



2013 Branch Visitor to the GMB Congress Plymouth 2-7th June 2013

This was my first visit to a GMB Congress and I was impressed by the organisation that took place. Everything seemed to flow in an orderly fashion. If I could find the smallest fault, it was that some delegates chose to go to the rostrum to speak on every issue, which caused the days business to overrun. This, however, was gradually brought under control by Mary Turner GMB President.

There were many issues that I found interesting but too many to mention all in my report, However, I have selected a few.



Mary Turner GMB President

1. Paying a Living Wage.

The General Secretary, Paul Kenny spoke about the campaign to have every employee paid a living wage, now at £7.45ph. A list of Councils paying the living wage was shown on a screen, but Milton Keynes was not there.

The General Secretary said there would be employers who would say they cannot afford to pay. "Well show us your books and we will help you" he said!



General Secretary, Paul Kenny

2. Housing.

Delegates spoke of the need to have local authorities build council houses (not trendy named social housing). Housing that will be owned and controlled by councils.

It was interesting to hear stories of members of the Tory party now owning council houses and putting them out for rent. A nice little earner for some it was said.



Owen Jones

3. General Strike.

London Region (Milton Keynes City Branch) seconded a motion from the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region (Barnsley General Branch) calling on the TUC to call a general strike.

Delegates spoke of the growth of food banks. Even people who are in work and have full time jobs have qualified to use them. Many spoke of tax avoidance, bankers bonuses, corporate greed, the margin of wealth between rich and poor. plus the rising number of children now living in poverty in Britain. It came as no surprise that Congress voted unanimously on this motion.



Dennis Brett, and Jim Hiom

4. The Bedroom Tax.

This was seen by Congress as another attack on working class people. It also hits people who were unable to move to a smaller dwelling even if they wished to. There are too few. it's simply a means of cutting the housing benefit.



Monica Smith, RMA

5. Blacklisting.

A speaker gave a brilliant speech on Blacklisting that has been going on for years illegally in the construction industry. He mentioned companies that blacklisted union members based simply on being a Safety Rep. Many are high profile companies, i.e. Crossrail, Euro Tunnel to mention a few. The General Secretary came to the rostrum to announce that today; the GMB is filing a lawsuit on behalf of 156 employees who have suffered blacklisting. The first union to do this.



General Secretary, Paul Kenny

6. Labour Party.

Delegates called for a new Warwick agreement to be signed now with the Labour Party, not when or if it is the next Government.

A call for the right of all Labour Party constituency members to elect the Leader of the Labour group.



Andy Burnham PM, Shadow Health Secretary,
Dennis Brett, and Margaret Aspinall, Hillsborough Family Support Group

Dennis Brett.

Branch Retired Members Officer.
Milton Keynes City Branch.



Andy Burnham PM, Shadow Health Secretary



Paul Hayes, London Regional Secretary, and Dennis Brett