

stuc



77th STUC Women's Conference

**Tuesday/Wednesday
16/17 November 2004
Albert Halls, Stirling**

CONFERENCE DECISIONS

I MOTIONS CARRIED

Composite A “Close the Gap” (covering motion nos. 1 and 3)

“That this Conference recognises that the issues surrounding equal pay are complex and include part time and flexible working, unpaid overtime and worklife balance, and unless employers address these issues in conjunction with the equal pay agenda, then we will fail to fully tackle the pay gap.

“Conference commends the work of Close the Gap and all of its partners. In particular, Conference welcomes the commitment of the STUC and the Equal Opportunities Commission in driving forward the initiative, and the support of the Scottish Executive in providing part of the funding for the project.

“Conference welcomes the very positive practical work - including weekend schools, campaign material and equal pay tool kits - produced by Close the Gap in its campaign to secure equal pay for women. Conference notes that the Close the Gap partnership is due to come to an end in November 2005.

“Conference calls on:

- all affiliates to fully engage with Close the Gap to offer support and advice to trade union members in all workplaces;
- Close the Gap partners to continue to develop the partnership working, and disseminate the project findings through their networks; and
- Close the Gap partners, including the Scottish Executive, to continue the excellent work of the project, and investigate ways of securing funding to enable the project to pursue further its good work
- The STUC Women’s Committee to continue working closely with the Close the Gap Campaign to raise the issue of equal pay with employers and government

2.

“Conference also calls on the Women’s Committee to continue their invaluable work and to campaign:

- for a change in equal pay legislation to require employers to carry out mandatory pay audits;
- for employers to publish the results of pay audits and for these to be made available for public scrutiny;
- to introduce time limits for implementing the results of pay audits; and
- to introduce financial penalties on employers who fail to comply with timescales.”

Composite B “Asylum, Immigration and Dungavel” (covering motion nos. 2 & 29)

“That this Conference commends the excellent work done by the STUC on asylum and immigration policy, and in particular recognises the crucial role of the STUC Women’s Committee in highlighting concerns about the incarceration of families, women and children in the Dungavel Detention Centre in South Lanarkshire. Conference notes the detailed report produced by the STUC following the visit to Dungavel in May 2004.

“Conference notes also the continued debate between the STUC and the Home Office, regarding asylum and immigration policy, and welcomes the STUC’s ongoing dialogue with Scottish Churches, the Scottish Refugee Council, New Roots Scotland, Positive Action in Housing, and other groups campaigning for improved asylum and immigration policies.

“Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- continue to campaign for the end of the use of detention centres for asylum seekers and their children;
- campaign with renewed vigour for the complete closure of the Dungavel Detention Centre;

3.

- campaign against electronic tagging to monitor asylum seekers who have committed no crime;
- campaign for the end of the destitution of asylum seekers and their families; and
- call for a review of the current asylum and immigration system to ensure transparency, and that just, fair and speedy decisions are made.”

Motion No. 4 “Equal Pay Campaign”

“That this Conference notes that considerable and positive steps have been taken in the past two years to promote and highlight the pay gap between men and women in Scotland.

“In particular, Conference congratulates the initiative undertaken by Close the Gap Campaign in actively promoting this important issue.

“Conference welcomed the launch of the Scottish Executive’s Equal Pay Campaign in March 2001, and also welcomed the steps taken to raise awareness of the pay gap in Scotland and the encouragement given to employers to close the gap. We also welcome the fact that the Executive, as part of its Modernising Government agenda, has ensured that all Civil Service organisations have conducted equal pay reviews and are producing action plans to show how equal pay gaps will be reduced.

“Nevertheless, Conference expresses serious concern at the lack of progress – particularly in the public sector – by employers in undertaking Equal Pay audits. Recent reports suggest that the pay gap in Scotland is getting wider.

“This failure by Public Sector employers to address the growing pay gap has led many unions to re-assess their positions in respect of negotiation in favour of looking to take legal action. Consequently, the main Local Government trade unions (ie UNISON, GMB, TGWU) have served notice on the Scottish Local Government employers that, unless substantial progress is made very quickly on this issue, they will take legal action.

4.

“Conference expresses serious concern that, despite fine words from the Executive and other Public Sector organisations about their commitment to equal pay, unions such as Unison are being forced to take such action.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee:

- i) to urge the Scottish Executive to include mandatory equal pay audits as part of annual funding requirements to all public sector organisations;
- ii) to urge all public sector organisations to produce details of their equality plans for staff and service providers in their annual reports/accounts; and
- iii) to set up a meeting with the Finance Minister, Social Inclusion Minister and representatives from all the main public sector organisations, to establish how they intend to progress this matter.”

Amended Motion No. 7 “Job Segregation”

“That this Conference expresses deep concern at the findings of the EOC investigation into Modern Apprenticeships. Conference recognises that this is part of the pattern of segregation of men and women, which begins at the earliest stages of learning and continues into later stages of education, training and recruitment. Conference shares the concern of the EOC that the findings suggest that the Modern Apprenticeship scheme entrenches traditional patterns of recruitment into employment.

“Conference notes the efforts of the Scottish Executive and the UK Government to address skills’ shortages in key areas of the economy. In particular, it welcomes the ‘fresh talent’ initiative of the Scottish Executive to bring essential skills and knowledge to the Scottish economy.

“Conference suggests that tackling job segregation should be an essential element of these efforts. In addition, Conference believes that tackling the implications of job segregation for women should be a matter of priority for the Executive and Government.

5.

“Conference supports the proposal, contained within the White Paper, ‘Commission for Equality and Human Rights’, to place a duty on public authorities to promote gender equality, but feels this does not go far enough.

“Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- i) support the EOC in its call to establish a national strategy to tackle job segregation;
- ii) urge the Scottish Executive to tackle job segregation as part of its ‘fresh talent’, or other initiatives, to improve the skills’ base of the Scottish workforce;
- iii) enter into talks with EOC Scotland to consider a joint campaign to tackle job segregation;
- iv) raise awareness with affiliates of the seriousness of the implications of gender bias; and
- v) urge local authorities to pre-empt the new legislative duty by developing a strategy to tackle gender inequality;
- vi) campaign to ensure that the duty to promote gender equality is introduced into legislation at the earliest opportunity;
- vii) campaign to ensure that issues of gender equality continue to have high profile and sufficient resources to deliver change within the arrangements for a single Equality and Human Rights Commission; and
- viii) campaign for the extension of the public sector duty to promote gender equality to the private and voluntary sectors.”

6.

Motion No. 8 “Low Pay”

“That this Conference, whilst recognising that the introduction of the national minimum wage has benefited many low paid workers, believing that the current level is set too low, this being reflected in the number of workers still living in poverty and relying on additional benefits.

“Conference is deeply concerned by recent reports by the TUC and the Low Pay Network that, five years after the minimum wage was introduced, 170,000 workers are still being paid less than they are entitled to by law.

“Conference notes that the workers being cheated out of the minimum wage are most likely to be employed in the clothing, footwear and retail sectors, or work as hairdressers, domestic workers or housekeepers, occupations predominantly taken up by women.

“Conference notes that in the UK, 4.7 million women earn less than £5 an hour - that is 43% of all women employees. Low pay is an issue not only for those women on low wages, but also for those who depend on them, such as their children. Women on low pay are unable to build up savings. If they earn too little to make National Insurance contributions, they are unable to claim contributory benefits, such as the basic state pension or statutory sick pay. Women's low pay over a lifetime makes them vulnerable to poverty in old age.

“Conference reaffirms its position that, after 30 years of the Equal Pay Act, it is a scandal women's pay continues to lag behind that of men and urges the UK government to take urgent action to tackle the gender pay gap.

“Conference recognises the level of the minimum wage is still too low and that lower rates for young people encourage the worst employers to view young workers as a source of cheap labour.

7.

“Conference believes that too many workers are still being hit by low pay and, therefore, calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign to raise awareness of the continuing problem of low pay and urge both the UK Government and Scottish Executive to take urgent action to address the problem of low pay.”

Motion No. 9 “Pregnancy Discrimination at Work”

“That this Conference welcomes the ongoing statutory investigation into pregnancy discrimination at work and the work being done by the EOC and unions in Scotland to win a fair deal for pregnant women at work.

“Discrimination and unfair treatment of pregnant workers is rife. Conference notes the following:

- EOC research shows that 25% of women and 16% of men knew someone who had experienced problems at work, because they were pregnant;
- in an average year, more than 1,000 women take legal action, claiming they were sacked, because of their pregnancy; and
- a recent survey by USDAW of over 1,300 of its women members found that seven out of ten women either had not had risk assessment whilst pregnant, or did not know if they had.

“Conference believes that unions have a critical role to play in advancing and defending the rights of pregnant women in the workplace. Too many employers still see pregnant women as something to be, at best, tolerated and, at worst, undermined or got rid of.

“Risk assessments are a vital tool in protecting the health and safety of pregnant women and their babies. Union health and safety reps are crucial in ensuring pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers get an individual and ongoing risk assessment.

8.

“Conference believes that employers should be doing more to protect pregnant women workers and, therefore, asks the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- press the Health & Safety Executive and local authorities to do more to ensure compliance with the duty to do risk assessments for pregnant women;
- work with the organisation, Scotland’s Health at Work, to ensure that their criteria for awards, recognising good practice in the management of health and safety at work, include doing risk assessments for pregnant women;
- work with the organisation, Safe and Healthy Working in Scotland, and employers’ advice agencies, to identify how to raise awareness amongst employers of the need for risk assessments during pregnancy.”

Motion No. 10 “Better Deal for Paternity Leave

“That this Conference notes with concern the inadequate statutory provision for paternity leave and calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for all employers to follow best practice in giving fully paid paternity leave of at least two weeks duration at the time of the birth or adoption of children.”

Amended Motion No. 11 “Working Parents and Carers”

“That this Conference believes that helping parents and carers balance work and family life should be a high political priority. The important measures already taken, such as improvements to maternity leave, and the announcement that the right to request flexible working will be extended to carers, are very welcome.

“Conference, however, believes that the Right to Request Flexible Working has not yet delivered meaningful change for parents in Scotland. Conference notes research by the EOC, showing that 74% of working women and 81% of working men say they have no access to any kind of flexible working arrangements.

9.

“Conference also notes that the vast majority of part-time workers in Scotland are women, due to their primary role as carers. Only 9% of men in Scotland work part-time compared to 42% of women.

“Conference, therefore, believes that winning clear rights to flexible working should continue to be a high priority for unions in Scotland and the STUC.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to continue working closely with affiliates to support their work in the following ways:

- helping to raise awareness amongst workers in Scotland of the Right to Request Flexible Working;
- sharing best practice of where unions have won negotiating successes around flexible working; and
- continuing to use its political channels to make the case for improved statutory rights for Scottish parents and carers in need of more and proper flexibility at work.

“Conference also calls upon both the Scottish Executive and the UK Government to take immediate action to make work life balance a reality in the workplace by introducing:

- quality, affordable nursery and childcare provision for all who need it;
- improved arrangements and financial support for those with caring responsibilities; and
- improved rights for part-time workers, including rights to work flexibly and transfer back to full-time work as appropriate.”

Motion No. 12 “Family Friendly Policies”

“That this Conference recognises that the government has made some useful moves towards better childcare provision, but this does not go far enough.

10.

“Conference recognises that children’s early years development is crucial in ensuring social justice. The majority of childcare still falls to women and the increase in unsocial hours working impacts on them particularly hard.

For instance, it is clear that shift working is increasing, especially continental shifts, and that women increasingly work nights to cover childcare.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to campaign for improved rights to provide:

- substantially increased statutory payments for maternity/paternity leave, paid parental leave and tax credits that take account of family size;
- rights to flexible working hours;
- an age limit of not less than 14 for taking parental leave; and
- rights for all carers to time-off with pay for caring responsibilities.”

“Conference also calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to encourage all affiliates to support the Parents and Carers Coalition.”

Motion No. 13 “Flexible Working

“That this Conference welcomes any rights introduced by Government to encourage flexible working in recognition of the essential role played by those with childcare responsibilities in the workforce. Work life balance issues are at long last being encompassed within the mainstream. However, we know from experience that it is not enough to merely encourage employers to do something. The most enlightened employers will use best practice in any event. Rights need to be enforced, if they are to have any credibility. Our experience of employers in the transport sector, is that they have to be dragged kicking and screaming to do anything, let alone voluntarily adopt best practice in any field.

11.

“The Right to Request Flexible Working means what it says. It is merely a right to ask. The employer does not have to acquiesce to the request, the employee only has the right to ask. The legislation has taken us a step further in the right direction, but it needs to be given teeth, if it is to have any impact. Conference, therefore, asks the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for the following changes to the legislation:

- i) increase the age limit from 6 to 13 years of age;
- ii) agency workers to be covered by the legislation;
- iii) the grounds for submitting a Tribunal application should be extended to cover an employer’s unreasonable decision not to grant flexible working;
- iv) Tribunals be empowered to impose flexible working, where it is deemed the employer has unreasonably refused the request;
- v) employers should discharge the burden of proof at Tribunal once the facts have been established; and
- vi) provision for the employee to seek a review of the arrangements should be included in the legislation.”

Motion No. 14 “ Rights of Part-Time Workers”

“That this Conference notes and welcomes continuing legislation and regulation in the protection of the rights of part-time workers, but notes with the gravest concern the failure of many employers to recognise and implement statute and regulation and, in particular, the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000. Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to urge all employers to provide mandatory training for relevant managers to ensure that all relevant statute and regulations are properly observed.”

12.

Motion No. 15 “Fixed Term Working”

“That this Conference notes that almost 50% of all academics are fixed term workers, and 98% of all university employed researchers are employed on a fixed term basis.

“Studies have shown that women are more likely to be employed on a fixed term contract and, once employed, will stay employed on a fixed term basis for longer. The same is true of those workers who come from an ethnic background, and disabled workers.

“In a university setting, this can mean being employed for very long periods on a series of short contracts, providing little job security. Universities employ people this way partly because research funding is allocated to them in blocks attached to projects, which will run for short periods.

“Fixed term contracts are becoming less and less necessary as the amount of research carried out by universities grows. The AUT believes that the sector should substantially reduce its use of fixed term contracts, with a view to promoting permanency as the ‘normal’ form of employment, as stated by European Directive 1999/70/EC, and are working with our employers to achieve this.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to:

- a) urge the Scottish Executive to tackle the funding issues leading to the abuse of fixed term contracts in universities, and to develop policy, which addresses the gender and other discrimination arising from their continued use; and
- b) work with the Equal Opportunities Commission to help employers from all sectors comply with European Directive 1999/70/EC and develop gender friendly policies in relation to decisions about the use of future fixed term contracts.“

Motion No. 16 “35 Hour Week”

“That this Conference recognises that genuine work life balance can only be achieved when it is underpinned by a strong regulatory framework.

13.

“Conference deplores the trend towards a long hours culture, which not only is detrimental to the health of staff, but puts an intolerable burden on women who combine work with caring responsibilities. Conference notes that this trend is exemplified in the NHS, where some workers will have their weekly contracted hours increased from 35 to 37.5, effective from December 2004.

“Conference welcomes the TUC’s Campaign ‘It’s About Time’ and the initiatives taken to highlight the discrepancy between the number of Public Holidays in the UK and in the rest of Europe. In the same manner, Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to support the long term Campaign for the establishment of a statutory 35 hour week.”

Motion No. 17 “Bullying at Work”

“That this Conference notes that bullying at work has received considerable media coverage in recent years and is gradually being acknowledged as a serious and widespread problem.

“Research carried out by Staffordshire University in 1994 revealed that 78% of a sample of 1,137 employees had witnessed bullying at their workplace and that 51% had experienced it themselves.

“Bullying in the workplace can take many forms. Bullies in a position of authority may subject their subordinates to humiliation and ridicule. In some cases, they may remove an employee’s responsibility, refuse requests for leave and training, and block promotion.

“Bullying is not confined to managers and supervisors. An employee may be bullied by a colleague or be victimised by groups of employees.

“Women are particularly vulnerable to bullying, since there are high concentrations, such as social security departments, hospital and schools. Women tend to react to bullies by withdrawing and covering up their feelings of humiliation. This can often lead to low self-esteem, depression and occasionally suicide.

14.

“Conference calls for the Women’s Committee to campaign in favour of legislation against bullying in the workplace that compels companies to provide adequate person-management skills and equality training, prior to appointing people into management positions.”

Motion No. 18 “Equality Reps”

“That this Conference is aware that, over the last two years, the debate about encouraging the introduction of workplace equality reps has been developing. Conference also recognises that, since the election of a Labour government in 1997, our programme for gender equality has focussed very heavily on legislative change.

“While this has been a necessary tactic, our overall strategy must be to determine how to ensure gender equality remains a collective issue, enabling us to make best use of the new legislation for our members’ benefit.

“Conference believes that the most practical way to achieve lasting change would be to develop equality reps at the workplace to specialise in this increasingly complex area. Conference recognises the benefits to union organisation that will flow from this.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the Women’s Committee to:

- secure the support of all affiliates for the introduction of workplace equality reps;
- lobby government for legal recognition for equality reps in line with that achieved for learning reps; and
- assess the feasibility of providing in depth training for these reps in a similar way to that currently provided for shop stewards.”

15.

Motion No. 19 “Public Private Partnership Schemes”

“That this Conference believes there is a continuing gender bias in the affect of PPP schemes.

“Where PPP has been used in Local Government, it is predominately women workers who are transferred from the public to the private sector.

“Women also have little access to investment decisions in the economy, with women being grossly underrepresented in private sector board rooms.

“Conference calls for the Women’s Committee in its representations on PPP and PFI to the Scottish Executive to raise the gender impact of privatisation.

“Conference calls for economic democracy and economic equality to be raised up the Scottish Executive’s economic development and public services agenda.”

Motion No. 20 “Caledonian MacBrayne”

“That this Conference is totally opposed to the impending changes to the structure of Caledonian MacBrayne. Experience on the railways clearly shows that, once privatisation takes place, pay and conditions of employees will suffer, health and safety can be compromised, job security becomes a thing of the past and short-termism reigns. Our job as trade unionists is to protect the interests of our members, whilst in this case also acting in the interest of the public. Whilst the Scottish Executive will stress that the service will remain in public ownership, we have seen this sleight of hand before on the London Underground. However it is dressed up, the reality is that privatisation is taking place.

“Conference notes that the RMT has many women members employed by Caledonian MacBrayne and we have a duty to protect them. The creation of a separate vessel owning company and the establishment of five year contracts is a recipe for short-termism. This can especially adversely impact upon our women members.

16.

“It is difficult enough to pursue work life balance issues with companies that have a secure future, but nearly impossible with those on five year contracts.

“Conference, therefore, agrees that the Women’s Committee lobbies the Scottish Executive, in order to reverse this policy.”

Motion No. 21 “Merger of Fire Controls”

“That this Conference again expresses its deep concern at the folly of the proposals to merge Fire Control rooms in the name of modernisation, when this will impact on the highly effective service provided by Fire and rescue services throughout Scotland to our communities and result in an increased level of fire deaths.

“Local knowledge of our communities by experienced and trained staff cannot be valued highly enough and this Conference believes that the Scottish Executive is not only relying on flawed evidence to support their ill-thought out proposals, which are a calculated attempt to purportedly save money by cutting jobs, which are in the main filled by women. Conference, therefore, urges the STUC Women’s Committee to endorse this position.”

Composite C “Women and Pensions” (covering motion nos. 22 and amendment, 23 and 24)

“That this Conference, notes that women pensioners in Scotland are living on just 68% of the average income of Scottish men pensioners and that women pensioners in Scotland have an average weekly income of £106, compared to an average £156 for men in Scotland. Less than 12% of UK women pensioners receive the full state pension in their own right compared to 91% of men.

“Conference notes that women are more likely to take on caring responsibilities and, therefore, lose out on their entitlement to the basic state pension. They are more likely than men to be low paid and in part-time work, which has affected their access to occupational pension schemes and their ability to pay into any pension scheme.

17.

“Conference recognises that many older women in Scotland are struggling to survive on poverty level income and is of the view that it is scandalous that, after a lifetime of hard work and caring for their families, many older women have to live in poverty, when they should be enjoying a dignified and well-earned retirement.

“Conference believes that, despite recent union successes, such as gaining equal pension rights for part-time workers, the pensions system is still failing women and younger women saving for the future, and calls:

- on the Government to make closing the pensions gender gap a major priority in its strategy for addressing the growing crisis in pensions and ensure that this takes account of the affect of women’s caring responsibilities
- for an immediate up-rating of the basic state pension and the restoration of the link between pension rises and earnings increases
- for a significant rise in payments made to the over 75’s in the form of a new age allowance to replace the current derisory rise when pensioners reach the age of 80
- upon the Government to end this injustice and enable women to receive a decent pension by:
 - ⇒ ensuring all national insurance payments count towards a pension);
 - ⇒ relaxing the rules around the Home Responsibility payments, so that they really do protect those at home with caring responsibilities;
 - ⇒ ensuring that a well resourced pension service exists to support people trying to build up and claim a pension; and
 - ⇒ compelling employers to make occupational schemes to reckon all maternity leave both paid and unpaid.

18.

“These would be first steps in ensuring women live in retirement with the dignity they deserve.”

Composite D “Domestic and Violent Abuse” (covering motions 25 & 27 and amendment)

“That this Conference welcomes the campaigning work of the Scottish Executive to tackle domestic abuse. Conference recognises the affects of domestic violence and abuse on children. Those children, who are either abused themselves or witness abuse of a parent (according to data, usually the mother), react in a number of ways, which can adversely affect their education, health and future prospects.

“Conference pays tribute to the work of organisations, such as Women’s Aid, which seek to support women and children who experience domestic abuse or violence.

“Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- continue talks with the Scottish Executive and seek the support of MSPs and the Scottish Parliament to ensure adequate funding for places of refuge and other initiatives, to ensure the safety of those who experience domestic abuse or violence;
- work with appropriate organisations to devise training and education programmes for affiliates;
- raise awareness of the estimated number of children of school age, who are experiencing or have witnessed domestic violence or abuse;
- support organisations, such as Scottish Women’s Aid, to raise the profile of what is needed to combat domestic abuse;
- raise with the Scottish Executive the need to eliminate domestic abuse in Scotland;

19.

- support and promote awareness of the Amnesty International ‘Stop Violence Against Women’ Campaign, and ensure that the issue of violence against women is taken up in the STUC’s international, as well as domestic, agenda.”

Motion No. 26 “Domestic Violence”

“That this Conference views with profound concern the continuing high incidence of domestic violence, which accounts for one-fifth of all violent crime reported, and that domestic violence had a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other type of crime. It is a gross failing in modern society, which blights the lives of hundreds of thousands of Scottish women and their children and tears apart the social fabric.

“Conference recognises that trade unions have an extremely important role to play in combating this violence, of which women are overwhelmingly the victims, through information campaigns and supportive approaches at the workplace, to adjust hours of work and to help ensure that counselling is available.

“It calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and STUC affiliated organisations to work with the Scottish Executive for the reduction and elimination of domestic violence. “

Motion No. 28 “Abortion Rights”

“That this Conference notes with concern the current interest in reviewing the law to reduce the time limits for abortion in the UK, as well as the US Republican Party’s continuing attacks on women’s rights in relation to fertility, and the impact that the Global Gag Rule has on US foreign aid policy to the developing world.

“The decision to abort a foetus is a complex one, involving a range of personal, emotional, social and economic considerations. Conference does not believe that any review on the time limits for abortion should be purely based on new scientific research.

20.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee and wider trade union movement, to reassert its support of a woman’s right to choose, campaign to correct the prevalent false impression that pregnancy termination is easily available and urges the UK Government not to restrict further a woman’s right to access abortion.”

Motion No. 30 “Affordable and Suitable Housing”

“That this Conference recognises that the provisions of quality, accessible and affordable housing is central to all working families, but in particular single parents, while dealing with the many difficulties associated in caring for their children through to adult life.

“The cost of childcare means that many low paid workers are forced to leave work, in order to look after their children and, consequently, find it hard to find suitable housing within their already stretched budgets, or find it too hard to continue living where they are and are forced to look for alternative, often sub-standard housing.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to pursue a campaign to the Scottish Executive, highlighting the plight of mothers, who are caught in this poverty trap. Suitable, affordable housing is the cornerstone of any child's life, and a necessity for any parent who is disadvantaged by whatever circumstance.

Amended Motion No. 31 “Combating Fascism, Racism and Xenophobia”

“That this Conference notes that combating the continued rise of racism and xenophobia in Scotland and Europe as a whole presents a major challenge to society. Conference notes that great inequality in life circumstances, asylum practice, fear of being unemployed, insecurity about the future and a lack of confidence in local authorities and in political structures have all been cited as main concerns of electors, who have supported racist political organisations.

21.

“Conference views all organisations which foment hatred on grounds of race and religion as a stain on Scotland, which should have no place in our society and should be challenged at every level, at the doorstep, workplace and ballot box. Conference notes that racism and fascism are affronts to basic democratic rights and trade union values and that trade unions play a crucial role in defeating fascism.

“Conference calls upon the Scottish Parliament to recognise that to unite communities, greater effort needs to be focussed on increasing awareness of the advantages of diversity in Scottish society, addressing the economic and social roots of racism and protecting social and economic cohesion in communities with whatever means are at its disposal.

“Conference calls upon the Women’s Committee to further extend and develop their support for community-based organisations fighting racist organisations and actively promote an agenda for local communities, which has as its main aim providing support for social and economic inclusion. Conference affirms that there is no place in the labour movement for racists and xenophobes, recognising that such beliefs are contrary to the aims, objectives, and history of the trade union movement.

“Conference calls on the British Government to restore to the trade union movement the right to expel members of fascist political organisations, without any legal reprisals and applauds the actions already taken by affiliates to exclude racists and fascists from union membership.

“Conference also calls on all affiliated unions to redouble efforts to ensure a large turnout at the 2004 St Andrew’s Day March and Rally Against Racism and Fascism.”

Motion No. 32 “Concerns over the Growth of the British National Party”

“That this Conference notes with grave concern the growth of the British National Party. This fascist party represents a real threat to everything that the labour movement stands for.

22.

“In this year’s European elections, the BNP received a very high number of votes and will be using the next General Election to gather further pools of support. Already, many asylum seekers in Scotland, including women and children, have been subjected to a frenzy of racism. Misrepresentation and misinformation in the coverage of refugees and asylum seekers have influenced many people in Scotland and it cannot be ignored that the BNP will take every opportunity to mobilise and demonstrate whenever possible.

“The Women’s Committee is instructed to campaign to raise the profile of the Unite Against Fascism Campaign (UAF), which brings together the trade union movement, and is opposed to any form of racist, religious or sexual discrimination. Conference also calls on all trade unions to affiliate to this worthwhile Campaign.”

Motion No. 33 “Fair Play at the Olympics”

“That this Conference applauds the work of the ‘Fair Play at the Olympics’ Campaign. We believe that the work must go on to try to improve the working conditions of workers in the sportswear industry in low labour cost countries, the majority of whom are women. Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to engage with affiliates to continue the Campaign.”

Motion No. 34 “International Solidarity”

“That this Conference believes that international solidarity with women and men in other trade union centres throughout the world is needed now more than ever.

“Conference opposes terrorism and oppression in any form and believes that the international community needs to work together to develop peaceful co-existence and defeat poverty.

“There are, unfortunately, too many examples of where women and children are being affected by oppression and war. We are deeply saddened by the war in Iraq, where innocent women and children are living in fear, often of their lives.

23.

“We are concerned that the people of Palestine continue to face oppression and suffering at the hands of the Israeli government. We are appalled by events in Zimbabwe where untold atrocities are visited on women and children.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to:

- a) convene a Conference with solidarity organisations in Scotland to discuss ways of raising the issues and concerns;
- b) write to the British and Scottish Governments to express the need for action to be taken to defeat poverty and oppression; and
- c) develop links with women trade unionists in international trade union centres to promote the rights of women.

“Conference also calls on the Women’s Committee to discuss with the General Council how a higher profile can be given at the STUC Congress in April 2005 to international solidarity, particularly in working with women who often suffer most at the hands of oppressors.”

Motion No. 35 “Defeating World Poverty and Oppression”

“That this Conference urges the British Government during its Presidency of the G8 and EU in 2005 to press ahead with its efforts to have the debt of the poorest countries cancelled and the International Finance Facility Initiative supported by other rich countries, since these aims are essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

“Delegates give their full support to the Commission for Africa and welcome the Government’s commitment to raise the aid budget to 0.47 per cent of GDP by 2007-8 and to achieve the UN target by 2013, but recognises that the increase in development aid and credit needs to be accompanied by radical action to open access to international markets for developing countries, and particularly

24.

to eliminate agricultural export subsidies, if the populations most vulnerable to famine and disease, particularly women and children, are to secure for themselves the basic necessities of life.

“Conference notes too that integral human development requires the governments of developing countries to respect fully trade union and other basic human rights. In this context, Conference notes the conclusion of the recent ILO World Commission that globalisation in its present form is not sustainable and is concerned that inadequate public accountability and poor governance sometimes mean that aid benefits corrupt elites, not those of the families in most need. Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to make representations to the Government to make available aid funds for trade union training in developing countries, since independent unions have proved themselves effective means for achieving accountability and good governance, and for pressing governments to use aid to benefit the poorest people most vulnerable to hunger, disease, and oppression.”

Emergency Motion No. 1 “ Job Cuts in the Civil Service”

“That this Conference commends the civil service members of PCS of whom over 250,000 took strike action on 5th November this year in defence of jobs and pensions and to protect the services they provide from the cradle to the grave.

“Conference condemns the proposals of the Chancellor to cut over 100,000 jobs in the civil service without regard to the effect this will have on locally provided services, especially to those in our society most in need.

“Conference expresses its solidarity with PCS and all of its members involved in this struggle, in particular Conference expresses its deep concern about the effect that compulsory redundancies or compulsory redeployment will have in disrupting family life and threatening the security of civil service workers, many thousands of whom are scandalously low paid.

25.

“Conference pledges its full support to PCS and its members and instructs the STUC Women’s Committee to work with the General Council to assist PCS and any other public service trade unions in campaigns to defend jobs and services to the people of Scotland and the UK.”

Emergency Motion No. 2 “Women and Work Commission”

“That this Conference expresses concerns on the UK Government’s new Women and Work Commission. Whilst the STUC Women’s Conference welcomes any initiative that positively addresses the gender pay gap, Conference is concerned that the Women and Work Commission will not do this as its remit appears to be more about measuring the pay gap than closing it. The range of influences upon the gender pay gap have been well documented through research already published. Any additional information uncovered by the Women and Work Commission will be useful, but another list of statistics on women is not the answer to reducing the pay gap.

“Conference is clear that what is needed is action, in the form of mandatory equal pay audits. A major concern is that the Women and Work Commission’s remit does not allow it to make recommendations for legislative change.

“Conference is concerned that established public appointment procedures were not followed in appointing the Commission’s members. Whilst this is not a reflection on the individuals selected, Conference notes the absence of any representatives from Scotland or the other devolved regions of the UK. Conference notes the omission of childcare and domestic responsibilities from the range of issues to be considered by the Commission. It is essential that these issues should be included in any recommendations for tackling the gender pay gap.

“Conference understands that the Women and Work Commission was established as a result of the agreement between the Labour Party and its affiliated trade unions at the Warwick Policy Forum in July 2004.

26.

“Conference expresses its concerns that the commitment to establish a body to report within 12 months on mandatory equal pay audits and equality reps is already being diluted at this early stage. Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to take forward the views of this Conference and ensure they are expressed to the UK Government, the Scottish Executive and to the Women and Work Commission.”

Emergency Motion No. 3 “Sandblast Campaign and the Saharawi People’s 30 Year Struggle for Self Determination”

“That this Conference notes the Sandblast Project proposals for 2005, which will see a month-long festival implemented to mark the Saharawi people’s 30 year struggle for self-determination.

“The Sandblast Campaign will raise awareness of the cause and plight of Saharawi women, who have been invisible to the rest of the world, whilst they have run their communities and schools in harsh conditions. It also aims to seek more political resolve to bring about a just solution to the conflict and Moroccan obstructionism.

“Conference welcomes previous support from the STUC Women’s Conference, the STUC and the Scottish Parliament for the people of Saharawi, women in particular, and calls on them to support the Sandblast Project with all means at their disposal.”

Emergency Motion No. 4 “Chivas Brothers”

“That this Conference notes the announcement on Thursday 11 November 2004 by Chivas Brothers to close their bottling plant in Kilwinning.

“This will mean the loss of over 70 skilled jobs – many of them performed by women workers.

“The factory has provided work for over 20 years and formed a key part of the manufacturing base of the Ayrshire economy.

27.

“Conference calls for intervention by North Ayrshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, and the Scottish Executive to work with the TGWU and the company to provide alternatives to closure.

“Conference sends its support to the workers affected by the proposed closure and pledges that the Scottish Trades Union Movement will give them their full support.”

II MOTIONS WITHDRAWN

Motion No. 5 “Equal Pay Audits

“That this Conference notes that, according to the Minister for Finance and Public Services, the Scottish Executive plays ‘a key role in promoting good employment practice in the public and private sector, particularly in relation to equal pay’. Conference also notes that the Scottish Executive is a partner in the Close the Gap Campaign (along with the Equal Opportunities Commission Scotland, and the STUC, amongst others).

“In the light of this commitment to work in partnership with other organisations to deliver equal pay, Conference condemns the arrogance of Scottish Executive management in refusing to involve the recognised trade unions (PCS, Prospect and FDA) in the second Equal Pay Audit, and in refusing so far to share anything other than a two-page action plan with the unions. This contrasts unfavourably with the approach taken in the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body management, resulting in a detailed 30 page summary report, which will provide a focus for future discussions between the SPCB and the trade unions.

“Conference agrees that the Scottish Executive should be leading by example, and that their obstructive approach should be challenged. Accordingly, the STUC Women’s Committee is instructed to seek an urgent meeting with the Minister for Communities to ask him to raise this with the Minister for Finance and Public Services, to ensure that the Scottish Executive practises what it preaches in relation to equal pay.

28.

Motion No. 36 “Trade Unions in Iraq”

“That this Conference supports the rights of female and male Iraqi workers to:

- organise trade unions freely, to have trade union representation and to strike;
- be actively involved in economic and social policy making, particularly with the aim of securing full employment and a living wage for all;
- participate democratically in rebuilding civil society;
- seek support from the international labour movement to help with education and training; and
- develop facilities to meet the special needs of the disabled, including war victims.

“Recognising the need for education in trade unionism to secure these rights, Conference supports the Khali Shawqi Appeal. This initiative aims to raise funds for travelling theatre buses to visit workplaces and communities throughout Iraq, helping to restore trade union consciousness and to overcome the damaging legacy of the discredited Ba’athist unions. To this end, Conference instructs the STUC Women’s Committee to publicise the appeal amongst affiliates and to take every possible step to aid fundraising for it in the Scottish Labour Movement.”

III MOTION FELL

Motion No. 6 “Equal Pay in Higher Education”

“That this Conference notes that the pay gap in Higher Education in Scotland currently sits at 18%. Females in HE tend to have lower starting salaries, and are less likely to be promoted.

29.

“A long hours culture and the fact that women are more likely to have caring and family responsibilities at home, means female workers are often seen to be “doing less” than their male counterparts in equivalent roles. This is further compounded by the fact that women are more likely to be part time workers.

“Research is an important aspect of the academic workplace, for personal development and in the wider university context, as it is a key determinant for funding. Recent findings have shown that men are twice as likely as women to be rated as ‘research active’. In the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise, only 19.3% of all female academics were acknowledged as research active, while 36.5% of all male academics were acknowledged. How research active a person is can have an impact on the likelihood of promotion to a more senior post and, therefore, on career earnings for some of the most talented academic women in Scotland.

“Though work has been done to address pay structures in Higher Education, to date little has happened to address the indirect aspects of the equal pay issue.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to reaffirm its commitment to work with the Scottish Executive, the Equal Opportunities Commission and its affiliated members to end indirect discrimination and its part in the Higher Education gender pay gap.”