

ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

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D E C I S I O N S

Resolution No.2 – Asylum Seekers

"That this Conference believes that all those fleeing persecution abroad have a right to asylum in this country. We are opposed to scapegoating immigrants and asylum seekers for the problems of society.

"Conference is concerned that measures in the new legislation on asylum and immigration will further reduce asylum rights, undermine civil liberties and human rights as well as exacerbating racism.

"The legislation includes unacceptable proposals to:

- i) withdraw benefit rights from all asylum seekers and introduce a system of cashless vouchers;
- ii) compel asylum seekers to live in designated accommodation in any part of the country;
- iii) extend the use of immigration detention and increase the powers of detention by custody officers;
- iv) require financial bonds from visitors needing a visa, a measure which discriminates against the poor;
- v) end the right of appeal against deportation for those who have been here for over seven years;
- vi) grant police powers to the immigration service; and
- vii) increase internal immigration controls through immigration checks at work; and encouraging marriage registrars to check immigration status.

"These measures tend to legitimise the racist campaign against refugees and asylum seekers in the right wing tabloid press, by William Hague and the Tory Party. Conference condemns these actions as racist and inflammatory.

"Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee and the STUC General Council to:

- establish close links with the Scottish Refugee Council and Amnesty International
- campaign against harassment and intimidation of refugees and asylum seekers engendered either indirectly by the media, or directly by organised fascist groups
- work to build a greater understanding amongst Scottish people of the plight of refugees and asylum seekers

- lobby the Government to relax the stringent conditions placed on asylum seekers and to provide more support to them through a very difficult, harrowing and vulnerable period."

Composite A (Covering Motion Nos.3 & 4) – Support for the Scottish Youth Parliament

"That this Conference welcomes the establishment of the Scottish Youth Parliament launched earlier this year, after several months of preparation by its own Interim Executive of young people and a number of years of tireless work by the Connect Youth Network, Community Learning Scotland and Youth Link Scotland.

"Conference recognises the work carried out by the STUC Youth Committee over recent years, and, in particular, over the past year to participate in, build links with, and help to establish the Scottish Youth Parliament. This has resulted in the STUC Youth Committee having two Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs), one of whom has been elected to the Executive position of Chair.

"Conference reaffirms its aim that the Scottish Youth Parliament should act as a platform to give young people in Scotland a credible voice and a chance to form policy and opinions on the issues affecting them. Conference notes the efforts that have gone into ensuring that young people participating in the Scottish Youth Parliament are representative of a wide range of young people in Scotland, many coming from backgrounds that would normally exclude them from having the opportunity to voice political views and opinions.

"Conference notes that the views of young people and of young trade unionists have too often been ignored or written off in the past. With the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, we now have a Government that is willing to listen and to take seriously the views of young people.

"Conference is, however, concerned at the lack of public financial support, both at Local Government and Scottish Executive level, being directed towards supporting the Scottish Youth Parliament, without which it will become impossible for it to become established effectively. Conference notes that currently the Youth Parliament is operating on limited support in kind from a range of other organisations and, at present, it has no dedicated support staff or funding of any kind. Conference is opposed to the Scottish Youth Parliament being privately funded, as this may lead to its views being compromised by sponsors.

"Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Youth Committee to take the following steps to ensure that the Scottish Youth Parliament gets the best possible start and works to the benefit of young trade unionists by:

- encouraging the Executive to establish policy-making processes within the Scottish Youth Parliament that are democratic; open and accountable
- lobbying the Scottish Executive to address the issues of appropriate funding and support for the Scottish Executive Youth Parliament and campaign to avoid private finance.
- encouraging more young trade union members to become involved in the Scottish Youth Parliament as MSYPs when the next round of elections come in 2002.
- continuing to work to support the Scottish Youth Parliament and build links with a wide range of other youth organisations through the Connect Youth Network."

Amended Resolution No.5 – Drug Crisis

“That this Conference notes the devastating effect drug abuse continues to have on young people in Scotland’s communities and the spiralling human and economic costs. Since 1989, despite the ever increasing rise in the amount of drug seizures, the availability of drugs on the streets has also increased. The reliable indicators of the drugs crisis, namely falling street prices, drug related crime, purity levels and addiction levels, all indicate that the problem is growing.

“Conference acknowledges that levels of drug use among young people in Scotland are particularly high and that many young people are actively involved in using a wide range of different drugs for recreational purposes.

“Conference also notes that the Customs and Excise have reduced the number of staff employed on anti-smuggling activities, and have increased their dependence upon intelligence operations at the expense of the visible deterrent of anti-smuggling posts at ports and airports. This has had a profound effect in Scotland, given the opportunities the vast coastline gives to smugglers.

“Conference welcomes the various initiatives being undertaken by the Scottish Parliament which aim to tackle the negative cycle of drug mis-use, addiction and crime through a wide ranging series of measures. However, Conference is concerned that much more requires to be done by the government to engage young people in a more open and honest debate about drug mis-use, which aims to develop realistic and effective ways of tackling this issue, without stigmatising and excluding the large number of young people who choose to use drugs recreationally.

“Conference believes that only a full comprehensive drugs strategy which fully involves and takes into account the views of young people will have any possibility of succeeding. Such a strategy must include:

- education of young people about the potential dangers of drug mis-use
- education of drug users about how to maximise their safety
- social inclusion strategies to ensure that those most vulnerable to drug mis-use can access positive life choices
- changing current sentencing policy for recreational drug users, with a view to avoiding long-term exclusion and stigmatisation
- education
- effective sentencing policy for drug dealers
- seizure of the assets of drug dealers
- increased resources to help with the rehabilitation of drug users
- assistance for communities afflicted by widespread drug abuse
- increased numbers of anti-smuggling staff to deter smugglers and seize more drugs

“Conference believes that in developing such a strategy, all agencies and bodies with an interest, including the STUC and appropriate unions, must be involved throughout the process. Additionally young trade unionists must specifically be provided with an opportunity to influence this strategy development.

“Conference calls on the Westminster Government to provide the resources to increase the number of Customs and Excise staff in Scotland and calls upon the Scottish Parliament and its Executive to involve the STUC and unions along with young members in a realistic and informed debate on the whole drugs issue.”

Amended Resolution No.6 – Social Inclusion

“That this Conference welcomes the Government’s emphasis on promoting social inclusion at local, Scottish and UK levels. In particular, Conference welcomes the need to tackle issues such as poverty, homelessness, poor health, unemployment, poor skills, crime and institutional discrimination. And we note that many of these issues affect young people and result in a culture of apathy and a ‘drop out’ society. It is, therefore, essential that young people are included in the debate to tackle social exclusion.

“Conference welcomes the initiative of the Scottish Parliament and Executive in implementing a comprehensive strategy involving every department and public agency, in order to promote social inclusion.

“Conference believes that young people need to be at the heart of the debate which shapes the policy development and implementation of social inclusion strategies and, therefore, agrees to urge the STUC Youth Committee to:

- prepare a report which sets out the issues of social exclusion which face young people
- identify a strategy for ensuring that young people can influence the formation of policy for promoting social inclusion.”

Composite C. (Covering Motion Nos.7, 8 10 & Amendment) – Repeal of Section 2A of the Local Government Act 1986

“That this Conference welcomes the Scottish Executive’ s drive to promote equality and Repeal Section 2A of the Local Government Act 1986. This legislation promotes homophobia and stigmatises lesbians and gay men as second class citizens. Repeal is long overdue, as this bigoted piece of legislation has caused untold harm and heartache to young lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

“The fact that only the Scottish Conservative Party, of all the political parties in the Scottish Parliament, is in favour of maintaining this piece of discriminatory legislation is significant. Conference condemns businessman, Brian Souter’ s ‘Keep the Clause’ campaign and poll aimed at retaining Section 2A. Conference recognises that this is just a cynical exercise in encouraging discrimination against lesbians and gay men and notes that, despite their outrageous lie that Scotland’s children will be subject to ‘ gay sex lessons’ , organisations such as Childline, Children in Scotland, Barnardo’s and Save the Children all believe Section 28 is a bad piece of legislation that must be scrapped at the earliest opportunity.

“This legislation actively harms young people by denying them the advice and information they need to take a responsible attitude to sex and sexuality. It encourages bullying and attacks the self-esteem of young gay men and lesbians and those perceived to be gay or lesbian. It denies Councils the ability to help a minority fight discrimination. The idea that an individual’ s sexuality can be changed by school lessons is ludicrous, as is the implication that, if the Act were repealed, teachers in schools all over Scotland would be pressurised into promoting homosexuality.

“It is clear that the aim of the Scottish Executive is to provide a framework whereby teachers can take a sensitive professional approach to sex education which will give young people the knowledge that could help protect them from abuse and make them aware of dangerous practices.

Conference supports the repeal of Section 2A and calls on the STUC Youth Committee to support both Stonewall’ s ‘ Campaign for the ‘Repeal of Section 28’ throughout the UK and the ‘ Scrap the Section’ Campaign here. Conference further urges all trade unionists to support the Scottish Executive in its drive for a decent and more equal Scotland.”

Amended Motion No.9. National Minimum Wage

"That this Conference recognises that the National Minimum Wage is one of the better policies introduced by the Government, but £3.60 is a joke. The National Minimum Wage was intended to be a statement against poverty, but it is slowly being turned into a monument to political inertia.

"Even the CBI has been forced to admit that the NMW has not had a negative effect on the economy, so it is time it was set at a decent living standard, so that people can live, not just exist. In this regard, initiatives such as the T&G's Campaign for £5 Now and GMB's 'Rage Over Age Rates Campaign' are to be welcomed and supported

"The discrimination shown to the young people is so demoralising that a young person aged 18 years old gets a different rate of pay compared to a 22 year old. The 18 year old could have a family to support and just the different rate of pay and just the same bills to pay as any other person from 22 to 65 years old.

"In addition, it is shocking that workers under 18 are simply excluded from a National Minimum Wage altogether. Many school children are working long hours, facing workplace hazards for very low wages. It is vital that the STUC Youth Committee campaigns for the National Minimum Wage to apply to them too.

"We, therefore, call on the STUC Youth Committee to campaign to get the rate set to a decent standard and abolish the discrimination against the young people."

Amended Resolution No.11 – Young People and Crime

"That this Conference welcomes the Scottish Executive's review of options for dealing with young offenders. However, Conference believes it is crucial that the Scottish Executive looks at the reasons behind young people committing crime, and addresses these, rather than condemning young people to prison or young offenders' centres. Conference believes we need to tackle social exclusion which is at the root of young people offending; and offer young people opportunities, rehabilitation, education and training, and alternative leisure activities, to deter our young people from turning to a life of crime."

"For many young people the lack of leisure and social facilities is the root of much social exclusion and criminal behaviour by these young people. The Scottish Executive needs to examine the funding of community based schemes such as after school clubs, youth clubs, sports facilities, drop in centres, advice centres and volunteer schemes.

"Conference calls for the Youth Committee to make contact with and recruit workers in community based youth and action groups building on the job protection measures contained in the Community Minister's report 'Active Communities'."

Resolution No.12 – Scotland's Public Services

"That this Conference notes that public provision of local services has a long and proud record of serving Scotland and agrees with the public ethos of democratically accountable services, collectively financed and accessible to all.

"The election of a new Scottish Parliament opens new opportunities for Scotland's Local Government. The language of dialogue and partnership will need to be built on and strengthened if vital local services that Scotland values are to be returned to the levels that people deserve and need.

"It is, therefore, astonishing that Local Government is at almost crisis point. Inadequate funding year on year has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs and service provision is cut to the bone.

"Local Government in Scotland is the primary provider of local public services, services which are crucial to the people of Scotland, and highly valued by them. These services must be of the highest possible standard and adequate finance must be available to provide them.

"There is nothing modern or new about 'rolling back' to the days of failed, private, selective, outsourced, charitable and uncoordinated services. It must be done by building a new future based on the principles of public service, responsive to the needs and wishes of the Scottish people.

"Conference calls on the Parliament to use the opportunity of a new focus and new ways of working to put together a new partnership and adequate funding which promotes a positive agenda for public services.

"Conference believes that the people of Scotland deserve the very best public services and calls on the STUC Youth Committee to liaise with an alliance of trade unions in campaigning to promote directly provided public services."

Resolution No.14 – Education and Training for Young People

“That this Conference welcomes the Government’s commitment to Lifelong Learning and initiatives such as the New Deal which offers young, unemployed people the chance of education or employment. However, Conference believes that the education system still does not give all young people the best opportunities in life. It is essential that young people do receive decent education and real training.

“Conference proposes every young person aged 16 is given four opportunities:

- continued education at school or college;
- college education for vocational studies;
- work-based apprenticeship;
- employment with real training.”

Resolution No.15 – Fair Redundancy for Young Workers

“That this Conference notes with concern that young workers can become easy targets for redundancy when an employer finds itself in a situation where jobs have to be shed. An employer may find it more efficient to terminate the employment of a young worker, because a young employee will have less service, and redundancy pay is based on a person’s age. Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to campaign for a fair and equitable redundancy system for young workers, to combat discrimination against young workers in redundancy pay.”

Resolution No.16 – Bullying and Harassment

"That this Conference notes that, in recent years, it has become recognised that bullying is a serious workplace problem. Last year, a TUC survey found that up to 5 million employees may have been bullied at work, yet, currently there is no specific legislation which deals with it.

"Bullying is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious behaviour. It makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, undermines their self-confidence and causes them to suffer stress.

"Workplace bullying carries a high cost for employers too, for example, due to: staff sickness; low workplace morale; lost resources if experienced staff leave.

"It is, therefore, imperative that the STUC Youth Committee and the STUC General Council campaign for an Act giving a statutory right to dignity at work, providing protection from bullying and harassment.

"Conference calls for such a campaign. It also calls for affiliates to campaign amongst the employers, in whose organisations they organise, to have in place policies and mechanisms on bullying and harassment to protect their employees from such behaviour."

Amended Resolution No.17 – Union Learning Fund

"That this Conference notes with concern that the Union Learning Fund, which is successfully facilitated by unions in England and Wales at present is currently unavailable to trade unions in Scotland.

"Conference believes that the introduction of similar funding in Scotland is a potentially successful recruitment tool and recognises the role of the Workplace Learner Representative in increasing activity in young members.

"Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- i) apply pressure on the Scottish Executive to introduce similar funding in Scotland; and
- ii) ensure that they play a significant role in the facilitation of any subsequent funding."

"It is essential that young workers are encouraged to join a Union in a variety of settings, i.e. voluntary work, work placements; further and higher education; and part-time and vocational employment. This Conference believes that pressure should be put on the Scottish Executive to look at opportunities for learning partnerships in the voluntary and not for profit sector.

"Conference is aware that a working group has been set up between Trade Unions and the STUC to discuss the possibility of a Union Learning Fund in Scotland. However, all Trade Unions representing voluntary sector members are not on the working group.

"Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to work with the STUC Lifelong Learning Unit to make sure young workers and volunteers in the voluntary sector are taken into account in any future bidding process for a Scottish Learning Fund."

Amended Resolution No.18 – Trade Union Education

"That this Conference believes that trade union education represents one of the central methods by which young people can be encouraged to take a wider role in the activities of their unions. Conference congratulates union education providers in Scotland for the invaluable work already undertaken in this field.

“Conference is concerned to ensure that the union education programmes that are in place are effectively meeting the needs of young members in developing skills and providing information to facilitate an increased involvement within the movement.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- conduct a review of trade union education courses and materials by providers in Scotland
- conduct a survey of young Trade Union members across all affiliates to identify their specific interests and training needs
- prepare a report to the STUC Youth Conference in 2001 setting out their findings and proposals for future provision.”

Composite B (Covering Motion Nos.1 & Amendment, 19 & 21)
Respect at Work – Developing Young Members

"That this Conference recognises and fully welcomes the ' Respect at Work' Campaign currently being driven by the STUC Youth Committee.

"Conference further welcomes the increase in profile that the Campaign achieved amongst lay activists at Annual Congress 2000.

“Conference believes that trade unions must move with the times. We must demonstrate to people that being part of a trade union adds value to their lives. Union membership has started to increase for the first time in almost 20 years. New legislation has been introduced, with 26 new rights. It is now the time that we must step up our campaign to bring the union into every workplace and make it part of people' s lives.

"We must encourage more young people to join and become more involved with their chosen union, so that we can make sure we can drag the trade unions into the 21st century. We must be more pro-active and reflect the world of work and people' s lives as they change.

"Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- i) continue to educate young people about their rights at work;
- ii) continue to promote the ' Respect at Work' Campaign; and
- iii) produce and present a detailed report to the General Council Executive Committee about specific ways of meeting the challenges facing the Movement in activating young people.

"Conference believes that the most effective way of recruiting young workers to join trade unions is to harness the skills and talents of our existing young members and channel them into recruitment and organisation.

"Conference is deeply concerned about the lack of attendance at STUC young members' training events organised by the Youth Committee and recognises the difficulties experienced by the Committee in reaching out to young members effectively in its efforts to encourage young people to promote trade unionism in schools and colleges. Conference acknowledges that this is often difficult to achieve and a slow process. Conference calls on the STUC and affiliates to support the Youth Committee in its endeavours and continue to encourage young trade unionists to get involved in this valuable work.

"Conference also calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- i) urge all affiliates to develop networks, that are conducive to improving attendance at the young members' training events; and
- ii) encourage all affiliated officers with young member remits to meet with the Youth Committee to assist in structuring appropriate guidelines for increased young member activity.

"If we are to increase Union membership amongst the under 26s, we must do so in an appropriate manner. Conference agrees this means providing the tools and facilities for existing young activists to recruit young members.

"Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to provide formal advice and organising literature to activists, representatives and affiliated officers with responsibility for young members.

"Conference calls on the Youth Committee to investigate the possibility of producing joint recruitment publicity amongst affiliates. Each contributing Union should have an amount of material dedicated and branded for use by that Union."

Amended Resolution No.20 – Political Activity of Young People

"That this Conference is concerned at the low level of young people's membership of political parties. Without more young people getting involved, there is a danger that there will be a membership crisis in the next few years and that issues of concern to young people in Scotland will not be addressed. Conference calls on the STUC to work with the Scottish Labour Party Youth Campaigns Committee and other youth organisations to identify the reasons for young people not becoming politically active.

"Conference further call on the Youth Committee to incorporate their findings in a report and use this to develop a strategy for encouraging young people to get involved in politics and to actively become involved in political parties and to use their votes in all democratic elections."

Motion No.13 – Youth Rate of the Minimum Wage

"That this Conference welcomes the introduction of the minimum wage as a major step forward in the fight against poverty pay. However, we believe that the minimum wage will not be fully effective unless it applies to all workers.

"We believe that the rejection in February 2000 of the recommendation of the Low Pay Commission to pay the adult rate of the minimum wage from 21 is a backward step and calls on the Government to extend the full adult rate of the minimum wage to all workers aged over 18, as all fair employers already do.

"16 and 17 year olds are also entitled to a fair wage. They need to be paid a decent rate to ensure that teenagers are not employed in preference to older workers. We, therefore, call upon the Government to introduce a rate of 90% of the minimum wage to apply to all 17 year olds and 80% to 16 year olds in line with the practice of many employers."

BALLOT RESULTS

a) Scottish TUC Youth Committee

1. General Seats

Leigh Bacon, Graphical, Paper & Media Union
Andrew Burns, UNISON:Scotland
Steven Jack, Manufacturing, Science & Finance
Donna McBride, Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union
Ian Munro, Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers
Stuart Quayle, Transport & General Workers' Union

2. Women' s Seats

Lyndsay McCoy, Manufacturing, Science & Finance
Fiona Smith, UNISON:Scotland

b) Young Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council

1. General Seat

Matthew Marr, GMB:Scotland

2. Woman' s Seat

Pauline Minnery, GMB:Scotland

c) Youth Conference Delegation to the Annual Congress 2001

1. General Seats

Andrew Burns, UNISON:Scotland
Donna McBride, Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union
Matthew Marr, GMB:Scotland

2. Women' s Seats

Leigh Bacon, Graphical, Paper & Media Union
Lyndsay McCoy, Manufacturing, Science & Finance
Pauline Minnery, GMB:Scotland

SPECIAL SPEAKERS

Liz Elkind, President, STUC
Janet Kewley, Chair, STUC Women' s Committee
Stuart Clark, Chair, Scottish Labour Party Youth Campaigns Committee
Georgia Cruickshank, Chair, STUC Black Workers' Committee
Mandy Telford, President Elect, National Union of Students (Scotland)
Wendy Alexander, MSP, Minister for Communities
Brian Wilson, MP, Scotland Office Minister of State
Bill Speirs, STUC General Secretary

VISITORS

Eric Juncker, CGT, France

Laura Pelay, Avalot, Spain
Montsserat Ruiz, Avalot, Spain

Roberto Alcantara, CONC, Barcelona
Maria Cinta Suarez, CONC, Barcelona

Ian Anderson, North Lanarkshire Council
Chris Biggam, North Lanarkshire Council
Katrina Greig, North Lanarkshire Council
Steven Kidd, North Lanarkshire Council

Leanne Parker, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Raj Jethwa, TUC Youth Officer

Darren Dupre, Wales TUC

SATURDAY, 1 JULY

Workshops on Scottish Parliament Committees

1. Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament:
Leader - Steven Jack
2. Social Inclusion Committee of the Scottish Parliament:
Leader - Leigh Bacon
3. Education, Culture & Sport Committee of the Scottish Parliament:
Leader: Matthew Marr
4. Local Government Committee of the Scottish Parliament:
Leader - Barrie Grunewald

Open Panel Debate with Chairs/Representatives of Scottish Parliament Committees

Panellists:

Kate MacLean MSP, Chair, Equal Opportunities Committee

Margaret Curran MSP, Chair, Social Inclusion Committee

Mary Mulligan, MSP, Chair, Education, Culture & Sport Committee

Bristow Muldoon, MSP, Representative, Local Government Committee

SUNDAY, 2 JULY

Workshops

1. Lifelong Learning: Leader - Dec McGrath
2. Getting Active in Your Union: Leader - Katrina Murray
3. Respect Campaign: Leader - Mandy McDowall
4. School Visits: Leader - John Park

Open Panel Debate on How Best to Attract Young People Into Trade Unions

Chair: Tracey White, STUC Assistant Secretary

Panellists: Sandy Boyle, STUC General Council
Darren Dupre, Wales TUC
Raj Jethwa, TUC Youth Officer
Leanne Parker, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Emma Phillips, UNISON

Jimmy Waugh Memorial Trophy

This year, the Jimmy Waugh Memorial Trophy was presented to Emma Phillips, UNISON.