

# **SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

## **2001 ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE**

# **D E C I S I O N S**

## **Resolution No.1 - Global Economy**

“That this Conference notes that the existence of a truly global economy is now widely accepted. Economic activity is no longer limited by the boundaries of the nation state. The total mobility of capital and its unfettered activity across the globe has diminished the extent to which individual nation states can regulate the activity of transnational capital within their boundaries. While it is argued that ultimately everyone benefits from trade, at local, national and international levels, it is clear that the benefits of trade are distributed neither fairly nor equally. The effects of globalisation can be seen in the erosion of wages and working conditions in the countries of the North and South, with the inevitable consequence of increasing poverty and inequality among workers.

“In the era of global capital the need for global solidarity is ever greater. Globalisation means that now, as never before, it is even more important that trade unionists work together as a truly international force to fight for the recognition that workers’ rights are human rights. This resolution calls upon this Conference:

- to reaffirm its commitment to international work;
- to offer solidarity to sister trade unions in their struggle around the world whenever possible;
- to build partnerships with organisations such as War on Want to campaign for core labour standards;
- to examine how union assets and the pension funds of members might be used in a socially responsible way to promote workers’ rights around the world;
- to support calls for a Tobin Tax on currency speculation to calm the financial markets and reduce the impact of global gambling on some of the poorest people in the world;
- to investigate bringing the global dimension into union training events and all relevant publications;
- to encourage members to support campaigns tackling issues of globalisation.”

“This Conference believes that this will provide a raft of measures which will help address the inequalities which globalisation has made worse.”

## **Resolution No.2 - Sectarianism**

“That this Conference recognises that just as discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality poisons society, religious sectarianism is just as destructive a force.

“Conference welcomes initiatives such as ‘Nil By Mouth’ which serve to educate the public of the dangers of sectarianism and offers such bodies its support.

“However, while noting this, Conference also recognises that initiatives such as ‘Nil By Mouth’ alone will not eradicate the problem. Civic Scotland, including the churches and the government also have a major role to play.

“Conference further notes that while this issue is most commonly highlighted and is thought as being a uniquely Catholic-Protestant, West of Scotland problem this is not always the case and affects all religions across all of Scotland.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the Youth Committee to lobby the Scottish Parliament to pay greater attention to this area, and in light of Donald Gorrie’s motion to Parliament on this issue, set up an independent inquiry to examine ways in which this problem can be best addressed.”

### **Amended Resolution No.3 - Multinational Employment**

“That this Conference notes with concern the decision of Motorola to close its factory in Livingston. It further acknowledges that this is not the first instance of a multinational company closing its factories in Scotland and the rest of the UK due to the limited employment protection offered compared to continental Europe.

“Conference recognises, in spite of this, that employment created by multinational firms has great significance in Scotland and so attracting these firms in the first instance is an important feature of Scotland’s economic development.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the government to implement the following schemes

- attach stricter conditions to any grants given to multinational firms to persuade them to locate to Scotland
- implement employment legislation akin to that which continental workers in countries such as France and Germany enjoy
- ensure that the European Union Directive on Workers’ Consultation Rights is implemented as swiftly and effectively as possible.”

## **Resolution No.4 - Traditional Industries – Young Workers**

“That this Conference notes the decline in traditional manufacturing industry in Scotland. However, it is important that this decline is stemmed and traditional engineering and manufacturing industries are encouraged to develop and diversify.

“Conference believes that it is important that young people see that Scotland' s traditional industries can offer opportunities to them, and can give new and exciting career paths for them to follow.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- investigate the opportunities that are available for young people in traditional industries;
- work with affiliates, the Scottish Executive and the Westminster Government to ensure opportunities for apprentices, training and development is encouraged;
- encourage young people into apprenticeships and training to develop themselves; and
- help young people to be involved with and develop Scotland' s traditional industries as they diversify and develop for the future.”

## **Comp A (motions 5 & amend & 6) Short-Term and Temporary Contracts**

"That this Conference is concerned at the increasing mis-use by employers of short-term, fixed-term, temporary contracts, zero hours contracts and agency workers, to deny employees access to conditions of employment enjoyed by permanent employees.

“Conference believes that these contracts deny basic employment rights to those who are placed on them and undermine the terms and conditions of other workers on more secure contract arrangements.

“Conference urges the STUC to:

- make temporary and agency workers aware of new rights under the ‘Fixed Term Contracts (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations’
- campaign against the use of zero-hour contracts
- call for a change in legislation so that all workers have employment rights from day one of employment.”

## **Resolution No.7 - Protecting Public Services**

“That this Conference acknowledges the vital role that Public Services play in Scotland. Conference is concerned that the present increases in private finance initiatives and public/private partnerships, on the back of years of under investment in Scotland’s Public Services, will lead to deterioration in the services that are provided.

“Conference believes that the provision of public services should be based on the following principles:

- Democratic accountability in planning and delivering local services.
- Effective delivery of services by well trained, directly employed staff.
- Adequate funding to ensure the high quality delivery of modern services.
- Equality of access for all
- Protection of pay and working conditions for all Public Sector staff in order to bring to an end ‘two-tier’ workforces.
- Partnership at work between, Government, Employers, Service Users and Trade Unions to ensure the continuing improvement of Public Services.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

1. Mount a campaign supporting the Provision of Direct Public Services, by well trained, directly employed staff, working in partnership with their service users.”

## **Comp B (Motion 8 & amend &13) Protecting Young Workers**

“That this Conference notes that the government is currently consulting on the possible implementation of a new EU Directive regulating the working hours of young workers. While we welcome the measures contained in the Young Workers Directive, we note that, due to the weak enforcement of domestic law and policy aimed at protecting the social, economic and human rights of children in employment, many children are still inadequately protected in the labour market.

“Conference is concerned that, in it’s present form, the Directive could still allow employers to seek individual “opt-outs” from limitations in the length of the working week and that clauses in it could permit flexibilities or “derogations” from other aspects of the regulations on the basis of “operational requirements” or “foreseeable surges of activity” etc.

“Conference believes that the inclusion of such clauses undermine the improvements that the Directive could bring and recognises that thousands of working children in this country are exposed to unacceptable health and safety risks, long and unsociable hours, and irreconcilable pressures between work, study and family life.

“Conference calls on the STUC to campaign for the removal of opt-outs and derogations from this proposed legislation and calls on the UK Government to develop a coherent legal and policy framework to protect children and young people in the workplace. This should cover a minimum wage for all young workers, health and safety, working time, and training and support for young workers.”

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to campaign for every local authority to employ at least one child employment specialist to implement and enforce protection laws. In addition, we ask that the Youth Committee continue campaigning for all those under 18 to be covered by the National Minimum Wage.”

### **Amended Motion No.9 - Minimum Wage**

“That this Conference acknowledges that the introduction of the National Minimum Wage is one of the most significant achievements of the Labour government and welcomes the moves, announced in the recent Budget, to increase the minimum wage level.

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

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC to mount a campaign for an increase in the National Minimum Wage to at least £5 an hour, and the abolition of the youth rate.”

## **Resolution No.11 - Young People and Lifelong Learning**

“That this Conference supports and recognises the significance of the development of the Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) and the opportunities that it brings.

“We also recognise the wider Scottish Executive Lifelong Learning initiatives that are becoming a part of every day life in Scotland. We believe that use of initiatives, such as ILAs in SULF projects and the promotion of learning centres can be very effective recruitment and retention benefits for trade unions.

“However, we are concerned about the lack of participation by young people in these initiatives. Many young people after leaving school participate in a minimal amount of vocational training and neglect a positive start to learning in the workplace. This agenda can fill the obvious gap.

“We call for the STUC, through its Lifelong Learning Unit, to encourage trade unions submitting bids for SULF projects to target young people in the workplace.

“Additionally we call on the STUC Youth Committee to raise the awareness of the benefits of the learning agenda to young trade union activist, members and potential members, perhaps by holding a stand-alone seminar on the subject.”

## **Resolution No.12 - Violence at Work**

“That this Conference believes that violence, physical or verbal, should not be tolerated at work. We have a right to work without threat or fear of harassment. We want Zero Tolerance in the workplace.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Youth Committee to campaign to:

- a) raise awareness of Zero Tolerance amongst young workers;
- b) harness the influence of the STUC to achieve Zero Tolerance policies in the workplace;
- c) campaign with all appropriate organisations for positive Government policy on Zero Tolerance.”

## **Resolution No.14 - Asylum Seekers**

“That this Conference supports the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, and is unable to endorse the current 1998 Act.

“We strongly disagree with the treatment of genuine Asylum Seekers and are concerned about their treatment by this Government and Local Authorities.

“We believe that those searching for refugee status should have an acceptable standard of living and be given support from the Government and Local Authorities.

“It is appalling that those in search of safety are placed in random communities with no support and a massive language barrier; and this Government insists on forcing Asylum Seekers into real poverty traps with the offer of vouchers and basic benefits.

“We call on this Government to review the Asylum Seekers Act, and to allow these people to actively seek real employment, and to receive hard cash for real work.”

## **Amended Motion No.15 - Young People, Democracy, and Lowering the Voting Age**

“That this Conference notes current polling research, and electoral statistics that show that young people are less likely than older people to exercise their democratic right to vote.

“It is important that young people are involved in the democratic process, and are encouraged to have a stake in the society in which they live.

“Young people can get married at the age of 16, can work at the age of 16, can pay taxes at the age of 16, can smoke tobacco at the age of 16, and can legally engage in sexual activity at the age of 16. However, at the age of 16 people cannot vote.

“Conference urges the STUC Youth Committee to:

- ⊗ campaign to encourage young people to participate in democratic elections;
- ⊗ encourage political parties to recognise young people and their interests and well being, in their policy formulation;
- ⊗ do what it can to raise awareness of the age disparity in the voting system;
- ⊗ and to begin to campaign to lower the voting age to include young people aged 16 and over.”

## **Emergency Resolution No.1**

“That this Conference believes that the universal provision of free, nutritional school meals, is a key route to tackling poverty and social exclusion in Scotland, as well as being an effective public health measure for promoting healthy eating habits and long-term good health, among all Scotland’s school children.

“Conference therefore requests that the Scottish Parliament make provision for free nutritional meals, including the re-introduction of free milk, in schools under the management of local authorities; and for connected purposes.

“Conference further calls on the Youth Committee to lobby MSPs on this issue and promote the campaign across the Trade Union Movement, as well as supporting the Public Petition on this from the STUC Women’s Committee, which was launched at the start of July.”

(WITHDRAWN)

**Amendment to Motion No.10 – Young Workers and the National Minimum Wage**

*Last paragraph, line one, delete “a” and insert “the”*

(DEFEATED)

**Motion No.10 - Young Workers and the National Minimum Wage**

“That this Conference congratulates the Labour Government on introducing the national minimum wage.

“Conference recognises the importance of the national minimum wage in ensuring that work pays and understands its contribution to helping people off benefits and back into work.

“Conference notes that the introduction of the national minimum wage did not cause job losses, as predicted by the Tories, and we celebrate the fact that unemployment has now reached a 25-year low of under 109,000.

“Conference in particular welcomes the efforts made to tackle youth unemployment, but notes with concern that nearly 60,000 16 and 17 year olds are in work in Scotland and not protected by the national minimum wage.

“Conference, therefore, calls upon the General Council to campaign for a national minimum wage for all 16 and 17 year olds in work and for the adult rate to apply from the age of 18 years.”