



SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

**2002 ANNUAL STUC
BLACK WORKERS CONFERENCE:
PERTH**

CONFERENCE DECISIONS

Resolution No.1 - National ID Cards

“That this Conference notes:

- * the UK Government’s current consultation on the introduction of ‘entitlement cards’ as a form of National ID card
- * the Home Secretary’s enthusiasm for such a scheme following the tragic events of 11 September and as a means of preventing the rising number of ID thefts, using as justification
- * the lack of written constitution of the UK that sets out the boundaries of Government involvement in private citizens’ lives
- * that the UK Government has already used the ‘National Security/Public Safety’ get out clause of the current human rights legislation.

“Conference believes:

- that every member of UK society should be entitled to access to public services without being forced to display a National ID Card
- that any National ID card scheme, if introduced, should not be compulsory and the cost of such a scheme should not be at the expense of the delivery of public services, or to individuals who participate in such a scheme
- that there should be no extension of either police or Government powers to enforce such a scheme
- that the UK Government should be subject to the same provisions of the Human Rights Act as any other public body
- that there is a real danger of ID cards being used to further discriminate against those who are Black/minority ethnic.

“Conference resolves:

- * to mandate the Black Workers’ Committee to write a formal report to the UK consultation exercise on this issue outlining our concerns
- * to campaign against a compulsory system of enforced national identification.”

Amended Resolution No.2 - Making Anti-racism Work in Scotland

“That this Conference is alarmed at the recent election results in Northern England which resulted in the election of a number of BNP Councillors in towns where civil unrest had been provoked by far-right organisations in the Summer of 2001. Racists had targeted these areas with the intent of dividing communities and stirring hatred against minority populations. The situation is not dis-similar to that in Sighthill, Glasgow, where a Kurdish asylum seeker was murdered, and where it is now rumoured that the BNP plan to stand in the local elections next May.

“Conference notes that the communities targeted by these far-right and fundamentalist organisations are among the most socially deprived in Britain, but in most cases it is the black residents of these areas who suffer disproportionately in terms of unemployment and social exclusion.

“Conference agrees that complex issues need to be addressed if these problems are to be resolved. In this connection, the report from Sir Herman Ouseley on ' Community Pride, not Prejudice' which resulted from a longterm study of growing race segregation in Bradford, sets out an agenda for reform which deserves serious consideration and has wider application. In particular, the report highlights the need for leadership from those committed to and inclusive of anti-racist society.

“Conference agrees that the Trades Union Movement is in a unique position to seek to bring together communities and fight the menace of the far-right and fundamentalists. Conference, therefore, urges the STUC General Council and all affiliates to give serious consideration to the Ouseley Report and examine (in conjunction with the Black Workers' Committee, the local communities and anti-racist organisations) how the Trade Union Movement can take a lead in building an inclusive anti-racist society based on equal outcomes and mutual respect in Scotland and throughout the UK.

“Conference deplores the politics of the BNP and similar fascist organisations which are incompatible with the principles of the Trade Union Movement.

“Conference commits to support affiliates who deny membership or expel from membership, members of the BNP or other fascist organisations.

“Conference asks that the General Council report back to the 2003 Black Workers' Conference on the actions they have initiated in response to this issue. “

Composite A (Covering Motion Nos.3,4,5,6 & 8) Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

“That this Conference welcomes the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which applies to the employment policies and practices of public sector bodies, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal. Furthermore, Conference welcomes the commitment to developing codes of practice for relevant public bodies

“Conference however, notes with concern that the provisions of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 is limited to public authorities. This means that individuals will attain different levels of employment protection dependent on whether they work in the public or private sector.

“Conference also notes that Trade Unions do not fall within the scope of the current provisions. Conference calls on the STUC to adopt the provisions on a voluntary basis. Further, Conference believes that all employers, including the Trade Unions, should be included in the legislation.

“As the Government has publicly stated that it wishes to create a just, fair and inclusive society, Conference calls on the Government to extend the provisions of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 to the private and voluntary sectors, particularly as there is a lack of clarity about whether the Act will automatically extend to private organisations conducting contracted-out public duties/services, and given the fact that many voluntary organisations are funded by public donations.”

“Conference is concerned that there is a lack of adequate and targeted resources and training available, which may undermine the implementation of the new codes of practice. Furthermore Conference believes that the STUC and all affiliates have a key role to play in negotiating and delivering the race equality schemes that are required by the Act. Conference is concerned that unless Union members are actively involved with the employers in the process of developing action plans to combat institutional racism the implementation of the Act could become a tick box exercise.

“Conference recognises that, as a result of the European Race Directive, the United Kingdom (UK) race relations legislation will have to be updated by 2003 to include the reversal of the burden of proof and the ability to take some form of representative actions. Conference is concerned that not all Trade Unionists are aware of European equal rights legislation and how it relates to UK legislation.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Black Workers Committee to work with the STUC General Council and affiliates to:

- produce a negotiating guide on the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- be fully involved in the development of relevant Codes of Practice in Scotland and in assisting the implementation of the practical guidance therein;
- collate and disseminate examples of best practice to all affiliates - public and private sector - so that every opportunity to work in partnership with employers is fully utilised in the equality proofing of all employment practices;
- campaign for extending the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act to the private and voluntary sectors, especially in relation to a duty to promote race equality;
- campaign to ensure union representatives be actively involved in the establishment and implementation of race equality schemes which incorporate race equality in all policies and service delivery by public authorities;
- urge that ethnic monitoring be reviewed and improved to ensure that it meets the standards set out in the CRE Code of Practice Guide on Ethnic Monitoring;
- call for the Code and Guide to be used by affiliates to negotiate improved race equality practices in the private and voluntary sectors;
- recommend that all results of ethnic monitoring, subsequent investigations and corrective actions are published and made public;
- Campaign for the Government to:
 - i) provide adequate funds available to enable public sector employers to meet their obligations under the Act;
 - ii) establish a minimum standards framework in order to provide a consistent approach in the way that the Act is applied;
 - iii) extend the Race Relations (Amendment) Act to all employers regardless of the sector or number of employees in any new or revised race relations.”

Amended Motion No.7 - Racial Equality Councils

“That this Conference notes with concern the present state of race relations in Scotland. An increase in reported racially motivated crime and continuing discrimination in employment, housing, and the receipt of public services indicate the need for immediate and long-term efforts to guarantee social justice for all residents of this country.

“Toward this end, Conference agrees that the work of the Commission for Racial Equality must continue through local structures at local levels throughout Scotland. Dedicated staff trained in safeguarding and promoting racial equality must be accessible to all.

“These local structures (and staff) must concentrate their efforts on dealing with anti-discrimination case work and explicit anti-racist campaigning, and must, therefore, be (and be seen to be) independent from those agencies their clients may wish to complain about.

“Without the assistance of these local organisations, many victims of racial harassment and discrimination would not be able to seek redress either through mediation or the courts. Provisions under the new Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 require public bodies, and those providing services to them, to become proactive in promoting racial equality, thereby significantly strengthening existing legislation. Conference notes that this inevitable increased demand must be met by appropriate structures established locally to provide support and educational services.

“Conference welcomes initiatives undertaken to restructure existing organisations funded by the CRE into a better co-ordinated central network of local staff all working to the same objectives and, therefore, calls on the Scottish Trades Union Congress, its affiliated Trade Unions and the Black Workers’ Committee to:

- a. work with the Commission for Racial Equality to develop new or enhance existing local structures to provide advocacy services to those seeking redress of discrimination and to campaign against racism, utilising public education initiatives and other appropriate means; and
- b. petition the Home Secretary for additional funding to support the work of these local structures in Scotland.”

Resolution No.9 - Racism in the Workplace : Survey of Affiliates

“That this Conference notes there is still a concern that institutionalised racism can be found in some areas of working life.

“Whilst recognising that much work has been done by affiliates in encouraging black members to play an active role within the Union’s structure, it is time to assess and analyse how much progress has been made.

“A survey of affiliates should be undertaken to ascertain what role black members play in their respective Unions as well as what services are offered to black members.

“It will be the aim to report back a set of recommendations to ensure all affiliates adopt best practice.”

Resolution No.11 - Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill

“That this Conference welcomes the move by the Westminster Government to finally end the humiliating and demeaning voucher system for asylum seekers. However, Conference is alarmed by the Government attempts, along with other EU member states, to link the war against terrorism to the war against human trafficking and the need for a deterrent asylum system. This approach has led to asylum seekers being stigmatised as criminals and potential terrorists and having their basic human rights trampled on.

“Conference is appalled by many of the proposals published by Government in the White Paper "Secure Borders, Safe Haven" and in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill that once again seeks to further restrict the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. These proposals include:

- 1) The introduction of a bio smart card for asylum seekers;
- 2) Asylum seekers being forced to live in accommodation centres;
- 3) The continuation of mandatory dispersal;
- 4) The introduction of mandatory English tests as a prerequisite for citizenship;
- 5) The introduction of a one-stop appeal mechanism;
- 6) The removal of the right to appeal against removal directions;
- 7) The introduction of provisions to deport children who have been given leave to remain once they have reached 18 years of age;

- 8) The damaging proposals to exclude children of asylum seekers from the mainstream education system;
- 9) The extension of powers to stop, search and arrest asylum seekers.

“Conference believes such draconian measures are not compatible with the spirit of the 1951 United Nations Convention on refugees and further undermines the fairness and dignity with which refugees and asylum seekers should be treated.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Black Workers Committee to work with the STUC General Council and affiliates to campaign against the latest Nationality Immigration and Asylum Bill.”

Resolution No.12 - Minors & Asylum Applications

“That this Conference notes that unaccompanied minors seeking asylum face exceptional difficulties and agrees that the Government urgently needs to do some joined up thinking to ensure that refugee children are treated compassionately.

“Many of these children have experienced or witnessed unimaginably horrific situations. They are, therefore, vulnerable when they reach the UK and will not always have the requisite documentation proving their age. They should not be detained in adult institutions as a result of any dispute about their age.

“Conference notes that where minors are granted exceptional leave to remain in the UK, this leave may be subject to review once they attain the age of 18. At this age it is possible for a decision to be taken to repatriate individuals where it is felt that the circumstances leading to the original asylum claim no longer exists.

“Conference accepts that even though circumstances may have changed in a refugee’s former homeland, it should not automatically be viewed fair to repatriate an individual, particularly where they are settled and wish to remain in the UK.

“In these circumstances, this Conference calls upon the Government to adopt the following policies:

- (a) in relation to disputes concerning age – the burden of proof should be on the Immigration Officer to provide proof that the applicant is over the age of 18;

- (b) in relation to repatriation all prevailing circumstances should be considered taking into account the changed circumstances as a result of becoming settled in the UK socio-economic and political structure of the former homeland and family circumstances, etc. of the refugee prior to any decisions being taken about repatriation.”

Resolution No.13 - Media

“That this Conference recognises the role of the media as both a negative and positive force in society and commends those sections of the media which work assiduously to combat negative and racist images.

“Conference condemns irresponsible media portrayal of black/ethnic minority people, including asylum seekers, which fuels prejudice, hatred and religious intolerance. In particular, Conference condemns coverage in the aftermath of the tragic events of 2001 which seeks to associate all followers of Islam with terrorism.

“Conference calls on the STUC Black Workers’ Committee to work with affiliates to combat such negative images and promote a more balanced view.

Resolution No.14 - Education

“That this Conference recognises the importance of the provisions within the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act, 2000 to ensure equality of opportunity to education for all young people. Conference notes that education is a devolved power under the terms of the Scotland Act, 1999.

“Conference recognises the excellent work undertaken by local authorities, schools and other agencies in trying to combat racism while providing essential services, such as education for asylum seekers’ and their children.

“Conference is concerned, however, that sections 31 and 34 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill may operate contrary to these aims of equality.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Black Workers’ Committee to work with affiliates to support the right of all children in Scotland to be provided with school education in terms of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act and other appropriate education legislation.

Resolution No.15 - Slavery

“That this Conference recognises and welcomes the work that was achieved in Durban at the 2001 United Nations World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular the statement that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade was, and always will be, a crime against humanity.

“Whilst we recognise this British Government’s acknowledgement of this statement, they and previous Governments have refused to apologise for the atrocities that amounted to the transatlantic slave trade.

“Therefore, we call upon the STUC Black Workers Conference to support the campaign for an apology for slavery and colonialism which calls on the Government to recognise its part in these acts.

“We ask the STUC to call upon the Government to commit to developing and implementing realistic policies and provisions for reparations as recommended in the declaration and programme of action that emanated from the 2001 World Conference against racism.”

Resolution No.16 - Palestine

“That this Conference, following the statement made by the Prime Minister on the 7th April 2002 during his speech to The George Bush Senior Presidential Library College Station, Texas, which called for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, expresses the gravest concern at the escalating violence in the Middle East.

“Conference calls upon the General Council to exert the maximum pressure on the United Kingdom and Israeli Government for an immediate withdrawal from the Palestinian Territories and the implementation of all relevant UN resolutions.”

Statement Adopted About Scottish Executive Campaign Against Racism

The STUC Black Workers' Committee welcomes the announcement of the Scottish Executive that it is to launch a public awareness Campaign against racism.

The Black Workers' Committee sees the launch of this public awareness Campaign as a very important step to breaking down racist attitudes in Scotland, so that in the future racism will no longer be socially acceptable. It commends the Scottish Executive and the Social Justice Minister, Margaret Curran, for putting substantial resources into this important work and looks forward to further long-term resources being invested in order for the Campaign to achieve its objective of making Scotland a place where all its citizens are free from discrimination.

The Black Workers' Committee hopes that the Campaign will be hard-hitting and lead to an actual change in attitudes and actions. We recognise that the Scottish Executive is making an active commitment to combating racism and discrimination and look forward to working closely with the Scottish Executive on developing the next steps of this Campaign.

We call on all other organisations and political parties to join the Scottish Executive in campaigning against racism.

DEFEATED

Motion No.10 - Asylum Seekers and Refugees

“That this Conference welcomes the moves to abolish the voucher system for refugees and asylum seekers contained in the new Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill.

“However, Conference is concerned that other aspects of the Bill are intended to deter asylum seekers rather than establishing a system that is fair and just. In particular, Conference is concerned that the Bill includes:

- an increase in the number of asylum seekers detained or removed;
- the detention of asylum seekers and their children in remote detention centres;
- the exclusion of asylum seeking children from education in the school system;
- stricter limitations on grounds for appeal by asylum seekers.

“Conference calls upon the STUC to campaign against the worst aspects of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill and resolve to present the case for fair treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, including greater access to work, employment rights and education.”