



**...for Young
People's Wellbeing**

SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

69th STUC YOUTH CONFERENCE

**SATURDAY 27th &
SUNDAY 28th JUNE 2009**

DECISIONS

1. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

SECTION 1 – YOUTH COMMITTEE

Composite A (Covering Resolution Nos. 1, 13 & 14) Young Workers and the Economic Recession

“That this Conference expresses its concern at the high number of jobs being lost as a result of the current global recession and the increased threat that young workers face during economic downturns.

“Conference believes that the priority for the UK and Scottish Governments must be to avoid repeating the disastrous mistakes of the economic and social mismanagement of the 1980s and 1990s which resulted in catastrophic hardship for young people.

“Conference notes that Scotland has one of the highest levels of young people not in education, employment and training in the developed world, and is concerned that the current economic crisis presents an even bleaker outlook for young workers as UK unemployment is set to rise to 3 million.

“Young workers are already paying the price for this economic downturn. The job markets are flooded by workers who have been made redundant as a result of the global recession. This has led to fierce competition for any jobs available: jobs that in the past were traditionally filled by young workers.

“Additionally, Conference reiterates its opposition to the ongoing discrimination against young people in terms of lower levels of the Minimum Wage and benefit levels.

“The Scottish Government’s commitment to Modern Apprenticeships schemes is not being delivered and employers are not playing their part in creating apprenticeship opportunities with little positions likely to be created this year. Therefore many young workers face the prospect of unemployment or continuing in education due to the shortage of real employment opportunities for young people and discriminatory redundancy selection procedures, Minimum Wage and benefit levels.

“Conference believes the Government has done little to protect the lives of ordinary people: investing £900 billion on rescuing the banks, and that without increased efforts to save our traditional industries our international standing as a country providing talented and skilled workers will be shattered.

“Targeting fiscal measures and public spending at the most vulnerable, investment in public services and especially training, education and good housing, will ensure that the economic impact is maximized and the economy is best placed to recover from recession.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- work with affiliates to raise awareness of and highlight the particular implications of the current economic crisis on young workers;
- organise a summit on youth unemployment in Scotland, involving affiliates and youth and student groups;
- support the STUC’s campaigning priorities, including enhanced redundancy protection, review of welfare reform proposals, realistic increases in Jobseekers Allowance and other benefits to ensure dignity in the event of unemployment, and an end to discriminatory

3.

employment practices and benefit entitlements and investment in and expansion of Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE);

- ensure the UK and Scottish Governments meet their commitments to investment in skills and Modern Apprenticeships and training and from employers to protect training budgets from cost-cutting;
- increase support for research and development and investment in good quality jobs, especially in manufacturing;
- ensure political and media recognition of the positive role of an efficient and well funded public sector as a driver of the Scottish economy and especially in respect of economic and social regeneration; and
- ensure investment in economic education in schools and more support for increasing awareness about alternative economic strategies and business models including, public, social and community ownership."

Resolution No. 2 – Mental Health and Suicide

“That this Conference recognises the importance that good mental health and wellbeing in the workplace plays in today’s society. Difficult economic circumstances often leave people feeling under more pressure due to mounting bills and insecure employment. This Conference believes that young people are particularly at risk in this recession given that they are often in temporary employment, apprentices and in low paid roles. The jobs first attacked when employers seek to cut costs.

“This Conference further believes that a focus on good mental health and support for people facing difficult circumstances is essential in this time of economic uncertainty, especially for young workers.

“Mental health issues are often wrongly considered marginal issues affecting few people in society. But recent figures show that over one in four (28%) of us will experience a mental health problem at some point in our lives and nearly two thirds (61%) of us will know someone well who has experience of mental ill-health.

“Young people are particularly vulnerable to mental-ill health and this Conference is particularly concerned that suicide is currently the **biggest killer** of young people aged 18-34 in Scotland. Conference is further concerned that the suicide rate in Scotland is the highest in the UK and almost three out of every four suicides are by men.

“This Conference therefore calls on the Youth Committee to:

- continue working with the Samaritans to develop their Suicide and Self-harm information pack for young people and to develop their DEAL programme in Scottish schools;
- work with the General Council to raise the profile of suicide prevention, and positive mental health in Scottish society; and
- work with the General Council to promote wellbeing and a healthy work-life balance in workplaces across Scotland.”

Resolution No. 3 – Unions into Schools and Colleges

“That this Conference recognises the excellent work which the STUC Unions into Schools and Colleges projects have delivered. These projects deliver information on trade unions and employment rights to college students and school pupils, many of whom are working at the moment. For many young working students, this is the first time they have met a trade union rep, and it is a welcome opportunity to dispel myths on trade unions.

Issues for part-time working students such as not receiving holiday pay, holidays and contracts of employment consistently come up during these sessions and by increasing working students' knowledge, these sessions have helped to empower young people with increased awareness of their employment rights.

“Conference believes that when young people enter the workplace they are potentially at their most vulnerable, with a less developed knowledge of employment rights than those who have been there for longer. This lack of knowledge is a key issue for the trade union movement to address, both to prevent employers taking advantage of young workers, and also to encourage young workers to protect those rights by joining and becoming involved a trade union.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- continue to support the Unions into Schools/Colleges projects;
- encourage affiliates to recruit more reps to talk to young people in their local area in colleges and schools; and

- work with the NUS to promote employment rights information to students in FE colleges.”

SECTION 2 – EQUALITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Amended Resolution No. 4 - Alcohol

“That this Conference notes the recent efforts by the Scottish Government to restrict off-license alcohol purchases by 18 – 21 year olds as part of a long-term strategy to tackle Scotland’s often-traumatic relationship with alcohol.

“Despite failing to receive Parliamentary support for the proposal to ban off-license sales to under 21s, the Scottish Government is continuing to push the measure through by the back door by giving the powers to local authorities. We note that also included in that measure is a proposal to enact a minimum price per unit of alcohol of 40p which will mean that on average a bottle of wine will cost no less than £4.00.

“Conference believes that the Scottish Government has not fully justified the proposed restrictions to off-license sales and that tighter enforcement of the existing legislation is what is actually needed.

“Conference also believes that a minimum price per unit will adversely affect young people in particular and does nothing to promote an attitude of legally drinking responsibly among young people either.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- work with representative organisations, including the National Union of Students in Scotland, to oppose proposals to restrict off-license purchases; and

- work with the Scottish Government to promote a strategy of education, rather than legislation in relation to alcohol.”

SECTION 3 – FAIRNESS AT WORK

Amended Resolution No. 5 - Pensions and Young Workers

“That this Conference notes that young employees in both public and private sector employment are increasingly being offered defined contribution (DC) pension schemes that are unfavourable in terms of the likely guaranteed benefits as projected to point of retirement.

In most cases this reflects the lesser contributions now made by employers. All too often this creates a two-tier system which is particularly discriminatory towards young workers, who often work alongside older colleagues on a defined benefit (DB or final salary) pension scheme, doing the same work, but with an inferior guaranteed total reward package.

“Conference agrees that since pensions are effectively deferred wages, this is unacceptable treatment of our young workers.

“Conference instructs the Youth Committee to work with the STUC General Council to identify means of correcting this disparity. Work to assist with this might include:

- identifying the extent of the disparity in both public and private sectors - if required by commissioning appropriate research;
- assisting affiliates to address the contribution deficit through existing collective bargaining processes;

- using equal pay or age discrimination legislation if and where appropriate;
- lobbying for changes to pensions legislation to ensure contribution parity with the aim of achieving fair and equal treatment for young workers; and
- continuing to defend remaining defined benefit schemes and oppose their closure to new members."

"Conference calls for a report on progress made to be presented at the 2010 Youth Conference."

Resolution No. 6 – Agencies

"That this Conference recognises that many young workers will undertake temporary working through agencies as a route to full-time employment. Conference is aware that this occurs across a range of industries and can be a useful route into full-time employment.

"Conference agrees however that too often employers use temporary, agency and casual staff to get around decent employment standards and exploit vulnerable workers. While many agencies are entirely reputable, recent reports of the activities of some scurrilous agencies and gangmasters highlight how badly temporary workers can be treated.

"Conference pledges to campaign that the agency workers agreement is implemented across all workplaces to achieve equality and respect for all agency workers."

Composite B (Covering Resolution Nos. 7 & 8) Apprenticeships

“That this Conference fully supports a Bill being brought to the Scottish Parliament that will make an Apprenticeship a right for every young school leaver across Scotland and welcome the improved opportunities the Bill will bring.

“Conference congratulates Scottish Labour on securing funding in the SNP Government’s budget for an increased number of Apprenticeships; but is concerned at the implementation of the Apprenticeship Guarantee. This Guarantee should not be a political sound bite but should provide clear, user friendly support.

“Conference further notes that various strands of Government have a key role in ensuring Apprenticeship numbers are maintained through public sector contracts.

Layers of Government with a responsibility for procurement must be proactive in ensuring high quality training across many industrial sectors.

“Conference therefore calls upon the Youth Committee and all strands of the STUC to:

- campaign for major public projects to include Apprenticeship numbers that must be met as a condition of contract;
- to lobby the Scottish Government to ensure the effective implementation of the Apprenticeship Guarantee, and

- put pressure on the Scottish Government to maintain employer led Apprenticeships so that young people have employee status throughout the Apprenticeship period.”

Amended Resolution No. 9 – Work Experience

“That this Conference recognises that work experience for pupils in Scottish secondary schools can play a significant role in shaping the perceptions of young people with an estimated 86% of S4 pupils taking part in 2007/08.

“Conference notes in response to a recently published report on work experience for pupils, that the Scottish Government is currently reviewing the traditional one-week experience. Key findings in the report include:

- due to a lack of flexibility in the system there was very little work experience targeted at pupils' interests or future career; and
- almost three quarters of the 30,000 employers participating were from the private sector with low levels of public sector involvement.

“Conference congratulates the role of the STUC in the Schools Visits Programme since 2006 and the involvement of trade union school reps who have delivered over 60 classroom visits to 2,000 school pupils. The visits have been vital in informing pupils of workplace rights as around half of young people in secondary schools are estimated to be working either part-time or on a casual basis while still in school.

“Conference therefore resolves to campaign for:

- the participation of trade unions in the work experience programme to promote the benefits of being a member of a trade union;
- the promotion of trade union lay activity within workplaces as a valuable lifelong learning opportunity for young people; and
- the incorporation of a trade union work experience option being included within the Schools Visits Programme.”

Resolution No. 10 – Minimum Wage

“That this Conference welcomes the recent 10th Anniversary of the National Minimum Wage.

“Over one million workers benefited from the last increase in the Minimum Wage; two-thirds of whom were low paid women. While taking the time to celebrate the improvements in pay the National Minimum Wage has brought, we must continue to fight for improvements in it:

- in removing the age banding which discriminates against young workers; and
- for full coverage for Modern Apprentices.

“These improvements are needed to address the age inequalities present in the National Minimum Wage.

“The STUC Youth Committee should look toward the good example recently set by Glasgow City Council on agreeing a £7.00 minimum wage for their staff. Conference also welcomes the recent statement made by UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis, in calling for a National Minimum Wage of £7.45 per hour. The case for improvements in the

National Minimum Wage is an important one, and all unions can agree that £5.73 is not a practical living wage.

“Recent calls from the CBI and other business organisations to halt Minimum Wage increases are vigorously opposed by this Conference. The STUC Youth Committee, as part of the wider STUC, should defend the National Minimum Wage against these attacks under the cover of the ‘credit crunch’.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to:

- continue to push for the removal of age discrimination in the National Minimum Wage;
- work with other interested partners to secure improvements to the National Minimum Wage; and
- support the efforts to push for a living wage for all.”

Resolution No. 11 – Age Wage Discrimination

“That this Conference welcomes the measures within the Equality Bill to tackle age discrimination. However, Conference believes that this Bill is undermined by the absence of measures to protect young people and the continuation of age discrimination in the Government’s National Minimum Wage policy.

“This Conference strongly believes that all workers who perform the same work should receive the same wage, regardless of age. This Conference rejects the argument that differential rates encourage training and development opportunities for young people as the system is abused by unscrupulous employers who exploit cheap labour without providing sufficient training.

“This Conference applauds the work that has been done on this issue by the STUC, as well as by the STUC Youth Committee, but urges the STUC to redouble efforts to put an end to the contradictory Government policy of age wage discrimination.”

Resolution No. 12 – Welfare Reform

“That this Conference opposes the UK Government’s Welfare Reform agenda as a major attack on the welfare state including:

- greatly extending the role of the private and voluntary sectors in delivering welfare services;
- abolition of income support;
- introducing a work for your benefit scheme;
- stricter sanctions on the unemployed;
- forcing lone parents and those with long-term illnesses to seek work, or lose their benefit if they refuse; and
- giving the private sector the right to bid for the work of Jobcentre Plus.

“Conference believes these proposals were unacceptable when first published, but appear even more so in the context of a major recession and that people dependent on state benefits are victims of factors outside of their control.

The Government should be focussing on providing the help and support they need, instead of penalising them and cutting their benefits.

“Conference believes that the Government should rethink its plans and introduce instead reforms to create a better welfare state and fairer society. Measures that should be adopted are:

- immediate increases in the rates of Jobseekers Allowance and other benefits;
- an end to the privatisation of Jobcentre Plus work;
- positive measures to make employers offer flexible working practices and expand the provision of affordable childcare; and
- voluntary not compulsory skills training for those who want it, with proper financial support for those able to work.

“Conference instructs the STUC Youth Committee to organise the widest possible opposition to the Welfare Reform amongst youth organisations in Scotland and work with the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform to oppose these measures.”

SECTION 5 – PUBLIC SERVICES

Resolution No. 15 – Quality Assurance Standards

“That this Conference notes that in science, the ability to produce credible, traceable and trusted data is essential. In the UK this standard is assessed by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). UKAS standards apply not only to science but across a wide range of areas, ensuring that products and services meet a required quality assurance.

“Unfortunately, universities are lagging behind industry and very few teach quality assurance as a module. As a result, laboratories across Scotland are unable to hire graduates for technical positions as they do not have enough experience of working to an accredited quality standard.

“This Conference instructs the STUC Youth Committee and the STUC to lobby the Scottish universities to implement the teaching of quality assurance, not just in science but across the board.”

Resolution No. 16 – Teacher Unemployment

“That this Conference is concerned at the number of newly qualified teachers who have successfully completed their probationary year but who cannot secure full-time/permanent teaching employment. Conference notes the financial problems facing Local Authorities at this time and the drop of approximately one thousand teachers employed in Local Authority schools in Scotland since last year.

“Conference is also concerned that the recruitment practices of some Scottish Local Authorities appear to discriminate against teachers at the beginning of their careers and may constitute discrimination on the grounds of age.

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

- raise these concerns with the Scottish Government and Scotland’s Local Authorities;

- call on the Scottish Government to ensure full delivery of its commitments on teacher numbers and class sizes; and
- campaign for a reversal of the damaging public sector cuts and for enhanced job opportunities for Scotland's, young, unemployed teachers."

SECTION 6 – INTERNATIONAL

Amended Resolution No. 17 – International Peace

"That this Conference welcomes the election of Barak Obama as US President as a positive change for young people in the USA and throughout the world.

"However, Conference believes that much needs to be done to change US foreign policy to address the serious and ongoing threats to peace and security for the next generation throughout the world including:

- addressing potential international tensions arising from the world economic downturn;
- an effective strategy for withdrawing international troops from Afghanistan; and
- holding Israel to account for its failure to meet its obligations in respect of Palestine.

"Conference re-affirms its support for a lasting peace in the Middle East based on the creation of a viable Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and for a fundamental change of US policy in South and Central America, including an end to the boycott of Cuba.

“Conference calls on the UK Government to:

- reverse its decision to deploy a new generation of nuclear weapons on the Clyde and freeing long term resources to invest in the productive economy; and
- promote action at the United Nations and European Union towards meaningful Middle East peace process.

“Conference instructs the STUC Youth Committee to:

- involve young workers in support for the General Council's campaign for boycott, disinvestment and sanctions against the State of Israel until such time as it meets its international obligations in respect of a free and viable Palestinian State;
- provide solidarity support for young workers in struggle throughout the world, particularly in the Middle East, Latin America and Afghanistan; and
- support CND Scotland in campaigning to remove nuclear weapons from the Clyde.”

Resolution No. 18 – Solidarity with Cuba - Support the Miami 5

“That this Conference congratulates the people of Cuba on the 50th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and on their achievements in providing a good standard of life, particularly in the areas of health care and education to the Cuban people. They have done this despite a strict and inhumane blockade imposed upon them by the United States of America.

“They have also done this in the face of numerous terror attacks by mainly exiled Cubans based in Miami, acting without hindrance from the American authorities and allegedly with both the knowledge and support from the FBI and the CIA. These attacks have been waged against the Cuban people for almost all of the 50 years since the Revolution and during that time have killed over 3,500 Cubans.

“In an attempt to counter these attacks, the Cuban government took measures to both inform and defend itself by sending 5 men to infiltrate the terrorist organisations. However, the men, now collectively known as the Miami 5, were arrested as a threat to US national security on September 12 1998, and have been imprisoned there ever since.

“Since their imprisonment the 5 men have been moved across States indiscriminately, often denied contact with their families, and the wives of two of the men have been denied visas to enter America to visit them for the past 7 years, under the guise that they are ‘potential threats to national security’.

“Denying prisoners’ visits from their family in these circumstances is unnecessarily punitive and contrary to standards for humane treatment of prisoners and States’ obligations to protect family life.

Amnesty International has launched a new appeal in support of the Miami 5, urging that these restrictions be reviewed, drawing the Government’s attention to international standards that stress the importance of the family and the right of all prisoners to maintain contact with their families and to receive visits.

“This Conference urges the STUC Youth Committee to:

- increase support for the campaign to ‘Free the Miami 5’;
- increase pressure on the UK Government to support the campaign; and
- raise public awareness of the Miami 5 as they are victims of a media blackout.”

Emergency Resolution No. 1 - Young Scots United Against Racism and Fascism

“That this STUC Youth Conference expresses its alarm and concern at recent newspaper reports which suggest that members of the racist and fascist British National Party have been allowed to infiltrate the Scottish Youth Parliament.

“Conference notes that these revelations follow the recent election of two BNP Members of the European Parliament in other parts of the United Kingdom, but reiterates the ongoing concern of the STUC Youth Committee about the stance of the Scottish Youth Parliament on the political affiliations of its supposedly non-political members. Conference believes that this misguided and complacent attitude has now been brought into very thorough disrepute, and calls for MSYPs to reject toleration of political extremism which seeks the promotion of hatred and ignorance amongst Scotland's young people, and seriously questions whether the Scottish Youth Parliament can be said to be operating a democratic structure which is robust in safeguarding minority communities or representative of majority youth opinion in Scotland.

“Conference asserts and believes that the vast majority of young Scots reject the hatred and ignorance of neo-Nazi parties and calls for Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to join the trades union movement in supporting a no-platform policy against racists and fascists by refusing to take their seats in the Scottish Youth Parliament until members of the BNP are subjected to open, inclusive and contested elections in which their political affiliation is made known to those eligible to vote.

“Conference this year invites those Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament who stand for tolerance, diversity and respect to join the STUC’s Annual St Andrew’s Day March and Rally Against Racism and Fascism and requests that the Scottish Government, along with local authorities, urgently review their funding and support of this organisation if its Members and Officers continue in their failure to reject political extremism in favour of a more inclusive, open and tolerant Scotland. In the interim, Conference calls upon other mainstream and representative organisations in Scotland to suspend their engagement with the Scottish Youth Parliament until such time as it has acted to reform itself and ensures fair and transparent democratic structures.

“Conference instructs the STUC Youth Committee to bring this matter to the urgent attention of the STUC General Council, affiliates, Government and other social partners, and calls for a renewed youth campaign to be established, along with other organisations, such as the National Union of Students in Scotland, against the BNP and their racist and fascist politics of hate, ignorance and fear.”

Emergency Resolution No. 2 – Fair Tips Campaign

“That this STUC Youth Conference condemns the practice of deducting tips from hospitality industry employees for the purpose of ‘topping up wages’ – an obscenity that in the 21st Century should be unlawful.

“Conference calls on the STUC Youth Committee to work with the General Council to increase awareness of the Unite – Daily Mirror ‘Fair Tips Charter’ and the Campaign’s wider objectives. Conference demands that employers in Scotland and across the UK should:

- pay all employees at least the minimum wage with 100% of tips added on top as a bonus with no hidden charges;
- reach agreement on how tips are shared with those staff directly affected;
- make no deductions from tips to cover breakages, till shortages or customer walk-outs; and
- make all rules for the distribution of tips and service charges available in writing for staff and customers on request.

“The STUC Youth Conference applauds Government rejection of business lobby pleas to delay decision that restaurants and cafes will be banned from using tips to pay basic wages from October. Conference calls for intensification of STUC political lobbying to ensure primary legislation is introduced to give workers 100% ownership rights over tips, service charges, gratuities and cover charges.”

2. ELECTION RESULTS

Youth Committee

General Seats:

Geraldine Donnelly - Community
Kieron Green - UNISON
George Lawson - Prospect
Mark Lynch - UCATT
Helen McGuigan - PCS
James O'Connell - UNITE

Women's Seats:

Jenny Roberts - UNISON
Georgina Wardrop - UNITE

Trades Union Council Seat:

There were no nominees for the Trades Union Council Seat.

Young Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council

General Place:

Mark Lynch – UCATT

Woman's Place

Georgina Wardrop - UNITE

Youth Conference Delegation to the STUC Annual Congress 2010

General Places:

Mark Lynch - UCATT
James O'Connell - UNITE

Women's Places

Geraldine Donnelly - Community
Jenny Roberts - UNISON
Georgina Wardrop – UNITE