



**SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

**2001 ANNUAL STUC  
BLACK WORKERS CONFERENCE:  
PERTH**

**CONFERENCE DECISIONS**



The undernoted Resolutions / Composites / Statement were adopted at the 2001 Annual Black Workers Conference

### **Resolution No.1. - Globalisation – Ethical Trading**

“That this Conference notes that whilst the existence of a global economy may be a reality, the apparent benefits of this are distributed neither fairly nor equally. In fact, it is clear that the effects of economic globalisation are most acutely felt in the Southern countries of the world.

“The defining principles and rules of a global economy geared to human needs must ultimately incorporate not only the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation but other agreements and policies which mark the emergence of a global civil society for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights, the multilateral agreements on the environment and the cancellation of third world debt. These rights must be recognised and enforced if global solidarity is to take precedence over global exploitation.

“Nelson Mandela reminded us that in this shrinking of the globe through the advances of communications and information technology, that it is even more incumbent upon us to become once more the keepers of our brothers and sisters no matter where they find themselves in this world. This he challenged to be one of the major political and moral tasks for government in the 21st century.

“Conference agrees to defend the democratic and trade union rights of workers on both sides of the development divide from a globalisation process which is undermining these rights while ravaging living and working conditions, public services, and the environment.

“Specifically, it calls on the Black Workers’ Committee and the STUC General Council to ensure that a truly internationalist perspective permeates all its thinking on the issues of globalisation.

“In particular, Conference calls for

- a) the Northern perspective to always be integrated with the views and issues from the South;
- b) the rights of Scottish workers to be protected, but only **ALONGSIDE** the rights of workers across the world,
- c) the STUC Black Workers’ Committee to build partnerships with other international organisations campaigning on these issues; and

d) public awareness to be raised about the dangers of globalisation.

"The concern for common good, which characterises international solidarity must never become lost in parochial or national attitudes of protection of self-interest."

**Composite A – Race Relations Amendment Act –  
(Covering Motion Nos.2,3,4 & 5)**

"That this Conference recognises the importance of the new Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which provides greater protection against racial discrimination. The Act strengthens existing legislation by covering both direct and indirect discrimination and specifically targeting the public sector. Public authorities, such as central and local government, the police, customs and excise, the prison service, the NHS, further and higher education establishments, non-departmental public bodies or any private organisation carrying out public functions are now required, by law, to:

- eliminate racial discrimination; and
- promote race equality

"That this Conference welcomes the introduction of the Race Relations Amendment Act, which imposes a new duty on public sector bodies in carrying out their functions 'to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of difference racial groups'.

"Conference notes that the duty also applies to the employment policies of public sector bodies, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal.

"However, Conference believes that the act is flawed in that:

- the Government has produced a list of public services that have a general duty to promote race equality rather than a list of exclusions;
- the Government has not included private sector companies that provide public functions in the Act, namely gas and electric industries and transport companies;
- the specific duties on employment only require public authorities to collect statistics and not to prepare a race equality employment scheme; and
- there is no specific proposal or advice to clarify the position of private sector providers delivering public functions as a result of Best Value, PFI or other forms of outsourcing.

“According to the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the new Act will force public agencies to confront racial discrimination and develop methods to overcome institutional racism. Key features are:

- The general duty requires that public bodies consider racial equality in every aspect of their work.
- Special duties may be imposed by the Home Secretary in instances where public bodies could improve general duty compliance.
- The CRE is now entitled to issue codes of practice which provide guidance to public authorities.
- The new positive duty on public authorities is enforceable and subject to inspections or audits.

“Conference recognises that as a result of the European Race Directive, the race relations legislation will have to be updated by 2006 to include the reversal of the burden of proof and some form of class action provisions.

“Conference believes that the introduction of the Act provides an opportunity for Unions to work in partnership with employers to equality proof employment practices, to eliminate discrimination and to address the under-representation of black staff within those organisations.

“Conference believes it is important that Trade Unions are aware of the implications to their sphere of work and are able to provide reliable and appropriate advice to their members.

“Conference calls on the STUC and its affiliates to continue to support the CRE through all means at their disposal to ensure compliance of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and to campaign for an extension of anti-racist legislation to include the private and voluntary sectors.”

“Conference also calls on the STUC Black Workers Committee to work with Unions, employers and the CRE to promote awareness of the new duty and to ensure that public sector bodies not only serve but reflect the racial diversity of the people of Scotland by:

- a) Organising a training day related to the RRA and the implications of the amendments and develop a training programme which Unions can adapt for their own membership.”
- b) Producing a negotiating guide on the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 that advises on the best ways of ensuring compliance with the Act and dealing with its flaws;
- b) Monitoring the progress of negotiations undertaken by individual unions on the implementation of the Act by employers;

- c) Campaigning for the changes in the race relations legislation which encompass the spirit of the European Race Directive and challenge the flaws in the general and specific duties contained in the current Race Relations (Amendment) Act."

**Composite B – Refugees and Asylum Seekers  
(Covering Motion Nos.6, 7,8 & 9)**

"That this Conference recognises the richness of multi-cultural societies and the potential contribution that refugees and asylum seekers can make to Scotland.

"Conference notes with growing alarm the rising incidence of physical attacks and abuse experienced by asylum seekers and believes that the negative coverage of the asylum issue by some sections of the Scottish media has played into the hands of those who seek to encourage racism and intolerance.

"Conference supports the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, and is unable to endorse the current 1998 Asylum Act. Conference is deeply concerned at the current treatment of people arriving in the UK seeking asylum and refuge.

"Conference welcomes the Government' s review of the system of support for asylum seekers in the UK and urges the Home Secretary to proceed urgently to implement overdue reform.

"Conference deplores the voucher system in relation to Asylum Seekers. This degrading scheme serves no other purpose than to line the profits of participating companies and to stigmatise those who must use the system. Conference calls for its replacement by full cash benefits.

"Conference opposes the forced dispersal of Asylum seekers to areas with inadequate resources to provide decent housing and social services. Asylum seekers should be given the support and the resources they need to live safely in areas they choose to live in, where they feel comfortable and may have friends and relations too.

"Conference condemns the restrictions on asylum seekers taking jobs and accessing study and notes that the Right to Work is a basic human right, which should be a right for Asylum Seekers. Work helps to give a person dignity, economic and personal independence, and helps people form valuable relationships in new communities."

“Conference calls on the STUC Black Workers Committee, General Council and affiliates to campaign alongside asylum seekers in support of basic human rights and specifically for:

- the abolition of the voucher system and the re-introduction of cash payments for refugees and asylum seekers;
- the right of asylum seekers to fully access work and study;
- an end to the policy of forced dispersal and full consultation with community groups and organisations representing refugees on the nature of community support services required;
- the closure of detention centres and a speedy, transparent and fair procedure of application for asylum that takes full account of the need for information and language assistance for asylum seekers;
- recognition of the rights of economic refugees to asylum;
- support a national STUC anti racist campaign designed to welcome refugees and asylum seekers.”

### **Amended Resolution No.10 - Making Diversity Work in Scotland**

“That this Conference notes that the riots in Northern cities in England and the recent murder of a Kurdish ‘Asylum Seeker’ in Glasgow accentuate the need to combat social exclusion and to ensure that all individuals, institutions and workplaces promote anti-racist practice, encourage mutual respect, and eliminate discrimination. The report from Sir Herman Ouseley on ‘Community Pride not Prejudice’ which resulted from a long-term study of growing race segregation in Bradford, sets out an agenda for reform which deserves serious consideration and has wider application. It also highlights the need for leadership from those committed to an inclusive anti-racist society.

“This Conference urges the STUC to give urgent consideration to the Ouseley Report and examine how the Trade Union Movement can take a lead in building such an inclusive anti-racist society based on equal outcomes for all and mutual respect in Scotland and throughout the UK.”

### **Resolution No.11 - Racism in the Community**

“That this Conference deplores the growing rise in racism and xenophobia throughout the UK which is being fuelled by the activities of the British National Party and other groups of the far right.

“Conference is concerned in particular about the levels of racism and intolerance being shown towards refugees and Asylum Seekers living in Scotland.

“Conference calls on the STUC General Council and the Black Workers’ Committee to continue to:

- i. co-ordinate the activities of Unions in tackling racism and in addressing the causes which give rise to it;
- ii. work in partnership with community groups and refugee groups;
- iii. expose and challenge the activities and views of the British National Party and other far right groups;
- iv. promote racial tolerance and defend the rights of Asylum Seekers to live with dignity and without fear.”

### **Resolution No.12 - Services to Black/Minority Ethnic People**

“That this Conference is concerned that many Black people are not receiving services to which they are entitled.

“Conference recognises that ethnic monitoring is one administrative way of determining where black people are, e.g. geographically and economically.

“Conference is concerned, however, that Ethnic Monitoring by itself is insufficient. We call upon the STUC Black Workers’ Committee to open a dialogue with the Scottish Executive relating to a possible review of Ethnic Monitoring to determine best practice and how the data is used to improve services to black/minority ethnic people.”

### **Resolution No.13 - Equalities in Higher Education**

“This Conference welcomes the support from all involved in higher education, including the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, the university employers and the unions, for the new Equality Challenge organisation.

“However, Conference remains concerned at the lack of progress in eliminating race, gender and other unlawful discrimination in higher education. Conference opposes employment practices, such as the widespread use of fixed term contracts which make it more difficult to establish and sustain equality of opportunity.

“Conference calls upon the Black Workers’ Committee and the STUC General Council to work with the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council to come up with solid and workable ideas for promoting more concerted action by higher education institutions to promote equal opportunities, with detailed monitoring and open reporting on progress. As has occurred in the case of failure to meet targets for student recruitment, financial penalties should be considered where there is persistent failure by an institution to make demonstrable progress on eliminating unlawful discrimination.”

### **Resolution No.14 - Representative Participation in Public Life**

“That this Conference calls on the STUC to support black ethnic minority candidature within the Trade Union Movement and in local government, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, national Government and European Union elections.

“There is a need to give opportunity to groups that presently have a limited public voice. Conference believes that representatives of people from various traditions will lead to greater social justice and better understanding of Britain’ s multicultural society. Black ethnic minority interests currently are focused within organisations engaged in minority issues.

“Conference agrees that the STUC and its affiliates can give leadership and direction in efforts to change the attitudes and prejudices that prevail in the UK regarding ethnic involvement in civic and political life.”

### **Amended Resolution No.15 - Counselling and Support for Victims of Racial Harassment and Discrimination.**

“That this Conference continues to express its concern and anger at the incidents of racial harassment and discrimination at work. We need to tackle discrimination and harassment. But equally we need to give support, advice and assistance to victims.

“Conference recognises that harassment and discrimination, of whatever nature, can have a devastating effect on individuals, and may cause physical, emotional and psychological health problems.

“Conference calls upon the STUC to assist affiliates to offer more practical and emotional support, counselling and advice to trade union members who are victims of racial harassment and discrimination, and to truly recognise the traumatic and destructive nature of racism to individuals and their families.

“Affiliates are also urged to give active consideration to setting up dedicated harassment advisors for members to contact when they need advice or assistance.”

### **Amended Resolution No.16 - Organisation for Black Workers**

"That this Conference notes that this is now the fifth Annual Black Workers' Conference of the STUC and congratulates all parties involved for ensuring the continuing success both of the Conference and the Black Workers' Committee.

“However, Conference acknowledges that the strength of Black self-organisation within the STUC can only be maintained if Black membership and self-organisation is strong within individual affiliates.

“Conference, therefore, notes and welcomes the current Black Workers' recruitment drive that is being led by the Black Workers' Committee and asks all STUC affiliates to fully embrace this campaign. Conference also calls for greater recognition to be given to the work of individual Black Members' groups within STUC affiliates, which might include reports from each such group in the Annual Report to the Black Workers' Conference and the STUC Congress, and an annual seminar for elected officers of Black Members groups to come together and share experiences.

“Further, Conference calls on the Black Workers' Committee to begin an immediate dialogue with those affiliates without appropriate structures for Black self-organisation to consider what support might be available to assist.”

## **Amended Resolution No.17 - Equality in Trade Unions**

“That this Conference congratulates the TUC’s Stephen Lawrence Task Force, whose work has just concluded, on producing a wide range of recommendations for action and change, both within and outside the Trade Union Movement.

“Conference also supports the proposals arising from the Task Force and supported by the General Council of the TUC for changes to the TUC Constitution which explicitly incorporates equality objectives; and the recommendations for analogous actions among TUC affiliates, including regular equality audits, which are before the TUC Congress in September 2001.

“Conference urges all affiliates in Scotland to embrace these programmes with enthusiasm and instructs the STUC Black Workers’ Committee to provide practical help and encouragement to them in doing so.

“Conference further welcomes the decision of the STUC General Council to establish a short-life working group on mainstreaming equality within the Trades Union Movement in Scotland. Conference notes the Scottish Executive describe mainstreaming equality as ' the systematic integration of an equality perspective into the everyday work (of organisations)' but insists that:

- groups and individuals who experience inequality and discrimination must be involved in informing policy making through effective consultation mechanisms;
- different equality groups may require different sorts of analysis and specific tools;
- wider participation must be encouraged to tackle under-representation of disadvantaged and excluded groups;
- structures, behaviours and attitudes that contribute to or sustain inequality must be tackled head-on;
- positive action measures that are designed to address long-term historic disadvantages must be integral to all measures; and
- specialist equality committees, units and staff have a crucial role to play in driving, co-ordinating and supporting mainstreaming.

“Conference agrees that a two-pronged approach - specific anti-racist / race equality initiatives, combined with a longer-term strategy for mainstreaming, is the best approach to bring about meaningful changes.

“Conference calls on the STUC General Council and all affiliates in Scotland to give this matter urgent priority and to report regularly on progress made/ difficulties encountered.”

## **STUC Black Workers Committee Statement on War Against Terrorism**

The STUC Black Workers Committee expresses solidarity with all the victims of the tragic events of 11th September, which have caused such suffering for the families of so many people from a wide range of nationalities, ethnic and religious groups.

There is absolutely no justification for attacks on innocent civilians. Those that are responsible for such attacks should be brought to trial under the auspices of the UN and international justice. On the basis of this same principle, the sanctity of human life and the need for international justice, we call on the US and British Governments and their coalition partners to withdraw from their current campaign of military action against the people of Afghanistan.

This Committee believes that the governments of our world must find a peaceful solution to the situation we now face as a result of the events on 11<sup>th</sup> September. This solution must acknowledge the causes which led to such tragedy. It must acknowledge the injustices by the West against others in the past, and it must be based on international justice and respect for human rights.

This Committee is extremely distressed that the current military actions have resulted in civilian deaths and will continue to do so. These actions will not provide solutions to the conditions that feed terrorism, such as the continuing lack of a just peace in the Middle East or the desperate poverty that exists around the world. We call on the coalition governments to pull back from their current course of war

This Committee is also highly concerned that the growing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is not being properly addressed. Military action has disrupted the urgent humanitarian aid required to assist the people of Afghanistan. We find the dropping of food parcels along with bombs disturbing and cynical. We reiterate the warning of UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, that if aid does not get through before the winter period, up to 7 million Afghan civilian's lives will be lost.

This Committee calls on the US and British Governments and others involved in the current campaign to stop their military action against the people of Afghanistan.

This Committee will work for the mobilisation of the wider trade union movement against the ignorance and intolerance which has resulted in racism and racist attacks against minority ethnic communities throughout Scotland and the UK.

This Committee offers full solidarity and support to the growing Stop The War Coalition. It calls on the STUC General Council and all affiliates to adopt this position and to do all they can to actively promote it to the British Government and people.