

Unions work for women

THE 2004 STUC women's conference was held on 16-17 November at the Albert Halls in Stirling. The conference was a roaring success and the FBU delegation, observers and visitors had a fantastic time debating, networking and exposing global injustice against women.

This conference had an order paper as wide and diverse as any I have attended, if not more than most, and was chaired by Veronica Rankin (Educational Institute of Scotland).

The conference debated issues from asylum to the gender pay gap, emergency fire controls to paternity leave and had guest speakers from trades councils, MSP Malcolm Chisholm, the Cathkin High School "debating society" and the South African high commissioner Lindiwe Mabuza, to name but a few.

The FBU motions being debated by the 90 strong conference were:

- Emergency Fire Control Rooms
- Abortion Rights
- Western Sahara

All were carried unanimously.

The delegates were Ruth Winters (FBU President) Linda Shanahan (STUC Women's committee) and Janette Ferguson (Region 1 Women's Rep) Sally Harper (Region 10 women's rep). Observers were Joanne Winrow-Jones (Region 9 Womens rep) and Vicky Knight (EC member for women) and our visitor was Philippa Clarke (Ex research department and FBU sister.)

Resolutions on the BNP and Paternity Rights were also seconded by the FBU and we received resounding support in the debate created by the FBU's 'Emergency Fire Controls' motion.

Unison, in seconding this motion pledged

full support for our campaign and shared in our concerns of the proposed 500 job losses, reduction in public service and the future for regional fire services, regional government and the impact on trade unions and the workforce of the future.

The contribution of our South African sister moved and humbled the conference, each and every one of us.

She told delegates a brief history of apartheid and how the reinforced and reiterated beliefs of the South African people were: "only with the full and equal contribution of women, could a better life for all be achieved".

She talked about the oppression of South African sisters in so many different ways and for so many reasons, the chief one being to divide the strength of Black South Africa through racism, class and gender segregation.

She paid tribute to strong women worldwide – celebrating feminism and women like Sylvia Pankhurst for fighting the British struggle against racism, fascism and sexism. A truly uplifting and moving contribution.

There was an afternoon session solely on the issue of equal pay, which after a 50 year struggle attempting to achieve it was still a burning issue and high on the agenda of so many women workers. The session was enjoyed by all participants and was followed by four motions on this subject. All were passed by the conference.

The 2004 Women's STUC was a fantastic event, I would like to congratulate the women in Region 1 for their amazing input. They are a credit to the FBU. Thanks for a great two days. I hope to be invited again soon!

Vicky Knight, EC Member for Women

THE TUC Women's
Conference

was held in

Scarborough in

March 2005. The

FBU was well

represented. Below

are two emergency

resolutions

presented by the

union and carried

by the conference

**The campaign against Regionalisation of
Emergency Fire Control Rooms is one of
the most prolific campaigns this union
has ever run and
quite rightly so. In
order to maintain
its profile and
ensure the maximum**

**support for this
issue, the NWC took the following
motion to the 2005 WTUC conference
in Scarborough, which again passed it
unanimously and reiterated the TUC
and all its affiliates' support for our
campaign.**

REGIONALISATION OF CONTROLS

**This conference is aware of the
government's proposals to reduce the
number of control rooms in England
and Wales from 49 to 9 and in Scotland
from 8 to 1. Conference firmly believes
that these proposals form part of
New Labour's political agenda on
regionalisation and is in no way based
on improving the service. Conference
notes that this political policy on**

TUC