

# Fourth Irish Policy Conference of Unite

23rd & 24th May 2017

**Belfast**

## Agenda

General Secretary: Len McCluskey  
Regional Secretary: Jimmy Kelly  
Chair, IEC: Liam Gallagher





## **ECONOMY**

### **MOTION 1**

#### **Economy – Ireland North and South**

The last two years have been particularly challenging for Northern Ireland's economy. While we have officially left the recession of 2007, job-losses among our larger and higher-value added employers continue apace. As a result the average full-time wage in Northern Ireland has fallen by 5.5% over the past twelve months.

This conference calls for the incoming Northern Ireland Executive to bring forward an expansive budget with front-loaded investment in infrastructure and publicly-owned renewables generating capacity. This should include more immediate plans to deliver the second cross-border electricity interconnector, improvements to vital road infrastructure and an upgrading of the electricity distributing grid and water system. It should also include plans to future-proof our economy into with investment dedicated to extending the rail system, its electrification, an underground rail link to Scotland (to accommodate freight) and a step-change in investment in renewables generating capacity: wind, tidal and wave.

This conference notes with concern the increasing mismatch between skills and training need and demand. Funding is not being provided to support employer-led skills mechanisms but is instead being aligned with the corporate interests of skills providers. State support for upskilling and apprenticeships should be directed by Joint Boards including both employers and trade unions representing workers.

The decline in Northern Ireland productivity remains our greatest challenge economically. This is not reflective of a lowering of productivity in the manufacturing sector but the overall reduction of this sector within our economy. We call on the NI Executive to bring forward a robust Manufacturing strategy with real actions for growth, to increase investment, to develop sub-supply chains and to direct procurement contracts to grow the local economy.

This conference also notes the potential threats arising from the Brexit process as well as the need to ensure any opportunities arising are fully exploited to deliver jobs growth. Any industrial strategy for Northern Ireland should include proposals to support 'at risk' industries, safeguard jobs but also include proposals to make use of increased powers to intervene in the economy in the absence of EU state aid laws.

This conference reiterates its opposition to austerity which is reducing demand within the Northern Ireland economy, and its deep opposition to proposals to cut further the corporation tax rate to 12.5% or even lower. This is both deeply inequitable, wasteful and will not result in any significant increase in employment given the need for offsetting public expenditure reductions and the context of a global downturn in trade and investment. Instead of cutting back on public expenditure in the hope of attracting private sector investment, we call for the state to expand its involvement and activity in the economy, intervening to support key industries and grow the economy by investing in our inherent strengths and labour force.

In the Republic unemployment has fallen rapidly, wages are rising even though this is still patchy, it is at a slow-pace and concentrated among the higher-paid, deprivation rates are falling for most categories and emigration is slowing. In this context, it is vital that Unite remains relevant to the concrete needs of workers by focusing on the real drivers of economic wealth and equality, and the challenges that are mounting for the Republic's economy.

- The indigenous economy is one of the weakest in our peer group in Europe and is concentrated in low-waged, low value-added sectors. We need new, imaginative and pluralist strategies to boost native enterprise activity – especially in the export sector. This will involve the public, private and cooperative sectors and mark a sea-change from the tax-cutting, wage-cutting policies of employers. The trade union movement needs to enter the debate over 'competitiveness' with its own analysis and policies.
- Social insecurity imposes extra-ordinary costs on workers – through reduced life-quality – and the economy. The social wage is a key instrument to ensuring benefits for all workers whether through pay-related sick pay, a new universal 2nd pension model or enhanced family benefits. This would remove social uncertainty and reliance on private markets in the provision of public goods and services.
- High costs of living continue to degrade people's living standards. This can be seen in the scandalous rise in private rents in Dublin and, now, emerging in other urban areas; high costs of childcare and increasing household expenditure on health care. In these and other areas we must look at successful European models: off-the-books cost-rental accommodation in the rental sector, public and not-for-profit provision of affordable childcare and a new health social insurance programme to provide a single-tier health system, supported by employer payments.
- Low wages are a symptom of a deeper inequality – between labour and capital. We need a new national wage bargaining framework which includes the right to collective bargaining and collective sectoral bargaining, especially for low-paid and fragmented sectors. This would mean a mandatory extension of Joint Labour Committees and Registered Agreements where employers do not have veto rights.

We must confront threats to the Republic's economy. First, Brexit: the imposition of a border, the impact on firms trading into Britain and the potential for a structural currency shift has the potential to do substantial economic damage – especially in rural and border areas. This calls for a democratic cooperation between workers, employers and the Government to transform enterprise activity and develop the supports for enterprise to ensure continued activity and expansion.

The second main threat is the combination of (a) EU's proposed Common Consolidated Corporate Tax base which seeks to ensure that profits generated in a jurisdiction are taxed there (thus ending the Republic's facilitation of multi-nationals booking profits here but which are generated in other jurisdictions); and (b) the potential reform of the US corporate tax regime which could penalise multi-nationals in Ireland that export back into the US. Again, this calls for the development of a new policy to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), moving away from tax-haven type incentives and towards programmes that emphasise our infrastructure, labour skills, affordable housing costs, etc.

Many of our problems are a legacy of the austerity years but ultimately, we must move beyond just a rhetoric of anti-austerity. Unite led the debate during the recession with its programme of

investment-led stimulus and reflation; now we must lead the debate to broaden, deepen and democratise a future recovery for workers.

Irish Executive Committee

## **TRADE UNION, EMPLOYMENT & WORKERS' RIGHTS MOTION 2**

### **Workers' Rights for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Strong trade unions, with the ability to negotiate collectively on behalf of working people, are not only a cornerstone of our democracy but also essential to reducing economic inequality and promoting economic growth. Yet the rights of trade unions and of working people have been under sustained threat since the 1980s. In the United Kingdom, six Acts of Parliament were passed between 1980 and 1993 restricting trade unions' ability to take lawful industrial action. In the Republic, some of these provisions were mirrored in the 1990 Industrial Relations Act, with regard for example to secondary picketing.

The legal assault on trade union and workers' rights in the United Kingdom culminated in last year's shameful Trade Union Act – which has not yet been translated into law in Northern Ireland.

The right of workers to negotiate collectively by a union of their choice is a fundamental human right. While that right is largely vindicated in Northern Ireland, it was only partially vindicated in the Republic by the 2015 Industrial Relations (Amendment Act) which, essentially, provides a right of recourse for workers whose employer refuses to negotiate collectively with a body of the workers' choice. In effect, this means that Unite can represent an employer's workers in Northern Ireland, but may be unable to represent those working for the same employer just miles away in the Republic. In both jurisdictions, low pay and precarious work are among the challenges confronting workers and their unions.

This Conference therefore instructs the incoming Executive to campaign for:

### **Republic of Ireland**

- A legal framework within which workers can assert their right to collective bargaining as recognised by the United Nations and the European Convention on Human Rights;
- A strategy to increase the Minimum Wage to the level of the Living Wage, currently calculated by the Living Wage Technical Group as €11.50 per hour;
- An end to low hour contracts and the right of workers' to secure hours of work;
- Legislation to ensure that overtime is paid at a higher rate;
- Improved protection against unfair dismissal for workers in their first year of employment;
- Living Wage to be conditional for procurement of all public sector contracts.

### **Northern Ireland**

- Against any moves to translate the Westminster Trade Union Act into Northern Ireland law;
- In support of proposals to reverse the anti-union legislation in the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- A strategy to increase the Minimum Wage to the level of the Living Wage, currently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation at £8.45 per hour;
- The extension of collective bargaining to low-paid and fragmented sectors of the economy;

- The abolition of Zero Hours Contracts and more stringent enforcement of minimum pay legislation;
- Living Wage to be conditional for procurement of all public sector contracts;
- Equality demands that pay levels in the health sector should be the same as those Britain.

**Irish Executive Committee**

### **MOTION 3**

#### **Viking Clause**

Conference calls on Unite to campaign to secure legislation in the NI Assembly to provide additional protections for Northern Ireland workers, including extended consultation periods, increased transparency on plans, the need for conduct of economic impact assessments for large-scale redundancy proposals, extended statutory redundancy payments and the right of recognised trade unions to veto takeovers which threaten long-term employment, or to negotiate additional commitments, financial and otherwise to agree a takeover.

**Aerospace Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

### **MOTION 4**

#### **Notice Payment**

Conference calls for Unite to lobby government to seek appropriate amendments to the Redundancy Payment Acts 1967 and the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973 to ensure that where a worker is forced to give notice of intention to claim redundancy payment in respect of lay-off or short-time he/she does not lose their entitlement to notice or payment in lieu of notice.

**RI/Construction (ROI) Branch**

### **MOTION 5**

#### **The Scourge of Performance and Real Time Management on Workers' Wellbeing and Health**

Conference instructs the Irish Executive Committee and Unite leadership within the next 12 months:

- 1) Commit the Union to conduct an in-depth study into the introduction of performance and Real Time management systems into many of our workplaces
- 2) The effect these performance and information gathering systems are having on workers' mental and physical wellbeing
- 3) Agree the union's response and develop a Union wide policy based on the findings of this study

**Finance & Legal Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

### **MOTION 6**

#### **Women's Apprenticeships**

Conference supports this motion for recommendations to employers and government to include the introduction of a positive action scheme, the collecting and publishing of apprenticeships data by employers, greater availability of flexible and part-time apprenticeships, as well as increased pay and financial support for apprentices, including childcare provision and the introduction of a single national minimum wage for all age groups regardless of apprenticeship status. Conference calls on Unite to take action to make sure that women have the same chances, support and pay as their male counterparts.

**General Engineering & Manufacturing Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

## **INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**

### **MOTION 7**

#### **Manufacturing in Northern Ireland**

That this conference endorses the publication 'Joint Unite – Manufacturing NI proposals for an Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland' and commend continued campaign activities towards the goal of securing the adoption of this paper by the incoming NI Executive, following on from the very successful Unite For Manufacturing event held in Belfast in January 2017.

This conference supports the demand for an industrial strategy for manufacturing which includes measures to deliver the goal of the sector contributing 20% of Northern Ireland economic output by 2020. Alongside our own proposals, any industrial strategy for Manufacturing should include the actions agreed jointly between Unite and Manufacturing NI. These include:

- Establishing a Joint Industrial Board bringing unions, management and government together to secure growth in the sector;
- Committing the NI Executive to maintain Industrial de-rating and to lower energy costs for Manufacturing to the EU average;
- Increasing investment in our road and rail infrastructure and delivering the North-South Energy Interconnector;
- Bringing forward enhanced capital allowances to stimulate investment, job-creation and raise productivity;
- Securing existing protections for Freedom of Movement for Goods and People following the UK Referendum vote;
- Increasing investment and the appeal of Apprenticeships to deliver the skills needed by our employers;
- A proactive approach by Invest NI to growing our indigenous Manufacturing base and developing local supply-chains;
- Ambitious targets for foreign-direct investment and job creation in Industrial Manufacturing;
- Ensuring NI Departments prioritise local manufacturers for public procurement contracts and facilitate greater access to GB and Irish procurement markets.

**Irish Executive Committee**

### **MOTION 8**

#### **Manufacturing Strategy (Northern Ireland)**

That this conference reiterates the importance of the manufacturing and industrial sectors for the Northern Ireland economy and commends the officers and activists of our union on their efforts to secure a manufacturing strategy for Northern Ireland.

That this conference fully supports the proposals jointly endorsed by Unite and Manufacturing NI, representing employers in the sector, and that we call on the Irish Executive Committee to continue to support the campaign to secure meaningful action for our Manufacturing sector.

**NI/B1006 BE Aerospace Branch**

## **MOTION 9**

### **North West Manufacturing**

Conference calls on Unite to work to highlight the continued decline of the North West economy. Derry/Londonderry is the second city of Northern Ireland yet it still has the highest level of unemployment and economy inactivity in the UK. The power and resources for a regeneration strategy must be given to the newly formed Local Council Authorities who are best placed to drive the urgent need for infrastructure and investment.

**NI/B3001 (Derry'Londonderry) Branch**

## **MOTION 10**

### **Regional Disparity**

Conference calls on Unite to lobby the Northern Ireland Assembly to accept that huge regional disparity exists in job creation and infrastructural development West of the Bann. This is evidenced by every every employment statistical report over the last ten years and by the number of young people leaving the North West. Urgent investment is needed to address a rapidly declining region. This will require an all Party approach if future wealth and economic growth is to be apportioned throughout the whole Province.

**North West Area Activists' Committee**

## **PENSIONS**

### **MOTION 11**

#### **Attack on Pensions "Mind The Pensions Gap"**

Conference notes that the Government changed the retirement age for the receipt the State pension at the beginning of 2014 to age 66.

The changes were agreed with the EU-IMF troika as a condition of the State's bailout of the banks and whose aim were said at the time by the troika and the Government ,at ensuring the future sustainability of the pensions system.

The Pension Gap is due to widen even further in 2021 (just 4 years away) when the state pension qualifying age moves to 67 and 68 in 2028.

The gap between normal retirement age (for most age 65) and deferred receipt of the state pension is becoming a real issue for our members & in particular with regards to those who have integrated ( state pension benefit integrated in private scheme) pension schemes. The financial cost to someone who is currently age 59 and due to retire at age 65 will be €24,000 (2 yrs. state pension).

A worker retiring at age 60, who has an integrated pension will have to wait 7 years to receive the state pension.

The Pension Time Bomb is ticking and yet successive Governments have either failed to tackle the "Elephant in the Room" problem, perhaps hoping that it will go away or leave the mess for the next administration.

In response to this ever increasing crisis, this Conference instructs the Union's Irish Executive Council, officers and leadership to immediately commit the union to explore ways of bridging the Pensions Gap, both locally and nationally, and concurrently run a campaign to lobby the government to reverse the decision made in Jan 2014 to change the state pension age to 66.



We need to take action NOW.

RI/0592M Dublin ISS No. 2

## **MOTION 12**

### **Dying to Work**

Conference notes that our Equality legislation provides protection against discriminatory treatment based on the concept of 'Protected Characteristics.'

Currently workers with a terminal illness are not classified as having a protected characteristic and therefore have very limited legal protection against employers dismissing them due to illness.

Conference notes that employers are therefore free to dismiss terminally ill workers once they have made 'reasonable adjustments' to the employee's job to assist with the illness. Conference agrees that the last thing a terminally ill worker would need is to have to fight for the right to continue working and not to face the indignity of being sacked.

In addition conference notes that the loss of death in service benefits to terminally ill workers sacked before death is a further distress at a time when security for a family for the future should be protected.

Therefore conference agrees to support the TUC's 'Dying to Work Campaign' currently being developed in the Midlands and to support the lobbying of MP's to establish new legislation, currently being drawn up by the society of labour Lawyers which;

- Seeks to get terminally ill workers covered by protective rights at work in line with those covered by Pregnancy/Maternity rights
- Seeks to protect death in service benefits
- Seeks to allow workers with terminal illness to die in dignity

**Regional Disability Committee**

## **MOTION 13**

### **Pension age**

Conference believes that the threat to both public and private pension provision is one of the greatest challenges facing workers in both the Republic and Northern Ireland and congratulates our Union on standing side-by-side with members battling to protect their pension entitlements.

Conference is particularly concerned at moves to increase the State pension age in the Republic from 65 to 68 and notes that:

- (1) The State pension forms part of the social contract between workers and the State, and increasing the pension age by three years will deprive workers of a benefit – €12,000 for each year by which the age is increased – for which they have paid through their social insurance contributions.
- (2) Under the new measures, the State pension age will be considerably higher than the retirement age in many workplaces. This will force workers to rely solely on their occupational pension for up to three years before the State pension kicks in, resulting in a significant increase in pensioner poverty since many occupational pensions (integrated schemes) are premised on the assumption of a concurrent State pension.

- (3) The increase in the State pension age does not take account of different types of work or consider
- a. The health inequalities and resulting life expectancy differentials between different groups of workers: manual workers have a lower life expectancy than ‘white collar’ workers, have fewer years of retirement and are thus additionally penalised by the increased pension age;
  - b. The health and safety implications of forcing workers in construction and related industries to continue working up to the age of 65.
- (4) Many workers may wish to stay in employment beyond their workplace retirement age and/or the State pension age; however, they should not be obliged to do for financial reasons. The increase in the State pension age is not designed to facilitate older workers staying in employment, but merely to deny them an entitlement for which they have paid.

Conference therefore calls on the Union to lobby for a reversal of the State pension age increase, and the re-introduction of the pre-existing State retirement age and associated Social Protection payments.

Separately, Conference calls on the Union to lobby for legislation that prevents employers forcing workers to retire at the age of 65 on a mandatory or compulsory basis, while continuing to assert the right of workers to retire at age 65 if they so choose.

**RI/109 Branch**

## **MOTION 14**

### **A living state pension**

Conference recognises that changes in retirement mean that many younger workers will have to work to until they are 68 and end up paying more while getting less as a result of the attacks on the terms and conditions that have taken place on younger workers. These attacks have taken place over the past number of years and in particular the changes that have been imposed on many occupational pension schemes in the UK and Ireland.

Many younger workers are now faced with huge job insecurity with zero hour contracts, low pay and very little prospect of having a decent pension in retirement.

As a result of these changes, future generations of pensioners are going to need a secure and decent state pension more than ever before.

For many low paid workers their pension pots will give them less than £1500 a year in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland defined benefit pensions terms are continually being cut with defined contributions pension returns nowhere near what was expected, whilst the private pension industry are making huge profits.

Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee to ensure that the Trade Union movement as a whole begins to prioritise a campaign for a living state pension for all generations that guarantees dignity and financial security for today and tomorrows pensioners.

**Retired Members’ Committee**

## **PUBLIC SECTOR MOTION 15**

### **Immediate Repeal of FEMPI Legislation**

Conference notes that's the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act (FEMPI) is emergency legislation that was introduced by the government to allow unilateral changes to Public servants terms & conditions as a mechanism to drive cost savings to the exchequer. The legislation gives the Government hugely coercive powers over public sector workers. FEMPI drove forward the extremely negative agenda of the Croke Park, Haddington Road & to a lesser extent the Lansdowne Road Agreements, it was the instrument used to coerce ICTU & Public servants to sign up to these extremely negative National Agreements, through which members have suffered a series of pay reductions, extended working hours and dilution of terms and conditions,

It gives significant coercive powers to the government in its negotiations with unions well beyond the normal checks and balances that apply in negotiations between employer and unions. Therefore it puts the unions at a significant disadvantage in national pay negotiations.

The Government has acknowledged that the financial emergency is now over. It is vital that FEMPI is immediately repealed so that any future negotiations between government and unions are carried out on the basis of normal industrial relations and without the unfair influence of emergency legislation that usurps normal constitutional rights.

This conference, therefore, calls on Unite to seek the immediate repeal of FEMPI legislation, in line with ICTU policy.

**RI/0308M Education & Research Branch**

## **MOTION 16**

### **Repeal of Extra Hours**

Conference calls that, at the conclusion of the Lansdowne Agreement, Unite will demand that the extra working hours agreed as part of the Croke Park/Haddington/Lansdowne Agreements cease.

**Education (ROI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

## **MOTION 17**

### **Campaign to Protect our Public Services**

Conference calls on the Irish Executive to carry on a parallel campaign in protection of the public services across the island of Ireland.

Conference notes the high profile campaigns in Northern Ireland on manufacturing and the recent construction campaign and welcome this.

Conference believes that the Union has an opportunity to lead a campaign to demonstrate the value of public services to the economy. Investment in public sector jobs and infrastructure can have complimentary benefits to the manufacturing and construction campaigns. Examples of this include the massive underspends, neglect of premises and sell off of public sector properties and attempts at reducing the workforce. If a 'quality ' public sector service is to be developed it needs to invest in construction, technology and equipment which is properly and ethically sourced that can be provided from local industry. A proper campaign can run in parallel and work for both our public sector and private members alike.

**Health (NI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

## **MOTION 18**

### **Review of Public Administration (Local Authorities)**

Conference fully supports Unite in their efforts to ensure that the restructuring and harmonisation process that local councils will be undertaking following the merger of 25 out of the 26 councils in Northern Ireland as a result of the review of public administration in 2015 will not result in the downgrading of the terms and conditions of our members and potentially leave the door open for a privatisation agenda.

**Local Authorities Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

## **POLITICAL**

## **MOTION 19**

### **Unite campaigns on Right to Water/Right to Change/Unity Movement**

Conference endorses the work of the Right2Water campaign in opposing the commodification of our human right to water. Conference applauds all who worked with our Union to develop and maintain the largest social campaign seen in the Republic. This campaign married mass mobilisations with a national campaign of peaceful civil disobedience in a way which won the popular, intellectual and ultimately political arguments against the failed Irish Water model established in 2014 and revised in November 2014 which is now defunct.

This single campaign then created the momentum whereby citizen initiated policy principles called Right2Change were endorsed by well over 100 electoral candidates in the General Election 2016. Conference endorses these principles espousing a 'Right2Water', 'Right2Jobs & Decent Work', 'Right2Housing', 'Right2Health', 'Right2Debt Justice', 'Right2Education', 'Right2Democratic Reform', 'Right2Equality', 'Right2Sustainable Environment' and 'Right2National Resources' as principles that, when implemented, will fundamentally address Ireland's gross social and economic inequality in a manner that will advance the interests of our country generally, and working people and their communities in particular.

In this neoliberal era Conference commends and mandates Unite to continue to pursue, using all available resources, the achievement in the Republic of our first progressive Government addressing these issues and to do so through education, communication and coalition building so a new political movement can emerge that will at last put working people and their communities at the heart of all political decision making.

**RI/61 Energy Sector Branch**

## **MOTION 20**

### **Political Re-alignment**

That this conference congratulates Unite the Union together with the other five unions, political parties and community groups who campaigned against water charges and the right to change.

This movement was the most effective struggle of the broad anti-austerity movement which has wreaked havoc on working class communities within the 26 counties.

Notwithstanding the success of this movement there has still being a revival of FF and no fundamental change in the direction or the policies of the current government.

What is needed in the current situation is maximum cooperation of all the political parties who signed up to the right to change or who supported the anti-austerity and anti-water charges.

The union should broaden and widen its commitment to this process by developing an education program based on the ideas of political realignment and a social and economic program underpinning a left led government.

To bring this about the political committee should write to all branches asking to nominate individuals who are interested in giving their time to such a project.

We should also seek to involve union members who are Councillors, TDs or members of political parties to participate in the development of these policies.

The union also recognizes that this will require the capacity to engage with, persuade and encourage the membership and the activists that this project is of vital importance to their interests.

We should also commit ourselves to trying to win all the other unions to these goals.

We should explore structures which allow for joint initiatives to be taken to bring about greater cooperation and trust between the parties, community groups and trade unions.

**RI/102 Branch**

## **MOTION 21**

### **Opposition to Austerity**

Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee to seek to re-develop meaningful opposition to austerity from the Northern Ireland Assembly through demonstrations and industrial action, including through co-ordinated strike action across the public sector and involving, where possible, private sector workers in dispute with their employers.

**Belfast Area Activists' Committee**

## **MOTION 22**

### **Austerity**

Conference calls on the IEC and the EC to continue to oppose austerity in all its forms. In particular conference condemns the savage cuts and uncertainty in relation to the provision of youth services and the Governments cruel welfare reform policies which are causing severe hardship among the most vulnerable sections of our society on a daily basis.

**Community, Youth Workers and Not for Profit Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

## **MOTION 23**

### **Jobstown Not Guilty**

This Conference notes:

The dangerous precedent being set by the Irish Judicial system following the verdict by Dublin's Children's Court on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016 which found an underage boy guilty of the false imprisonment of former Tánaiste Joan Burton at a protest in Jobstown in 2014.

It is the contention of this Conference that the verdict was a clear message of the state's intention to reduce incidences of peaceful protest and an effort to thwart the growing anti – austerity movement across Ireland. The criminalisation of participants in protests is an attack on the right to protest and an attack on water charges movement of which Unite is a part of.

It is our further contention that the charges against the Jobstown protesters should be

dropped.

Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee:

- To put out further statements condemning the conviction of the 17 year old protester of 'False imprisonment' recognising the principle of "an injury to one is an injury to all" and this conviction is a threat to everybody's democratic right to protest.
- To organise as part of wider education programme training for all members on how to mobilise and protest highlighting what their rights are during protests.
- To send a message of solidarity to the #Jobstown Not Guilty Campaign.
- To officially support the # Jobstown Not Guilty Campaign in the run up to and during the trials, assisting in publicising planned protests and events amongst the membership of the Union and in any other way deemed appropriate by the Irish Executive Committee.
- To encourage all Unite members to show solidarity to all protest movements tackling neoliberalism and austerity.

**Regional Youth Committee**

## **EQUALITIES MOTION 24**

### **Guidance for representing Non-Binary Members in the Workplace**

Conference notes the rise in alt-right politics locally, nationally and globally and the impact this has on the rights and acceptance of minority GROUPS.

Conference notes the work done in the region around LGBT+ hate crime and discrimination in the workplace. The Regional LGBT Committee commends the support that the region has given in protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT+ members and the wider LGBT+ community.

Conference calls on all members to adopt a zero tolerance towards homophobia, transphobia and biphobia in the workplace particularly around those who identify as non-binary. Conference calls on all officers and workplace reps to familiarise themselves with descriptions that non-binary people use to identify their gender and to be sensitive to the preferred pronouns that individual members use.

Conference calls on guidance on non-binary terminology to be collated and issued to all officers and lay representatives to assist them in addressing members who identify as other than cisgender.

**Regional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Committee**

## **MOTION 25**

### **National Migrant Committee**

Conference is appalled by the rise in racism, discrimination and intolerance especially towards migrant workers since the UK EU referendum vote in June 2016.

Unite has been at the forefront of fighting racism and discrimination through its own networks and by supporting other organisations. Conference acknowledges that members who are recognised as migrant workers are given every opportunity to participate in the structures and activities of the

Union, however to continue with the good work that the Union has done to fight racism and discrimination Conference believes there is a need for a National Migrant Committee to be established. A National Migrant Committee would look at organising around the unique issues faced by overseas migrant workers since the Brexit vote.

**Louth & South Down Area Activists' Committee**

## **MOTION 26**

### **Promoting Religious Harmony**

Conference believes that Unite officially condemns the order issued by The President of the United States restricting travel to and from the USA based purely on a religious basis.

Conference notes the Prime Minister, Theresa May's abject failure to condemn the migrant and refugee order, which will further ostracise the Muslim community within the UK.

Conference notes that the Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority (BAEM) Regional Equality Committee has worked hard to promote religious harmony in Ireland and continues to encourage and protect Ethnic Minorities within our region.

Unite must continue to promote community cohesion throughout the UK & Ireland and needs to challenge Heads of State who are intent on causing division and adopting fascist policies.

Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee to challenge our governments to publicly speak out and condemn other countries when they adopt racist policies which promote hate and extremism.

**Regional Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority Committee**

## **MOTION 27**

### **Domestic and Sexual violence and Abuse**

This Conference notes with concern the rising figures from our government agencies relating to reported Domestic Violence (DV) and Sexual Violence (SV) and Abuse.

DV and SV and Abuse ruins and blights the lives of women, men and children. Some victims never recover from their experiences; others try to live with the scars but can be troubled with mental health issues for the rest of their lives.

Conference notes that our region campaigns strongly to raise awareness on the issue but we need to do more as this issue impacts on victims' careers and education.

Conference calls on the region to:

- Increase awareness of International End Violence Against women's day
- Continue our partnership working with Women's aid and Nexus
- Include DV and SV and Abuse awareness training in our Unite education to workplace reps
- Lobby government for improved funding for DV and SV and Abuse services in Ireland

**Regional Women's Committee**

## **INTERNATIONAL MOTION 28**

### **BREXIT**

Since the EU referendum result UNITE has led the way in addressing the Brexit issue and standing up for the interests of working people. For UNITE's Irish region, Brexit also brings with it, its own set of unique problems - the issue of the border, the effect on the considerable trade that flows between the North and the South as well as the functioning of the region in a country that has the potential to be simultaneously both inside and outside of the EU. With Article 50 being triggered, and with negotiations that will define the terms of Brexit and the future relationship with the EU about to start, UNITE will not stand by and allow a Tory government to be given a blank cheque to simply implement its own vision of Brexit. UNITE will never accept a Brexit that will be paid for by working class communities.

The Irish policy conference therefore upholds the UNITE Executive Council statement on the European Union that was adopted at the 2016 policy conference which set three general priorities for UNITE's actions in the immediate aftermath of the EU referendum:

- The defence of Unite members' jobs;
- The protection of those employment rights which depend on legislation or initiatives at the European Union level;
- Opposing the racist backlash unleashed by the Leave vote.

The UNITE Irish Policy Conference will also commit to support UNITE's campaign to ensure that the Government delivers on the following issues during its Brexit negotiations with the EU:

- Maintaining full tariff and barrier free access to the single market;
- A guarantee that UK workers will continue to benefit from the social, environmental and employment rights that currently derive from our membership of the EU, and that these rights will evolve at least in line with those in the EU in future to ensure a level playing field for workers;
- An immediate commitment to honour the right to remain for EU citizens currently in the UK, and UK citizens living elsewhere in the EU;
- Full respect for the specific concerns of UNITE members in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This includes lobbying Irish Government and Stormont Assembly, Governments/Administrations and MEP's to ensure the EU sets in train a process to evaluate what within its structures has created an environment - evidenced by the Brexit vote - where in Britain, Ireland and elsewhere the EU is now increasingly seen as a neoliberal project of wealth inequality and division as opposed to a social project of economic equality, liberty, social justice, and peace.

**Irish Executive Committee**

## **MOTION 29**

### **International solidarity with Mexico**

Conference reaffirms solidarity with trade unions and working people around the world and pays tribute to the contribution of the international trade union movement, including Unite and our Ireland Region, supporting trade unionists in Colombia in their successful efforts to achieve a



resolution of the conflict there. Conference notes the continuing difficulties facing trade unions in Central and Southern America, and in particular the persecution being suffered by the mining union Los Mineros, with which Unite is affiliated through Workers Uniting. Conference especially notes as follows:

- (1) Unite is affiliated with Los Mineros through Workers Uniting, and that Unite activists were hosted by Los Mineros last year at a 'Building Power Internationally' Workers Uniting conference in Mexico City, joining in a march to remember two Los Mineros members murdered during a strike;
- (2) Los Mineros and its representatives have been continually persecuted by the Mexican authorities because of the union's success in challenging Mexico's system of employer-dominated 'protection unions', organising thousands of new mining and manufacturing workers and winning pay increases averaging over 8 per cent per year in comparison with the national average of four per cent;
- (3) That notwithstanding the reforms approved by the Mexican Senate last year, 'employer protection contracts' in the country's mines remain widespread and, according to the International Trade Union Confederation, recent proposals by the Government could seriously undermine any positive impact of the constitutional reforms;
- (4) That 'employer protection contracts' undermine freedom of association and collective bargaining, and have been the subject of a complaint to the ILO;
- (5) That, despite the continuing demands of Los Mineros, those responsible for the Grupo Mexico mine disaster at Pasta de Conchos in the Mexican state of Coahuila that killed 65 miners have yet to be prosecuted or the bodies of the 63 workers killed recovered;
- (6) That the failure to prosecute those responsible for the deaths of these and other miners has created a 'cycle of impunity' which puts workers' lives at risk;
- (7) That drug cartels are complicit in the corrupt, unregulated and rapid expansion of the coal mining industry to the detriment of local communities and workers.

Conference therefore expresses solidarity with our sister and brother trade unionists in Mexico and calls on the incoming Irish Executive, through Workers Uniting, to establish formal linkages with Los Mineros with a view to providing assistance and increasing awareness in the Ireland Region of the abuses being suffered by workers and trade unions in Mexico.

**RI/B5005 Archaeology Branch**

## **MOTION 30**

### **Unite in support of Ibrahim Halawa**

Conference notes that 21-year-old Ibrahim Halawa is an Irish citizen who has been imprisoned without trial in Egypt for the past three-and-a-half years after attending a demonstration in Cairo on charges which could attract the death penalty; that his trial has been postponed 19 times; and that there are currently serious concerns for his health. Conference further notes that, following a thorough investigation of his case, Amnesty International has concluded that Ibrahim Halawa is innocent of the charges of which he is accused, and that he is a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly.

This conference therefore calls on Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan to publicly demand that the Egyptian authorities release Ibrahim Halawa, allowing him to return to his family in Dublin, and to make it clear that failure to do so will have consequences for relations between Egypt and Ireland.

**RI/B8000 Waterford Community Branch**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **MOTION 31**

#### **Community Membership**

Conference notes there is a large fraction of the population who are not members of a union. This is people in the community who do not make up part of the workforce and do not have a voice within our community; therefore we would propose encouraging all current industrial members of the union to call upon their family and friends who fall into this category to join a community branch of the union. Linking families and workplaces together to strive for a better and more caring society.

**NI/B2004 Newry Community Branch**





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