

GFTU National Youth Conference

8-10 March 2013

Friday 8th March

Conference opened by Doug Nicholls, General Secretary and Joe Mann, President of the GFTU.

Guest speakers included Dona Dije, founding member of the movement of women nut breakers in Brazil; Marie Taylor, Community and Youth Workers Union in Unite; and Colin Burgon, Venezuela Solidarity Campaign.
"Principles are higher than positions". Colin Burgon.

Evening entertainment by the Socialist Magician, Ian Saville and is glamorous assistant Robert Carlson!

Saturday 9th March

Introduction to the day given by Dami Benbow, former Deputy Young Mayor of Lewisham, former Youth Worker and active youth campaigner.

Morning workshops included young people and work, the role of unions, young workers rights at work and the know all's surgery. Performances throughout the morning by the Banner Theatre on the world without unions. Work also commenced on the manifesto.

Young people & Work:

Considered issues facing young people at work e.g. Vicious circle of work experience v. qualifications, age discrimination and exploitation.

Considered visible pressures on young people such as having to earn against the hidden pressures such as lack of opportunities. Discussed ways of balancing these pressures - connect, challenge, change (connect with the issues, challenge them to make the change).

Young workers rights at work:

Went through legal rights for people under 18 years old. Further and more detailed information will be uploaded to regional website shortly.

"A young worker is injured at work in the UK every 40 minutes!"

Morning session closed by Dot, National Pensioners Convention.

Afternoon session was opened by guest speaker Enrico Tortolano, National Officer of PCS.

Afternoon workshops included exploding the myths about the economy hosted by Enrico Tortolano, campaigning for political change, organising and campaigning and the economy explained. Performances throughout the afternoon by Banner Theatre on the new world with strong unions.

Exploding the myths of the economy:

Considered in details many of the myths regarding the economy and discussed different view points on issues such as pay increases and the national minimum and living wages.

Some of the myths included - poor people are a drain on society, wealth creators will leave the country if tax goes up, private sector is good and public sector is bad, austerity is the only way and cuts mean growth.

"The economic crisis at the moment is the redistribution of wealth. Companies are now making more profits than ever before whilst wages are getting lower. 10% less money is going to wages and is going to profits instead."

Evening entertainment was provided by the Banner Theatre and the First of May Band.

Sunday 10th March

Morning workshops included young people speaking up and building the unions, transforming unions for young people and youth engagement.

Transforming unions for young people:

Considered different ways of transforming trade unions. Some suggestions included getting into schools and colleges to discuss trade unions, keeping it relevant and real, consult young people and actually listen to their responses, accept who we are and don't focus too much on the extra benefits of membership.

The GFTU Manifesto was agreed and hustings and votes were held for the international opportunities.

Conference ended at lunchtime.