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Scotland

Scottish Socialist Party Conference

- News from around the world -

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500 delegates met in the town of Perth on 12-13th February for the Scottish Socialist Party annual conference. The most prominent business was the election of a new National Convenor for the party to replace it's previous high profile figurehead Tommy Sheridan, who resigned in November of 2004.

The candidates were Colin Fox, a member of the Scottish Parliament from Edinburgh and Alan McCombes, national policy coordinator for the party. Colin was elected with a convincing 62% of votes cast.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/conf04.jpg>]

In his acceptance speech Colin took to the stage with Alan in a show of comradeship and pledged to focus on taking the party's anti-war and anti-poverty message to the streets of Scotland.

He said the party would be mobilising to fight the upcoming General Election and to protest at the meeting of the G8 which is due to be held in Scotland later this year.

Key policy debates at the conference included discussion on Iraq. Conference rejected motions which called for unconditional support for the resistance in Iraq, instead it backed the Iraqi people's right to resist whilst saying that our solidarity should be focused on working class and labour movement organisations.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/alancolin.jpg>]

Colin Fox (left) and Alan McCombes

A call to boycott the Westminster elections was resoundingly defeated. Other contentious debates were over abortion, with conference reiterating their support for a woman's right to choose.

A call to close down 'special needs schools' was narrowly defeated. There was also an international focus with debates on Venezuela and the European Social Forum.

Guest speakers at the conference included Pastor Daly, an anti-deportation campaigner, who himself fled Angola and was held in detention in Scotland.

Rose Gentle, also spoke. Rose is the mother of a young soldier killed in Iraq who has led a community based campaign calling for troops to be brought home from Iraq. Conference committed itself to supporting her campaign amongst military families. The mood at the conference was definitely for unity and to get on with the job of spreading the socialist message in Scotland.