

143rd ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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Held at:

**Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS**

on:

**Monday, 12th September 2011
Tuesday, 13th September 2011
and
Wednesday, 14th September 2011**

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Congress President:

MICHAEL LEAHY

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PROCEEDINGS – DAY ONE

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FIRST DAY: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 10.00 a.m.)

The President (*Michael Leahy*): Good morning, colleagues. Would delegates take their seats and would Congress come to order.

Congress, I have great pleasure in opening this, the TUC's 143rd Congress, and for the first time ever to be held at Congress House. I would warmly welcome all of those delegates to the hall. Also, I give a special welcome to everyone joining us online, the first time that the Congress has been broadcast live on the web via the TUC website. I would also like to welcome everyone watching the live feed in Congress House.

The programme of music this week has been put together by *Music for Youth*. Many thanks to the Bromley Youth Music Trust who have been playing for us this morning. I am sure you will show your appreciation in the normal way. (*Applause*)

Appointment of tellers and scrutineers

The President: The first formal item of business is to ask Congress to approve the tellers and scrutineers, as set out on page 7 of the General Purposes Committee Report booklet. Can I have your agreement? Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) If any teller has not yet met Mike Smith of the TUC staff, would they please come to the staff table located along the wall on my left.

May I remind everyone in the hall, first of all, to switch off their mobile phones. Please make yourselves aware of the emergency procedures for Congress House. They are on display throughout the building and at the back of the hall. If you have mobility or disability issues, please make yourself aware of the nearest refuge points. If there is an emergency, you will receive further instructions on what to do from me. There is no fire alarm test scheduled. If you hear the alarm, brothers and sisters, it genuinely is for real. If any delegate requires first aid, requests should be made to the Congress House reception, extension 1215.

Welcome to Sororal and Fraternal Delegates

The President: Congress, I would now like to welcome the sororal and fraternal delegates and visitors to Congress who are seated at the back of the hall. This year's delegate from the Trades Union Councils Conference is Jim Thakoordin, who is seated with the UCU delegation. We will also be welcoming Norma Stephenson, sororal delegate from the Labour Party, who will be addressing Congress on Wednesday morning.

Obituary

The President: Colleagues, we now come to the Obituary section of the General Council's Report from page 173 when we remember our trade union colleagues who have died during the past year. You can read more about the contribution these colleagues have made to the trade union movement in the General Council Report. In our report we list Colin Barnett, former north west divisional officer for NUPE; John Batstone, the long serving chair of the National Association of British Steel Pensioners and Community representative on the TUC Pensioners Committee;

Andrew Boyd, former TUC regional education officer for Northern Ireland; Dennis Delay, former secretary of the TUC Steel Committee; Jayaben Desai, the leading figure in the landmark Grunwick dispute; Keith Faulkner, senior events officer for the TUC; Mick Graham, national secretary of the GMB's public services section; Roy Jackson, former TUC assistant general secretary; Miriam Karlin, who was an actor and member of Equity's council; John Macreadie, former deputy general secretary of CPSA; Terry Marsland, senior official in the Tobacco Workers Union, TASS and MSF; Alf Parish, former national official of the print workers' union SLADE; Tony Stewart, who worked in the TUC Economic Department; Clive Webster, deputy general secretary of Accord, and Les Wood, former general secretary of UCATT. I have to say also that since the last report went to press the death has occurred of Jack Wyman, former executive committee member of the AEU and former General Council member.

Congress, in asking you to stand in memory of these former colleagues, I also ask you to remember other trade union colleagues who have died in the past year, both here and around the world. At this time, I am sure our thoughts are also with those who have suffered loss in the man made and natural disasters of the past year, including those who lost their lives in New Zealand, the Japanese earthquakes and the devastating attacks in Norway in which so many young socialists lost their lives.

Congress, let us, therefore, re-commit ourselves to the cause of world peace. Please stand now for a moment's quiet reflection.

(The Congress stood in silent tribute)

Report of the General Purposes Committee

The President: Congress, I now call upon Peter Hall of the General Purposes Committee to report to us on the progress of business and other Conference arrangements. Peter.

Peter Hall (*General Purposes Committee*): Good morning, Congress. The General Purposes committee has approved 14 composite motions. Composite Motions 1 to 14 are included in section 3 of the GPC Report and Composite Motions booklet that you have all received. On behalf of the GPC, I would like to thank all those unions that have co-operated and worked together to reach agreement on the composite motions.

The GPC has also approved two emergency motions. Emergency Motion 1 on the TUC's response to the riots is to be moved by the POA. Emergency Motion 2 on Pre-abortion counselling is to be moved by UCU and seconded by Unite. Copies of both of these emergency motions have been placed on your seats and the President will indicate when it is hoped that the emergency motions will be taken.

Congress, please be reminded that only materials approved by the GPC may be distributed in the hall. Let me also remind delegates that the mover of each motion may speak for up to five minutes and other speakers for up to three minutes. Thank you for your co-operation. I will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decisions when necessary throughout Congress. Thanks.

The President: Congress, I now invite you formally to receive the GPC's Report?

Can we agree? (*Agreed*)

Congress, the GPC reported the approval of two emergency motions. Emergency Motion 1 is the TUC's response to the riots. Emergency Motion 2 is Pre-abortion counselling. If time permits I will try and take these emergency motions after the published programme of business this afternoon. I will let you know if it looks likely nearer the time. Would the movers and seconders, in those circumstances, be ready.

Just a reminder to delegates, as Peter Hall has reported, movers of motions will get five minutes – I repeat, five minutes – and all other speakers three minutes. As Congress will last for three days rather than the usual four, I intend to keep strictly to these timings to ensure that we will be able to take all scheduled business. I hope you will co-operate with that for ease of reference. It would also be helpful if speakers could line up ready in the seats at the side of the front hall.

Congress, please listen carefully while I explain how I intend to take the debate on the General Council's Statement on the TUC's Future Campaign Strategy and Composite Motion 4: Alternative economic strategy. First, I will invite the General Secretary to give his address to Congress and to move paragraph 1.7: Continuing the campaign, which contains the General Council's Statement on the TUC's Future Campaign Strategy. I will then call Chapter 1: The All Together Campaign and paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6. Then I will call paragraphs 4.1 to 4.5 and paragraph 4.18. Then the mover, seconder and supporters of Composite Motion 4: Alternative economic strategy. Then I will take any other speakers on the General Council's Statement and

Composite Motion 4. I will then take the vote on the General Council's Statement followed by the vote on Composite Motion 4. If that is clear, I will now call the General Secretary.

General Secretary's Address

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): President, Congress, welcome everybody to Congress House to this first ever Congress to be held here in the movement's home. Those of us who work here and the many of you who come here regularly might take the building for granted, but it is worth spending a moment or two reminding ourselves of the significance of this building in the history of the trade union movement.

The idea of a dedicated home for British trade unionism was conceived in the depths of the Second World War – when London was under constant bombardment and trade unionists were among those fighting at home and abroad for the very survival of our democracy. It was financed by contributions from our hard press members, many struggling to make ends meet. It was built on the site of a former brewery, and we bought the site for £25,000. That secured a 999 year lease, so we will be here for a while yet. It was intended as a resource for the whole movement: a conference facility, a research centre, a focal point for our trade union education and a meeting place.

But this was never purely a functional building. It was dedicated to work and it contains great works – the Epstein statue in the courtyard above under whose shadow

we meet – dedicated to the victims of world wars. The Meadows bronze that you passed on your way in – the Spirit of Trade Unionism – the strong helping the weak.

Congress House was opened in the mid-1950s, at a time when the country was determined to put behind it the poverty of the thirties and the devastation of the war. It was conceived in hope and dedicated to progress, sentiments that we will echo this week.

Let us also reflect on the fact that we meet ten years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. As our American colleagues reminded us, on the 1st anniversary of September 11, over 500 of those who died that day were trade unionists. They included 12 members of the Flight Attendants Association, killed when their planes, their workplaces, were turned into weapons of mass destruction, 43 members of the Hotel Employees Local working in the restaurant at the top of the World Trade Center, and 343 fire fighters who gave their lives in their heroic attempt to save others.

Ten years on the world is a very different place. London, too, has known mass death from terrorism, and far, far too many others have also died in the conflicts around the world since the 9/11 outrage.

This is the first Annual Congress to be held in the capital since 1902. When that Congress met in Holborn Town Hall just a mile from here, the Labour Party was just two years old, formed as a result of a Congress resolution, with a mandate to advance the interests of working people, to bring social justice through Parliamentary action and to tackle the gross inequalities that tore Victorian society apart. That was a period

of momentous change, and that generation of trade unionists played a vital role in changing the course of our economic and social history.

We are at such a turning point again, and we face such a challenge again, as our economy continues to be ravaged by the consequences of the gravest global financial crisis that any of us have ever seen, and we have a government locked into policies that are making things worse, not better.

Last month, as our cities burned amidst the worst rioting in decades, social divisions in modern Britain were laid bare. The violence and the criminality that we saw shocked us all, and none of us would seek to justify or condone it in any way. The victims were overwhelmingly frightened ordinary people in working class communities – with the police and emergency service workers called on to put their safety on the line to restore order. The Prime Minister chose to describe these events as “criminality pure and simple”, but it isn’t so simple. What happened in August actually revealed deep fractures within our society, a society that ranks amongst the most unequal anywhere in the developed world, where a super rich elite have been allowed to float free from the rest of us, where a generation of young people are growing up without work, without prospects and without hope, none harder hit than the black youngsters held back by an unemployment rate approaching 50 per cent. As we make the case for opportunities for all, we cannot, must not and we will not allow the riots to be exploited by EDL thugs. So today, let us pledge to fight the Far Right wherever and whenever it peddles its racist poison, and let us take heart from the local elections when the BNP suffered the worst rout in its sorry history.

Congress, the Government's response to the riots has been profoundly wrong. Rather than addressing the complex long-term factors that lie behind the alienation – the poverty, the lack of social mobility, young lives stunted by hope denied – they have instead reached for simplistic clichés about moral decay. And yet as they have retreated to Victorian language about the undeserving poor, they have said nothing about moral disintegration among the rich: the financiers with huge assets sneakily channelled through the tax havens, the out of control traders and speculators who razed our economy to the ground and the super rich tax cheats whose greed impoverishes our schools and hospitals.

Let's be clear about this: high moral standards, yes, of course, but not just for the poor and the ordinary, they must be for the rich and the privileged too. *(Applause)*

And in a year when we commemorated the 25th anniversary of Wapping, let us say loud and clear that moral standards must apply to you too, Mr. Murdoch. Let's also resist blatant double standards, so that someone who steals a bottle of water goes to jail while there are second chances aplenty in the corridors of power.

Congress, what happened in our cities last month has not just raised alarming questions about the country we have become. It has not just exposed the pernicious inequality bequeathed by neoliberalism, but it has also underlined the folly of coalition policy in withdrawing EMA help from disadvantaged teenagers, cutting youth services by two-thirds and more and abolishing the Future Jobs Fund and the Youth Guarantee that gave new chances to young people previously in utter despair.

Of course, I accept that the riots were not caused by the cuts, but as any fair-minded person must see the cuts will undoubtedly make the underlying problems much worse.

Congress, the coalition has set the cruel and mistaken objective of getting rid of the deficit within just four years. This is not just austerity – it's austerity on speed, rashly carried out at a time when yields on UK debt are at historic lows, the deepest cuts in the UK since the 1920s, deeper cuts than in any country outside of those with sovereign debt crises, and cuts that would make even Margaret Thatcher look like a spendthrift.

We were told “We are all in this together”, but the cuts have hit middle and low income workers in both private and public sectors, and hardly been noticed by those who did so well out of the banking bubble. The less you had to do with causing the crash, the bigger the price you are having to pay. Public service workers and users may be the most obvious victims, but the private sector is suffering just as much. Don't forget the public sector spends more with private companies than it does on the wages of its own staff. But the damage goes deeper. Cuts have hit business and consumer confidence. With living standards facing their most severe fall in almost a century and real wages just about everywhere falling fast, it's no wonder so many companies are in trouble, and even those with healthy balances are failing to invest. No one denies the deficit, but this is a government that has turned the crisis into a major smuggling operation. Contraband policies that were kept from voters before the election are suddenly centre stage. Remember, “No top-down NHS reform”? Remember, “I'll cut the deficit, not the NHS”? Yet we have the biggest and most complex health reorganisation ever, a deeply damaging Bill still going through

Parliament, big cuts already biting hard with over 50,000 NHS jobs set to go, and the profit motive being injected right into the heart of the NHS.

Congress, let's be 100 per cent clear: our NHS is not for sale, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. (*Applause*) And nor should our education and schools system be broken up and taken out of any genuine local democratic control in the misguided drive for academies and so-called free schools.

I am sure that there are some ministers who recognise and regret the pain that they are causing, perhaps who genuinely cannot see the alternative, but what worries me is that those really in the driving seat are pushing forward an agenda to permanently shrink the state. For them this isn't temporary pain, but the culmination of a long held dream – a chance to influence policies under cover of the crash that they know that voters have rejected over and over again. It's marketisation and privatisation on a huge scale – warmer words when they are wrapped up as localism and the big society – but the same old hard right ideology.

What's even worse is that, for sure, it's hurting, but it ain't working! It is now clear that the government won't even clear the deficit. The cuts have stamped on growth, and the UK economy is still producing less than before the crash, when other countries have at least recovered that gap. Spending is being slashed as the global economy teeters on the brink of a crisis that could dwarf even the financial meltdown of 2008.

In America the President has now proposed a bold new initiative to encourage growth and jobs, but it is being hampered by Republican intransigence. It's high time those Tea Party crazies woke up and smelled the coffee. In Europe, politicians have failed to find a convincing response to the sovereign debt crisis. As Greece has shown, you can't cut your way to financial health. Growth is the only answer. When even the IMF and the World Bank call for more stimulus and less austerity, our own government's nakedly political agenda is revealed as the economic fig leaf slips. Economists now openly talk of a double dip. Remember what they said about us when we warned that that was exactly what the cuts could lead to. Whether we technically go double dip is still open, but unless we change course the best we can look forward to is bumping along the bottom for years, and change course we must.

All of this puts a huge responsibility on to our shoulders. No one else can claim to speak for so many of those bearing the brunt of austerity. No other part of civil society has the organisation, the resources and the reach of our trade union movement. That responsibility is one that we have willingly accepted. Up and down the country, trade unionists have led the fight against the government's brutal agenda, not just defending the NHS and local libraries, not just speaking up for our welfare state and a decent benefits system to support the most vulnerable, but representing the interests of all working people. As we will debate on Wednesday, nowhere is our fight more urgent than when it comes to public sector pensions.

All workers – all workers – deserve decent pensions and security in retirement. But let's be clear: the government's plans for public service pensions are not about their long-term affordability. They are all about making hard pressed public sector staff

sacrifice their long-term pensions security to contribute even more to short-term deficit reduction, and that is wrong, wrong, wrong! (*Applause*)

Congress, whether it's fighting cuts to pensions, fighting NHS reforms or fighting inequality, one thing is for sure: we're at our best when we are united. We saw that on March 26th as we staged our magnificent *March for the Alternative*, the biggest event the TUC has organised in decades. There were half a million people from every walk of life, black and white, young and old, men and women, most union members but many who were not. That was proof of how powerfully we can make our case when we reach out beyond the confines of our movement, building a coalition as wide as it is deep.

Now as I move the General Council's statement setting out our campaign plans, I want us to recall the success of that day, to recognise what we can achieve when we work together, to hear how loudly our voice is heard when we speak together, and to see the impact when we properly plan and use our resources wisely. The statement that we have before us today is based on those insights. It is an ambitious two-year plan, and the General Council will decide in October on whether affiliates, through the affiliation fee, should give us the extra resources needed to win this battle. In the two years ahead of us, we have to go further. We have to take our campaign to where our opponents are strongest. They say that the cuts are necessary, that we have 'maxed out the nation's credit card', however fatuous that analogy may be, and too many agree, even if they hate the way the cuts are being done. That's because the government has largely succeeded in making the deficit the key problem, so we have to shift the terms of the debate.

We say that you can't cut the deficit by depressing the economy, that it's only through jobs and growth that we can heal the public finances. Of course the deficit is important, but it is just one symptom of what's wrong. The problem is the collapse of the economic model that politicians and policymakers have backed since the 1980s. Deregulation, the worship of markets and suspicion of the state failed to deliver what was promised. Instead, this led to an economy run in the interests of banks and finance, where the super-rich prospered, but wages were held down with many workers resorting to credit to keep up. That model has blown up in our faces, turning into an angel of destruction.

The task now is to build a new economy that delivers for all, that pays fair wages so that companies can have customers, that nurtures success stories like our creative industries. It's time to think big. Let's exploit new technologies in the fight against climate change and forge a new future for future for manufacturing. Today let's offer our support and solidarity to the workers at Bombardier and the people of Derby as they are fighting to save their jobs, their communities and their industry. *(Applause)*

Let's make the case for tax justice – and let's say loud and clear to the Chancellor that any plans to cut tax for the richest one per cent by scrapping the 50p rate are a disgrace and we will fight them tooth and nail.

On a day when the Vickers' Report fails to deal with what really needs to be done to transform our banks, let's argue for real reform of our financial system, turning the banks from casinos that enrich themselves into utilities that serve us.

Congress, we have to win the case for an economic alternative, developing our sophisticated arguments for growth and investment into the straightforward ideas that are the new common sense, showing we can win the intellectual high ground as well as the industrial battles. In other words, we've got to build a mass movement for change.

This year we had a *March for the Alternative*. In the year ahead, I want us to build a *Movement for the Alternative*, one that cannot be ignored by any politician in any party, one that builds on the great diversity of our cuts campaign and one that inspires the millions of people out there who believe in social and economic justice. We need as many ways for people to get involved as possible. We need to use the potential of the new social media and we need to be armed with the case for change.

The TUC has a special role. Just as on March 26th, many look to us for coherence, for arguments, and for campaign leadership. That sets us a very great challenge in the year ahead. It's one that we shouldn't take on lightly. It's not something for you just to mandate Congress House to do. It's not an issue where you pass the responsibility. Instead, it's one where we recognise that the TUC is more than the staff and offices where we are meeting this year. It's every union, every officer, every activist and every member. So please vote for the General Council statement, but do so in the knowledge that the vote is just the first step. This is not just a vote that I am asking for but a commitment – a pledge to work with every ally we can muster as we fight our greatest battle in living memory. Out of the ashes of this financial crisis which dragged the world to the edge of the abyss, let's get Britain back to work. Let's save

our public realm and let's build that new economy. Together, let's achieve something of which this generation can be proud. Thanks for listening. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Brendan, for moving paragraph 1.7, containing the General Council's statement on the TUC's Future campaign strategy and, more importantly, for that inspiring speech, setting out the challenges facing the trade union movement and the importance of unity and building alliances in the months and years ahead. Thanks, once again.

Delegates, we now turn to Chapter 1 of the General Council Report, The All Together Campaign, page 5. I call paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6.

Delegates, we now turn to Chapter 4 of the General Council's Report: Economic and Industrial Affairs, the Economy, page 51. I call paragraphs 4.1 to 4.5 and paragraph 4.18.

The Alternative Strategy

The President: Delegates, we now turn to Composite Motion 4, The Alternative Strategy. The General Council support the composite motion.

Tony Burke (*Unite*) moved Composite Motion 4.

He said: Comrades, if there were any doubt as to the objectives of this coalition of millionaires, this has been removed by the attack being waged against our working people, against our young people and against the sick, elderly and disabled across our

country. The dangerous message of fear and despair is taking hold in our communities where there is already very little hope or confidence about what the future will hold.

On the back of a financial crisis not the making of our class but created by the spivs and speculators in the City of London and Wall Street, an unregulated market based on speculation and manipulation and a drive for self-enrichment, this government are attempting to drive home a hard right agenda that without a co-ordinated and sustained industrial and political opposition could see the destruction of much of the social fabric of our country.

Make no mistake, Congress, driven by the memories of Thatcher before them, there is a concerted attempt to destroy in one term what has taken generations to build. The cuts are biting deeply into every area of public life as the ideological dogma of cutting the deficit rather than growing the economy takes effect. We have got stagnation as the government slashes and burns and our people pay the price for the mistakes of the rich and wealthy. Our young people face an uncertain future, as Brendan says, where we are approaching 50 per cent unemployment in a number of areas. The failure of the government and private industry to invest in the infrastructure of our country, in the core sectors of the economy, in emerging technologies and what they are doing to our people is unforgivable.

The government say that there is no plan B. Well, I've got a message for them. They've got no plan A either. They are like Mr Micawber, waiting for something to turn up. We are in a spiral of decline, of decreasing demand leading to further job

losses in the public sector, in the private sector and in manufacturing. Let us be clear, Congress: you can't cut your way out of recession, and removing workers' rights is not a strategy for growth. What we need is a well resourced strategy for growth, a strategy that puts people before profits and puts hope and confidence back into the hearts of our members.

We need a strategic investment bank, using the assets that we already own, helping to re-balance the economy, with investment in public infrastructure, housing, communications, transport, within our struggling private sector, manufacturing and developing green technologies. We need to create employment in high skill, high value industries that will enable us to transfer production away from the weapons of mass destruction to those more socially useful. Such measures would create thousands of decent, well paid stable jobs with skills that will rebuild our reputation as a nation for manufacturing and technological excellence. We also need a fair tax strategy, ending tax evasion and avoidance, and a procurement strategy that recognises social and workers' needs.

Comrades, let's be clear. There will be no room for bystanders in the coming battle. Our fight to stop these vicious cuts destroying our communities will not be won easily. The battle is for our future, and it will be a long and drawn out battle. It will be one that we will need to develop strategically, but it is one that we must win. If this government does not change course, this will not be a winter of discontent. We have to have a winter, a spring, a summer and an autumn of struggle for our unions and our members. It's a battle that we are up for. Let's win it. Thank you.

Keith Jordan (*Community*) seconded Composite Motion 4.

He said: Conference, let's be very clear. Osborne's policies are hurting, not working. Since coming to power, the Tories and their Lib-Dem lackies have managed to choke off the recovery. Now the economy is well and truly flat-lining. Government spin doctors are already saying that there will be more bad news this week. Unemployment is rising, inflation is still high and working people are feeling the squeeze. So what are Osborne and Cameron going to do about it? Carry on regardless. They seem to think that plan A is a life jacket that will carry us all to safety. In fact, plan A is a millstone around the necks of all of us. Congress, it is not time for plan A. It's time for plan B. It's not time for arrogance. It's time for humility. It's not time for cuts but time for investment. When everybody else is cutting back, we need the government to step up and take action. Let's face it, it's common sense that you will never cut the deficit without increasing economic growth. I don't think this coalition's got any common sense. Their heads are full of other ideas like rolling back the state, cutting so-called red tape and attacking employment rights.

What do we want as a plan B? Let's start with immediate investment in major infrastructure and construction. Let's see high speed rail built to help bridge the north/south divide. Let's have an industrial policy that supports UK manufacturing and genuinely boosts exports. Let's have banks that serve society rather than serving themselves.

Congress, as trade unionists, we know what is really happening out there. We see first hand job cuts, pay cuts and their effects on our communities. We say, "No more". Let's keep on campaigning for an alternative. Please support the composite.

Matt Wrack (Fire Brigades' Union) supported Composite Motion 4

He said: The financial economic crisis that has wrecked the world since 2008 was not an act of nature or an act of God. No, it was sparked by the actions of people, in particular, within the banks and finance sector. Since then it has unleashed unemployment, poverty and homelessness upon millions and millions of people across the globe. How has that happened and how was it allowed to happen? It happened because for 30 years we have been told that privatisation, deregulation and lowering tax at the top is the way to ensure prosperity. The market has been worshipped and, of course, it has all now blown up in their faces. They have created a class that is out of control, without any morals, a feral class. Unfortunately, in this case it is the feral class of billionaires who do whatever they want in order to boost their wealth and profits.

That banking collapse in 2008 prompted a collapse in private investment, and that collapse accounts for the loss of output and all the subsequent problems which we debate in relation to the deficit and so on. Our resolution, which has been incorporated into the composite, addressed, in particular, the question of the banks, because we need policies that are more now about addressing the fundamental problems in relation to the banks rather than simply bailing them out and propping them up at taxpayers' expense. We believe at the heart of that there has to be a debate around public ownership.

From what we have seen so far and what we have seen in response to the crisis is the privatisation of the gains but the socialisation of any losses. In other words, it is

socialism for billionaires but not for the rest of us. Despite that bailout at our expense, the banks still continue fail to lend and fail to provide investment, despite their profits and despite their return to bonuses. We believe that we need to put on the agenda the question of public ownership in the banking sector. We need a banking service that is aimed at serving the economy and the people, rather than a casino for billionaires. People will, of course, say that this is out-dated and a return to the 1970s and the 1980s. We, in our union, are proud that we still commit ourselves to socialism within our rule book, and we want a bit of socialism for us rather than simply for the billionaires at the top. Instead of them dictating to us the policies that are needed, we believe that the people need to start dictating to them the sort of policies which are needed to preserve our livelihoods, our homes and our jobs. We need to put that on the agenda from now. I support the composite.

Harriet Yeo (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*): Congress, I have a disability but I didn't cause this financial crisis. I know lots of other people with disabilities and they didn't cause this financial crisis, but they are paying for it, living in fear of their benefits being stopped. I know students, and they didn't cause the financial crisis, although they are paying £9,000 a year to help the country out of its debt. I know elderly people who are having their benefits eroded, and they are paying to help the country out of this crisis, but they didn't cause it. You didn't cause it. The bankers caused the financial crisis, and it should be the bankers who are paying for it.

Before this government came to power you would have imagined that the CBI and this government would be consistently singing from the same hymn sheet, but even the CBI are beginning to worry about this government's spending cuts. Just last

week, the CBI was voicing its concerns about the government's spending on transport infrastructure. I may not agree with the CBI's financing model, but I do agree that if we want this country not to come to gridlock, we must invest in our transport infrastructure, taking as much of the burden off the road as possible and putting it on to rail. If the CBI is castigating this government, then, surely, the government should realise that they have got it wrong and do what is needed to successfully grow the economy? Even the Bank of England are turning their backs on George Osborne. I look forward to the day when this country can do that as well.

Just last Thursday the Bank of England refused to turn on the top in a huge blow to George Osborne as he sought another multi-billion pound dose of electronic money to save the coalition's skin. Once again, to save the coalition's skin, he would risk the workers' very livelihood. The fact that the CBI, the Bank of England and, even according to some reports, the IMF head, Christine Lagrant, are turning their back on this rich man's government is bad. Even Argos is turning its back on George Osborne, asking him to think again about the spending power of the poorer households, but with average families set to be £4,000 a year worse off by 2013, it is going to take a massive u-turn for Argos's Terry Dudley to have his dream come true.

Let's face it, you need a backbone to admit you may have done something wrong and sort it out, and backbone is something that George Osborne lacked and, along with this government, a conscience.

The only people whose income seems set to climb, and in all probably will not be spending their money at Argos, are the high earners whose wealth has grown as the

average person's has fallen. Conference, I have got the red light now. I would ask you to pass this motion unanimously, and then with the TUC go on to pass this government into the realms of history, showing what they were – despicable, for reach people but not for the workers. (*Applause*)

Ian Fleming (*UNISON*) supported Composite Motion 4.

He said: Congress, we all know that there is a better way. Not the cut, cut, cut, but to stimulate economic growth and develop jobs and skills. We are seeing falling living standards for working people, pay cuts and pay freezes across the public services. This problem is being felt particularly acutely in the community and voluntary sector. UNISON has 60,000 members in that sector who provide essential services to vulnerable people and groups. For years they have been under pressure as the commissioning and procurement system forces organisations to cut costs to a bare minimum in order to survive. Pay is forced down and the quality of services suffers and much of our sector's expertise is wasted. It is years since most of our members in the community and voluntary sector have had any sort of pay increase. Indeed, many charities are now cutting pay. UNISON members in Quarriers – a charity which supports young people – were forced to take industrial action last week in a response to pay cuts of between 10% and 23%, and the employer's complete refusal to engage in constructive dialogue.

Members of the Nokia Housing Association have been hit with pay cuts and other reductions in terms and conditions which equate to between a 35% to 58% loss in pay. Other employers are using these tough times as a cover of cutting a range of terms, conditions and freezing pay. Employers are reducing redundancy arrangements to

make it cheaper to cut jobs and many are cutting maternity and paternity pay and annual leave entitlements. The effects on individual workers and their families are profoundly worrying.

UNISON recently researched the effect of the cuts to our members and their families. Worryingly, it shows that people's health is suffering. One person who was interviewed said that she felt suicidal as a result of the impact that the cuts were having on her ability to provide a decent service.

Bullying is an increasing problem and pressure is mounting on many middle managers to produce results with half the numbers of staff. Our members reported struggling to afford the basics for life, like food, energy, petrol and transport. So the cuts and many employers' response to them is causing a real fall in living standards. Low paid workers, providing essential services in our communities, will be made poorer by having their pay cut, and unemployment is rising as employers cut jobs to retain contracts. Society is becoming less equal.

We all know that this situation was created by the financial institutions and we know that there needs to be tighter control, regulation that protects the taxpayer and more transparency in reporting mechanisms. We need to focus on opportunities for young people.

Support the composite and let's make sure that the government and opposition provide active industrial policies, not like the recent employers' charter, but

something that will stimulate economic growth and safeguard and develop jobs and skills for the future.

Bob Crow (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) supported Composite Motion 4.

He said: I thought Brendan's speech was very interesting when he spoke about the history of the TUC and how the Labour Party was only two years' old when the Congress was last held in London. My union was one of several which moved the resolution for the founding of that Labour Party Congress in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon, which is just a mile down the road.

When Thomas Steel went to the rostrum, he moved that there should be a party of labour because at that time our union supported the Liberal Party. It was recognised over 109 years ago that you can have all the parties you want, but if you just massage the economy, you will continue to have booms and dips.

We have to recognise the fact that it is not just the Tory and Liberal policies that have been wrong, but Labour's policies for privatisation were wrong too. If we want to have real control over our economy, we should take over those industries. People said to me last week that if we take them over, there will be a lot of compensation to pay. I do not think we should pay a single penny of compensation. In fact, why should we pay compensation to the likes of *Electricité de France* and the people who have run away with billions of pounds in the water and energy industries? They should be paying us compensation. In fact, some of them should be getting six months inside for the way they have treated us.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, let us put forward an alternative solution. When bombs drop on Libya, Afghanistan and Iraq, the government finds the money just like that, in the same way that Rory McIlroy puts his hand down the hole of a golf green and picks a golf ball up. Why is it that if we can find money to destruct society, we cannot find money to construct society? (*Applause*)

My view is this. Do not bring the lame ducks back into nationalisation. That was Margaret Thatcher's old trick. She brought Rolls Royce back, she put taxpayers' money into it and gave it back to her friends in the City. Do not take the lame ducks back. Bring back the white swans to provide education, health, schooling and everything that we demand in a civil society. I ask you to support. (*Applause*)

Sheila Bearcroft (*GMB*) supported Composite Motion 4.

She said: The timing of this debate, Congress, is crucial in the economic life of the United Kingdom. We all know where to lay the responsibilities and the blame for the economic situation we are in today. It is not the fault of the workers in public services, the people surviving on a meagre benefits allowance or working people who do not earn enough to pay 50% tax.

Fair and square the bankers brought us to this crisis, turning the world's economy into a casino where they gambled but they always won. Black or red – if you are banker you cannot lose. Red – you get a massive salary with millions in bonuses. Black – you get someone else to pick up the bill and you get a massive salary and millions in bonuses.

As the banking crisis unfolded in 2009, Fred the Shred reportedly acted like someone off to play a game of golf. He was more interested in securing his huge pension than in the economic crisis he had helped to create. Bankers have, however, been a bit worried lately about what the Vickers' Commission report would say. In the past few weeks, they have been beating a path to their mates in No. 10. They have been worried about whether they might be reined in from the freedom to gamble with our lives and our children's futures.

Once again they have got their way. Unsurprisingly, the Vickers 'Commission report, which came out this morning, rejects putting a clear division between risky investment banking and the high street banking on which we rely. Instead, they are calling for a financial ring-fence. The question is how high and how wide will the ring-fence be? Will bankers skip over it easily or get their lawyers to find ways around it?

This is not the clear separation we want. It gives no guarantee that our money is not gambled away again. In any case, the coalition government looks likely to delay the implementation of these reforms until 2019, which leaves plenty of time for the bankers to accumulate more bonuses. No board member or senior executive of a bank which has been saved from failure by public funds should be allowed to hold a similar post. Colleagues, I will conclude by saying that in the Welsh alphabet, we have no "W" so I would send a clear message that must go out to the bloody "bankers" who brought Britain to the brink of bankruptcy. I support. (*Applause*)

Jerry Glazier (*National Union of Teachers*) supported Composite Motion 4.

He said: We have heard how devastating government economic policies are depressing and not stimulating the economy and how they have, and will have, devastating impacts upon society, especially upon the poor, the young and the old who are vulnerable. We desperately need economic policies which enhance opportunities and not restrict them.

The government's scrapping of the Future Jobs Fund and Education Maintenance Allowance ('EMA') is simply perverse. Contrary to government-speak, access to education through EMAs has made a crucial difference. EMAs have encouraged students to stay in education. EMAs have enabled students from poorer backgrounds to stay in education. EMAs have had a beneficial impact upon young people who have low or moderate achievement at the end of Year 11 in schools.

The cuts to EMAs will also destroy the contracts which exist between students, schools and colleges which ensure their attendance in education and support their progress. These cuts are also perverse at a time when the numbers not in education, employment and training (the so-called NEETs) have dramatically risen since the election of this government. Compared with 2010, they were up in July of this year by almost 18%, a depressing increase of almost 120,000. The total is now almost 800,000.

At the same time, over the past year, the government has set about the systematic destruction of Connexions, with a loss of thousands of jobs across the country. High-quality professional careers advice has been eradicated with responsibility placed

upon schools, which have little resource to make effective provision. Careers advice is to be largely provided by an online system for all, young and old, but a very poor substitute for direct contact and support for students seeking assistance with post-16 education and hard-to-find employment.

Congress, the NUT is committed to campaign for an economic strategy which boosts employment and creates a fair society for all. I ask you to vote for this crucial composite.

Paul Noon (*Prospect*) supported the General Council's statement but abstained on Composite Motion 4.

He said: My union's intervention in this debate is not to seek to persuade you to vote against the composite. We will not be voting in favour, but given the list of supporting unions, it will inevitably be carried. We are not fundamentally opposed to the composite. We agree with most of the text and recognise that in TUC composites there is a wide range of issues covered so even when we do not think the words are brilliant, we would not normally trouble Congress with an intervention.

However, like all other union delegations, we are here to represent the interests and views of our members. There is one aspect of the composite which we and our members will not, and cannot, support. The end of the last sentence of the fourth paragraph calls for re-nationalisation of key drivers of economic growth and wealth creation. The original RMT amendment gave energy, transport, water and telecommunications as examples and, although these are not included in the final text, there is no doubt that this is what is meant, as Bob confirmed with admirable clarity.

My union has a significant number of members in some of the areas targeted by the composite to return to the public sector, particularly throughout the electricity supply industry, in BT, O2, Vodafone and other mobile and fixed line operators. I have not met many, if any, who would now want a return to the public sector. In fact, most of the people there have never worked in the public sector, anyway. Of course, why would they – for the benefit of pay freezes, job cuts and underinvestment?

Things may be tough in the private sector, but Prospect represents professionals and managers throughout the economy and in recent times we have done much better, by any measure, in the private sector than in the public sector. The TUC has a long history of taking account of the views of union members in an industry before pronouncing on what should happen to them. I am sure we will do this when we come to pharmaceuticals later in the week.

Our clear policy, after consulting reps and members in ASI and telecoms, is against re-nationalisation. Of course, no government of any colour would do this. A policy of buying the companies and paying for the shares would create deficits which would make present economical troubles look like happy times. Re-nationalisation without compensation (that siren call of the 1970s) would wreck the UK's position as a trading nation. No one would do business with us. Just as a by-product, think of what it would do to the pension schemes which invest in these companies or to our members who own shares in them.

Finally, the call for re-nationalisation ignores the fact that the structure of these industries has changed since they were privatised. The telecoms industry in particular is vastly different with many players who did not exist doing things that had not been thought of at the time of BT privatisation.

Our public services, health, education, local and central government all require investment. We would be quite happy to support calls from the rail unionists to take their industry back, but a wholesale re-nationalisation of efficient and well-run companies would, in our view, be nuts. We support the General Council's statement and abstain on Composite 4. Thank you.

Dave Bean (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Composite Motion 4. He said: We share Unite's policy that there should be no cuts. Cuts only damage the economy and divide our movement. As we have seen in Greece and Ireland, cuts lead to more cuts. It is like the mediaeval quacks who kept cutting away the infected parts of the body and then wondered why the patient died.

Congress, the medical profession has learnt to treat the problem and not just to hack away at it and in economics we need to learn the same lesson too. We have to offer an alternative to the failed policies of George Osborne and his Cabinet of millionaires. That alternative cannot be based upon the demands of the City but on the demands of our people for jobs, decent pay and fair pensions.

That alternative needs to address the £120 billion in tax avoided, evaded or simply not paid and not let off those with Swiss bank accounts, as in the recent deal brokered by

Osborne, to collect only a fraction of the tax which they owe whilst being able to retain their anonymity.

On top of that, the Chancellor wants to cut the tax that the rich do actually pay. The scrapping of the 50% tax rate would be a disgrace and an insult to the poor and the vulnerable.

PCS supports the emphasis on green manufacturing and, alongside our sister unions, the CWU and the TSSA, produced the *One Million Climate Jobs NOW!* pamphlet, a considered and costed programme to create jobs and invest in industry which can also transform our economy into environmental sustainability.

The announcements today regarding the restructuring of the banks will not put things right. Our economy has to shift away from its dangerous over-reliance on a deregulated and risky finance sector. We need state-controlled banks which act and invest in the public interest. They should not invest in what produces the highest returns for an already super-rich elite but what creates a return for our communities.

Congress, did we nationalise the banks in the bail-out or did we just privatise public money? If we allow the same bankers to run our banks and economy again, how can we reduce inequality, how can we get investment in jobs and how can we stop the tax avoidance schemes which deprive us of the revenue to invest in decent public services and welfare for all?

Achieving our aims, a just economy, a more equal society and full employment requires us to be bold. That is why PCS is pleased to support Composite 4.
(Applause)

Maria Exall (*CWU*) supported Composite Motion 4.

She said: Free market liberalisation has been in force in our sector since the 1980s in telecom and since the 1990s in post. Yes, we agree with this composite; there is a major change in direction needed.

In the post, we have seen worse services for the customer and massive job losses, all set to accelerate if privatisation goes ahead. In telecoms, the boom industry of the late 20th century, there has been a great expansion of services, but the development of an infrastructure fit for the UK economy and society is held back by the liberal competitive model. Long-term investment has suffered, but nowhere more so than in the quality and spread of broadband and super-fast broadband.

We have called for greater government intervention to secure comprehensive coverage. The government need to consult with all the stakeholders to develop a proper strategy, a strategy that can deal with the digital divide which is becoming wider and wider in our society. We want a universal service obligation for broadband and we want Ofcom to have a duty to promote investment. We want investment of the 4G spectrum revenue back into the telecom sector and we want a requirement from employers in the telecom sector to provide workforce training – a bank of skills for the future. For all these reasons, we support an economic strategy which explores the benefits of taking back key drivers of economic growth into public ownership.

Further, any modern economy needs a financial services sector, but one which supports the real economy and job creation. The signs of the 2008 global crash and recession were apparent in the early 2000s. Do you remember the dot com bubble? Do you remember the collapse of WorldCom and Enron? This happened because of a combination of a fantasy economics and criminality.

Unfortunately, the fantasy and disconnection from reality continue. Every time George Osborne speaks on the ever-worsening monthly statistics and says that he is sticking to Plan A – that is “A” for austerity – he provokes a private sector investment strike. The problem is not public sector debt; it is private sector stagnation.

Congress, there is an alternative. The apparent laws of competition and profit are actually irrational and inhuman and they are an ideological excuse for exploitation and greed. There is an alternative to cheap labour, homelessness, unemployment, poverty and social division, which is democratic control and public ownership. That delivers better services. Rational planning and investment deliver better working lives for all. Industry must serve the people and not enslave them. Support Composite 4. Thank you.

Anita Halpin (*National Union of Journalists*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 4.

She said: President, Congress, it has been said in a book which has been read by millions, “The last shall be first.” I would like, first, to put on record that the NUJ is

pleased to support Composite 4. It has taken a long time for this movement of ours to adopt an alternative economic strategy.

I want to return to paragraph 1.7 which is what you might call a campaigning strategy, as I am sure Brendan would agree. It is a very strong statement with a very strong introduction and, yes, the fight must go on.

Brendan, our resources include our members. We may be best served, as we will debate later in the week, by you coordinating action, helping us to work and allowing us to express solidarity. That is the next debate on union rights.

However, you did allude to the fact – I will summarise the last paragraph – that the General Council has in mind that in addition to its normal affiliation fees adjustment, it would levy (my word, not yours) an additional 10p per member per year.

Lots of big unions make up the membership of this TUC, but the great majority are smaller specialist unions like my own. For me, as Treasurer of my union, £3,000 a year (which is what the 10p poll tax, to coin a phrase, might be what we are asked to pay) would give me a lot of leaflets for my colleagues at the BBC, who have already had two days out in striking for cuts and security. They will obviously be taking action on pensions as and when appropriate. It would certainly be a lot of money for my members at south Yorkshire, who have just gone back after 55 days of striking. It is only now that management are prepared to talk to them.

Last year, Brendan, you proposed this smaller Congress in alternate years – and you can have your say on that later – but it is important that the TUC is going to be able to fulfil the primary purpose of promoting trade unionists. You said that by saving money, you would be able to put more resources into recruitment, organising and those sorts of campaigns. It has to be the sort of campaign that we are talking about with “All Together; it is going to be a fight to the death.”

All I am saying on behalf of the NUJ, and maybe on behalf of some other smaller unions like my own, is that in October, when the General Council has a mind to consider the levy of 10p next year and the year after, could it also give consideration to the money that the smaller unions might be able to better use to maximise their resources as a movement? This is not meant to be a negative point, but I felt that it was something that somebody had to say.

We look forward to seeing each other and mobilising for whatever comes next. Maybe some of the money that we save will allow us to mobilise even better. I thank you for your time and I know the General Council will give it consideration.
(Applause)

The President: The General Secretary has said that he does not want the right of reply so we will vote first on the General Council’s Statement.

* *The General Council Statement was ADOPTED*

* *Composite Motion 4 was CARRIED*

Independent Commission on Banking

The President: I call now Motion 26, Independent Commission on Banking. The General Council supports the motion.

Ged Nichols (*Accord*) moved Motion 26.

He said: Today is a critical day for the future of our country, not just for the economic future but for the social and moral fabric of our society too. The publication today of report of the Independent Commission on Banking provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to learn the lessons of the financial crisis of 2007/08.

Before I talk about the ICB's recommendations to the government, let me take this opportunity to remind you of the impact of the failures of successive governments and financial regulators to impose methods to restrain greed and short-termism in the boardrooms of some of our largest financial institutions.

The bailing out of the Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds Banking Group, where the majority of my members work, cost UK taxpayers billions of pounds and pushed our country into massive debts and years of severe economic hardship. This has led to savage cuts in frontline public services, policing, healthcare and our armed forces, to name but a few, to the detriment of our society as a whole, hitting the most vulnerable and those least able to cope the hardest. It has also led to redundancies and reduced terms and conditions of employment. Those of you from unions representing people in the professions know full well that this is no fault of the workforce.

Public sector employees and those who depend upon the services they provide are rightly angry and they are paying the price for boardroom greed and incompetence. Let us also recognise that over 150,000 bank employees have lost their jobs since 2008, 30,000 of them in the Lloyds Banking Group alone. Bank staff are just as angry and bitter about the failures of their bosses, politicians and regulators as everyone else, perhaps even more so since those who still have jobs in a once-respected profession have seen it dragged through the mud and become a badge of shame rather than a badge of honour.

Accord's response to the Independent Commission on Banking's interim report focused upon three key strands that we thought were essential if banking was to be rehabilitated and society protected from a disastrous repeat of the financial crisis that we are still enduring. The first was to ring-fence retail banking away from investment banking. Secondly, banking needed to be based on professional advice rather than on a sales culture. Thirdly, there needed to be a greater focus on the need for a cultural change in banks since if the focus is merely on structures then the necessary lessons will not be learned and the seeds of the next financial crisis will be sown.

The report of the ICB today is welcome in so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It is welcome that the ICB has recommended a strict ring-fence between retail and investment banking. This hopefully means that never again will UK taxpayers have to bail out City bankers who constantly preach that they are risk-takers and wealth-creators but in reality they have socialised risk for privatised profit.

It is welcome that the ICB appears to have recognised that competition in the banking sector is determined by more than how many branches a particular bank may have. In particular, I believe that the Lloyds Banking Group should not have to sell off more branches than those already stipulated by the European Commission.

However, I am very disappointed that, on first reading, there does not appear to be recognition of the need to change the culture within UK banks and a core belief that the TUC should urge the government to focus more on changing the bank culture. What our country and our people need are decent banks, charging decent prices, doing decent things, serving our communities, serving customers and not foisting unwanted products upon them, supporting small and medium-sized businesses, making reparations to our society and to our economy for the damage that they have inflicted, helping to build a better Britain and, in doing so, providing decent work, secure jobs, fair rewards and dignity at work for their employees. *(Applause)*

Gail Cartmail (*Unite the Union*) seconded Motion 26.

She said: There was a lot riding on the outcome of the Vickers' Report, but we are not surprised that the banking lobby put pressure on the Independent Commission on Banking and the government to kick it into the long grass.

The banking lobby are masters of smokescreen and banks should be held to account and face appropriate penalties for their failures to increase lending to small and medium-sized enterprises and to curb bonuses under Project Merlin. Yet instead, what we have heard today are dire warnings of the consequences for the economy and a mass exodus of companies if the proposals go ahead.

Whatever the outcome, it is the workforce that is bearing, and will continue to bear, the brunt. As has been said, 150,000 jobs have been slashed across the sector since the start of the crisis in 2008. Workers face an increase in the pace, volume and intensity of work with fewer people to deliver it and to cope with the very often stressed-out customers.

Regulatory overhaul should improve professional standards, confidence and trust, but these changes will do nothing to tackle the workload or intense scrutiny that the workforce is under which has led to an increase in workers involved in performance improvement plans, who then face disciplinary processes on grounds of performance. Also, there is still no movement to close the appalling gender pay gap of 50% in the industry, as exposed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The drive for sales has not gone away. Sales targets continue to be an issue for our members. As long as remuneration policies are linked to sales targets, the potential will remain for future misselling scandals like the personal protection insurance.

The Vickers' report, as has already been said, missed a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make a real difference to those of us who deserve change for the better. The suggestion to create firewalls in 2019 will bring immediate uncertainty to workers across the sector. This morning, Sir John Vickers did not dissent from the assertion that the cost to the industry of these changes is roughly equivalent to the top bankers' bonuses. Nor can we help but notice that the Robin Hood transaction tax which we all support would represent a fraction of this cost.

We demand that the unbridled greed of bosses is curbed and the workforce protected from paying for the price of reform. (*Applause*)

The President: I will now call the General Secretary.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): President, Congress, let me reiterate the General Council's support for the Accord motion and its call for higher professional standards and proper staffing levels throughout the banking industry.

The General Council recognises the importance of this report by the Sir John Vickers' Commission, which is being published today, although, of course, we will need time to look at the detail. However, the initial strong impression is that it is merely tinkering around the edges of what is one of our central economic problems.

It goes without saying that we need safe banks so that we avoid a repetition of the 2008 crash and the colossal taxpayer bail-outs which followed. We need clear, strong, ring-fencing between investment and high street banking and tougher capital requirements too. These reforms need to be made as soon as practicable. They should not become victims of the special interest pleading by the bankers whose sole interest is to return to business and bonuses as usual.

In a sense, the Vickers' Commission was asked the wrong question because the bigger issue is not just how we make the banks safer, crucial though that is, but how we make them useful. How do we get the financial system to drive investment and create

jobs? How do we support businesses in the real economy? How do we get responsible credit flowing again?

We want our banks to become like utilities, supporting ordinary working people and the real wealth-creators in our economy, namely, manufacturing and communications, the creative industries. They may be businesses which do not deliver an immediate fast buck or a quick return on investment but potentially deliver lasting economic value. With growth stalling confidence on the floor and a double dip looming, we need a proper debate and radical thinking on how our banks can help us rebuild our economy in the long term.

Let us make the two banks which are part-owned by the taxpayer work on behalf of the public at last. Let us set up a proper green investment bank, free from Treasury restrictions, which has the financial clout to nurture the low carbon industries of the future. Let us think about a national investment bank and regional banks to support growth and jobs where they are needed most.

Congress, the kind of banking system we have is absolutely fundamental to the kind of economy that we have. For three decades, neo-liberalism allowed the banks to float free from the interests of the real economy with the catastrophic results that we have all seen. In the years ahead, we have to make the banks start working for us. If we can do that then we can lay down stronger foundations for a fairer economy. Thank you for listening. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Brendan. The right of reply from Accord is waived. We will go to the vote.

* *Motion 26 was CARRIED*

Employment rights

Trade union rights

The President: We now turn to Chapter 2 of the General Council's Report, Employment rights, Organising and rights at work, page 15. I call paragraphs 2.1 to 2.6 and Composite Motion 1, Trade union rights. The General Council supports the composite motion.

Len McCluskey (*Unite the Union*) moved Composite Motion 1.

He said: Sisters and brothers, this debate could be a ritual. Every year we unanimously vote for the compromise and then we get on with working within laws which we do not really expect to change. Congress, it is past the time that we took a different approach.

This composite makes clear what is needed. Let me read you just one sentence: "Congress calls on the TUC to develop an industrial strategy of resistance so that workers are not left to fight alone against draconian laws and exploiting bosses." What does "resistance" mean? It means learning from the student movement's struggles to support decent education and from the young people of UK Uncut taking direct action. It means building on the impetus of the magnificent trade union

demonstration *March for the Alternative* in March, the biggest in our history. It means learning from our best fighting traditions. It cannot mean meekly accepting the laws as they stand.

Unite has spent enough time going in and out of court arguing for the basic right of employees to collectively withdraw their labour at British Airways and elsewhere. Of course we must win the argument for trade union rights and use the language of fairness and freedom which resonates with those who are not our members. Let us remind people that trade unions are a power for good. From the abolition of child labour to the family-friendly policies of today, our movement has always stood on the side of the angels.

Our problems today are with the Tory/LibDem pantomime horse which is flirting with new anti-trade union laws, but it would be dishonest of us to pretend that this is not in some measure a bipartisan problem. The fact that we have come to the end of 13 years of a Labour government with the Thatcher laws still in place is a stain on Labour's record and a betrayal of its historic mission and purpose, spelt out by Brendan this morning, of advancing working people's rights. (*Applause*)

I welcome Ed Miliband's identification with trade union values. They are values which are shared, incidentally, by the majority of British people. However, we want to see empathy turned into policy, Ed, and a clear understanding that the next Labour government will recognise the value to our society of free trade unions and legislate accordingly.

Today, as the composite makes clear, the Bullingdon Bolsheviks in government are threatening to bring in still further laws to attack free trade unionism. They should be careful. My message to the government is this: push us outside of the law and you will be responsible for the consequences. We will bring Wisconsin to Westminster. Let it be clear, Prime Minister: we will not have our human rights taken away from us. Our movement does not speak for itself alone but for millions of decent people across the country who are not prepared to put up with more class legislation designed to make it harder for ordinary working people to stand up for themselves while the feral ruling class get away scot-free with their crimes. *(Applause)*

Congress, law is an essential thing for a civilised society but class law pushed through a Parliament full of expense cheats, by a cobbled-together coalition which no one voted for, is not going to paralyse me and it should not paralyse our movement.

In finishing, Chair, let me ask this question. Why should the working people of Britain (a country which has sometimes stood alone in the cause of freedom and democracy) enjoy fewer rights and freedoms than our brothers and sisters in France and Germany? How can that be right? Our rights, including the right to organise and struggle together for a better life for ordinary working people, are not the gifts of ministers and judges. They are ours to assert with confidence in the justness of our cause and our strength to secure it. *(Cheers and applause)*

Paul Kenny (*GMB*) seconded Composite Motion 1.

He said: We live in a country where politicians and media moguls talk about freedom. They talk about it with such self-righteous passion that it would bring a tear

to a glass eye. For so many of those dinner party evangelists what they really mean is a world away from the civil and political freedoms that this movement champions.

The TUC is no Johnny-come-lately to the demand for an end to repressive regimes across the globe. There are no excuses for protecting our exports and arms sales to avoid criticising regimes who torture their citizens and attack trade unions and civil groups. What is all this to do with our government and our country? It is the hypocrisy of their double standards.

Ministers admit that the right to strike is a basic human right and freedom, but they then threaten to outlaw or seek to frustrate that same right if you dare to exercise it. This is at a time and in a country where employment and trade union rights are shackled and abused to an incredible level.

This trade union movement has much to be proud of. Its values of decency, respect, tolerance and liberty have never wavered or been subject to the twists and turns of fashion. Would society really view homophobia or racism with the same disgust had it not been for trade union campaigns? I doubt it. On pensions, social housing, equality, tax benefits and health and safety, trade unions have campaigned and fought for social, political and industrial change when politicians and press barons called us loony or wreckers.

Our trade union movement has beliefs built on the experience of millions of working people. I am proud of my union and I am also proud of all of yours. We campaign for others to benefit. We are not threats to freedom but to greed, exploitation and hate.

That is why our ability to defend and promote the interests of working people by industrial action is feared by the CBI, political elites and employers who see their workforces as little more than compliant tools.

As Tory and Labour governments over the last 30 years introduced or maintained the anti-worker legislation, we carried on, adapted, hoped for better and tried to continue to protect people at work. We have had to deal with judges, union-busting firms, legal inducements and victimisation, but a line in the sand has now been drawn. More anti-union laws are being threatened, no doubt on the back of public sector workers fighting to save their pensions, jobs and our services, a fight about to be joined by millions of others.

Bad laws have to be broken. Civil disobedience in protest at the erosion of civil liberties and freedoms has a place in our history. Let us be proud of what we have done, what we do and most of all what we will be prepared to do in order to protect and reinstate the freedom to organise working people for social justice. If we cannot do that, what is our purpose? If we do not fight to protect our health service and our futures then who will? In the months ahead, we will be assaulted on all sides by business, political parties and the media, but so be it. The freedom to organise, defend and protect the right to strike are not abstract phrases from the past but a living values.

The President: Could you wind up, Paul, please?

Paul Kenny: I will do. I am well wound up, actually! *(Laughter)* Millions of people, inside and outside of trade unions, can and will fight. If going to prison is the price to pay for standing up to bad laws, then so be it. As long as I do not have to share a cell with some expense-fiddling MP, I will put my name in the frame. To those who say that the time is not right or people are not ready, I say that the clock has stopped. Let us make it clear: we will give politicians the biggest campaign for civil disobedience that their tiny little minds could ever imagine. I am happy to second.
(Applause)

John Rimmer *(NASUWT)* supported Composite Motion 1.

He said: Congress, over the last 16 months, working people in this country have been subjected to a relentless attack by the coalition government. No part of a working person's life has been left untouched. Regulation and good practice guidance has been ignored, pay has been frozen, the value of pensions reduced, working conditions worsened and thousands of jobs lost. Safety at work has been seriously compromised. Justified protests have been met with threats to further reduce trade union rights, remove the facility of those who represent workers and to restrict access to justice by creating even higher hurdles for abused employees to seek redress.

Where regulations have remained untouched, the coalition has created a climate where employers act with impunity, flouting the law at the expense of workers' rights. When the government issued its declaration of war – its open assault on workers' rights with the Employer's Charter – it signalled open season for the employers to please themselves and ride roughshod over our country's workforce.

The coalition's declaration that Britain is open for business has created conditions where employers are able to sack workers during the first two years of their employment, employers are exempt from a wide range of employment laws and reduced statutory sick pay. This is not Britain open for business; this is Britain up for exploitation and abuse.

Working people need more protection and representation than ever before. We need to be clear about this government's intent to attack trade union rights through even more regressive legislation – we have some of the most restrictive legislation in the western world – to remove our fundamental right to take industrial action. Many of our most important rights are enshrined in the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, such as the freedom of association, the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Congress, these fundamental rights are under attack from the coalition government's intent to break trade unions. We are under siege from a government intent on maximising profits whilst working families suffer and workers' rights are obliterated. Congress, support Composite Motion 1 and show this capitalist government that Congress is determined to protect and defend all working people and all working families through effective trade union action. (*Applause*)

Lorraine Monk (*University and College Union*) supported Composite Motion 1.

She said: The trade union movement was built on the ideal of the rights of people – the right to work, the right to be freed from wage slavery, the right to association, the right to free speech and the right to express our dissatisfaction by demonstration.

Public demonstrations forced the Tolpuddle Martyrs to be pardoned and established the right to belong to a trade union over 170 years ago. The matchgirls' strike, the dockers' strike, the battles of Cable Street and demonstrations against the poll tax are all demonstrations which reflected the concerns of the people who fundamentally disagreed with the government of the day and whose actions led to change.

With a Parliamentary democracy which allows the vote only once in five years and a Parliament itself so remote from real people's lives, the right to protest is more important than ever. On December 10th, 2010, I stood with other lecturers and students unable to get to Parliament to lobby against the rise in tuition fees, to object to the privatisation of education and to the end of the idea of education for all. We stood doing nothing by the Cenotaph in the cold and dark. There were no gangs, no hoodies and no children's monsters conjured up by the tabloids. It was just young and old people standing together for education.

We were charged at by the mounted police. They thundered down Trafalgar Square pushing us onto the other police lines which barred the way to Parliament. They did not care who was hurt. Like many other people that day caught up in the violence, I complained but was told that the Police Reform Act 2002 excludes any complaint related to the direction and control of a police force by the chief officer or anyone

under his delegated authority. In other words, whatever the police do to innocent protesters on any day of protest cannot be investigated or challenged.

This is reminiscent of totalitarian regimes which allow no criticism. The letter began by saying that the Metropolitan Police wanted feedback to reflect on the ways in which they could – wait for this – “improve their service delivery”. Well, on their service delivery, they should stop trying to beat us into submission. My feedback is that the police should uphold the right to peaceful protest. The government must not harass and kettle protesters under the pretence of security. Finally, we must repeal the section of the Police Reform Act 2002 which stops the actions of a chief officer or anyone else being called into question and being held to account for their disgraceful harassment of innocent protesters and brutality against young people, many of whom were marching for the first time in their lives on that day.

Make no mistake, it is the government which is to blame. We must resist any use of the police to suppress the discontent of the people. We must defend our hard-won rights and our hard-won welfare state. We must defend the right to protest. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

Michelle Stanistreet (*National Union of Journalists*) spoke in support of Composite 1.

She said: Just last week Rupert Murdoch wrote a letter in News Corporation’s annual report and spoke of the major black eye the company has received from the phone hacking scandal. I can think of many who may like to dispense rather more than a black eye to the man ultimately responsible for the cynical closure of a newspaper in a

desperate act of damage limitation, not least the 280 staff who lost their jobs, and the scores more freelancers and casuals whose incomes were slashed overnight.

Murdoch went on to say, as he did at the infamous Parliamentary hearing, that this episode has been the most humbling of his career, yet with his actions it is clear that he lacks humility now just as he did 25 years ago when he used the full force of his influence brutally to break the unions with the backing of the courts, the police, and the government, as instruments of his will. Murdoch did Thatcher's dirty work then and in his wake came many more employers hell-bent on keeping unions out. Murdoch's reward was a loophole in the UK recognition laws to use his puppet News International Staff Association as a mechanism to block unions seeking recognition. Journalists who have been made redundant or summarily dismissed since the *News of the World* closure have found out to their peril just how seamless the links between the company and their staff association really are.

Journalists at Wapping have been denied the collective protection and representation of an independent trade union for decades. There is a clear parallel between the effect of union-busting and the moral vacuum that has been allowed to proliferate at News International. Collective trade union representation is a moral human right and it is high time Murdoch was forced to let the NUJ back in. The NUJ code of conduct governs all our members and is at the heart of what we stand for as a union. It is high time that journalists had the right to a conscience clause in law so that when they stand up for a principle of journalistic ethics they have a protection against being dismissed.

Far from being humbled, Murdoch's lies keep coming. Ever since the hacking scandal broke the blame has been squarely placed on anyone but those closest to Murdoch, not just for the culture and for the unethical practice but for the carefully woven cover-up. For the hundreds of ordinary journalists sacrificed it is the end of a career, the loss of their livelihoods, and reputational damage on a scale that no one can yet quantify, whilst those at the top get away with impunity. Rebekah Brooks' eventual resignation came with a huge pay-off, a chance to travel the world on Rupert's tab, and the promise of another job when this blows over. We now know that Andy Coulson was taking Murdoch's shilling even when he was installed in Downing Street, and James Murdoch presided over the cover-up pushing the lie that this scandal was the actions of a single rogue reporter, a lie that only emerged with the revelation that the phone of Mersey teenager, Milly Dowler, had been hacked and her messages listened to and deleted. So, the absence of genuine humility and lack of personal responsibility could not be clearer when Murdoch says: "The behaviour carried out by some employees of the *News of the World* is unacceptable and does not represent who we are as a company. It went against everything that I stand for."

We believe that this scandal shows exactly what Rupert Murdoch and his sidekicks stand for: power at all costs, contempt for our politicians and our police who fell over themselves to do his bidding, and an interest in journalism and the media only because it furthers his commercial influence. This is another Wapping moment in our history. We want Congress to lead the way and ensure that we right the wrongs of union-busting at News International, that we deliver union recognition back to the union, and that ethical journalism is protected from the bosses with the introduction in law of a conscience clause. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Steve Gillan (*The Professional Trade Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers*) supported Composite 1.

He said: In what should have been a celebration, the 50th anniversary this year with regards to the signing of the European Social Charter which heralded member states and their citizens the social rights with which to improve their standard of living and social wellbeing, unfortunately, it did not extend as far as Great Britain. The reality is that since the Thatcher anti-trade union laws came in we have some of the most restrictive laws in Europe. Unfortunately, and let's be absolutely clear about this, it is not just a past Conservative government or this coalition government, a Labour government had every opportunity to get rid of the anti-trade union laws in this country, and they did not. They abandoned decent hardworking workers. To restrict them in this way is shameful.

In supporting Composite 1 my union knows only too well about the restrictions. We have been restricted since 1994 under the Criminal Justice Public Order Act, section 127, which makes it illegal for prison officers to take any form of industrial action. Unfortunately, governments do not look at trade unions as the solution to many problems; they see us as the problem. We have made applications to the International Labour Organisation in respect of the restrictions that we have. In many cases the ILO has come back and said where the government have chosen to restrict the POA, and prison officers, under the guise of essential services, then they should have adequate compensatory mechanisms for resolving pay and industrial relations matters. That has not happened. Since 1994, we have been deprived of that. In actual fact,

you could say where others have collective bargaining, we have collective begging. That is the reality.

I am pleased to say that this week the POA will be lodging our case with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for the right to strike, and I would like to thank John Hendy QC for assisting us with that application. Speaking in support of the composite, we have some of the most anti-trade union legislation in Europe. I will make it absolutely clear on behalf of the POA that if it is the will of our members, irrespective of the law, and they wish to protect themselves against any government who are tampering with their pensions or the collective bargaining issues and want to take action, then we will defy the law and take that action. Thank you.
(Applause)

Glenroy Watson *(National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)*
supported Composite 1.

He said: Good morning, President. Good morning, Congress. Comrades, we must be very clear when we are confronted, as the mover has said, by people who do not agree with us. What we are faced with – this is the reality – is that those who are demanding another way, their way, about the consultation of our members, speak from a point of hypocrisy. We must not be shy about that.

The reality is that with many of the people who are trying to have a go at the trade union movement about the way in which we consult our members on industrial action, when we compare the means by which they have gained power, we know it does not reflect or represent anybody. The reality is that we are governed in this country by a

group of people who have no mandate. Their position was never put to the country. This is a coalition of convenience. This is a condemned coalition. How dare they raise that spectre to us.

When we see the behaviour of people such as the Mayor of London trying to challenge the work that we are doing to defend our members' jobs, we realise that we are faced with hypocrisy and we have to challenge these people. We have to say that we are the only ones where, for every policy and every action that we take, we go back to the members to seek their views. We do not act in a way that lacks even the basic consultation after we have been elected. So, where do they come from? The reality, comrades, is that if we were getting it wrong, if we were not representing our members, if we were not taking effective action against these attacks on our members, they would not care.

It is because we are successful, it is because we are doing the right thing and it is because the members are defending and acting on behalf of what we are doing that hypocrisy is actually raising its head. Support Composite 1 and let's actually ensure that we speak with strength and power. Thank you, comrades. (*Applause*)

* *Composite Motion 1 was CARRIED*

The government's deregulation agenda

The President: I call Composite Motion 2, The government's deregulation agenda.

The General Council supports the composite motion.

Paddy Lillis (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) moved Composite 2.

He said: Congress, employment rights and basic regulations covering the workplace are at the heart of getting a decent deal for workers. These rights include employment rights, such as the right to go to a tribunal over unfair dismissal, the right to be consulted over redundancies, the right to have terms and conditions protected if your business is transferred to another employer. It also includes rules over health and safety and the protection of equality and anti-discrimination legislation. All this is now under threat. The Tory-led coalition is starting to make the case for sweeping changes to individual and collective employment rights.

Earlier this year the government launched a so-called Red Tape Challenge. The government say they want to tackle over-regulation, reduce bureaucracy, and cut red tape, but in reality it is an attack on workers' employment rights, it is about reducing the rules and regulations that employers have to comply with. What the Tories mean by red tape is the existence of basic rights for people at work. Only last week reports emerged that David Cameron wants to look at the agency workers' regulations. The government seem to blame basic employment rights as being in some way responsible for the slow economic recovery. They are wrong. The economic downturn was not caused by excess regulation but by unregulated financial markets. There is no evidence that deregulation creates jobs. Fair regulation should be an essential part of a modern economy, a key element of a modern labour market.

Scrapping employment laws will do great damage to the United Kingdom workplaces and the rights and safety of workers. Scrapping employment laws will do greater

damage to workplaces and all rights. The workers who will suffer the most will be the low paid and the most vulnerable in society. Congress, employment rights and workplace regulations exist to offer workers a basic protection while at work and it will be the worst employers who will benefit most from the deregulation. The United Kingdom is one of the least regulated labour markets amongst the developed countries and the Tory-led coalition is seeking to target and erode the minimal rights that workers have at work.

How do we respond to the challenge? Earlier this year as part of the Red Tape Challenge the government announced a review of Sunday and Christmas Day trading hours. We encouraged Usdaw members and reps up and down the country to respond to the consultation. They did respond in their thousands and brought down the website. In fact, Vince Cable said at the British Retail Consortium Conference that the Red Tape Challenge on trading hours had backfired and that workers who wanted regulation were bombarding the website and making their voices heard.

Congress, deregulation is a major threat. We have to respond to that challenge and there may be many different ways for the trade union movement to make its voice heard. We need to mobilise trade union members to get involved and, if necessary, continue to bombard government online consultations, such as the Red Tape Challenge. We need to get the message across loud and clear that workers want more employment rights and they want strong regulation in the workplace. We need to make the case for rules and regulations in the workplace. We need to lobby for workers' rights, we need to campaign for employment rights, and we need to raise the

challenge when the Tories and their Lib-Dem friends start making the case for deregulation. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Ged Nichols (*Accord*) seconded Composite 2.

He said: To describe legislation that provides basic protection for vulnerable workers as red tape and a burden on business is, frankly, dishonest and pathetic. If you run a business, then you have to accept the responsibilities that go with it. Good employers know that treating workers well brings rewards. Well-treated workers are more productive and more likely to stay, cutting costs on litigation and recruitment.

One of the many troubles with this government is that they swallow all the business whingeing and look at employment legislation from the wrong end of the telescope. In fact, the reality is that the number of cases in the tribunals each year is a tiny proportion of the total UK workforce and, in any case, if all employers operated like the good ones it would do much more to reduce the rate of litigation than illiberal attempts to deny justice to workers who have been badly treated.

The disgraceful Employers' Charter was supposed to reassure employers that they could sack people quite easily and that therefore no changes to legislation were required. It backfired and backfired completely, partly because it was wildly inaccurate and misleading but also because it was a licence from the government to treat employees badly, which no fair-minded employer would want to do. A responsible government should be focusing on how to enforce employment law more effectively, as the previous government was doing, and give proper funding to ACAS and the Health & Safety Executive, and other statutory bodies, rather than setting up

feeble gimmicks like the Red Tape Challenge. They should acknowledge that real evidence that regulation does not hurt business or damage the economy does not exist.

I second. (*Applause*)

Leslie Manasseh (*Prospect*) supported Composite 2.

He said: I want to address specifically the proposed changes which affect access to employment tribunals. The agenda is very clear here. The government want fewer ET cases and so, probably, do we, but instead of considering how to moderate the conduct of employers which gives rise to those cases in the first instance, the strategy is to make it harder for workers to have their case heard. As ever the assumption is that too many workers are making unjustified claims rather than too many employers are treating people unfairly and unlawfully.

The facts simply do not bear this out. Of course, there are examples of poor and opportunistic cases but these are a very small minority. In virtually all cases employment tribunals are the very last resort for a worker when all else has failed. There are plenty of existing procedural safeguards which both encourage conciliation and prevent weak cases from taking up time unnecessarily. That is why almost 50% of cases are settled before any hearing takes place.

Of course, the devil is in the detail. Some of the proposals in isolation can be portrayed as relatively minor but taken together they constitute a major attack on the right of workers to get redress for unfair treatment; none of them works to the benefit of the claimant, all of them tilt the balance further in favour of the employer. It is deliberate, it is calculated and it is carefully thought out. As Ged said, treating people

fairly at work is not a burden on business, it is a basic right that should be at the heart of any civilised society and it is a right that needs to be enforced.

The UK already has one of the most lightly regulated employment markets in Europe. Reducing access to employment tribunals will further erode such rights that exist and put a price on them that will hit the most vulnerable workers the hardest. For example, increasing the length of service threshold to two years for unfair dismissal claims will disproportionately hit black and minority ethnic workers who are more likely than white workers to have less than two years' service.

Here is an idea. One straightforward way for the government to reduce the number of employment tribunal cases is to encourage workers to join a trade union. Our early intervention in workplace problems is the best, quickest and cheapest way of resolving them. Of course, the real intention is not to resolve problems, it is to prevent them being heard and in so doing give employers even more licence to ignore basic and fair employment standards. Please support. (*Applause*)

Andy Kerr (*The Communications Union*) supported Composite 2. He said: Congress, the composite is absolutely essential in taking a stand against the government's deregulation agenda and defending the hard-won rights of workers throughout the UK economy. I want to focus in particular on the situation facing temporary agency workers who form one of the most vulnerable sections of the UK workforce.

The CWU and other TUC-affiliated unions have campaigned hard for equal rights for agency workers for many years in a determination to bring about change, and play a critical role in the adoption of the EU Temporary Agency Workers Directive in 2008. This directive is due to be implemented into UK law under the Agency Workers Regulations coming into force on 1st October 2011. Whilst the forthcoming regulations will create new rights for agency workers, we have serious concerns that they contain a number of weaknesses, which means that many agency workers will not receive equal treatment intended under the EU Directive. One problem area is that regulations allow for an opt-out, which means that agency workers on a permanent contract with an agency and in receipt of pay between assignments are exempt from equal pay. If agencies move their workers to permanent contracts with a minimum of pay for one hour a week between assignments, they can avoid paying them equally with permanent employees. Agencies are already applying this tactic to avoid equal treatment.

If the Agency Workers Regulations are implemented to protect agency workers as the EU Directive set out to do, they need strengthening, as does the government's guidance to employers. In particular, they must properly enshrine the government's obligation under the EU Directive to prevent misuse in the application of the principle of equal treatment for agency workers. There is real concern where reports in the press this week suggest the Prime Minister has sought legal advice on watering down the forthcoming Agency Workers Regulations. Whilst this raises serious alarm bells, it nevertheless typifies the government's general approach and demonstrates that we must campaign hard both to strengthen and to resist any weakening of employment

rights. Congress, I ask you wholeheartedly to support Composite 2. Thank you.

(Applause)

Dave Allen (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) supported Composite 2.

He said: When the government talks about deregulation and employment law they mean only one thing, giving companies greater power to get rid of workers while avoiding any kind of natural justice. The government's proposals are a sacker's charter. The claims that this is being done to encourage companies to hire staff is completely false, with no grounds whatsoever. The reason companies are not hiring more workers is not because employment laws are too strict, it is simply because government policies have stalled the economic recovery. Rather than looking to take workers on, many companies are laying people off.

UCATT operates in an industry where half the workers are officially self-employed or are forced to work under the banner of bogus self-employment with no rights at all. Even if you are directly employed the nature of the industry means that contracts are often shorter than a year. Many workers in the construction industry spend the majority of their working lives without any employment rights. Frequently, we find cases of workers who have worked with the same company employer for many years but do not even have a written contract. It is a scandal and an outrage that workers in a so-called fair society that is supposed to have equality for all are treated in this manner. To suggest that by extending the unfair dismissal rules from one year to two years will result in more construction workers being recruited is the logic of a simpleton. It is the argument being made by a government which is entirely out of

touch with all reality, a government that does not know and does not care how industries operate.

Congress, it is entirely right that we should be opposing these policies. We must fight them all the way. Cutting employment rights will cause increased employment insecurity for all. As a movement we need to be fighting harder to ensure that in future all workers have employment rights and that they cannot be undermined by false self-employment or evasion attempts by employers. We need to send a clear message to this government to ensure that the hire and fire culture of employers who exploit workers is ended once and for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Iain Loughran (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) supported Composite 2.

He said: The CSP wish to highlight our particular concerns about the government's proposals to increase the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims from one year's service up to two years' service. This change would result in up to three million workers in the UK having a significant cut in their employment rights and as appears standard with this government's agenda it is those least able to afford it who will have to pay. It is young workers, female workers and workers from ethnic minority backgrounds who are much more likely to have less than two years' service and would be unable to bring a claim for unfair dismissal. That means if you are dismissed by a bullying boss, or on competence grounds with no investigation, or just before you reach your two years' service, then that dismissal will be fair. Although we know it certainly is not fair, we will not be able to challenge it any more. That does seem very unfair.

We know it is costly to take legal action; it costs time, it costs money, and it is very stressful for all involved, but we all know it is a vital part of maintaining good employment rights for all of our members. As union reps and as members we work hard on resolving disputes in the workplace to avoid unnecessary legal action, hard work that saves the public sector up to £400m a year. We will keep working hard to resolve disputes, especially those that affect the most vulnerable in society, and we will keep fighting hard to protect employment rights, especially the ones that protect the most vulnerable in society, and I hope we will start now by supporting this composite motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

* *Composite Motion 2 was CARRIED*

Vulnerable and atypical workers

The President: Now I call Motion 10, Vulnerable and atypical workers. The General Council supports the motion.

Luke Crawley (*Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union*) moved amended Motion 10.

He said: The amended motion lists the workers covered by this motion. All of these workers are groups that are ripe for trade union recruitment. All of these workers have been increasing in number in the workplace and unscrupulous employers use them to reduce their costs at the expense of the workers' rights. The motion refers to them as "vulnerable" because they often feel they have little or no power to protest at their treatment or to join with others in the workplace to try and improve their

position. They are atypical because they do not fit easily into the neat definition of someone directly employed by a company and paid at least the national minimum wage for a defined number of hours per week.

BECTU, one of the biggest unions in broadcasting, has thousands of freelance members engaged in a variety of contracts working on film, TV production, and increasingly in theatres. We have members engaged through agencies. We have members engaged who are self-employed. We have all kinds of workers, many of whom could be classed as atypical. Our main focus on vulnerable workers in the media is to try and help those who are new to the world of work, those who are most easily exploited because of their ambition to work in the media. Employers take them on as interns, so called, and pay them little, often nothing. We have been campaigning for several years and have successfully taken cases to employment tribunals. Most recently we made use of the new HM Revenue & Customs complaint procedure. Our member was taken on as a runner/driver working on a film production for expenses only. He came to us when they would not even pay his expenses. The HMRC complaints procedure worked. Our member was awarded the national minimum wage for the hours that he worked, and expenses.

More recently, we launched a website. It is online at www.creativetoolkit.org funded by the Union Learning Fund. Its main aim is to try and get the message across to young people who want to work in theatre, TV or film-making that they are workers and that they do have rights, and it provides information on training, insurance, health and safety, as well as suggesting to them they may consider the possibility of joining a trade union, and obviously we would like that to be BECTU. Our communications

officer, Sharon Elliott, has done a great deal of work on that site and thanks are due to her. The site celebrates the drive and enthusiasm of those new to the industry whilst giving them the confidence to insist that they be paid for what they do, a novel concept for some young people, unfortunately. It also points out the benefits of joining a union, as I have already said. It was confirmed last week that HM Revenue & Customs will now be targeting the film and television industry as an area where this kind of practice is prevalent.

As I said at the beginning, these kinds of practices are becoming more and more widespread across many industries and this motion calls on the TUC to convene a meeting of interested unions to share their experiences. This is an area where unions could and should be recruiting and organising members. Support the proposition and help us to do that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Jeff Broome (*Union of Shop, distributive and Allied Workers*) seconded Motion 10. He said: Congress, Usdaw welcomes the motion from BECTU on vulnerable and atypical workers because as trade unionists protecting vulnerable workers is at the heart of what we do. We need to extend the protection of union membership to those who need it most. That is why it is important that the TUC continues to campaign on the issues of vulnerable and agency workers. Congress, we believe in fairness and we believe in giving everyone a voice at work. The trade union movement rightly welcomed the Agency Workers Regulations. These are important regulations which will deliver key new rights to many vulnerable workers. However, if these new rights are to deliver equal treatment we need to ensure there is effective enforcement, trade union representation for agency workers and trade union organisation of this group of

vulnerable workers. Congress, without enforcement, representation and organisation, the new rights for equal treatment will fail to deliver for agency workers. This also has big implications on the core workforce because the continuing exploitation of vulnerable workers will undermine and erode the terms and conditions of the permanent workforce.

Usdaw has launched its own agency workers campaign. Our aim is to ensure that agency staff know their rights and to organise agency workers to get equal treatment. We have successfully launched our new website, *Unfair Ground*, and have provided guidance and information for agency workers' reps and officials. We have also made good use of e.com to reach out to this group of workers. We are winning the hearts and minds of trade union activists in the core workforce. We also understand the importance of attacking the exploitation of vulnerable workers and we all stand together. Congress, Usdaw welcomes the TUC work on vulnerable workers, particularly the new Basic Rights at Work website, which will provide vulnerable workers with vital information. We need to work together to extend this work, in particular to organise vulnerable workers. Please support. Thank you for listening.

(Applause)

Ravi Kurup (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Motion 10.

He said: Congress, I draw your attention to the second paragraph of this motion. This is not a new issue; PCS already had to deal with the issues of these new working practices many years ago. When the last government and the chancellor, Gordon Brown, mooted job cuts in the civil service we identified that such job cuts would lead to malpractices in the employment industry. Long ago we argued for the proper

compliance of employers, gangmasters, the minimum wage and and stringent enforcement.

Job cuts in the civil service have made it impossible to police the rogue employers who are spreading the use of atypical employment practices. For example, HMRC is responsible for the compliance of employment, self-employment and companies paying the minimum wage, whereas Defra has the responsibility for gangmasters, and the Health & Safety Executive for health and safety laws. The fact is an atypical worker is actually a failure of the regulatory process. The government departments have lost the workers and when the migrant workers are coming in in large numbers, coupled with the loss of jobs, we are unable to regulate the practices. Whilst we campaign for stronger action against atypical workers we must also campaign against job cuts in the civil service. For example, if you do not have enough inspectors to look at the issues of employment, self-employment, the status of migrant workers, the companies who bring in malpractices, the minimum wage or people who smuggle human beings into the UK, then what happens is that people will suffer at the end of the day. The poor people suffer.

What I am asking you to do is this. Whilst you support this motion you must also fight the job cuts in the civil service because of the regulatory processes. Any motion you pass will not come to fruition because you need people to enforce the regulations. Without regulations poor people will not get justice. Therefore, a stitch in time will save nine. It is time for us to put up a fight against job cuts and support the poor migrant workers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

* *Motion 10 was CARRIED*

Payroll companies

The President: I now call Motion 11, Payroll companies. The General Council supports the motion.

George Guy (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) moved Motion 11.

He said: Congress, UCATT has a wealth of experience in dealing with construction companies, subcontractors, agencies and the like. However, we have seen a shift in employment status over many years from direct employment to false self-employment. This type of work for many construction workers has seen the protection that employment legislation gives taken away. For instance, UCATT has since the introduction of the Working Time Regulations pursued, and continues to pursue, countless claims for holiday pay through employment tribunals where we have been extremely successful. However, in order to skate round such obligations industry has adopted new methods of employment, such as composite and umbrella companies, and in recent years payroll companies where individuals receive a contract of service as opposed to a contract of employment. The use and interpretation of these contracts has become more complex over the years.

The construction workers' entitlement to employment rights and protection, which many other workers take for granted, has been eroded. The shift to false self-employment within construction means that in excess of 50% of workers are now

engaged by this method. It is often the case that in order to gain employment workers reluctantly sign away their rights. Over the last couple of years we have seen a shift to payroll companies. These companies have absolutely nothing to do with construction, they put nothing into the industry, yet they make a tidy living from those working in it. They are what you would call parasites.

Let's just examine the role of a payroll company. The largest one I believe to be Hudson Contract Services, who say that their aim is to reduce the tax burden for over a thousand UK construction companies operating under the Construction Industry Tax Scheme. In one year alone they say they saved clients over £25m in employers' National Insurance contributions simply by the client placing the tax and employment law liabilities with them. Hudson claim to have contracted and paid over 75,000 individual construction workers under the construction industry tax scheme. In January this year the *Daily Mirror's* investigation exposed how companies and employment agencies through payroll companies can easily register workers as self-employed when in reality they are employees. By using the payroll companies to register workers as self-employed the companies concerned can avoid paying employers' National Insurance contributions. As the workers are officially classed as self-employed, they are denied even the most basic employment rights meaning that they could be sacked without notice or reason, they do not receive redundancy pay, holiday pay, sick pay, they do not have a pension entitlement, and in a perverse twist the workers themselves rather than the contractors they work for have to pay the payroll company for its services. The payroll companies need to deduct the flat rate fee of between £15 and £20, or a percentage of earnings, directly from the workers' pay. It simply cannot be that agencies or payroll companies can decide whether an

individual is self-employed or not. That is clearly the role of the Revenue & Customs. At a time when this government is imposing massive cuts in public spending, it seems inconceivable that the money being lost to the Treasury in this manner goes unchallenged.

As a union we have met with the Revenue & Customs on a number of occasions and they too are growing concerned and alarmed, as we are, at the growth of payroll companies within industry in general. We have campaigned as a trade union for many years against the use of false self-employment. Every worker should be directly employed and covered by legislation, even though that legislation is the most basic legislation. The use of payroll companies is not confined to construction. Unfortunately, the practice which was once peculiar to our industry has now spread to others, including agriculture and, as the amendment to the motion refers, aviation. Most affiliates will at some time in the future be faced with the same problem. This situation clearly must be challenged and that is why we call upon the General Council to campaign actively for a change in the law which will prevent agencies or payroll companies dictating whether an individual is classified as self-employed. Congress, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Jim McAuslan (*British Air Line Pilots' Association*) seconded Motion 11.

He said: In an attempt to offload risk a growing number of employers are unfairly forcing pilots to register themselves as self-employed. This should be a concern to every passenger and every taxpayer in this country. Like many unions, we are concerned about workers who are to all intents and purposes employees but are forced to register themselves as self-employed. Perhaps the courts are waking up to this as

the recent Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Autoclenz Ltd. v Belcher* found that the presence of a substitution clause previously seen as a knockout blow to prove that there was not a contract of employment was in fact an empty vessel. BALPA is encouraging fellow trade unionists and the TUC to use that judgment to launch a major attack on the abuse by employers of self-employed status.

BALPA's concern goes much wider than employment status. We believe that the practice goes against our own Civil Aviation Authority's regulations, which say that the employment of freelance flight crews may only be used in exceptional circumstances. In some airlines, and you know who I mean and I cannot name them because my lawyer will not let me say it, the exception is fast becoming the norm to the point where the majority of pilots are actually operating under these freelance contracts not knowing from one week to the next where they are going to be based or whether or not they are going to have any work. As well as safety, we have the issue of this bogus self-employed status, as the mover has said, leading to a major loss to the Exchequer. This is aggravated when some airlines (and you know who I mean) insist that people are not only self-employed but they have to set up a limited company with fellow pilots and register themselves offshore in a foreign land. BALPA knows that many individuals have had to go along with this façade because they are desperate for work in the current economic climate. Not only are these people employees, they are also UK residents and should be paying UK tax; it is a huge loss to the UK Exchequer.

Bogus self-employment is bad for jobs, bad for safety, and bad for the country. The government should act now, and so should we. It is our bread and butter. Let's challenge this practice. I second. (*Applause*)

* *Motion 11 was CARRIED*

Employment law

The President: Now I call Motion 12, Employment law. The General Council supports the motion.

Ronnie Draper (*Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union*) moved Motion 12.

He said: The motion actually focuses on a bizarre interpretation of legislation. In the UK we have always prided ourselves on a judicial system that works on the basis of innocence until proven guilty. I suppose in the main that works very well, but when it comes to the world of employment law it suffices to presume guilt on the basis of an employer's reason to believe. Activities like sabotage, theft, or even sometimes the written word, things that are put in emails and texts, on Facebook or in Twitter, can always lead to somebody losing their employment. Can you imagine what the world would be like if everything was based on "had reason to believe" and if that was applied to criminal law? The courts would grind to a halt and the jails would be full, if indeed they are not already. Think about all the high profile miscarriages of justice we see and then multiply it by whatever amount you like and you will still be underestimating what would happen in criminal law if we applied the same things that we do in employment law. In criminal law there is a presumption of guilt and a

reason to believe that a person or persons has committed a crime, otherwise nobody would ever appear in court, but it is an assumption that has to be proved by the accuser and not by the accused. If I say that somebody committed a crime against me, there has to be strong prosecutable evidence to charge that person with the offence. Guilt would not be decided by me, it would not be decided by somebody in my family, or somebody in my employ. Hearsay, the fact that they wear a hoodie or they have tattoos, or because I did not like their views, would not be enough to assume guilt, but in employment law there is no need to have evidence so long as the employer has the belief of guilt. Every fulltime official, every lawyer, probably every activist, has dealt at some time over their lives with somebody who has been dismissed irrespective of whether or not there is irrefutable evidence to prove guilt.

Within our union we have had two recent cases in South Wales where members were dismissed despite no concrete evidence being presented. In one case DNA evidence was taken and the person was proved innocent by the police and yet still those people lost their jobs. The power to dismiss over the right to natural justice is the inspiration for this motion and for our Executive to make it a high profile challenge to our Parliamentary group. Companies can jump on a bandwagon and use this crazy legislation to rid themselves of whoever they want. Firebrands, a tremendous trade unionist, the health and safety rep who gets the job done, all of these people can find themselves on trumped up charges from an unscrupulous employer. They can find their employment challenged and compromised. Yes, the employer could end up in a tribunal and, yes, there could be some financial recompense, but at the end of the day, given the success rates that we have at tribunals, the person still loses their job. What happens to the person who has worked for a company for less than 12 months? They

have absolutely no chance at all. When we hear people talk about workers in Britain being the easiest to dismiss, it is not rhetoric; that is absolute fact. Whilst heinous interpretation of employment law is allowed to remain in place, the trend will continue.

Comrades, we are up against it with this shower in power. Trying to change employment law for the better will be a real challenge. We have all seen on a weekly basis Cameron and his cohorts trying to weaken our protections at every turn of the page. Still, we have a chance, we have an opportunity to change minds. We should be agitating in the corridors of power and we should be sowing seeds amongst potential and future Members of Parliament. Employment issues have to become manifesto issues and we are the people who should be making that happen. We may have to endure four years of misery but when we come to power again then we have to name the price for that power. We cannot allow ourselves to be sidetracked by peripheral issues, wish lists should become our demands, and a fairer deal for workers in Britain has to be top of our demands. We are not calling for preferential treatment but we are looking for the right to defend our civil liberties. We are asking for the government to give workers parity in law with a criminal, the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, and the right not to be hired and fired at a whim. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Max Hyde (*National Union of Teachers*) seconded Motion 12.

She said: Congress, this is a short but important motion. If an employer thinks it more likely than not that an employee is guilty, they can be treated by the employer as if they are guilty. Is there not something fundamentally wrong with a law that allows

for complete injustice? We must as a movement campaign vigorously for it to be thrown out. This law has destroyed the careers of teachers and even in some cases their lives. As teachers we often work with vulnerable and damaged children and may face allegations that could be false or even malicious. It is absolutely right and proper that such allegations are investigated thoroughly. It is not right and proper to assume the allegation somehow tarnishes irrevocably that individual so that then the law says they can be dismissed with no recourse.

As a member of the General Teaching Council for England, I have seen many cases where a careful investigative approach has shown there was no need for the dismissal; in fact it was not in the public interest. If that is not bad enough, we now face an unprecedented level of threat from the wholesale privatisation and fragmentation of the education system. Instead of dealing with one local authority and reminding them of their statutory duty of care to their employees, I will potentially be dealing with hundreds of employers, many of whom will be buying the advice that they want, not the advice they should have, employers with no equality training who do not see equality and diversity as something to celebrate.

Congress, we cannot and must not allow “no smoke without fire” to pass as a reasoned argument in a just society. Is it not just a bully’s charter? Brothers and sisters, in the interests of fairness and justice for all support this motion unanimously.

I second. (*Applause*)

* *Motion 12 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, unfortunately, I am afraid to inform you that we are running over time and we are unable to complete all of this morning's business but I will endeavour to take the outstanding motion at the most appropriate opportunity. Congress, that completes our business for this morning but may I remind delegates that there are the various meetings taking place at lunchtime. Details of these meetings are displayed on the screens and can also be found on page 20 of the Congress Guide, or in the leaflet included in your Congress wallet. Delegates, I would remind you also that we are on a tight schedule and I will be starting this afternoon's business at 2.15 promptly. Thank you.

Congress adjourned.

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress re-assembled at 2.15 p.m.)

The President: Congress, many thanks, once again, to the Bromley Youth Music Trust who have been playing for us this afternoon. *(Applause)*

Congress, this afternoon, in a change to the published guide, we will no longer be showing the *Robin Hood Tax* video at the start of this session. Instead I intend to take Motion 27, Sickness and Absence Policies, before the President's address. The unions involved have been informed.

Report of the General Purposes Committee

The President: I now call Peter Hall, the Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to give the GPC report.

Peter Hall (*General Purposes Committee*): Delegates, we are not able to take the debate scheduled for the morning on Motion 13: TUC support for smaller trade unions. If time permits, I will try and take Motion 13 after the published programme of business this afternoon. I will also try and take one or more of the emergency motions approved by the GPC after Motion 13. I will let you know, obviously, if it looks likely nearer the time. Would movers and seconders be ready, please.

Delegates, I now return to Chapter 4 on the General Council's Report, Economic and industrial affairs and to the section on Public services from page 80.

Sickness and absence policies

The President: I call Motion 27, Sickness and absence policies. The General Council supports the motion.

Pamela Black (*Society of Radiographers*) moved Motion 27.

She said: Delegates, NHS terms and conditions state: "Employers will amend, in partnership with local staff side, their local policies and procedures consistent with the provisions of this agreement." It does not say that treating them mean will keep them keen. The Department of Health says that good management of staff leads to higher quality of care, more satisfied patients, lower patient mortality and that treating staff fairly and giving them support creates a culture of staff engagement. Staff engagement equals reduced absenteeism. Rather than follow this route, there are

employers in the NHS who are more content to tear up the nationally agreed terms and conditions by deferring pay progression for sickness absence. It goes without saying that these routes have not been taken in partnership with local staff sides.

We all agree that managing sickness absence is not an easy task. Staff do become ill. They have to have surgery, they become depressed, they have accidents and acquire diseases and infections that absolutely prevent them from turning up to work in a hospital environment. This is just plain commonsense. How is someone going to react when they know if they stay off work because they have an infection that they will jeopardise their earnings and their employment? How will they feel if the policy that is in place to protect themselves and their patients will result in them losing their next pay increment? They are damned if they do and they are damned if they don't. They are left to make a decision – be responsible or take a risk. However, the consequences of their actions could be far-reaching and devastating to the patients in their care.

Trusts are working hard to eradicate hospital acquired infections. Money is being spent on raising awareness, and for what? To meet the targets for improvement of infection control. That is absolutely essential. All that will be wiped out the instant one or two employees cross the threshold with a raging infectious disease because an employer wants to save money. Consider, if you will, the areas that are most vulnerable – the kitchens, the wards, the patients with low immunity to infection. All of these areas are at risk if an employer feels the urge to control absenteeism with penalties rather than be responsible and work with the staff to improve attendance. A trust's reputation will be seriously damaged and they will be responsible for any

compensation to the patient, and no amount of pay progression deferment will be able to compensate for that.

Let's be honest. Sickness absence does negatively impact on patient care. It can reduce staff morale and it does cost organisations money. There can even be a presumption that there are some malingerers out there, but why should the majority who work hard and follow all the policies be penalised for the few who don't? What responsible employer penalises the majority to save a few bob?

Managers, like myself, walk a fine line being supportive to the poorly staff member and supporting the remaining staff who are having to cover for the absence. Staff morale can become extremely low. Stress increases, resulting in more staff going off sick and it has a devastating effect on the service. I rely on well-structured, robust policies that are properly managed, that have been developed in full consultation to make sure that my staff know that I respect them and will not tolerate irresponsible behaviour. We need clear procedures and processes that are well managed to support the return to work of the employee and to prevent or reduce premature or ill-health retirement. Managing sickness absence effectively ought to improve organisational productivity and improve patient care, not put it at risk.

Our staff and employees are our greatest resource and should be treated as such and not as commodities. Yes, we have financial savings to make across the NHS, but using soft targets like sickness absenteeism is not the way. Thank you.

James Donley (*GMB*) seconded Motion 27.

He said: Congress, no one should have to go into work when they are too ill to do their job. This should be especially obvious in the NHS where all staff, whether it be a nurse, a paramedic or a hospital porter, work in close proximity to patients who are highly vulnerable to illness. Unfortunately, attacks on staff sickness and absence are part of a much larger trend within the Health Service. It is a trend that includes down-banding, cuts in take home pay and widespread job insecurity. We know that redundancies are a regular feature of this government's agenda. What the coalition doesn't seem to understand is that job cuts in the public sector are not equating to less work. Quite the opposite. NHS workers are being expected to do more for less, and this is escalating into stress and overload. The pressure that staff are now under will inevitably lead to higher rates of sickness absence, absence for which staff could now be penalised.

Behind this injustice is, of course, the government's austerity programme, and the hardest funding settlement ever imposed on the NHS. Already it is obvious that the multi-billion pound savings demanded by government are unrealistic and unachievable without cutting services. However, axing high profile services that the public relies upon is difficult, so the next things under attack are the staff's terms and conditions. These are terms and conditions which have taken years to secure, an Agenda for Change agreement with its sole purpose to address the inequality long endured by health workers. We will not step back and allow the Tories with the Lib-Dems piggy-backing to destroy the NHS on the health workers' terms and conditions.

The government has made it clear that one of its motives for forcibly converting hospitals into foundation trusts is to fragment the terms of conditions of the staff. The

same motive lurks behind the “Any qualified provider model” which will ultimately open up more and more of the Health Service to cost cutting private sector operators. In essence, the government wants the NHS done on the cheap by staff paid on the cheap. We have said all along that Lansley’s so-called reforms will have catastrophic consequences for the nation’s health and for the public servants who deliver the Health Service.

Public servants protecting our nation’s health deserve dignity at work. They are the key to patient care, quality and outcomes. To attack NHS staff is to undermine the service they are able to provide. That is why the cuts in terms and conditions must stop. The Health Bill must be scrapped, and the government should give the NHS the fair funding settlement it was promised. Please support.

The President: Does the Society of Radiographers want the right of reply?

(Declined)

* *Motion 27 was CARRIED*

Report of the General Purposes Committee

The President: I now call on Peter Hall, Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to give the GPC report. Peter.

Peter Hall *(General Purposes Committee):* Good afternoon, Congress. I can report that the General Purposes Committee has approved a further emergency motion. Emergency Motion 3 on the English Defence League will be moved by the NUJ and

seconded by the RMT. The President will indicate when it is hoped that this emergency motion will be taken. I will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decisions when necessary throughout Congress. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Peter. Congress, the GPC reported the approval of a further emergency motion, Emergency Motion 3, English Defence League, in the name of the NUJ. I will take this emergency motion when a suitable opportunity arises and endeavour to give the Congress as much notice as possible.

President's Address

The Vice President (*Sheila Bearcroft MBE*): Colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to ask the President to address you, Congress. Thank you.

The President: Congress, it is a great honour for me to be your President. It is a privilege to be the first person from my union, Community, to perform this role. It is a pleasure to be the second Welsh person in three years to hold this post. First, Sheila, now me. That is evidence, I hope, that Ryan Giggs isn't the only talented left-winger in Wales. I am not going to mention rugby because we have a nation in mourning.

Let me begin by saying thank you to all those people who have made this such a memorable year for me. Thank you to everyone in the TUC and my colleagues on the General Council. Thank you to my friends and colleagues in Community, who have been a significant support. Above all, my sincere thanks to my family, to my wife, Irene, who is here today, and my sons, Sean and Greg, for their love and support through many years. Thank you.

It has been a year of countless highlights. I have been proud to be part of our campaign against the cuts, never more so than when I addressed the huge crowds in Hyde Park during our *March for the Alternative*. I have been proud to be President of the International Metalworkers Federation (Steel and Non-Ferrous Section) as well as your President. I have been proud to support the TUC's international work. Today, let us offer our solidarity to our trade union brothers and sisters in the Middle East as they continue to struggle for jobs, democracy and equality.

In May I was privileged to lead the TUC delegation to the ETUC Congress, which took place this year in a most appropriate place – Athens. There I found for myself what austerity means in practice. How the cuts cause untold damage to public services, living standards and economic prospects. In Athens we elected a new ETUC leadership team, including Bernadette Ségol and Judith Kerton-Darling, whose commitment to the steel industry I know is second to none. I am sure that you will join with me in wishing them well as they fight the EU's misplaced retreat into austerity as they resist the attacks on workers' jobs, wages and pension rights across the continent.

Congress, this year may have been particularly special for me, but trade unionism has been my life's work. When I left school at 16 and started work at Panteg steelworks, the first thing that I did was to join the union. At that time it was the British Iron and Steel Kindred Trades Association. How times have changed. A year later after joining, I was a union rep. That, for me, personally, was the beginning of a long love affair with this great movement of ours.

I grew up in the valleys of South Wales, not just a coal and steel heartland but a trade union heartland too, a place with a big sense of community, where people take great pride in manufacturing industry and where trade unions have always been part of its social fabric. They opened libraries, educating working people, supporting members far beyond the factory gate. That's why my theme this year is *Strong Unions, Stronger Communities*.

We all know with the economy scraping along the bottom with cuts hitting the vulnerable hardest, and with public services at risk, I believe there has never been a more need for an effective trade union presence in the diverse communities that make up our modern Britain.

Brothers and sisters, we cannot risk a repeat of the 1980s when our movement was sidelined, unions were marginalised and workers suffered terrible consequences which they still suffer today. Remember how it felt, remember the impact of the Tory cuts back then. Remember how their industrial vandalism scared so many communities that we still see today. Congress, let us remember what Thatcherism did to ordinary working people, and let us say, loud and clear, never, ever again.
(Applause)

Over the past year we have begun to build a huge anti-cuts movement in Britain, a unique alliance with trade unions at its heart, but we must go even further, brothers and sisters, taking our message out into every workplace and every community across the country. Together we must show the people of Britain that cuts are a completely

false economy, that austerity is not an answer, that there is an alternative based on jobs, growth and fair taxes. I am proud to have led a union which, as its name suggests, has been at the forefront of community trades unionism. I am very proud that we have taken lifelong learning into the communities, proud that we led the fight for pensions justice, helping secure the Pension Protection Fund and the Financial Assistance Scheme, and very proud that earlier this year we helped secure the future of steelmaking in the north-east of England with the resurrection of the Teesside Cast Products Plant. (*Applause*) It is the first time ever that steelworkers in this country have reopened after being shutdown. Last month the new owner, SSI, began the process of recruiting a thousand skilled steelworkers, with another four thousand jobs secured in the supply chain. That's great news for the region.

What has happened, I believe, in Teesside isn't just an outstanding example of the power of trade unions and community campaigning. It is also proof that our manufacturing industry can have a bright future. Congress, it is only by making things and selling them to the rest of the world that we will be able to generate the wealth we need to build a fairer society, to tackle the inequality that exists and fund, more importantly, world class public services.

When it comes to manufacturing, be in no doubt that Britain can be amongst the best in the world. We build – this is a fact – more cars here than ever before. We build aero engines and help to assemble many of the aircraft they power. We also make the world's best steel and the world's finest shoes. Colleagues, let's not forget that we design, manufacture and export trains. Today, let us say, loud and clear, to the government that the decision not to award the Thameslink contract to Bombardier in

Derby is an absolute disgrace. (*Applause*) Let me be clear, it is an insult to British manufacturing, British skills and British workers. We must do everything in our power to get ministers to change their mind. It is high time our procurement rules were fit for purpose. It is just plain wrong that we can't take into account social dimensions when making these decisions. Other countries in Europe are able to do it, so why can't we?

Congress, we can do so much better than this. The right policies for manufacturing can help deliver the economic recovery, rebalancing and renewal that this country so desperately needs. It is time, Congress, to be bold.

The existential challenge posed by climate change gives us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop the green industries, jobs and skills of the future. It is one that we must take. Let's manufacture the wind turbines in the country using British steel. Let's lead the way in carbon capture and storage technology. Let's build the next generation of electric vehicles here and let's make Britain a centre of excellence for high speed. Colleagues, we have got the skills, the expertise and the R&D facilities. All we need now is the political will for it to happen. Where better to start than with an active green industrial strategy. We've got to get away from short-termism of the finance speculation. We've got to create sustainable wealth for all, and we've got to learn from what the likes of Germany have already achieved.

One thing is for sure. We can't have a strong economy without a strong manufacturing base. So now is the time for real change, not business as usual, but an industrial renaissance, not another dose of free market madness but intelligent

intervention. These are the things, Congress, that I have campaigned for throughout my working life. These are the causes that bring us together as trade unionists, and these are the challenges that we must now rise to.

It won't be easy, but I am convinced that we can make progress where it matters most. I believe the arguments are all on our side, and I am confident that we can win the battle for Britain's future. Congress, let's build that stronger economy, let's build that stronger community and let's together build a stronger trade union movement. Thanks for listening. *(Applause)*

Vote of thanks to the President

The Vice President: Congress, I now call upon Gerry Doherty to move the vote of thanks to the President.

Gerry Doherty *(Transport Salaried Staffs' Association)* in moving the vote of thanks, said:

President and Congress, it is a great honour to be able to stand in front of you this afternoon moving a vote of thanks to someone who I think has conducted himself in a really remarkable manner through the very difficult year that he has presided over the Trades Union Congress. I did, however, note, Michael, your reference to the Welshman, Ryan Giggs, in your Presidential Address. I hope that wasn't a pitch for an ageing footballer to be included in the British Olympic Team, if it ever comes about next year, because if it is, I am going to make a pitch for an ageing Scottish one. We should have Dennis Law as a striker. *(Laughter)*

Michael's background is in the steel industry. One of the pleasures that I have in standing here and moving this vote of thanks is that my maternal grandfather was involved in the steel industry in a place called Cambuslang. It was an subsidiary of the Ravenscraig works. I remember as a little boy going down with him every month to the steelworks to pick up his pension. He lived with us. We never saw him for the whole weekend. You know what Scotsmen do when they've got a few quid in their back pocket. He used to turn up the following Monday and he always had a bag of fruit for us young kids and a bunch of flowers for my mum. That was his rent for the following month until he picked up his pension again. That steelworks in Cambuslang is no longer there any more, and neither is Ravenscraig. I have watched what has happened as industrial heartlands of this country have had their heart ripped out of them. It was really during the Thatcher years, but what we have now are the sons and daughters of Thatcher who have come back to finish off the job that she didn't do.

As Michael said, he left school at 16 and immediately joined the union. That was the norm in those days. He became a branch rep the following year at 17 years old. I think that is quite something. However, what Michael didn't say was that he was the youngest ever official of the ISTC, a very proud union, a predecessor union of what is today Community. That is quite an accolade to be the youngest ever ISTC official. Michael's comments today about the dark days of Thatcherism, the Tory cuts and the lessons of the 1980s are testament to the struggles that he has faced and the lessons that he has learnt. We would be very unwise to disregard them today.

Talking about history, Michael said today that he is the first member of his union to preside over Congress. However, in its previous incarnations, his union has been central to the work of Congress since the start in 1868. John Caine of the Amalgamated Iron Workers' Union spoke at the 1868 Congress, like Michael today, on why trade unions are an absolute necessity. He spoke of why employers were opposed to the social interests of trade unions and working men in the same style that Michael warned our current government of the madness of their austerity programme when he spoke at our rally in Hyde Park. Michael has always supported the diversity of trade unions, respecting the representation of smaller unions at the TUC. He often talks of trade unions being a force for good in the communities in which our members live. In his own words, he prefers the power of influence to the influence of power. But he is prepared to use power when necessary, for example, when he led the first ever strike over pensions by a union in the UK and succeeded in getting the employer to re-open an occupational pension scheme after he closed it without consultation. He also led a five-and-a-half year campaign for justice for those who lost their occupational pensions when their employer became insolvent. Commenting after serving a writ on a UK government, he memorably said, "People have said that I'm looking to end up in the House of Lords. After today, I'm more likely to end up in the Tower of London." That campaign was eventually won in December 2007, winning £12.3 billion for 140,000 pension scheme members, the largest ever financial settlement by a British trade union against an employer – a UK government.

Let me tell you more about the man. Michael wears his Welshness as a badge of honour. However, if you are celebrating any event at all in his company, don't ask him to sing. I am told he is the only Welshman on God's earth who can't sign a note,

despite even having his headquarters in Covent Garden. (*Laughter*) Michael, you thanked your wife and family. I am a trade union leader, and I know the toll that it takes on a wife and family being a trade union general secretary. This whole movement owes a vote of thanks, yes, to your wife but to all general secretaries' partners, but to be general secretary of a union and for a whole year to also lead the TUC really does deserve a vote of thanks to your partner and your family.

Michael, you have been a great President. Thank you for everything you have done for the last year. Please have a great week. (*Applause*)

The Vice President: I now call Ged Nichols to second the vote of thanks.

Ged Nichols (*Accord*), in seconding the vote of thanks, said:

Congress, we listened earlier to Michael bringing the real world outside of this hall in front of us as trade unionists and, as ever, I think he was spot on in what he said. We are grateful for his wisdom, concern and understanding of trade union priorities. That deep understanding might have something to do with where he comes from. When Michael was a school boy at the Twmpash Secondary Modern in Pontypool, there was nothing he liked more than playing rugby. He was a good player. He was representing Pontypool Schoolboys before his career was cut short by injury. He was a gifted and promising fly half in period when Pontypool gave the great Welsh sides some of their most gifted players, including the legendary Pontypool front row of Graham Price, Bobby Windsor and Charlie Faulkner who, to the uninitiated may not know that they were known as the "Viet Gwent". Two of the "Viet Gwent" were ISTC members at the Penteg steelworks, where Michael grew up. He grew up in a terraced

house with a tin bath and an outside toilet, and he learnt to stand up for himself – I guess you would have to stand up – but he also learnt how to stand up for others too. Bobby Windsor, one of those legends of Pontypool, said recently, “Nowadays in the gym if you can’t lift weights any more, you just stop, but when we were shovelling at the steel works you got the sack if you stopped.” They were hard men, the “Viet Gwent”, slaving at the coalface of international rugby, taking the strain and the knocks while others took the glory. I will leave you to draw your own comparisons between that and Michael’s career in this great movement of ours.

Lord Brookman, Michael’s predecessor as General Secretary of the ISTC, said that Michael was the union’s youngest ever official. It is a great achievement. Keith Brookman went on to say that Michael earned a reputation for being tough and for complete loyalty. He has been unfairly stigmatised by some as a right-winger, but he has always put his members’ interests first and he was a critical figure in the running of the 1980 steel strike in defiance of some of the senior officers of the union who viewed him as a dangerous leftie. How times have changed. (*Laughter*)

When interviewed in 2001, Michael said: “The Thatcher government wanted a fight with a union, and it picked the steel workers to warm up for the miners.” He said that that period taught him that strikes should only be used as a last resort, as after the strike the steel workers continued to face problems as British Steel cut costs in the run-up to privatisation. Michael said that most of his time was spent dealing with job losses, closures and trying to mitigate the damage.

How refreshing, therefore, it must be for him, and I am sure it was for all of us as the round of applause showed, to hear about us spearheading the talks that have led to the re-opening of the Teesside Cast Products Plant. It is truly an example of the power of trade union community campaigning.

Michael is still a keen sportsman. Despite the great working relationship that he and Brendan have enjoyed, he has never forgiven for cancelling the cricket match between the General Council and the press that used to take place every Saturday before Congress. Admittedly, we didn't win very often. That was usually because the press team contained a couple of ringers who were really good players and miraculously, for that day a year, seemed to have NUJ membership. Michael was our team captain and he always took the match very seriously. I remember him berating Brendan and I for being late for the game just before Congress 2006. Brendan and I had other distractions. We were in a pub outside Brighton watching Everton beat Liverpool 3-0.

(Groans from the floor) On that note of discord, at least with my fellow general secretaries at the CWU and Unite, I will close by saying that I think we are very fortunate to have Michael preside over our important discussions this week. His speech today, his personality and the contribution his union makes to our movement make me delighted to second the vote of thanks. Michael, have a great Congress.

(Applause)

The President: Thank you, Jerry and Ged. I hardly recognise myself. Delegates, we now return to Chapter 4 of the General Council's Report, Economic and Industrial Affairs. I call paragraph 4.13 and Composite 9. The General Council supports the composite.

Public services and their importance to the economy

Jane Carolan (*UNISON*) moved Composite Motion 9.

She said: Comrades, a UNISON motion on public services has almost been a staple in the Congress agenda for too long. We had criticisms under Thatcher and Major, criticisms under new Labour, when Congress dithered about whether to oppose PFI, and now, perhaps, we have the greatest threat yet: the new austerity agenda being preached by Osborne, cutting spending to the level of the '90s despite demographic change and emerging needs. There has been a major acceleration in the rate of attacks on public services and people are now waking up to the consequences. When rioting broke out the press suddenly realised that when young people complained there were no services for them, it was not just a whinge for *Kevin the teenager*. It was the stark reality that youth services are an early and obvious victim. No youth services, no educational maintenance allowance, no jobs or apprenticeships and cuts to university places. What a time to be 17! But, then, don't be a parent requiring a pre-school place and don't be a pupil in a state school expecting you will get a first class education. Your classroom assistants will have been made redundant and your early year will have its budget cut so that Tarquin and Tabatha from up the road go to their free school, with uniforms and read Latin. Don't think you can substitute your inadequate education at the local library because it won't be there. Don't expect that your grandma will get meals on wheels or a home help, unless you can afford the much increased fees. Don't expect, if you see a child in need, that somebody will rush in to help. An overworked child protection social worker will work wonders to make sure they get assistance, but they can't work miracles without resources. Don't ever assume if you son, daughter, brother or sister, can't afford a mortgage that there

will be social housing available. There won't be. There won't be housing advice, either.

The welfare state is no longer a safety net and the NHS is no longer safe. Comrades, the greatest myth is that we are all in this together. What member of this multi-millionaire Cabinet will face the slightest difficulty? The worst part is that cuts are only part of the agenda. The other part is the privatisation of the services that we provide, and the pretence that public sector jobs can be done more cheaply. Well, yes, they can, if the wages are cut, if the terms and conditions are cut and if the pensions are non-existent. Of course, that is cheaper. It is cheaper for the private sector providers and their shareholders, but not for those who are employed to provide the services and not for those who needed the services.

How many in this hall watched *Panorama on The private providers of social care?* We saw about companies whose only concern for those in their care has never extended beyond maximising their own greed. Their motto is, "Never mind the client, look at the profit margin". That is capitalism in action but certainly with no place in caring.

Let's not pretend that there are so-called 'back office staff' whose jobs don't matter. The reality is that our lives, our services, our jobs, our pay and our pensions are being trampled over. Even in George Osborne's universe that matters. Unemployed public servants don't vanish. They claim benefits, increasing public spending. Public sector workers in a pay freeze cannot spend as inflation rises. But the results of these actions, as Keynes noted, is that public expenditure increases even as economic

demand falls. That is the real tragedy of the world we live in. Real needs are not met and real people suffering deprivation.

What is the answer? According to several top economists we need to cut the top rate of tax. Who is a top economist? Is it one who realises that if you want a well paid job you have to give the paymasters what they want, and thus a justification for their greed? Or maybe a top economist is one with amnesia, because tax-cutting agendas have been tried before. Global Reaganomics and the evidence is there. Trickle down theories are exploded and the evidence that the only economic indicator that was increased was the inequality gap.

Comrades, we have to stop apologising in saying that cutting public services is not the way out. There are cuts that we support: cut Trident, the use of consultants and privatisation, but don't cut taxes. The government should pursue the tax dodgers with double the zeal that is shown against so-called 'benefit cheats', whether those dodgers are individuals or corporations. I would love to see a TV campaign calling on accountants to shop their tax cheat clients. I've even got the slogan for them: "Be a grass – make them pay tax."

An alternative economic strategy is the only way forward. Neo-liberalism is a failed ideology. The belief in the infallibility of markets is blown apart by the evidence of the real world. We are speaking for all of the working people of this country, from hospital porters to consultants, from dinner ladies to chief executives. Our only defence is standing together. Please support this composite. (*Applause*)

Janice Godrich (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Composite Motion 9.

She said: Congress, this debate is about the key role that public spending can play in helping to get us out of the mess caused by the investment bankers and speculators when they crashed our economy. It touches on the discussion we will have on the alternative economic strategy because we say that austerity is not the answer. Yet a key component of the austerity budget is a cut of £81 billion to public spending. Both in Britain and internationally, the evidence tells us that cuts make the problem worse. Job cuts and pay freezes depress demand. Consequently, many economists now predict we are the verge of the current recession worsening. Of course, the threat to our public services isn't just economic. It *Guardian* called it "The end of the NHS as we know it", no longer a comprehensive service that is free and available to all but a return to the days when most people had limited access to free services and everyone else having to find money for private insurance and private care.

Nick Clegg's comments in relation to the recent riots speak volumes about this government's true motives. He suggested that those people who behaved so despicably should have to look their victims in the eye. They should have to see for themselves the consequences of their actions and they should be put to work clearing up the damage they have caused so they don't do it again. Well, if it's good enough for rioters, why haven't those who have caused the crash been subject to the same strictures? They set a disgusting example, with the rich evading and avoiding paying taxes on an industrial scale, MPs fiddling their expenses and police officers reportedly taking bribes from a media organisation that had a murdered girl's mobile? If we are talking about victims, why aren't those who suffer domestic violence or lose their

benefit victims? Why aren't lolly pop ladies who have lost their jobs victims? Why doesn't Nick Clegg see senior citizens who no longer have access to day care facilities as victims? The truth is that every cut creates a victim, and that is why we welcome the fact that this composite rejects all cuts. We can't say some jobs and services are defensible but others are not. We shouldn't fall into the trap of choosing between firefighters, nurses, Jobcentre workers or coastguards, or choosing between a library, a youth club or a health centre. Let's choose to stand together in line with trade union principles of solidarity and unity, and recognise that an injury to one is an injury to all. We need to show this government that we mean business, as Dave Prentis did when he pledged to mount the most sustained campaign of industrial action since the 1926 General Strike unless the government drops its proposed changes to pensions. Dave was also right to point out that the attack on pensions isn't an isolated one, that part and parcel of their deficit reduction programme, and that our members, the people who provide public services and use them will bear the brunt. The huge mobilisation for the *March for the Alternative* and the support for 30th June gives us confidence. Let's support this motion. Stand up for our members in order to protect their lifestyles, not the privileged lifestyles of the rich and famous. Thank you.

Tony Kearns (*The Communications Union*) supported Composite Motion 9.

He said: A number of people who have spoken today made reference to the Con-Dem government. I was taken this morning with Danny Alexander's statement. Danny Alexander, you will remember, is the Tory lackey who fluffed his government lines on pension policy live on television, who said that what he expects from us today is sabre rattling. Then I read in the media, by the self-appointed media clowns, like *Leo McKinskry* in the *Express*, that the unions are destroying the country. I suppose the

good thing about that was that it was in the *Daily Express* so not a lot of people read it. What we are seeing now is an alliance between the government and the media which is going to launch a consolidated and concerted attack on public services, the workers and those like ourselves who are prepared to stand up and defend it. I think we need to set the record straight and say that the reason why we are in a so-called economic crisis is because capitalism failed and we should not be afraid as a trade union movement that capitalism failed.

Brendan said this morning that the public sector spends more in the private sector than wages. The only place where real jobs are being created directly and indirectly is through public spending and in public services. I remember a year ago when the business leaders wrote to the *Times* and said that we don't have to worry about the government's cuts because the private sector will create all these jobs. I don't see these business leaders writing to the *Times* now telling us how many jobs they have created, because the answer is that it is in the public sector where jobs are created and not the private sector. You would wonder whether they have learnt anything from the mistakes of the past? I am talking about the greed and avarice of bankers, who produce nothing socially useful, who brought the economy to its knees.

We see this morning Andrew Poulson, who is the external member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy saying: "The banks should go further and buy not only gilt but more risky assets." So, once again, reverting gambling with our futures is the ethos of the bank. They are behaving as if nothing has happened. If Danny Alexander wants us to stop sabre rattling, then Danny Alexander and his mates need to give our kids a proper education. If Danny Alexander wants us to stop sabre rattling, then he

needs to give our youth jobs now and in the future. If Danny Alexander wants us to stop sabre rattling, then he needs to give our pensioners security and safety now and in the future, and that means investing in those people who provide those services.

Furthermore, if Danny Alexander is going to make statements needs to go and read a dictionary and look at the words “liberal” and “democrat”. He should tell his mates Clegg, Cable and Davy to stop their big business mates, Cameron, from ruining our country. The point is that the Institute of Fiscal Studies has said that while Osborne’s tax cuts are going to represent a 10% drop in living standards, the *Telegraph* today reports that payouts to bosses in the top 100 FTSE companies has risen by 87% in the past year. The self-imposed two year pay freeze is over and the pigs are back at the trough. The reality is that the market, as it is known, has failed. If the alternative to the failed system is to say that we are going to stand up and defend public services, then that is what we are going to have to do.

The CWU conference earlier this year unanimously carried a policy to support a call for a 24 hour general strike. The responsibility of all trade unions and all trade unionists is to work together. This campaign is not just about us, it is about the communities. It is also about saying to this government, and to anyone who wishes to be in government, that we don’t accept cuts and the future of the jobs in this country lies in the public sector and public services and we will defend them.

Terry Hoad (*University and College Union*): Conference, the UCU is giving its enthusiastic support to this composite motion. We are actually all in this together. The people in this hall and the members who we represent are all in this together

because we are the ones who are being hit by this government's punitive cuts agenda. These are ideologically driven cuts and they have been since the day that the Lib-Dems ensured that David Cameron got his hands on the keys to Downing Street. I want to focus, as a previous speaker did, in particular on the pensions aspect of this, and to talk about why these ideologically driven cuts have to be resisted.

As recently as November 2006 the unions agreed reforms to make the pension scheme sustainable in the long-term. The government's new proposals, on the other hand, are driven by the Treasury's desire to bolster its coffers and to smash public sector pensions. The average weekly for a woman working in local government is £60 a week, and for men £85 a week. The government wants to introduce changes that will see a lecturer with a £10,000 pension lose around £36,000 in the course of their retirement. Nick Clegg in June joined in the gold-plated pension jibes saying that other workers in the private sector would not be willing to contribute their taxes towards such extravagantly generous provisions.

Our battle has to be for decent pensions that keep people out of poverty and in dignity in their old age. We can't go along with Clegg's view which would have hard working people in this country begrudging someone a pension of about £6,000 a year. Last week the government was looking at ways to cut the 50p tax rate for the 1% of people who earn more than £150,000 a year, and renege on promises over the NHS. Some people would say that you just couldn't make it up. The British public isn't stupid and they need to stop being treated as such by this coalition. Parroting that we are all in this together, in their sense, or that there is no alternative is just offensive nonsense. It is offensive nonsense when the richest thousand people in Britain saw

their collective wealth rise by 18% last year. The majority of the people in this country are in it together. They are in the mess that the coalition is making, but don't believe for one minute that those who are creating the mess are in it with us. What we need now, as many people have said already, is sustained, co-ordinated and determined action. Please support this motion and the fight back against these ideological self-serving policies of the government. Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you, Terry. Usdaw.

Jeff Broom (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) supported Composite Motion 9.

Congress, public services are at the heart of our community, and the Tory-led coalition cuts to public services affect us all. They destroy lives, cripple communities and strangle growth. This government continues to cling to the mantra that the private sector will find jobs for unemployed, ex-public sector workers. This completely ignores the problems faced by the private sector.

Public sector job losses leads to fewer customers shopping in the retail sector. This results in more job losses in the private sector, in shops, distribution and manufacturing. The retail sector has had a tough time this last 12 months. A number of high profile retailers – TJUs, Oddbins, Focus, Habitat and J. Norman – have gone into administration. These are the signs of a private sector that is suffering from low customer confidence and the squeeze on consumer spending. The consumer and customers which the private sector depends on are often public sector workers, who are facing job losses and job insecurity.

Congress, we are all in this together. We depend and rely on public services. Public sector cuts will have a big impact on the private sector. Public investment and public sector employment is important to the wider economy. The Tory-led coalition continues to believe that economic growth is possible in the shadow of damaging cuts. They continue to believe in the fantasy of job creation without investment.

Udaw believes that public sector cuts have a big impact on all workers including those who we represent. That is why we, the trade unions who organise in the private sector, will oppose the cuts in public services and why we will support public sector trade unions in their efforts to protect jobs and livelihoods of public sector workers. Thank you.

Brian Cookson (*NASUWT*): Congress, the NASUWT, the teachers' union, is very pleased to support Composite Motion 9. The coalition government is making an ideological assault on millions of people in this country. It is a agenda-driven, threatening the efficiency, equity and democratic accountability of public services. It puts in jeopardy the employment of hundreds of thousands of skilled and committed public servants and the lives and life chances of the people they serve.

Colleagues, there is an alternative, and the alternative includes a financial transaction tax, a Robin Hood tax, a tax that will take money from the bankers without hitting ordinary working families. Lack of banking regulation has driven millions worldwide into poverty. A Robin Hood tax would be a first major step into placing the banks at the centre of repairing the untold damage that they have done to the UK and world

economies by their reckless actions. It is supported by the European Parliament, a growing number of European ministers and it has increasing worldwide support. This tax should be at the forefront of all agendas to replace the ideologically driven excuses for dismantling our public services.

In the UK, a small 0.05% tax on major transactions like stocks, bonds and foreign currency would raise more than £20 billion. Do not tell us that this would drive the banking industry out of the country. This is a mere scare tactic with no foundation, spread by those who have forfeited their right to have any credibility or trust.

No, Mr Osborne, despite your claims, none of the measures you have introduced go anywhere near to force the banks to redress the misery of the crisis they have created. Together with other measures that must now be pursued, based on promoting progressive taxation, including the collection of taxes avoided, evaded and uncollected, this financial transaction tax is not only an alternative, it's a solution. We must fight this government's demolition agenda, place the responsibility to fund the preservation of our essential public service infrastructure where it belongs – on the banks! The TUC has produced excellent materials on the Robin Hood tax. They need promoting widely and visibly to redress the rhetoric of this government that there is no alternative. The video that you would have seen at the beginning of this afternoon needs showing at every opportunity throughout the UK. Colleagues, we have got to promote and support a financial transaction tax and save public services. Support Composite Motion 9.

Helen Kenny (*Prospect*) supported Composite Motion 9.

She said: In its approach to public services, this government is guilty of double-think, mis-information and, in some instances, outright lies. George Orwell defined double-think as, “The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one’s mind simultaneously and accepting both of them.” Stating that the private sector will create the jobs and growth necessary for recovery while at the same time believing that public spending must be cut is poor double-think. Government procurement accounts for £236 billion per year. Government spending can help boost business confidence by investing in areas such as Broadband and energy infrastructure. These are vital to the economy but will also provide confidence for private sector investment. Then there is the multiplier effect on the rest of the economy. Growing businesses are more likely to invest in research and innovation, thereby creating jobs and fuelling the recovery.

Moving on to mis-information, the suggestion that cutting back office staff won’t impact on frontline services. This is an artificial divide, Congress. Support staff are vital and often have specialist skills and expertise. We have highlighted the Audit Commission’s climate research and forensic science. Looking at the Audit Commission, high quality audit will be a vital defence against some of the problems that are likely to arise as public bodies seek to downsize as a result of swingeing budget cuts. Cuts to the budgets of both research councils and higher educational institutes’ capital budgets will have a devastating impact on climate research. This area of research is a force for the public good and we believe that it is important to have research in this area that is independent of corporate interest.

Now we come on to some outright lies. I work for the Forensic Science Service, which the government has decided to close because it is, apparently, losing £2 million per month. Setting aside the absurdity of expecting forensic science to make a profit, it is clear that the losses are not of that magnitude. Government investment in a major restructure had almost turned the organisation around before they pulled the plug, with no notice and little consultation, even with their own experts. The Home Office has stated on numerous occasions that the private sector has the capacity. We know that is false. Our colleagues in those companies are drowning in work and the situation will only get worse for them. This is the very human cost of this government's approach to public services. Hundreds of dedicated forensic scientists have and will be made redundant, and many will choose or be forced into a career change. It is a kneejerk, short-sighted approach that will devastate my profession. Please support.

Andy Noble (*Fire Brigades' Union*) supported Composite Motion 9.

He said: Congress, I want to start with a message for David Cameron. Last month after the riots he turned up at Salford Fire Station to thank firefighters for the work that they had done after the recent unrest. On a similar occasion last year, he turned up at Carlisle Fire Station to thank them for some of the work that they had done. Our message to David Cameron is simply this: stop the hypocrisy. Stop patting us on the back when you are cutting our jobs, slashing our pay, pensions and when you are trying to privatise our public service.

The government is in denial about the firefighter jobs cull which is currently ongoing. In the House of Commons in February, Fire Minister, Bob Neill, said it was

scaremongering to suggest that 1,000 firefighter posts could be lost as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review. He has refused to answer direct questions in Parliament about the numbers of firefighters. New research by the union based on the Freedom of Information Act requests confirms that over 1,000 jobs were in fact lost in the first round of the cuts up to April 2011, the hardest hit areas being Scotland, the south-west, Yorkshire and the west Midlands. So much for scaremongers. In the space of one year, we've seen the largest single fall in fire-fighting numbers since the Second World War, and that is in just the first of the four years. When the government says it is back-loading the cuts to our service, it is an absolute disgrace because what is to come will be much worse.

The union believes that ever-increasing cuts to central government grants to fire authorities up to 2014 will lose to the loss of 6,000 fire-fighter posts and possibly even more. What does this mean for the public fire service? It means that fewer fire-fighters always means that it takes longer to get to a fire or another emergency in response to a 999 call, longer response times increase the risk to life and result in more property damage because of fires, and certainly a poorer response to other major incidents.

The FBU warns that the Fire Service will reach a breaking point with widespread incidents such as civil disturbances, floods and wild fires. Cameron's promise not to cut frontline services has proved absolutely worthless. You don't get much more frontline than 999 response, and we have certainly been cut to pieces.

We know that this is not just a financial exercise. We also know that it is a softening up exercise in an attempt to open the fire and rescue services to market forces. We have already got evidence of this in Cleveland Fire & Rescue, which has established a mutual trading arm, and we also know that they are exploring the possibility of establishing a social enterprise company to take on core fire and rescue service activity. We are also aware that a private sector provider from Denmark has signed a memorandum of understanding with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service. Of course, we have got the goings on in London with one of the best examples of why the private sector should be kept well away from the emergency services – Asset Corp. That is the only company I know that spends more time in the courtroom than the boardroom. It is an absolute disgrace that London’s fire appliances are owned by a company that is constantly in the court fighting off bankruptcy charges. It is an absolutely disgrace that we are considering putting profit before the protection of people’s lives, whether that is in the Fire Service or in any other industry. Please support.

* *Composite Motion 9 was CARRIED*

Equality Audit

The President: The TUC Equality Audit is one of the most important pieces of work that we do at the TUC. It allows us to examine what we are all doing to promote diversity within our own organisations. The unions have already received copies of

this year's Equality Audit. I now call upon the Assistant General Secretary to introduce the Equality Audit for 2011.

Kay Carberry (*Assistant General Secretary*): President and Congress, I am very pleased indeed to present the report of the latest TUC Equality Audit. We know that there is a popular stereotype of what the typical trade unionist looks like, but that cannot be further from the truth. If you just look around the room, you will see that that stereotype is a bit outdated.

Women are now more likely to be union members than men in all sectors, ages and types of job. Union density is higher among black workers than white and that is for both men and women. However, at the same time, we still have not got to the point where we can claim completely fair representation within the Movement structures and that is what this Equality Audit Report is all about. For example, although women are equally represented or even outnumber men in many unions today, last year less than a third of those attending the TUC shop stewards' training were women. Yes, there has indeed been a lot of progress in gender equality at the top of unions in the past eight years while we have been running the biannual equality audits and this was recognised in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Sex and Power Report this year but, at the same time, men still outnumber women three to one at general secretary level.

One very good thing about this latest TUC Equality Audit is that it shows that unions are taking concrete steps to address under-representation more than ever before. It shows that unions have stepped up recruitment activities aimed at women, black,

disabled, LGBT and young workers. For example, the proportion of unions targeting young workers for membership has risen dramatically over the last four years and now it is nearly half of all unions. There are some very good examples too of how unions are actively encouraging under-represented members to put themselves forward for unions' posts. An example is the training courses that the TUC ran with the Federation of Entertainment Unions this year to give black members the knowledge and confidence to run for office in their unions.

So we know that big companies are dithering about whether they will adopt voluntary targets for women on their boards, but while they are doing that a growing number of our unions have changed their rules and have guaranteed representation on their executives bodies by reserving seats not just for women but for black, disabled and LGBT members too. This leads to fairer representation, but it does other good things. For example, it also leads unions to take up a much wider range of issues broadening the collective bargaining agenda.

It is also very good to report that unions are more active than ever before on behalf of disabled members and on issues affecting LGBT members. Many more unions are monitoring the proportion of their officials, executive members and conference delegates who are LGBT. You will remember that just a few years ago, unions would have considered this far too sensitive to do. Trade unions are participating in Pride events up and down the country, giving them support and taking the trade union message to the LGBT community.

Congress, there are far too many good examples in the Equality Audit Report for me to do justice to them in just a few minutes. I do hope that everybody will take some time out to read that report. It is not only a great measure of how we are doing collectively, but it is also telling us a good story about ourselves. It shows us how we can do even better so that we can build a more diverse and sustainable trade union movement for the future which we need so much. So, President, I commend the report to Congress.

Equal Rights

The impact of the cuts on the equality agenda

The President: Thank you, Kay. I now call paragraph 3.7. Delegates, we continue with Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Equal Rights, from page 32. I will call paragraphs 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 and Motion 14, the impact of cuts on the equality agenda. The General Council is supporting the motion.

Paddy Lillis (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) moved Motion 14.

He said: Congress, over a year ago, David Cameron pledged to cut the deficit in a way which was fair, open and responsible. We know that the cuts have been none of these things. Tell me what is fair about over one million unemployed women. The latest figures published only last week show that female unemployment is at a 23-year high and this figure is set to rise as the Tory-led coalition push ahead with their flawed economic strategy, which is to dismantle many of the vital public services provided to women and children.

They are also forging ahead with their assault on benefits for working parents and disabled people, tax credits cut, disability living allowance torn apart, child benefit frozen and housing benefits capped. What is fair about working mothers losing almost £3,000 of their family income or forcing disabled people off benefits into a shrinking and often inaccessible job market? What is fair about cutting maternity grants, closing Sure Start Children's Centres and freezing child benefit?

Child care support has also been badly hit by the cuts. A recent survey by the Daycare Trust found that over one-third of mothers said that a reduction in child care support would leave them socially isolated and would make it much more difficult for them to see their midwives or health visitors.

There is very clear evidence that women are paying the highest price for the spending cuts. Congress, the austerity measures have failed the fairness test and are rolling back progress made on the equalities agenda. The impact of the cuts are falling most heavily on those in our society who can least afford them. David Cameron and George Osborne claim, "We are all in this together". They claim that they are committed to women's equality and that social mobility and tackling child poverty are still their priorities. They make these claims when their economic policies risk undermining women's connection to the world of paid work not only in terms of unemployment and mounting job losses, but in terms of making work pay as services for women and children are sliced.

Their reckless economic strategy threatens greater inequality. Their cuts agenda is hitting the most disadvantaged groups the hardest. It puts at risk the incoming job

security of millions of working families across the United Kingdom and puts thousands more children at risk of falling into poverty.

The scale and the pace of the cuts are relentless and it is the disadvantaged in society who are paying the highest price. One thing is clear about this Government and that is that they say one thing and do another. They say that they want to mend a broken society by pulling the rug of financial support from under the feet of working families. They say that they care about community cohesion by forcing thousands of vital services to close. These are services like community law centres, citizens' advice bureaux, rape crisis centres and the list goes on.

The trade unions say what they mean and mean what they say. We mean it when we say that we are highlighting the unfair and unequal impact of the cuts. We mean it when we say that we will campaign to promote an alternative to the cuts. We mean it when we say that we will reach out to low income working families, to women workers, to disabled work people and to black workers to ensure that their voice is heard and the trade union movement campaigns against these cuts. Congress, USDAW asks you to support this motion and the impact of the cuts on the equality agenda.

Lesley Mercer (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) seconded Motion 14.

She said: Last week, I was able to speak to some CSP members working in children's health about how they saw the interrelationship between poverty and cuts and children's health. Their feedback was really valuable and I am going to share some of that with you now.

If a parent with a disabled child cannot get that child to a hospital appointment because of cuts in local funding for taxis or special ambulances, that child really suffers. Cuts in subsidised swimming and football clubs locally affect children with dyspraxia. Some of you here today will know what that is but for those of you who do not, it is a problem with coordination. Children with dyspraxia need to reinforce their physiotherapy treatment with regular extra physical activity. They do not get that with cuts in local support and they go on to have more serious accidents and do less well at school.

Our members also found poor living conditions with houses which are too cold, too damp or too overcrowded because families cannot afford better. Children with existing conditions like asthma and cerebral palsy become more ill. Most people know how poor nutrition affects learning and concentration, but it affects muscle health too and physios are often the first to spot these things. Members tell me that they are seeing more and more children for whom school dinners are now the main source of nutrition and probably the only hot meal of the day.

A paediatric manager down in Wales told me last week that the doctors in her area are prescribing more and more antidepressants to children, the result of growing stress among families battling with unemployment and also in-work poverty.

Congress, we live in the world's fifth largest economy and these are the real-life experiences of people right at the lower end of the income scale. I say shame on

those who are clamouring for tax cuts for those people right at the opposite end of the income scale. Please support. (*Applause*)

Cecile Wright (*University and College Union*) supported Motion 14.

She said: Wilkinson and Pickett, the authors of *The Spirit Level*, point out that phenomena usually described as social problems, social unrest, ill-health and unemployment are more common in unequal societies than ones with better economic distribution.

It is also well-reported that the disparity between the rich and the poor in the UK has widened over the last 25 years. Interestingly, this situation has occurred against a background of successive governments, including the current coalition government, having a social mobility strategy at the heart of the policy agenda.

The UK remains one of the most unequal societies in the developed economies. The coalition government's austerity measures, cuts to welfare and public spending cuts will serve to further embed social division. Within this, it would appear that low income families, women, disabled workers and young people are destined to be at the sharper end of the growing inequality that affects the country.

Focusing on young people, for instance, a recent study conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research stated that nearly 50% of black young people aged 16-24 reported that they were out of work compared with 20% of white people of the same age. Further, the study revealed that not only had the absolute level of employment risen for this group, but they were at the sharpest end of joblessness. Also, we find

within this group that they are likely to stay on in education beyond the age of 16. However, it is a disgrace that there is only one university in the UK, e.g. the London Metropolitan, that appears to have more black students attending that university than the whole of the Russell Group top universities.

Against the background of the withdrawal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance etc, there are greater barriers to these young people getting into higher education. Are these groups simply meant to be surplus to requirements? UCU for one does not think so. The social and economic situation has consequences, as we saw with the unrest across the country over the summer. Indeed, it was Martin Luther King who said that social unrest is the voice of the voiceless.

We have a responsibility to strengthen our resolve and work with the voiceless. We have a responsibility to ensure that we stand with our communities to ensure that they do not suffer from the vagaries of the market and the cuts of the coalition government. Please support the motion.

Pat Stuart (*Unite the Union*) supported Motion 14.

She said: It is already clear that the cuts imposed by this coalition government are impacting most heavily on women and also on black workers, workers with disabilities and others who are already disadvantaged in the world of work and will widen the equality gap, potentially setting us back years.

These effects are clear in my own Not for Profit section of Unite where the youth services are being decimated and funding is being slashed to a range of organisations

providing services to those with greatest need in the community. My own branch has been busy representing members, both at a political level and at an industrial level, who face swingeing service-destroying cuts to mental health services, services to the homeless, family support services and community advice services among others. Our members are facing the threat of redundancy. They are losing their entitlement to annual leave – some of them losing up to week -- they are losing their public holidays or they are losing some of their sick pay entitlement.

Even those losing their jobs suffer extra distress because these are the kinds of people who work in our sector and who work in public services as well. It is extra distress at the thought of the reduction or loss of the services they care about providing and the people who rely upon those services.

Most of our members are women and a high proportion of them are black. What is happening to them is a microcosm of the triple whammy that women are facing at present in the economy: (1) women's jobs are most at risk from cuts; (2) women disproportionately rely upon many of the services being damaged; and (3) the increased burden of care arising from the vacuum in the support services falls upon carers, most of whom are women.

There is little point in appealing to the moral sensibilities of the government because (a) they do not have any, and (b) their view of the world is tainted by that hostility to women which is a classic feature of right-wing politics. We see elements of it all the time in their pronouncements. The specific help so far has included cutting the child

care element of tax credits, abolishing the health and pregnancy grant and cutting entitlement to child benefit. It is a real help to us, I do not think!

Congress, we now need our brothers in the unions to help us to make the plight of women and the issues we are facing a key campaigning priority. We need your assistance to highlight the equality gap which is growing in front of us now rather than reducing. The amendment makes a point about the inevitable effects on children of driving women into greater poverty. The rich louts in the government do not care. In fact, every time they look around they think of something else for which to blame us. Single parents were to blame for the riots, but I will not start on that. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Annette Mansell-Green (*Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) spoke in support of Motion 14.

She said: Good afternoon, Congress, and thank you for allowing me to speak in this debate as I think this is the maiden speech from the Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association. We would like to particularly support another small specialist health union affiliate, the CSP, in their amendment regarding child poverty.

In doing so, what I would like to do is to highlight a particular area of concern to our members and that is the cuts that are being faced by the children and adolescent mental health services across the country with some areas facing cuts of up to 25% in those services. There is also the threat of privatisation.

I think we understand that in order to address these health inequalities, and particularly mental health issues suffered by this group of people, we need a multi-agency approach. You cannot deliver a multi-agency approach through health and social care with local government and the NHS with private sector involvement. Having said that, we do have members who do work for the private sector and there are particular issues to address around that under different headings.

Congress, we know that health inequality and in particular mental health are both the cause and effect of poverty, particularly hitting children the hardest. Cuts to this service are of vital importance with members facing up to 25% cuts in service delivery and also redundancies.

Poor mental health is more prevalent in poorer areas and within already disadvantaged groups. What are some of the issues faced by these young people when it comes to mental health problems? They include self-harm, alcohol and substance abuse, eating disorders, conduct issues, emotional issues and a variety of aspects of the autistic spectrum.

Our children and adolescents deserve a fair opportunity in life to participate and to contribute to society. We have heard from other speakers that there is a disproportionate effect on BME groups. They are more likely to experience the risk factors associated with mental health such as deprivation, discrimination, poor education and employment prospects. Coupled with cuts to other services such as the EMA, it is a double whammy for already disadvantaged and discriminated against groups.

Another group that we need to consider are the children of refugees and asylum seekers who are at very high risk of mental health issues due to the fact that they have suffered traumatic experiences prior to arriving in this country and then discrimination when they do. Looked-after children and young offenders are two other groups. You can see that there are areas in which we need to work together as a movement with all our specialities – the big unions and the small – in fighting these cuts and stopping the prevalence and vicious circle of health inequality, social deprivation and poverty. (*Applause*)

The President: There is no right of reply so we will move to the vote.

* *Motion 14 was CARRIED*

No cutting back on women's equality: women united against the cuts

The President: I now call paragraph 3.8 and Motion 15, No cutting back on women's equality: women united against the cuts. The General Council supports the motion.

Diana Holland (*Unite the Union*) moved Motion 15.

She said: President, Congress, moving Motion 15, No cutting back on women's equality, on behalf of the TUC Women's Conference.

In March this year, TUC Women's Conference debated many vital issues, but it was this motion that we chose to bring here to Congress. It is a motion which shows the anger, the unity of purpose, the strength and the humanity of working women across our movement and our communities. Women and children did not cause this global economic crisis and yet it is women and children who are being singled out to pay the highest price. Two-thirds of the cuts are funded by taking money from women. On average, every man is losing £4.20 a week, which is bad enough, but every woman is losing £8.80, which is more than double. Single parents, who are mostly women, are losing on average one full month's income a year.

We have heard about scrapping the Health in Pregnancy Grant which takes £190.00 a week from all pregnant women, the freezing of child benefit, the shameful robbing of thousands of pounds from women in their late fifties through changes to their state pension age and the impact upon women of the devastating attacks on our welfare state and public services.

As Brendan Barber said this morning, the cuts are also being used to smuggle in ideological policies that never appeared in any manifesto, undermining hard-won achievements for working women, their families and communities. It is things like taking away free fruit from children in school, abolishing the Women's National Commission, abolishing the Agricultural Wages Board, the Teenage Pregnancy Advisory Group and hidden cuts to access to work. Just what contribution do these cuts make to dealing with the global economic crisis? They are unfair, unjust and just plain wrong.

We have an alternative and we will unite to achieve it. Last night, at the TUC Women's Reception, we also condemned the invidious and slimy attacks on abortion rights and highlighted the hostility to women underpinning this right wing cuts agenda. We were alerted to the major threat to our achievements on maternity and family rights of which we can rightly be very proud. I watched the short film here at lunchtime showing a child of today dressed as a chimney sweep. We do not need to learn again why child labour is wrong, nor do we need to learn again why we need maternity rights or why we need, as unions, to negotiate and build upon those legal minimums.

When I first became a union officer over 20 years ago, every week I was representing women who were sacked when they became pregnant and women whose pension entitlement was reduced or non-existent because of pregnancy, childbirth and caring. These are lessons we do not need to learn again. That includes the current threat to the migrant domestic worker visa which ended their slavery status in 1998.

David Cameron, Nick Clegg and their millionaire team should hang their heads in shame. An attack on the most vulnerable shows your own weakness not strength. Last weekend, migrant domestic workers made their work visible in a protest with brushes, sweeping up outside Parliament. We should join them and sweep this latest attack on the most vulnerable in our community out of Parliament and into the dustbin where it belongs. (*Applause*)

So, we are angry, we are organised and we have been taking action, but we need to ensure the huge alliance that we are building has the diversity of women and men,

together and equal, with issues of women's equality centre stage and not at the margins. Yesterday, I came across a document that a national officer had passed to me. It is an agreement which came from nearly 60 years ago. It says: "In April 1953, the NJC approved the principle of equal pay for equal work" and it then went on, "but in the light of the situation obtaining generally in this regard, the implementation of the principle was deferred until the time should be appropriate."

In the light of the situation obtaining generally in this regard today, working women need action now for our charter, to oppose cuts and to continue to advance equality and let no one say that we need to defer implementation of the principle of women's equality to a more appropriate time. Inequality and disunity is too high a price to pay. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

Susan Highton (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 15.

She said: Congress, it is fitting that this motion was chosen by the delegation for the TUC Women's Conference to be heard today because what this government is doing to our public services, to our communities, to our health service and to the most vulnerable members of our society will impact upon women's lives in the way that many never imagined when they listened to the promises of Cameron and Clegg at election time last year. Almost immediately, they froze child benefits, scrapped pregnancy grants and raised the criteria for the tax credit despite the fact that their own Minister for Equalities warned that these measures had not been equality impact-assessed and would have a detriment effect on women. Cameron and Clegg chose to ignore this advice.

Now we see Sure Start Children's Centres being forced to close across the UK or the service has been cut to a minimal level, the very centres which provide a lifeline to women and children most in need of support and a way in which women can re-enter the workforce and escape the benefits trap. Users of Sure Start services are mostly women and the vast majority of staff employed in them are also women, many of them members of UNISON. At a time of recession, the need for public services increases and not decreases.

Southern Cross is a prime example of just how badly things can go wrong when private companies take over the services that the public sector could, and should, provide. The care of over 30,000 vulnerable people is now uncertain as is the future of the staff providing this care.

This past week, members of my union stood vigil in support of the NHS as this government drove through the Health and Social Care Bill. It is a bill that will yet again impact detrimentally upon women's lives and women's equality. It is a hidden attack on women.

Our experience of privatisation has been a disaster. For our members, it means lower wages, longer hours and poor standards for how else can they provide a cheaper service? For patients and service users, it means longer waiting lists, lower standards and less choice. If maternity services are cut or centralised, how many mothers and babies will be at risk? If facility services are cut, how many women will suffer the agony of being told that no help is available for them unless they can pay? How

many waiting lists will go up and will private patients leapfrog the queue so that women are left waiting for hip and knee surgery to make their lives more bearable?

In the Cinderella services of mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, how many women will struggle on with their own problems or try to deal with their family members' problems whilst the queue for help grows longer and the specialist services they so desperately need are withdrawn? Cameron would like us to believe that his "Big Society", volunteers and unpaid workers will fill the gap, but we know that women's organisations providing support to women who experience domestic abuse, those at risk in trying to escape forced marriages and women who have suffered sexual abuse and rape are now seeing their funding withdrawn or slashed by local authorities trying to make ends meet and the tragedy services being used.

Please support this motion and let us all go out and fight for what we deserve. We deserve public services and we deserve women to be at the forefront. (*Applause*)

The President: There is no right of reply so we will go to the vote.

* *Motion 15 was CARRIED*

Race equality and the attack on public services

The President: I now call upon 3.9 and Motion 16, Race equality and the attack on public services. The General Council supports the motion.

Mark Clifford (*UNISON*) moved Motion 16 on behalf of the Black Workers' Conference.

He said: I move Motion 16, Race equality and the attack on public services, on behalf of the Black Workers' Conference.

Congress, we move at a crucial time, just a month since the civil disturbances which scarred, scared and shocked our nation. It is at a time when the fate of public services hangs in the balance with a White Paper promising reforms which will further undermine the fabric of the public service ethos as we know it. It is at a time when our unions are needed by black workers more than ever to defend their jobs, pay, pension and terms and conditions.

Congress, this motion highlights the devastating impact the Tory-led government attacks are having on public services and rolling back years of progress on race equality. Black unemployment has increased sharply. The figures are getting worse as the scale of the job cuts take effect. Analysis by the IPPR revealed that 48% of young black people are unemployed compared with 20% of young white people, a social travesty on a massive scale.

These figures show that young people are paying a heavy price for the recession and economic crisis caused by rich bankers. The situation has been exacerbated by the coalition government's policies, which have consigned many young people to long-term unemployment and restricted access to further and higher education, plunging many into debt. They have withdrawn funding for Connexion services, youth clubs, community centres and the Jobs for the Future programme. The list is endless.

The government's cuts and funding for local authorities are punishing local communities and pushing our poor communities deeper into poverty. Where communities once had hope, the slash and burn government policies are giving rise to despair, dissolution and disharmony.

When the government cuts funding to local government in cities like Birmingham, London, Manchester, Bradford and Leicester, it is cutting lifelines to some of the most deprived communities in the UK – our communities. Those same policies robbed a generation of achieving their ambitions and aspirations in the 1980s and 1990s. Many communities have never recovered from the onslaught of the Tory policies of worklessness, living on the breadline and trapped on benefits. We know which communities are going to suffer disproportionately. They are communities whose histories were already blighted by discrimination, poverty and workplace exploitation, their future still gripped by the stranglehold of institutional racism.

David Cameron's talk about the "Big Society" is just that; talk. His words ring hollow when we know that the community and voluntary sectors have been facing budget cuts of their own. Those groups providing specialist services to the black community have faced some of the deepest cuts. It brings home the responsibility that trade unions have. Only we have the collective power and the will to truly tackle racism in the workplace.

As I marched with hundreds of thousands of ordinary people on March 26th, I felt proud of what we, as a movement, had accomplished. We sent a message to the

government that we were not going to stand aside and let them target the poor, the old and the sick and that we were not going to let them feather the pockets of their friends and make us pay the price. It is vital for us now, as trade unionists, to negotiate, bargain and organise to make sure that black workers and black communities are not made to pay the price for the reckless gambles of the bankers.

Equality is one of the most important tools we have to challenge the unfairness and inequality of the government plans. We believe that black people need trade unions and trade unions need black people now more than ever before. Congress, we need to go further. We need to ensure that race equality is a key part of the TUC's and the affiliates' agendas to defend public services and to focus on their anti-cuts campaigns, both nationally and within local communities.

Trade unions in particular have always faced the social challenges of our time. We have never shied away from meeting them and we must forge ahead in finding solutions to the challenges of our time. We will organise, we will lobby and we will be relentless in our campaign for a better future for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Zita Holbourne (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Motion 16.

She said: Black workers are bearing the brunt of cuts to the public sector. As the largest employer of black workers with 640,000 employees, the cuts to the public sector are having a disproportionate impact. At least 27,000 black workers are set to lose their jobs. Cuts to the public sector are having a knock-on impact on the voluntary sector with funding slashed leading to respective longstanding black

organisations, which provide valuable services to black communities in the most deprived and vulnerable areas, ceasing to exist.

Job segregation, discrimination in recruitment pay, progression and appraisal mean that black workers are already in the lowest grades on the lowest pay living in poverty so are more likely to be impacted by cuts with devastating consequences. As the public sector has a high concentration of women workers, this means that black women will experience a double impact and this will also hurt not just them but their dependants and families. Young people will be unable to get employment in the public sector because of job cuts and the government's plan to make us work longer to receive our pensions. Young black people are twice as likely as their white counterparts to be unemployed with nearly half of young black people out of work. It is essential, therefore, that all trade union anti-cuts campaigns tackle the racism of cuts.

PCS and the TUC Race Relations Committee, alongside a range of unions and national and local anti-cuts groups, having been working with Black Activists Rising Against Cuts UK, a national campaign with regional structures to tackle the disproportionate impact of cuts on black communities, service users and workers. All anti-cuts campaigns need to include black workers, service users and communities in their activities as these are the people who can speak first-hand on how the cuts are impacting upon them and to ensure that the discrimination of cuts is addressed. PCS has a national strategy to tackle the discrimination of cuts and has delivered a programme of training to equip both lay and full-time officer negotiators in using the

law, including the Equality Act and equality impact assessments, to challenge any potential disproportionate impact of cuts on black workers and service users.

Whilst there is no longer a requirement for EIAs in law, employers must still demonstrate due regard and unions should negotiate for EIAs to be policy if they have not already done so. The Cabinet Office and many civil service departments have agreed that EIAs are the best way of making assessments. It is essential that assessments of the impact are carried out prior to any cuts taking place, steps and measures are taken to avoid any disproportionate impact and that, as trade unionists, we insist upon this.

To end, trade unions have a responsibility to practise equality and to tackle and challenge any discrimination at work. This should remain a priority in bargaining, organising and negotiating. Equality is not an add-on. It should be at the heart of any campaign, not least the campaign against cuts. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: There is no right of reply so we will move to the vote.

* *Motion 16 was CARRIED*

Disability

The President: I now call upon paragraph 3.10.

Chris Murphy (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) spoke paragraph 3.10.

He said: This may not be the most important issue this week or this year, but it is about disability. The TUC – and I am looking at the General Council – should take on board what I would call “the walking wounded”. There are disabled people who are unfortunately very limited in mobility and need wheelchairs. However, there are the walking wounded – and I am classed as one of them – who are independent and can get around to a degree.

You can get a blue badge which allows you to park in convenient places because of a physical defect or because you are disabled. You have to apply and, if you are lucky, you are given one. However, when you make an enquiry through your union as a delegate to the TUC – and I am talking about Brighton, Liverpool or Manchester – there are parking facilities but you have to pay for them. In Liverpool, it was difficult to park and if you parked, your car was towed away.

I am asking the General Council – and I expect that there will be gnashing of teeth and crying tonight about the great cost of the hall, which you are not going to believe – if trade unions can be asked before every conference if they have any walking wounded. I know I am not using the correct PC term, but they are those people who are independent and still want to be active. If there are facilities available so that they can drive themselves there, park their motorcars, get into the conference and get out (which is all we ask for) I hope the General Council and the organisers of Congress will pay attention to this. If not, I will do my best to come back and hound you next year. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, colleague, for those heartfelt remarks on behalf of the disabled. We take on board your comments and certainly we will look seriously at these when we do the review of Congress after the event. Thank you very much for those comments.

Mental health at work

The President: I will now move to Motion 17, Mental health at work. The General Council support the motion.

Sean McGovern (*Unite the Union*) moved Motion 17 on behalf of the TUC Disability Conference.

He said: Congress, if you had a mental health condition, would you tell your employer? If you were stressed and it was affecting your health, would you tell your boss or any of your colleagues? Most workers do not. There is such a thing as an environment of fear where many people are afraid of bullying and other forms of discrimination so they are not open about their mental health condition. Trade unions have always played an important role in negotiating for dignity at work. We at Unite have recently launched our stress and mental health campaign, which includes a lot of information as well as a negotiator's guide for reps.

Congress, this is the time to organise around this vital issue. We need support for workers with mental conditions on our bargaining agendas so that we can negotiate for reasonable judgment, sufficient disability leave and a workplace free of stigma. We all know that the horrific government cuts will put more pressure on workers,

which will worsen their conditions or even be the cause of another condition. We all remember the government's pledge: "We will protect the NHS from cuts." The reality is proving very different.

There have been serious cuts of 15% to jobs in mental health trusts and this is just the beginning. This government has the audacity to admit that its massive cuts to the public sector undermine its pledge to help one million people recover from mental health conditions by the year 2014. We will see the devastating long-term effects of these cuts with specific care models for those with long-term conditions or severe mental illnesses not being developed or piloted or best practice not being disseminated across the country.

We now know that some of the deepest cuts will hit people in the mental health services. The figures show that in total 6,346 jobs could be at risk across the 53 mental health trusts and, yes, you have guessed it – a high proportion of those will be at clinical rather than at management level.

This government thinks that it is easier to make these cuts because people using mental health services cannot, or dare not, speak up, but we will show them. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

Julie Robinson (*UNISON*) seconded the Motion 17.

She said: Congress, 45% of our workers are experiencing, or have experienced, mental ill-health. Many of our colleagues do not disclose that they have these conditions. We have to ask ourselves why our colleagues, some of them really close friends, do not divulge this information. I think Sean has covered the reasons in his

speech. It is all part of hidden disabilities. No one questions a wheelchair user or a blind person etc. When you look as fit as a butcher's dog, it is hard for employers and workmates to understand that your diabetes, cancer or mental health means that you could be disabled.

No one likes the idea of standing up and shouting that they had Prozac for breakfast so the motion calls on the General Council and also affiliates to ensure that activists and members are made aware of all legislation that can support our members who are experiencing mental ill-health. Training should support affiliates to negotiate policies which support mental health, including disability leave agreements. This training should include ways of helping our colleagues to disclose their mental health conditions to ensure that our members and employers become more aware of mental health conditions.

In summary, I have noticed in the equality debates that we have had only movers and seconders. I would hope that is only because of the plea from the President to keep the debate short and not because of apathy from the affiliates. I move. *(Applause)*

Mandy Hudson *(National Union of Teachers)* supported Motion 17.

She said: The NUT is proud to support this motion from the Disabled Workers' Conference regarding mental health. We have done quite a lot of work over the years on mental health issues. What I want to focus on now is particularly how the trade union movement can support those colleagues with mental health conditions.

I find that this matter only comes to people's attention when stories are told of the horror and stress that individuals go through when trying to cope in a workplace which is completely overwhelming. We know now that what we face in terms of the cuts is a completely overwhelming situation for all of us. For many years, those with mental health conditions were considered to be weak and all they needed to do was to pull themselves together. I believe that there is a systemic failure of institutions in society as a whole to recognise the fact that if people are working in stressful conditions, they are going to crack. That is something that we all have to recognise.

The TUC, according to the numbers that I have seen this week, represents six million workers and yet we know that our power goes further in terms of the tone that we set. I would encourage the General Council to continue to roll out the training used for disabilities generally and mental health in particular. There are many good publications out there regarding courses on disability championing, mental health awareness and work/life balance. All of those are there to help raise awareness.

I would also stress that we need to watch our language. I have just been listening to the equality debate. Let us get away a little more from the suffering, the victims and the vulnerable because we could all be considered to be suffering and vulnerable victims. We are the ones who can actually power the fight-back on this. We are much stronger together. Let us get rid of the negative reactions. We need to empower our reps within each workplace to be able to see beyond an individual situation and to fight a system which causes so many people to be under so much mental distress. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

The President: There is no reply. We will move to the vote.

* *Motion 17 was CARRIED*

Defending LGBT rights while fighting the cuts

The President: I now call paragraph 3.11 and Motion 18, Defending LGBT rights while fighting the cuts. The General Council supports the motion.

Bev Miller (*UNISON*) moved Motion 18.

She said: President, Congress, I am Bev Miller, a UNISON delegate, a TUC LGBT Committee member and proud to move Motion 18 on defending LGBT rights while fighting the cuts. This motion is a composite of motions and amendments submitted to this summer's TUC LGBT Conference. There was little else on our minds at that conference which opened on the day of the teaching unions' pension strike and there has been little on our minds since. We were angry and determined then and we are even more angry and determined now.

As LGBT people, we are faced with the most vicious onslaught of our lives on our jobs, on our terms and conditions, on the services that we use and on the benefits on which we rely. We are under attack as workers and as trade unionists. Can you imagine being a black LGBT person with a disability?

Congress, this is not news to anyone here. Everyone who is not a banker or a millionaire is affected by the cuts. What this motion highlights is the specific and

disproportionate impact upon LGBT people. This Tory-led government has, with characteristic duplicity, re-branded itself as caring about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. They have their action plans and their ministerial statements saying that they want to tackle prejudice.

They say, “We will take a range of measures to end discrimination in the workplace.” Then why do we continue to hear reports of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the workplace with members afraid to complain as they know that their jobs are at risk?

They say, “We will promote better recording of hate crimes against disabled, homosexual and transgender people.” Then why introduce 20% cuts across the police service, which will make tackling hate crimes a pipedream for police forces? They say that they are developing plans to deal with the devastating discrimination faced by transgender people. Then why are gender reassignment services being deemed non-essential and subject to ever more severe rationing?

Congress, we must expose the short-sighted nature of these cuts – the relatively miniscule amounts of money saved compared with the huge costs in human terms. There is the cost of unemployment, damage to mental health, relationship breakdown, lives which are ruined and, in some cases, suicide by failing to provide these vital services. Regardless of its talk, this government has no interest in equality, no interest in removing barriers and no interest in fairness.

The gains made in LGBT equality is the legacy of years of trade unions and community organisations campaigning and the work of the previous Labour government. Cameron cannot admit that LGBT people will be among the hardest hit by his Government's austerity measures. LGBT people work disproportionately in the public and voluntary sectors which are being cut.

As a community, LGBT people are more reliant upon public services. The few dedicated and valuable services that have been established do not, as this motion says, win popularity contests. Local newspapers are not likely to run campaigns to save their local LGBT support group or dedicated mental health services.

Delegates, it is up to the trade union movement, working with the LGBT community, to defend these vital services and oppose the cuts and attacks on our pensions. Members in our service should not pay the price for the greed of the financial institutions which caused the mess. We must highlight the alternatives and campaign for the implementation of the Robin Hood tax. As long as this government carries on with its reckless handling of the economy, it will be cuts, cuts, cuts.

Our legal right to equality are of little comfort when so many of us are being made redundant or redeployed to lower grades with less pay. We must ensure that equality impact assessments are used to challenge discriminatory practice against LGBT people. We will not be marginalised, we will not be silenced and we will not lose the rights that many before us fought so hard to gain. We will be out, proud and determined to win this fight. Congress, please promote equality, oppose the cuts and support this motion. I move. *(Cheers and applause)*

Harry McAnulty (*Unite the Union*) spoke in support of Motion 18.

He said: We have to note the devastating impacts across Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales that the austerity ConDem cuts are having on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. The already marginalised communities experience a range of health inequalities, experience discrimination in all walks of life, and are subjected to homophobic hate and abuse, all recognised by government departments. The communities are being further beaten into the ground by the ConDem spending review. In London almost one in 200 people aged between 15 and 59 are living with HIV. The HIV virus disproportionately affects gay and bisexual men across Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, and in some areas one in four gay and bisexual men are living with the virus. Charities who carry out HIV prevention work like the Terence Higgins Trust, GMFA, and CASE, have had their budgets slashed by up to 43% but yet there continues to be a 70% rise in HIV infection cases from the early Noughties. Other charities that provide a range of mental health support for LGBT people have also been targets of the same vicious austerity measures. We have also heard from other speakers of the attack on youth services by local authority cuts, and services that support LGBT youth have greatly been reduced or are under increasing threat.

These changes in funding with no impact assessments are further threatening and marginalising the LGBT community. With the reduction in police funding across the regions equality has indeed slipped down the agenda. Job losses such as LGBT hate crime officers are impacting on the investigation and reporting of hate crimes; indeed, the transgender community is also feeling the impact of the ConDem attacks on services. The NHS trusts have stopped referral for gender reassignment surgery for

trans people. High levels of suicide among trans people waiting for surgery is well documented in US research which cites that 41% of trans people have attempted suicide. Just last week the Health and Social Care Bill was discussed in Parliament. If this is passed it will change the nature of how services are commissioned with more responsibility falling upon GPs. The Equality and Human Rights Commission on Trans report recognises that GPs may have less of an interest in gender issues, therefore impacting on the vital services.

It is evident that the services for LGBT people do not win popularity contests and they are among the first to be cut. Congress, we need to highlight the attacks on LGBT key workers in organisations, maintain the commitment to LGBT equality, campaign against the erosion of the equality agenda, and defend LGBT support services. Congress, the cuts are having a real and devastating impact among the LGBT community. I hope that all unions can stand united with fellow workers to fight against the austerity measures, an attack on society's most vulnerable and on working people. Comrades, I urge you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

Dave Brinson (*National Union of Teachers*) spoke in support of Motion 18.

He said: By choosing to bring this motion, the LGBT conference is recognising that the government's savage cuts agenda threatens every area of the equality agenda. We made significant gains under the previous government in terms of equality legislation but legislation alone does not achieve equality. LGBT people still face discrimination, ignorance, intolerance, and hatred and they rely on the support of public services and those funded voluntary sector groups in challenging and combating this.

If we really want to change attitudes in society we need to invest in education and in youth work. We celebrate those professionals delivering equality work, whether in schools, local authorities, or in the voluntary sector. People like Ellie Barnes who led such fantastic work for LGBT History Month at Stoke Newington School. I have to give a shout out for Ellie's fantastic work if only for the fact that Toby Young hates it. (*Laughter*) Toby Young does not think that our young people should learn about gay and lesbian history. He thinks they should spend that time learning about the Ancient Greeks. There may be a shock coming to you there, Toby. (*Laughter/Applause*)

The motion acknowledges the coalition is trying to make positive noises on equality issues. The fact that the Red Tape Challenge in the equalities section asks in the very first question whether we should scrap the Equality Acts altogether casts some doubt on that. If this government is serious about equality, then they are currently failing to put their money where their mouth is or whatever orifice it is that they are currently talking out of.

We keep hearing how frontline services are to be protected. This is Cameron's big lie. Are the thousands of professionals working for local education authorities, often with the most vulnerable kids, now being made redundant *en masse* not frontline services? Are those specialists leading equality and diversity work, health education, and anti-bullying work in schools and local authorities not frontline services? Are those voluntary groups working with young LGBT people who have seen their funding slashed or scrapped altogether not frontline services? The government's cuts

agenda is an attack, an ideological attack on public service, an attack on ordinary working people, a wholesale attack on the equality agenda, and we need to put a stop to it. Support this motion. (*Applause*)

* *Motion 18 was CARRIED*

Public sector equality duty

The President: I now call paragraph 3.2 and Motion 19, Public sector equality duty.

The General Council supports the motion.

Sue Gethin (FDA) moved Motion 19.

She said: The FDA was pleased when the 2010 Equality Act clarified and strengthened equality rights in the United Kingdom but we are disappointed that this government has weakened the public sector duty by failing to back it up with specific duties regulations, particularly as this appears to be happening out of a belief that these duties create an unnecessary burden on authorities, which is a premise we do not accept.

This is a complex and confusing area of employment legislation and regulation and the FDA is calling upon the TUC General Council to help equip affiliated unions with the expertise to work with public bodies to ensure that progress gained to date is not lost and also to campaign to retain and assimilate good practice on publishing meaningful equality data. This can be done through the use of effective equality impact assessments.

We would like the TUC to continue to act as a conduit to share good practice, allowing affiliates and reps to learn from each other and to ensure that training and briefing materials are available for affiliates and their reps, which will allow us to build up the necessary expertise.

The draft regulations laid before Parliament in July 2011 weaken the specific duties which are supposed to back up the public sector equality duty such that they provide little support for individuals and groups seeking to hold public bodies to account, and nor do they provide guidance to public bodies on how to meet the general equality duty which remains a requirement.

It is said the changes are being made to reduce bureaucracy and the burden on public authorities. However, we believe that having information published to demonstrate that issues are being dealt with would indeed be a lesser burden on a public authority than reacting to the numerous questions raised by citizens, the press, staff, and trade unions, about the same issue. If the information is already out there, then the authority need do nothing more than point the questioner to it and in doing so it demonstrates openness and transparency. Organisations that have been using best practice to date may also believe that what they were previously doing will become unnecessary.

The government has stated that its new approach to the specific duties is about improving transparency and democratic accountability. However, we do not feel that the light touch approach gives the necessary power and information to allow citizens,

community organisations, and trade unions, to question the equality commitments of public bodies, particularly if there is a requirement for public bodies to commit to a single objective towards achieving equality.

The regulations drafted imply that one objective will be enough to meet the requirements of the general duty, although this covers eight protected characteristics and has three elements, eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations. As the necessary information may no longer be readily available, trade unions and others are likely to resort to freedom of information requests to get this information that should have been published. This will thus increase the bureaucracy compared to the publication of equality impact assessments in a timely and open fashion.

The FDA believes that equality impact assessments are a good starting point for those seeking to establish whether public bodies have paid due regard to equality. We do not accept the government's statement that publishing evidence is unnecessarily prescriptive. We are also concerned that the draft regulations expect the public bodies will be held to account only after the event. This goes against the purpose of the duty to pay due regard and will be costly and ineffective in the way of operating as potential issues and concerns will fail to be addressed at a formative stage.

Effective equality impact assessments are a vital tool for public bodies to demonstrate that they have taken account of the public sector equality duty. Equality impact assessments should not be just a tick box exercise, they should be meaningful,

effective, properly evaluated, and carried out by those who are trained to do so. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 19. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Elizabeth Cameron (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 19.

She said: I am delighted to be seconding Motion 19, the public sector equality duty. President, Congress, Unison campaigned relentlessly for the public sector equality duty following publication of the Stephen Lawrence Report. This report found evidence of entrenched institutional racism in some of our public institutions. The purpose of the public sector equality duty is to seek to bring about transformational change in eradicating, I stress, persistent and systematic discrimination in our public institutions.

Unison welcomes the strengthening and extension of the public sector equality duty in the 2010 Act. It is very disappointing and deeply distressing that the coalition government's approach has been to weaken the specific equality duty rendering them almost meaningless, and abolishing the requirement to carry out an equality impact assessment prior to making changes to procedures, policies, and practices.

EIAs have enabled the public, trade unions, and under-represented groups to scrutinise and influence public authorities. EIAs have become simple to operate, widely accepted, and defined by the court as an essential requirement before decisions are made. They have helped to drive improvements in public policy. Unison argues that EIAs are still the best way of complying with the general duty when changes are made and the government has said that the intention of the revised specific duty is to move from a process-driven approach to a focus on transparency and a shift in

approach, a focus on performance, not process, and yet have removed the two practical tools that deliver this. Their commitment to equality and transparency has been shown for exactly what it is, a hollow sham. Revising the duties in this way is a retrograde step and takes us back to the 20th century model of equalities, all talk and no action.

We reject this approach. Unison believes that the equality impact assessment is an effective tool in eliminating discrimination. It is a modern approach that shines a light in the darker corners of our public institutions. It helps to remove entrenched barriers that pervade those institutions. It improves equal access and enhances public accountability. They are a key component in giving substance to the general duty and are necessary to demonstrate that public authorities, who should by example be leading, are taking due regard to and complying with meeting their statutory obligations under the general duty, and are delivering all of their functions as employers.

In Unison we publish a range of extensive guidance to negotiators and branches to use in defending members' jobs and protecting services. We are collating examples of good practice where trade unions are engaged in using the equality duty to protect members' jobs and services. Our experience to date has shown that where Unison branches and paid officials actively use these equality impact assessments we can make a real difference. We will continue to hold public authorities to account, and this government to account, for their policies which threaten to roll back years of progress on equality. Congress, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

* *Motion 19 was CARRIED*

Proposed reform of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The President: I now call paragraph 3.4 and Motion 20, Proposed reform of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The General Council supports the motion.

Anne McCrae (*Educational Institute of Scotland*) moved Motion 20.

She said: I am pleased to be moving Motion 20. Comrades, I am going to present you two fairly simple, very strong but very simple arguments why the labour movement should be opposed to this government's proposals to reform the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

First of all, the first argument like so very much of what this government wants to do is that their proposals are inevitably politically and ideologically motivated. I think what it shows and exposes is actually the reality of what they want to do, that in fact equality and human rights issues are far less important to them than actually allowing the needs of business and the needs of the market to be unhampered in any kind of way. I think the second argument as to why we should be against these changes is about cutting jobs, about cutting public services, and about cutting quite vital public information on the nature of inequalities in our society.

I will just explore the first argument, initially. The proposed change to the remit of the EHRC has, I think, been wrapped up in this whole thing about bureaucracy, unnecessary bureaucracy, and about this Red Tape Challenge that we have heard

various other speakers talk about. Actually, as we all know it is not really that at all, it is yet another attack on working people, an attack that goes along with attacks on our pay and conditions, attacks on civil liberties, and attacks on our pensions. The best way to fight those, of course, is to fight back. I applaud the brothers and sisters in the PCS and Unite who have actually walked out on a couple of occasions to fight back about that. I think that is really important.

Employers believe that they have to be free of these regulations and that means they want to be free of health and safety regulations, they want to be free of any kind of responsibility for decent pensions, and free from equality and human rights regulations, but without those regulations employers have the green light to abuse and to exploit workers.

The Commission is absolutely vital in its role in enforcing equality legislation. It is important that we defend it. It is also about much more than that. The proposals of this government are to repeal the general duty, which is about a duty that the EHRC has to promote understanding of the importance of equality and diversity. The government does not like the vagueness of that; they do not like that at all. They want to have it removed.

I think it is really important that we defend that duty and defend the right to be promoting equality and diversity because of the position we are in at the moment where, and again I am repeating things that have been said already but I do not apologise for repeating them, we have the opportunity for difference to be constantly exploited and the potential for racism to flourish whether it be the EDL or whether it

be the BNP. My home town in Edinburgh, unfortunately, had an organisation called the SDL, the Scottish Defence League, trying to get onto our streets on Saturday, and they were stopped. That kind of a context is really important. That is where I think defending the EHRC sits. The kind of anti-traveller, anti-gypsy sentiment that we have seen in the attempts to evict the residents of Dale Farm is also part of that and of course inevitably I cannot fail to mention the August riots in England, which also show the fractures and inequalities in our society.

With that kind of background it is really, really important to promote equality and diversity; it is very vital indeed. The EHRC has done very, very important work on a number of things. I think it was mentioned this morning the very useful inquiry they had into the sex discrimination in the finance sector and the huge massive pay gap, gender pay gap, in that sector. There are also things like the defence of the Coleman case, which they supported in the Court of Justice of the EU which upheld Sharon Coleman's case of discrimination by association and gave new rights to six million carers. All of these things are really, really important and they have all been thanks to the EHRC.

One other area, of course, and the second argument that I put forward to you was that it is not only those kinds of aspects but it is also the fact that jobs are being cut. I think the seconder from the PCS is going to go on and talk about that a little more. We have put in our consultations, three-month consultations, and I am sure you have put in one of those, but we also have to continue the campaign to defend the EHRC. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Jane Aitchinson (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Motion 20.

She said: President, Congress, this so-called reform as my sister from the Educational Institute for Scotland has already very clearly explained, is just another cut. Congress, this is a devastating cut, a cut that threatens the very viability of the Equality and Human Rights Commission if we allow it to take place. This is part of what the government are describing as an attack on red tape but what they are attacking here is not red tape at all. This is an attack on the safeguards that we have fought for to provide much needed protection for workers, to stop us from being further exploited or disadvantaged by ruthless employers because we are black, or because we are LGBT, or because we are women, or because we are disabled, or because we are pregnant, or just because our face does not seem to fit.

The EHRC is an independent body responsible for enforcing equality and human rights. In its first two years alone it ensured the protection of six million carers. It advised 70,000 workers through its helpline and it helped 136,000 businesses to uphold equality in their workplaces even through the tight times of the recession. All this costs UK citizens £1 a head per year so clearly this is not about saving vast amounts of money. This is about allowing the Tories' big business backers to maximise their profits at the expense of workers and workers' rights.

The government intends to slash the EHRC budget by 68%, threatening jobs and services to the very core. PCS members in EHRC have already been forced to stage two strikes in defence of their jobs and the services they are rightly proud to provide. These cuts, if they are allowed to take place, would hurt those in society who are already suffering the most from the Tory cuts. The Tories do not care who their cuts

hurt, but we care, we care because we fought for much of the legislation that the EHRC enforces. We represent the workers they defend and we represent the EHRC workers themselves whose jobs are even more needed in Cameron's Britain.

Who was not inspired, Congress, by the brave and determined women of Dagenham, celebrated in the film *Made in Dagenham* which we saw released last year. Their equal pay victory is just one example of the protection the EHRC upholds. We must fight just as hard as those Dagenham sisters to defend the victory that they won for us. When these cuts are defeated, and, Congress, they will be defeated, we cannot afford to start back at year zero on equality. The cuts are designed to divide us. Fighting every cut unites us, so let's fight every cut together. Thank you. (*Applause*)

* *Motion 20 was CARRIED*

Defending multiculturalism

The President: Congress, as I indicated earlier, I may be in a position to take the business that was dropped from the agenda this morning after Composite Motion 3, Defending Multiculturalism. That business is Motion 13, TUC support for smaller trade unions, moved by the AEP, seconded by ASLEF. I may also be able to take Emergency Motion 1, TUC response to the riots, moved by the POA, seconded by the FBU. Will unions please be ready in case we have enough time? I now call Composite Motion 3, Defending multiculturalism. The General Council supports the Composite Motion.

Billy Hayes (*CWU*) moved Composite Motion 3.

He said: When David Cameron told an international audience that multiculturalism in Britain has failed, he attacked our diverse communities and our future economic prospects. In March this year support for the Tories was falling so he used coded racism to whip up his core vote. It is not only that this approach is morally wrong, it is also factually wrong.

Multiculturalism has been a success in Britain and makes a major contribution to progress in our society. In a globalized world, in a globalized economy, multicultural Britain has a competitive advantage. Our diverse communities link us directly to other nations and other developing markets. The many languages and social skills of our population offer us a personal connection with the most dynamic parts of the world economy. We have a pool of talent in our population who can speak the language of the markets and the market-makers in China, India, Latin America, Africa, and so on.

As trade unions we have an interest in promoting more open connections to the world economy and the free movement of people and goods. We need to overcome the traditional problems of under-investment in a productive economy and the over-reliance on the City of London. Attacking multiculturalism is attacking our future prosperity but Cameron's speech also gave aid and comfort to the racists and the fascists.

One of the EDL leaders said that Cameron was "now saying what we were saying." Nick Griffin said he agreed with Cameron's approach. Le Pen, leader of the fascist

Front National, said, “It is exactly the type of statement that has barred us from public life for the last 30 years. We congratulate him.” It is then vital that the Trade Union Movement takes a stand against such people. The prime aim of the BNP is to have an all-white Britain. The prime aim of the EDL is to terrorise the Muslim community from a participation in public life.

The TUC’s Annual Report documents our support for the anti-racism and anti-fascist campaigns in the past year. We have done good work in the past 12 months, particularly against the BNP, but in the next year we can expect the government cuts to hit harder and the economy to continue to stagnate. Inevitably, this is fertile ground for the racists. We must expect more problems from the violent Islamaphobes in the EDL. We need to mobilise against them as we did recently in the East End of London. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain’s Muslim community as we did when we held a General Council meeting in a mosque in East London some years ago now.

The BNP has been dealt some huge blows and is breaking up but they can revive in one form or another. The CWU welcomes the amendments from Unison, UCU, and TSSA, and of course the General Council supports, but we live in very dangerous times. We hope many unions will send delegates to the convention on multiculturalism called by the UAF, *One Society Many Cultures*, on October 15th at the TUC. We stand positively in favour of multiculturalism and positively against racism and fascism. I move. (*Applause*)

Lilian Macer (*UNISON*) seconded Composite Motion 3.

She said: Unison members are committed to provide quality public services that change people's lives, services that help people back into work, that help our children get the best start in life, and help care for our sick and elderly. We ensure that our world-class public services are there for everyone and we rely on people of all races, religion, and background, to deliver them. That is why the fight against racism, against prejudice, is a fight for our public services. That is why we work so hard to fight the fascists and the far right. It is a workplace issue for Unison. Without our black members, our migrant worker members, our public services would grind to a halt and, Congress, the NHS would collapse. There is no doubt that services provided by local government would also be affected.

The politics of demonising and scape-goating immigrants, Muslim people, and other black communities, for the problems caused by ruthless employers and financial crises is not restricted to the far right. It has entered mainstream. We now have a government that wants to exclude certain people from our society to create a smaller Britain, a less tolerant Britain. Among many of the reckless policies introduced by the Tory-led government are attacks on migrant workers. They talk about managing migration. They mean dividing up people into good migrants and bad migrants, and not done on the basis of what they are able to contribute. Perhaps it is your neighbour or your work colleague who goes from being a human being to an illegal overnight. These processes demonise our workers and we cannot tolerate that.

This motion highlights the damage that both the words and actions of the government have done to our society. Our members know that the fight for public services is a fight against the far right. Our members and activists work hard throughout the year

to challenge the BNP and the English, Welsh, and Scottish Defence Leagues, the Defence Leagues which have disfigured our cities and over the past year intimidating and dividing our communities in the cruellest possible way, reviving some of the ugliest forms of racism and violence on our streets. They want to show that our communities are in conflict with each other. The best response to them is to unite our communities and workplaces against the far right. That is why I want to ask you, Congress, to support the campaign to ban the English, Welsh, and Scottish Defence Leagues from holding demonstrations on our streets. Congress, please support.
(Applause)

Kathy Taylor (*University and College Union*) supported Composite Motion 3. She said: UCU, like very other trade union here, condemns the Prime Minister and his government's appalling and continuing attacks on multiculturalism. You will remember, I am sure, that his speech was made on the same day, the very day that the English Defence league brought its hate to Luton. The EDL, and others who are like minded, should know that in every community all over the country and wherever the EDL arrive to peddle their messages of hate decent fair-minded people are coming together in their thousands to challenge and oppose them.

I want to congratulate all those people and all the trade unionists who made the 3rd September in Tower Hamlets a day of anti-racism and anti-fascism by their united mobilisation to combat the EDL in their own community. As a trade unionist I know we can beat them through organising. As an educator I know we can beat them through exposing them and challenging their racist messages. Multiculturalism is being scape-goated by the far right as the cause of every kind of social ill, from the

lack of affordable housing and secure well-paid jobs to failing schools, yet the right conveniently ignore the fact that the government's massive cuts in funding for education and the welfare state have already hit our ethnic minority communities so hard.

We applaud genuine efforts to enhance community cohesion but creating a vibrant and cohesive community requires that people have jobs, that they have homes, that they have hope, and that they can feel safe from the bigotry and violence of the EDL and the BNP. Cameron's panacea to his perceived crisis is to call for more immigrants to learn English. They are empty words. As with so much of this Government's despicable track record so far their policies and their actions have actually done the complete opposite. Their proposals to inflict yet further cuts on adult education and their vicious attacks on the welfare state have hit hardest precisely those non-native speakers of English who need English to support their children, find work, access education, and play a full role in their communities. The proposed changes mean almost 80,000 people across England will lose the right to free language courses with women representing more than two-thirds of those affected, according to the government's own assessment.

Congress, there is some good news. Action for ESOL, the campaign which brought together unions, teachers, students, and community groups, has forced a government U-turn, a tremendously successful campaign for those who supported it. It is an example to us all of what can be achieved by those with a common purpose, united and determined to fight back. While the reversal is great news we should not assume it is permanent. It remains vulnerable. ESOL courses remain vulnerable. We have

won this particular battle but not the war. We need to continue to fight for free ESOL provision and a right to language education for all those who need it.

Finally, Congress, language education is about the whole person and their capacity to take charge of their lives and to participate actively and critically in all aspects of their world. Please support this motion and continue to support the campaign to defend English-speaking as a second language courses. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

Joel Kosminsky (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) supported Composite Motion 3.

He said: This is my first time at Congress. Please be gentle with me. (*Applause*) We are very pleased and delighted to be supporting this composite. “Multiculturalism” is a word you hear a lot but what exactly is it? It is more than going for a curry down Brick Lane: buses 8 and 25 are just round the back there, they run all day and all night. Multiculturalism is having the world on your doorstep and being the better off for it. Multiculturalism recognises and embraces the skills and contributions of all our brothers and sisters and the work of others who have joined us, and the way they enrich our society.

I come from the east end of London and the accent sort of gives it away. The east end of London – Shoreditch, Hackney and around the docks – has been a melting pot for a thousand years. I am one of those people who came in, indirectly, many generations ago. I would not be here if there had been caps on migration then. Caps on migration now encourage racism as they did before and keep divisions between not just working

people but us and everybody else. I hate orders. I hate barriers. I hate racism. I have had all of them.

I was born a Jew but I have never had that faith. What does the word “Jew” give you as an immediate assumption: that I am pro-Israel, that I am anti-Palestine, that I am rich, powerful, and successful? Apart from the successful bit, that is wrong on all counts. So, it is assumptions, and assumptions generate prejudice. We are all different. We are all equal. We need to support each other and the people who come to this country for a better life because they are helping us as much as we help them. Please support this composite. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Kamaljeet Jandu (*GMB*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 3.

He said: Thank you, President, sisters and brothers. In addition to what has already been said, I just want to illuminate a particular aspect of this debate and give a clear message as well. It has been many years since I was told by somebody to go home or to go back to where I came from. I remember the moment when that was said to me and I remember saying, “What, Coventry?” I thought, “Fair enough.” Then I was told, “We’ll pay your fare to go home.” It’s like, “What, £2 to get the number 88 from Camden to South London? Okay, fair enough.”

Congress, I think as with all people in this room I celebrate Christmas, I celebrate Easter, I celebrate St. Patrick’s Day; it is a moment for families to come together as with all of you, and others will in addition to that celebrate Diwali, Eid, Ramadan, and Hanukah. All these things happen and, frankly, what is the problem? That is the real question that is coming out here. I am English of Asian heritage. The English

Defence League does not represent my interests so the message to the English Defence League, to those opposing English people of colour, and to Cameron, is quite simple: We are here. We are always going to be here. Get over it. If you don't like it, you emigrate. (*Applause*)

Zita Holbourne (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Composite Motion 3.

She said: The Prime Minister chose to make his comments in Munich on the day when the EDL was staging a protest in Luton, disgracefully making a link between multiculturalism and terrorism. Cameron claims that state multiculturalism has failed but "state multiculturalism" is not a term we should acknowledge or recognise. Multiculturalism was built and developed in the UK over centuries. It cannot suddenly fail. It is not a government policy and it cannot be taken away by the likes of Cameron. Multiculturalism is what makes the UK a strong, vibrant, enriched society; to remove it you would have to erase history.

PCS put an emergency motion to the TUC Black Workers' Conference earlier this year calling for signatures of all affiliated unions to challenge Cameron and his attack on multiculturalism, to work with *One Society Many Cultures*, and to ask Cameron how he will tackle the extremist elements of the EDL and the BNP. In response to Cameron's attack a national petition attracted 7,000 signatures and a rally sponsored by *One Society Many Cultures* at which a number of trade unions were represented took place. Since then a book has been published entitled, *Defending Multiculturalism: A Guide to the Movement*. I am going to plug it. The launch is tomorrow at 1 o'clock in Bookmark and I contributed to it along with a whole range

of trade unions and the diverse range of contributors. Please come along to the launch in the fringe tomorrow.

One aspect of the motion we need to be cautious about is supporting the campaign for a ban on the EDL, the SDL, and the WDL, from holding demos and rallies. Whilst we are completely against them being allowed to express and spread their hatred, recent calls for bans have led to anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigners and trade unionists also being barred from marching as evidenced with the 30-day ban that is taking place currently in five London boroughs this month. Therefore, we believe this demand should be kept under review as it should not be for government to decide if we can protest as trade unionists.

Whilst there was a ban on marching in Tower Hamlets, we should congratulate those involved in the campaign by community activists and trade unionists in Tower Hamlets that prevented the EDL gathering in the Sainsbury's car park, using several pubs as a meeting place, and congratulate the RMT on threatening to close down Liverpool Street Station and stop trains if the EDL dared to go there. *(Applause)* This meant that the EDL did not succeed in holding a demo in Tower Hamlets and the counter-demo and rally that took place was a tremendous show of unity, strength, community, and multiculturalism, standing together against the racist and fascist EDL.

Finally, the far right will blame black workers and service users for the lack of jobs, housing, and services, instead of looking at the real cause, which is this horrendous Tory government that we have. Therefore, it is important that all anti-cuts groups

include campaigning against the far right and their attacks on black and migrant workers and communities in their campaigns. The attack on multiculturalism is not going away so we must continue to campaign in its defence at the same time as celebrating multiculturalism. Please support. (*Applause*)

Matt Wrack (*Fire Brigades' Union*) supported Composite Motion 3.

He said: I am speaking in support of Composite Motion 3 but again with some reservation on one point. I think Billy outlined very well the danger from the far right as cuts take hold, as unemployment rises, and as poverty increases. In those situations division is possible and in those situations racism and the far right can, unfortunately, gain an echo. In terms of campaigning directly against the EDL, the BNP, and other far right organisations, we also have to make our campaign for decent conditions, decent housing, decent jobs, and a decent future for all, central to that as well.

I was very proud, along with Zita and a number of other people in the room, to be in Whitechapel the other week to protest against the EDL attempting to march through east London. I think that bit of east London is very rich in history for this debate. Going back to the 1930s, of course, we famously had the Battle of Cable Street in October 1936, but alongside that there was a campaign, for example, to improve housing conditions, and a united tenants' movement demanding decent housing for all that undermined the basis for fascism at the time.

Our concern on this is about point 6 and the call for support for a campaign on the banning of EDL and other such marches. As has been said, that ban was not the ban

that was imposed. The ban that was imposed by the Home Secretary is a general ban on political marches for 30 days in all neighbouring boroughs, including the marches organised by anti-racists, including marches on the issue of the cuts, and ironically including any potential march around the anniversary of Cable Street. This should come as no surprise to us. History demonstrates very clearly that that will always happen; such powers will be used against us. I think even more alarming was one of the arguments I heard that the cost of policing should be used as an excuse to justify a ban on marches, not just the EDL march but anti-racist marches as well.

I will just finish on this point. In Cable Street we will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street this October. It is the most famous victory of anti-fascists in the history of the British working class and the British labour movement. Ironically, there were very similar debates in the run-up to the events around Cable Street in October 1936 on how fascists should be confronted and taken on. On the question of bans I will say this. In October 1936 it was not the police who banned fascist marches in East London, it was East Londoners, working class people, trade unionists. They got together, they organised, they came out on the street, and they banned fascists from going through the East End. That is how we defeat fascism: “They shall not pass.” (*Applause*)

Billy Hayes (*CWU*) in exercising his right to reply said: Thanks, President. I just wanted to deal with the two reservations that have been raised. If you read what the motion says at point (b), we are talking about a ban on the EDL, the SDL, and WDL, not a generalised ban. We did not support the ban in east London, we contributed; in fact, Tony Kearns spoke. We just want to clarify that one point. We understand the

whole point about the generalised ban. We did not support the ban in East London; in fact, we spoke on the demonstration. It was just to clarify that one point. Thank you.

* *Composite Motion 3 was CARRIED*

TUC support for smaller trade unions

The President: I now move to Motion 13, TUC support for smaller trade unions. The General Council support the motion.

Kate Fallon (*Association of Educational Psychologists*) moved Motion 13.

She said: President, Congress, I am speaking today to ask you to show your support for the small trade unions. The AEP is the Association of Educational Psychologists. We are a small specialist trade union and professional association with 3,500 members, the large majority of whom are women. Ninety-three percent of educational psychologists across the whole of the UK who are eligible to join the union have done so. We like to believe that we have a good track record at organisation. It also means that we can speak with some authority on behalf of our whole profession.

Educational psychologists work mostly in local authorities with schools, families, and children, particularly on behalf of those children with special educational needs. We work alongside a wide range of other public sector workers, many of them members of bigger unions. We also have a good record of working closely with other unions in

the workplace, of helping with negotiations and taking industrial action, which has had positive results for the whole of a local authority workforce.

Local authorities have largely recognised the well-known big unions for negotiation and consultation and we want to put on record our appreciation for the work that these unions have done. For many years they have helped to achieve and maintain generally good employer/employee relations and working conditions for local authority staff. Some local authorities also recognise the smaller specialist unions like ours and include us in the same negotiations and consultations as the bigger unions understanding that sometimes we have some specialist occupational needs. However, sometimes the local authorities will not recognise us and we are not allowed at the table.

Our members have employment rights that have been as hard fought for as for the members of other unions and we are facing similar threats to all other trade union members who work in the public sector; indeed, threats to our members are also a threat to the very continuation of the profession. We still have nationally agreed terms and conditions of service and we need those to be represented at the negotiating table. Where we and the other small specialist unions are not directly represented within all the current negotiations we need the bigger unions to support us when we try to gain recognition, and to remember us when we cannot.

There have been some instances recently where the bigger unions have negotiated changes to terms and conditions for their members which local authorities then expect to be able to impose upon the smaller groups of workers. Some of these changes may

prevent our members being able effectively to support some of the most vulnerable children in our communities. Unwittingly, the large unions may agree to changes which would undermine our hard fought for national agreements.

Congress, I am not suggesting that the bigger unions concerned do not care about our members. However, we want to raise awareness of the small unions and call upon the bigger unions to remember us, to talk to us, encourage us to be included in consultations, and to acknowledge some of our specialist occupational needs when they are the lead negotiators so that our employment rights are also defended.

The trade union movement was founded upon different occupational groups working closely together in the knowledge that solidarity brings strength. TUC history records many occasions when larger groups have helped to support smaller groups. We recognise and celebrate the bigger unions and the strength that we all gain from that size but we still believe that there is an important role to be played within the trade union movement by the smaller affiliates who represent a range of very specific crafts, skills, and professions. Congress, let's look after each other and work together in the traditional spirit of trade unionism where the big guys do not forget to look out for the little guys. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

Alan Donnelly (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) seconded Motion 13. He said: We are proud to be a small trade union, very proud to be a small independent trade union. First of all, Congress, I think we have heard many things today about history. It may be we need to look at the history books and see where we came from, where the TUC came from. It was small unions coming together to help

each other, to make a better socialist society. That is where it came from. I am not here to knock the big unions because of the work they do for their members but we also need to look at history.

I left school in 1976 and in 1979 when the Tories took over there were 13 million in the TUC, today there are 6 million under this new administration, but how many there will be at the end of this administration, I do not know. On behalf of the small trade unions, when the General Council goes away it should look at the structure. We have done that in our own trade union, looked at the structure of the union. It would be a fine legacy of the TUC at the end of this regime if there were more TUC members than there were at the end of the last Tory government's term. I think the TUC needs to look at that. We faced those issues. We have had to look at our structure. We had the membership down to 13,000. The industry I was in was where your father got you your job and you became a turnout of your father. He would get up at 4 o'clock in the morning so the chances were you knew what it was about. That is how the industry has changed. Sixty per cent in the train driving grade now have come from outside the industry where most of them were not involved in trade unions and had no time for trade unions.

When it comes to running a small trade union cost is a big issue. Cost is a massive issue. Our contributions are not the smallest, in fact they are probably up with the highest, but the bottom line is you have to sell the trade union movement to the members. I am not here to knock the TUC because I am very proud to be in the TUC, but reducing it is not sending the message out. First of all, as a small trade union we do have a cost and the costs of our trade union, our rule book says, will be the general

secretary, president, and two delegates, and because of what has happened this year there are no delegates, there are no lay members we have sold the union to, and the trade union movement before.

One of the things we did was set up meetings — and we never recruited anybody in the branch rooms — for non-trade unionists to attend and we sold the trade union movement to them. There is a massive role for small trade unions. Also, Brendan, and Ged, if you look at the Premier League now and look at the big four, you have had more experience than me of being outside the big four so you should know what it is like when you have a big four. Cheers. *(Laughter/Applause)*

Annette Mansell-Green (*Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) spoke in support of Motion 13. She said: Thank you, President. Good afternoon, Congress. I am now a member of staff for a smaller trade union. I started my trade union activity many years ago as a member of a smaller trade union that is sitting over there, the Musicians' Union, and then spent 18 years as an activist within Unison. I have experience from all different types of trade unionism and trade union organisation.

This morning Brendan said we need to build a mass movement for the alternative. Congress, the only way we are going to do that is by working together in solidarity for a common cause. The HCSA, as I said this morning, is making its maiden speeches this week and there is a good reason for that. Our members, the hospital consultants and specialists, do have a choice, they can join a professional association, they are members of the Royal Colleges, and they can join a professional association that is

also a trade union and a proud affiliate of the TUC. We are here, we have a voice, we have a purpose, we deserve recognition, we deserve equality, and we are ready.

As far as we are concerned, and we have heard it a few times already this week, we are all in this together and together we should be. I am sitting in a line of delegates from the smaller specialist trade unions and we are all starting to talk to each other now in a positive and cohesive way about what we can do for our members in their particular specialist areas where we have a common cause and a common goal, and I welcome those opportunities; also to work with the larger unions where we can would be very, very beneficial. We are grateful for the cooperation and joint working that we have with the associations that are not trade unions; we can sometimes develop fruitful outcomes with them.

Members choose to join us for specific reasons. They want a voice and they want to be involved in collective responses, they want to be part of our movement. At a time when we have a government that is hell-bent on weakening our influence, our opportunities, and our rights, it is vitally important that we work together as affiliates whatever our size.

Finally, a little story: on a blog that is used for hospital doctors somebody suggested that our general secretary should ride through the streets doing a Lady Godiva to draw attention to the plight of our members and the threats to their pensions. I think perhaps a better alternative would be if we join together in a joint campaign and fight for the retention of our pensions, which I hope to speak about on Wednesday, in a collective trade union response. However, we do reserve the right to see our general

secretary riding on horseback through the streets of Coventry. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: Thank you very much, colleagues. I now call on the General Secretary.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): There was a whole mix of interesting ideas in that debate that we will all be pondering on, I am sure. The General Council asked me just to give a brief word of explanation. The General Council is supporting this motion, which deals with two issues: firstly, it deals with the issue of the importance of the involvement, active involvement, of smaller unions in the affairs of the TUC and, of course, on that issue we are proposing further constitutional changes in the structure of the General Council from next year onwards. We take very seriously, too, in the TUC our responsibility for bringing unions together in particular sectors, big unions and small, to carve out common strategies to meet the challenges we face. For example, all our health unions meet together regularly under TUC auspices, big and small, and in other sectors too.

The other issue that the motion deals with is about consultation and involvement of smaller unions in the bargaining structures that exist in different sectors. The small point of explanation is this, that the spirit of the motion is absolutely supportive, that all unions together, big and small, in key sectors really should share information, should share intelligence, and should try to form common cause in their negotiating strategies. But as to the structure of bargaining machinery, that is an issue the unions within each sector really have to resolve. The TUC role occasionally has been to

become involved when there is a formal dispute arising between unions but that is the exception rather than the rule. The rule is you have to resolve those matters within each sector. We support the motion with that point of explanation.

On the suggestion of general secretaries acting as Lady Godiva, a number of unions are already making those plans and I am looking forward to that as a key part of our campaign. (*Laughter*)

* *Motion 13 was CARRIED*

The President: Colleagues, that concludes this afternoon's business. May I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this evening and details of those meetings can be found on page 11 of the Congress Guide.

I would also like to remind delegates to complete and return the equality monitoring form that has been sent to them. Delegates should have received lilac forms which should be returned to delegation leaders. If any delegates have not received a form they should see their delegation leader. Delegation leaders should return their white forms in the box provided at the TUC information point at the bottom of the entrance stairs.

Could I also remind delegation leaders that the ballot for Section C of the General Council takes place tomorrow morning. Unions eligible to vote for Section C should collect their ballot papers from the TUC information point at the bottom of the

entrance stairs from 9 a.m. Ballot papers only will be provided in exchange for an official delegate form. Please note that the ballot closes at 12 noon tomorrow.

Thank you, Congress, for your cooperation this morning and this afternoon. Congress is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning. Thank you.

(Congress adjourned at 5.30 p.m.)