

149th ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,
Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 10th September 2017
Monday, 11th September 2017
Tuesday, 12th September 2017
and
Wednesday, 13th September 2017**

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Congress President:

DR. MARY BOUSTED

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**PROCEEDINGS — DAY FOUR
(Wednesday, 13th September 2017)**

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FOURTH DAY: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH 2017

(Congress assembled at 9.30a.m.)

The President: I call Congress to order. *(Video shown)* Isn't that great. I'm going to miss that so much. I would, first of all, like to thank the Hampshire String Quartet, who have been playing for us this morning. *(Applause)*

Delegates, there is a slight change to business this morning. Huber Ballesteros will now be addressing Congress first thing this morning. Congress, we now have a further emergency motion. Emergency Motion 3: A cabinet in crisis. This is to be moved by the NEU, seconded by the GMB. The emergency motion has been circulated in the hall this morning. We also have outstanding business in the form of Composite Motion 6: Influencing the Brexit deal, to be moved by the TSSA, and Motion 59 on STPs, to be moved by the HCSA. I will take Composite Motion 6, Motion 59 and Emergency Motion 3 in that order after today's published business. Is that clear, Congress? Thank you.

Video presentation and guest speaker — Huber Ballesteros

The President: Congress, as you know, when he was on his way to collect his visa to come to Britain to address Congress in 2013, our comrade, Huber Ballesteros, one of Colombia's many brave trade union leaders and an executive committee member of the CUT, was arrested and jailed for 40 months without trial and without charge. Together with Justice for Colombia and trade unionists in many other countries, British unions campaigned for Huber's freedom, and we are so pleased to see him

here today. Before he addresses Congress, here is a short video about the campaign. *(Video shown) (Applause)* Congress, I am sure that you will be as pleased as I am that the campaign was successful and Huber is not just free at last but also that he is here at last. Huber, I am delighted to invite you to address Congress. *(A standing ovation) (Huber Ballesteros addressed Congress in Spanish)*

The President: Thank you, Huber. We are truly honoured to have you with us. I went to Colombia with Justice for Colombia in 2016, and I will never forget — you read about these things but nothing can prepare you for the awful reality — the injustice and the terror practised upon trade unionists and human rights leaders by the Colombian government and by the right-wing terror groups, which were allowed to act with impunity to kill, maim and torture trade union leaders, and that includes agricultural workers, teachers and those across the whole section of the trade union Movement. So, please, take back at this crucial time in Colombia, where it is really a turning point, where there is a possibility of peace and justice. There is a possibility that it will be overturned, as you said in your speech. Please take back our solidarity to your fellow trade unionists and let them know that we will always stand with them. *(Applause)*

Delegates, we turn to section 3 of the General Council Report: Respect and a Voice at Work, the section on equalities from page 35. Before we start the business today, we have a full morning's business and I want to finish around lunchtime. I also want every motion to have its speakers and its supporters, as you have indicated, to speak and support. To do that, when a motion is called, I would like people to come down to the front to get your credential scanned and be ready to come up to the rostrum

quickly and in order. Let me say that you will get your full time but you will get nothing over your full time. So when it comes to the end of your full-time speaking and the red light goes on, be ready to stop. In that way, every motion will get the time it deserves, every union will get their motion heard and there will be no hierarchy of who has motions and who doesn't in the TUC Congress this year. Can we start, please, with paragraph 3.3 and Motion 37: Organising against racism in the workplace. The General Council supports the motion. It is to be moved by Usdaw, seconded by UNISON, and CWU, Unite, UCU and NASUWT have indicated.

Organising against racism in the workplace

Jeff Broom (*USDAW, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) moved Motion 37. He said: President and Congress, I am pleased to be moving this proposition and welcome the amendment submitted by UNISON. Whatever your position is on Britain's membership to the European Union, I am sure we can all agree on one thing, that the campaign leading up to the vote last June was one of the most decisive, hostile, negative and fear-provoking campaigns that we have ever seen in this country. This was partly due to the rhetoric and focus of the campaigners themselves, encouraged and inflamed by the highly partisan national media. The issue over immigration dominated the debate, a debate that was not about levels of immigration policy or public concerns, but was explicit and dishonest about blaming migrants for the vast range of Britain's social and economic problems, from taking our jobs and benefits to blocking hospital beds, schools and prisons and from importing organised crime and smuggling terror weapons. We were told time and time again that migrants were to blame. They were blamed for traffic congestion,

inflating the average cost of a British wedding, pushing up property prices and even ruining the green fields of Britain's countryside. The imagery and language used by campaigners was deliberately inflammatory. Words and photographs, most commonly associated with national desires and catastrophes covered the front pages of the press. The spiky reports of incidents of racism that followed was also widely reported. It is worth pausing at this point to take a moment to remind ourselves that behind the 41% increase in reports of race crime and hate crime, and thousands of unreported race-hate offences, there was a person, a human being, an individual that experienced the physical and psychological trauma of racist abuse, the life-changing and life-limiting consequences of racism. Restricting the debate to numerical data does not do justice to those who have experienced racism.

Stats cannot and never will reveal the reality of racism. Nor, as we are discovering, are they particularly effective weapons in the struggle against racism. They rarely change hearts, shift attitudes or challenge bigotry. For that we need to go beyond the stats to the experience of black, Asian, south-Asian, eastern European and Muslim workers themselves that illustrate that Britain is and always has been an unequal society, a society where the colour of your skin or your religion makes you more vulnerable to unemployment, low pay, insecure work, poor health, poor housing, harassment and abuse. Never has the struggle against racism and bigotry been more urgent than it is today.

The referendum campaign was set against a background of wider Government policy, specifically designed to create a hostile environment for migrants, as once again it unleashed the forces of hate and division. Trade unions along with the rest of civil

society now have a pressing job to do in going forward, to forge alliances with other groups speaking out against racism and bigotry, to train and support reps, to stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity and support our members at the sharp end, to prioritise racial equality and collective bargaining strategies. Usdaw reps have never been backward at coming forward and struggling against racial intolerance. Since the launch of Usdaw's *No Room for Race* campaign last June, hundreds of Usdaw reps, if not thousands, have been involved in the campaign against racism by running workplace campaigns, handing out leaflets, displaying posters, organising federation schools on the subject, taking part in divisional conferences on hate crime and demanding that managements tackle racist graffiti and bullying on sight, doing what unions do best, which is standing up for people at the sharp end and bringing people together, engaging members, non-members and employers with our anti-racist message: *Not in my name, Not in my workplace*. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you. Seconded by UNISON.

Ash Dhobi (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 37 and thanked Usdaw for accepting the amendment. He said: Conference, trade unions have a key role in their workplaces in challenging racism, so prioritising how we eliminate racism is so important, and placing this on the bargaining agenda is crucial. Therefore, the amendment from UNISON enhances the actions called for by our sister union, Usdaw.

Congress, it is important that trade unions develop a strategy and a collective action plan in the workplace to deal with race discrimination. UNISON's *Challenge racism and workplace toolkit* is my union's lead for race equality campaigning to eliminate

racism at work. This comprehensive guide and its complementary training courses offer a range of resources, ideas and checklists for UNISON's activities to bargain with confidence on race equality. It also allows for the inclusion of anti-racist work within branch campaigning, organising, recruiting and negotiating.

Equality legislation provide unions with the means to hold employers to account, but the principle of equality can only be a reality in our workplace if we organise around them and place them on the bargaining agenda. The Race Discrimination Claims Protocol is also part of our commitment to strengthen UNISON's work in providing support to members who are experiencing racism in the workplace. Best practice and training should be the template for producing guidance on dealing with race discrimination cases. Training trade union representatives to be confident in representing members and when dealing with race discrimination is a first step, and this should not be feared.

Congress, racism can be subtle and complex, but addressing an issue at its root cause, which may lie in managers' actions or workplace cultures is what we need to do if we are to make a difference in the lives of black workers. The challenges may be increasing but our resolve to fight back must be stronger than ever. We must re-affirm our commitment to speak out, stand up and challenge the scourge of racism in society. Moreover, we must organise against racism in the workplace if we are to be effective in promoting equality. We must speak with one voice that racism has no place at work. Thank you, Congress. Please support. (*Applause*)

Amarjite Singh (*CWU, Communication Workers Union*) spoke in support of Motion 37. He said: Congress, when we talk about racism, let's never forget the name Stephen Lawrence, a boy murdered because of the colour of his skin, and after 24 years racism still exists in our workplaces and on our streets. However, the trade union Movement, with like-minded organisations and communities, have been proactive in challenging racism in the workplace and on our streets. But, since the referendum to leave the European Union we have seen verbal and physical abuse increase, not only aimed at EU citizens but at black, Asian and minority people. We have seen on a so-called political broadcast, Mr Farage standing in front of a billboard with refugees fleeing a war-torn country and persecution, the perception being that by leaving the EU they would be reducing or getting rid of BAEM people or citizens.

We have also seen an increase in far-right and fascist organisations, such as the EDL, Britain First and National Front take to the streets. However, the trade union Movement, with communities and like-minded organisations have been pro-active by counter demonstrating against these organisations. The CWU encourages its members to link up with organisations to join counter demonstrations where we have the far right on the streets. We have been on the streets in Liverpool, Rochdale, Birmingham, London and Swansea. All our reps in the CWU have to take equal and fairness training so they can identify and deal with discrimination in the workplace. There is no place for racism on our streets or in our workplaces. We, the trade union Movement, must lead the way, as we have in the past, and never forget what happened to Stephen Lawrence and ensure that it will never happen to anybody else, never mind on our streets but at our workplaces. Congress, support the motion.

(Applause)

Susan Matthews (*Unite*) spoke in support of Motion 37. She said: Congress, I am the pro-Unite Executive representative for BAEM on behalf of Unite.

As a Jamaican we have grown up learning about our national heroes and heroines. One of my key heroes was Marcus Garvey for his knowledge and wisdom. One of his key sayings as I will always remember as a child is that no race, no people, no nation has ever been freed through cowardice and through bowing and scraping. But all that has been achieved was through sheer determination and effort.

At the moment, racism has increased across our society and it is a very problematic issue in the workplace. We have heard post-Brexit the hateful language used by the current US President to describe human beings, even such as Charlotte Villiers. I believe that racist views can spring from a lack of education and understanding, but it also comes from the economic and political environments around us. The recent changes in climate means that we have been taking steps backwards. Our union, Unite the union, continues to promote our *Race Forward* campaign to raise awareness about race discrimination. Therefore, it encourages us all not to just sit or stand by when you see others being discriminated against because of the colour of their skin. I encourage you all to take action and stamp out racism.

We need all our determination and effort to stamp out racism and to take action, thereby making sure it is reported and acted upon. The workplace is not a playground for expressing one's bad views on race.

To conclude, I would say that it is vital that we mandate our employers to continue to produce policies and procedures that eradicate and promote zero tolerance in the workplace against discrimination, and any form of discrimination going. Please promote equality reps in the workplace and campaign for rights for equality. Please carry on equality assessments to recognise the under-represented groups in the workplace. I support.

Dave Muritu (*UCU, University and College Union*) spoke in support of Motion 37.

He said: Congress, it is vital that all of us in the trade union Movement are involved in the fight against racism. For too long, many have said, and surprisingly even within our own movement, that were living in a post-racial society, that racism had gone away. Although I acknowledge that there has been a rise in racist attacks since the toxic debate around the EU referendum, racism never went anywhere. It is entrenched in the structures of our society and the struggle is all of our collective responsibility: black and white.

At UCU we have established a day of action against racism, and this February will be its third year. The day has become an opportunity to remind all of our membership that the struggle against racism is vital. For the inaugural event, UCU produced a witness film, which gave voice to the everyday racism faced by black people working in the higher and further education sectors. It was really powerful watching these testimonies with white members at the FE college where I work. I really saw that it challenged their perceptions of what is happening in their own workplace. I found it created a space to talk about racism as an issue that they need to be involved in the

fight against and not just a struggle for black members. For this reason, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Dave Kitchen (*NASUWT*) spoke in support of Motion 37. He said: Congress, the NASUWT welcomes and fully supports this motion. Organising against racism in the workplace is at the heart of the NASUWT campaigning, bargaining and organising strategy. Schools and colleges have a critical role to play in promoting and advancing equality, yet research conducted by my union, the NASUWT, shows that institutional racism is at endemic levels in many of these institutions.

The NASUWT is extremely concerned by the persistent nature of racial injustice and discrimination and has been working tirelessly over many years on strategies for eliminating racial discrimination and advancing racial equality. We continue to challenge situations where BAEM teachers face prejudice, marginalisation, hatred and abuse because of their ethnicity, nationality or religious belief through casework as well as campaigning and bargaining.

The NASUWT has first-hand knowledge and experience of the growing problems of racial injustice in schools and colleges. We host the largest gathering of BAEM teachers in the country and we constantly hear the shocking experiences from BAEM teachers of blatant racist and religious discrimination in the workplace.

Congress, equality, tolerance and respect are integral to a strong, prosperous and civilised society, yet we have a Government that have introduced policies that marginalise or demonise sections of our society. In addition, policies such as the

Prevent Strategy and the duty to promote fundamental British values have intensified the current and widespread anti-immigration narrative and have contributed to increased levels of discrimination and victimisation against black workers.

We are concerned about the message that this sends to our children, the next generation of global citizens, a message reinforced by Government that equality and diversity are insignificant, that the lives and aspirations of black children, teachers, head teachers and the wider community do not matter.

Congress, it is for these reasons that the NAWUWT has introduced its *Act of Racial Justice* campaign, a widespread campaign that challenges all forms of race discrimination, injustice and inequality in education, a campaign built on the foundations of the workplace and community organising. As a teachers' union, the NASUWT will continue to play its part in championing race equality and diversity in the workplace. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

The President: I am now going to put Motion 37 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 37 was CARRIED*

A better deal for black workers in the labour market

The President: We will now move to Motion 38: A better deal for black workers in the labour market. The General Council supports the motion. It is to be moved by

Carol Sewell on behalf of the TUC Black Workers Conference, seconded by the NASUWT, and I have indicated also to speak the PCS, RMT and Prospect.

Carol Sewell (*TUC Black Workers Conference*) moved Motion 38. She said:
Congress, I move this motion on behalf of the TUC Race Relations Committee.

Congress, equality legislation provides trade unions with the means to hold employers to account, but the principles about equality can only become a reality in our workplaces if we organise and place them on the bargaining agenda. It makes sense to use the knowledge and skills of every member of our workforce and make sure that they all have the same access to job opportunities and promotion, no matter their background. But, sadly, Congress, and with some frustration, this is not the case when it comes to black people.

The levels of unemployment, the marginalisation and discrimination faced by black workers with entrenched barriers, structural and institutional racism would appear to be ever increasing. As a direct result of UNISON's legal challenge that saw the landmark victory at the Supreme Court, which resulted in the scrapping of employment tribunal fees that have allowed discrimination to flourish and restricted access to justice in employment and discrimination cases, we must now continue to keep up the pressure.

Black people are noticeably severely under represented in senior management positions, in many workplaces, and despite the high levels of public service employment, many of us are still concentrated in lower-paid jobs. We have evidence

through research of an ethical pay penalty, which is also creating a high level of in-work poverty for black workers.

A recent report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission entitled *Healing a Divided Britain*, there is a need for a comprehensive race equality strategy. It is stated that a failure to tackle deep-rooted race inequality will exacerbate division in our society unless urgent action is taken. This report looks at a number of aspects of everyday life, including education, employment, housing, pay, living standards, health, criminal justice and participation. The TUC's Race Relation Committee strategy is to raise awareness of racial discrimination, harassment as workplace issues, to reach out to black workers, in particular to young black workers, by validating their experience of racism in the workplace, whether in or outside of unions; to gather data on the extent of racial discrimination and harassment in the workplace; to highlight the experience and impact that race discrimination has on black workers as a means of putting race back on the political and public policy agenda; to build and strengthen alliances with organisations and campaign on racial discrimination and harassment at work; to update the negotiating guide on tackling racism in the workplace in a way that engages reps and that is used for both as printed and internet-based resources, to encourage affiliates to be pro-active rather than case based in dealing with the workplace and within the labour market and promote collective bargaining as the most effective way that affiliates can tackle race discrimination in the workplace.

This motion, Congress, outlines some clear initiatives in how we should be tackling the economic exclusion and inequality in black communities. The TUC Race

Relations Committee has outlined plans and a pro-active campaign strategy to involve all unions to take forward.

Congress, our ability to access jobs, to earn decent pay, to be treated with dignity and to receive the support and opportunities to us are vital. In 2017 we must reaffirm our determination that our collective power must be used to change this situation. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Michelle Codrington-Rogers (*NASUWT*) seconded Motion 38. She said: Congress, I want to thank Carol for moving the motion. I got involved in the trade union Movement because I believe in making lives better, which is the same reason I became a teacher. Like all trainee teachers, I joined all the teachers' unions and the reason I decided to stay with NASUWT was because I saw a union with the political will to be introspective and wanted to find out what it could do and how it could be better. I have seen my union grow our Annual Black Teachers' Conference from 20 of us in the room to more than 400 of us at the ICC, the largest gathering of black teachers in the UK, if not Europe. We have developed more courses for all of our black teachers, which don't just teach black activism but also creates a space focused on empowerment and engagement, a space for us to focus on what we need from our union and where we need to go next. We have a dedicated equalities team of staff who know how to empower us as black teachers so our voices are amplified and not filtered.

We also send a very full delegation to TUC Black Workers where our first-time delegates feel confident enough to speak. I am a proud unionist from an island whose

independence was hard fought for by socialists and unionists, and it is in my blood as it is for a number of our black workers who also have a history of fighting against colonialism and empire.

So where are we? Why aren't we in the room, and why, most importantly, aren't we in this room? There needs to be more black workers in these rooms. (*Applause*) At the last Black Conference only 28 affiliates sent delegates. That is less than half of the affiliates to the TUC. I can't believe that half of you were not able to find, encourage, encourage, empower or engage black workers to come to a dedicated space in the trade union Movement that exists to empower and energise a section of our workforce, who are constantly under attack, who are disproportionately affected by the very same issues at the centre of this week's Congress, and who are disproportionately represented in precarious and insecure employment. So, I ask again, why aren't we in the room?

A strong, confident union is not afraid to start looking internally and engage with their under-represented members to help them focus their energy and to find the barriers and challenge them so that their members, like in many other unions, are able to make sure that they are represented. I am proud of my union for asking these difficult questions and not being afraid to hear the answers. By building and developing spaces and structures needed to engage the black teachers will make sure there are appropriate structures in which we are represented and we have a voice.

The annual TUC Equality Audit should be on the desk of every single general secretary, and I charge every general secretary to be a champion for keeping race on

the agenda. It is not just about anti-racism and anti-fascism, but it is about giving black workers the tools that they need to be the agents of change in our Movement. We need to be in the room.

So I am setting homework, because as a teacher that is what we do. I am going to ask you to go back to your workplaces, to meet your black members and ask them what their union can do for them, and send them to the Black Workers' Conference in 2018. We will welcome them, we will energise them and we will send them back to their unions with the tools needed to make an impact, and you then need to ask them again what their union can do for them. Again, we need to engage, encourage and empower. Please vote for this motion and I'll be checking your homework next year.

(Applause)

Glenroy Watson (*RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke in support of Motion 38. He said: Greetings, Congress and President. It is always useful, I think, to follow a speaker who has laid the foundations for many of the things that need to be put here, because it is a question about attendance. If we have created a structure of the TUC Black Workers Conference, we need greater participation. I am an old speaker, Chair, and I am not sure if, with all the technology, I need to introduce myself. Anyway, I am Glenroy Watson from the RMT.

I want to focus on some of the aspects of the motion, and I am glad to see that both Wilf and Gloria are on the stage because the action plan and the need for an action plan, and the ownership of that action plan having been put at the TUC Race Relations Committee, is quite an important aspect of this, but each of our affiliates

have a responsibility about examining their workplace and their working environment. I am a train driver on London Underground, and we are very proud to have engaged and unionised the cleaning sector of our industry. But when the motion talks about extending the statutory equality duty to private companies bidding for public services, the reality is what about the thieves that are in already? What about the people who are already in these industries and are exploiting and racistly destroying the condition of those workers already? There should be an aspect to this that says we must examine those people who are there already. That is very much necessary for London Underground.

I am in no doubt that London Underground see this as an opportunity for their own racist agenda to be sub-let and sub-contracted to other companies. Therefore, we need to examine those people who are already in there. I hope that part of the action plan is that the TUC Race Relations Committee will also include examining the already successful bidders.

If we are making progress as far as the employment tribunal is concerned, we must stop this disgraceful behaviour by employers who admit that they are racially discriminating against their employees but then ask to sign private deals and confidential documents. If you are guilty, if you have accepted that and you are willing to correct it, you should be willing to say that publicly so we cannot have a situation where they are making private deals and are keeping these things quiet. *(Applause)* I hope that we can expose bad employers, because if they are going to become good employers it must not be done in secret but publicly and seen by everyone. I support. *(Applause)*

Satnam Ner (*Prospect*) spoke in support of Motion 38. He said: Congress, I live and work in Scotland. As the first ever black President of the Scottish TUC in its 120 year history (*Applause*) I bring fraternal greetings from all of your trade union colleagues in Scotland.

Conference, austerity isn't working. Of course, we know that all too well, but imagine, for a minute, what it is like if you are black, Asian or minority ethnic worker. Let me help your imagination by sketching out a picture. Overall employment rate figures show 1 in 3 BAEM workers out of a job compared with 1 in 4 white workers. As regarding temporary work, austerity has had a huge impact. We have seen a 58% increase over five years compared with the overall increase of 11% over the same time period. On zero-hours contracts, the figures are 1 in 20 of the BAEM community as compared with the 1 in 36 national average. In every category, black workers are significantly worse off, and we have not even got into the workplace yet.

Overt racism from colleagues is unreported and under-reported. We see discriminatory performance management systems, institutional embedded practices that propagate, sustain and magnify adverse outcomes. Ask yourself: "Is that fair, is that just, is it equal?" Conference, my union, Prospect, has taken action on a number of fronts to identify issues to involve, support and develop our BAEM members and reps. We have a self-organised BAEM working group. We have BAEM networks and a focused action plan, honed by the union to deliver resources, to support our reps and our members.

Congress, your solidarity is important, of course, but it is not enough. As affiliate trade unions, are you clear about the role you need to play? Ask yourself, honestly, are you doing enough to bring justice, fairness and equality to your black, Asian, minority and ethnic membership? Please support. (*Applause*)

Mohammed Shafiq (*PCS, Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Motion 38. He said: Congress, I am a first-time speaker at Congress. (*Applause*) It is an honour to speak on behalf of my union to endorse and support the motion that was agreed at the TUC Black Workers Conference. A number of studies over the past five years have confirmed what many of us in equality have known that life in the workplace for black workers has got worse under this nasty, Tory Government. The rise in insecure work has increased poverty levels amongst black workers. A TUC report found that black workers are three times more likely than white workers to be employed on zero-hour contracts and temporary work. The analysis found that one in three black workers were in insecure jobs in comparison to white workers, where it is one in 20. This means that nearly a quarter-of-a-million black workers in the United Kingdom work under the umbrella of zero hours or temporary work.

Congress, the struggle for true equality in the labour market will not be won until we recognise the inherent institutional racism that exists in some of our industries and workplaces. Our trade union Movement has been at the forefront of highlighting the evil of racism in the workplace, and I am proud to be part of a movement that does not just talk about fighting racism but it is doing it in the workplaces around the country. From discrimination and harassment cases to performance management

cases, we know that black workers inherently suffer, and when they do the only support they get is from their trade union.

Ten years ago, when I suffered racial and religious discrimination in the Civil Service and was wrongly dismissed, for a short while all hope was lost. It was union, PCS, that appointed an experienced black rep to represent me. Not only was I cleared of all wrongdoing and reinstated into the Civil Service but also won my case against my employer. I made a vow then to myself that if I won my case I would dedicate my working life as a trade unionist to helping others. Ten years on you can ask the employer how I have been doing, representing members of all ethnicities to beat the employer and to get rights for our members. I mention this because if we have to support and defend black members in our workplaces from discrimination, harassment and bullying, the union is at its forefront. I have so much more to say but I will stop there because I don't want the President to interrupt me. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: Thank you for that rousing speech. You said just the right things. Can we now move to the vote. Will those in favour, please show. Will those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 38 was CARRIED*

The President: I now call Motion 39: De-criminalisation of sex work. The General Council opposes the motion and I will call upon Sue Ferns, during the debate, to explain the General Council's position. It is moved by ASLEF and seconded by the

GMB, PCS, Unite, the NEU and UNISON are also down to speak. Can you come to the front and get your passes marked? Thank you.

De-criminalisation of sex work

Simon Weller (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) moved Motion 39.

He said: Maybe I should start by answering a couple of questions. First, why are we discussing this? Is it not at odds with the Women's Conference decision to support the Nordic model? Also, we have to bear in mind that the LGBT Conference passed a resolution supporting de-criminalisation. This is the reason that this body is going to have to discuss this issue.

I know that this is a controversial issue with very firm opinions on both sides. I know it is a very difficult subject for many people. Another question which is asked is why is a male-dominated trade union moving this? We have 95% male members. I just make it clear that this has come from our Women's Committee. It is an issue that they feel passionately about and have pushed forward. Also, from our experience in our workplace – railway stations and depots tend not to be in the most salubrious parts of town – we see the effects of the criminalisation of sex workers.

This is not an issue that is going away. It is not known as “the oldest profession” without good reason. It not only affects women. Whilst 88% (about 72,600) of sex workers are women, there is the involvement of other genders as well. Sex work is on

the increase, partly because of austerity, but also because of insecure workplaces and substance abuse forcing people into this employment. There has been a 60% increase in street prostitution in Doncaster alone and arrests and raids by the police deter sex workers from reporting violence, leaving them again vulnerable and marginalised. If we were to compare two areas, in Nottingham (where the arrest of sex workers and clients is high) only 5% of sex workers will report that they have been victims of violent crime. However, in Lancashire, where the police had a deliberate policy of not prosecuting the sex workers, reports of violence went up by 46%. In London, sex workers are 12 times more likely to be murdered.

De-criminalisation is different from legalisation. De-criminalisation, the New Zealand model, involves the removal of prostitution-specific laws and sex workers and sex work businesses operate within the law of the land as other businesses. Sex workers would be entitled to the same protections. Under legalisation (which is in Nevada and the Netherlands) the sex industry is controlled by the Government and sex work is only legal in certain state-specific circumstances. This still pushes the very vulnerable sex workers into the edges of criminality, back into the realm of organised crime.

In July 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee published an interim report recommending the immediate change of existing legislation so that soliciting is no longer an offence and the brothel-keeping laws allow sex workers to share premises. The report made it clear that the organised criminal exploitation and abuse of sex workers would remain a criminal offence and there would be zero tolerance.

Human trafficking is often cited as a reason not to de-criminalise, but the Commons' Report draws a distinction between prostitution and trafficking and points out that the modern-day Slavery Act 2015 already criminalises the latter. De-criminalisation was introduced in New Zealand in 2003 with verifiable success. The law removed prostitution from the criminal law and allowed people to work together collectively. 90% of sex workers in New Zealand said that they had additional employment, legal and health and safety rights. 64% found it easier to refuse clients and 70% were more likely to report crimes. However, in Sweden, the Nordic model, which criminalises the buying of sex, negatively impacts sex workers. That is from the Global Commission on HIV and the Law. Sex workers face increased stigma and are more vulnerable to violence. There is no evidence of a reduction in prosecution.

De-criminalisation would increase safety and provide a legal recognition of sex workers as workers. It aids health and frees up police time because then the focus is not on the sex workers themselves. It ends the criminal records that the sex workers end up with, which provides a bar to them leaving that trade. I know this is going to be difficult for many people, but please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Margaret Gregg (*GMB*) seconded Motion 39.

She said: Few people here will be familiar with UK law on prostitution, which is complicated, unclear and impossible to summarise in the few minutes I have to speak. I suspect none of us could actually describe the three legal models or quote widely from the extensive academic research on the diverse experience of people who sell

sex. Despite that, people feel entitled to advocate policies about which they are often poorly informed, but passionately intense.

There are four things that I hope that those who are open-minded will do. The first, of course, is to vote for the motion. The second is to consider your principles. A global movement of hundreds and thousands of sex workers campaigned for de-criminalisation not because they say the sex industry is perfect, but because, like trade unionists, they know the solution to exploitation and abuse in any industry is the promotion of full human, civil and labour rights for those involved.

GMB take a lot of flak for including sex workers and yet trade union membership is in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is illegal for sex workers to share premises or organise work with others, but freedom of association is a fundamental right. Criminalisation deprives sex workers of equal protection of the law because people who sell sex do not trust the police not to prosecute them or their clients. Prostitution is having sex for money and neither having sex nor getting paid is inherently abusive, exploitative or harmful. Yes, there are people in prostitution who are coerced or drug-dependent or have otherwise limited choices. The problem is coercion, drug-dependency, lack of choice, social exclusion and stigmatisation, not prostitution itself. By confusing prostitution with a whole host of other problems, it allows those problems to continue to flourish. It is vulnerability which creates victims, not sex work.

Thirdly, educate yourself. Media coverage on Twitter is not enough. A good place to start is the website of the national anti-violence project, Ugly Mugs. Only one in four

sex workers reporting crimes to Ugly Mugs is willing to have contact with the police. This falls to zero in areas that actively enforce criminalisation, allowing violent perpetrators to operate with impunity. Ugly Mugs is in contact with approximately 10,000 sex workers. In a survey, 96% of respondents opposed criminalisation.

Policies that solve problems are based on reality and on evidence. There is no evidence that most purchasers wish to buy sexual services from the unwilling. There is no evidence that demand for commercial sex is the cause of trafficking. There is no evidence that most sex workers are unwilling. Please support Motion 39 to tackle violence and exploitation in the sex industry. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: I now call upon Sue Ferns to explain the General Council's position.

Sue Ferns (*Prospect*) explained the General Council's position on Motion 39.

She said: Congress, this motion clearly raises important issues so I would like to explain why the General Council opposes it. First, as has been said, this motion is at odds with Women's Conference policy which opposes the de-criminalisation of prostitution. This same motion was brought to the TUC Women's Conference this year and it was defeated.

The motion calls for full de-criminalisation of prostitution so let us be clear. Full de-criminalisation in this context does not just refer to prostitutes. It also means de-criminalisation of pimps, brothel owners and all those profiting from the exploitation of women and girls. The motion talks about people, not just women –

and Simon mentioned this too when he moved the motion – but we should be in no doubt that the overwhelming majority of those in prostitution are women and girls. In the sex industry, men represent a small minority and have very different pathways into and out of it.

Full de-criminalisation, which is what the motion calls for, is also known as the New Zealand model, a model which has been heavily criticised, including by women who have worked as prostitutes there, and as this year's Women's Conference delegates heard, there is compelling evidence from experts in the field of violence against women, who have spent time in New Zealand and have seen at first hand the lack of protection that this model affords to women in the sex industry there. There is research pointing to the New Zealand model leading to an increase in sex trafficking.

Those who support the New Zealand argue that criminalising buyers of sex drives prostitutes underground and makes them less safe but, Congress, the evidence from Sweden and other countries where buyers of sex are criminalised does not support this. In fact, it suggests that by criminalising buyers of sex, street prostitution is reduced, fewer men purchase sex, trafficking is reduced and, more importantly, social attitudes change. It is an approach that has succeeded in halving prostitution in Sweden and which has been recently adopted in France, Northern Ireland, Canada, Norway, Iceland and Lithuania.

Congress, I also need to address a number of facts in the motion. It says that those who work in the sex industry do so because of economic necessity rather than criminal coercion, but actually there is strong evidence of coercion. A recent report

by London South Bank University found that 50% of women involved in prostitution reported coercion regarding their involvement. A 2016 study by the Police Foundation identified 65 brothels operating in Bristol over a two-year period and of these three-quarters displayed links to organised crime groups. So, while it is certainly true that women are driven into prostitution out of desperation, drug addiction and economic necessity, it does not follow that we should campaign for the de-criminalisation of pimps and brothel owners who benefit from women's poverty. Rather, as trade unionists, we should be campaigning to end the austerity, poverty and benefit sanctions that may drive some women into prostitution in order to feed their families.

The motion states that current legislation forces sex workers to work alone, but that is not the case. Current CPS guidance is clear that it is not illegal to sell sex in a brothel. What is illegal is to manage or control others working in a brothel. Prostitutes can – and often do – band together for safety and protection. What they cannot legally do is pimp, manage, coerce or profit from another person selling sex.

We have also heard about the 2016 Home Affairs Select Committee report into prostitution. In fact, this is an interim report that recommends that further consideration should be given to all of the different legislative approaches to prostitution, including the position that the TUC Women's Committee supports, which is criminalising those who buy sex rather than those who sell it. That Committee's inquiry is ongoing and has not yet reached a conclusion.

Finally, Congress, the motion calls for sex workers to have the same rights as workers in other industries, but I ask you to consider whether exchanging money for sex can really be considered work in the same way as any other job. Just because a financial transaction takes place does not mean that this is a job like any other. Ask yourself what other jobs are there where extreme violence, sexually-transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy and rape are common workplace hazards? For all these reasons, Congress, the General Council asks you to oppose this motion. *(Applause)*

Zita Holbourne (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) explained why PCS abstained in the motion.

She said: PCS is abstaining, but we felt it important to explain to Congress the reasons. We recognise the importance of the issue and the need to debate it, but what the motion is calling for goes further than our current policy and, in our view, does not address all the issues. In many ways, there is a wider debate that is needed that takes into consideration all the concerns and issues around rights for sex workers and the underlying reasons some people may become sex workers. A similar motion came to the TUC Women's Conference, as has already been mentioned, and we abstained there, also explaining our position.

PCS has consulted our branches on sex workers, but we are still debating the issues and so have not yet developed a full policy on sex workers. Within that debate, we are looking at both workers' rights and exploitation. We believe that any policy on sex workers should apply to all sexes because not all sex workers are women. Some of the issues faced by sex workers impact disproportionately on equality and on

workers' protected characteristics. Discrimination in the labour market and at work, austerity and cuts can lead to people being forced to leave or being barred from regularised employment. This includes LGBT people and impacts doubly on young LGBT people, with a particular impact on transgender people, who may move to sex work as the only option they feel available in order to survive during transition.

We recognise the need for sex workers to organise and that criminalisation may make sex work more dangerous, but we also need to look at exploitation and how women are too often viewed as sex objects and are subject to misogyny. Trafficking must be eliminated and we need to campaign against cuts which have led to services and organisations that help those who are trafficked losing their funding, being under-resourced or even forced to close their doors. We need to look at the impact of job cuts deepening poverty, welfare cuts and sanctions and how this may lead to some people becoming sex workers not out of choice, but because they feel they have no choice.

PCS fully supports and is at the forefront of campaigns to reverse benefit and employment policies which cause economic hardship and destitution and which lead to an adverse, disproportionate equality impact. We do recognise that criminalisation increases risk and health and safety of sex workers, but we need to continue the discussion in our union about in what form we support de-criminalisation whilst also challenging cuts, discrimination and exploitation. For these reasons, we must abstain.

(Applause)

Julie Phipps (*Unite*) opposed Motion 39.

She said: Prostitution is not currently illegal in Britain. The exchange of sex for money, goods or other types of gain in return for accommodation, food or drugs, on an individual basis, is not illegal. Advertising prostitution, soliciting, loitering, kerb-crawling, running a brothel and living off earnings from a brothel are illegal. On decriminalising those – mainly women – who are selling sexual access to their body, we are all in agreement. The de-criminalisation of the whole industry – those procuring the service, profiting from it, pimps and brothels – is where we have disagreement.

The legalisation of the whole industry is to normalise and that is where we fundamentally disagree. The sale of your body is not the same as selling your labour. *(Applause)* The commodification of women in this way is against equality, portrays us as subservient, puts us at risk of violence and, quite frankly, negates the campaigns in which we have engaged across this conference. The sex industry is about inequality. To legalise the whole of the industry is to maintain a group of people in sexual service. Women, men and children in the industry are at risk of violence and that will continue as it is about the power of people and making them subservient. The New Zealand model is exactly that. It is not a small cooperative model, make no mistake. Big business is operating within it. New Zealand's women's groups have found exit services harder to find and, finally, it has been legally rendered as "just another job".

Congress, it is important to note that the TUC Women's Conference voted against this motion. They decided this was not something our women wanted to campaign for.

Unite takes its women's structures and representation seriously. We represent over 3,000 women and one-third of our delegation here today is made up of women. We do not believe that when the Women's Conference makes its voice heard, you can simply seek to bypass those structures by submitting the motion to this Congress. *(Applause)*

Congress, we believe we must oppose an industry which trafficks, imprisons and exploits women and children. We must oppose an industry where the acceptable front is lap-dancing clubs, hiding the exploitation and vicious circle of drug and sexual abuse. We must support women who wish to find a way out of the sex industry whilst respecting those women who are in the industry. *(Applause)*

Sisters and others in the sex industry, we will never judge you. However, we do judge your oppressors. Congress, oppose this motion. *(Cheers and applause)*

Philipa Harvey (*National Education Union*) opposed Motion 39.

She said: Our union of education workers vigorously opposes this motion. As a union, we have significant concerns around the inaccuracies in the motion that were outlined by Sue Ferns from the General Council. The motion states that current legislation forces sex workers to work alone, but as you have heard, this is not the case. Current CPS guidance is clear. It is not illegal to sell sex in a brothel: what is illegal is to manage and control others in a brothel. So, yes, we should, as a trade union Movement, defend workers, but our core purpose is not to enable the bosses to profit from the exploitation of workers. *(Applause)*

The CPS distinguishes between those involved in prostitution. They recognise that it is currently a victim-centred crime and that those who are abused and exploited require holistic support. It recognises a need for a multi-agency approach. As Sue Ferns identified, another factual inaccuracy is that those who work in the sex industry do so because of economic necessity rather than criminal coercion. You heard from the recent London South Bank University report and the report from Bristol that this is also inaccurate.

For us as an education workers' union, we cannot support a motion that legalises what today we are standing here calling "working" and "an industry". Let us be clear. One-third of women involved in prostitution entered this industry before the age of 18. Is this really an industry or whole-scale exploitation of young women and girls?

As education workers, we must refute the idea that prostitution is a job like any other. As the TUC campaigns around the Great Jobs Agenda, we cannot have policy which supports any exploitation of young girls and women. These are young girls who are already being groomed for prostitution through gangs that exist in our communities. We have to be clear and recognise this for what it is. We cannot ignore and sanitise the realities of violence and abuse that prostituted women suffer.

When men request a prostitute, one of the most frequent requests is, "The youngest you have got." Is there really a line at 18 which makes prostitution no longer exploitation or child abuse or rape and then becomes a job? Do not condemn

generations of young women to ever-increasing violence and sexualisation. Vote against this and campaign against it. (*Applause*)

Penny Swift (*UNISON*) opposed Motion 39.

She said: Congress, UNISON has a very clear policy on this issue, which is to campaign for the Nordic model to end prostitution. In very crude terms, it is to criminalise the pimps and punters who exploit women, but not the women themselves. Make no mistake, delegates: it is women who are far and away the ones who are exploited in prostitution and it is men who exploit them.

The motion says, “... that many people would not choose to work in the sex industry ...” Again, we say this is an attempt to pretend that prostitution is not gendered, that it is not women who are the most exploited. We dispute that. We also dispute the use of the word “many” because that suggests that there are many others who do actively choose prostitution and we do not believe that is true, just as we do not believe that legalising prostitution makes women safer, that it is just a job, or that it is just sex. It is not just sex and it is not just another job. It is yet another form of exploitation and violence against women.

75% of women in prostitution first became involved as children. 70% of them were in care. 45% of them were sexually abused as children. Those women did not make a free choice. The women working on the streets to feed their children may not be trafficked, but neither are they making a free choice. It is shameful to suggest that the solution to that is to legalise the exploitation of women rather than to find ways to

support women and challenge the government that puts them in that position.

(Applause)

The motion quotes the Amnesty International decision, a decision that is seriously flawed. One of their key advisers was convicted of trafficking shortly after serving on the Amnesty expert panel and is now serving a lengthy jail sentence. It also quotes the Home Affairs Select Committee, chaired by Keith Vaz, a man who was revealed to be using prostitutes just weeks after the report was published. It is hardly an unbiased opinion from either of those bodies.

Congress, it is a fact that legalising prostitution increases demand, makes trafficking more likely and allows organised crime to flourish. Legalising violence against women is not the answer to women and children living in poverty. Allowing the purchase of women's bodies is not the way to challenge this Government's inhuman treatment of the poor and disadvantaged. Permitting the exploitation of the most vulnerable in society is not something we should be condoning. Please oppose this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: ASLEF, do you want a right of reply?

Simon Weller (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) replied on Motion 39.

He said: Some quite significant issues have been raised and there are some inaccuracies. First – this is a fairly semantic point – it is not the same motion that

went to the TUC Women's Conference. There were deliberate changes within the motion. We want to make it very clear (particularly after the last speaker's very powerful contribution) that this is not about legalisation. This is about de-criminalisation. There is a fundamental difference.

Regarding increasing demand, in 2008, there was a governmental review in New Zealand. Its evidence was that there was no increase in prostitution in New Zealand. Also, there was no evidence of a decrease in Sweden where they implement the Nordic model. I think it is also important to say – this is an emotive subject – that coercive, violent and abusive relationships (pimping) remain illegal. De-criminalisation is not suddenly going to make prostitution compulsory.

I think there is a role for us to be the voice of all workers. One voice which has been conspicuous by its absence has been the voice of the actual sex workers themselves. *(Applause)* I take slight umbrage when speakers say that their union takes its equality structures very seriously. I will tell you now that ASLEF takes its equality structures very seriously. We are pushing this motion because it has come directly from our women's section and from our LGBT section. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

The President: I am now going to put this motion to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? The motion is overwhelmingly defeated.

* *Motion 39 was LOST*

Ending the gender pay gap

The President: I now move to Motion 40: Ending the gender pay gap. The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by Vicky Knight, on behalf of the TUC Women's Conference, and seconded by the National Education Union. PCS, Unite, UNISON and the NASUWT have indicated that they want to speak. Can you please come to the front and get your cards marked. Thank you.

Vicky Knight (*University and College Union*) moved Motion 40.

She said: I am standing here devastated that 47 years after the Equal Pay Act, on behalf of working women, I still have to ask for an end to the gender pay gap. (*Applause*) Congress, women's work is no less time-consuming, stressful, difficult, complex, demanding or dangerous than men's work. However, women's work, whatever it is, has traditionally been, and remains, lower paid than men's pay. Young, older, BME, LGBT and disabled women all too often experience a double and triple detriment in opportunities, pay and provisions in the workplace. This simply builds on the inequality already present within the gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap increasingly impacts on women through an intersectional lens which, in many cases, has not been included in the current research data sets. The women who are consistently bottom in the gender pay scales are disproportionately black women workers. Congress, the TUC Women's Committee debates are never far away from unequal pay and although gender pay gap reporting is welcomed, we are not convinced that a "naughty list" of rogue employers will have the desired or

necessary progress on this issue. It can highlight the scale of the problem as we already know that the full-time gender pay gap is 13.9%, with the part-time gap worryingly higher, impacting most on those least able to manage financially.

Legislation, reporting and enforcement are all required. Without this triumvirate, as experience has shown, anything less is ineffective tokenism. Let us be frank here: what will happen if an employer fails to publish unequal pay data? The answer is nothing at all. The legislation is currently meaningless without sanctions or enforcement.

Who can enforce these requirements? PCS and Unite have told us consistently that it is less and less the EHRC due to the Government cuts absolutely gutting their ability to act on rogue employers. Another failure of gender pay gap reporting is that it does not require employers to say what they will do when they find their gender pay gap. There must be mandatory action plans agreed in consultation with trade unions.

As things stand, companies who identify gender pay gaps or find them have to do nothing. Even high-profile cases like the recent BBC scandal will not necessarily result in improvements. What we will see is a couple of the top brass coming out in their flak jackets for a couple of days and the press and the outraged of Twitter will find another villain to go after. Congress, there has been much debate here at this conference on scrapping the cap and not enough on closing the gap. Let us be clear: there can be no fair pay without equal pay for women.

We need proper, effective work, which is aimed at tackling the different factors behind the gender pay gap. 75% of pregnant women and new mothers experience discrimination at work and pregnancy discrimination, even though it is illegal, is on the rise. Secondly, regarding occupational segregation, we have to get away from women's work, work that is undervalued and all too often underpaid. Girls are still discouraged from pursuing STEM subjects and therefore STEM careers. When we do find men doing women's work, they are more likely to be running the show. In our schools, 38% of teachers are male, but when you look at head teachers, they are disproportionately male. Just 36% of head teachers are currently women. Lack of flexible work and women forced into part-time work because caring is still seen as a traditional women's role keeps down women's pay and women's promotional opportunities.

Congress, we need to build in transparency into our pay structures, a free and robust tribunal system, and a coordinated trade union strategy of local and national campaigning for an end to unfair pay as well as an end to precarious work, casualisation and zero hours contracts. The TUC must robustly remind employers of their legal duty to provide information to unions for the purposes of collective bargaining, to collate and, above all, to act to end gender-based discrepancies on the issue of pay.

Congress, please let us move to make sure that we do scrap the cap, but let us also ensure that we eradicate the gap. Almost five decades after equal pay legislation was passed, let us get on with it. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

Heather McKenzie (*National Education Union*) seconded Motion 40.

She said: Vicky has said it all really, but I will reiterate some of her points. What do all the workers here and those who we represent want? They want dignity and they want respect. We talk about this, but what is that in reality? It is pay. That is how you show dignity and respect. As Vicky has pointed out, we have had 47 years of the Equal Pay Act where courageous gains were made by our sister lionesses in many sectors on policy, but the real gap sadly reflects that there is no fair pay at all without equal pay for women.

Brothers, sisters are clear that we will never crack the cap if we do not close this gap. We are leading and you are supporting, but everybody has to be genuinely on board if it is not going to take another 50 years to achieve this; to go beyond accepting meagre crusts rather than a great big bunch of red roses for us all! As a teacher, I appreciate that we have gender-neutral pay, but in reality we have lower pay rates in progression and promotion, as our 2016 survey evidenced and as Vicky pointed out. In a nutshell, it is still heavily weighted, as in most areas of work, towards men reaching more senior and higher-paid positions. Thus, the gap continues, not just in teaching but everywhere else. The same survey also confirmed, as if we sadly need to hear this again, that the chances of reaching such heights are sadly slashed – and this is worth repeating – by part-time work. For a returner of any age, whether after maternity leave or any other break in service, or for a black or disabled teacher and a women on top of that, it not only has an impact on our pay and in our purses, but more importantly (which is forgotten) on our pensions. It goes on throughout life.

As reported by the NEU, the OECD report “Education at a Glance”, confirms that all teachers’ pay is now more than 15% in real terms worse than in 2010. I know in other professions, it is even worse. So, why are we here? As Vicky pointed out, we have legislation, but basically it has no teeth. To have teeth, you have to make them pay exactly the same. We want pay in our packets and we need to make sure that companies or employers have to pay too. So, sisters and brothers, let us make sure that Theresa hears us. We are going to go on and on. We want to crack the cap, but we want to close the gap. Please join in with us. Let us say it once together, please: “Crack the cap; close the gap.” (*Congress repeated the chant*) I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Louise Kowalska (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in favour of Motion 40.

She said: In the first paragraph of this motion before you, the Fawcett Society explained that in 2016, due to the gender pay gap, women effectively worked for free from 10th November 2016 until the end of that year. I would like to bring this calculation into the context of this conference. The core hours that we are all working in this hall, from Sunday to Wednesday, is a total of 22 hours. President, and all other women in this room, we ceased to be paid at 4.30 yesterday afternoon.

When the compulsory reporting of gender pay gap disparity was introduced for employers of more than 250 workers in 2016, Nicky Morgan said that there was nowhere for gender inequality to hide. Figures exposed within the civil service – and I here recommend that the Government stays behind the sofa – suggest that while the

gender pay gap is falling across the civil service as a whole, recent data shows that the average male civil servant earns 13% more than a female. While better than the 15% disparity recorded in 2010, at this rate of fall, full pay equality will take another 37 years or 2054. Also, in the senior civil service, gender inequality has risen. The gender pay gap rose in one in four Government bodies, with the worst offenders being the smaller offices such as the Office for Budget Responsibility and the Attorney General's Office, where women are experiencing a gender pay gap of 37% and 41% respectively.

The Government's introduction of Employment Tribunal fees has had a disproportionate impact on women. It affects women's ability to expose wage irregularities and take forward equal pay claims. We welcome the court victory against the freeze, but thousands of women have been prevented from accessing justice and denied workplace rights. Regarding the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, cutting budgets and staff at the EHRC leaves the Commission toothless at a time when more needs to be done to tackle discrimination. PCS has called for the EHRC to be strengthened and properly funded. The EHRC should promote and enforce the laws that protect everybody's rights to fairness and respect.

2018 marks not only the 150th anniversary of the Trade Union Congress, but also 45 years since the women's strike at Dagenham. Let us celebrate these anniversaries with an equality legacy our founding sisters and brothers would be proud to see. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Jasmin Suraya (*Unite*) supported Motion 40.

She said: Unite supports all the demands within this motion and insists that the Government takes robust action now to put an end to the gender pay gap. The glass ceiling, as my friends have described, has been recently reinforced by a concrete floor and a barbed wire fence. That is what has widened the gender pay gap. That is why this motion was a top priority for the TUC Women's Conference this year. The growth in insecure work, the spiralling of self-employment, the spread of casualisation and relentless austerity have all hit women the hardest.

Today, there are more women in the workforce who are in jobs which are concentrated in the lowest-paid and most exploitative sectors. That is what we in Unite call "the five Cs". They are cleaning, clerical, cashiering, care and catering. I do not care whether women work at the BBC or, like me, in health. No woman, no matter where she sits on the income scale, should experience outright discrimination. The media stories about the BBC, no matter where you work or who you are, have highlighted that pay disparity between men and women still exists. Enough is enough, we say. It is about time the reality of pay discrimination was exposed. Serious action now needs to break down this occupational apartheid. We need to build our public services, universal childcare, with stronger trade unions for us, as women, to be able to enforce our rights. This demands our political will. Brothers, let us also be clear that all of these actions will benefit everyone and not just women.

As a Movement, our instinct is to remain resilient, to fight and to hold those in power to account. That is why we need a commitment for concrete action which can reverse the attacks on women's equality. We will then be on the path to finally achieving

gender equality. Women demand, and deserve, equal pay now, today, in 2017. My mother wished to see, in her lifetime and mine, that this would be achieved. We can make it happen. Deeds not words! Please support. (*Applause*)

Linda Hobson (*UNISON*) spoke in support of Motion 40.

She said: Congress, it has been mentioned lots of times this week, but I am so proud that I am going to mention it again in the context of this motion. The work that UNISON did in overruling the unlawful tribunal freeze sits central to this motion. (*Applause*) Women in the workplace bear the brunt of this injustice. The implementation of these illegal fees saw a dramatic drop in sex discrimination and equal pay claims. Congress, it is simply not acceptable for women to still endure a gender pay gap. A gender pay gap is not inevitable and it is not insurmountable. Indeed, it is not beyond each and every employer and government, acting with a real willingness, to end the gender pay gap once and for all.

Our trade union Movement has shown that the battle for equal pay can be won. UNISON has won a tremendous victory over Glasgow City Council, a victory which is likely to benefit 6,000 low-paid workers. However, it is a disgrace that this is a fight that women continue to have to battle, with little, if any, support from our Government. The Government's own important mechanism is simply too weak a tool to address the issue; a reflection, I believe, of the gender imbalance within our corridors of power.

The Women and Equalities Committee has reported that the tool does nothing to address the structural causes of the gender pay gap. The fact is that women are still more likely to take on the caring roles within families, which impacts on their earning potential, often forcing them into low-paid, insecure and part-time work. Women are underpaid and undervalued. If I hear one more time, “It was your decision to have kids”: really? We would be in a pretty sorry state if we women took collective action and decided not to! (*Applause*)

Congress, in all seriousness, UNISON wholeheartedly supports this motion and, in doing so, we are showing women within our workplaces and our communities that they are worth more. I, for one, am sick of being promised jam tomorrow. Please support. (*Applause*)

Kathy Duggan (*NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union*) supported Motion 40.

She said: Just as a reminder, as it has a long row of initials, the “W” in NASUWT actually stands for “women”. Speaking in support of Motion 40 on ending the gender pay gap, three-quarters of the teaching profession are women and yet the gender pay gap is alive and thriving in schools. In my view, the gender pay gap in schools is institutional discrimination; nothing more, nothing less. It is not overt; it is underhand.

The NASUWT commissioned research from the University of Warwick which analyses pay data collected by the Government on every teacher in England from 2010 or, as I call it, the apocalypse. This shows conclusively the pay detriment on

women teachers. Analysis of pay shows that women teachers, on average, earn 85% less than men. Women start being paid at the same rate as men in their twenties, but by the time they are in their thirties, their pay is falling. By the time they are in their forties, their average pay levels have slumped compared to their male counterparts. Just for the avoidance of doubt, we do the same job in schools. A teacher (male or female) is a teacher.

We cannot ignore that having children impacts on women workers' pay. In many cases, pay and promotion prospects never recover from maternity leave. The Department of Education's data shows that the average woman teacher earned nearly £3,000 less than the average male teacher during 2016/17 and it is not getting any better. This gender pay gap for women teachers becomes a gender gap in pensions for their whole lives and we live a bit longer than men. We must be doing something right!

What is the Government's response to the gender pay gap in schools? It is a regime which does not oblige most schools to report the data so they get let off the hook. The light-touch implementation of this regulation means again that people are let off the hook, as we heard earlier. This is why the NASUWT implements national action to ensure that schools and academy trusts must gender-proof their pay policies and why we have taken effective action to achieve equal pay in schools and academies. Congress, it is vital for the campaigning and organising actions in this motion to be carried out to oppose institutionalised gender pay discrimination. Congress, please support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: I am now going to put Motion 40 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 40 was CARRIED*

Northern Ireland same-sex marriage and the DUP

The President: I now call Motion 41: Northern Ireland same-sex marriage and the DUP. The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by Claire Mullaly on behalf of the TUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ Conference. It is seconded by the National Education Union. Unite, UNISON and the NASUWT have indicated that they want to speak. Will all speakers come to the front and be ready to come to the rostrum quickly. Thank you.

Claire Mullaly (*Prospect*) moved Motion 41 on behalf of the TUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ Conference.

She said: Congress, cast your mind back to the morning of June 9th. How did you feel as the prospect of a Tory/DUP deal was becoming a reality? In Belfast, on 9th June, it was the day a surreal dystopian nightmare became a reality. Horror thoughts were abound: what about the Good Friday Agreement; what about peace; what about devolution; what about the Northern Irish women's struggle for control over reproductive rights; and what about the ongoing struggle for LGBT+ rights in a place that LGBT+ activist, Peter Tatchell, called "the most homophobic place in Western Europe"? Congress, this motion asks for your support to campaign for equal marriage

in Northern Ireland. It calls for the solidarity of this Movement to oppose the Tory/DUP deal and to work with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to expand equalities provision in Northern Ireland and to robustly defend existing equalities legislation elsewhere in the UK.

So, what do we know about Northern Ireland? We know that the devolved administration collapsed in January and has not operated since. We know that power-sharing is fragile and makeshift and is an easily-destroyed arrangement. We know that neutral British and Irish Governments are essential for our Good Friday Agreement and for devolution to work. We know that our devolved Government has been ransacked and destroyed to satisfy Theresa May's Machiavellian political ambition, leaving us voiceless.

So let me describe LGBT+ life in Northern Ireland. We are the one region of the UK that has been denied equal marriage. While we know that equal marriage is not a panacea for LGBT+ poverty, homelessness, healthcare access issues, insecure employment, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, it is important that we can all dream the same dream without the DUP vetoing it in Stormont, using the petition of concern. ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, assessed Northern Ireland as the worst place in the UK to live for LGBT+ rights, with only 74% equality compared to the 86% equality throughout the rest of the UK.

In 2014, the DUP attempted to legislate for a conscience clause to be applied through equalities legislation where businesses could refuse to serve LGBT+ people on

religious grounds. If this was happening in Donald Trump's America, we would correctly be calling this out as blatant discrimination disguised as religious freedom. The last time I looked, we are a democracy and not a theocracy. These attacks on the LGBT+ community create a toxic atmosphere, which is compounded by anti-LGBT rhetoric from people such as Theresa May's friend, MP Ian Paisley Jr (who sits at the heart of Government) saying that he is pretty repulsed by gay and lesbianism.

This toxicity leads to a heavy psychological impact. Recent research shows that 47% of Northern Ireland's LGBT+ community had considered suicide. If you look at the person to your left or to your right, the chances are that if they were living in Northern Ireland as an LGBT+, one of them would have contemplated suicide. Further to that, 71% has suffered depression. How has this been allowed to happen in the UK?

The LGBT+ community and the trade union Movement in Northern Ireland and the UK are not going to take this lying down. In fact, three weeks after this disgusting deal put the DUP at the heart of the UK Government, a huge march through Belfast city centre brought it to a standstill, demanding equality for the LGBT+ community. Trade unions, human rights campaigners, friends, families and workmates were united in demanding equal marriage. The solidarity of the people of Northern Ireland (70% of which support equal marriage) is real and it is growing. For an entry to one is an entry to all. When minority rights are used as a political football, we will fight and we will win.

Congress, we need your help to take our fight to Westminster to speak out against the politics of division and hate espoused by the DUP and to deliver equal rights for all. When Tory leadership hopeful, Jacob Rees-Mogg, feels emboldened enough to voice

his opposition to same-sex marriage in the UK, we know that we must be vigilant and active in smashing homophobia, not just in Northern Ireland, but in the rest of the UK. Congress, we know that the DeLorean car was built in Belfast, but do not let the Tories and the DUP take us on a back-to-the-future style trip to the 1950s. *(Applause)* Equal rights now! Equal marriage now! Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

Julia Neal (*National Education Union*) seconded Motion 41.

She said: Congress, the DUP looks set to gain a strong grip over the UK Government as a result of the unholy alliance between Theresa May and Arlene Foster. With a party which does not support women's rights or the LGBT community, which requests that creationism be taught in schools and is in favour of the death penalty, everyone should be concerned. More specifically, it was not so long ago that I spoke at this Congress about the problems posed by a certain Iris Robinson, who declared that homosexuality was an abomination. There was also a councillor who claimed that Hurricane Katrina was an act of revenge on the city of New Orleans for hosting a gay event. Goodness knows what they are going to say now with the ravages of Harvey, Irma and Jose!

Inclusivity is not their strength. Congress, we can agree that the Tories are making a mess of everything and the only time May actually contacted Trump was over employment and financial issues. It was nothing to do with the problems of trans issues in the American armed forces, which is outrageous. Closer to home, we can be sure that being propped up by a bigoted, homophobic DUP could pose a great risk to the LGBT community. The Stonewall School Report 2017, which is just out, shows

that similar to Northern Ireland, one in five LGB and two in five trans young people have attempted suicide. Three in five LGB and four in five trans young people have self-harmed.

There is more work to be done, which we hope will not be put at risk by this Government. When right-wingers talk about same-sex marriage, it is common for them to draw parallels to paedophilia and even bestiality. They also make statements about the children of LGBT+ parents being more likely to suffer from abuses or neglect. This is not only untrue, but it is damaging, it is dangerous and it is downright disgraceful. *(Applause)* In Australia, which we hope will approve equal marriage, Turnbull recently remarked about same-sex marriages around the world. He said, “In any one of these nations, has the sky fallen in? Has life as we know it come to a halt? Has traditional marriage as we know it been undermined? The answer is no.” Even in Scotland, Ruth Davidson had to seek categorical assurance that there would be no rescinding of LGBT rights if a deal with the DUP was done.

Congress, I call on you to support the work of the LGBT+ Workers’ Committee to oppose this alliance, to defend existing equalities legislation across the UK and to make sure that we encourage further expansion of equalities legislation in Northern Ireland. Thank you for listening. *(Applause)*

Bridie McCreesh *(Unite)* supported Motion 41.

She said: Congress, the trade union Movement is based on principles of equality and solidarity. It is why Unite urged all of our members to vote “Yes” in the 2015

referendum to legalise same-sex marriage in the south of Ireland. When that referendum was won, it was a huge step forward for equality and human rights. It is why, as a Movement, we cannot now ignore the actions of the Conservatives in using the DUP votes to prop up their government, actions which effectively provide legitimacy for some of the DUP's reactionary views.

The DUP's First Minister, Arlene Foster, has said that her party will continue to keep using the contentious petition of concern. This is a mechanism that means that the Bill needs cross-community support to become law. This is to block same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland for at least another five years. Effectively, it is using the peace process to block the drive towards equality.

The DUP have stated also that using the petition of concern demonstrated their determination to protect the traditional definition of marriage. They have also led the opposition at Stormont to the Northern Ireland Equality Commission case against a bakery in Northern Ireland which refused to make a customer a cake iced with the slogan "Support gay marriage". Foster herself wrote to the Scottish Government in 2015 asking Edinburgh to bar civil partners from Northern Ireland converting their partnerships into marriage. Arlene Foster has justified these positions by insisting that gay people do not really want to get married anyway and that the issue had become a "bit of a storm in a teacup". Well, it is not a storm in a teacup to those denied their human rights.

The DUP is out of step and on the wrong side of history on this and so many other questions. Thousands marched in Belfast Pride this year under the banner of

“Demand change”. Continuing to add discrimination on the basis of sexuality is not a storm in a teacup. It is a denial of people’s human rights and it is against the basic tenets of our Movements. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Asha Wolfe-Robinson (*UNISON*) supported Motion 41.

She said: During the LGBT+ Conference in early July, we were still assessing the fallout from the snap election. Our anger about the Tory’s shoddy deal with the DUP was still fresh and raw so it is no surprise that Conference voted to bring this motion here to Congress.

This motion called for two things. The first is to continue to oppose this desperate deal and the lies which expose the Tory’s true values around equality. We must use it mercilessly to train the Westminster Government into acting on its fine words on tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Let us see some actual deeds. Secondly, the motion calls upon us to defend and expand LGBT+ rights and equality protections across the UK. The focus is the law and this is particularly pertinent in the context of the UK exiting the EU.

TUC LGBT Conference hailed Ian Walker’s brilliant victory at the Supreme Court in his long battle for equality regarding his partner’s pension. That is one thing that same-sex marriage did not sort. However, the Supreme Court judgment was still in breach of EU equality laws. It is essential that the Repeal Bill does not allow these rights to be rolled back. Even with legal protections, workplace discrimination continues to blight LGBT+ people’s lives, as was shown clearly in the TUC report

“The Cost of being Out at Work” published this summer. Do not think this motion is only about marriage in Northern Ireland, important as that is. It demands that we all take action to defend and advance LGBT+ equality at work, in our unions and under the law. Congress, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Debbie Hayton (*NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union*) spoke in support of Motion 41.

She said: Congress, the situation before us, quite frankly, is disgraceful, deplorable and shameful. While the law has moved on in Great Britain and elsewhere in Europe, including countries such as Malta and Germany, those with bigoted and reactionary views have used every barrier they can find to prevent same-sex couples getting married in Northern Ireland, even using a petition of concern, a measure that was deliberately included in the peace process to protect minority interests.

My union, the NASUWT, hosts an annual equality conference in Northern Ireland where we consult teachers who work in schools across the region. We were shocked by some of what we heard. Only 9% of colleagues reported that their school was actively addressing issues of homophobia and transphobia amongst staff. 59% were aware of discriminatory practices within their school. Shockingly, not a single teacher had undertaken school or local authority-led equality training during the previous two years.

This all sadly confirms what NASUWT has found through casework and research; that the Government is woefully neglecting their responsibilities on equality issues. Let us be clear: every human being has the right to marry and marry the person of

their choice. Furthermore, married same-sex couples moving to Northern Ireland should continue to have that marriage recognised locally. Currently, they are treated as civil partnerships irrespective of the wishes of the couple. Rights that have already been won must be protected and we must fight to see them extended. These are rights such as the recent ruling in the Supreme Court Walker case, a victory for same-sex couples in securing pension benefits, an issue which NASUWT has led on, alongside the TUC, for many years.

Congress, we applaud those trade unionists from all sectors and from all traditions who marched together through Belfast on 1st July in protest. We must ensure that the trade union Movement is fully behind the fight for equality in all parts of the UK and send a message across the world that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic discrimination has no place in the 21st century. Congress, please support this vital motion. (*Applause*)

The President: I now put Motion 41 to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 41 was CARRIED*

Strong Unions

The President: Congress, we turn to Section 5 of the General Council Report: Strong Unions, the section on international solidarity from page 57. I call paragraph

5.7, Global union organisations. Unite have indicated that they want to raise an issue on Bombardier and Boeing.

(Speaker unidentified) (Unite) spoke on paragraph 5.7.

He said: I should advise Congress that on Monday of this week, we were advised that the US corporation, Boeing, brought claims of price-dumping by the aerospace company, Bombardier, which is based in Northern Ireland and Canada, to the US Department of Commerce. If successful, the claims brought by Boeing to the US Department of Commerce for unfair competition by Bombardier's C Series passenger jet could result in punitive fines threatening the very future of Bombardier in Belfast. At present 25% of workers are employed on the C Series production. In four years' time, we anticipate that 60% of workers will be working on the C Series.

Bombardier is Northern Ireland's largest private sector employer. The jobs are vital to the aerospace industry and the manufacturing economy. They also sustain many more jobs in the supply chain in the UK and Northern Ireland. On Monday, we were briefed about this situation. We immediately contacted the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and the United Steelworkers Union in the USA and Canada.

Congress, I have to say that Bombardier benefited from state investment from Canada and from Invest Northern Ireland, all of which was entirely lawful and legitimate. That is a fact that Theresa May has to confirm. This is corporate bullying on a massive scale by Boeing towards Bombardier and it is all to do with stopping us

making and selling the C Series jet to Delta. Boeing did not even put in a bid for the work. We are told that Theresa May has contacted Donald Trump, but we are also told that he has to keep out of it because it is an issue for the US Department of Commerce.

We have to stop this bullying altogether. The UK Government places orders with Boeing of upwards of £4 billion for Apache helicopters and for the P-8 marine surveillance aircraft. We ask the General Council to support our unions and our members in Northern Ireland. We ask the Government – Liam Fox and Theresa May – to stand up for our members in Northern Ireland, to stand up for the aerospace industry and to stand up for UK manufacturing. Put an end to this corporate bullying by Boeing against a company whose members have done nothing wrong. Thank you for letting me intervene. (*Applause*)

The President: I now call paragraph 5.8. CWU have indicated that they wish to speak.

Amarjite Singh (*Communication Workers Union*) spoke on paragraph 5.8, Global solidarity.

He said: Congress, you will have seen on the news recently regarding the displacement of Rohingya Muslims from Burma. I am just making you aware that atrocities are happening. Within a week, we have seen over 300,000 Rohingya Muslims being forced over to Bangladesh as their villages have been burnt down. Men, women and children have been driven out of Burma and have gone into

Bangladesh. As we all know, Bangladesh is not one of the richest countries in the world. However, they have supported the Burmese Muslims.

We have seen Archbishop Tutu, the Dalai Lama and Malala Yousafzai denounce Aung San Suu from actually putting any pressure on the military to stop what is happening. She needs to come out and denounce the military's persecution of these people. The UN have used hollow words such as "textbook ethnic cleansing", but have done nothing. My understanding is that they are supposed to be meeting today, but we need to make sure that something is done. India, neighbours of Bangladesh, has sat on its hands as well. It needs to speak out and assist Bangladesh in what is happening.

The TUC should be at the forefront of putting pressure on the UK Government, the UN and the wider world to stop these people being displaced and forced out of their country. They should be able to return without any fear of reprisals, persecution or death. Also, they should be given citizenship. At the present moment in time, these people have no documents or citizenship. Congress, that is my intervention.
(Applause)

The President: Sally, can you respond on behalf of the General Council?

Sally Hunt (*University and College Union*) responded on behalf of the General Council.

She said: The TUC and the International Trade Union Confederation have a very long track record of supporting the struggle for democracy and workers' rights in Burma. I had the honour of meeting some of the Burmese trade unionists who had to organise outside of Burma at that time because their very lives were at risk if they worked and organised when the junta was in power. We welcomed the shift towards democracy in Burma and the freedom of association that followed that.

However, we have consistently argued that the struggle for democracy, freedom and justice is very, very far from over. The plight of the Rohingya has a long history, but we have to be very clear. The recent attacks are nothing short of genocide and the international community, of which we are part, needs to act. The TUC will take this issue up with our comrades in the Global Trade Union Movement, but we also need to challenge our own Government to work with those promoting peace and justice and, at a very bare minimum, to stop, and not worsen, the situation by arming the very people who are persecuting and killing the Rohingya. *(Applause)*

Congress, we ask you to take this up in your global federations. We ask you to remember this: there can be no reconciliation without justice and there is no justice without an end to this violence. We must stand with the Rohingya and we must stand for peace. *(Applause)*

Solidarity with all progressive forces and the Kurdish population of Turkey

The President: Thank you, Sally. I now call Motion 75: Solidarity with all progressive forces and the Kurdish population of Turkey. The General Council

supports the motion. It is moved by Unite and seconded by the GMB. During the debate, I will also call on Sally Hunt, on paragraph 5.8, to give the General Council's response to a question on Turkey from the NASUWT and UNISON. The NASUWT have also indicated that they want to speak and that will be allowed. Can we now start with Motion 75 and Unite.

Tom Murphy (*Unite*) moved Motion 75: Solidarity with all progressive forces and the Kurdish population of Turkey.

He said: Congress, last year, we passed an emergency motion condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the action of the Turkish government and expressing our solidarity with the Kurdish population and all progressive forces in Turkey. Sadly, since last year, the situation in the country has dramatically deteriorated. Further waves of mass arrests, detentions and dismissals of workers have taken place. More media outlets have been closed down and a brutal war on the Kurdish population has continued. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that we are witnessing Turkey (a NATO member state) descending into fascism. What is happening is utterly outrageous and must be stopped. That is why this motion calls for us to redouble our efforts to build solidarity with the Kurds and all progressive forces in Turkey and the wider region.

We demand that the Turkish state immediately ends the state of emergency, restores democratic and press freedoms and restarts the peace process with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the PKK. We demand that they immediately release all political prisoners, including all those HTP members of Parliament and local politicians, who

have been jailed for taking part in the opposition. Most crucially, we demand that they release the jailed Kurdish leader, Abdullah Ocalan. Ocalan and the PKK have shown themselves to be willing and serious partners in the peace process and both have made it clear that solutions can be found with the existing borders of Turkey. However, it is clear that these solutions will only be possible if basic human and democratic rights are guaranteed for everyone regardless of their ethnic background and their religion.

Congress, standing here, making demands and passing motions is not enough. It is absolutely vital that we do what we have done many times before. We have to draw on the great traditions of our Movement and build the real solidarity that is so vitally needed. We need all TUC affiliates to redouble their efforts and make our members and activists aware of what is going on. We need to build a mass solidarity movement, just as we have done with Cuba, South Africa, Colombia, Palestine and many others in the past.

What happens in Turkey and the wider region will have huge implications for all of us in Europe. That is why, as a first step, this motion calls on the TUC to organise a solidarity delegation to Turkey as soon as possible and insists that such a delegation must also visit the Kurdish areas. It is critical that we not only see first-hand what is going on, but we make clear the opposition of the British Labour Movement to it. Also, we must demonstrate to our Kurdish brothers and sisters that they are not alone and we will not allow them to be isolated and cut off.

Congress, this motion also calls on all affiliates to affiliate and fully support the work of the Peace in Kurdistan and Freedom for Ocalan campaigns. In less than two years,

Abdullah Ocalan will have been in prison for 20 years and he will be 70 years' old. He was taken illegally and has been held in inhumane conditions which contradict basic human rights standards, but this goes unnoticed and unaddressed in the West. It is crucial that we build awareness and build massive international pressure for his release because only with Ocalan at the table as a recognised leader of the Kurdish people will there ever be a proper and lasting peace in the country.

Congress, it is also vital to understand that Erdogan's obsession with war and the Kurds does not stop at the borders of Turkey. In Syria, where the Kurds have played an internationally-recognised and heroic role in fighting and driving back ISIS, where they have built real, inclusive, democratic structures and where they offer possibly the only real hope for peace, democracy and inclusivity for the region's future, Turkey has sent its army in. However, the Turkish army is not fighting ISIS; it is fighting the Kurds. It is an utter disgrace that a NATO member state is doing this and this is why we must maximise pressure on our Government and all international bodies to demand that they stop these barbaric actions and withdraw their army from Syria.

Congress, we know there are many demands on us with Brexit and the wider challenges we face, but we must not lose sight of the need to maintain and build our wider international solidarity efforts. Support Motion 75 and help build international solidarity with the Kurds and all progressive forces. Down with Turkish fascism and freedom for Ocalan! Thank you. *(Applause)*

Jo Pitchford (*GMB*) seconded Motion 75.

She said: I am a first-time speaker seconding Motion 75 on the Kurdish population in Turkey. (*Applause*)

On April 25th of last year, in the House of Commons, the Freedom for Ocalan campaign was launched by GMB and Unite, a campaign which has subsequently been endorsed by several unions represented here. It is only right and proper that UK trade unions are at the forefront of the campaign to free Ocalan because the British state bears a very heavy responsibility for its part in creating the divisions we see in the Middle East today and inciting conflict for its own strategic ends.

Over 100 years ago, in 1916, at the height of the First World War, the infamous Sykes-Picot Agreement was signed in secret between Britain and France. This only became public knowledge after the Russian Revolution when Lenin described it as “the agreement of the colonial thieves”. Sykes-Picot effectively carved up the old Ottoman Empire between the European victors of the Great War and divided Kurdistan into the countries that we know today as Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey. By far the largest number of Kurds lives in Turkey where over 15 million people constitute some 24% of the entire population. Despite the large numbers and the fact that the Kurds have lived in the area for thousands of years, they have been subject to the most appalling treatment at the hands of the Turkish security forces, as described by the mover of this motion.

Congress, in the hugely complex circumstances that surround the terrible violence in the Middle East, it is difficult to separate the fact from the fiction amidst the barrage of propaganda or the subjective reporting that comes from all sides. The temptation is

simply to switch off and focus on events at home. However, that is simply not an option. If we are to have any influence in helping to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict in Turkey and in the wider region then we must step up our support for the Kurdish people and their imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, because in them lies the hope for a more equitable and tolerant society. Please support this motion.
(Applause)

Kathy Wallis (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke in support of Motion 75.

She said: Whilst it is important to address the internal politics of Turkey and the deliberate attacks on the Kurdish communities, we must not overlook the issues affecting trade unionists, public sector workers, journalists and all those working to defend the rights of human workers and trade unions, social justice, democracy and the rights of children and young people to free, high-quality education. These fundamental rights are under attack in Turkey.

The NASUWT is proud to stand alongside our trade union sisters and brothers in Turkey who have seen these rights and values systematically attacked and violated. We are proud to have represented the TUC earlier this year at the KESK conference and to have conveyed the support and solidarity of our Movement. Teachers are being denied the right to organise freely in independent and democratic trade unions free from political interference. Unacceptable and unjustified attacks against our sisters and brothers in the Egitim-Sen have been justified under the cover of decree no. 686, a decree being used deliberately and systematically to intimidate and silence pro-democracy forces.

The NASUWT is outraged by these attacks on teachers and those who have devoted their lives to civil rights, democracy and building a fair and just society. It is outraged by actions that have led to many thousands of teachers being summarily dismissed, suspended or arbitrarily arrested and ordered to appear before court hearings, falsely accused as terrorists and of actions against the state, thus losing their right to work in their livelihoods. Despite these continued attacks, Egitim-Sen has remained steadfast and determined to continue the work to secure trade union rights and freedoms, just as they did when, in 2016, I had the privilege of presenting to them with the NASUWT International Solidarity Award at our national conference.

Congress, every day this is being made increasingly difficult and attacks on their leaders are forcing them to flee their country and seek refuge elsewhere. With support from NASUWT and the international trades union community, they are doing all they can to alleviate the hardships being suffered by their members. The NASUWT is demanding that the Turkish Government ceases these repressive actions against teachers and guarantees quality education for all, but the UK Government needs to act. Ignoring human rights abuses in Turkey and aligning our Government with the repressive Turkish Government purely because we need post-Brexit allies is not, and cannot ever be, the basis for the future of our economy. Congress, support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you. I now call on Sally Hunt.

Sally Hunt (*University and College Union*) responded to the request for an update on Turkey from the NASUWT and UNISON.

She said: Can I start by paying tribute to the many unions in this room who have shown practical solidarity to their sister unions in Turkey over the past year. We know it has meant a huge amount to all of them.

In that time, tens of thousands of trade union members and activists have been sacked or arrested on the trumped-up charge that they supported a coup which, in fact, the trades union Movement opposed. This includes academics, trade unionists, journalists, public servants and many others, all critical voices of the current regime. They cannot find other jobs at the very least and, at the very worst, they are being labelled terrorists because their Government is deliberately trashing their reputation. We, in the trades union Movement, are all suffering because of the loss of those members and those activists.

British unions and unions from around the world have sent observers to trials, attended conferences, visited prisoners and used supply chains to pressurise employers to help to tackle the persecution of workers in Turkey. Here, we have joined the global union movement boycott of the ILO regional meeting, which is due to be held this December in Ankara. As the General Council's report states, we took up the Turkish union's case at the ILO this summer. However, we need to continue and add to this work in the coming year.

The TUC, the ETUC and the ITUC have all condemned the way that President Erdogan has used the coup to muzzle his political opponents. He is undermining human rights, the freedom of association, the freedom to assemble and, in particular, the freedom of speech across Turkey. Meanwhile – here we go again – Liam Fox is planning a post-Brexit deal with this appalling regime. It is yet another shameful act from this totally amoral Government.

The TUC urges and encourages all unions to contribute to the global solidarity fund for the victims of the counter-coup and we need you here to engage with your sister unions and organisations in Turkey and with European and global industry federations. Congress, we simply cannot, and will not, stand idly by while our sisters and brothers are treated in this way. We will keep up and build the solidarity with Turkish workers and their unions and we will keep up the pressure on the Turkish Government in solidarity from all of us to them. On behalf of all of us, we stand with our Turkish sisters and brothers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Sally. I now put Motion 75 to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 75 was CARRIED*

Human rights in Qatar

The President: I now move to Motion 76: Human rights in Qatar. The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by the NUJ and supported by the CWU. UNISON also wish to speak.

Tim Dawson (*National Union of Journalists*) moved Motion 76.

He said: “Qatar is a slave state.” Those are not my words, but those of Sharan Burrow, the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

1.2 million workers are toiling in Qatar under what is known as the kafala system. Building workers, mostly from Nepal, Pakistan, India and the Philippines, can only enter the country if they are sponsored by Qatari nationals. As they enter the country, they surrender their passports, they surrender their rights to work for anybody else and they surrender their right to leave the country without their employer’s permission.

A great many workers live in makeshift hovels beside the building sites on which they work, slogging away in heat so intense and humid that simply crossing a road is a challenge. The shocking numbers who have died on the World Cup-related sites is well-known. Some estimates put it at close to 2,000 workers. It is little wonder then that the International Labour Organisation is considering a complaint about Qatar’s violation of the Forced Labour Convention 1930.

Let me be clear. Qatar’s medieval human rights record is not much different from that of its neighbours in the Gulf. You will find similarly shocking abuses in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. There is a difference, however, and that makes it worth our while giving some thought to Qatar at this moment.

For the past two decades, Qatar has been trying to make its presence felt beyond its own shores. That is why they have put so much effort (if that is the right word) into hosting the World Cup. That is why they established the Al Jazeera broadcasting network, which encourages pluralistic discussion-based programming, where divergent views are encouraged. As that outward strategy has been successful, Qatar's neighbours have started to feel threatened. That is why they have mounted a blockade on the country's ports and the extraordinary demand that the Al Jazeera network be closed down.

This motion asks that we add our voices to those who are seeking to use Qatar's crisis to encourage it to take bolder steps towards creating a fair, progressive society where all workers enjoy the rights that we consider to be a birthright, where trade unions are able to organise, and where free speech and freedom of expression are treated as foundational human rights. The NUJ has a particular interest because we have a collective agreement with Al Jazeera's London newsroom, alongside many members of BECTU. This is the only collective bargaining agreement which exists with Al Jazeera globally and it was a hard-fought one. We want the collective efforts and wins for our chapel members here in the UK to be replicated for journalists who work in Al Jazeera's newsrooms across the world.

In June, the NUJ took part in an international conference in Doha dedicated to defending freedom of expression. The concluding statement of that conference, organised by the Qatar National Human Rights Committee, resolved that respect for ILO conventions is vital to creating a society in which free speech can thrive. That

concession, accepted by a body which is part of the Qatari State, says to me that change is possible in that country. As trade unionists, internationalists and humanitarians, this is the moment to say to Qatar in the loudest possible voice, “When you respect the rights of the workers from around the world who toil in your country then workers of the world will stand by you when your existence is threatened by your neighbours.” Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Tony Kearns (*Communication Workers Union*) seconded Motion 76.

He said: As Tim laid out in moving this motion, the kafala system in operation in the Middle East, particularly in Qatar, is no more than a system of slavery and control. They treat people as a security issue and not as a labour issue. That is what the kafala system does. As Tim pointed out, you cannot change your job without permission, you cannot quit your job without permission and you cannot leave the country without permission. Workers are routinely exploited and are barely able to live on the wages they are given. They often live on construction sites or motorways and in terribly squalid conditions. This is a neglect of the very basic human rights that we take for granted. This is modern slavery and we think it has to stop. However, if that is not bad enough, they are now facing an added problem caused by the Saudi blockade. 90% of all Qatari food supplies come from Saudi Arabia. If you are a worker in the kafala system, with low wages and not able to buy food at this point in time, you can imagine what it is going to be like when the food supply is cut off as part of this blockade.

As Tim said, the political situation in the Middle East is complicated. We understand that the reason Saudi Arabia announced the blockade is because Al Jazeera television had the temerity to openly criticise the role of the Saudis in the war in Yemen. It exposed to the world what is going on in Yemen under the name of the Saudi Arabian Government and they did not like it. In a most extreme and ruthless measure, they wanted to dictate to another country what that country's news agency does.

We think, as a fundamental principle, it is wrong. If we are here to uphold anything, we are here to uphold the freedom of speech. As a Movement, when workers' rights are being exploited anywhere, we need to stand with them in solidarity. As a Movement, we cannot stand by and watch another humanitarian crisis unfold, which is what is likely to happen to the 1.2 million kafala workers as a result of the blockade. As a Movement, we stand by those who seek freedom of expression which is suppressed in a brutal way.

I will give you an example of one worker and how this blockade is going to tear families apart. Fawaz Bukumal, a media worker, is 35 years' old and has lived in Qatar for 34 years and 11 months. When he was a month old, he moved from Bahrain so he is a Bahraini citizen. He works for a sports news agency company. Two weeks ago, he was called in by his employer and told he was getting sacked so he had to go back to Bahrain, a country in which he has not lived since he was one month old. He is married with a child, but he was told to leave the country and go back to somewhere where he has no job and nowhere to live. This is what is happening in Qatar as a result of the Saudi blockade and it has to stop. That is why the NUJ is right to bring this motion and the CWU is proud to second it. *(Applause)*

Paul Glover (*UNISON*) spoke in support of Motion 76.

He said: Congress, more than 90% of the population of Qatar are migrant workers, subject to the kafala system you have heard about, which was supposedly abolished in 2015, but, as we know, it is still very much in place. Workers are tied to their employers, the employers have power to refuse them an exit visa and passports continue to be confiscated. The sponsorship system is used widely across the Middle East, including by Saudi Arabia, and it allows for the worst forms of abuse to take place.

Congress, Qatar has ratified five of the eight ILO core conventions, but not the right to join a trade union or the right to bargain collectively. This must change to protect all workers, including journalists at Al Jazeera. The ILO must factor this in when it decides in November whether it should send a Commission of Inquiry to Qatar. The right to join a union is a fundamental right and must be respected. It is only by respecting workers' rights to organise and bargain collectively can the worst forms of abuses be challenged. As Aidan McQuade, of Anti-Slavery International, said recently, "Unionised workforces cannot be enslaved." Through one of the global union federations, UNISON has been supporting workers inside Qatar through our international development fund. We recognise that workers are at the mercy of their employers and a brutal labour system so we must support them in whatever way we can. Solidarity is the key.

In relation to the current dispute, our own Government has a crucial role to play: (1) it can stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and (2) it can use its influence inside the UN Human Rights Council to help diffuse the current political crisis. We all want to see a peaceful resolution to the conflict and an end to the threats against Al Jazeera. We also want to see migrant workers enjoy the protection of the law and where domestic law fails them then it must be international law. Whether workers are employed by the state-owned media or by a private company, they all have the right to join an independent trade union to help them secure their fundamental rights. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you. I am now going to put Motion 76 to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 76 was CARRIED*

TUC Administration and Organisation

The President: Congress, I now turn to the General Council Report, Section 6, TUC Administration and Organisation, from page 76. I call paragraphs 6.1 to 6.6, 6.8 to 6.12, 6.14 to 6.19 and Motion 77: TUC review. The General Council supports the motion with an explanation. I will call on the Deputy General Secretary during the debate to explain the General Council's position. It is moved by GMB, seconded by CWU and UCU have indicated that they wish to speak. Can all the speakers please come to the front. Thank you.

TUC review

Tim Roache (*GMB*) moved Motion 77.

He said: Congress, there can be little doubt that we live in unpredictable times: Brexit, Trump, a weakened and clueless Tory Government propped up by the DUP and, yes, President, Huddersfield Town in contention for a Champions League slot!

The President: That is the end of your speaking time!

Tim Roache: Thank you very much. (*Laughter*) Change comes fast and it comes hard. Get it right and we can grasp the opportunities to shape the consequences for the benefit of our members and our Movement. If we are too slow to respond or rely too much on yesterday's conventional wisdom then we will miss the boat. There is one enduring experience of trade unions throughout the ages: nothing that truly matters to the Movement is gifted to us whether it was the end to child labour, the fight for an eight-hour working day, the weekend, paid holidays or key health and safety laws to protect people and save lives. There is health and safety as depicted by the *Daily Mail* and *The Sun*. However, talk to people from Grenfell about the importance of health and safety.

We have to be inspired by the past, but focused on the future. The challenge for all unions here, collectively as the TUC, is to make sure that we can overcome barriers and embrace the appetite for change. That is what this motion is about. I come to this debate as someone who has always been a firm advocate of the TUC. Indeed, as

GMB Regional Secretary in Yorkshire, I was proud to be the President of the Yorkshire and Humber TUC for a number of years. That is why I ask – and my executive asks me regularly – if we look in the mirror, are we the most effective that we can possibly be in educating, agitating and organising? We do a lot well, but does everything we do build and strengthen our Movement at the pace we need it to when so much is at stake?

The mood of the country has changed since the General Election. We can all feel it. We must embrace the new politics being forced and inspired by the real and relevant policies of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party, which now gives hope of something different. People are sick to death of the status quo. At the TUC, let us help to break it. There are more people willing to stand with us now to make real change a reality than I can remember in the last 20 years, but why is the People's Assembly leading on campaigns and demonstrations when it should be us, at the TUC, building on our relevance and adding our presence to all those people hungry for change?

The debate on a decent pay rise for all public sector workers is raging today and all public sector unions need to stand and fight together to have any chance of winning. That must be coordinated and led by the TUC. We have to make the world of work the top political issue in this country. The Labour manifesto was a magnificent step forward, but the new politics needs new trade unionism. Let us work together, as Corbyn said yesterday, to ensure a new deal for workers with a common bargaining agenda. Workplace reps are the foundation of our unions and effective training is critical to our union growth, yet trade union education funding has been cut and reps

are under enormous pressure. We must think afresh about how we can support unions in delivering the most effective trade union education that we can.

Our TUC regions and devolved nations are real assets to our Movement. They are close to the action in building trust and relationships. Can we push down some of the power to make this work increasingly more important to us? Brexit is going to affect different unions and regions in many different ways, especially if the Tories get their way, so how can we help unions respond to the economic upheaval and insecurity that many workers are experiencing?

The gig economy, the fourth industrial revolution and automation are not just topics for the “Too difficult” box. They are happening now and unless we shape a distinct trades union response, we will be on the receiving end and, more importantly, workers will be exposed and abused. Our Movement is rightly a broad church with diverse sectors, but what we have in common are the deep values that bind us together. Solidarity and collectivism cannot just be what we preach to the outside world; it must be the code by which we work together as sister unions.

It is time to review our internal protocols, strengthening the speed and, yes, the sanctions for those who wilfully flout them. There is no room in this Movement for those who wear the badge of solidarity only to discard it when a recognition deal with an employer is on the table, standing shoulder to shoulder only when bargaining past to close the deal. (*Applause*) Our self-regulation within the TUC leaves a lot to be desired. Yellow cards for repeat offenders are demonstrably ineffective. Sometimes a red card is required and we should not be shy or afraid of that.

Congress, what this motion is calling for is an honest root-and-branch look at what we do. It should not just be another review like 2013, 2014 or 2015. These are uncertain times and if we do not seize this opportunity, it will not just be Roache, O'Grady, McCluskey or Prentis who suffer; it will be those millions of workers who need us now. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Tony Kearns (*Communication Workers Union*) seconded Motion 77.

He said: The CWU came down here this week carrying some key messages. We were hoping that Congress would deliver a resolve to develop a common bargaining agenda, a resolve to come together to cause a demonstration where we could campaign for workers' rights and develop a new model of trade unionism, one that engages more with members, strengthens workplace activism and engages with the younger generation. We have unanimously agreed to do this with the motions we have carried this week. It is clearly time for change.

We live in a political environment that is rapidly changing. With Post-Brexit and this Government, we are facing a worrying future. The world of work is changing rapidly before our very eyes and yet we saw the power-grab by the Conservatives yesterday, which is something which should worry us all. That power will concede nothing to us without our demands.

The CWU believes that we are in for the fight of our lives. Yesterday, we had a Labour leader who stood here and gave the type of speech to workers' representatives

that I believe we have been waiting for and needing for years. I believe that if a previous Labour leader, when in power, had come here and given the same type of speech and received the same type of support, we would be living in a far different society than the one we are living in now. (*Applause*) This was the leader of a Labour Party which has seen unprecedented levels of membership increase while ours has declined.

We have heard this week of unions doing their own thing, with their own initiatives on how they are going to face the future. This motion, coming at the end of the week, gives us a fantastic opportunity. We need to answer this question, which is the one Frances posed at the beginning of the week in her marvellous contribution to this conference. She said, “We know what we have done for the last 150 years. It is now about making sure we are fit for the next 150 years.”

As a collective, sometimes we need to be honest with ourselves. We need to examine our own relationships with each other. Why is that? It is because future generations need us to do that. We are passionate about this Movement. We believe that we need to hand this Movement over in a better state than the one which we inherited. We need to all come together under Frances’s leadership. We need to look again and define our objectives. We need to look at our structures to ensure their relevance for the future. We need to ensure that the activities in which we engage match the aspirations and hopes of so many young people.

Jeremy Corbyn called for young people to join a trades union. The TUC has been tweeting long and hard that young workers need unions like never before, but unions

need young workers. Congress, the world is changing. The best anti-poverty movement we can think of is the trades union Movement. This is about having faith in ourselves. Let us have this review and build a collective for the 21st century and beyond. I second. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you. I call upon the Deputy General Secretary to give the explanation of the General Council.

Paul Novak (*Deputy General Secretary*) explained the General Council's attitude to Motion 77: TUC Review.

He said: The General Council's attitude to Motion 77 is to support with an explanation. There is always a value in reviewing the operation of any organisation, including the TUC. It is absolutely right for our unions to want to ensure that the TUC is as effective as possible, that the organisation makes best use of its resources and that we can work together effectively as a Movement. This is particularly vital at a time when our resources and our membership are under so much pressure.

However, in taking forward any such review, two key points should be borne in mind. First of all, it is important to recognise that over the course of the last five years, the TUC has undertaken a number of reviews – some organisation-wide and some focused on particular services or functions – to ensure that we are operating as effectively as we can. Those have been reported to the Congress in the General Council Report. In 2013, when Frances was elected General Secretary, we undertook a thorough organisational review and we refreshed that again in 2016.

In 2014, 2016 and 2017, we established an executive working group to review the TUC's affiliation formula. In 2015, we ran a consultation exercise with the unions, which resulted in a revision of our disputes principles and procedures which govern inter-union relationships, an important point. In 2015/16, we established an executive work group to develop a strategy for delivering trades union education into the future and restructured our education service late last year to be able to deliver both classroom and additional online learning so that we can reach out to that next generation of union reps. Finally, Congress, in 2016, after extended discussions between the TUC and STUC, we reached a five-year agreement on an effective transfer of resources from the TUC to the STUC.

We did all of that work not for the sake of it, but precisely because we wanted to make sure that we could campaign as effectively as we could on public sector pay, on Brexit and getting a decent deal for working people, on great jobs and on the work that we talked about this week on reaching out to young people. It is important that any review we undertake builds on this previous work and takes us forward. The second point is making sure that any review we do properly engages with all of our unions and does not detract our attention from the very real and pressing issues facing unions in the TUC, which Tim and Tony have so clearly articulated.

Congress, please pass Motion 77. Let us make sure we look ahead to our 150th anniversary with confidence and let us get on with that job of changing the world of work for good. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, Paul. Can we have UCU?

Vicky Knight (*University and College Union*) supported Motion 77.

She said: We thank the GMB for bringing Motion 77 to Congress, but we are seeking some safeguards within this process in relation to trades union education in particular.

At UCU, we are really proud that it is our members who deliver trades union studies from TU-Ed centres around the UK. We know that TU-Ed is facing challenges, but I am here to tell Congress that we are very much alive and kicking with our classroom provisions. However, it will take affiliates to come and use our services to make sure that we are alive and well and fighting fit.

As Paul, Tony and Tim have already said, we need to use trades union studies in the classroom, online, blended, eNotes, and all the services that are provided. We need to be here in the century to come because we are indeed facing the fight of our lives. There has been a lot of talk about employers not releasing employees to come into the classroom for learning face-to-face to develop their political, analytical and collegiate response to what they are doing to us. However, funding cuts have really hit hard in recent years and while time off is available, employers do not offer it if they are not keen to support our message. Currently, not many employers are, but the lack of release should not mean that we change what we do. Quite rightly, the TUC have diversified, but all cuts require an industrial response, demanding our trade union rights.

Therefore, we must demand the right to time off and the right to education and training. We must be able to deliver that flexibly, dynamically and personally, as and where it is required. Obviously, I am going to say everywhere as I am a trades union studies lecturer. The review of the TUC must ensure that those representing workers and those working in the classroom are fully consulted and that TU-Ed is given the ongoing support and investment that it needs. Support the motion and please take cognisance of those concerns which we have raised. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Vicky. I am now going to put Motion 77 to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 77 was CARRIED*

Support for affiliates involved in trade disputes

The President: I now move to Motion 78: Support for affiliates involved in trade disputes. The General Council supports the motion with an explanation. I will call upon the General Secretary during the debate to explain the General Council's position. It is moved by the RMT and formally seconded by PCS.

Mick Cash (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) moved Motion 78.

He said: Congress, last year I was at this rostrum moving a resolution to oppose driver-only operation on our railways. On that day, we were joined by our Southern guard members from Brighton, who were on strike against driver-only trains. Those of you who were here last year will remember that they sat up there (*indicating*) with the T-shirts. They were on strike to defend our safety and, on that occasion, we stood and applauded them.

Exactly a year on, those same workers are still on strike. They have been taking industrial action for 18 months now and this is the longest-running dispute in our union's history. I want to pay tribute to those men and women who have not given up despite all that has been thrown at them by the Government and their employers. (*Applause*) They are as determined as ever to defend safety and accessibility on our railways and they are not alone. They have been joined by workers on Merseyrail, Northern Rail, Greater Anglia and soon we will be balloting our members on South Western Railways.

Congress, we do not want these disputes. We need to make it clear that this is a Government-orchestrated attack on rail unions and on our Movement. These disputes will go on for as long as it takes because there can be no compromise on safety or accessibility and indeed no compromise on security of our railways. This dispute has had many twists and turns. There have been some highs and there have been some lows. One of those lows occurred in January when a deal was announced by the TUC, on the steps of Congress House, covering our members and driver-only operation. It was a deal to which we were not a party and over which we had no say. This caused anger and frustration and there were many things said at the time,

particularly on social media. This issue had become divisive at a time when we needed unity.

This led to this matter being discussed at my union's annual conference this year where a number of options were debated. This resolution is as a result of that debate. Our annual conference wanted to put on record our concerns, but also to put in place steps which mean that we can learn from this experience. It should not be about blame or what he said or she said. It should be about how we can now, and in the future, maintain unity and solidarity when disputes occur. *(Applause)*

Congress, we need unity more than ever before. I am going to make a plea today that we have this debate and we move this resolution. However, what we need is unity. Let us unite to take on this failing, right-wing, anti-worker Tory Government. Let us unite to win our disputes. Let us keep the safety-critical guard on our trains. Finally, let us unite to nationalise our railways. I move. *(Cheers and applause)*

The President: PCS will formally second. Thank you. I now call ASLEF.

(Speaker not identified) (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen) supported Motion 78.

He said: I am rising to support the motion before you. *(Cheers)* We are, as a Movement, continually under attack. Part of the problem is the way the laws are used to divide us. We have been in litigation for 18 months while a company, backed by the Government, has chosen to try to divide and conquer. That course then drives the

strategies and the tactics that we have to apply. We are independent trade unions under the auspices of a Movement which wants us to work together, to strive together and to move in the same direction, but sometimes, because of where we are, we need a couple of degrees of separation.

That separation came about when we were in court and they tried to claim that we were taking secondary action and had no right to be involved in a dispute directly impacting on our members and their agreements. When they could not win that battle, one of the arguments they threw at us was that it was not a trade dispute but a political one as the RMT and ASLEF have openly said they do not like the Conservative Government and they want to bring it down. If we thought we could bring it down by just winning on Southern, we would have done it a long time ago.

Quite simply, it is right that we look at what we do. We openly asked for the assistance of the TUC to be independent arbiters because of the difficulties we were having with a Government-led strike. We wanted them to hold the management to account, to see what we were going through, to see what the Government was allowing them to do and was willing to fund upon their behalf, and to help us through a period of strife. I believe that either now or tomorrow, the TUC would look at the needs of all its affiliates and where it can be mutually assisted or where it cannot happen because of litigation or other needs. There are tactics that have to be applied.

I urge you to support the motion and I want to thank the TUC for the assistance they gave ASLEF and all my members last year. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: I now call on the General Secretary to explain the General Council's explanation.

Frances O'Grady (*General Secretary*) explained the General Council's position on Motion 78.

She said: The RMT's motion seeks appropriate rule changes to clarify the role of the TUC when a union engaged in an industrial dispute seeks assistance from the TUC when another union is engaged in a similar trade dispute at the same time with the same employer. The motion also seeks to establish a process for the TUC to engage with the other affiliate.

How we conduct ourselves during industrial disputes is something that matters to every union here today and, of course, to the TUC. Helpfully, the motion does not seek to prescribe how any future rule change should be worded and it suggests that an alternative approach may be for the General Council to consider a policy statement or a motion to Congress. Sensibly, the motion also proposes that the TUC consult with affiliates on any proposed rule change or policy statement.

The General Council supports the motion, but with the following explanation. When considering whether to introduce any future rule change or policy statement, the General Council will want to ensure that it does not cut across or undermine the sovereign rights of affiliated unions to pursue or seek to resolve their own trade disputes as they see fit. Each union has its own rule book under which the union is democratically accountable to its own members so, of course, no one union can

impose its terms of the form that that solidarity should take on sister unions unilaterally.

Solidarity – and believe you me, I am clear about this – is fundamental not just to our values but to our everyday practice as a trades union Movement. It is who we are and it is what we do. However, it is important to remember that by its very definition, solidarity is a collective endeavour. This is also important when considering the TUC’s role. So, please support the motion, but be mindful of the issues that it raises. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, Frances. I now move Motion 78 to the vote. Will those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 78 was CARRIED*

Accessibility of venue for the TUC Disabled Workers Conference

The President: I now move to Motion 79: Accessibility of venue for the TUC Disabled Workers Conference. The General Council supports the motion with an explanation and I will call on the Deputy General Secretary during the debate to explain the General Council’s position. The motion is moved by Sean McGovern on behalf of the TUC Disabled Workers Conference and it is seconded by the NEU. I am then going to call upon PCS to speak. Thank you.

Sean McGovern (*Unite*) moved Motion 79 on behalf of the TUC Disabled Workers Conference.

He said: Congress, the TUC's Bloomsbury headquarters, Congress House, is an iconic building designed by David du Roi Aberdeen in 1948, which was officially opened in 1958. By 1988, Congress House was granted a Grade II listing. Such a listing is indicative of the special architectural and historic values embodied within the building and its exterior. However, alongside this honour, there are constraints as the listing serves to make every effort to preserve the antiquity of the building.

The annual TUC Disabled Workers Conference attracts over 200 disabled delegates along with support workers, observers and the media. Many of those attending use wheelchairs and other aids and appliances. A number attend with support dogs. This makes for a very crowded conference space which is very difficult to navigate. There is also an issue over heating of the space which exacerbates discomfort amongst conference goers. At break times, the space outside the conference chamber becomes uncomfortably crowded. Wheelchair users, the visually impaired and people with mobility impairments find it almost impossible to move around freely.

There is then the critical issue of transporting delegates vertically. The lift system in Congress House was not designed for mass vertical transportation and it was definitely not designed to accommodate quite a small manual wheelchair. Indeed, it is often necessary for wheelchair users to partly disassemble electric wheelchairs in order to actually fit into a lift. Can you imagine the logistical difficulties of trying to move scores of disabled people around the conference space or fringe meetings or

simply to leave the building for some of Bloomsbury's fresh air? Consider the problems presented to the conference organisers, who would have to move in excess of 100 people who cannot use lifts to safety in the event of an emergency. It also hinders the participation of delegates in the full conference agenda, whether it is on the conference floor, organising and discussing with other delegates around the conference or taking part in the fringes. These are all part of the democratic process.

Congress, disabled trade unionists therefore ask you to agree to instruct the General Council to organise the improvement of Congress House to fully accessible standards. We also ask that the TUC Disabled Workers Conference is held at an alternative venue until Congress House is brought up to fully accessible standards. Congress, I move. Please support this motion and solidarity. (*Applause*)

Mandy Hudson (*National Education Union*) seconded Motion 79.

She said: I think Sean has outlined the basic difficulties with the building and why this is coming to Congress. What I want to be able to convey to you is the strength of feeling from disabled workers and from the Disabled Workers Committee over many years as we have grappled with the building, as we have travelled in listed lifts and the difficulty we have had in moving things forward. We have requested on many occasions that the Disabled Workers Conference is moved elsewhere and yet we feel that we have not been listened to.

The President has just indicated that there will be an explanation from the General Council as they support this. I heard that as a reservation in terms of the listed

building status of Congress House. One of my delegation reminded me of the quote that the President used in her address, namely, we are building a Movement, not a monument. I think it is a great pity that, at the moment, disabled workers are blocked by the monument which is Congress House in terms of our access and in terms of our organising at our conference. *(Applause)*

I am personally very disappointed that we have had to bring this motion to this Congress at a time when our people are literally dying from the way we are facing social care cuts and the changes to ESA and work-capability PIP. The UNCRPD has noted that it is a human catastrophe. I would much prefer to be talking about that and getting the backing of the affiliate unions of the TUC, but instead we have to bring this in-house motion. I will be very unhappy if the explanation or the reservation of the General Council comes to, “Well, it is a listed building and you cannot go anywhere else” because we have heard that too often. I would encourage you to by all means listen to the reservation or explanation of the General Council, but to use your influence as unions to make sure that all workers get proper access to the benefit of the conference rather than being blocked in this way.

Another suggestion from the National Education Union was that at the next Congress, since it is the 150th anniversary, let us have 150 disabled workers in the room, let us have 150 black workers in the room and let us have 150 LGBT+ workers in the room. Let us really demonstrate the fact that we are for equality. We fight for it every single day in our workplaces. We should not have to fight for it here. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

Mark Leopard (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Motion 79.

He said: I will admit that it is miles outside of my comfort zone coming and speaking at something like this, but this is such an important issue for me. (*Applause*) I was supported by PCS, my union, to ensure I was able to get here to speak here today. Obviously, Congress opened on Sunday and you all turned up. At some point, it was decided that the TUC Congress was too large for Congress House and the decision was made to move to Brighton or various other venues. You turn up to somewhere with tables, chairs, air-conditioning, offices, screens, good lifts and lots of support. If you had attended the Disabled Workers Conference in May, you would have seen wheelchair users queuing up for the lifts, problems with the temperature and lighting in meeting rooms and the issues that Mandy and Sean mentioned about overcrowding in the breakout areas.

The Disabled Workers Committee, as Mandy said, has been pushing for change of location for a long time. On receipt of the accessibility audit at the Committee meeting earlier in the year, it was unanimous that we had to put in an emergency motion to the Disabled Workers Conference and the members voted for that motion to come here.

Just to end with, the motion is now very clear. I am sure the explanation being given will be, as Mandy said, about the listed status and the difficulties with making the adjustments, but the motion covers that. It says to take time to get the adjustments made, but during that time hold the Conference elsewhere so that as many disabled

representatives can take part in a really important meeting. Please support.

(Applause)

The President: Thank you very much and thank you for speaking. It was great to hear what you had to say. *(Applause)* Now I would like to ask the Deputy General Secretary to give the General Council's explanation.

Paul Novak (*Deputy General Secretary*) gave the General Council's explanation on Motion 79.

He said: I am explaining the General Council's attitude to Motion 79, which is to support with an explanation and, I stress, not a reservation. The motion passed at the Disabled Workers Conference is based on longstanding and real concerns from the Disabled Workers Committee, which have been highlighted already in the debate. It calls on the General Council to ensure that Congress House meets fully-accessible standards.

It is worth saying that Congress House is currently compliant with legal requirements and is an accessible venue, hosting many events attended by disabled delegates on a regular basis. However, it is also equally true that restrictions imposed by the building's age and its listed building status mean that it is not at the level that would be required of a newly-built venue. While we are constantly trying to make improvements to accessibility, we are unable to address issues such as lift size with the resulting problems that have already been described.

The motion calls on the TUC to find an alternative venue for the Disabled Workers Conference until Congress House is brought up to standard and, if passed today at Congress, that is what will happen. Relocating the Conference will clearly have resource implications and they will need to be fully assessed. As well as venue hire, these could include increased staff and accommodation costs. In addition – and probably more importantly – it may be harder to respond to last-minute demands, both before and during the Conference, with the flexibility that being in Congress House provides in terms of resources and availability of staff. We know that those additional costs of relocating the Conference would need to be met from our existing resources.

Congress, it is important to stress that any decision to relocate the Disabled Workers Conference is based on the very real and specific issues raised by the Committee and the Conference concerning providing acceptable accessibility for a large number of disabled delegates at one time and it should not be taken as a precedent for relocating any of our other statutory conferences.

Just to conclude, given the issues I have outlined, the General Council has agreed that it would be valuable if the President convenes a meeting with the General Council's leader of disabled workers. If this motion is passed, we have to think about how we implement it and how we identify, for example, suitable alternative venues. We must then bring proposals back to the Executive Committee to make sure we implement Motion 79. *(Applause)*

The President: There has been no one opposing. The General Council supports with an explanation. Can we now put Motion 79 to the vote? Will all those in favour,

please show? Will all those against, please show? Thank you very much. It is unanimously carried.

* *Motion 79 was CARRIED*

Brexit

The President: Congress, we now turn to Section 2 of the General Council Report, Brexit, from page 30. I call Composite Motion 6: Influencing the Brexit deal. The position of the General Council is to seek remission. I understand that TSSA is prepared to remit.

Influencing the Brexit deal

Manuel Cortes (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) moved Composite Motion 6.

He said: I want to start off by thanking UNISON and the Royal College of Midwives for the amendments they made to our original motion, which have really strengthened what you have in front of you. I think there are two particular things which come out very strongly in our motion. The first is that we have said that at the end of the Brexit negotiations, the choice is between having chlorinated chicken in our shops (having a trade deal that resembles TTIP on steroids) or giving up the jewel in the crown, our NHS, to privatisation and to private companies running it. If that is the choice on the table, we are saying that staying in the EU must be one of the options that should be considered because all options should be on the table.

Some people are arguing that that is anti-democratic. I will tell you what is anti-democratic. It is to say that people cannot change their minds. If people had not changed their minds, we would still have the death penalty. If people had not changed their minds, we would not have the gay rights that people now enjoy. If people had not changed their minds, kids would still be going up chimneys to sweep them. The reality is that people change their minds and we, as a Movement, have a proud record of fighting for what we believe in and making people change their minds. It is total nonsense and completely undemocratic to say that a snapshot of public opinion – and that is what every election is – has to be written on tablets of stone and can never be changed.

I am urging everyone to keep an open mind on this. Some people have argued, rightly so, that maybe we need to stay in the single market. It is not very often that a comrade from the RMT and I agree, but when Eddie Dempsey stood on this platform and argued that if you stay in the single market you are almost, by default, staying in the EU, I agree with that analysis. However, I have got a different opinion on what we should do because if you stay in the single market and you are not part of the European Union, somebody else will be making the rules and you will have to go along with them. Who voted for that? Absolutely nobody! If the alternative is a deal that secures single market access for ever, why would you give up your seat at the negotiating table?

The other issue is about free movement. We have a powerful but simple slogan: “End workers’ exploitation, not free movement.” Yesterday, we had Jeremy Corbyn on this

platform and the day he becomes our Prime Minister is not a day too soon. He was right when he said that Labour will tackle all the issues that have left so many of our people behind. He was right to say that a Labour government will introduce a real living wage of at least £10.00 an hour to end the scourge of low pay. He was right to say that a Labour government will bin bogus self-employment. He was right to say that a Labour government will ensure that there is a union in every workplace by introducing essential collective bargaining. He was right to say that, in future, we will have a powerful Ministry for Labour so that every aspect of policy in the interests of working people is considered when legislation is being put forward in Parliament.

That is the way to end workers' exploitation. It is not by immigration controls. That is not the way forward. By having people come to this country with visas, it gives the employer the upper hand. If you are dependent on a work contract to be able to stay in this country, what power have you got to stand up to the bosses? All they have to do is dismiss you and you get kicked out. Who is going to join a trade union to stand up for the rights of people facing possible deportation? It is delusional to suggest that decreasing immigration is going to improve wages and terms and conditions. The opposite is the case and if you do not believe me, look across the pond. Look at the United States. You have got illegality by design. The United States could not function without millions of so-called illegals.

It is the job of bosses and the Tories to divide us. Our job is to unite people irrespective of their nationalities. Our job, like Karl Marx rightly said, is to get workers of all lands to unite. (*Applause*)

The President: Congress, after that impassioned speech, can I just say for the record that Composite Motion 6 is remitted.

* *Composite Motion 6 was REMITTED*

STPs

The President: I now move to Motion 59: STPs. The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by the HCSA and seconded by BOS.

Eddie Saville (*Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) moved Motion 59.

He said: Congress, yesterday you heard a little bit about STPs in Composite Motion 14: Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships. Across England, these 44 footprints have been plotting the future of our NHS. Policymakers say that they will lead to greater efficiency and better care. Hospital doctors fear precisely the opposite.

Across the medical workforce, you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who would oppose the sentiments and the stated aims of STPs. Better integration of care is vital to ease pressure on hospitals and meet the demographic challenges. Collaboration between local authorities and NHS bodies makes sense, but hospital doctors' concerns are two-fold. First, there is the cloak-and-dagger secrecy concerning the process. 95% of hospital doctors who took part in HCSA's research over the summer felt that STPs were not transparent and open. Nearly 95% of them said that they had neither

been consulted nor had sufficient involvement in the plans. Congress, whatever the claims, this is neither a bottom-up process and nor is it one that is clinically-driven.

Large sections of the NHS workforce, whose main priority is patient care, including hospital doctors, have been shut out entirely. It is no surprise, Congress, that they fear the worst. Nearly two-thirds of our members are concerned that the STPs will have a negative impact on care. They are concerned that against a backdrop of budgets already strained to the limit this kind of radical programme cannot be beneficial. It simply does not compute. Instead of focusing on better care, STPs appear to be focusing on squeezing services out of inefficient and insufficient budgets. As a result, our members fear underfunding, understaffing, hospital and bed closures and further service rationing.

If this Government is serious about delivering better patient care rather than simply better budget cuts, they will need to put their money where their mouth is. First, we need real and meaningful clinical involvement to inject a medical perspective on delivering the great care that we want. Congress, if that means more cash then the money has to be found. Second, this process cannot be rushed. We predict that at the current breakneck speed, there is a high chance of failure. We need a timetable which recognises the complexity of the task and proper trials to stress-test the process. Congress, warm words are not enough. We need real, crystal-clear evidence that STPs will deliver positive benefits to patients.

Take these steps and there is still an opportunity to deliver a new era of healthcare. Ignore us and we believe that STPs will be yet another wasteful, failed reorganisation

where patients, the taxpayer and hardworking, loyal NHS staff will end up paying the price. Congress, this is a very important motion. Please support it. I move.
(Applause)

Lesley-Anne Baxter (*British Orthoptic Society Trade Union*) seconded Motion 59.

She said: We have heard this week that EU workers face an uncertain future and are being used as bargaining chips in the Brexit negotiations. This is also occurring in the NHS and so the STPs need to recognise the importance of all staff – clinical and non-clinical – within the NHS.

The governance surrounding both the delivery of services and the sustainability of a healthcare workforce to provide and maintain a free-at-the-point-of-need NHS appears to be lacking in the STP plans. Orthoptists provide a clinical workforce in eye-care in the NHS. As a small profession, we are commissioned nationally for undergraduate places in two English universities and in one Scottish university. These provide a graduate workforce for the whole of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. This also includes orthoptic workforces in the Channel Islands, Gibraltar, the Isle of Man and further afield. We have a national commissioning service.

The STP plans appear to concentrate on local needs, but workforce planning occurs at different levels over which the STP has no control. For example, at STP level, the organisation may well identify the number of orthoptists and other clinical staff required to meet the needs of the local population in terms of care. They will not directly commission the universities to train for those needs. We support the call for

NHS England to release the plans for commissioning and training across England and also to recognise that similar arrangements need to be made within the devolved countries and the Republic of Ireland to ensure that workforce planning is transparent.

We agree with this motion. The morale within the NHS is at its lowest, with a decrease in real-term pay, staff shortages, mergers, and privatisation of services, which is occurring quite regularly. We need the STPs to recognise that clinicians are a mobile workforce, frequently working across borders, and need to be commissioned appropriately. The STPs will need to recognise a more strategic view of workforce planning. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: I will now put the motion to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 59 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, we now come to the last motion. It is Emergency Motion 3: Academies in crisis. It is moved by the National Education Union and seconded by the GMB. The NASUWT have indicated that they wish to speak.

Academies in crisis

Sally Kincaid (*National Education Union*) moved Emergency Motion 3.

She said: I really do feel that I am keeping you in detention so I am sorry about that! Thank you, Congress and President, for allowing us to bring this emergency motion to the floor.

Last week, many of you will have seen pictures of your friends' children or even your own children or grandchildren standing outside with their new school uniforms on, waiting to go to their new schools or to go on to the next year. If they were small people, they were probably very nervous but very excited. If they were larger people, they were probably quite bored and thinking, "Let us get this photograph over with."

Last Friday, before we had even got to lunchtime of the first week of the first term back in the new academic year, 21 schools in the North discovered that the multi-academy trust, which was supposed to be supporting and looking after them – their equivalent of a local authority – had walked away. This is 21 schools. Wakefield City was the name of the trust, but the schools are in Doncaster, Sheffield, Rotherham, Goole, Bradford and Wakefield, where I work. That is 15 primary schools and six secondary schools. Now, 10,000 pupils do not know who is looking after their schools in the future. The staff who work in those schools (including myself) do not know who they are going to be employed by in the next few months.

What has caused this? Is it a blip? I will tell you what has caused it. It is the forced academisation programme. Schools which were struggling because of poverty and deprivation were forced to join multi-academy trusts. Massive school cuts have been coming through across the sector, particularly hitting academies for various reasons. Finally, there was absolutely no financial accountability. If you Google "Wakefield

City Academies Trust” – and I am sure all of you will – you will discover some of the horror stories. A primary school in an ex-mining village ran out of paper in March 2017. There was no paper for the children to write on and no paper on which the worksheets could be photocopied. At the same time, the CEO’s high-tech company made over £260,000 from the schools because they were hiring out computers and software.

After the announcement on Friday, the DfE said: “Academy trusts operate under a strict system of oversight and accountability, more robust than council-run schools, allowing us to take swift action to deal with underperforming.” I am not allowed to swear, but this is absolute rubbish. Put your own swear words in! We have known for years that schools within this Trust were struggling. Again, you can Google it. They talk about rebrokering the schools in the Trust, but who will benefit? Even before this disaster, £190 million has been spent on academy conversions and rebrokering over the last few years.

Our children, our pupils, our parents and our carers deserve better than this uncertainty and chaos. The staff working in schools need job security. 52% of teachers leave teaching within ten years. This means that many of the children have been in school longer than their own teachers. As for Justine Greening, her response in Parliament to this on Monday was nothing short of shameful. If I was her teacher, I would definitely put her in detention or exclude her for a very long time! (*Laughter*)

The academy programme is deregulation and privatisation. I fear that Wakefield City Academies Trust is the Northern Rock of the education system. In February, we had

60 orphan schools. These are schools that nobody wants because their Ofsted is not so good or they have financial problems so no multi-academy trust wants to take them over. They are left in limbo – orphan schools. I do not like to say, “I told you so”, but I did. It makes me sad and it makes me angry. We have to say, “Enough is enough.” We want our schools back in local democratic control. Return them to the LA. (*Applause*) There is a petition online. This is the start of the end of their privatisation programme. (*Applause*)

Alison Morrell (GMB) seconded Emergency Motion 3.

She said: I am a first-time delegate and honoured to be speaking on behalf of the GMB seconding this emergency motion. (*Applause*)

The GMB represents over 150 support staff across 21 of these schools within the Wakefield City Academies Trust in some of the most deprived areas of Yorkshire. I have had to work on eight of these schools to TUPE them out of the authority. We knew it was wrong then, but we definitely know it is wrong now. To say we could see the trouble coming is the understatement of the year. We have been raising serious concerns over recent months about the Trust’s leadership, management ability (or lack of), its financial viability and its failure to engage with the unions representing the staff.

Wakefield City Academies Trust is a classic example of what can go wrong when democratic accountability is replaced with sponsorship or “pupils for profit”. Salary payments to management teams spiralled upwards as investment in the schools

dropped away. The CEO, Mike Ramsey, procured an IT system for the schools from a tech company owned by his daughter. It cost just under £300,000 in the year up to August 2016 and more money has been spent on it since. This is a CEO who earned £25,000 a month in salary. On top of this, he earned an extra £46,000 for being the executive adviser to the Trust. A contract for the administration support services, again awarded to said CEO's daughter, was worth £123,000.

In 2016, there was an investigation and there was found to be a lack of transparency with 16 rules being broken. Recommendations were made, but they were obviously not followed up. We found through different unions that there has been a culture of bullying, harassment, failure to apply agreed policies and a consequential increase in staff sickness and absence, including a rise in mental health illness. GMB support staff and teaching unions have been ringing the alarm bells for some time, but here we are, along with the pupils and their families, left to pick up the pieces.

Congress, this Trust is not the first one to fail and it will not be the last. Justine Greening said that it is important to take swift action and to have the schools rebrokered into a new trust. Why rebroker now? They should have been rebrokered in 2016 – not that that is what we want. We are saying it is not good enough. These schools must come back into local democratic control now or these disasters will keep on coming. Our children and their futures deserve better. Let us hope this is the beginning of the end. I second. *(Applause)*

Robert Barratt (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) supported Emergency Motion 3.

He said: This emergency motion states that Congress is shocked by the decision of the Wakefield City Academies Trust, announced last week, to abandon its schools, but we are not nearly as shocked and worried as the students and staff in those schools. The future life opportunities of the children and young people in Wakefield City Academies Trust schools depend on their education, as do the livelihoods of the teachers and support staff, together with the living standards of their families.

It give us no comfort to report to Congress that this Academies Trust was chosen by the Conservative Government only two years ago to spearhead a further wave of academisation in the north of England against recalcitrant local authorities and local communities that wished to keep schools within local democratic control. Moreover, it gives the NASUWT no comfort to report that the Department for Education now states that the failure of leadership of this Academies Trust has led to these schools being deemed to be under-performing. Furthermore, it gives the NASUWT no comfort to remind the Government that this union warned that the reckless programme of mass academisation, which was motivated by nothing less than an ideological hatred of local authorities, would result in huge profiteering and monumental failures. We have heard of some of the figures, but it does not end there. I urge you to look at some of the financial actions that have been taking place in that Trust. There are horror stories greater than Stephen King could write!

This is the latest example of how the Tory Government has played Russian roulette with the lives and futures of our children and young people. Congress, in the last few months, there have been too many examples of the failure of the Government's academisation programme, which has wrought chaos and confusion on teachers,

pupils and parents. We call upon the Government to commit to an urgent, independent inquiry into what happened at this Trust. The sponsors of this and other failed academy trusts cannot be permitted to simply hand schools back to the Government and walk away, having wasted millions of pounds of taxpayers' money. It is crucially important that lessons are learned and those responsible are held to account.

Congress, we cannot allow profiteering and greed to put at risk children's education. Children have only one chance of an education. Those who seek to take risks with children's futures must be held to account. I urge you to support the motion.
(Applause)

The President: Thank you. I now put Emergency Motion 3 to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Emergency Motion 3 was CARRIED*

The President: That ends the motions for Congress.

Any Unfinished Business

Closing of Congress

The President: Congress, could I now draw your attention to Appendix 3 from page 94 of the General Council's Report, which is the TUC Accounts. The auditor is present on the platform. Does Congress accept the accounts as set out in the Appendix? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I call Appendices 1, 2, 4 and 5. That completes the formal business of Congress. I now ask Congress to adopt the General Council's Report. Is that agreed *(Agreed)*

Congress, I now wish to make a number of votes of thanks to those who have contributed to the smooth running of Congress. They will be brief because of the time, but they are sincere and heartfelt. I would like to start by thanking Liz for her role as Vice-President and for keeping her finger on that button. I would also like to thank Taj for doing exactly the same thing for the first half of Congress. As delegates know, keeping your finger on the buzzer is vital if you are going to chair Congress so thank you. *(Applause)* I would also like to move a vote of thanks to the staff at the Brighton Centre for all they have done to ensure that the Congress has run smoothly and to their stewards for their assistance during the week. *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank the verbatim reporters, the tellers, the scrutineers, the stage crew, QED, and the musicians, who have worked so hard throughout the week. I am sure these votes are also agreed. *(Applause)* This is not written down, but I would also like to thank the TUC staff. There is a lot on your shoulders when you are a President chairing Congress and I have been immensely helped, guided and supported by the TUC staff. They work immensely hard throughout Congress – Paul, Frances, Kevin and all the staff – to make sure they run effectively and efficiently. I am sure you would like to thank them too. *(Applause)*

General Council Retirements

The President: Congress, it is now time to say farewell to colleagues leaving the General Council. Retiring from the General Council is Mohammed Taj, who has served on it for 17 years and has represented Unite on the Executive. Taj, you have already been presented with a Gold Badge of Congress, but I invite you briefly to address Congress. *(Applause)*

Mohammed Taj *(Unite)* addressed Congress.

He said: Sisters, brothers and comrades. Seeing that I was the timing man for the President for the first two-and-a-half days, I had better be careful that I finish my speech on green!

What can I say? The only thing I have to say is that Theresa May's Cabinet is full of leaks. Frances has no leaks whatsoever in our Cabinet. No one warned me that I might be called upon to make a contribution otherwise I would have had the chance, like you did, to prepare a speech. I have not turned up here with ten pages.

It has been a long journey and I feel very privileged. I was someone who came as a migrant worker at the age of 14-and-a-half in 1966. I could not speak a word of English, but eventually ended up serving on the General Council for 17 years. I was President of the TUC and I was still a bus driver while I was doing it. *(Applause)*

I want to thank the TUC staff and my own union for all the support they have given me over the years. I also want to thank my own branch members for all the support they gave me. My company was really generous and gave me 12 months off with full pay to concentrate on this. We need good employers like that, who can help and assist us to do the job better. Most importantly, I genuinely want to thank all of you that I have come across in the trades union Movement over the last 40 years. You have helped, guided and supported me. The first time was when I was put forward as a shop steward and I said to them, “I do not really think I can do the job of a shop steward because my English is not that good.” That was 42 years ago, but my English has improved over that time so I want to thank all my teachers.

Mary, thank you very much. Liz, and particularly Frances, you have been tremendous. Two women have been running the TUC and I suspect there will be two running it next year as well. I wish you well. I will be there on the sidelines watching what you guys are up to so put up the fight. Finally, there is no retirement when you are fighting fascists and racists. (*Applause*) I saw racism back in the 1960s and 1970s. A delegate said to me today, “You know it has not gone; it has always been there.” I can tell you that, from my experience, it is getting worse. Thank you for the support and I hope the trades union Movement will continue to support migrant workers and black workers for many years to come. Thank you so much. (*Applause*)

The President: Also retiring from the General Council is Brian Cookson from the NASUWT. Brian has served on the General Council since 2010. Brian, I would like you to come up to the stage. I have great pleasure in presenting you with the Gold Badge of Congress. (*Applause*)

(Gold Badge of Congress was presented to Brian Cookson)

Brian Cookson (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) addressed Congress.

He said: President, Congress, brothers and sisters. Thank you for the medal and thank you for the agreed reference!

I stand here as a committed and passionate trade unionist, proud and privileged to have been a member and activist in a truly great union, the NASUWT. Serving on the TUC General Council has been part of the icing on the cake, a hugely interesting and valuable experience as well as a privilege to be able to be part of representing and fighting for workers in all sectors. Leaving does not change my will and intention to fight for workers' rights, end injustices, challenge all hatred and racism and stand shoulder to shoulder with you all in the fight for equality and inclusivity in the workplace and society.

Trade union membership is now more important than ever. Our future lies in young workers and I have been excited by the increasing political awareness of many of the young people I teach. The TUC or unions must reach out to them. Reach outwards, empower them and demonstrate that together, as the TUC, we are strong. We will deliver for them and for all workers. Thank you to everyone who has supported me.

(Applause)

The President: Thank you, Brian. We wish you well. Earlier in the year, John Smith, from the Musicians' Union, retired from the General Council. John has served

on the General Council for ten years. John, I have great pleasure in presenting you with the Gold Badge of Congress. *(Applause)*

(Gold Badge of Congress was presented to John Smith)

John Smith: Congress, President, thank you very much for this honour. It has been a real pleasure serving ten years on the General Council. It goes very quickly, I can assure you. It was really a fantastic honour to be asked to join the Executive Committee of the TUC. I think I have done five years on that. Being involved with the TUC at that level has been wonderful. Representing the Musicians' Union and all of the workers in the entertainment industry and being able to make their case at that level has been a real opportunity which I hope I have grasped.

It has also been great working closely with the TUC. I have the utmost respect for Frances, Paul and all of the team. It is a fantastic organisation with a fantastic group of people who work tirelessly on behalf of all of us. I am not going right out to pasture. My involvement with the trades union Movement continues. I am into my Presidency of the General Federation of Trade Unions ('the GFTU') for a two-year term. I will be as involved as I can with that so I hope I will see many of you. Let me give a little plug. There is an arts festival called Liberating Arts taking place at Exeter University in November. I hope lots of unions will be there where we can get the creative community and the trade unions together. I hope to see you around. It has been a real honour and a pleasure. I may even appear at future Congresses! Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, John. Also retiring from the General Council is Brian Wright from UCATT. Brian has served on the General Council in the past year. Jane Carolan is also retiring from the General Council. Jane has been a union activist in UNISON for over 30 years and a General Council member for over a decade. We will make sure that Brian and Jane receive their Gold Badges at a later date.

Congress, also leaving the General Council this year is Niamh Sweeney from the NEU, the ATL section. She will be greatly missed. (*Applause*) I am sure Congress will want to show its appreciation for the contribution and commitment of all members of the General Council.

Finally, Congress, I can announce that the next President of the TUC, who takes up office next year – and she will be magnificent – is UCU's Sally Hunt. (*Applause*) Sally, I wish you very well. I know you will be great and I know you will enjoy your year as President as much as I have done.

Presentation of Gold Badge and Congress bell to the President

Frances O'Grady (*General Secretary*): I call Naimh Sweeney to move the vote of thanks to the President. (*Applause*)

Niamh Sweeney: President, Mary, Congress, this time last year, I had the pleasure of nominating my General Secretary, Mary Bousted, for the Presidency of the TUC and this is how she thanks me! I knew she would be a phenomenal Chair and I do not think she has disappointed. She has chaired Congress with the aptitude, prowess and

fairness that we all hoped she would bring. Why? It is because this is how Mary carries out every task that comes her way, no matter what the challenge.

Mary is a passionate trade unionist and educational professional to the core. National Education Union members know that she cares about our workload, our pay and our wellbeing well after the meeting has finished and the camera has stopped rolling. As President of the TUC she has extended that to every member of the trades union Movement, but most particularly to young workers. Mary is a champion of women within the TUC. She has been a wise counsel to me and an inspiration. I would not still be teaching without my trade union and I would not be standing here today without Mary.

Congress, I think you will agree that there has been a significant shift in the work that we have done this week. We have committed to stand firm and to speak with one voice on racism, unfair pay, bad employers and social justice. We are stronger together, but we must not forget that once we leave this hall. We have witnessed some momentous events, not least the inaugural performance of Paul Novak and the Supremes. It has also been the first Congress for the newly-launched National Education Union, the largest education union in Europe, representing nearly 500,000 education professionals.

We have welcomed back Mark Serwotka, taking up his new role as the walking/talking advertising board for our fabulous NHS. After four years in prison, denied his right to speak here, we have finally welcomed the immovable Huber Ballesteros. (*Applause*) We have been humbled by the testimony of the emergency

and public services, whose workers have engaged tirelessly in their responses to the devastating human tragedies that we have seen this year. Thank you.

My personal highlight has been supporting my own sixth-form student, Georgie, from Cambridge, member of the BFAWU. *(Applause)* I have taught Georgie for two years and I know she would not mind me telling you that at the beginning of our teacher/student relationship, she did give me a bit of a hard time. She was not always keen on doing the additional independent work out of the classroom. She was excellent verbally, but not too keen on getting out a pen and folder.

However, since joining the trades union Movement, Georgie has been transformed. Speaking here at two fringes, highlighting the exploitative £4.75 an hour wages of her and her colleagues, she has become the confident woman I knew she had the potential to be. That is what sixth-form colleges and the trades union Movement can do. After seeing such a formidable trade union leader in the Chair, she will no doubt be inspired and empowered to know that the trades union Movement is open to all workers here and across the globe. I would also add that never before has one of my students had a better reason for having an acceptable absence at college!

Congress, we have been set a challenge for the next year, the 150th Congress. We must do more for young workers. We must do more to get them involved and keep them involved in the Movement. Thank you, Congress. Thank you, Mary.
(Applause)

(Gold Badge of Congress was presented to the President)

The President: Thank you, Niamh. Congress, thank you for all your support this week and thank you for all you do for our Movement. Finally, Congress, there is a short film looking ahead to our 150th anniversary.

(Film shown to Congress)

The President: Thank you. Congress, I now declare the 149th Congress closed.

(Applause)

Congress adjourned at 1.40 p.m.