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TUC Congress 2009 verbatim account of proceedings

Congress Day 2: Tuesday 15 September

141st annual Trades Union Congress

Held at **The BT Convention Centre, Liverpool**

Congress President: **Sheila Bearcroft MBE**

This is the unedited verbatim report of the second day of the 2009 Congress as supplied by verbatim reporters Marten, Walsh, Cherer

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

The President: Congress, can we come to order? Thank you, colleagues. Congress, there is still a lot of chatting and talking going on. I have called Congress to order. Thank you very much. Can I say once again many thanks to Mundo Afrika who have been playing for us. May I remind delegation leaders that the ballot for the General Council takes place this morning. Ballot papers should be collected from the table situated by the TUC Information stand in the Lower Gallery area at the bottom of the escalator. Ballot papers will only be provided in exchange for the official delegate form. Please note that the ballot closes at 12 noon today. There is also the delegates' questionnaire on your tables. Please return these to the TUC Information stand situated in the Lower Gallery area at the bottom of the escalator.

Congress, there have been complaints about noise from outside the hall. Can I ask you, please, to keep conversations to a minimum in the corridor to my left? Yesterday some delegates on that side of the hall had difficulty listening to the debate.

I now call on Annette Mansell-Green, Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to give the GPC Report. Thank you, Annette.

General Purposes Committee Report

Annette Mansell-Green (*Chair, General Purposes Committee*): Thank you, President. Good morning, Congress. The General Purposes Committee has approved three further emergency motions. These are, Emergency Motion 4 on Vestas and green jobs, moved by the RMT and seconded by Unite; Emergency Motion 5 on Sri Lanka, moved by FBU and seconded by NUJ; Emergency Motion 6, National Grid, national greed, moved by GMB and seconded by Unite. The President will indicate when it is hoped that these emergency motions will be taken. Congress, please be reminded that only materials approved by the GPC may be

distributed within this hall. Requests for the distribution of materials within the main hall should be put to the GPC. Thank you for your cooperation on this. I will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decisions when necessary throughout Congress. Have a good day, comrades.

The President: Thank you, Annette. Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Delegates, yesterday afternoon we were unable to take Motion 79, North Sea safety in the name of BALPA. We now also have six emergency motions: Emergency 1, Pleural plaques in the name of UCATT, E2, Cuts in the civil service compensation scheme in the name of PCS, Royal Mail dispute in the name of CWU, Vestas and Green Jobs in the name of RMT, Sri Lanka in the name of the FBU, and National Grid, national greed in the name of the GMB. If at all possible, I intend to take Motion 79, North Sea Safety, at the end of this morning's scheduled business. I will take the six emergency motions when a suitable opportunity arises and endeavour to give Congress as much notice as possible.

Education

The President: Delegates, we continue this morning with chapter 3, Economic and Industrial Affairs, the section on Education, from page 81. I call paragraph 3.15, 3.16, and 3.19, and Motion 60, Information, advice and guidance (IAG) in education. The General Council supports the motion.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) in education

(Insert Motion 60 - Information, advice and guidance (IAG) in education)

Pauline Rodmell (*Association for College Management*) moved Motion 60.

She said: I will keep this brief for those of you like me who are not morning people. The topic of information, advice and guidance is something we can all relate to and I will bet that if you all cast your minds back to your experience of careers advice there are probably very few of you who can raise your hands and claim that you had inspirational, helpful, ambitious and apt advice. Information, advice and guidance is generally poor and has been for a long time. This is a very serious problem because educational success must start with individuals being placed on the programme that is right for them. When information, advice and guidance is poor, success, retention and satisfaction rates are inevitably lower than they should be. On a human level, at least, too many people are thwarted in their search for the direction that will bring them success and happiness in their life and the impact is greater on comparatively disadvantaged individuals as middle-class children often have other sources of support and guidance.

We are aware of and do not endorse the recent media highlighting of the hostile stance towards the connection services taken by Alan Milburn MP in his report on the state of the profession in this country today. He proposes marketisation and fragmentation. In this motion we are calling for positive support and stronger investment in our information, advice and guidance services. What we need now is a major well-resourced project to develop this workforce and their practice frameworks. We are seeking your support, therefore, for a call to government to resource and support the development of high-quality training steps to ensure

a culture of excellence, ambition and impartiality in this area as well as best practice benchmarks. I ask Congress to support this motion.

The President: Thank you very much, colleague. Colleagues, before the next speaker begins their address let me say that the murmur of noise from the body of the hall is really overpowering. Please give respect to those at the rostrum. Julia?

Julia Neal (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) seconded Motion 60.

She said: President, members of Congress, ATL is pleased to second Motion 60 calling on the Government to support the lifting of standards in information and guidance for young people. Congress, I am an experienced careers education and guidance coordinator, now currently in charge of university entrants in a large sixth form in the south west. I have also worked as in-service trainer in Devon and Cornwall where I believe that teachers and the Connection Service have done their very best to guide young people as they make important life chances. Now, am I feeling defensive about this motion? No, actually, I am not because I have witnessed during the past few years changes in the quality of service that can be provided due to ever-increasing constraints. These are emerging from changing targets, government pressure and there is much more centralised control. This is borne out by recent research by the NFER which has found that a great deal of connection careers adviser time is spent tracking down young people who are hard to reach with levels of success said generally not to be commensurate with the effort involved. This leaves less time for pupils who might be seen as average ability or the most able and a reduction in the status of careers education and guidance in schools.

The Focusing Agenda has exposed some of the deficiencies in guidance programmes and has highlighted the need for more in-depth training for connection staff and teachers. The Government should provide more funding and there should be greater emphasis on the IAG in initial teacher training programmes. It is also important that, with the increasingly crowded school timetables, senior management teams in schools make adequate curriculum time.

Colleagues, guidance just must not be marginalised. Discrete careers lessons are a thing of the past and provision has to be made in broader PSHE lessons and tutorial periods. Intense competition at post-16 level for students means guidance often serves the institution rather than the individual and choices are more complicated than ever these days with the wider range of qualifications on offer. We also still have an academic vocational divide which makes good guidance even more necessary. In addition, the use of IT requires particular support and should not be seen as a substitute for one-to-one guidance.

Congress, in three minutes it is difficult to include all the issues but you can get the point. This motion is very important. I ask you to support the motion because the futures of our young people are far too important to leave to chance. Thank you for listening.

* *Motion 60 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, we are having requests from many unions to be involved in the debate. At this point in time, we have a very full schedule. Where I can include extra speakers I will do so but please bear with me in wanting to keep to a scheduled time. Thank you very much.

The President: I now call Motion 61, Education and the Recession. The General Council support the motion.

Education and the recession

(Insert Motion 61 - Education and the recession)

Alastair Hunter (*University and College Union*) moved Motion 61.

He said: Congress, it is a matter of urgent concern to members of UCU and to our colleague unions in education that at a time when the economy urgently requires the investment in education for all our people and for all our young people that we have a government and a potential government equally determined to cut education and to cut the kind of resources that young people need. This motion touches on a range of issues but I only want to focus on one or two given the amount of time available.

It seems to me incongruous that at a time when the number of young people not in employment, education or training is at an all time high, indeed we have three times as many young people in that category as in Germany and twice as many as in France, we propose to destroy the future of such young people. What does the Government do in response to the need to encourage young people into education? It cuts resources for ESOL by which we encourage new British citizens to find a place in our society! It cuts resources for ELQ, which is vital for the retraining and re-education and re-skilling of our workforces, and it puts strings and limits on the widening participation agenda at universities. In all of these ways, right at the very point in time when we need to be encouraging further uptake what does the Government do, it finds ways to curtail it, it finds ways to reduce it!

Comrades, this is not simply a matter of educational unions speaking in their own vested interest. Of course it is in our vested interest to have higher investment in education. Of course it is in our vested interest to have more youngsters at FE colleges and in universities. Of course it is in our vested interest to have a much wider selection of the society and the community involved in education. But I think they are vested interests in which we all have a share. It is well known that the added value in education goes far beyond the upfront cost. Politicians only look at the upfront costs, but for every student who completes education or indeed, and this is something that is not often said, even for students who are only able to take part of a study course the advantage in their skills, the advantage in their confidence, and the ongoing advantage to society hugely outweighs the cost apparently at the beginning.

Comrades, like most of you, I was utterly shocked by the report in *The Guardian* yesterday which revealed that at a time when company profits were down by 31% and the FTSE down by 33%, FTSE directors awarded themselves a 10% increase in that same year. It seems to me that a government which is complicit in the collapse of the banking system that we saw and a government which made noises about curtailing the abuses but is evidently condoning these abuses is ill-placed to say to those of us in the public sector, not just in education but in all areas of the public sector, 'You have to take the cuts. You have to control yourselves.'

But it is not just for students or for potential young people in education, staff as well are under threat. The increase in casualisation in our sectors is enormous. To take just one of the more egregious examples, in further education there is one agency with 60,000 people on their books. These people are bogusly deemed to be self-employed. They have no union

rights, they have no security, and they very rarely, if ever, see a pay rise, and they are regularly paid below the going rate.

In supporting this motion, you are supporting a call to save a generation that will otherwise be lost, an entire generation of young people with nowhere to go and no hope for the future. Support this motion. Support our call for proper investment in education. Thank you very much indeed.

Jerry Glazier (*National Union of Teachers*) seconded Motion 61.

He said: Recession and its impact on jobs is a massive concern for all in the trade union Movement and especially for those who work in education. Sadly, this recession is already having a significant and disproportionate impact on young people. As we saw this summer, many young people face an uncertain future, in spite of hard work, in terms of access to further and higher education and employment. Next year competition for places in further and higher education is expected to be even greater. This poses major challenges for schools which will need to advise and revise student expectations in light of increased competition.

Congress, this motion, rightly, explicitly asks you to affirm that education has inherent value and should be a right, not a privilege. It is the powerful potential of education that will, in a skills and knowledge-based economy, be a significant driver for economic recovery. Yes, that is a crucial investment at any time, but assuming at times of recession even greater importance. It is also about opportunities for those who are the casualties of recession, so increased capacity for retraining and re-skilling will be key to future prosperity.

The NUT totally shares UCU's rejection of increased privatisation and marketisation of education with its already proven negative impact on provision. The outrage of expensive PFI projects, for example, whose original purpose was to keep costs out of the public sector borrowing requirements pales into insignificance with the currently estimated one trillion pounds of government debt, shackles institutions with debts for 30 years at rates which cost over three times the original capital costs.

Congress, attacks on pay, pensions and jobs, in colleges and universities will be mirrored in the school sector. In defence of these attacks we will need to campaign together to win together.

Dave Jones (*Unite the union*) supported Motion 61.

He said: Chair, Congress, Unite members in universities are the people who look after your children as they embark upon not only a great adventure but also a journey that will have an impact on their lives and all of our futures. Our members are low paid but we do the job because we care, like so many people in the public sector. While we in higher education are considered to be in the public sector, however, our employers are increasingly pretending that they are in fact private sector bosses. The large sums you pay for your children's education that comes to the universities does not affect our pay. It may affect the Vice Chancellors' 10% pay rises; I could not say. We are currently negotiating higher education sector pay. From day one the employers told us that a higher pay settlement would result in redundancies. As we are pragmatic people we try to work with the employers with this in mind. We asked to define a redundancy avoidance agreement in partnership with the employers. After all, if universities cannot retain and redeploy their staff then what else can we do?

The employers refused our request for this agreement. They made us a final pay offer of 1.5%. Colleagues, there are 160 universities in this country and currently 99 of them are carrying out or planning redundancies: so much for our pragmatism and restraint! The employers have no intention of working with us to avoid redundancies. Like employers everywhere else they are using the recession as an excuse to sack people.

As a part of joint union action Unite is about to ballot its members in the sector for strike action to protect our jobs and continue fighting against privatisation because our members are committed to their role in the universities and are making them as good as they can be. Private contractors do not have the same link with universities and they do not have any accountability. We need to fight for our jobs, security for those who want a career in higher education, and good education for those who want to go to university. Education, education, education, is fighting back. Support this motion, support our fight.

A Delegate (*Prospect*) supported Motion 61.

He said: Congress, I urge you to support this motion. The Government now pledge themselves to lifelong learning. They have talked about the need for a higher-skilled economy yet they cut the funding for that higher-skilled economy. We must not forget that the trade union Movement is based not only on fighting for the rights for our members but also on education for them. There are a number of people who have been able to stand at the rostrum because of the education they received through their trade unions, and Union Learn now. Union Learn relies on the equivalent lower qualifications, the ELQs. Funding for this is vital. It is also vital for the higher-skilled economy. Many of our members in Prospect started with a first degree but in the technology subjects that they work in a first degree achieved in the 1970s is of not much relevance now. In fact, our higher-skill economy would not be anywhere if that was the only place where they stayed. We need the ELQs to increase the skill levels, to make sure that our members stay up to date.

Then you come to people who have career breaks and need equivalent qualifications to get back into the job market. A high proportion of these people are women. Have the Government actually done any sort of equality impact assessment on the changes of funding and how it will fall disproportionately on our female members?

Lastly, research. One of the knock-on effects of reducing the investment in education is that research crucial for the future of this country becomes commercialised. Congress, commercial research is short-term, commercially biased in looking towards money rather than the future, and is skewed. It means that research into things like epidemics, which will have a huge impact but may not occur for several years, does not happen. What happens to research into Avian flu and Swine flu if it is left to the commercial interests? I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

* *Motion 61 was CARRIED*

Bonus culture

(Insert Motion 62 - Bonus culture)

The President: I now call Motion 62, Bonus culture. The General Council support the motion.

Hank Roberts (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) moved Motion 62.

He said: At our last conference at Easter on the whistle blower legislation I revealed that my head teacher had in a single year received a bonus of £60,000. This was on top of an already over £100,000 salary pay in a year. I revealed in another year he had received a bonus of £45,000. In commenting on this the school's chair of governors not only said that he was worth every penny but admitted another bonus I had not known of, of £80,000 in a year. More is to come but first ask yourself this obvious question, what should a head teacher already on over 100 grand receive a bonus for? Look at improving school exam results. Is that not what they are meant to be doing anyhow and trying as hard as they can? Improving attendance, is that not what they are meant to be doing and trying as hard as they can? Improving behaviour? Carry on, name one thing that any head teacher who is a decent head teacher should not be doing and trying their hardest for, for £100,000 a year.

To return to my school, I uncovered evidence of other additional payments to a tiny handful at the top which was approaching £1m. Yes, you heard that, £1m at a state school. I was due to return to school for the summer term when just before it opened I and two other elected union reps at the school were suspended and disciplinary hearings were proposed for our dismissal. The whole staff was up in arms and balloted ready to take strike action. However, before that was completed the main recipients of this largesse were suspended themselves, i.e. the head teacher, the deputy head, finance, and the bursar. The three union reps were reinstated. Great. Victory. An investigation was ordered into the finances of the school. It transpires that things were even worse than I had imagined. In one year the head teacher had been paid more than £400,000. The Prime Minister who is coming will tell you if you ask him, I am sure, earns £187,000 a year for running a country yet this individual received double that for a single school. It is shocking. It is outrageous. We have found out now as the investigation progresses that approaching £2m has been handed over to the people at the top of the school.

This problem started when the Government decided in its wisdom that each individual school in the country should be responsible for its own budget. Obviously, if you do that, if you multiply the possibilities of graft and corruption, you are going to get more graft and corruption. You do not have to be a genius to work that out. Obviously, the majority of head teachers are honest but a minority are not, as with all humanity. Therefore, obviously, the more lax the system, the greedier the ethos, the more that will go or be led down the road to perdition, or hell, corruption legal or illegal. Okay, that is what happens.

In academies, mind you, there are no limitations on a head teacher's salary; there is a bonanza, a gold rush at the top. A sponsor who appoints a majority of governors at the school can appoint his cousin, or his cousin's aunt, or whatever, whoever he wanted to and they could be paid half-a-million a year, or even a million, completely legally at taxpayers' expense, and because they are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act we will not even know about it. This is what is going on. It is an absolute disgrace!

Vitally important questions arise: how could and how did they get away with it? Why was it undetected by the school auditors? Why was it not picked up by the local authority auditors who are ultimately responsible and, most important, in how many other schools and at what cost to the taxpayer is this going on? We have to have limits on the pay of public servants or they will no longer have it as their priority to serve public interests but will substitute the serving of their own: public service, not self-service or rather service of the self. A

proliferation of increasing pay differentials, the bonus culture, trust academies, is all part of the privatisation agenda. Buy off the top and you will get privatisation through more easily. Wed them to greed and they will sell the soul of state education for a mess of pottage. They plan to end state education. That is what this is all part of and all about. I say, and we must say, *No, No, Never*.

Brian Cookson (*NASUWT*) seconded Motion 62.

He said: In seconding this important motion I want to highlight the issues raised in the NASUWT amendment calling for the publication of the pay and rewards of head teachers and other school leaders. Congress, for decades we have been told that greed is good. That was the mantra of the neo-liberals, the belief that the market is king, but the lessons of the current global financial crisis show the damage caused by financial recklessness and greed.

Although in the education service we are thankfully still a world away from behaviour on such a scale the warning signs are here. The bonuses, the six-figure salaries being received by some head teachers are a clear example of this. Of course, head teachers must be properly remunerated but are we now really saying, through the size of these salaries and bonus payments. It is more difficult to run a school than to run a country?

Congress, the bonus culture has no place in education. We do not need or want the reckless practices and inappropriate risk-taking such schemes engender. The claim that management flexibility and autonomy are good for our nation's education must be exposed as a gross lie. It allows individuals to exploit the system, to abuse the trust of the British public, to put self interests before the public interest and to line their pockets at the expense of children, young people, and taxpayers.

It is not just the size of these payments that is worrying but the fact that they only come to light by whistle-blowing. This is unacceptable. We need to throw a spotlight on these self-serving practices. In all other public sector occupations the pay received by the most senior paid executives has to be published. Even paying rewards for trade union general secretaries has to be on the public record. Why not the pay and rewards of head teachers? This is just not an accountability issue; we are talking about the proper use of public money. In protecting the integrity of state education we need to make public the pay and rewards of head teachers. This would help to moderate the practices of school employers and prevent excessive payments. Congress, we need to learn the lessons from the reckless behaviour which culminated in the global financial crisis. We need to be clear the bonus culture has no place in state education.

Dave Wilshire (*Communication Workers Union*) supported Motion 62.

He said: I am here to talk about the bonus culture in Royal Mail. It is debatable whether Adam Crozier has the values and commitment of postal workers but what cannot be beyond debate is that he enjoys a pay packet that is around 157 times greater than that of an average postal worker. Postal workers in London have already had to take 10 days strike action in defence of their terms and conditions. Areas such as Bristol, Plymouth, Peterborough, Bournemouth and others, have had to take strike action on a number of occasions over the same issues. In London, in particular, some postal workers are being asked to work 46 days more a year just so that their wages can stand still. Royal Mail is launching vicious attacks in every workplace throughout Britain.

So, how do Crozier's terms and conditions compare? Brendan talked yesterday about bumper bonuses and Crozier is certainly guilty of enjoying a bumper bonus. Adam Crozier took home £3.004m in 2008, £843,000 was salary and annual bonus; the rest were proceeds of an incentive plan. The £3m figure is equivalent to £58,538 a week. In 2009 he received £995,000 in base salary and annual bonus; additionally he has £706,000 in his new incentive plan. Postal workers in contrast have had a pay freeze imposed. In 1999, the chief executive of Royal Mail, I think his name was John Roberts, was paid £230,000. Crozier's current pay represents a 1,222% increase on that figure and it is no wonder that a Labour MP, Jon Cruddas, has described that as double standards.

When I was growing up a band that I used to listen to sang lyrics that said, *It makes them worried, their bank account is all that matters, you don't count.* Well, this phrase certainly applies to Crozier and his wages and it is unacceptable that while postal workers have had a pay freeze imposed and having their terms and conditions cut on a daily basis he is enjoying such a bumper bonus. Thank you.

Gerry Doherty (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) supported Motion 62.

He said: I want to begin with thanking the teaching unions for bringing this issue of the bonus culture that exists in this country, and indeed around the world, to the attention of Congress. It is only recently with the banking crisis that this whole bonus culture has been questioned and has been put where it should be, in the dustbin, except that the mood has changed recently. All of a sudden because of green shoots of recovery it seems to be the bonus is back on the agenda again. Someone said earlier here that the bonus culture has no place in education. I agree with that. Actually, it has no place in society because whatever words they use, and when you read the annual reports they talk about benefits, they talk about rewards, they talk about compensation, actually it is pure and simple greed. I want to give you just a couple of examples.

Someone mentioned an article in *The Guardian* yesterday and in that *Guardian* article there was a guy called, Sr. Manny Fontenla-Novoa, the Chief Executive Officer of Thomas Cook, that family-friendly, cuddly, company that you go to for your holidays every year. The board of Thomas Cook has 12 members, every single one of them male, every single one of them white. It purports to have an equality agenda. It does not seem to extend to the board. Mr. Fontelie Novoa last year, for one year, one year's wages, took home £7,037,000; £5m of that was what was called a synergy bonus. There was a merger between My Travel and Thomas Cook. The result was 2,800 people lost their jobs, almost all of them women; 2,800 people, and he pockets £7m. This is the society in which we live. It is pure greed. That is in the private sector. I will return to Thomas Cook later on this week.

I also deal with Network Rail in the public sector. We have people in Network Rail lining their pockets. They tell me Network Rail is brilliant. It is far better than it was under British Rail days, the trains are running better and 90% of trains are running on time. Well, I use the trains all the time and I must be really unlucky because I seem to catch the 10% that are late. This is wrong. It has to stop. It has to stop and it has to come from the trade union Movement. Greed has to go and we have to tell the Government that. Thank you.

* *Motion 62 was CARRIED*

Demand-led learning in further education

(Insert Motion 63 - Demand-led learning in further education)

The President: I now call Motion 63, Demand-led learning in further education. The General Council support the motion.

Peter Pendle (*Association for College Management and Association for Managers in Education*) moved Motion 63.

He said: The past decade or so has seen a significant sea-change in our approach to how we shape our public services. Colleges, for instance, instead of offering what they can offer or what they want to offer, or what they have always offered, nowadays look to respond to the needs of their communities, providing learning that meets local needs, including those of employers, or at least they would if the government dictate did not get in the way so much of the time.

The shift from being supply-driven to being led by the needs of those they serve is by no means confined to colleges and at ACM and AME one of the key changes over the past decade for us has been to encourage colleges to shape provision in line with what our members tell us that they want to see. Most people applaud this shift from offering off-the-shelf provision to offering services shaped to the needs of students and the needs of learners. But, unfortunately, the development of the so-called demand-led provision, such as Train to Gain, has actually resulted in the control of funding moving from colleges to employers who are being subsidised for training that they were either already funding or should have been funding in the first place, with hundreds of millions of pounds of public money leaking out of the system all together being paid to the unnecessary and ineffective brokers commissioned by the Learning & Skills Council to make the system work. As a result, colleges have lost the autonomy and discretion to develop provision and programmes, and the worst example of this has been the wholesale destruction of ESOL provision across much of the country.

Demand-led learning is not the same as need for learning. Demand implies the ability to pay. Too often learning needs cannot be expressed as demand if demand entails paying fees that people may not be able to afford. This is all too often true for the most marginalised individuals struggling to escape from the margins and into the mainstream. An important element of government education policy must always be to subsidise learning where individuals are too poor to pay.

In Train to Gain this ability to pay is not the result of employers' own decisions but rather manufactured through government funding policy. Government subsidies were not put in place because employers cannot afford to pay but rather all too often they are too short-sighted to invest in training. Are these the people we should effectively be giving control to control college funding where one minute we see colleges being encouraged to deliver ever-increasing programmes and the next we see a shuddering halt to funding because budgets have been exhausted. Frankly, it is a complete fiasco. Rather than pay employers to fund training maybe what they should be doing is funding learners so that they can have control over their own training they receive in order to improve their career and life opportunities. Colleges generally want to respond to the profile of learning needs in their communities and they desperately need the flexibility and discretion to do that.

Now, I know that colleagues in one or two unions have concerns about the wording used in the last paragraph of the motion, to give colleges the flexibility and discretion to respond to

local needs. I acknowledge that some clarification would be helpful. Let me try and give some reassurance. This is not meant to suggest that colleges should be able to undermine nationally-negotiated pay and conditions of service. ACM and AME remains committed to the re-establishment of binding national negotiations in FE for all staff and indeed we believe that ridding FE of the bureaucratic and wasteful demand led funding arrangements would enable colleges to agree a proper pay increase for college staff rather than the pathetic 1.5% enforced on us all this year. So, colleagues, I would ask you to support a policy which would enable colleges to respond to local needs nimbly and with flexibility, a genuine need-led approach. Please support the motion.

Martin Johnson (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) seconded Motion 63.

He said: The world of FE, Congress, is wonderful and challenging because of its diversity. It tries to do so many things. It has so many demands made of it. The job of professionals in colleges ought to be to balance those demands. Train to Gain gets it wrong because its financial arrangements upset that balance. Of course we applaud the government for trying to deal with British employers' perennial inability to recognise training needs but in diverting cash to employers Train to Gain robs others. It is often provision for the most needy which crashes, like English as an additional language. ATL believes that colleges must above all serve their local communities. It must be for the professional leadership in colleges to interpret and balance all local learning needs and ATL believes that in a post-LSE world we need a funding system which enables that. Thank you, Congress.

David Murity (*University and College Union*) supported Motion 63.

He said: Increased funding is vital in further education if colleges are to play the part they should in the recovery of the economy by way of the education and training of young people and adults. It is all too apparent that is not sufficient at the moment for the volume of students entering colleges. We agree that the funding is far too narrow and should have more flexibility in how that funding is used but there should be a level of accountability alongside that. As the motion points out, colleges should be able to respond to the genuine demands of students and the local communities and not what suits college principals.

In supporting this motion we should be clear that a call for flexibility must not adversely affect the levels of permanent staff in colleges. Often under the guise of flexibility FE colleges seek the further casualisation of the teaching staff. A colleague of mine in the UCU delegation tells me that as much as a third of the lecturers at her college are employed through an agency on short-term contracts with little or no protection with the result that valuable and scarce resources are being siphoned off to increase the agency's profits. Yes, combating disadvantage for students is essential but let's not disadvantage or exploit our colleagues in the process. Congress, with the clarification given by the mover of the motion, please support this motion.

opposition we will move straight to the vote.

* *Motion 63 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, we continue now with Chapter 5 of the General Council Report, Learning and Skills, from page 117. I call paragraph 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4. That completes Chapter 5 of the General Council Report.

The Regional dimension

The President: We now turn to Chapter 7 of the General Council Report, the Regional dimension, from page 150. I call paragraphs 7.1 to 7.15, paragraph 9.4, and Motion 82, National TUC strategy for the defence of the TUC unemployed workers centres. The General Council support the motion and I call Jeremy Dear on behalf of the Trade Union Council's Conference. Jeremy, it is great to see you at the rostrum.

National TUC strategy for the defence of the TUC unemployed workers centres

(Insert Motion 82 - National TUC strategy for the defence of the TUC unemployed workers centres)

Jeremy Dear (Trades Union Councils' Joint Consultative Committee) moved Motion 82.

He said: Comrades, sisters, brothers, I am the General Secretary of the NUJ but here as Chair of the Trades Union Councils' Joint Consultative Committee, enormously proud and honoured to be moving this motion, the historic first motion from the Trades Union Councils Conference. Trades councils back today where they belong at the heart of our Movement. I have to tell you that when we passed the groundbreaking motion last year which opened the door for today there was some fear from the platform that the Trades Union Councils Conference would table a crazy motion moved by an unreconstructed Marxist. They are at least pleased that the motion is not crazy. Indeed, this is a motion that in its call for solidarity with all workers -- employed, under-employed or unwaged -- strikes at the very essence of what trade unionism is about, at the very heart of the crisis faced by our members, irrespective of their industry, public or private sector, whichever nation or region they work in: the scourge of mass unemployment. It is a motion which makes clear in the face of predictions of jobless figures reaching 4 million that just as mass unemployment was not a price worth paying under the Tories nor is it a price worth paying under New Labour. It is not a price worth paying because we know that behind every grim unemployment statistic there is a human story, the fear of a new lost generation, families driven apart by debt, the descent into poverty, of communities wrecked, of hopelessness and despair. This is also a motion which refuses to wallow in that despair but builds hope through solidarity, a hope which recognises that the fight against unemployment is not a question of resources but a question of political will. If the Government can find £75bn for Trident, they can afford fair benefits, provide stronger support for protecting jobs, properly resourced health, education and other public services and, by the way, fund the planned extension in maternity leave. This is above all a motion which alongside a call for an active campaigning strategy to tackle job cuts and the economic crisis sets out a course of action to ensure that all in our Movement are guaranteed our solidarity. When employers use unemployment to drive down wages and make employment less secure, such solidarity is vital.

In the face of the last recession the TUC worked with trades union councils to establish unemployed workers centres. These centres have continued to do magnificent work alongside unions locally, helping to tackle the devastating impact job losses had on too many communities. Yet just at the point at which the millions of people's lives again risk being blighted by the consequences of mass unemployment we have just 35 centres in England down from a peak of 200 in 1986. It is time for us once again to turn our words into real support for the TUC unemployed worker centres and for unions alongside county associations, the regional TUC and others actively to seek to establish ones where they are

needed but do not exist, to build on the work already being done by the TUC through the unions' Active Communities Project, to support unions and their members in the face of the recession, to provide a redundancy counselling service for members, to re-establish and promote the effective operation of a fund, to provide a regular income from union branches and employed workers, building links between local workplaces and the centres, providing crucial financial support for the magnificent advocacy, advice, and campaigning work of those centres.

Comrades, the Trades Union Councils Conference is proud to be represented here today by this motion and thanks to all those unions which continue to support their local trades union council, and calls on you to help us support the unemployed workers. Thank you, comrades.

Cheryl Gedling (*PCS*) seconded Motion 82.

She said: The PCS is seconding this motion with great enthusiasm. We should not forget that unemployed workers' centres were created at the beginning of the last great recession in the early 1980s. During the 1980s and the 1990s they were at the heart of trade union campaigns against unemployment. Now, as unemployment continues to rise and those on benefits are being targeted by the introduction of Workfare and the punitive benefits regime, the support offered to them by unemployed workers' centres is more vital than ever.

But for the centres to achieve all that they are capable of achieving and for the entire labour Movement to support the unemployed, we need to do more than offer support when they are down. My own union, PCS, has led the way in campaigning against the Government's welfare reform plans. Let us be plain here. The difference between Labour and the Tories on welfare reform is that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. It is simply absurd for some in the Labour Government to point in horror at Tory plans for Workfare when it was this Government which first planned and then implemented exactly this type of welfare reform. It was Gordon Brown who decided that the best man to plan reform of the welfare system was ex-merchant banker, David Freud. He then accepted all of his recommendations to part-privatise the system of welfare delivery to the long-term unemployed and then put James Purnell in charge of implementing those plans.

Of course, following the credit crunch and the bank failures, those plans began to unravel. The Government's publication of the preferred bidder list of companies to deliver the so-called flexible new deal confirms that, contrary to earlier spin, charities in the third sector providers have been excluded in favour of large private sector companies such as Serco, which is a FTSE 100 listed public services provider, which is earmarked for contracts worth £500 million.

The entire labour Movement should be campaigning against these plans no matter what political colour they are. If they were wrong under the Tories then they are wrong now. Similarly, it is urgent that we develop and tie together national campaigns to protect and enhance employees' rights in the recession, ensuring that no more unemployed workers are there for the centres to deal with.

The motion outlines the different elements of this national campaign, some of which are already underway and some of which need to be kick-started right now. Some are very concrete such as campaigning for the creation of a National Redundancy Counselling Service. It is in this context that we view with great alarm the demise, or the often dire

financial situation, of unemployed workers' centres throughout Britain. The funding constraint placed on many of the centres by Labour-run councils is restricting many of them to the role of welfare rights advice centres at best. The few remaining centres which have not been forced to close now undertake little or no external campaigning.

Congress, we need to put this right. This motion seeks to tie the unemployed workers' centres back into a nationwide campaign to actively promote the interests of workers. To that end, ordinary men and women, assisted by trade unions when not even in work, who have no subs to offer us and who are not even members, will not forget who helped them when they needed that help most. When they are back in work, they will come back to the unions in much greater numbers than before. Please support this motion.

Kathy Taylor (*University and College Union*) supported Motion 82.

She said: President, Congress, the mover of the motion referred to the TUC's Active Unions, Active Communities Network Programme. When you look at the core principles of that, there is a clear synergy between it and the Trade Unions Council motion. Every one of the principles effectively mirrors the core activities and objectives of trade union councils and the TUC unemployed workers' centres; in particular, the commitment to tackle poverty and unemployment, to promote trade unions and trade union membership and last, but not least, to provide services and support to the community.

We all know that there are 6.5 million workers who are members of trade unions and therefore have the support and backing of that membership, but there are millions of workers out in the community who do not have this support. Many of us here are fortunate enough to work for organisations both in the public and private sector which have had well-established trade union organisations, but the effects of changes in the structure of industry today have resulted in the vast majority of those who are lucky enough to be in work being employed by small companies with no tradition of trade unions, quite often with management actively hostile to trade union membership for their staff.

Whilst it is always our priority to recruit members, it must also be part of the remit and responsibility of the trade union Movement to extend its support to all workers, especially those who find themselves unemployed through no fault of their own, and at the same time to demonstrate not just the benefits of membership but also the genuine concern that the trade union Movement has for all workers in struggle, particularly during a period of recession with the loss of jobs which is a consequence of the current economic situation.

At a time when government and big business are abandoning them, we must demonstrate that the trade union Movement will stand up and defend the rights of all our brothers and sisters in and out of work. Those who find themselves out of work are particularly vulnerable. The Unemployed Workers' Centres offer a crucial lifeline of support, encouragement, reassurance, practical advice and guidance, education and training, all of which combine to help restore confidence, dignity and self-worth at a time in their lives when so many factors are conspiring against them.

The genuine commitment to the Active Unions, Active Communities Network means that it is vital that we support the campaigns called for in this motion and promote the TUC Unemployed Workers' Centres as it is clear that they will be one of the key organisations in the practical delivery of the initiative. I urge you to support the motion.

The President: I am pleased to say that there is no opposition so we will move straight to the vote.

* *Motion 82 was CARRIED*

The President: We now turn to Chapter 1 of the General Council's Report, Organising and Rights at Work, page 5. I call Composite Motion 5, Trade union membership. The General Council support the motion.

(Insert Composite Motion 5 - Trade union membership)

Paul Noon (*Prospect*) moved Composite Motion 5.

He said: The point of this composite motion is not to point the finger at anyone in the Movement or to claim that Prospect has all the answers - far from it. We have a collective problem and it is better that we admit it, that we talk about it and that we try to address it rather than to go on pretending everything is fine.

Although individual unions can point to excellent examples of organising success, the overall picture facing the Movement is gloomy. In 2008, union membership was down in the UK. Union density is down too with less than one person in six in the private sector now in a union and many of those are in areas with former public sector employees which have been privatised.

We have seen also alarming falls in that bastion of union membership, the public sector. It is down almost 2% in 2008 alone. Union density for men is down 9.4% since 1995 and, most scary of all to me, there are big falls in union membership and density for younger workers. This is against a relatively benign background of increases in the number of public sector workers and recognition legislation.

So what does the future hold for us? Well, let us look in the crystal ball. There may be a future change of government to one which, if the record of past Conservative administrations is anything to go by, will not be a friend (to put it at its mildest) of the trade union Movement. It is a future with big cuts promised in the public sector. It is a future where the demographics of our Movement play out with our existing ageing membership moving out of employment and possibly new entrants to the workplace not joining.

The brutal truth of previous recessions has been that union jobs lost in a recession are union jobs lost for ever. There is no big upswing in the membership when the economy recovers. Again, individual unions will do a lot to address this, but we have a collective problem and we must work harder for a collective solution in addition to everything else that we are doing.

I do not claim that this composite motion has all the answers and we do not have a silver bullet to guarantee future membership growth. I do not claim that, but what the composite does is to set out some modest steps that we might take together to improve the position. First, in our view, we have to make joining the trade union Movement easier. All our research has shown that the vast majority of young people have little idea about what trade unions are about and do not understand the alphabet soup of union names and who they are.

There is, however, a much greater recognition of the TUC. Can we exploit this by looking at the extent to which a TUC card, in addition to what we already do, would allow people to join the Movement as a gateway to individual trade union membership? It could help particularly pre-employment and, surely, needs to be properly examined. Could we have a joint card with the National Union of Students which would apply to undergraduates so that when people move into employment, they are directed to the appropriate union? Could we work more closely with the National Union of Students and increase work in schools and universities to improve their understanding and recognition of the role of trade unions? We think the answer is 'Yes.' That is not to decry the work that has already been done, but what has been done so far is simply not enough.

Can unions co-operate more in working towards a common goal of increased membership and density? Again, we think the answer is 'Yes.' We have to look at sectors where we can mount coordinated, organising and recruitment campaigns - not just a few balloons and a poster but properly resourced long-term organising efforts.

Finally, can we shout louder collectively about what we can do? It is not what a Labour Government has not done, but what we can do? That is not only in wage bargaining and protecting individual members but in mounting the case for equality for decent public services, for fairness at work and for protecting the environment, issues which connect with the agenda of younger people.

I do not pretend that any of this is easy and that we have not thought about it previously as a Movement, but I am convinced that we have to look at it again from our standpoint of today's union membership position, in the present economic position and with a view to the possible political change which might happen whether we like it or not. The answers lie in our own hands. It is no use blaming governments, society or even non-members for not seeing the light of belonging to a union because for many people there is no union in their workplace for them to join. We have to be imaginative and cooperate towards this end.

For all we do individually as unions, we have to work together for growth. My union believes that it is in our collective interest to do this and we can be successful as a Movement, but not by simply going on as we are. I move the composite motion.

Richard Evans (*Society of Radiographers*) seconded Composite Motion 5.

He said: We are very pleased to support this important composite motion. So much good work is going on so why are numbers falling? What is the future of the trade union Movement? Will we see dwindling influence as the national profile of the Movement falls away and employers are more and more applauded for short-selling their workers? Will all those old arguments that unions are out of date, irrelevant and self-interested begin to look more and more correct? Are we learning from the past or are we living in it? Will the political relevance of our great Movement be distilled to the few minutes each year when the nation watches to see how uncomfortable we can make the Prime Minister or the ex-Prime Minister?

The signs of decline are real unfortunately. Individual unions are facing up to the challenges and the TUC cannot sit back either. Is it a battle for survival? I do not know. It should not be just about survival and preserving influence. If it is only a battle to achieve more airtime and positive comments in the media and if it is just about keeping our books balanced, then we do not perhaps deserve to succeed.

Union membership matters because people need unions. The challenge is in helping working people to realise not only the need, but also that unions have the answer to that need. We know that the way to win the membership battle is at grass roots level when our unions and their work is relevant, meeting needs at the front line and causing debates in workplaces, streets and homes everywhere. We must not lose sight of the needs of our members and potential members. It is a basic principle of organising. We know that small-scale workplace solidarity and activism is what gave birth to this great Movement. Its survival now requires us to re-capture that spirit.

The TUC role that is set out as a number of projects in this motion provides a central leadership function. As a Congress, we should not only instruct that these be pursued energetically without delay, but we should all re-commit to organising and to our number one cause - the ordinary working people of this country. As Sheila told us yesterday, there has never been a greater need for a strong, effective trade union Movement than now. We have got to turn the tide. Please support the composite.

David Watts (*FDA*) supported Composite Motion 5.

He said: Colleagues, the FDA is pleased to be supporting this important motion. Professional staff and managers, including senior managers, deserve effective union representation no less than any other employee. The motion draws attention to those on the brink of entering the workforce - students and other young people. In our case, for example, we are reaching out to prospective members and publishing information about what aspiring trainees should be thinking about when they are choosing their employer as they have some opportunity to do so.

Equally, as other speakers have said, we should be looking to expand the proven benefits of union membership to new sectors or to ununionised groups of staff. This gives me an opportunity to mention Managers in Partnership. In 2005, in a shared project, the FDA and UNISON together set up Managers in Partnership ('MIP') for senior managers in the Health Service. The constitutional set-up gives MIP the strengths of both the parent unions, but it also has the advantage of being a small organisation able to respond rapidly to events and to members' needs. MIP has grown fast from its inception and now has over 5,000 members. We believe that this is the UK's fastest growing union organisation.

Last year, MIP commissioned research into attitudes towards trade unions among managers both in the NHS and in the private sector. You can imagine what the results will be. Since the yellow light is on I will gloss over them. However, I will refer you to the Unions 21 fringe meeting which took place yesterday. Many of you may have been there. There were some key messages which are borne out by our own experience.

Unions working together can be more rewarding than unions working separately. The approaches should build on individual union identities and the differing needs of different membership groups. Unions should seek to enhance the working lives of members, e.g. through Union Learn or some other schemes. Like Paul, I do not think there is a silver bullet and we do not claim to have all the answers. This motion calls for new mechanisms and new ideas. We want to encourage that. I ask you to support the motion.

Sian Ruddick (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Composite Motion 5.

She said: President, Comrades, it is a provable fact that workers in unionised workplaces are better paid, safer and have better access to training and development than those without a union. The major reason given by non-members as to why they have not joined a union is because they have never been asked.

We also know, by using organising tactics (e.g. campaigning with members and empowering workplace activists) that we can recruit and actively engage employers who are not prepared to act upon reasonable arguments. This is borne out by the experience of PCS. There is a direct correlation between the period before industrial action and an increase in membership. All of this reinforces this timely motion.

In PCS, despite losing up to 100,000 jobs in the Civil Service, we have worked hard to maintain our membership, thereby increasing our density. In Jobcentre Plus, where I am based, we are currently recruiting heavily with new (although unfortunately temporary) staff being taken on and they are joining PCS in their thousands.

The TUC, via its affiliates, consists of the UK's largest volunteer network in its elected officers and representatives. PCS believes that all affiliates should empower their activists and utilise every angle to promote trade unionism in their sector such as lifelong learning and green campaigning. The TUC and its affiliates have the network of reps, organising experience and the resources to help revive a trade union presence in every town and city. We acknowledge and note the work of the TUC Organising Academy in training hundreds of new, full-time organisers. Additionally, there is the work done by our health and safety reps and the growing number of green reps within our workplaces.

We call upon the TUC for practical guidance and support to reinvigorate the regional and district TUCs, to take trade unionism into each community, to support campaigning and to advocate trade union membership. This will need thorough debate and planning to ensure that it happens. The impact of recession through escalating levels of unemployment and the ever-present threat of the sack makes the need for unions in Britain to co-operate more closely and to pool our resources to establish a trade union presence throughout the whole of Britain. This motion contains a number of timely and practical steps to help achieve this and to attract the millions of potential new members into our ranks. Please support.

Sean Vernell (*University and College Union*) supported Composite Motion 5.

He said: Mark Serwotka, at a meeting last night, made a point that this TUC Congress is probably one of the most important Congresses there has been for many, many years. I think that is absolutely true. I believe that what we do in the next three to five years can determine what we do in the next 20 or 25 years. What the trade union Movement looks like in the next 25 years will be determined in the next three to five years. Do we have a new, young generation of people engaged in trade union work?

People have said that there is no silver bullet and there is not. It is hard graft and thinking about how we, as reps and organisers in our branches, go about making sure that we make trade unionism relevant to our members in terms of their lives and their conditions. However, although there is no silver bullet, there is one thing which is absolutely clear. When we have had campaigning, dynamic and fighting unions then people join trade unions. We face a situation whereby 800,000 16-24 year olds are unemployed and another 600,000 young people will join them on the dole queues in these coming months. In that situation, the

potential to recruit new young people with collective responses to their problems is clearly massive, but again it is about how we organise and how we have fighting unions.

Look at any graph over the last 30 or 40 years and look at trade union membership. It goes hand in hand with the rise of industrial struggle and when people fight back and actually organise. It seems to me that this is what we need to look at. Look at Visteon and look at Vestas. Some people, in the case of Vestas, were not in a union at first, but understood that they needed to fight and organise and thus they joined a trade union.

Too often in the trade union Movement, we look at the younger generation and say, 'They do not have the same collective values. They are not as radical as people in the past.' Let us remember that this generation built the biggest anti-war movement in history. This is the generation which alerted us to the problems of climate change. This is the one that has been affected most by marketisation in the last 30 years when the institutionalisation of youth unemployment has come about. If they are not joining trade unions then we have to look at ourselves and ask, 'Why is that not the case?' We have to try to convince them that there is a way out of their problems and that is with collective responses.

We talk about the 1980s and the similarities. We do not have to go back to the 1980s. There need be no return to the 1980s. We need organised collective resistance. We need organised campaigning unions which can actually do that. I believe that if we put that forward then the thousands of young people who are, at this moment in time, looking for a union organisation can actually join and be strong.

Susan Highton (*UNISON*) supported Composite Motion 5.

She said: Congress, the motion is clear. The recession is hitting us, our families and our communities hard. It is hitting our unions hard too. Members are looking at their wages and thinking, 'What do I not need to pay?' It cannot be their UNISON subs.

It is at times like this that their union subs are a must when we are fighting to defend their jobs and their services. In public, voluntary and private sectors, we need to urgently recruit new members and not lose existing ones. There is a link to successful campaigning in the workplace. It shows our relevance and builds recruitment. Success breeds success and we need to be organised to do this.

Secondly, we need activists like you and me. We need to treasure them, respect them and support them. Why? It is because the best of our recruitment is face to face and for non-members that you cannot meet in person we have technology. This year UNISON started taking membership applications directly through our website, something that many of you might already do. What surprised us was that with a little publicity, this option took off overnight. What also surprised us was the number of people who joined on online in the middle of the night. Given our nightshift workers perhaps it should not have surprised us. For young workers, like for all workers, we offer eight sub-bands so that those on low wages pay low subs with the exception of apprentices in the public services. They can now join for just £10 a year.

Congress, no union can afford not to prioritise and organise recruitment in this day and age. Every penny of our members' subs must be put to good use. Every penny must contribute to our health and to moving us forward because the motion we pass this week could be

meaningless without workplace relevance and credibility. We must be the voice of Britain at work. To do this, we have to be seen and heard in every workplace. Please support this motion. Thank you.

The President: Congress, there is no opposition. We will move straight to the vote.

* *Composite Motion 5 was CARRIED*

The President: We now return to Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Economic and Industrial Affairs, Public Services, page 76. I call Motion 57, Child protection services and media coverage of baby Peter. The General Council supports the motion.

(Insert Motion 57)

Child protection services and media coverage of baby Peter

Charles Ward (*Association of Educational Psychologists*) moved Motion 57.

He said: Congress, this motion is in no way to be seen as an attack on journalists on whom we depend as one of the bastions of a free society. However, it is an attack on bad journalism, on sensationalism and on the Murdochs of this world whose only motivation seems to be using their control of the media to make money and to control opinion.

The AEP puts child protection and safeguarding as a high priority and in fact has invested considerable money this year for a small union on research into the role that educational psychologists can play in protecting children and what they can do in preventing unsafe printing abuse and safeguarding children.

Congress, we were all horrified by the death of baby Peter. We were all horrified by the actions of his mother and his carers. We were all concerned about the failure of the system that allowed errors to be made and, indeed, we should be concerned about the work of some individuals. However, we should not use this to sensationalise and blame everyone involved in the work of safeguarding and child protection just because of this single event which caught the taste of the media.

We should not tolerate things like *The Sun's* e-petition which called for *all* social workers involved in baby P's case to be sacked and to be never allowed to work with vulnerable children again without any indication of what responsibilities they may or may not have had. We should not tolerate the headline that they put in later on which just said, 'Baby P idiots must go'. In the view of the AEP and in my view that is outrageous and scandalous.

We have seen other similar headlines recently: 'Baby sent to live with bomb fiend.' The *Daily Mail* had, 'Bunbling police missed chance to charge baby P's mother.' There was the way that the facts were twisted by using the headlines and we know that the headlines are the things that people focus on and remember most. The *Daily Star*, even last week, had the headline 'Baby P bunglers sent kid to live with bomb fiend' and they supported that with a little bit of twisted fact and a little bit of semi-racist comment about fostering with families of the same culture. In November, the *Daily Mail* had a headline, 'Baby P council falsely accused me of abusing my child' reveals whistleblower', an attack on individuals using whatever they can.

What does all this do? It destroys, I believe, the motivation of key workers involved in the protection of our most vulnerable children. It deters new entrants into highly-reputable professions. It decimates services for vulnerable children. I have to say that it is not just social workers. It is a whole variety of professionals who get involved. For example, there are the CAFCASS professionals who have had problems resulting from Ofsted inspections following that.

Let us come back to social workers just to set the picture. UNISON did a survey in January and found that 20% of social workers were working in teams with vacancies. It was found that 75% of services reported that child protection referrals had increased since the Victoria Climbié case. Most frighteningly for me - and it should be for all of us - 60% of the people who responded to UNISON's survey said that staff who were either newly qualified, or even not properly qualified, were doing child protection work. That is the kind of damage that media irresponsibility can create.

The Local Government Association also reports similar problems. Two out of three councils, it says, have problems recruiting children social workers. Four out of ten have problems retaining them. It is no surprise. Yet, in spite of that, the numbers of children who have been killed by a parent have significantly decreased. Congress, the profession supporting children needs your support. I move. (*Applause*)

Gareth Davies (*Community*) seconded Motion 57.

He said: There has been a lot of hysterical publicity in recent years and a lot of this has been fed by fear of predatory paedophilia. We do not support that sort of thing and I do not think anybody in the hall does. However, we obviously all recall Sarah Payne (1st July 2000); Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells (4th August 2002); and Rhys Jones (22nd August 2007). Being in Liverpool, we also have to mention James Bulger. These things are utterly and completely outrageous, but they do not have anything to do with the sort of cases that this motion is seeking to address. We are talking about Victoria Climbié and we are talking about Baby Peter. We need to be looking to a solution to the problem. You cannot just say, 'Social services are rubbish' because you are just trying to sell newspapers by coming out with that. Yes, we will accept that you can look for improvements in the situation and that is obviously something that we always need to be doing in every field all day and all night, but just to whinge and come out with headlines that seek to increase circulation and which pander to public fear is not the answer to the problem.

We represent people in the NSPCC and we have to do the industrial relations job there, but there is a balancing act to be done. Obviously, we recognise the value of the work that this organisation does. The same goes for Barnardos and various other children's charities as well. That is why we are seeking to broaden the remit of the resolution. Having said all that, when it comes to crimes against children, we are talking about the worst crimes in the book because what is happening outside the dysfunctional family situation that you get with Victoria Climbié and baby Peter (and probably including that to a degree) is an attack on the future. It is your future, my future and our future. We are simply not having that.

We realise that we have to approach the situation in a cool and calm sort of way. You cannot legislate against the vagaries of human nature, but you really must support the people and the infrastructure that is designed to deal with the situation. You cannot just do this sort of

hysterical bashing. Therefore, I call upon Congress, unreservedly and wholeheartedly, to support this motion. (*Applause*)

Chris Tansley (*Unison*) supported Motion 57.

He said: Congress, I want to confess that I am a childcare social worker. That admission is not one that I have made many times during the last couple of years because of the hostility that I have come to expect in response to saying that. I have been a childcare social worker for more than 30 years now. I have been used to the media attacks on us if we are seen to fail to remove children at risk of abuse at the hands of those who should protect them, or have been attacked for being over-zealous in removing children without enough evidence to justify it, but I have never encountered the level of hatred and attack that followed *The Sun's* petition demanding the sacking of those social workers involved in the tragic case of baby Peter.

What I want to ask *The Sun* is this: just how do they think their campaign of hatred against social workers helps to protect vulnerable children in our society? (*Applause*) It is those very children who depend on the work that goes on every day of every week of every year by committed, hardworking social workers. I will tell you what the effect of their campaign was. It was further demoralisation of social workers. As the AEP mentioned, there was a fall in the number of entrants into social work. There was an increase in hostility towards social workers within those very communities in which they need to work to protect the most vulnerable children within them.

As the AEP also mentioned, in UNISON we surveyed our 50,000 social work members following the death of baby P and we asked them what changes had happened since the Lamming Report came out after the other tragic death of Victoria Climbié. What they told us was that their working conditions had got worse and not better. They in fact reported vacancy rates of 20-40% in some places. There were employers deliberately not advertising vacancies to keep costs down. They also reported that they were carrying dangerously high caseloads. Let me quote one of the social workers who responded to us: 'I have now over 30 cases, all of which are serious child protection. I have worked in social work now for 22 years. It has never been as bad as in these last two years. I now have 300 hours of overtime that I am owed that I will never find time to take.' On top of that, they were landed with a new, national recording system taking over 70% of their time, time sitting in offices in front of computers that should have been spent working in the community protecting children they have responsibility for.

They also reported many other issues affecting practice and they are in the ten-point plan that you can find on our website. I did not read any of that in *The Sun's* vile attacks on social workers. Another thing I did not read was that for one tragedy which occurs, there are hundreds and hundreds of children that social workers protect from abuse and neglect and work with to heal the emotional scars that abuse has left behind. (*Applause*)

Congress, I want to take this opportunity to applaud the great work that I know my social work colleagues do all the time to protect and heal the most vulnerable in our society. I ask you to applaud them too. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Congress, we move straight to the vote.

* *Motion 57 was CARRIED*

That is no more than our children deserve. (*Applause*)

The President: I now call Composite Motion 17, Independent Safeguarding Authority. The General Council support the composite motion.

Independent Safeguarding Authority

(*Insert Motion 58 - Independent Safeguarding Authority*)

Alex Mackenzie (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) moved Composite Motion 17.

She said: In 2002, the country was shocked by the murders of two schoolgirls, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. Ian Huntley, who was convicted of their murders, was employed as a school caretaker, but background checks, when he took up the post, had failed to reveal information of concern held by a police force in another part of the country. Had this information been shared, he would almost certainly not have been employed and so calls for an inquiry eventually led to a set of recommendations published in the Bichard report.

One of the key recommendations from the report was for the establishment of a single body responsible for vetting and registering individual suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults and barring those deemed unsuitable. The necessary legislation for such a scheme was put into place in 2006.

No one here could have anything but complete support for the principle of safe and effective public protection and the need to have the systems in place to ensure this protection and prevent a repeat of the terrible events of 2002. However, is the ISA, in its current form, going to be able to deliver this protection in a way that is also fair and proportionate to those who are required to be registered?

There has been a lot in the media recently about the ISA discussing volunteers who might be required to register: who can take the kids to swimming club or football practice? Yesterday, Ed Balls made an announcement on the ISA system. I had a glimmer of hope that maybe I would not have to come up to the rostrum and speak today as all our concerns would be addressed but no. He was simply asking for a review of those volunteers who might be required to register.

Congress, you should note that whilst volunteers might be required to register, they are not required to pay any costs. But what about our members - the 11 million workers required to register to work, paying out of their own pockets? They are in health, education, social care, prison services, childcare services and more. What about the low-paid part-time women workers who struggle to make ends meet - a physiotherapy assistant in a hospital on £6.80 an hour before tax; the catering assistant or cleaner in a care home or school - who must pay their registration to be allowed to work?

For those workers required to have professional registration, there is also duplication, both in cost and process. It makes the system for regulation overcomplicated with no clarity on how the ISA and professional regulators will work together, or maybe they will not. One of the greatest areas of concern is the hearing and appeal processes. The ISA rightly has the power to bar individuals from working in any situation with vulnerable groups. However, the current proposal is for a paper-based hearing only with no ability for the individual to make

representation in person. What about the rules of natural justice? What about our right to be represented when others are considering our employment? We are calling on the Government to ensure a fair hearing system based on existing best practice to remove the duplication of process for those already on professional registers and to make it mandatory for the employers to pay the registration fee and not individuals.

Congress, public protection and, in particular, protection of vulnerable groups matters to all of us and to our families. However, if the ISA scheme is to succeed in its key role of public protection then the government and the ISA body must respond to our concerns and ensure that it is also a fair system for workers. Please support this motion.

Judy Moorhouse (*National Union of Teachers*) seconded Composite Motion 17.

She said: Congress, the establishment of the ISA could have been the ideal opportunity for the government to have rectified a gross unfairness, the unfairness whereby prospective employers of teachers have access to unproven allegations and other untested soft information held by the police and communicated through enhanced disclosures, but it was not to be.

Let us be very clear about this. Unproven allegations and other soft information will still be disclosed to employers even when the ISA has cleared teachers and others to work with children and young people. Real examples of the sort of information that has been disclosed include the fact that a teacher is HIV positive; a teacher has a son who has a caution for sexual assault; a teacher has been accused of an assault by a pupil despite the fact that the police decided not to charge. Never has the old adage, 'There is no smoke without fire' been acted upon so assiduously.

DCSF guidance also dictates that all reported allegations and concerns should be recorded by the head teacher and employers and disclosed to prospective employers in references. Colleagues, the NUT believes that child protection procedures must be robust and effective. There is no place within the teaching profession for those who wish to take advantage of their position to abuse children. However, it is also important that teachers' rights are balanced with this and that they are treated fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Another of concern to the National Union of Teachers is the suggestion that the requirement to be registered with the ISA could be linked with the National Identity Card System and database. In fact, in 2009, airside workers were threatened with exactly this prospect. Fortunately, and following a vigorous campaign, this requirement was removed, but the identity card requirement has not gone away.

The Government are currently suggesting that identity cards will become compulsory for foreign nationals but otherwise will be voluntary. However, from 2011, those who apply for a passport will automatically be registered on the National Identity Base alongside their fingerprints and facial scans. Other pilot projects are seeking to encourage young people to agree to be registered on the database. Therefore, there remains a concern that a registration with the ISA could be linked with registration on the National Identity Database. That is why the NUT is asking for your support in ensuring that the hearings and appeals processes are fully consistent with the right to due process, to a fair hearing and to any necessary redress

and that they are fully compatible with articles 6 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Please support Composite Motion 17.

Jean Rogers (*Equity*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 17.

She said: There is no question that Equity believes that children's welfare is important and, where appropriate, checks should be carried out. Many of our members who work in areas playing to children and vulnerable people, in schools, halls, homes and hospitals, believe that children's entertainers should not be left alone with children but that there should be qualified supervisors there. Entertainers are not childminders. They are there to perform. Nevertheless, in order to continue working, all our members who work in children's entertainment do have the CRB checks. Now, clowns, magicians and puppeteers, who have spent their whole lives performing for children and who have had their CRB checks, even though they have been proved to be no threat, are now having to pay £65 in October in order to register for this scheme.

Equity is really concerned that the Government are offloading the cost of this scheme onto more and more of our members who just cannot afford these extra costs. We have about 37,000 members. Most of them are on single or short-term contracts. Very rarely does a performer have a long-term contract. Maybe they do in the soaps but even then they are for about a year and then they are reviewed and either renewed or not renewed.

We now believe that the Government are going to extend the net and include actors (mostly young actors) who work in Theatre in Education ('TIE'). They go into one school, they may do a performance or a workshop and there is always a teacher present, but it looks as though they may come under this scheme. Where will it end? Will it be pantomimes next? When I have played Aladdin, I have met children in dressing rooms and at the stage door, always accompanied by their parents. I perform on stage with the Dancing Babes. They are chaperoned in the wings and they are chaperoned in rehearsal. This Christmas in Leeds, when I am Wicked Queen, and I berate them in the audience, 'You dirty little scumbags; you little guttersnipes', will I have to have a CRB? Where will it end?

Our amendment says that all casual and low-paid workers, not just our members but all those who come under that heading, should be like the volunteers in the scheme who are cost-neutral. Please support this motion.

Pam Black (*Society of Radiographers*) supported Composite Motion 17.

She said: The Society of Radiographers is not opposed to an intention to protect the most vulnerable in our society. We are not opposed to systems which determine who should or should not work with children or vulnerable adults. We are opposed to a policy which does not allow for me, as a professional, or my staff, to discover or challenge the opinions or decisions made by others about what we do and who we are.

The Society of Radiographers submitted an amendment to the original motion, which is paragraph 5 of the composite. That reflects our concerns that in any barring an appeals process must be fair and transparent. How do I challenge a decision that states that I am not fit to work with children or vulnerable adults? How do I explain to my staff member that HR have told me that I have to send them home when they have no idea how to challenge my authority?

If I have to discipline a member of my staff, I have a clear process to follow. We both know that process and we both understand what can and will happen. The information I have is the same as that which my member of staff will see and be able to challenge, but the ISA will not be following this process. They will not be transparent in their dealings with me or my staff. They will make decisions that I cannot challenge. They will make decisions that I have not seen. They can take away my livelihood and destroy my standing in the community. This cannot be right and this cannot be allowed. To add insult to injury, they even expect me to pay for this outrage. Challenge me if you must. Investigate me if you want. I ask for nothing more than a fair hearing and a fair process. I ask Congress to support this composite. Thank you.

Paul Rodmell (*Association for College Management*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 17.

She said: We believe that ISA assessments should be based on relevant criteria using up-to-date and secure information. I ask Congress to consider this scenario: a member has 23 years unblemished service record working with children with special needs. There is a mix-up regarding the administration of two drugs with one child almost getting another child's medication and vice-versa. Fortunately, no child suffers any ill-effects. The internal investigation by the LEA finds that, actually, the school rather than the member is at fault due to not having any proper procedures. It is not our member's fault. It is merely an accident waiting to happen. The blame lies with the institution and the LEA. There is no police involvement or, indeed, any suggested unlawful activity. Following our intervention the member is not even disciplined. However, the LEA, apparently, reports the drugs incident to the ISA. Our member is now being told that she could be put on one or both of the ISA lists. This begs the question: just what did the LEA say? Was it accurate? Did it include all the information, and who in the local authority provided that information? More importantly, what criteria will the ISA be using to decide if our member is bad or not?

A mistake due to someone else's procedure is hardly in the same league as someone who behaved negligently. Surely, the relevant criteria here would have to be who is at fault? So it is vital that the information used is accurate and secure and that the criteria to be used are relevant and fair.

ACM's second contribution to this composite is that information from enhanced CIB checks should be considered with due care so that where false allegations have been made about an individual, they are not barred from working with children and vulnerable adults unless there is some very good reason. Even allegations proven to be totally without foundation can form part of the enhanced CIB check, and this is unacceptable. There needs to be workable guidelines to enable proper consideration to be given in these instances. I ask Congress to support.

Glenroy Watson (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke in opposition to Composite Motion 17.

He said: Congress, this is a most unpopular job, because most of the speakers before me have mentioned many of the things that we are concerned about and why we believe we cannot support this motion. The point is that at the end of the day a process that offers you the opportunity to appeal is a little bit after the horse has bolted. We want a system that prevents wrong information and the wrong process being engaged. When people talk about a level

playing field, ie that all concerned have a neutral process about the cost of this scheme, it is just trying to endorse it. There has to be a better mechanism to do this that is secure and who we can hold accountable.

Look at what the police are doing with DNA. They are not releasing DNA which they know they should not hold. I think we need careful consideration before we engage in a process which is charging our members and our people for paying for an investigation into themselves and then, when it is wrong, they are refusing to change it. I am, sorry, Sheila, but there now has to be a right of reply as to how it is that this is taking us forward. I do not think it is and we have concerns without our delegation that this is the wrong way to approach this situation. Where are those people who are supposed to take this responsibility and take it forward? Are they being let off the hook while the workers concerned are being asked to cover the cost? I know it is controversial, comrades. I have been deliberating with how to do this, how to raise this and how actually get your support. I realise that many of the speakers have come and supported this composite. However, we have concerns and we would like those concerns addressed. Thank you, comrades.

The President: Thank you very much, comrade, and we do appreciate your point of view. Does the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy wish to use their right of reply?

Alex McKenzie (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*), in exercising the right of reply, said: President, I am a little bit confused, unfortunately, about the opposition of the RMT, and I am assuming that what they are actually saying is that they oppose the whole concept of the ISA, which is not what we are saying because we believe that vulnerable adults and children do need protection from the likes of somebody like Ian Huntley, who managed to get a job in a school thereby putting himself in a position where he could then attack and kill two girls. What we are asking for is that the process they have put in place actually to be fairer for our members, to make sure that information that is given is based on factual information and that the person who is being investigated is informed, that a due process of a hearing is one that follows what we would expect from any situation where you are being investigated.

The cost, as we agree with our RMT colleague, is something that we do not believe should be put onto the individuals, but that the employers should be paying for that. Congress, I urge you to support this motion to allow good public protection whilst allowing a fair system for our workers. Thank you.

The President: I remind Congress that the General Council is in support of the composite and we will move to the vote.

* *Composite Motion 17 was CARRIED*

Children's workforce

(Insert Motion 59 - Children's workforce)

John Chowcatt (*Aspect*) moved Motion 59. He said: Congress, unless the public opinion polls soon and dramatically start to alter, all of our public services are facing a return to the hungry years because we are going to see, particularly from 2011 onwards, which is the end of the current comprehensive spending review period, sharp reductions in vital public expenditure on key services. This dark cloud is looming just as we detect an emphasis

coming from Government, particular from the Department for Children but also from other Government departments and agencies, on the very bold concept of building over time one broad children's workforce - one children's workforce - a workforce that encompasses all of those who work in schools and education support services, in all youth and career services, in children and family social care, in youth justice services, in the whole area of early years and child care services and, increasingly, in children's health services. This is an estimated 2.7 strong children's workforce.

As trade unionists we instinctively support the basic Government agenda that has triggered this new focus, this new concept, and that agenda is the Every Child Matters agenda in England. It prioritises children's services integration, quite rightly, and it seeks to secure for every child and young person in the country five key outcomes: staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing. We also welcome the fact that the Government have now set up, albeit only recently, a new National Level Children & Young People's Workforce Partnership involving trade unions to consult over the development of this workforce and over specific plans to improve its training and professionalism. On track for next year, so very soon, is a detailed Integrated Qualifications Framework, an IQF, to cover the whole of that broad children's workforce in one framework.

But this motion says that further progress is needed if the Government really want to achieve a more effective and better co-ordinated children's workforce. Firstly, every part of that workforce should be entitled to concrete arrangements to ensure fair pay and conditions of employment. That includes the, historically, very low paid and overwhelmingly female labour force that works in early years and childcare settings, including the new Early Years Professionals, EYPs. Similarly, as we discussed in another motion a few minutes ago, low pay levels still generate major problems of staff recruitment and retention in other key children's services professions, like social work, and that does need urgent review, particularly in the light of the 'Baby Peter' episode and the appalling recent episode in Doncaster concerning violence to children. That is the first point.

The second point is that we need to ensure that expert professional supervision remains available to address difficult ethical and professional problems whenever or wherever they arise in all localities, and that this is not eroded as we move towards more multi-disciplinary teamworking in children's services. There are local authorities around the country which have so far got that right and can show how it can be done but, unfortunately, not in all cases so far.

Lastly, as this motion says, we should avoid reinventing the wheel. We have to have a bit of humility. We have to accept that some countries in northern Europe and beyond have, for a long time, been engaged with more holistic approaches to child development, to seeing children in the round. We need to discuss and learn from their experiences to see what can help us here. That includes learning from the experiences of 'social pedagogy', as it is called, in Scandinavia, Germany and beyond. That can boost the effectiveness of children's services in our country.

Congress, more than ever, in a period of recession and with public service cutbacks now looming, we all want the very best for all of our children and young people. We all support the basic principles behind the Every Child Matters agenda, but this motion says we also need faster progress now on fair pay and consistent support for the children's workforce which is

going to have to deliver that agenda today and tomorrow. Congress, please support Motion 59.

Charles Ward (*Association of Educational Psychologists*) seconded Motion 59.

He said: Congress, before I start, can I thank you for your very supportive comments in relation to the vote on Motion 57.

Colleagues, the AEP seconds this motion and wants to bring to your attention the broad extent of the professions involved in the children's workforce and the broad extent of the work that they do. I will just focus very quickly on my members and some of the work they engage in. I think everybody thinks, 'Ah, yes, educational psychologists. They do statements and assess children'. But they do far more than that. They are clearly involved in much multi-disciplinary work. They have significant roles to play for children in care, in fostering and adoption, in early years, in child protection, as you heard earlier, and also with youth offending teams. That is just some of their work. What they do have is a significant role, as so many members of the children's workforce do, in early intervention, and it is early intervention that we should be looking at because that brings about prevention of problems rather than trying to deal with problems after they have arisen.

I also want to draw your attention to, which is particularly to bullet point (ii) in the motion where it talks about proper supervision. These workers are key workers for vulnerable children. They need to have highly qualified workers and they are often involved in very intense and emotional work, and they need proper professional supervision. They need supervision that supports them and not just manages them. That is essential for our children's workforce. For our children, if I can quote you, President, 'no more than they deserve is a proper qualified children's workforce'.

The President: Congress, once again there has been no opposition so we will move to the vote.

* *Motion 59 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, as you are aware, unfortunately the sororal delegate from the Labour Party, Cath Speight, was not able to give her address yesterday afternoon, but I am hoping to be able to invite her to address you, Congress, on Thursday morning.

Prison privatisation

(Insert Motion 64 - Prison privatisation)

Brian Caton (*Prison Officers' Association*) moved Motion 64. He said: President and Congress, we have spent the last two days looking at how our public sector workers come under attack. As a member of the Prison Service we have felt that attack firsthand throughout the time of this Government and the previous government. When we talk about privatisation, like many of you in this hall, I watched people balk at the idea that you could privatise water that came from the skies, and that you could privatise water companies. Let me tell you this. When you talk about privatizing prisons, you are even going that step further.

The motion is quite explanatory. The POA is asking for your support in stopping the further privatisation of public sector prisons. We are told that everything is up for grabs. Well, colleagues, yesterday you heard from Jean Walker, the mother of Anthony Walker, who was murdered here in Liverpool. I put it to you as starkly as this: should those who carried out that heinous racial crime then be held for profit, so the profiteers can make money -- lots of money - from private prisons? I would hope your answer would be no.

When we talk about privatizing public sector prisons, many of you may say: 'Are prisons so well run?' The Prison Service has a league table, believe it or not - it's a bit like going to a hotel, isn't it. 'I'll find out what's the best hotel around' - and private sector prisons are at the bottom of their own league table, yet they want to privatise more. Privatisation has failed throughout western Europe in prisons. It is touted as being the panacea to make prisons better. There are no fewer suicides in private prisons. There are as many, if not more, assaults, and the one driving force for the privatisation of prisons is to smash public sector unions.

We recently heard - it was reported in the *Guardian* - that two judges in California have been imprisoned because of their links to private sector companies. They were being lobbied to send more prisoners to those private prisons so that their profits could increase, because that is what it is about. It is about making profit from incarceration.

If you go back to Victorian times, which were much heralded by Margaret Thatcher as a great time for Britain, they locked people up for profit and they had to buy their own food, and we put debtors in prison. Is that what we are heading for? Are we heading for a situation whereby we will be placing people in prison on profit margins? What happens when a prison goes bust? Will it ever go bust with our current criminal ways. We have 84,000 people currently in prison in England & Wales. That is the equivalent to a town the size of Burnley. We are told we will soon have 100,000 people in prison. Those in the City of London will be rubbing their hands because everyone you send to prison, if this Government or the government that follows it, will be imprisoned for profit. I ask you to support the POA in stopping further privatisation, in stopping the privatisation of public sector prisons.

We will soon hear from New Labour. What was morally repugnant - 'morally repugnant' were the words of Jack Straw - in 1997 should be morally repugnant today. Please assist us.

I will conclude now, President. This Government should not be the government of privatisation. If you want to put blue water between yourselves and the Tories, the Tories have already announced plans to privatise 50% of the public sector Prison Service. I would like to hear Gordon Brown say that they will stop privatisation now. Thank you.

Sue Fearn (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 64.

She said: Congress, *Prospect's* contribution to this motion focuses on the Forensic Science Service. Thanks to programmes like CSI, forensic science has come to be seen as a fashionable and attractive career. In many ways, of course, it is, but if only the reality of working in forensic science lived up to its media portrayal. In fact, the Forensic Science Service, currently a company wholly owned by the Home Office, has been under threat of privatisation since 2003. It recently announced its intention to cut 40% of its workforce involving up to 800 redundancies and to close three of its seven laboratories, including the closure of the only public sector forensic science lab in Wales, at Chepstow, as well as the

labs in Chorley and Birmingham. In short, the Government propose to slim down an essential service to make it attractive to a private sector buyer so it can be sold to raise money for the exchequer.

The lab closures will mean longer journeys to and from crime scenes as well as longer journeys to and from court to give evidence. Lower staffing levels will increase the time it takes to analyse evidence and return it to the police.

The idea of creating a commercial market in forensic science is a dangerous fantasy. No other country in the world has done it, but don't take my word for it. The experts themselves have warned, just this week, that pressure to deliver low cost investigations within tight timescales risks jeopardizing quality and could lead to a miscarriage of justice. So Prospect is fighting these latest proposals as we have been fighting off privatisation since 2003. We ask for your support in doing so.

The three month consultation period over the proposed redundancies and lab closures is coming to an end, and we have been pursuing a wide-ranging campaign with fantastic support from Lindsay Hoyle, the MP for Chorley. An Early Day Motion in the House of Commons currently has 79 signatures. More would be welcome. So please check out whether your MP has signed it. There has been a Westminster Hall debate and numerous Parliamentary questions have been tabled. We have met with Home Office Minister, Alan Campbell, and along with colleagues in PCS we have submitted evidence to an emergency inquiry by the Home Affairs Select Committee. As a result, the Select Committee has written to the Minister asking that the Government reconsider their proposals. Let's hope they are listening.

Prospect reps who work for the Forensic Science Service greatly appreciate the opportunity created by today's debate to draw attention to their plight. You may see some of them from the Chorley lab outside the Conference Centre this lunch time. There is no mistaking them. They will be wearing their white evidence collection suits and handing out leaflets that look like *this*. Please talk to them, please support them and, please, wholeheartedly support this motion.

Austin Harney (PCS) supported Motion 64.

He said: I am from the PCS union and I am here to give strong support to opposing the privatisation of prisons. I, myself, work for the Ministry of Justice, and at the moment we are in fear of court houses, Crown Courts and County Courts, facing closure and being turned into regional call centres, lowering the service delivery for our court users. That is an absolute disaster, and also probably going out to private tender is what we are hearing, as frightening as that is. But we are going to support the Prison Officers Association all the way in this campaign of fighting privatisation of the prisons.

As I begin, the record of the private sector in prisons as been lamentable. It has been a catalogue of failure and mismanagement, and this is not just a recent phenomenon. If we are concerned with evidence-based policy making, let's go back to the very first use of the private sector in dealing with crime and punishment. Not long after the British government started transporting convicts to Australia, they removed the job from the Navy and gave it to private ships. The private companies made such a mess of it that the government had to re-nationalise the job and pass it back to the public sector. So the evidence has been clear right from the start. Despite this, the new Labour Government has gone further and faster than any

previous government in privatizing prisons and prisoner-care. The UK has led the way in intruding the private sector into its justice system. With a total of ten private gaols, Britain already has the most privatised system in Europe. Yet despite the favoured conditions for winning contracts, the public sector continues to out-perform private bids. The Prison Service's bid for Manchester Prison, for example, was judged 18% better for quality and 20% cheaper than the nearest private company bid. Its bid for Blakenhurst Prison was 13% better for quality and 12% cheaper.

As a result, Manchester was kept public and Blakenhurst was returned to the public sector. It is very worrying that internal papers from the British Prison Service that were leaked to the BBC last year contained prisoner league performance tables. Ranking all prisons in England and Wales show that private prisons were consistently the worst for security, maintaining order and re-offending rates. Take just one typical example. The Chief Inspector of Prisons found in 2005 in Doncaster Prison, which is privately managed by SERCO, that conditions inside the prison had deteriorated since the award of the contract. In 2007 Jack Straw announced the three new so-called prisons or the private Titan warehouse prisons housing 2,500 prisoners each, with private sector involvement. The Labour and Tory Parties are looking very favourably at this in the future, despite its poor performance record.

Fellow delegates, privatisation is a failed experiment and a discredited dogma and nowhere more so than in the criminal justice system. We must give a lead to nationwide campaigning against further prison privatisation and publicise the appalling record of the private sector in criminal justice. Please support this motion and it is about time that all trade unions in the justice sector joined forces against the privatisation of prisons and the closure of court houses.

The President: As there is no opposition to the motion, we now move to the vote.

** Motion 64 was CARRIED*

Probation service cuts

(Insert Motion 65 - Probation service cuts)

Jonathan Ledger (*National Association of Probation Officers*) moved Motion 65.

He said: Congress, during the past year staff in the Probation Service, the overwhelming majority of whom are union members, have had to endure the growing threat of cuts in the Service's budget which, if implemented, threaten the livelihoods of many of them. That is a sadly familiar story for us all, of course, in these difficult times, but one which has been played out so confusingly that we have often felt that we were in the midst of an unfunny and poor written farce.

In October 2008 the National Offender Management Service announced that a £120 million cut in Probation's budget from a starting figure of just over £900 million would be made over a three year period. Napo responded immediately, calculating that if such cuts were implemented around 20% of staff would lose their jobs. We warned publicly that this decision would result in the effective meltdown of the service. This response appeared to upset the Ministry of Justice. At a NOMS conference in February, when I challenged the Justice Secretary about the cuts, he accused Napo of spreading stories that he described as

'bovine excrement'. It is too early in the day for me to use his exact words. But within weeks his tune and language had changed. Following local and national campaigning, during which our members demonstrated the extraordinary depth of their commitment to their work and union, the now indicative budgets for 2010 - 2012 were, apparently, withdrawn. I say 'apparently' because these indicative budgets, like some enormous financial elephant in the room, have never truly disappeared. Probation employers continue to plan on the basis that the cuts will be implemented. Some staff have taken voluntary redundancy or early retirement already, but compulsory redundancies on a huge scale are also being discussed.

The next generation of staff -- the future of the service -- is being decimated as we meet here now in Liverpool. Of the five hundred or so trainee probation officers qualifying this autumn, around half have now offer of work and are finding employment elsewhere. Given that it costs the best part of £100,000 to train each trainee, this is a massive waste of precious resources as well as a devastating loss of the skills and talent of people committed to the values and ethos of the service. On reflection, not so much a farce, more a fully blown tragedy.

These current and future staff losses are coming at a time when the demands on the service have never been greater. You do not have to be a criminal justice academic to work out the impacts of a recession on criminal behaviour in our communities, driven by hopelessness and despair. Yet the Government can only point to past investment in the service whilst ignoring the crisis going on now. Staff in the criminal justice system do a tough, difficult, sometimes dangerous and vital job on behalf of our society, rarely acknowledged, all too often only given attention when something goes wrong. They deserve better than the shabby and shambolic treatment they are getting.

Napo is a small union, but we draw strength and encouragement from our joint work with sister unions engaged in the criminal justice system. Dave Prentis and I have monthly meetings with Jack Straw at which UNISON and Napo together set out our demands. The support of the GMB for this motion is greatly appreciated.

I can also put on record, going back to the previous debate, Napo's full support for the POA and its on-going fight against the obscene privatisation of the prisons, a threat which also exists for the probation service.

Sisters and brothers, as the powerful debate on the public sector and threatened cuts demonstrated yesterday, the cuts to the probation service are just part of a much bigger picture. But I can promise you that Napo will use all the resources at its disposal to fight not just the threat to our members but to join with all public sector unions in defending our public services, the public services that are so integral to the decent, fair and just society we all believe in. Please support this motion.

Rehana Azam (*GMB*) supported Motion 65.

She said: Congress, in the debate about public sector spending, the cuts proposed in the criminal justice system are among the most alarming. The criminal justice system is directly responsible for looking after vulnerable people in our society, people who find that these hard times are hitting them hardest. In a recession they need to access a range of services to get them through it, but these services are under threat. The Probation Service, as you have heard, has been riding a roller-coaster of reorganization and budget cuts since 2001. Constant

uncertainty and change, coupled with increasingly heavy workloads, have taken their toll on the workforce. The proposed cuts will mean widespread job losses and will bring moral down to an all-time low. Frontline staff are already massively overworked. The recession has brought big increases in case work for everyone in the criminal justice system.

Take, for example, the Legal Services Commission, which administers legal aid. It is under pressure to deliver 30% cuts over the next five years. Worst still, it has now been commanded to find an additional 5% savings from its administrative budget this year and 10% by 2010. That is certainly an area which the GMB will be challenging. Budget cuts will lead to massive job losses in the Legal Services Commission, and they announced 600 job cuts in October of last year, all at a time when crime and the need for legal assistance is set to rise steeply. When these services are under greatest pressure, reducing their funding brings with it the real possibility of a delivery crisis. They will certainly add to the numbers of those made vulnerable by unemployment. It does not make any sense to cut budgets at this time.

Remember this. The Probation Service and the Legal Services Commission exist to make sure that those most likely to get shredded by this recession keep their lives in one piece. This is the worst possible time for such steep and callous cuts to the criminal justice system. Please support.

The President: As there is no need for the right of reply, we will move straight to the vote.

** Motion 65 was CARRIED*

Emergency fire control regionalization

(Insert Motion 66 - Emergency fire control regionalization)

Matt Wrack (*Fire Brigades' Union*) moved Motion 66. He said: This is an issue that we have brought to Congress to discuss previously. If I can refresh people's memories. The Government's plan is to close all emergency fire control rooms in England and to replace them with nine regional fire controls. In terms of the impact on our members, this threatens hundreds of jobs. It also threatens our members pay, terms and conditions of employment. It also threatens the quality of service provided to the public because emergency fire controls are at the heart of what the fire & rescue service does. Emergency fire controls receive calls from the public. They are the first point of contact with the public in the event of an emergency. They are involved in assisting the public in dealing with that incident, but they are involved also in mobilizing appliances and fire-fighters to emergencies and, subsequently, in the management of an emergency incident. They also manage the movement of appliances and personnel around individual fire services. There is a host of work not covered under the Government's project that is currently carried out.

One of the key questions which we have asked for a number of years now, which has never been answered, is who will do that work following regionalization?

For the Government, technology is the solution, but there are a number of major flaws in their thinking. The fact is that this project has run into huge technological difficulties like many Government IT projects. Nobody knows whether it will work and our view is that it will not. But this is too important an issue to put down to trial and error. The costs of this project have escalated massively - again, like all too many Government IT projects. The original claim

was that this would deliver savings to individual fire and rescue services. That claim has now been abandoned. What we expect instead is that cuts will be delivered to frontline emergency services in order to pay for regionalisation. The project is hugely late. The original plan was that all nine regional centres should be up and running by 2007 following a three year transfer process. No regional controls are up and running as yet in 2009, so the project is hugely late. But the biggest problem that lies behind the Government's plans for our emergency fire controls is that they believe that computers and technology can replace people. In this case, Congress, it is simply not the case. Technology can assist in the work that our members in fire controls do but cannot replace them.

Most distressing of all is the attitude that we have seen from Government, from civil servants involved in the project and from our employers, and that is their attitude to the people who currently undertake that work. I am talking about our members working our local fire and rescue service emergency controls. If you look back to 2007, for example, and those huge floods, our members worked far beyond what they were required to do contractually and were praised and patted on the back, but now they are being told that half of them are surplus to requirements. Half of them will face their jobs going down the road.

The Government's plan very clearly says that people working in the new fire control centres will not be considered to be part of the fire and rescue service. That really goes to the heart of the type of service we want to deliver because the Government have set up local authority controlled companies. Other parts of the public sector have already seen this model. They have no democratic accountability and no democratic control over that area of the fire and rescue service. As far as we are concerned, the fire service is based on teamwork and an essential part of that teamwork is the people who work in those emergency fire and rescue control centres.

We are facing a huge difficulty in relation to public finances. The Government have said, as we are likely to hear this afternoon, that cuts need to be made. We can suggest one cut that can be made. Scrap the regional fire control project. You will save millions and millions of pounds. It would be welcomed by those who work in the service and welcomed by the service itself. (*Applause*) I will finish by saying that we call on the Government to give that commitment to scrap the project, but we also give notice to them and to our employers. We will not sit idly by and see hundreds of jobs axed in emergency fire controls, and we will not sit by and see employers say, as they are saying, that they will use that opportunity to attack terms and conditions and to rip-up national agreements. If it comes to that, then we will be organising industrial action to defend those members. Nobody wants to see industrial action in the fire service or in any essential public service but, Congress, we will not sit by and see those members go down the road in that way. We have pledged to support them and we urge you to support the motion.

Annette Mansell-Green (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 66. She said: Comrades, I am pleased to be seconding this motion as an emergency service worker myself employed by the police service. UNISON represents members across the fire, police and ambulance services so we are in a strong position to understand the needs of the workers and the public's requirements and expectations. As Matt said, the FBU has been campaigning to stop the local authority controlled companies for about four years, and during this time many staff have left to be replaced by temporary and agency workers. It is also worth noting that this has resulted in around a 30% reduction in women workers. So, on the one hand, the government sets targets

for the representation of women and, then, on the other hand, reduces that representation through this silly project. It is total and utter nonsense.

I know from experience that regionalisation is a backdoor way, a cover, by government to cut costs. In reality this means cuts in jobs and terms and conditions and, frighteningly, cuts in services to the public. This is a backdoor route to privatisation. Local people deserve a local service under democratic control. How can the Government seriously believe that local knowledge is not required? When you call 999 you expect the person on the other end to be able to immediately identify where you are and the nature of the incident. They must be able to dispatch the fire appliance, ambulance or police officers to the right location with the right equipment without delay.

The role of emergency control staff is highly specialized. It is carried out by skilled, dedicated public service workers who have a loyalty to their local brigade, police force, ambulance service, etc. I know that the FBU has achieved seven questions in the House of Commons, which is good but more pressure is needed. This proposal is a ludicrous waste of public money, an amount now running at £1.4 billion, which is quite an increase from the original forecasts.

Comrades, this affects us all. We must use our collective voice in opposition to Government and in support of the FBU campaign. Please pick up a leaflet from their stall and get your MP to sign EDM 1800. Emergency service provision has to be publicly funded with democratic accountability. It must continue to be run by dedicated and experienced public service workers. Do not allow yourselves or your loved ones to become a statistic because the fire service or, for that matter, the police and ambulance, did not have the resources or the knowledge to reach you in time. Do not just support this motion, comrades. Go out *there* and take some action for all our sakes. Please support.

The President: Thank you, Annette. Congress we move straight to the vote.

* *Motion 66 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, we return now to Chapter 6, page 145, of the General Council Report: Protecting People at Work. I call paragraphs 6.4, 6.6 and Motion 80.

Performers' occupational ailments

(Insert Motion 80 - Performers' occupational ailments)

Barbara White (*Musicians' Union*) moved Motion 80.

She said: President and Conference, working in the music industry as a musician can be fraught with physical and mental stresses. Through not fault of their own, musicians are frequently unable to follow a healthy lifestyle. Their job frequently means late nights, irregular mealtimes and little time to exercise. This all puts a strain on the musician before their work has even begun.

The British Association for Performing Arts states that patient numbers have risen by 50% in the last four years. The vast majority of those treated are instrumentalists suffering from problems in their muscles and joints. Dystonia, muscle spasms and injuries caused by over

use are very common. Many musicians are reluctant to discuss their injuries with other colleagues. This is completely understandable when you think about the fact that an injury will affect a player's ability to perform and the stigma attached to that would be potentially damaging to the musician. They frequently finish up with an injury that they are having to suffer in silence.

The Musicians' Union represents a group of workers that are not recognized within the European framework for occupational diseases. Occupational deafness, musculo-skeletal injuries and RSI are all included on the list of occupational diseases but musicians are omitted from that list. Within the UK we have the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, but musicians are not a recognized group of workers where there is a link from activity to illness.

The idea of being a musician and suffering from occupational deafness sometimes give rise to a smile. I can assure you that, like all occupational diseases, there is nothing faintly amusing about it. Audiologists have confirmed that the criteria for occupational deafness should be changed for musicians. I would like to tell you about four musicians from Scotland. One of our members is currently on sick leave with focal dystonia. Two other players have suffered from this condition and are now back playing. Another player has had to give up working for their orchestra due to a dystonia. Dystonia is not included in an occupational disease but should be, because we know that there is medical research that confirms there is a definite link to the work of a musician and dystonia. It would appear that focal dystonia of the upper limb is recognized but not focal dystonia of the mouth.

The Dystonia Medical Research Foundation describes a type of dystonia which affects brass and woodwind players as 'embouchure dystonia', which refers to the adjustment of the mouth to fit the mouthpiece of a wind instrument. Symptoms of embouchure dystonia include air leaking at the corners of the mouth, involuntary and abnormal contractions of muscles of the face. Imagine being a brass or a woodwind player in an orchestra and attempting the impossible by trying to play your instrument before hundreds of people whilst suffering spasms in the mouth. The dystonia is painless but will most probably elicit intense psychological stress. Discussions need to take place, both at European levels and within the UK, to look at our sector with a view to examining the activities of musicians and whether there is a link to certain illnesses. This is an area which requires research, so for the future if any musician is diagnosed with an occupational ailment they will be able to receive some form of compensation. However, I would like to stress that this is not just about compensation but the fact that musicians are a group of workers who need protection under legislation in the same way that other workers are protected.

By opening up this debate regarding research and recognition, it raises an awareness within the music industry as a whole. We must include music colleges where students could receive guidance about healthy practice as part of their training. They need a solid training in healthy work and practice ethics. The impact of work in this area will have far-reaching benefits. Sometimes people think of the music industry as a glamorous profession but, at the end of the day, our members are workers who, at the moment, are being denied the rights that other workers enjoy. Please support this motion and help your fellow workers.

The President: Colleagues, while the next speaker is making their way to the rostrum, I have indications by other unions that they would like to take part in this debate, but to try and keep Congress to time, because we are behind time this morning, I would rather conclude with the seconder. Thank you very much.

Graham Hamilton (*Equity*) seconded Motion 80. I would like to start with a very quick story. There was this actor who had been out of work for many, many months and his agent rang him up and said, 'I've got a job for you'. He said, 'Oh, that's very good.' 'How big is the part?' 'Well, it's one line, and you have to go up to Barnsley tomorrow because somebody has dropped out of the part and they need somebody urgently.' He said, 'What's the line?' He said it's: 'Hark, I hear the sound of canon!' So all the way up to Barnsley on the train this actor was practising, 'Hark, I hear the sound of canon!', 'Hark, I hear the sound of ca..non!', 'HARK, I hear the sound of canon!!' His agent had told him to go and see the stage manager, so he got in the stage door and the stage manager said, 'You're on very soon. Go and put your costume on', and he was still practising the line, 'Hark, I hear the sound of canon' -----

The President: Colleague, I have just explained to Congress that I do not have much time. I hope that is part of your time.

Graham Hamilton: Oh, it is, indeed. The stage manager said, 'I'll give you a tap on the shoulder and you go straight on the stage.' So he taps him on the shoulder and he goes straight on stage, and there is this God awful explosion behind him, and he says, 'What the fuck was that?' (*Applause*) I hope they are not taking time off for the applause. (*Laughter*)

To be serious now, and it is a very serious subject, the explosive effects of that particular special effect is produced by a maroon being set off in a steel bomb tank. Standing too close to that can ruin a performer's hearing for life. The list of diseases and illnesses presently recognized by the industrial injuries scheme predominantly but not exclusively pertains to those working or those who have worked in manufacturing, agriculture, mining or construction. Ailments affecting office workers are also covered, to cover things like repetitive strain injury. But workers in the entertainment sector often experience high levels of physical and emotional stress due to itinerant working patterns, insecure employment and lack of a guaranteed income.

It is generally recognized that performers such as dancers risk injury through the course of their career. Many dancers retire from active performance in their mid to late 30s. Actors and singers can suffer from severe vocal problems and stage fright. Our members are vulnerable to the same pressures as workers in sectors which are traditionally characterized as being more intensive, risk intensive or dangerous.

Equity supports members pursuing personal injury claims. Stage, film and television sets can be dangerous. In fact, our workplaces are just as dangerous as any others. What we want the Government to do and society to now fully recognise and account for the risks that creative workers are exposed to while performing and entertaining in public. Congress, I urge you all to request the General Council to pursue in this country and at European level the introduction of protective legislation to cover performers' occupational illnesses within the European Framework Directive on Health and Safety. Thank you very much. I urge you to remember the Barnsley Theatre and support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Congress, I want no complaints about bad language. I am sure we have all heard far more than that in our places of work. We will now move to the vote.

* *Motion 80 was CARRIED*

High heels

(Insert Motion 81 - High heels)

Lorraine Jones (*Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists*) moved Motion 81.

She said: President and Congress, I am a practising podiatrist and member of the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists. Colleagues, this motion is about high heels in the workplace. There is something about high heels that gets people very excited indeed.

When this motion was published in the Congress agenda last month it created a huge amount of media interest that has continued right up until this week. The motion prompted an article by a psychologist in the *Daily Mail* under the headline: 'Hands off our heels'. This article argued that the post modern generation of career women have rediscovered heels as a sexual and professional weapon. Hmm! Tory MP, Nadeen Dore, was quoted as saying: 'You can bet it's a man in the TUC who has decided it's high time that we were brought back down to size. The TUC needs to stop discussing women's stilettos to divert attention away from labour chaos.'

Karen Brady, the managing director of Birmingham City Football Club, said: 'I would let them take my laptop away before they took my high heels.' *The Sun* proclaimed: 'Killjoy unions want to stamp out killer heels in the workplace', and launched an on-line petition to fight for the right to wear high heels at work. It is all a bit of fun and no publicity is bad publicity. However, there is a serious point that many people appear to have missed. This motion is not about telling women what to do. It is about choice. Nadeem Dore and Karen Brady are independent women who are free to wear whatever they like to work, but what about the women who don't have a choice. For example, shop workers, cabin crew and women working on exhibition stands. Women who are on their feet all day and required by their employers to wear high heels as part of their dress code.

The Society thinks that dress codes that insist on women wearing high heels are likely to be discriminatory because, with the exception of Equity members starring *La Cage Aux Folles*, male employees do not have to wear them. But the most important issue to us is health and safety. Workplace footwear is covered by health and safety law. This requires that all reasonable efforts must be made to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of an injury occurring. So what are the hazards of high heels? Well, there is the obvious risk of sprains and fractures from tripping over, but if you wear high heels seven times the normal pressure goes to the ball of the foot or, I should say, the amount of pressure that travels through the ball of the foot is increased seven times. That is with every single step that you take. Also with high heels there is a 25% increase in pressure to your hips and knees. Women, interestingly, have twice the amount of arthritic changes in the knee joints than men, so that is a little bit of food for thought.

Heels can cause short-term problems, such as trapped nerves, corns, heel pain, and long-term problems such as hammer toes, knee and back pain, shortened achilles tendons and bunions. This is not a trivial problem. Two million working days are lost every single year due to lower limb and foot related problems. The NHS spends 10.5 million years on bunion operations alone and, no surprise, most of these are performed on women. So if you adopt this motion, it is a triple win. It is a win for women workers who will be protected from foot problems, both in the short and long term. It is a win for employers who will benefit from a reduction in sick absences and show that they value their health and health and safety of

women in the workplace. It is also a win for the NHS, which will spend less money on correcting foot and lower limb problems.

Congress, my union is not about banning high heels. High heels are great for glamming up but they are not great in the workplace. So please vote for this motion and stop the high heel hazards and allow women the choice of a healthier, more comfortable option, should they choose. Thank you.

Mary Turner (GMB) seconded Motion 81.

She said: You will wonder how she is going to get her school meals issue in. That is quite easy. Watch this space.

Congress, this is a motion that has attracted plenty of attention from the media, almost all of it in the wrong direction. According to the *Daily Mail* we are saying that high heeled shoes should be banned from the workplace because they are sexist and pose a health and safety hazard. The same *Daily Mail*, which last year published a full page article entitled 'The hidden cost of wearing heels', suggested that up to a third of women suffer permanent damage from wearing heels. Nadeem Dores, a Tory MP, who claims to stand for women's rights and used to be a nurse says on her blog: 'I am 5ft.3 and need every inch of my' - listen carefully - 'Louboutin heels to look my male colleagues in the eye and the TUC needs to get real and debate something meaningful.' For those of us in this hall who don't know what 'Louboutin' means, they are expensive designer shoes with five inch heels which cost a couple of hundred pounds or more. That is more than my school dinner ladies earn in a month! (*Applause*) Well, Nadeem, this TUC and trade union Movement does not need lessons from you or the *Daily Mail* because you set women's right back 30 years when you were in government in the '80s and the '90s, and we shall not forget what you did.

For millions of women, Nadeem, this is something meaningful, and if you feel the need to wear expensive high heels to stand up to your colleagues then I feel very sorry for you. In the trade union Movement we stand on our own two feet. (*Applause, cheers and whistles*) Congress, when I looked at the word 'Louboutin' I thought that was something I flushed down the loo. It's a load of crap!

Congress, wearing heels for long periods can cause health problems. Many female workers suffer from hammer toes, bunions and sore heels because they feel obligated to wear high heels in their working life. The health effects extend beyond the feet. Wearing heels has been linked to the development of sciatica, caused by the unnatural walking position and to tendonitis. Congress, gender is a big factor here. Is anyone in doubt that if shorter men were expected to wear platform shoes to work every day there would be a public outcry? My God, there would on health and safety goods, although it seems to work on Nicolas Sarkosi.

Congress, sixty years ago parents were banned from binding the feet of their children in China. This is about women having the right to choose. It is not about banning one shoe or another. It is about having the option of wearing shoes that are more comfortable and fit better without being told you look bad, unprofessional or even being disciplined for failing to follow a bloody stupid code.

Congress, the *Daily Mail*, Nademe Dores and their ilk have never worked a ten hour day in high heels. As a matter of fact, I don't think they work a ten hour week. Their opinion counts

for nothing in this debate. Support Motion 81 and give women the right to choose their own footwear and look after their feet, and my school dinner ladies will be dancing the night away. Thank you. (*Cheers and applause*)

The President: Mary, I have a cousin who cried when male Cuban heels went out of fashion because he was so short.

Lorraine Monk (*University & College Union*) opposed Motion 81.

She said: Congress, I am speaking opposing this motion, which given the response I have just heard is a brave issue. One of the things I am going to say, first of all, is that I don't think it is a class issue. My mum wore heels all the time. She liked high heels. It is not a question of class. I want to put that point to one side for a moment. This is a very well-meant motion that allows the TUC Movement to be portrayed in the media as a killjoy fashion police who want to control what women wear. Why is this motion only aimed at women? Haven't they heard of people Bellasconi or men wearing narrow shoes or young men wearing boots? It's about fashion. It's not just about high heels.

Dress codes are tricky. Who decides what is appropriate. My union fought a successful campaign against a management who demanded that women lecturers cover up their arms. Who thought that one up? A man! Sisters and brothers, under health and safety let's list all of our inappropriate dress. Do not pick on something that is symbolic of a much wider debate about gender rules. It is something which many women have very particular views on both for and against.

The gender pay gap widened during the last three years by 3 per cent. More women are gaining degrees but they are not getting on. We should have had a bigger debate about women's issues than just the shoes. Let's debate the Women's Charter with the same enthusiasm as this debate. Let's demand mandatory pay audits to redress inequality and stop telling women what to do. Look at the wording of this motion. Don't tell us that we are conned into thinking that we are walking on a Hollywood catwalk when we go into work. I know my workplace isn't downtown Burbank. This campaign is patronizing. It assumes that women don't know what they are doing when they get dressed in the morning. Don't tell me that high heels are inappropriate for day-to-day working environments. I can make my own decisions, and this is a working environment. What are you going to do next year if you pass that last paragraph? Are you going to start measuring the high heels that people are wearing.

Like most women, I have been told to how to act and look all my life. I wear Doc Martins and I wear heels. Maybe it is one of the few decisions we get to choose. We welcome a debate about sexism in the workplace at UCU. We want health and safety to be taken seriously. But next time, if you mean six inch stilettos put that in a motion. As a new delegate, I was told it is the written word that counts. We want women to have real opportunities in life and we do that by empowering them, talking them and celebrating diversity, not making judgements about them. This TUC should address more than just a few minutes on the equality issue. We have settled for arguments about shoes rather than where women's feet on the rungs of the opportunity ladder.

Chair, I move against this motion because of those last few lines which I think brings the Movement into disrepute. We need to be looking at much wider and much more important issues as well. Thank you.

The President: Colleague, I do have to offer the right of reply to the mover of the motion, but at all times we were talking about women's choice. (*Applause*)

Lorraine Jones speaking in reply, said:

Actually, the last speaker backed this motion because she was asking for women's choice and that is precisely what I, as a podiatrist, what my union and what my fellow members are asking for. Many of our patients are women who have no choice on the shop floor. They come in to work in pain and agony. We want them to have a choice of a shoe that actually will allow them to do a day's work and to feel good at the end of it. This is a health and safety issue. It is a health issue. It's a choice issue.

In *Sex and the City* Sarah Jessica Parker said 'It's a woman's right to shoes'. Lorraine, I will agree with you because it is a women's right to shoes, just like your mother could choose to wear a high heel on the shop floor. We do not mind. If a woman chooses to wear a high heel, a court shoe or a little ballet pump on the shopfloor, that is her choice, but where there are employers who do not afford the luxury of choice and there is pain on a daily basis, then we are asking you to, please, support this motion and allow women who have no choice the choice to choose whether they wear a high heel or whether they wear something that is lower and more comfortable. Thank you.

The President: We move to the vote. Once again, the General Council support the motion.

A delegate (*No name or union given*): I wish to raise a point of order. I am not going to speak on the debate because it would be inappropriate because you have had the right of reply. I thought it entirely inappropriate for the President to push the Congress in a direction. The President should preside over Conference without passing judgement on motions on the floor or amendments or contributions. Please refrain from doing it again.

The President: Thank you, delegate. We will move to the vote, Conference.

* *Motion 81 was CARRIED*

Address by Salvador Valdes Mesa

The President: Congress, last year you will recall that we carried two resolutions. One of them expressed our solidarity with the Miami 5. The second one committed us to strengthening our ties with the Cuban Trade Unions and opposing the illegal US blockade. This year is the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Cuban trade union Movement. It is also the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Our General Secretary, Brendan Barber, marked those two anniversaries by being the first TUC General Secretary ever to visit Cuba for May Day. While he was there, he invited his opposite number, the General Secretary of the Cuban trade union Movement, the CTC, to come and speak to Congress. I am, therefore, very pleased, indeed, to welcome Salvador Valdes Mesa to address us this morning.

Bro. Salvador has been CTC General Secretary since 2006 and before that he was the General Secretary of the Agriculture and Forestry Union and a government minister for work and social security. Whilst Salvador is speaking a translation of his speech to Congress will be shown simultaneously on the screen. I can assure Congress that we have made appropriate

arrangements for delegates who are visually impaired as we were required to. Bro. Salvador, you are very welcome and I invite you to address Congress. (*Applause*)

Salvador Valdes Mesa, General Secretary, CTC (Cuba Workers' Group of Affiliated Trade Unions): Brendan Barber, Secretary General of the TUC and Sheila Bearcroft, President of this Congress, dear friends, dear brothers and sisters, dear delegates. Since long ago I have been following the continued actions of solidarity carried out by the British trade union and labour Movements along with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, the agreements endorsed in the many TUC and trade union events, as well as the resounding resolutions unanimously adopted in relation to Cuba in the past year during the 140th Annual Congress, which has been an undisputed influence in other parts of the world. Therefore, it became my duty to be here today in order to express personally the gratitude of the Cuban workers, their trade unions and the Cuban people as a whole for your fraternal solidarity and sincere friendship.

We Cubans will never forget that in times of difficulties caused by the blockade imposed upon Cuba by the government of the United States and the disappearance of the socialist community, Cuba suffered a deep economic crisis which deprived us of fuel, food, medicines and many other necessary resources. Still, we have always felt the friendly hand and the solidarity of the British trade unions which encouraged us and supported us morally and materially when in the early stages of this century ill-intentioned campaigns were unleashed against Cuba with the immeasurable aim of destroying our revolution and reverting our economic and political system, a system defended by the overwhelming majority of our people, who support and defend the revolution. When innumerable attacks were launched from Europe against my country, the British trade unions and the TUC improved their solidarity towards our workers, launching a strong message of friendship, brotherhood, understanding and support, which had an impact throughout Europe, and which repercussion became most evident during the celebration of the International Meeting of Trade Unions with Cuba and the European Conference on Solidarity with Cuba held in the year 2006. These actions gave us more strength for us to continue ahead in our struggle against the most brutal and criminal blockade suffered ever by any nation, a blockade which is still in place. The US tries to make it even worse. The present some kind of flexibility by way of applying cosmetic actions but, at the same time, they are trying to impose conditions. Our people demand the complete elimination of the blockade and we do not accept any kinds of conditions whatsoever.

Also in our constant battle for the freedom of the five Cuban heroes, anti-terrorist combatants, serving their 11th year of unjust imprisonment in the United States' penitentiaries, we have relied on the hard work and support provided by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, the TUC and the British unions, which has been, without doubt, of extraordinary importance to us. For us it has been of profound significance to have received several presidents and several secretary generals from different British trade unions who have joined us on different occasions, such as the case of the visit paid to Cuba by the General Secretary of the TUC, our friend, Brendan Barber, leading the largest delegation that attended our May Day celebration in Havana this year together with half-a-million Cuban workers in Revolutionary Square. That action was, no doubt, clear evidence of the high level of our relations, friendship and solidarity.

Therefore, it is my utmost desire to say to you this day, on behalf of all the Cuban workers, thanks TUC and thanks British trade unions from the depth of my heart. I want to convey

through you, delegates, to the Congress a strong hug to all the trade unionists in the United Kingdom for all that they have done and continued to do on a daily basis for the benefit of the Cuban people who will never forget your solidarity and who will always be ready to extend our friendly hand.

This Congress is taking place in times of difficulties for the labour Movement and workers around the world. The profound global crisis, which began in the United States, radiates its consequences across the world, exerting its negative impact mostly upon workers and their families.

We are witnesses of the growth of unemployment, the worsening of labour standards, the worsening of the quality of life of our people, the growth of poverty and social inequality in today's world. The World Federation of Trade Unions forecasts a possible increase of 51 million unemployed between the years 2009 and 2010. Europe and the develop world exhibits the highest rate. Meanwhile, it is astonishingly gross to see the way in which multi-billion economic packages are being assigned in order to save banks and major corporations who are, indeed, the creators of the crisis and how, once again, confidence is being placed in those financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, which caused such damage and harm to the less developed countries imposing on them conditions that trimmed their sovereignty and controlled their natural resources, thereby causing a drastic reduction in their social programmes and, thus, eliminating jobs.

Cuba, my dear friends, in the midst of the fierce blockade, of which we are victims, also suffers severely the impact of this crisis. As a consequence, we have been subjected to an increase of almost 53% in the price of foodstuffs and other goods, a reduction in the price of our exports and the diminishing of our income and revenues coming from the tourist industry. Added to all this has been the disastrous consequences of the passing through in our country last year of three devastating hurricanes that left damages valued at not less than \$10 billion, which compelled us to make gigantic efforts in order to palliate the situation left by them.

However, the answer given in our country to all of these shortcomings is different. While unemployment grows in the world, we have adopted a number of measures in the employment sector geared towards protecting our workers while in the world workers are declared redundant and thousands of teachers lose their jobs. In Cuba we protect and we perfect our educational programmes and we increase the level of salaries of our workers in that sector. Today, the workers of the world are losing or seeing their pension funds reduced while in Cuba we would rather increase these items and we strengthen and improve our social security and welfare schemes, while in the United States medical care is being denied to almost 50 million citizens. In Cuba we have endorsed a budget for the extension of medical services, institutions, hospitals and others in order to increase the level of our medical and healthcare services. They are absolutely free of charge and our infant mortality rate today has been reduced to 4.7 per each one thousand born alive. This has been the lowest figure in our history.

It is well-known that our country provides international co-operation by way of thousands of Cuban workers abroad who, without charge, give attention to other nations and people in need. Also Cuba graduates thousands of young medical students coming from poor nations, sharing with them our no. 1 resource, which is our human resources created by the revolution.

Dear delegates and friends, we strongly believe that in these times of difficulties for the working class, it becomes of paramount importance for trade union and labour movements to seek, in a responsible way and far from petty sectarian outlooks, ways and methods that will allow us to channel and bring closer our points of view and our actions for the purpose of defending the millions of workers and their families who we represent. We understand that unilateral actions carried out by national and international trade union organizations, disregarding or ignoring their trade unions or even attacking their criteria, far from helping to solve the serious problems of the world, only serve the purpose of making them more acute due to the depression and the international dispute.

Thank you, once again, TUC; thank you, once again, trade unions of the UK, to your leaders and to your workers for this opportunity that has been given to me and, above all, for the friendship and solidarity that you have always given us. To all my dear friends, brothers and sisters, long live friendship among our workers. Long live solidarity. Thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

The President: Thank you, so much, Salvador, for that very inspiring speech. It is wonderful to welcome you here at the TUC Congress.

Colleagues, that concludes this morning business. I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this lunchtime. Details of these meetings can be found on pages 15-17 of the Congress Guide or in the leaflet included in your wallet. I would also like to remind delegates to complete and return the Equality Monitoring Form that has been sent to them. Delegates should have received pink forms which should be returned to the delegation leaders. If any delegates have not received a form, they should see their delegate leaders. Delegation leaders should return the forms to the TUC Information Stand. Thank you.

(*Congress adjourned at 12.55 pm*)

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

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

The President: Will delegates please take their seats and would Congress come to order? Thank you, colleagues. I once again thank Mundo Afrika who have been playing for us this afternoon. Thank you. (*Applause*) I do have a special request of the media. I know you are not here this afternoon to take photographs of myself, I understand that completely, but if once you have finished photographing a particular person who is sat not too far from my left-hand side could you refrain from bobbing up and down because the delegates are here to listen to what the Prime Minister has to say. (*Applause*) And when you are chatting amongst yourselves down there it is being heard on stage. Thanks very much. I know that you will try and refrain from getting in front of people.

Congress, as you can see we have now been joined by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, and the Rt. Hon. Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. In a moment I will invite Gordon to address Congress after which he will be taking questions with Yvette. First, however, we come to that part of our agenda where we recognise the immense contribution made by the lay activists in our unions, they are the bedrock of our Movement. As I am sure you know the lay representatives awards are our appreciation of their work. There are no individual winners as such but each year we do choose a number of

outstanding representatives to accept the awards on behalf of all their fellow reps. In a moment we will meet this year's representatives. The Prime Minister will present the awards to each of our reps but first we will see a short film which tells you something about their achievements.

(Short video shown to Congress)

Lay Rep Awards

The President: Congress, I call Chapter 9.3, Congress Awards. It is now time to meet our award winners.

Organising Rep Award

Michael Hunt is a GMB member who set up a union branch at the NPower call centre in Thornby, Stockton-on-Tees. His tremendous recruitment efforts have seen membership leap from 50 to 1,000 in just 18 months. *(Presentation amid applause)*

Women's Gold Badge

Yvonne Washbourne is a PCS member who works for Jobcentre Plus. Yvonne has worked tirelessly for her union over many years, not just in the workplace but also in the Midlands TUC and its LGBT Committee. She is also a health and safety rep and a diversity champion in her workplace. *(Presentation amid applause)*

Health and Safety Rep Award

Geoff Smith teaches at Malbank School and Sixth Form College in Nantwich, Cheshire. He is the school's safety rep and also the rep for his union, the NASUWT in the region. Geoff has raised the profile of safety issues within the school producing a DVD and other materials for use in the classroom. He has established a bi-annual safety conference in partnership with UNISON, the NUT, and Cheshire County Council. *(Presentation amid applause)*

Learning Rep Award

Nicola Njie is a UNISON learning rep and works in an e.on call centre in Leicester. Nicola is passionate about members being able to progress through their careers and she was pivotal in negotiating a learning agreement with e.on. Nicola has been organising union learning events across the East Midlands. Over the last 12 months Nicola has recruited more than 500 members for UNISON.

(Presentation amid applause)

Congress Award for Youth

Helen Flannagan is a PCS member and works for Job Centre Plus in Wigan. Helen has spent a great deal of time and energy successfully encouraging young people to get involved in union work. Helen set up a hardship fund during the PCS pay dispute of 2007. She held a young members event which helped recruit over 60 new young members to the union.

(Presentation amid applause)

The President: Congress, that completes the Lay Rep Awards.

Address by Rt Hon Gordon Brown, MP, Prime Minister

Congress, it is now my great pleasure to welcome the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to address Congress. Gordon, we know you value the contribution and the work of the trade unions and the TUC. This is the fifth occasion on which you have addressed Congress, the first three times as Chancellor and then two years ago as Prime Minister.

The Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP, the Prime Minister: Thank you very much. Let me first of all thank your General Secretary, Brendan Barber, for all he does; let me thank Sheila for the wonderful chairmanship of this meeting, and if I ever need someone to protect me against the press in the future I will call on you. Also let me thank all members of the General Council, and all delegates who are here today. I also want to congratulate all the award winners for their service to our Movement. Helen, Nicola, Michael, Geoff, and Yvonne, all of them are heroes and I am proud to stand with them to thank them today.

In this great Liverpool conference centre surrounded by massive new cultural and economic developments I want to thank the entire people of Liverpool who by working together all played their part in what is a massive regeneration of their city. Once Liverpool was laid low by some of the worst ever unemployment in Europe. Now, it is a city, even in difficult times, being regenerated because of the commitment, the collective action, and the community spirit of all Liverpudlians, and it could not have happened without all the people of Liverpool working together.

This is the 40th anniversary of a man going to the moon and when John F. Kennedy, the then President of the United States visited the NASA Space Centre to talk to people who were the workers there. He asked everybody what they did as he went round. One said, 'I am a technician.' Another said, 'I am a research scientist.' Another said, 'I am an engineer.' Then he met a cleaner and asked what she was doing and she said, 'Sir, I am helping putting a man on the moon.' It was not just the astronaut or the President who took the world to the moon, it was all the workers there together.

When I went to Vauxhall today I heard everybody say they were working together to make the best car they had ever made, the new Astra. When I visited schools in the last few days I have met classroom assistants and cleaners, and janitors, and teachers, who tell me they are working to make their schools the best in the land. When I visited a hospital a few days ago they told me that their aim was to give the best healthcare in the world.

So it is with our country; what we do, what we achieve, we will achieve by working together. For me progress is more than one person advancing, it is all of us advancing together. Even in the most difficult of times Britain will work best when we all work together.

It is hard to believe that we meet in Liverpool today in his home city without the presence of our great friend, a giant of our labour Movement, Jack Jones. Whenever there was an injustice that had to be fought, Jack was there. When Spain cried out in the 1930s Jack was there. When low pay demeaned people's dignity, Jack was there. When pensioners demanded greater security Jack was there. And let us pledge in honour of his achievement that we will

always pursue dignity and security for all elderly people in retirement. (*Applause*) When discrimination and racism threatened people, Jack was also always there. Let one of our memorials to him be that we will fight to defeat all racist parties and all racist politics. (*Applause*)

It was because Jack Jones's ideals were forged in the harsh and bitter experience of the 1930s that Jack was always there for people who needed him. The 1930s were, as Jack saw, a time when recession became depression because of the inaction of governments and the failure of the world to come together. If I had been addressing you a few years ago that would have been a matter I could have talked about of historical interest, a reflection of the crisis of a distant age. Today these lessons, that when people need help you do not walk away, are profoundly relevant because the fears of depression have been precisely the worries that workers and homeowners, and savers and businesses, have faced in the last 12 months. Like the 1920s and the 1930s banks that should have been stewards of people's money became speculators with people's money, but unlike the 1930s, having learned the lessons Jack learned we have not stood aside and left people on their own. The lesson from the 1930s is that when banks collapse and markets fail governments cannot stand aside. They must ensure that the savings of people, their mortgages, their credit, are all protected, and that they must intervene to save jobs.

Many of you will remember it was exactly a year ago last year that a financial crisis was rolling across the Atlantic towards us, a crisis so great that if we did not act there was every possibility of a great new depression. A year ago the 160-year history of Lehman Brothers Bank came to an end. It was a bank that had survived the Great Depression and it had survived two world wars but it could not survive this global storm, and 25,000 people lost their jobs overnight. But that was only the beginning. Lehman's was so entangled with the rest of the financial system that we saw what was the equivalent of a power cut right across the banking system of the world, and we saw trust collapsing.

It was clear that we were facing a crisis of such speed and such scope that left unchecked there was every chance that the whole system would freeze up with people on high streets across the country unable to get the money they needed from the hole in the wall, families' life savings being swallowed up, and companies unable to process their payrolls. The reports, I have to tell you, that I was looking at were as stark as they were serious: we were facing a situation that could have been worse than 1929.

I knew then it was going to have to be us, the government, that were going to have to step in directly and ensure that whatever happened to the banks we did not put at risk the savings of the British people, the mortgages households depended upon, the credit that businesses need to maintain jobs, and try to save thousands of jobs themselves. It was here in Britain that we took the first steps to recovery.

We had to make a choice, whether to trust the banks when they said they simply had a cash flow problem, or whether there were structural failures that had to be addressed. Then we had another big choice, to leave the markets to sort it out or to intervene with radical and unprecedented action, and we made our choice by taking majority shares in two of the biggest banks in the world, restructuring the banking system to prevent savers losing out and putting in place the biggest insurance policy that Britain has ever had. Fortunately, this is what other countries also started to do.

Then we had another big choice, did we let the recession run its course, as happened in the recession of the 1980s and 1990s, or to intervene to support the economy with fiscal action? Our Conservative opponents said not to intervene, just to let the recession run its course but we made the decision to offer financial support to businesses and to help homeowners and the unemployed.

I will tell you why we did so, because for me every redundancy is a personal tragedy; every mortgage repossession is a hope destroyed; every business collapse is someone's dream in ruins, and where we can act we will never walk by on the other side. (*Applause*)

As a result of taking action I can tell you that more than 200,000 businesses employing hundreds of thousands of your members have been able to keep people in work. That was not the choice of our opponents. It was our choice and I believe it is the choice of the British people. Twenty-two million people have benefited from tax and other changes that have boosted their real income at a critical time; not the choice of our opponents, it was our choice and I believe it is the choice of the British people. Up to 500,000 jobs which would not have been saved without the action that we have taken have been saved. That was not the choice of our opponents, it was our choice and I believe the choice of the British people.

By changing the way that the courts are dealing with repossessions and by guaranteeing help to homeowners in difficulty, we have helped 300,000 families with advice with their mortgages and helped thousands to stay in the homes they have worked so hard for and were in fear of losing. At no time in our history have we, the British people, come together to do so much to support our homeowners, our businesses, our unemployed, our young people, and this did not happen by default, it happened because of our decisions.

Then we had a choice about international cooperation with Europe and the rest of the world. We had a choice to let loose global forces, as happened in the 1930s, let them wash all over us, or unlike the 1930s to work out a strategy together to deal with the problems around the world. We had a choice, we could have gone our own way, pursued national strategies in isolation, resisted European Union and G20 cooperation -- these were the great mistakes of the 1930s -- or to work intensively to ensure that policies are coordinated and that the results of what we do are magnified and multiplied by what we all do together. So, to work with other countries, to have a coordinated attack on the recession, to have joint reductions in interest rates and the fiscal stimulus together were our choices, not the choices of our opponents, the choices we made and I believe these are the choices of the British people.

In each of these decisions the Government would have made the wrong choices if we had followed the advice of our opponents and critics. We know that the better path which we have taken, and the one our opponents urged that we should not do, could be worth up to \$5 trillion of investment in economies round the world, it could make the difference in output and growth of 4%, and millions are in work who would otherwise have lost their jobs. We faced the Conservative position down, we have been shown to do the right thing by British families and the British people, and we have worked better because we are working together.

I tell you, we still have other big choices to make where we also need to work together. The recovery is not automatic. The road to recovery is still fragile. It has been hard won by making the right choices and could be quickly wrecked by making the wrong choices. People's livelihoods and savings are still hanging in the balance, and so today I want to say to the British people, do not allow anyone to put the recovery at risk. There is a fundamental

difference between the parties as to how to come through this recession and avoid it being deeper, longer, and more damaging. We still have these big choices to make. The choice is whether we continue to act to help families and businesses or whether we listen to the Conservatives and withdraw support from families and businesses today, cut public services now, and refuse to invest in Britain's future.

So, again, the country has a decision to make about whether we continue the support that I believe is necessary for this recovery or we cut away the support now. It is a choice that says something about what we believe, not as political parties only but as people and as communities.

If I were to take the advice of our Conservative opponents who are putting forward this advice even today, I would have to stop the school leavers guarantee that is giving 55,000 young people a chance of further education or work experience. To tell school leavers, after their chances have been destroyed by the failures of the banks, 'I am sorry, there is nothing we can do,' and to abandon them to unemployment is to retreat into the Conservative mistakes of the 1980s which led to a generation scarred for ever. (*Applause*) To do so, as you know, would be callous and cold-hearted, and it is the wrong choice for young people and it is the wrong choice for Britain.

If I were to take the advice of our Conservative opponents we would today be withdrawing the support now available to thousands of homeowners, and do nothing to prevent repossessions rising to the rates of the 1990s. But to tell a new generation of homeowners who have saved up to buy their first home, and now face difficulties because of the recession, 'We are going to do nothing for you now the times are toughest,' is unfair, it is irresponsible, it is the wrong choice for homeowners, and it would be the wrong choice for Britain. (*Applause*) To tell the small business owner, 'Wait and see if the strongest will survive, and there is nothing government can do to help,' is also the wrong choice for business and it is the wrong choice of Britain.

This is not the moment to cut apprenticeships. This is the time for government to support them. We will provide 21,000 additional apprenticeships in the public sector this year. This is not the moment to withdraw public support for house-building but to step it up, and I can tell you that we have put aside £1.5bn to build 20,000 more affordable homes during the next two years, including for the first time in many years new, modern, council houses. (*Applause*)

This is not the moment to abandon the help that has kept over 200,000 businesses afloat. This is the time to continue it. So I can say that businesses who need deferral of payments will continue to receive them during the coming few months. We do this because it is right to help people but it is also right for the economy. The more jobs and homes we lose now, the higher unemployment rises, the lower growth is as a result, and the more difficult it will be to secure our recovery, bring our debt down, and keep people in their jobs and homes. Growth is the best antidote to debt.

I say to you today, do not let anyone derail the recovery and threaten thousands of jobs by calling on councils to stop building the houses our people need. I say to workers and businesses across the country, do not risk the recovery by abandoning what we know can work, a modern industrial policy, a laser focus on unemployment, and worldwide support for coordinated action.

Just this morning I met the head of the International Labour Organisation to discuss the best way of protecting jobs. In two days' time I will be working for British jobs at the European Union summit, stressing the need to implement the stimulus packages all over Europe and not stop them prematurely. Next week I will go to the G20 in Pittsburgh and I will put the case for a new global compact for growth, jobs, and stability for now and for the future.

In April, when the G20 met in London, we obtained an agreement about what we had to do together to move the economy forward. Now we need agreement about what we can do together to maintain this road out of recession and sustain growth over many years. I will be asking all countries to contribute to world growth to the benefit of jobs in all our countries. I will demand that banks beyond Britain do what we are trying to do to isolate banks' impaired assets and show that they have to be removed. I will be demanding internationally that we look at setting limits on city bonuses. I will be standing up for what you believe, that there should be no escape from paying your fair share, and that is why I will argue we should implement a black list on uncooperative tax havens round the world. *(Applause)*

So, be clear, my priorities for the coming weeks and months will be ensuring that jobs are retained, the recovery moves forward, new jobs are created, and that we offer people our vision of a fairer, more responsible, more democratic, and of course a greener Britain. I want an industrial policy to signal the creation of 1.5 million new jobs for the future; jobs in green industries, I making the low-carbon cars that Britain is leading Europe in developing, jobs in the new digital services and, let us be clear, jobs in advanced manufacturing which will be central to the long-term future of this country. *(Applause)*

I believe that the fight for jobs and fairness must include agency workers and so I am saying to you today that when Parliament returns our new legislative programme will include equal treatment for agency workers and that in the coming few months the law will, for the first time be on the statute book, in the United Kingdom. *(Applause)*

When the recovery comes, I want workers on low and modest incomes to benefit from rising prosperity. I want to see their skills rewarded with decent pay. I want them to have more chances to get on at work and get on in life. When people gain new skills, employers should make sure they use them so that the company can benefit, and workers can go up the pay ladder. I can tell you we will continue to raise the minimum wage every year. *(Applause)*

Because we know also the pressures many people face as they balance the demands of work with the needs of family life, we know that since 1997 we have increased paid maternity leave from 18 weeks to nine months and we retain our ambition to extend it further. This is not only good for mothers but helps children get the best start in life. But fathers have responsibilities too. No Tory government has ever given a single day of paternity leave. This Labour Government gave men the right to two weeks paternity leave and I can say now from April 2011 we will give fathers the right to take up to three months additional paid paternity leave during the second six months of a child's life, if the mother has decided to return to work. We believe in giving couples more freedom, dads more rights, and children more time with the two people that they love most of all. *(Applause)*

I want to talk to you today also about the future of our public services. People need to know in these difficult times that the NHS, our schools, our vital frontline public services, will not only be there for them but day by day, week by week, we will always improve the quality of services that we offer. Take the National Health Service, let us remember that here in Britain

as a result of the decisions of a Labour Government there are not millions of people uninsured as there are in other countries. Here in Britain you do not have to check your wallet before they check your pulse. Here in Britain health is a universal right and delivered on the basis of your need and not your ability to pay. *(Applause)*

We are now transforming the Health Service for a new generation. Thanks to the work that you do we are offering personal guarantees to patients about waiting times, that from the time they go to the doctor to the time they have their operation that they will wait no more than 18 weeks. While the Conservatives have pledged to abandon these guarantees, we are trying every day to ensure that the vast majority of patients get treatment even earlier and that we will continue to do. We have given guarantees to everyone worried about cancer that they will not wait and worry because of delays in the Health Service. While the Tories want to deny the right we are creating of no more than a two-week wait to cancer patients to see their consultant, every year we will make it easier and quicker for cancer patients to be treated with speed, and this we will continue to do. We have given guarantees about GP services, that there will be weekend opening and evening to suit you the patient to go at the time that is convenient for you. While the Conservatives want to leave GPs to do exactly what they want, we will ensure that this new right to evening opening and to weekends is extended to even more communities in this country.

We will match those guarantees. I am grateful to all the staff of the Health Service for their work in its delivery. We will match those guarantees with the guarantee that every young person will also have the right to education not to 16 as before but to age 18. Previously, the only way to get personal tuition for children who could not read or write was to pay. Now we are extending the right of young people with learning needs as well as those with talents to get the personal attention in school that they need, not through private tuition but through free individual tuition in our schools and in our communities.

We will give a guarantee that every year each and every neighbourhood will have more extensive neighbourhood policing on the beat that communities need to feel safe and secure.

We will do all these things, and more, because we believe that decent education, health and services should be available not just to some who can pay but to all our people as a basic right. We can only make these improvements, as you know, within a framework of sustainable finances and to pay for these improvements and to achieve our budget deficit reduction plan to cut our deficit in half over the next four years, we have to take action. Like other countries, Germany and the United States of America, we will have debt levels around 80% of our national income and as the recovery happens we will plan to bring that debt down. That is why to continue to fund our public services and to cut the deficit we have announced that we will raise National Insurance from April 2011 by 0.5%. That is why at the same time we will remove unfair tax relief on higher income earners and that is why we will also raise the top rate of tax to 50 pence for those on the very highest incomes. *(Applause)*

I am here because I must tell you the tough truth about the hard choices that we have to make. My motivation is always to do the right thing by the British people, investing more during the recession and others are now following our lead. We have made the right choice to support people where banks have failed to do so. We are doing the right thing now to make sure that for the future as we move into a full recovery we will invest and grow within public finances that are sustainable. We will be cutting costs where we can, ensuring efficiency where it is

needed, agreeing realistic public sector pay settlements throughout, selling off unproductive assets we do not need to pay for the services we do need.

Labour will cut costs, cut inefficiencies, cut unnecessary programmes and cut lower priority budgets, and when our plans are published in the coming months people will see that Labour will not support cuts in the vital frontline services upon which people depend. *(Applause)* The choice is between Labour, which will not put the recovery at risk, who will protect and improve our public services on the front line first, and make the right choices for low and middle-income families in the country, as against a Conservative Party that would reduce public services now at the very time they are needed most, make across-the-board public spending cuts to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest few, and make different choices about public services because they have different values. These would be the wrong choices at the wrong time for the wrong reasons because they have the wrong priorities for Britain.

We will at all times be guided by our values of fairness and responsibility. We will not cut public services to pay for huge cuts in Inheritance Tax for the richest few estates in this country. In contrast, we believe there must be a fair distribution of the risks and rewards. Today I can tell you that we will be saving up to £500m over the next three years by reforming Whitehall early exit scheme payouts for early retirement. It is a scheme that offers as much as six times annual pay and these high costs prevent us giving other people jobs. This is not the best way to spend public money, and I am calling on other public authorities to make similar reviews of these terms.

I know what some people will ask. With all these constraints in the world economy, with all these pressures that arise from the global recession, with all these difficulties that we have to confront as a government and as a people as a result of what has been happening round the world, can we still ensure that year by year we are advancing towards a fairer and more responsible society?

I remind you that when we came in, in 1997, we faced huge constraints to get the debt down but we chose the right priorities. We immediately created a minimum wage, we created SureStart for children, we improved schools immediately, we ended the neglect of the NHS, we created the New Deal that has helped two million people, and we did it because we chose the right priorities, each of us working towards realising the talents of all. I believe that the first thing we have to ensure on the road to that fairer society is to ensure a generation of young people have the best chance of jobs.

Remember in the 1980s how we marched for jobs, we rallied for jobs and we petitioned for jobs, but because we were not in power we could not create jobs without a government committed to full employment. So I ask the people who remember these days to campaign with us as we say we will not allow a new generation of young people to become a lost generation. We will not let this happen: never, never, again. Never again should the potential of young people be lost before their adult lives begin. Never again should their talent be wasted. So for the first time we will legislate to put the apprenticeship programme on a statutory basis and ensure that an apprentice place is available for every suitably qualified young person and thanks to Labour the minimum apprentice wage will also rise. *(Applause)*

I can also announce today that up to 7,000 jobs will be created as a result of our Future Jobs programme. It is the next stage as we move forward to create for young people 100,000 jobs. In total, we will spend £5bn on creating jobs.

Now, friends, as I conclude let me pay tribute also to our armed forces who have risked their lives this summer, as they do every year, to ensure global security. Let us remember their heroism is unsurpassed and our gratitude to them is boundless. (*Applause*)

I want to say another thing because I know that so many of your members were the backbone of the *Make Poverty History* movement. Many are anxious about the recession and what it means for global solidarity and global justice. So, let me reassure you today. There are those who would use the financial crisis as an excuse to break their promises to the world's poorest. We will not. We will keep our promises. Let us remember that our beliefs, our conviction and our determination to fight for them have resulted in an astonishing path-breaking and life-changing set of advances: 500 million children are being vaccinated against disease, 40 million children around the world are now in education where they were not, and millions of people are being treated for Aids and are living as a result of new vaccines and medicines. There are millions more with free healthcare.

Friends, these achievements teach us to believe that nothing is impossible. We should never believe a blind fate governs us all. We should never believe that justice is beyond our reach, and this is a moment that calls for the progressive policies that we fight and believe in. Only a government that believes there can be such a thing as market failure can meet the challenges of this new global age. Only a government that believes the economy exists to serve the people and not people to serve the economy can meet the requirements of today. Only a government that understands climate change needs collective solutions can meet our needs. Only progressive policies can answer the huge challenges we face.

So let us have confidence. Let us have confidence that our values of fairness and responsibility are indeed the values of the British people. Let us have confidence that we can reflect these values in our policies for building Britain's future and let us have confidence that by working together and implementing the values we believe in we can together lead our country forward. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

The President: Gordon, we know and realise that we are living through very difficult economic times but we all recognise the lead that you have given in addressing the global financial crisis. Thank you very much, Gordon, for those inspiring but also challenging words. Congress, Brendan will now facilitate a question and answer session.

Brendan Barber: Congress, it is good that Gordon and Yvette have the opportunity to answer questions from colleagues. In the normal way we asked unions to indicate in advance so we can try and organise the questions around some of the key issues that I know are of concern to unions. The first group of questions relates to public services and Eleanor Smith from *UNISON*, then Christine Blower from the NUT, Malcolm Sage from the GMB, and Janice Godrich, PCS, each with a different aspect of issues relating to public services, now have the opportunity to put a question. Eleanor, perhaps we will begin with you, please?

Eleanor Smith (UNISON): During the past decade our members have been working hard to turn the welcomed new investment in the new NHS schools into falling waiting lists and raising people's achievements but these achievements have been put at risk by the financial crisis and result in pressure for spending cuts. It was heartening to hear you say, though, that you will continue to invest in the recession. However, do you agree that a fairer way to rebuild our public finance would be to raise additional taxation from those who are best able to pay by, for example, a tax on bonuses over £10,000, which 73% of the voters support or,

as a suggestion by Aidan Turner of the Financial Services Authority, levying a transaction tax on the financial sector.

Brendan Barber: Thank you very much, Eleanor. NUT, Christine Blower, on a different aspect of public services.

Christine Blower (NUT): Thank you very much, Brendan. Prime Minister, the National Union of Teachers welcomes the commitment from the Government to increase funding per pupil in state schools to that in the independent sector. Can you confirm today that this remains an absolutely firm commitment given the importance of education at all levels to ensure that the knowledge and skills are available to keep the UK well positioned when we begin to emerge from the recession?

Brendan Barber: Christine, thanks. Malcolm from the GMB.

Malcolm Sage (GMB): Prime Minister, you have called on the trade unions to fight for our public services like never before but we need a categorical assurance that you will not follow David Cameron's limbo routine of continually lowering the bar on public services. Even the Tories recognise the social, health and educational benefits of universal free school meals for under-11s, but they will not commit to funding them. So will you make a manifesto commitment to bring in this popular vote-winning policy?

Brendan Barber: Thanks, Malcolm. PCS, Janice.

Janice Godrich (PCS): Prime Minister, you referred in your speech to cutting costs by ending early exit schemes in Whitehall. May I respectfully remind you that thousands of low-paid admin workers in job centres, courts and the defence industry, have accrued rights under those schemes so I really urge you to reconsider that proposal (*Applause*) My question, Prime Minister, is that you are reported in the media as having said the Tories will approach the general election with plans to abandon national pay bargaining in the public services but Labour will take a different approach. In the Civil Service national pay bargaining was removed in 1994 and we have serious pay inequality and unfairness throughout government departments and related bodies. Myself and our sister trade unions have been trying to persuade you through the Cabinet Office to restore national pay for 10 years now. Would you be able to confirm now that if re-elected you would talk to us and the other Civil Service unions about moving to national pay for the hundreds and thousands of the Government's own employees. Thank you.

Brendan Barber: Thank you very much, Janice. There are a number of issues concerning public services and future funding issues. Gordon?

The Prime Minister: First of all, on free school meals we are piloting this year in three areas free school meals for every child. We are doing it in Hackney, we are doing it in Hull, and we are doing it in the north-east. The early results are what you might expect, that it is not only raising the nutrition of children but it is also making a huge difference to the way that they behave and their educational achievements in the schools. So this is an issue that is right at the centre of the political agenda because of the success that we are seeing in these pilots, and we will look carefully at what we can do next. Let me also say, of course, there are still thousands of people for whom we guarantee free school meals and will continue to do so.

When it comes to schools, the question is raised about our ambitions for education. Can I just say that in 1997, if you take the average school pupil, we spent about £2,500 a year on that pupil, about £50 a week, but now the latest figure is that we are spending £6,300 on that pupil, so it is more than twice as much as we spent previously. It is a big rise of about 100% in real terms so we are spending twice as much on the pupil in a secondary and primary school than was done 12 years ago, in real terms. Our ambition, of course, is to do the best by pupils in the future and we know that we have brought capital spending in our state schools to a higher level than in private schools and we will continue to look at how we can make progress for the future.

I was present last week when we opened 40 new schools in a day. We are opening 400 new or renovated schools this year and we are spending more on educational investment this year than at any time in the history of education, more than at any time in the last century, more than at any time in the history of schools. We will continue to invest. We have a huge programme of primary and secondary investment for the future.

Let me also say as regards measures of taxation that people are suggesting, I have looked at this question of a global financial tax and that is why we are meeting as a G20, because if we did it and nobody else did then you would simply see everything flowing to what would then become a huge tax haven. We already have a tax that is quite special to Britain, that is, we charge stamp duty on share transactions, so people in Britain pay on share transactions but they do not in other countries. We continue to look at means by which the world coming together can not only outlaw tax havens but also see what coordinated action we can take.

So far as the bonus is concerned, I am looking for new rules around the world that limit the share of bonuses. What I think you will see in the new taxation arrangements is that anybody who is earning above £150,000 will now pay 50% on their tax whereas it used to be 40%, so we are taking action there.

On national pay bargaining, let us look at the position we are in. We have signed three-year deals with a number of unions and a number of employee bodies, so in the teaching profession and in the Health Service, we have signed these three-year arrangements. We are not proposing to change that. In other areas it is the normal negotiations that will have to take place. I only say to all of you here that because we have kept inflation low and kept interest rates low, those people who are in work are seeing that the inflation and interest rates are not as high as they used to be, and I think that has to be borne in mind in every negotiation that people have.

I want to say also that we are a government dedicated to helping those on low and middle incomes, and so any changes that we make, whether it is in tax credits for mothers and for families, or in other arrangements, our aims are to help middle and lower income Britain. That is why I say it does not make sense at this time for other parties to recommend that we give tax handouts in Inheritance Tax to people who are already millionaires. That is both a mistake and it is wrong for the country. I will be happy to write to the Civil Service unions about their question on national pay bargaining.

Brendan Barber: Thank you, Gordon. We have in the unions, in the regions, a number of young workers and one of the big issues that you addressed in your speech, Gordon, was issues around apprenticeships and training opportunities for young people. Joanna Viecek, a

UNISON member from Mersey Travel. Joanna, please, then Andrew Batley, a Unite member from BAE Systems. Joanna, please?

Joanna Viecek (UNISON): Gordon - I hope you do not mind if I call you Gordon - I have never had the opportunity to ask a Prime Minister a question before but I wanted to be familiar because I have a problem for you. I am an apprentice at Mersey Travel and at my workplace we have a good training scheme and are paid reasonably well. Under government legislation apprentices are guaranteed at least £95 a week, but while that is welcome it is not really very much and many apprentices are only getting that small amount. It is even worse for those who work in companies that do not have unions because there is nowhere they can turn to if they are being exploited and underpaid. So, Gordon, I am asking you, why can't all apprentices be paid at least the minimum wage? Thank you.

Brendan Barber: Thank you, Joanna. Andrew Batley, please?

Andrew Batley (Unite the union): Prime Minister, I am an apprentice at BAE Systems that produces high-quality engineering products so I am interested in the many new industries and occupations which will be very important for the future economy. These industries include bio-sciences, aerospace, computing and, of course, information technology. What are the Government doing to ensure that there will be more apprenticeships in these new industries as well as the more traditional apprenticeships. While I have got your attention, I do not think there are enough young women apprentices in these new industries, so what are you doing to get more girls in my workplace? Thank you. *(Applause)*

Brendan Barber: Andrew, thank you. That question seemed to attract a lot of support. Gemma Bewley, please?

Gemma Bewley: I am an apprentice working on an interview room project with a company called Creative Training and I gained my experience through the Knowsley Apprenticeship. So do you think that any other local authorities across the country would be able to invest in any other projects like that scheme?

Brendan Barber: Okay, thank you, Gemma. Three different issues around apprenticeships. Yvette, this may be something you would comment on?

The Prime Minister: I was going to say that these were far better questions from the apprentices than ever we get in the House of Commons, so I do applaud them. I visited Vauxhall at Ellesmere Port today and I met a group of apprentices who are absolutely determined to do their best by the country. Half of them were Liverpool supporters, half of them were Everton supporters, you will be pleased to know, Brendan.

I think on the issue of apprentices, let's just be clear about one thing. Apprenticeships were dying 10 years ago. There were only 70,000 in the country and people thought that the end of the apprenticeship was coming. There are now 220,000 apprentices in this country, three times as many, and as Yvette will talk about I think nearly half of the apprentices are now women. There has been a four times increase in the number of women apprentices over the last few years and, as I said in my speech, we want to give a minimum apprentice income/wage so that people feel that what they are doing in apprenticeships is valued. The future of apprenticeships not only depends on the private sector, it also depends on the public sector. If you go round the public sector there are very few apprentices in the Health Service,

very few apprentices in local government, very few apprentices in schools or in education, and I think that is one of the ways over the next year, by agreeing to create 20,000 more apprentices, we can make progress. I want to say, as I said in my speech, to any young person, if you get the qualifications you will get into your apprenticeship and we will make sure that apprenticeship places are available for you.

Brendan Barber: Yvette, you might just comment on these issues?

Yvette Cooper: Yes. I do not think we should underestimate the importance of this. Getting young people that first step on their career ladder, that first proper training that actually I think for too long young people were just denied, getting people into jobs but also getting them good training as well, the apprenticeships are one of the best ways of doing that. It is good to see apprentices coming from a range of different areas but we do need to do more to get more apprenticeships in all kinds of different fields. We are seeing more and more women apprentices, which I think is a great thing because it was too often traditionally seen as just for young men. Actually, there is a whole load of women doing all sorts of apprenticeships in different kinds of fields.

It is true, though, as I think Andrew said, that there is more that we can do in some sectors where we are not getting enough women coming forward and we need to do more right through schools. We are doing work with schools on encouraging girls to go into engineering and to go into all sorts of non-traditional sectors in order to encourage those opportunities. We see this as being part of the wider work to give that support for every young person because never again should we lose a generation to work. The extra sports jobs that Gordon announced today for young people are alongside the apprenticeships as well.

I think Gemma's question was on the Knowsley Apprenticeship and what can local councils do. There are loads that local councils can do. Knowsley, I think, is doing some great work to support apprenticeships. A lot of local councils are coming forward to support the Future Jobs Scheme. There are even, indeed, a lot of Labour councils and actually some Tory councils coming forward to support the Future Jobs Scheme. It is just a shame that at national level David Cameron and the Conservatives are opposing the billion pounds for the Future Jobs Fund because I think you have to put that investment into young people. They say we cannot afford to. The truth is we cannot afford not to or we will have another generation abandoned as we did in the 1980 and 1990s, and we cannot ever go back to that.

Brendan Barber: Thanks very much, Yvette. Congress, I know a number of unions put in other questions. Richard Green has a very important issue.

Richard Green (*Community*): Prime Minister, thanks for the time. In April 2010 the lowest age for early retirement will increase from 50 to 55. This will have a massive impact on people in my industry, the steel industry. They work shifts and do hard physical work and many have paid into a pension scheme for over 30 years. Steel workers, when faced with redundancy, have taken the opportunity to access their pension scheme at 50. This opportunity will be taken from them. Therefore, can the Government look again and ensure that people can retire whilst they can enjoy it, rather than when they are forced to retire through ill health? Thank you.

Brendan Barber: Thanks very much, Richard. Two other issues, Andy Jones from UCATT. This is an issue of interest to a lot of unions, I know. Andy.

Andy Jones (UCATT): Prime Minister, will you commit to restore compensation and a process to establish liability for victims of pleural plaques past and present?

(Applause)

Brendan Barber: Andy, thank you. Jeff Broome from USDAW?

Jeff Broome (USDAW): Prime Minister, the last 12 months have seen job losses following the collapse of some very high profile businesses. Our union, USDAW, has had to deal with nearly 30,000 workers losing their jobs when Woolworths collapsed. One problem that has been highlighted is the number of workers who qualify for no statutory redundancy pay because they have worked with their employer for less than two years. Prime Minister, is there not a strong case for the Labour Government to look at introducing rights to statutory redundancy pay from day one of a worker's employment?

Brendan Barber: Thanks, Jeff. Those are three important issues. I think those are the only ones that we really have lined up, so let's have those three. Take those three, Gordon.

The Prime Minister: First of all, on the issue of pleural plaques, this is something that concerns me deeply. To see anybody, as I have with friends, die of asbestosis or mesothelioma is terrible and we should do everything we can to avoid it and to help those people who are affected.

After getting recommendations from a number of different medical groups, we are looking at what we can do on pleural plaques. We are also trying to make the UK a leader in this whole issue of dealing with asbestosis, and I want personally to make sure that compensation claims are paid out immediately for those people who are suffering from mesothelioma as what has happened over time is that companies have delayed and people who are sick never get the benefits they are due. You will see a statement on that coming out when Parliament returns to deal with all the issues - not just about pleural plaques but also about the disease of asbestosis.

Also, we are reviewing this whole issue of redundancy payments and we will be able to report on that later. I think that what we are offering now to people who are redundant, to make sure that they can get back to work quickly, is a better service than ever before thanks to our Jobcentre staff. I think it is important to recognise that even with the difficulties that we are facing, in the last few months an average of 300,000 people have moved into work and got jobs as a result of the efforts that have been made. However, we are looking at this issue of redundancy pay. Yvette will answer on pensions.

Yvette Cooper: Just to add this on pensions, this is partly around tax changes as well. We obviously invest a lot in tax relief on pensions as I think that is the right thing to do, but we also have an ageing population. People are living longer and healthier lives. It is right that people should be able to take earlier retirement for ill-health, but as part of a whole series of major changes and as part of the response to the Pensions Committee and a lot of the work that Jeannie Drake and the TUC were involved in as to how we respond to the aging population. We are also doing things like increasing the state retirement age over time as well making these changes to the minimum benefit age too.

The *quid pro quo* for that is that we also have to restore the link between pensions and earnings and make those important changes to increase support for pensions from everyone as well. The major change we are making to the pensions tax relief system is regarding those very highest earners who are earning over £150,000 because we found that they are getting the majority of the benefits. The vast majority of the pensions tax relief was actually going to a very small minority of people with the very highest pensions so I think that is a fair change to make. We do have to make changes to respond to an ageing population, but we also have to make sure that we do that in a way that is fair and particularly provides additional support for those on the lowest incomes.

Brendan Barber: Thank you very much, Yvette. We are going to squeeze three final questions in.

Jerry Bartlett (*NASUWT*): Prime Minister, thank you for reminding us about the dedication and courage of our armed forces in Iraq and elsewhere. Despite that, Iraq is moving only extremely slowly towards a stable and democratic society. A fundamental element of building a good civil society in Iraq must be the growth and security of a free trade union movement.

The TUC, and many of the affiliates to the TUC, have worked hard to support the growth of the fledgling union movement in Iraq in spite of legislation in that country and the government decrees which ban public sector trade unions as well as increasing difficulties in obtaining visas to allow our sisters and brothers from Iraq to visit us for solidarity, support and training. What can your government do to address these two issues? We want the adoption of a labour law in Iraq that enshrines international labour organisation standards and we want ease of visa access for our Iraqi trade union sisters and brothers to the United Kingdom.

Brendan Barber: Thanks, Jerry. That is a very important issue.

Richard Clifton (*Unite the union*): Prime Minister, this question is very relevant considering your visit to the Ellesmere Port Vauxhall plant today. What I want to know is given the government support for manufacturing, will you give the same commitment to secure the jobs of over 5,000 of my fellow Vauxhall UK workers just as the German and Belgian governments are doing in proposing to invest in their GM plants?

Lesley McClean (*Communication Workers Union*): Prime Minister, as a postal worker, I will now have to work five years longer than I planned before I can claim my deferred wages which is my pension. It will be lower because the Royal Mail has imposed a career average scheme. My colleagues, who joined Royal Mail after April 2008, will receive an inferior pension from the new defined scheme. Royal Mail spent 13 years not contributing into the pension scheme. This is now billions of pounds in deficit and growing by the day. Even Lord Mandelson acknowledged that the pension deficit is huge and a growing burden on the Royal Mail. As the government owns Royal Mail, can the Prime Minister tell me and my colleagues how, and when, he intends to address the problems of the Royal Mail pension scheme?

Brendan Barber: There are three very different issues: Iraq and trade union rights, pensions and the Royal Mail.

The Prime Minister: Let me first of all thank trade unionists here for the support for the development of free trade unions in Iraq. It has been British trade unionists working with people who want to be trade unionists and changing leaders in Iraq that has made the first advances in creating a trade union movement which is strong and representative there.

I will look at this question of visas, but let me just say that we do want the Iraq government to adopt labour laws. We do want the Iraq government to ensure that there is fair treatment to people and I continue to press Prime Minister of Iraq on these and other issues so that Iraq can be not just a democracy in name with large numbers of people voting at elections and at local elections, as has happened, but can ensure that there are freedoms and rights which there never were before for the ordinary citizens and workers of Iraq.

I want also to say this on the Royal Mail. We have a problem as a country because what we want to do is to ensure that the universal obligation for mail remains in place. As you know, in America they are reducing it and in other countries it is an issue. We want to be able to finance local post offices as a service to the public. We want to ensure a viable Royal Mail in a situation where there is huge competition from all the new technologies. If people are texting and emailing and not sending letters, that is an issue we have to deal with. I want also to give some security to the pension fund of the Royal Mail.

We have been trying to move forward on these things while at the same time getting new investment into the Royal Mail for the future. These are the discussions that we have had over the last few months. I know that there are debates going on between the unions and the employer. I want to see a future for the mail service, but also for the post offices and the Royal Mail service of this country. It will only be achieved by discussion about what is the best way forward.

I visited Vauxhall today and I was able to say to people - and this is the reason I went there - that we have faith in the future of the car industry in this country. I wanted to say to Vauxhall workers that we have faith in the future of the new model, the Astra. I wanted to say that we have and will continue to support the development of the car industry at Ellesmere Port and at Luton. I also wanted to say that we want Vauxhall at Ellesmere Port to win the new low carbon electric car which is going to be the Vauxhall competitor for the whole of the hybrid car industry. We said today that we are prepared to support with finance the Magna operation across Europe. We are in negotiations with the Germans and other governments so that we can make our support available to Vauxhall workers in this country.

The reason I went to Vauxhall today was to say what I am saying to you now. When people are in difficulty, we will stand beside them and help them through these difficulties. When we get the questions that we have had this afternoon, it is right for people to say, 'Here in my own area we have an issue that has to be dealt with. Here in my own industry there is a problem that you have to look at.' I appreciate all that, but let me also say that what we have to think about too in the next few years is how the whole of the country advances together. We have to think how, by taking action together, we can solve the challenges that we face ahead. I tell you that people have found in the last year that they do not want markets to rule their lives; they want to be able to make decisions themselves. People have found in the last year that they do not want to break away from the rest of the world as they need international cooperation to work.

People are finding, as I have been saying this afternoon, that even though we have great challenges ahead, we can make big advances over the next few years towards building a fairer and more responsible Britain. I want you to be part of that discussion and that debate so that we can move forward together. Thank you all very much. (*Applause*)

Brendan Barber: Gordon, many thanks indeed. These are, as you say, hugely challenging times. You have a fantastically big job to do and you need all the support we can give as you go, for example, to Pittsburgh next week to that G20. Gordon, over this next period, you will be spelling out a compelling vision. That is what you are about and that is certainly what we are about because we know how high the stakes are at this next General Election. Gordon, it has been great to have you with us.

The Prime Minister: Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

The President: Congress, we now return to Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Economic and industrial affairs, The economy, from page 44. I call paragraph 3.6 and Composite Motion 9, reforming the financial and banking systems. The General Council support the composite motion.

Congress, I realise that it is traditional for the hall to empty after we have had such an important speaker, but debates have to go on so if you are going to leave, can you do it in a very quiet and orderly manner. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Reforming the financial and banking systems

(Insert Motions 21 and 22 - Reforming the financial and banking systems)

Paul Talbot (*Unite the union*) moved Composite Motion 9.

He said: As the Prime Minister said a moment ago, in nine days' time, the heads of state and leaders are meeting in Pittsburgh for the next session of the G20. We want a strong message to go from this Congress on behalf of the trade union Movement, not just from here in Britain but across the globe, that there can be no return to the practices that have led to the unprecedented financial crisis in the markets.

For those who have already lost their jobs, their homes and their pension rights, the effect of the crisis has been all too obvious. In the last 12 months, in the financial sector alone, over 30,000 jobs have disappeared, never to return we suspect. More important than that, the banks realise that more than any other sector, they cannot be allowed to fail. That has encouraged the irresponsibility in the way in which they have conducted themselves in recent times. They know that no matter how risky the bet or how long the odds, the House must always pay up at the end of the day and they will get their money. At the root of this madness, spurred on, has been the compensation culture that has been allowed to develop to the point where obscene bonuses have been paid to those at the top of those organisations.

Even today, despite all that has occurred, those at the top of those financial institutions continue to act as though nothing has happened and, reverting to their old habits, persist in rewarding themselves multi-million pound bonuses. These are the very same people who, without the guarantees and loans which were mobilised by the British taxpayer, would not be having a job today. This has cost us in total in excess of £1.5 trillion over the past 12 months.

Some of that money we may get back and some we may not - it depends how things work out. We do not dispute, as Gordon said, that the government did the right thing in stepping in to protect the public from the potential financial meltdown, but the banks must also realise that they have a heavy financial and moral responsibility to this nation. As others have said before me, they should be prepared to make a substantial contribution to the public finances to avoid the need for any further public spending cuts.

We say this to our Government and to all those who are attending the Pittsburgh summit: Act now and act together to put an end to the practices that have caused so much misery across the globe. The new rules for the financial system must be built around a clear set of principles: firstly, an end to guaranteed bonuses, and, secondly, compensation packages which are tied to the long-term success of the enterprise. Success is measured not just in terms of shareholder value. Success is built upon solid foundations - respect for employees, job security, decent pay and conditions and secure pensions. We want a cap on the amount of bonuses that can be paid.

Bonuses themselves, however, are not the only issue. There must be a commitment to improve governance, supervision, transparency and an end to the speculative practices that have characterised and caused the current crisis. There must be an end to irresponsible lending taken in pursuit of short-term gain. Yes, as the Prime Minister also said, we must address the issue of tax havens.

In the UK, we want to see a greater public interest representation in the major financial institutions and at the Financial Services Authority. We welcome the initiative that Gordon has shown earlier this month by sending a strong message to the leaders of other European nations that these systematic faults must be addressed in Pittsburgh at the end of next week. We welcome the commitment that has been given to laying the groundwork for a new model of global cooperation. We also want them to look at the principles of mutuality. Think back to the time when a banking system was based on principles which were characterised by organisations like the Co-op and the building societies. Let us have some of that back in our high streets as well.

Above all, there must be recognition across the board that the era of voluntary regulation is over and that in today's complex environment, the principles that we now espouse must be backed up by sanctions for those who either do not wish to, or do not care to, play by the rules. In short, colleagues, what we are calling for is a return to a financial system which is based on values and a renewed sense of responsibility. Madam Chair, I move. Thank you.
(*Applause*)

Marilyn Morris (*Accord*) seconded Composite Motion 9.

She said: We are the union standing up for secure jobs, fair reward and dignity at work in the Lloyds Banking Group speaking in support of Composite Motion 9. As a banker for over 20 years - a banker and not a fat cat, not a recipient of obscene bonuses but one of the loyal, hardworking and low-paid women who are the backbone of the British banking system - one year ago this week, Lehman Brothers went bankrupt leading to the world that our members worked in being turned upside down and bringing about the recession, the consequences with which we are all living. Who would have thought that household names like the Halifax and the Bank of Scotland would be brought to their knees and would have to be rescued by the welcome intervention of our Government and a takeover by Lloyds TSB.

Much has been said this week about the bank bail-outs. These were not made in the interests of the banks themselves, but in the interests of stability in the finance sector and to protect the economy. The bail-outs were not hand-outs. They were investments and the expectation is that every penny of taxpayers' money will be repaid although not before thousands of jobs have been lost, lives and careers shattered, pension funds attacked, terms and conditions of employment assaulted and competition reduced. We have already learned that some bankers believe that the worst is over. The multi-million pound bonuses for those who either run organisations or stake our future in casino capitalism are returning and it is becoming 'business as usual'.

Have the lessons really be learned? Can we avoid a future repetition of last year's events? President Obama said last night that there must be better regulation and that this is the time for action. We believe that he is completely right. Congress, we ask you to support the view that the Government via UKSI (the body set up to manage taxpayers' stakes in the banks) must play the role of an active investor if it is to protect the interests of UK domestic and business bank customers. In particular, the Government must ensure that there is no return to the short-term return decision-making culture which did so much to precipitate the banking crisis. Therefore, Congress, we ask the General Council to support a call for the Government to use the taxpayers' shareholdings in the banks to protect the interests of customers, shareholders, employees and the nation as a whole. I support Composite Motion 9 and ask you for your support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Steve Kemp (*GMB*) supported Composite Motion 9.

He said: What a difference a year makes! Was it just one year ago that we were being told by the Government that the financial services industry was the backbone of the UK economy? Was it just a year since that we were told that calling for changes in the way that bonuses and pay were structured in the City was left-wing rhetoric without any basis in reality? Was it just a year since that many politicians still believed that any attempt to regulate or control the excesses of the City would drive the bankers and their businesses away to foreign shores? Yet here we are, 12 months later, after the economies of this country and many others have virtually been brought to their knees either by the actions of these self-same unregulated institutions or the inaction of light-touch regulation authorities, with those same politicians, driven by taxpayer fury, now clamouring for solutions along the lines for which the GMB and other unions have been calling for the last two years.

Congress, this is no time to be complacent. Now is the time for us to press hardest for real change in the regulatory framework to ensure that banks put aside capital to draw on in times of significant risk rather than turning to us, the taxpayers. There should be real changes to the way in which the richest are taxed so that they can make an equal contribution to our society and proper contributions to insurance and compensation schemes by banks.

We are finding ourselves with surprising allies, with the likes of Adair Turner, head of the Financial Services Regulator, who is questioning the social good of the swollen institutions he regulates, calling for a tax in financial transactions. When even the *Dail Mail*, for goodness sake, supports the idea of a High Pay Commission to regulate excessive pay and reward, we know that we are on a winner. The fact that we have so many unusual allies in our call for real change and proper regulation of this sector explains how serious this issue is.

Congress, we must continue to campaign strongly for meaningful solutions so that the financial system does not go back to the 'business as usual' attitude, already evidenced by the contempt that failed and bailed-out bankers are showing in their return to huge bonuses. Finally, let us never forget that the misery heaped on people and trade unionists throughout the world during this recession with lost jobs and lost houses was the fault of the financial sector. I will leave you with this: no one can blame the trade unions for the mess we are in at the minute. Support Composite Motion 9.

Dave Bean (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9.

He said: Congress, under this Government, there will be no reckoning. There will be no firm restraint, no punishment and no corrective action to prevent a repetition of the financial crisis. There will be no cap on pay and bonuses, no pruning of banks deemed too big to fail, no separation of retail and investment banking and no measure to restrict the speed or scale of the financial markets. Their dam is built of paper and it is already beginning to leak.

Confident that no meaningful restraint will be imposed, the banks have already decided that bonuses are back big-time. This year the City of London will reward itself for the destruction of other people's livelihoods with payouts of around £4 billion. Absolutely nothing has been learnt because our Government do not have the courage to teach them a lesson. The only firm response to the crisis so far is to give our hard-earned money to the very people who have caused it.

Congress, it need not be so. There is no shortage of ideas for sorting out the crisis. Proposals include a High Pay Commission, public representation on boards, a windfall tax on bonuses and a ban on bonuses at any bank backed by taxpayer guarantees. I am pleased to report that PCS has been very active on the tax front. At a tax justice Parliamentary reception in November, MPs from all the major political parties came to hear from PCS how a properly-resourced HMRC department is essential for a fair tax system, not being hindered by tax dodging which is costing the Exchequer some £100 billion per year. In February, PCS members from HMRC lobbied over 100 MPs about local office closures in their department. The mass lobby was followed by a rally with speakers from the TUC, PCS and MPs from the Parliamentary group.

Part of our argument has been that when the economy has a shortfall of billions and when just one HMRC employee brings in over £600,000 in tax revenue every year, it is nonsense to continue to close tax offices and cut jobs. We have also hosted a Parliamentary rally on tax havens ahead of the G20 summit in London and we have also put forward early day motions to Parliament on tax havens and a moratorium on job cuts in HMRC.

There have been moves in the right direction. The Government are currently consulting on a code of practice on taxation for banks aimed at reducing tax avoidance in that sector. In August, HMRC announced the signing of tax agreements between the government of Liechtenstein and the UK. However, in conclusion, moderate as those moves might be, most of the proposals put forward so far have been dismissed out of hand by a government scared of the financial system. The Government maintain that if regulations are too stiff, British bankers will leave the country. It is true that they have been threatening to depart in droves. My answer to those bankers is simple: just clear off now and leave!

Congress, support this composite and demand that the Government support ordinary people who are suffering in this crisis and not the greedy fat cat bankers who actually caused it.

The President: Congress, there is no opposition so we will move to the vote.

* *Composite Motion 9 was CARRIED*

The President: We continue with Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Economic and Industrial Affairs, from page 53. I call Motion 20, Save our Steel. The General Council support the motion.

Save our steel

(Insert Motion 20 - Save our steel)

Michael Leahy (*Community*) moved Motion 20.

He said: This motion, brothers and sisters, is close to my heart. I have been involved in the steel industry for over 40 years. I have worked in and around communities that have felt the warmth of molten steel for generations. I have seen the good times and the bad times, but we have always lived to fight another day. This time, I fear we may not survive.

We have with us here today a delegation of representatives from Corus Teesside Cast Products at the back of the room. (*Applause*) Their works have been under threat since 8th May. That was the day when they found out that a multinational consortium had ripped up the contract that they had to take 80% of Teesside's steel. That was the day that Corus started a 90 day consultation. Since that day, an entire community has been on tenterhooks as the fate of the plant now hangs in the balance.

Across the country, fellow steelworkers have been hit hard by the downturn. In Corus alone, 5,000 have been made redundant. Steelworkers are a fundamental part of working life. The blast furnaces glow right in the heart of the community. The steelworks on Teesside support thousands of jobs in and around Redcar and Middlesbrough. The port will die without their steel leaving its docks. Across the UK, steel reaches into every aspect of our lives from the tin of beans on the supermarket shelf to the ferry crossing the Mersey today. Millions of tons of steel pass up and down the length and breadth of Britain every year. In the automotive industry, in defence, in aerospace, in construction and in food and drink, quality steel produced to rigorous standards is readily available to our manufacturers and our builders from the steel plants dotted around the country.

Congress, I fear that the future of our steel industry is under serious threat. If steel disappears, I think it would only be a matter of time before what remains of manufacturing will follow. Steel is crucial to a successful economy. Steel is tangible. Steel has a price. Steel is not like the pieces of paper that the bankers traded which got us in this economic mess. Steel creates wealth, it creates jobs, it brings revenue to the Treasury and it builds our schools and hospitals.

This is why I am making an appeal today: SOS, Save our steel. This appeal is to the Government. They must do more, and they can do more, to save our steel industry. We have heard about the Government's new industrial activism. I say, 'Better late than never.' It is

crucial that activism goes beyond the point of rhetoric. It must mean effective policies of investment to create a sustainable and green steel industry. At this time of crisis, the Government must act immediately. We welcome the bringing forward of infrastructure programmes and the car scrappage scheme, but that will not do enough on its own. Brothers and sisters in Europe have benefited from extensive short-time working schemes while steel workers have lost their jobs in the UK. Elsewhere in Europe, people at least have remained in employment ready to fight another day.

I am calling now, on behalf of Teesside and on behalf of the steel communities everywhere, and on behalf of manufacturing as a whole, to hear our SOS. Save our steel, save Teesside and pass the motion. (*Applause*)

Keith Hazlewood (*GMB*) seconded Motion 20.

He said: Ever since, Sir Henry Bessemer, an English inventor, patented his process for turning molten pig iron into steel in 1856, steel has been recognised as one of the most important commodities in the world. In fact, in the UK, the government viewed it as so important that it has nationalised it twice. We do not hear that kind of talk from the Labour Government today, do we. All we hear is terms such as 'advanced manufacturing' and 'industrial activism'. Well, I believe that anybody who knows the UK steel industry would deem it advanced manufacturing and in need of some government industrial activism and we need it now.

Steel is a major component of the new Wembley and Olympic stadiums. It is a major component on the West Coast railway line and the Mini. It was also used on the space shuttle and in the new Airbus A380 aircraft. Of course, it also puts soup and beans on the supermarket shelves. Also, in these environmentally-conscious days, steel is 100% recyclable and reusable. Not many products can claim to be that.

Corus was British Steel in my younger days and it is now part of the Indian conglomerate Tata Steel. It still employs some 40,000 people worldwide and over half of those are in the UK, many of them in more remote parts of the UK where there is little alternative employment. It has one of the best apprenticeship schemes in the UK and a good graduate training programme. I understand that the Government want to increase the number of apprentices. Unfortunately, due to the recession and downturn in the market this year, the company is losing some 5,000 jobs in the UK and has frozen its graduate intake although I am pleased to say that Corus will still be recruiting some apprentices.

Congress, we must recognise that steelmaking is crucial for UK manufacturing in the future. Without a UK-based steel industry, UK manufacturing will be without its main component. Corus UK plants are some of the most efficient and least damaging to the environment. Allowing these plants to close would lead to imports from less efficient plants in Europe, Brazil and China at a time when we want to reduce emissions and energy use in the world. This would have the opposite effect and increase emissions whilst losing high-tech industry and jobs in the UK. This might lead to a reduction in emissions in the UK, but would not protect the global environment.

Colleagues, we must support steel manufacturing in the UK. Please support Motion 20. (*Applause*)

The President: We have one supporting speaker, who is an apprentice who works for Corus in Yorkshire and would like to be able to address this debate. (*Applause*)

Luke Jackson (*Unite the union*): I am an apprentice at the Scunthorpe steel site. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*)

As has just been said, there are roughly about 23,000 people in the UK employed by Corus and we have lost about 5,000 jobs. It is not just about the jobs in the steelworks itself; it is about the knock-on effect in the community which relies on employers like Corus. The Scunthorpe steelworks alone employs directly about 4,000 people, but indirectly it is estimated that 20,000 people rely on the steelworks being there. There are many towns and communities like this within the UK which depend on large manufacturers. We know that the decline in demand for manufacturing generally and the automotive industry particularly is affecting our industry. With the steel industry gone, the chance of other manufacturing companies relocating outside the UK is only going to increase.

Unite has welcomed the Government's commitment to every person who wants an apprenticeship being able to have one with the setting up of the NAS ('National Apprenticeship Service') but without the Government's support of UK steel and the manufacturing industry, people will be trained for jobs that are not there in the future. If manufacturing is allowed to decline further, with it goes the opportunity to train people with the specialist skills that the industry needs. Without that pool of specialist skills, the manufacturing industry will have to look elsewhere for them and so the spiral of UK manufacturing decline will increase.

My generation - many of your own sons and daughters - do rely on the UK steel and manufacturing industries so, for my future and my job, save our steel. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: That was an excellent contribution, colleague. There is no opposition once again so we will move to the vote.

* *Motion 20 was CARRIED*

The President: We will now call Composite Motion 13 on Housing. The General Council supports the composite motion.

Housing

(*Insert Composite Motion 13 - Housing*)

Andy Wilson (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) moved Composite Motion 13.

He said: I welcome the announcement made by Gordon before of 20,000 council houses, but unfortunately I think we need to put a few more zeros onto that figure because of the scale of the problem. There are 1,700,000 people registered on council waiting lists. There are 70,000 people who are homeless. Those are only the official figures. I am sure the people who lie on the streets of London, when I go to the Executive meetings at UCATT, are not registered on anybody's books.

The private house builders will not be building for these people. Local authorities have a history of solving that problem. There was large-scale house-building in the 1940s and the 1950s and that is what we should be going back to in order to address the gravity of the situation in which we find ourselves.

Standing here today, I cannot help but think that we have lost 11 years in which we could have constructed council housing. That has compounded the problem today. The banks were quite happy to finance the private sector. The mortgage rates continued to go up, the cost of houses continued to go up and everybody thought there was a party going on, but the party finished and the reality is that wages did not follow suit. There are a lot of problems that we need to solve. The housing situation initially would bring into being other industries. We have just been hearing about the steel industry. I was in Redcar with my colleagues a couple of months ago. The reality is that if we build the council houses that we require, they also require washing machines and other such commodities that other people manufacture. That is the scale of the problem that we have to deal with.

We have just had a young apprentice talking about the steel industry. It would be a crime if we build 20,000 houses plus and do not see the ratio of apprentices in the construction industry. For anyone procuring work in local authorities, whether that is housing or any other service, there should be a maxim that for every £1 million you get from a contract, you supply apprentices. We need to get the building workers back into work who the private house builders have laid off. You can look around your own communities and see houses built six bricks high or a dozen bricks high. They would have been lucky if they had got to the first floor. As the whole of the housing sector was built on credit, those same builders cannot afford to get the material to finish those houses. There might be an argument there for compulsory purchase. Local authorities have a track record. They have delivered and they will deliver in the future.

Rosie MacGregor (*Unison the union*) seconded Composite Motion 13.

She said: In Unison, we see housing as an essential foundation of public services. Get it right and it becomes the key to a more effective provision of health, social care, education and care of the most vulnerable by eliminating the harmful impacts of housing need. Yet, as this composite makes clear, Government policy has failed to deliver the bricks and mortar to provide a decent life for all.

Unison has membership across all providers of social housing. I work as a town planner in local government negotiating with housing teams, with housing associations and with private sector house builders (some of the major house builders) in an attempt to achieve a minimum of 30% of affordable housing for rent in an all-new housing development. Sadly, it is never enough and it is not simply that housing associations have failed to build at the same rate that councils used to. We would argue that it is because of a stubborn and long-held belief by governments that the market would, and should, deliver. Yes, the UK market has delivered. It has delivered an unsustainable boom that has priced ordinary working people like you and me out of the market resulting in record levels of personal debt. The bubble burst and led to a financial crisis which has brought the worst recession since the war.

What it has not delivered, even at the height of the boom, is the number of new homes that we so desperately needed. Nor has it delivered sufficient affordable housing to reduce homelessness, waiting lists or overcrowding in sub-standard homes. It is no wonder when

successive government policies have reduced local authority housing and placed reliance on the private sector and housing associations. However, there has at least, it seems, been some sort of realisation that only a vastly expanded public housing programme can ensure that our housing needs are met as well as boosting the economy.

We welcome the review of the housing revenue accounts. We welcome the new-build programme just announced and indeed the new council homes being built by the Scottish government. Let us hope that it is not too little too late. We heard from the Prime Minister this afternoon. We heard what he said, but it may not be enough. The aim must be for a new housing programme as soon as possible of genuinely affordable new homes - one million and more - with councils, ALMOs and housing associations working together to provide us with the bricks and mortar to build a decent future. Support the composite.

END TURN Fire Brigades Union to follow.

TUC TUESDAY PM Composite 13 (Continued) 4.25 - end of day.

Tam McFarlane (*Fire Brigades' Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

He said: Congress, in speaking in support of Composite Motion 13, I refer directly to paragraph 7 of the composite which calls for high quality fire protection systems within all social housing. On the face of it, this paragraph may appear to be a bit of a bolt-on to the resolution, but clearly when we refer to high quality housing we also need to be clear that safety is essential to that.

I want to give some context to this. No one could have failed to have seen on 3rd July of this year footage, much of it shot by bystanders with their mobile phones, a fire ripping through a multi-storey block of flats in Camberwell, London, and not been horrified. The result was six dead, 15 injured and 90 families left without a home. Of course, as terrible as this incident was, it could have been so much worse if it was not for the speed and professionalism of London's firefighters who led over 40 people to safety. In the aftermath questions and the media attention have focused on the adequacy of the fire safety arrangements within that block, especially when it quickly became known that there was only one staircase in the building despite a general expectation of an alternative fire exist.

The FBU firmly believes that all of these questions need to be answered fully and completely satisfactorily. We believe that the only mechanism to do that is through a public inquiry. We have called for that and we are glad to be joined in that call by Harriet Harman, although, frankly, we are going to continue to press until such an inquiry is actually announced. But we need to go further and we need to act now.

In 2005, following a multiple fatality in yet another high rise block of flats, which took the lives of two of our members in Hertfordshire, the FBU lobbied for domestic sprinklers to be fitted in all high rise flats. Following positive research from America, we subsequently increased this lobby to call for the fitting of domestic sprinklers in all new housing stock and, indeed, the upgrade of existing stock. We have lobbied hard and we have lobbied consistently, but now here we are four years down the line continuing to raise this issue against a background of yet another multiple fire fatality and a massive and clear need for more local authority delivered social housing. Frankly, it is time we should say to this Government that sometimes the talking has to stop; sometimes the consultation has to be

concluded and sometimes they just need to do the right thing. Please support the composite motion.

Ruth Jones (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapists*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: President and Congress, so what are houses for? Of course, the simple answer is that they are for living in, but during the past two or three decades they have been seen as an investment opportunity, an opportunity to make more money than you could by working. Rising prices made houses too expensive to buy. Ah, but, no problem, irresponsible lending soon filled that gap, at least until recently. As a result of the current economic recession, there has been a steady increase in the numbers of people facing mortgage arrears and repossession of their homes.

Contrary to propaganda, being saddled with a mortgage is not the only route to happiness. Social housing and housing associations can provide decent homes for those who cannot afford to buy or for those for whom buying does not make sense. But here is where the problem lies. There is not enough affordable social housing available and the gap between the number of applications and the number of homes available is getting wider.

We all know that poor housing is a major cause of ill-health in the UK, and in particular the poor housing stock in the private sector which makes up at least 10% of the total housing stock. We in the CSP see the result in ill-health created by poor housing which our disadvantaged patients are forced to live in. It is wide-spread and it extends from the cradle to the grave. I have visited premature babies sent home from a special care baby unit, sometimes still on continuous oxygen therapy, to a dingy one-bedroom flat with mould and damp throughout. That is not the best welcome into this world. I have also visited elderly people with chronic lung complaints whose condition is made worse by the fungal spores in the air and a central heating system that works occasionally and ineffectively. Do not forget the people who suffer sprains, strains or broken bones when trying to negotiate rickety stairs with worn and torn carpet in poorly lit stairwells.

How would you feel if you could not lock your front door securely as many of these vulnerable tenants cannot, so each time you returned home you wondered if you had been burgled yet again? What would that do to your mental health status or stress levels? What if you were already suffering from a mental health problem? That is why you are in the poor housing situation in the first place. Colleagues, the need is obvious. Please support the motion.

Jack Dromey (*Unite the union*) speaking in support of Composite Motion 13.

He said: Congress, bad housing harms health. Like the mother who said, 'The kids were always ill because of the damp'. Bad housing holds back kids at school, like the father who said, 'They were always falling behind because there were six of us in two rooms.' And it breaks marriages apart, like the wife who said, 'I loved him, but we were always rowing because there were six of us in two rooms.' Lack of housing divides communities and fans racism because of the foul lie perpetrated by the brain dead boot boys of the BNP that it is migrants who take the homes. That is why millions desperately need affordable homes to rent or buy. There will be five million on housing waiting lists next year alone. That is why we fought together to take housing up to the top of the political agenda.

We welcome the pledge that was made in 2007 that there would be an £8 billion investment, three million new affordable homes, and now the urgent action being taken by Housing Minister, John Heeley, with the *Kick Start* programme: 22,000 homes, 20,000 jobs and, at last, councils once again being able to engage in new build. That's right. It is to meet need. It is right to put unemployed building workers back to work. It is right because it creates jobs in the factories which produce bricks, glass and cement, and it is right because that will offer apprenticeships to the one in five 16-19 year olds who are out of work. We warmly welcome the announcement made yesterday by John, that if house builders want public money to build council homes, they will be obliged to provide apprenticeships. Conference, all of this is about building Britain out of recession.

As the motion says, these may be welcome steps but the Government needs much more ambition and to move further and faster at the next stages.

In conclusion, Congress, there are two visions in our country. There is our vision, on the one hand, of every one with a decent home at a price they can afford, a new generation of council homes, green homes, in mixed communities with decent facilities, council homes so good you could walk down any street in Britain and not be able to tell the difference between private and council. On the other hand, there is the Tory vision. Do you remember Dame Shirley Porter? Wait for it! The flagship Tory council on housing, Hammersmith & Fulham, has drawn up plans that involve the demolition of thousands of council homes ending security of tenure and hiking up rents to market levels. A two-bedroom council flat currently £85 a week would cost £380 a week. Why? Because council tenants are more likely to vote Labour. David Cameron has hailed Hammersmith as the future. We say that knocking down council homes, ending security of tenure and hiking up rents to gerrymander votes is the politics of the Westminster past. Unless he disowns his flagship council, David Cameron will be branded as Dame Shirley Porter in drag. Thank you.

The President: Colleagues, before our colleague goes to the rostrum, it was very remiss of me, but I did not call paragraph 3.10 before this debate commenced.

Robin White (RMT) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

He said: Madam Chair, General Council and brothers and sisters, I am standing here to speak against Composite Motion 13. Whilst the spirit of the motion is worthy, I find it contradictory in some terms, and as such I have to oppose it. The motion speaks, quite rightly, of the unmitigated failure of housing associations to provide the right accommodation for the working class people who we represent. It also, as other speakers have said, welcomes the Government's move to build another 9,000 council houses within this country, and giving the local authorities the ability to re-invest the rental from those houses. That is welcome.

It also speaks of the downturn in the construction industry. That, to me, personally, is very welcome. My son has just finished a three year apprenticeship as a bricklayer, but he hasn't got a job. So three good points have been well made. Yet Composite 13 asks the General Council to campaign to ensure local authorities, with housing associations and ALMOs, deliver primary social housing. This is why I have to speak against it. I ask you to do the same.

Registered social landlords or housing associations are private companies. They borrow money from the markets. They borrow money at a higher rate than local authorities can

borrow money. As a result, they charge higher rents and they charge higher service charges to the tenants who occupy their premises. The tenants have less security than an assured tenancy from a local authority. It is not a secure tenancy. Housing associations have the ability to evict people under the notorious 'ground 8' rule, where people cannot pay their rent and they have no way to pay their rent. Housing associations offer tenants less power. A council can be voted out. A housing association cannot.

Arm's length management organizations are, again, private companies driven by profits. Tenants are invited on board but they have no representation for tenants' interests. They are legally tied. The unions affiliate to Defend Council Housing. Most unions here affiliate to that body. Defend Council Housing opposes housing associations and ALMOs. The House of Commons Housing Group recommends that local authorities build and manage it. Here the composite motion asks for involvement from housing associations and ALMOs. It is contradictory. If we support it, then we are supporting the use of ALMOs, housing associations and privateers, and I believe we do not need that. The General Council suppose it, I oppose it and I ask you to oppose it.

The President: Does UCATT wish to exercise their right of reply? Thank you.

Andy Wilson (UCATT): Chair, I would have appreciated it if the delegation had actually spoke to us before the moving of the composite and we could have discussed the issues that they find hard to agree with. We have to remember that this composite came from a resolution and a number of amendments. That was the agreement we succeeded in achieving.

Local authorities have to be the driving force behind the future build. I have no problem reviewing those organizations that were formed through stock transfers and see if they are delivering, and is the business plan one for council housing repairs and maintenance and new build, or is it fancy alterations where they are going to get mortgages from? But that is not for today. I ask Congress to support the composite, appreciating that it covers a number of issues. I would sooner have had this discussion prior to the composite being heard.

The President: Congress, we will move to the vote on Composite Motion 13.

** Composite Motion 13 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, we return now to Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Economic and Industrial Affairs, the sections on Arts and Media from page 83. I call paragraph 3.18 and Composite Motion 18 - Digital Britain. The General Council supports the Composite Motion.

Digital Britain

(Insert Composite Motion 18 - Digital Britain)

Andy Kerr (Communication Workers Union) moved Composite Motion 18 on Digital Britain. He said: The Government's Digital Britain final report, published this summer, is a timely and encouraging set of proposals aimed at maximizing the benefits of the digital revolution and sustaining the UK's position as a leading digital economy and society. The Government's recognition of the need for universal access to high speed broadband as a pre-requisite for full participation in the economy and society is particularly welcome, as is the

proposal for a universal service fund to private access in areas where the market will not deliver. These developments represent good progress in the on-going trade union campaign, led by the CWU and Connect, which calls for the universal roll-out of super fast broadband to underpin economic recovery, to create employment and ensure British society is properly placed for a more dynamic, engaged and cohesive future.

High speed next generation broadband offers huge possibilities from improved access to e-healthcare and e-education to enabling remote working, thriving business and Government innovation. By making these networks available on a universal basis, we can build a more connected and digitally literate society, which will improve social cohesion and support economic activity right across the country.

It is also encouraging that the Government proposes to enhance the role of Ofcom through placing on a new general duty to encourage investment and to conduct a review of high speed broadband coverage every two years. But whilst the Digital Britain report represents real progress, some of the proposals are not far-reaching enough. In particular, we are concerned that the proposals for the Universal Broadband Commitment, rather than a legally binding Universal Service Obligation, would continue to leave some sections of society open to exclusion from modern communication networks.

There is also a need to ensure that the funding of the next generation of broadband access more fairly. This means placing the proposed levy on communication providers rather than directly on consumers and sharing the cost with mobile companies and internet service providers. We also have much to gain from the building of modern digital networks.

The successful delivery of Digital Britain will greatly rely on quality skills and training, and that is why there needs to be a requirement on employers to provide workforce training on the telecommunications sector as there is in the broadcasting sector.

Conference, therefore calls on the General Council, as set out in the composite, to work with the Government and Ofcom to ensure that the current proposals are implemented in a way that maximizes the potential for economic growth, social inclusion and job creation. Secondly, if high speed broadband is to reach the final third of British homes and businesses by 2017, the decision to proceed must be made quickly.

There have been reported hints from the Government that a universal fund may not be legislated on until after the General Election, and the separation of the universal funding proposals into the Finance Bill also threatens to slow down progress. These things bring into sharper focus the need for us to do all we can to lobby for swift action on the part of the Government.

The further proposal of the universal broadband service commitment should be made strong and legally binding under the Universal Service Obligation to ensure the effective delivery of broadband access.

Fourthly, we must work together through the TUC to ensure that the proposals set out in the Digital Inclusion Agenda are made an integral part of the TUC's own working programme over the next 12 months.

Finally, Congress, we must also lobby the Government to keep the pressure on, not only to ensure swift passage into legislation but to bolster its policy of industrial activism, which it promotes in the Digital Britain report. Only by the public sector playing a central and active role in addressing the needs of the UK communications infrastructure can we guarantee universal access. Congress, I ask you to support this composite motion. Thank you.

Leslie Menessay (*Connect*) seconded Composite Motion 18 on Digital Britain.

He said: Congress, this last year has seen real progress in recognizing both the importance of communications to the UK's economic future and in renewed efforts to extend the digital promise to all. The economic and social benefits of a truly digital Britain are now well within our grasp.

Like the CWU, we welcome the Government's Digital Britain report and the positive focus on social inclusion. We share the goal of delivering modern communications to all. Indeed, the recognition of the need for an active Government role in rolling out fast broadband owes much to the trade union campaign around these vital issues. But this is not the time to let up. We need certainty that broadband will be universally delivered. We want the Government to act to create new jobs in a growing sector, particularly at a time of high unemployment. We call on the Government to seize the day and bring forward legislation in the Digital Economy Bill early next session.

We also welcome the proposals for an enhanced role for Ofcom in relation to regular reviews of the communications network and in attracting new investment. This is vital, Congress, as our ability to realise the digital promise, like so much else, cannot be left to the markets alone. However, like the CWU, we are concerned at signs that the Government may be backing away from plans to raise a levy from all fixed lines in the UK. It would serve no purpose at all to have an ambitious programme but insufficient funds to deliver it. So no back-tracking, please.

On a more positive note, the Government have indicated a willingness to engage more fully in a programme of industrial activism. Now, more than ever, we need a government that is actively engaged in creating new, low carbon, skilled jobs. The communications sector will be at the heart of this, both as a hi-tech sector in itself with much potential for growth but also as one which will facilitate growth and development across the whole economy. The communication sector can create much needed new jobs and opportunities but the Government have to be a more than interested bystander. Moreover, digital inclusion must become central to our vision of social inclusion. It is not a peripheral concern, a fashionable add-on or a luxury. Access to a modern communications infrastructure is essential to full participation in a modern society. It is fast becoming a democratic imperative. We have a real opportunity to bring the digital promise to everybody in the UK today but we must work together and the Government must act to ensure that that promise becomes a reality.

The President: Congress, there is no opposition, so we move to the vote.

* *Composite Motion 18 was CARRIED*

Public service broadcasting and copyright piracy

(Insert Composite Motion 19 - Public service broadcasting and copyright piracy)

Jeremy Dear (*National Union of Journalists*) moved Composite Motion 19.

He said: Brother and sisters, during recent weeks you cannot have missed increasingly lurid headlines about the future of the BBC. As far as news stories go it was rather more dog bites man than man bites dog when James Murdoch, son of Rupert, said 'Action should be taken to cut the BBC down to size'. His comments were on the back of Government proposals to cut public funding to BBC and give part of the licence fee to commercial rivals come as no shock to us. If James Murdoch ran BUPA he would attack the NHS; if he ran a private school, he would savage state education. He does not. He runs a private media organization and he is attacking the BBC, urging the Government to slash its funding, to force it to privatise Radio 1 and BBC Worldwide and to stop it delivering on-line news, free at the point of delivery, or 'state sponsored journalism', as he calls it. He is egged on in his attacks by those other commercial media owners and corporations who serve not your but their narrow interests, profit and market share.

The argument goes like this. If the BBC is forced to abandon quality children's drama, music, current affairs and news programming across all platforms, the market will open up for their rivals. In reality, increasing commercialization of the media has not delivered real choice for citizens but it has led to greater conformity, less choice and fewer jobs. But we are used to such attacks, attacks not just on individual stories, individual journalists or individual programmes, but on the very public service values that underpin the BBC. Across the media industry the BBC leads the way in children's, programmes, in music, in drama, in local, national and international news, in TV and radio, in on-line, in current affairs, in jobs and in training. It is a public service global success story actively supported by the public.

Independent polls show strong public support for the licence fee for the BBC to be in exclusive receipt of it and against plans to slice off part of the BBC's funding for commercial broadcasting. That should be the end of the story, but it is not. What is different about these attacks is not that they are being made but that they are being echoed by a Labour Government which, in proposing to slice 3½% off the BBC licence fee and hand it over to commercial broadcasters, has joined the battle, not on the side of workers, not on the side of public service values and not on the side of licence fee payers. Let's put it into perspective. It is the equivalent of a Labour Government taking money from NHS hospitals and handing it over to private health contractors.

We are clear. There is a funding crisis with other public service broadcasters, for ITV and for Channel 4. They should be supported to protect excellent public servicing programming and to deliver quality local news. But contrary to the claims of Government ministers that there is no alternative to top-slicing the BBC, to undermining the independence of the corporation, to calling into question the link between the BBC and the licence fee payer, to opening up the licence fee to be raided by future governments, there are other options, but they require a political commitment to defending the public service against commercial interest.

With the right commitment, we could levy, as other countries in Europe already do, those who profit from re-broadcasting public service content but pay nothing towards its creation. Or the Government could commit that the money raised through a spectrum tax could be re-invested in public service broadcasting, but that commitment has so far been lacking. You do not have to tell me about the frustration and anger that trade unionists feel with some of the decisions made by the BBC's management, from inviting Nick Griffin on to *Questions Time*, to job cuts, to executive bonuses. It is an anger and frustration we share and reflect on a daily

basis. But we are also quite clear that we stand unashamedly for public service values. We believe that the supply of independent information people need to be engaged citizens is too important to be left entirely to companies motivated primarily by profit. A strong BBC, funded by the exclusive receipt of the licence fee, is central to maintaining and strengthening the BBC and public service broadcasting. We, the six unions, with tens of thousands of members working across the media, call on the Government to stand with us and abandon top-slicing. I move.

Martin Spence (*BECTU*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 19.

He said: Congress, I am addressing, particularly, the paragraphs in the composite motion on internet piracy.

Composite 18 was about the digital economy and the need to roll out broadband access, to drive forward jobs and prosperity and human rights in this country. What I want to talk about for a few minutes is one of the unfortunate consequences of that broadband access if it is not properly understood and properly regulated. The creative industries in this country are big business. They represent between 7% - 8% of gross domestic product now, employing, by some counts, a million workers directly and 800,000 indirectly, in sectors such as transport and retail. These are big numbers. They involve many jobs, but these jobs are threatened by the massive scale of on-going internet piracy. That is the illegal downloading and the illegal peer-to-peer sharing of files, music, films and TV programmes. Congress, this is theft! It is theft in which, I have no doubt, some people in this room have participated or, if not you, your children, or if not your children, then your grandchildren. This type of theft is rife, it's widespread and it is widely seen as not a big issue and not a big problem, because it is a form of theft that takes place in private, in people's own homes, it's easy because broadband access makes it easy, so it is perceived widely but wrongly not to be a big problem.

Let me emphasise that it is a problem, because it takes hundreds of millions of pounds of revenue out of the creative and entertainment industries, and that directly threatens investment, as it would do in any industry and that loss of investment threatens the direct present and future employment of the members who I represent and members of many other trade unions as well. The fact that it is easy does not make it right.

What we have been arguing for for some time, and I am pleased to say with some success, is that the internet service providers must take some responsibility. Their business model depends upon rich, attractive content. That is what drives their businesses. Their customers, their subscribers, want access to great music, to great films, great TV programmes and great on-line content. They have a responsibility, therefore, to help create the conditions where that great content - music, films, TV programmes - can continue to be made, the investments can continue to be made and the jobs can continue to exist.

We have, therefore, made the argument that they must take technical measures when they know there are regular offenders to step in and do something. I am delighted to say that the Government are inclined now to agree with us. With the TUC's support we have made progress and we are asking you now to consolidate the great support we have had from the TUC to date. President, thank you, and apologies for running over.

Tony Burke (*Unite the union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 19.

He said: Congress, as has already been said, the unions in this industry support the Government's vision for digital Britain. However, as the motion says up to 800,000 people who work in the creative sector may be having as much as 20% of their business revenue ripped off by internet pirates. This piracy threatens investments, it threatens our members' jobs and it threatens the economic growth and output in the creative and information industries.

As a consequence of this, Unite welcomes the importance the Government have placed on internet service providers to tackle the illegal distribution of content over their networks.

Congress, illegal downloading of digital material is widespread and growing. Illegal file sharing is not just limited to films and music, but it impacts on newspapers, on the magazine industry, on the book industry and on the premium information industries. We are committed to ensuring that the Government's commitment to legislate against piracy is reinforced and fully implemented. Our members believe that particular consideration must be given to the specific challenges faced by the publishing industry in the face of on-line copyright infringement, in particular the fact that publishers' content is often available in file sizes which are much smaller than those in the music and audio visual sectors. Because of this, it is vital that the Government acknowledge the importance of the printed media, magazines and books in shaping the policy environment for the report on Digital Britain.

It is also important that any sanctions considered for illegal file sharing must include proposals to take into account the fact that band width capping and shaping will not deter the serial infringers from illegally sharing downloaded published content.

The Government are committed to reduce illegal file sharing by 2011, and we believe that the Government should strengthen all the measures it needs to address on-line copyright infringement. We just cannot leave it to commercial interests to do that. We need to be vigilant, robust and to have the arguments right. As Martin said, this is theft. It is theft of our members' work. It is a rip-off, so let's stand out this illegal file sharing, the rip-off merchants who are stealing our members' work, which is the intellectual property of our members. Thank you.

Christine Payne (*Equity*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 19.

She said: Congress, equity wholeheartedly supports this motion, and I think the NUJ and BECTU have put the arguments very clearly on the importance of public service broadcasting to provide quality programmes and news that we want and need and for which this country has a worldwide reputation. They also put the argument very well, as did Tony, previously, on the serious impact of copyright piracy, and particularly the impact that that is having on jobs in film, television, music and investment.

The real problem is that as those revenue streams dry up, so does the investment in new work because record companies and film companies rely on the sales of their programmes in order to generate new income in order to reinvest in new work. If they cannot invest in new work, then it means that the sort of programmes, films and music that give us that worldwide reputation will no longer be made. As consumers and workers, we all lose.

But, in particular, my members will especially lose because they also rely on additional revenue from the sales of the films, television programmes and music that they make. Every

time a DVD is sold, my members are entitled to additional revenue. Therefore, as the illegal download is made my members are losing money. So for my members fewer sales means less income when they are working but less new work for them to do.

The key to the solution of this problem is the ISPs. They are able to put in place the necessary processes to tackle theft - illegal file sharing. It is the ISPs who have the direct relationship with the customers and all the evidence suggests that where a system is put in place for dealing with the offenders then the rates of piracy fall. It is all very well having every home in this country connected to the internet, but what are you going to watch and listen to? The ISPs also need new television, film and music in order to encourage engagement with the internet. Therefore, they also have a responsibility to those who work in the production of that work. The rate at which jobs are being undermined by this issue is too urgent for the ISPs not to play their part and they must play it now. They have the opportunity. Digital Britain gives them that opportunity and they must take it. Thank you.

The President: Congress, once again there has been no opposition. Let us move to the vote.

Jeremy Dear (NUJ): President, I wondered if Congress delegates were aware that there are postcards that people could sign that are available from the NUJ stall to oppose top-slicing?

The President: Thank you, Jeremy.

* *Composite Motion 19 was CARRIED*

Performers' moral interests

(Insert Motion 71 - Performers' moral interests)

Cathy Dyson (Musicians' Union) moved Motion 71.

She said: President and comrades, just to explain a little about moral rights and copyright before we start, I think it might be useful. Copyright is very important because it grants authors, composers and other creators legal protection for their artistic creations. It gives a bundle of exclusive rights which allows owners to control the use of their original works in a number of ways and also to be paid for them. It also provides moral rights which protect the author's reputation and integrity. Moral rights have two basic features; the right of paternity, that is the right to be mentioned in connection with the work, and the right of respect, that is to object to derogatory actions in relation to the work.

Moral rights do not provide the artiste or creator with the power to protect those works if nothing derogatory has happened to them, and this is the essence of our motion.

There are two parts to this motion and both of them have implications for the moral rights and interests of the musicians. The first concerns the BNP and their tactics in the run-up to the European elections where they subsequently won two seats. On the website they were selling and continue to sell, alongside a raft of dubious and offensive merchandise, compilation CDs. These are grouped into various sections entitled 'Patriotic Music', 'Great White Music', 'Nostalgia' and so on. They include Nick Griffin's own collection of nationalist songs, various folk bands and music, including the Albion bands, Glen Miller, the Andrews Sisters, a raft of classical music and so on. Dame Vera Lynn, now 91, has threatened to take

legal action against the BNP for using her performances to raise money for them (*Applause*) and what appears to be on their website an endorsement of their fascist beliefs, but to date the record still remains for sale on the website. This is because, under current law, musical performers or composers have little or no ability to prevent retailers selling their work once it is sold by a wholesaler to a particular distributor. As our national media organizer said in the press at the time, 'There is nothing as it stands to stop the BNP from acting in this way, and there is nothing that performers can do to prevent it.' Billy Bragg, for example - his work was actually on the BNP website - could find his track *New England* for sale on the BNP website raising money for something he has spent his entire musical life campaigning against. We would like to think that there should be a framework in this country sufficient to prevent something like this happening.

One of our members from Northern Ireland was horrified to find his band on the BNP compilation, and said, 'These BNP people are taking the proceeds from other people's work. We don't want any connection with such a party but we seem to be powerless to do anything about it.'

Both the MU and the Featured Artistes' Coalition have raised the profile of this issue with widespread national press coverage. However, the low level of moral rights accorded to musicians in the UK is a disgrace and should be addressed immediately by the Government which, apparently, values and stresses the importance of the cultural industries.

The second issue is almost more important than that one, and it is to do with the use of music in torture processes. As is now well documented, mainly by the charity Reprieve, which the MU wholeheartedly supports, the use of music in torture processes has been endemic during the recent Iraq war and in many of the ghost prisons that the US has operated throughout the world. Music has been used in torture light and no-touch torture practices by the US and UK military to psychologically disorientate and break detainees without leaving any tell tale physical marks. Reports from a variety of sources, including US military and released detainees, describe prisoners as blindfolded and shackled in pitch black, cold, isolated containers or garages and made to wear headphones through which deafening music is played for 15 hours at a time. The people whose music has been played have responded against this behaviour. David Grey has responded to the use of his song *Babylon* being used as torture music. Tom Morello of *Rage Against the Machine* has said, 'The fact that our music has been co-opted in this barbaric way is really disgusting. That particular kind of interrogation has rightly been cited as torture. If you are at all familiar with the ideological teachings of the band and its support for human rights, that is really hard to take.'

So a campaign organised by MU and Reprieve called *Zero DB* to stop these practices. Please look at that on the website. The moral rights of musicians are of vital importance not just to their reputations and integrity as artistes, but also to changing the world and to ending some of the worst excesses of military and capitalist power. Empowering the artistes to exercise their moral rights and to control the uses of their music would make it much harder for the military or the BNP to appropriate music for their own bitter ends and restore faith in the positive, communal and uplifting effects of music on society. Please support this motion.

Natasha Gerson (*Equity*) seconded Motion 71.

She said: Congress, the written broadcast of performed word is a very powerful tool which can and has been used by the media and by different organizations to influence our views on

society and on various political and social situations. These words in performances can be used in a positive way to enable us to perceive wrong doings and injustices, and thus inspire us individually or collectively to begin to correct or to write them. They can also be used and distorted in a negative and dangerous way by oppressive regimes and organizations who may employ them to influence the public in ways which are unsupportable to all of us in the trade union Movement. This cannot be tolerated. If we, as actors, writers, journalists, singers and musicians have no moral rights to protect our work, then we have no control over these serious forms of exploitation. This is a very bad situation.

As this motion also states, the media is expanding and exploding. The ways in which our work can be exploited are legion and growing every day. In some ways this is good. Equity together with our collecting society, BECs, has worked tirelessly to ensure that with the explosive expansion of media outlets we receive commensurately fair remuneration. Like everyone here, we want our rightful share of new sources of profit which would not exist without our original body of work. But when we complain that television credits roll too fast for our names to be read, it is not just so that our grannies and aunties can witness our moment of glory or that we will get more work out of it, it is because we take pride in the work we have done, some of which might just have a positive effect on some aspect of our society. No one wants to see their work hi-jacked by others and used in ways for which it was most definitely not intended. We can only control this if we are accorded proper moral rights wherever possible over how and by whom our work is used.

By supporting this motion you can help to ensure that in the future this will be the case. Thank you.

Dorothy Wright (*University and College Union*) supported Motion 71.

She said: Congress, this is my first time at the TUC and my first time speaking here. (*Applause*)

UCU members have great sympathy with and full support for this motion. Our members also work to protect their intellectual rights and seek to prevent the moral abuse of their endeavours, especially as politicians and others at times seek to misrepresent or abbreviate to the point of meaninglessness their research or writings.

In addition to being a UCU member, I am a folk music enthusiast. I am sick of seeing British folk music that is neither racist nor fascist being misappropriated and misrepresented by the BNP. My first knowledge of trade unions as a child in the US came through folk music. Congress may like to note that folk musicians are themselves so angered by this that they have formed *Folk Against Fascism* to stand alongside the growing number of anti-fascist groups in this country. Musicians including Steve Knightly, Chris Wood, Martin Simpson and others are objecting to the misuse of folk music in supposed support of things they categorically do not support. They also seek to raise awareness of the dangers of the BNP.

The Sydmouth Folk Festival this past August saw a one thousand person strong rally against the BNP at a folk festival! They, the *Folk Against Fascism*, are in the process of organising some major events for the forthcoming year. I have been told that they are also putting labels on their CDs to protest about the BNP's use of their music. We are seeing an increase in the breadth of infiltration of the BNP into more areas of society as they seek to normalize their status. However, we are also seeing an increase in the number of specific resistance

movements. It appears now, whether we like football, folk music or both, that we are united in our disgust of the BNP and the far right. The BBC should take note and not seek to aid in the normalization in an organization that has nothing normal about it. I hope the website reporting the BNP that we heard about from the NUJ yesterday will add to their site an up-to-date list of links to the growing number of anti-fascist movements. Jean Walker said on Monday that after an initial show of unity, after the murder of her son, Anthony, too many people went back to their comfort zones. In all aspects of work and leisure we need to make sure that there are no comfort zones of this sort. Please support this motion to lobby for better control for artistes and others to protect their moral interests. (*Applause*)

The President: Well done, delegate. Congress, once again there has been no opposition so we will move to the vote.

* *Motion 71 was CARRIED*

Media Freedom

(*Insert Motion 72 - Media freedom*)

Donnacha Delong (*National Union of Journalists*) moved Motion 72.

He said: Congress, a number of times today and yesterday we heard about some of the worst aspects of the media. We also heard yesterday how jobs cuts in the media are making it difficult for journalists to do their jobs particularly in terms of racism. But the media, at its best, functions as a watchdog. Some of the best examples of journalism are when they found out about abuses of power, they have communicated and publicized those to the public so we know what others are doing. But increasingly journalists are finding restrictions on their work, on the ground, preventing them doing exactly that.

I was at the G20 demonstration on 1st April this year. I was working as a journalist and I had my press card. At one point I was seeking to cover what was going on and seeking to get at a different side of the demonstration to where I had been. I went up to the police and asked if I could get through the lines to cover it. I was told that I wasn't allowed, that there had been a disturbance of the peace. I pointed out to them that it was exactly because of the disturbance of the peace that I wanted to get a different picture of it. I was told I was not allowed. It didn't matter whether I was journalist, a protester or anybody else. I simply was not allowed to go through the police lines. This was exactly one week after Parliament had said that the police were not entitled to restrict journalists from doing their job.

Later on that same day I was standing with a group of journalists in front of riot police lines. At this stage, the riot police had moved in and had been restricting the size of the demonstration area. We were standing around talking, there were some people lying on the floor in front of them, it was a sunny day and there was no problem. Suddenly, we heard somebody shout 'Run' because the police had decided, with no warning and no sign of violence in front of them, to charge. As I said, we were an obvious group of journalists and people with cameras. We all had to run carrying our cameras and our material with us out of the way of the police who had simply decided that they did not like us standing there. These are two examples of issues that many of our members and many other journalists found at that demonstration and on the next day. The next day, on 2nd April, a large group of journalists were threatened under the Public Order Act with arrest if they did not move on. If

you remember the pictures that emerged from 2nd April, that is the day when we saw the pictures of a police officer smacking a woman for shouting at him. The point is that without journalists present people do not know what is going on. We cannot cover the abuses and we cannot let you know what is going on. Journalists have a very special place to play in these demonstrations and should be allowed to cover them. Unfortunately, what happened in April of this year is not new. It is a situation that we have become very accustomed to in the past number of years.

One of the journalists who has done the most to expose what the police have been doing in these demonstrations is Mark Fellay. Mark was injured at a demonstration in 2006 by being pushed backwards by police who simply did not want journalists being close enough to take pictures of the action. That is one aspect of the problems we are facing. The other aspect is when journalists actually succeed in doing their job, exposing issues and telling the public what the story is. I am talking about people like Suzanne Bream and Chiv Mallick. The police come to them and expect them to do the police's job for them, demand access to their sources, demand access to their information. Rather than investigating situations themselves, they simply wait until the journalists have found the story and ask for all of their material. Protection of sources is one of the most fundamental requirements of a free media. Unless we can protect our sources, we end up in a situation like Suzanne Bream did where she was, literally, in fear of her life if she had provided that information. But the authorities did not seem to care until a court told them they had to, that she was in danger of being killed if she did what they asked her to.

We have had some successes. Both in the Suzanne Bream cases and the Chiv Mallick case we found courts that were willing to tell the authorities that they were not allowed access to our sources. The police have, since the events of April in the light of the coverage they received after that and the exposés that were published, thankfully in the media but largely due to individuals because of the restrictions on the media, so camera phone footage showed some of the worst abuses of the police because the journalists were restricted, apologized for some of their actions and have modified their behaviour in recent climate camp instances. However, this is not the first time we have had apologies from the police. We have had apology after apology after apology, yet they have continued to do the same thing. There is no doubt, if the light of publicity goes away from the police, that they will move back. That is why it is so important for the entire trade union Movement to put pressure on the police and authorities to recognise that as independent journalists we have a right to cover issues and we have a right to protect our sources. Please support.

Tony Lennon (*Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph & Theatre Union*) seconded Motion 72.

He said: Actually, if you notice, everyone has got a strapline to their unions these days. You are the media for something. Actually, we are the media and entertainment union. My suggestion that we should be called the 'union for very long names' did not go down too well.

I would like to follow on from the NUJ by explaining the background to an award winning picture which is on the front of our union magazine. If you go upstairs, you will see that this is one of many union journals that won a prize from the TUC, in this case, for *that* photograph. For those dealing in black and white, as they say, the photo is actually some Yorkshire Constabulary policemen doing a very deep search of a film crew who were working for ITV News in Kent. I would like to tell you the story behind the picture because I

think it just gives another very clear example of the way that the police are trying to interfere with the important democratic process of gathering news.

Last autumn, in 2008, a climate camp was set up outside the Northdown Power Station -- it was controversial at the time - with green protesters because there is likely to be an expansion of coal burning at the power station. Many journalists turned up, needless to say, because they wanted to interview the power company, the council and also, obviously, the protesters. The key to the group of journalists and technicians who went to the site was that they all had a thing called a press card. That is a guarantee of your bona fides as a journalist or technician who is earning a living working in the news gathering profession. They are not handed out like lollipops. If you have got a press card it is a guarantee that you are a genuine journalist, that you are not a protester in disguise, and there is a system by which the police can actually check that the card is valid, that you are the person on it, if there is any doubt at all. So they were all genuine journalists.

They turned up at the climate camp, where they had been allowed two hours to go in. They were fully searched on the way in and they were fully searched on the way out. On the way out a couple of stills photographers who protested about the search then had their cars completely searched just to teach them a lesson. The flimsy excuse given by the police was, 'You've got equipment which is capable of causing criminal damage.' I remind you that these are all bona fide genuine journalists. A group of stills photographers then went off to a McDonald's very close to the power station, which had free wi-fi. I am not accusing my colleagues in the hall of having an unhealthy diet. These days pictures tend to get sent back to base or to the agencies using laptops and wi-fi. So the people in front of me are not just cruising e-bay, I promise. The police appeared outside McDonald's and began filming this group of journalists through the window for no reason whatsoever but recording their faces. They knew their names already because they had been calling people they had never met by their Christian names. The lesson here is that the police at that particular incident stood in the way of journalists gathering information. It is important for us to have sensible debates about controversial issues like power. I would like you to support Motion 72 to make sure that the issue is kept alive and the police are reminded that they have got to let journalists and technicians do their jobs. Thank you.

The President: Congress, once again there is no opposition. Let us move to the vote.

** Motion 72 was CARRIED*

Scrutineers' Report

The President: Delegates, I can now invite Paula Brown, the Chair of the Scrutineers, to give the results of the ballot for General Council.

Paula Brown (*Chair of the Scrutineers*): President and delegates, I present the Scrutineers' Report. Would delegates please turn to the back of your Agenda and I will give the results of the ballot for the General Council Section C, F and J. The members nominated for Sections B, D, E, G, H, I and the General Purposes Committee are as printed in the Agenda.

In Section A the Unite list of nominations for the General Council are as follows:

Tony Burke, Gail Cartmail, Len McCluskey, Doug Rooney, Derek Simpson, Pat Stuart, Tony Woodhouse and Tony Woodley. All other union nominations in section A are as printed in the agenda.

For Section C, those elected are:

- Jonathan Baume, FDA, 422,000
- Brian Caton, POA, 405,000
- Jeremy Dear, National Union of Journalists, 470,000
- Mark Dickinson, Nautilus International, 389,000
- Gerry Doherty, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association, 538,000
- Michael Leahy, Community, 353,000
- Ged Nichols, Accord, 459,000
- Christine Payne, Equity, 401,000
- Tim Poil, Nationwide Group Staff Union, 387,000
- John Smith, Musicians' Union, 508,000
- Matt Wrack, Fire Brigades' Union, 387,000

For Section F those elected are:

- Leslie Manasseh, Connect, 681,000

For Section J those elected are:

- John Walsh, Unite, 5,265,000

That concludes the Scrutineers' Report.

The President: That concludes the business for today.

(Congress adjourned at 5.30 pm)

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