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TUC Congress 2009 verbatim account of proceedings

Congress Day 4: Thursday 17 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 fourth day of the 2009 Congress as supplied by verbatim reporters Marten, Walsh, Cherer

FOURTH DAY

(Congress reassembled at 10.15 a.m.)

The President: Congress, let me, first of all, thank you for your patience in waiting for us. We had a really long agenda at the General Council Meeting this morning. I do apologise for the late start. I will move to the order of business straightaway. Thank you, very much, once again, Congress.

Colleagues, I am now going to explain how I will take today's business. Please listen carefully. I intend to take the remaining scheduled business for today first, as published in your Congress Guide, namely, Motion 83, Democratic renewal, to be moved by the FDA with an amendment from PCS standing against; Motion 84, Political representation of members, to be moved by the CWU; Motion 32, People's Charter, to be moved by RMT; Motion 56, Education and the economic crisis, to be moved by NUT; Motion 73, Workers in adult entertainment, to be moved by Equity, and Motion 85, Young members, to be moved by RMT.

I will then take the outstanding business in the order in which it was lost, namely, Motion 47, Air passenger duty, to be moved by BALPA; Motion 76, Palestine, to be moved by the FBU. Finally, I will take the five remaining emergency motions; E2, Cuts in the civil service compensation scheme, to be moved by PCS; E3, Royal Mail dispute, to be moved by CWU; E4, Vestas and green jobs, to be moved by the RMT; E5, Sri Lanka, to be moved by FBU, and E6, National grid: national greed, to be moved by the GMB.

Congress, as I explained yesterday, in order to be sure that we complete the business I will continue, not to restrict the number, to be very wary and aware of time restrictions. As I have already explained to delegation leaders, where there are only indications of speaking in support or to being involved in the debate, I will not be calling extra speakers unless they are opposing the motion.

Address by Cath Speight, Labour Party sororal delegate

The President: Delegates, we start this morning by welcoming this year's Labour Party sororal delegate, Cath Speight, who was unfortunately not able to be with us on Monday. Cath Speight has been an activist and an officer of Unite the union for 25 years. She was a national equality officer before becoming the regional secretary in Wales, and then moving to her current role as a national officer for the finance section. Cath has served on the National Executive of the Labour Party for nine years, of which she is currently chair. She remains a passionate advocate for equality. Cath, you are very welcome and we look forward to hearing your contribution. (*Applause*)

Cath Speight (*Labour Party sororal delegate*) said: Thank you, Sheila. Again, I add my apologies to the fact that I was not able to be here on Monday. Congress, I am delighted to be here today as the Chair of the National Executive, to bring good wishes and support to Congress from the Labour Party. I am also pleased to be here as a lifelong trade unionist and one of your representatives on the NEC.

I suppose you might say that it has been a challenging year for the Labour Party but one that has also demonstrated the great strength of our Movement. The appointment of one of our own, Ray Collins, as the Labour Party General Secretary, has proved a turning point in the party's finances and organization, and he is now busy building our campaigning capacity for the next election. Many of you will know Ray from the many years he spent in the T&G, starting in the post room, aged 16 and working his way up to become Assistant General Secretary. I know that Ray still feels every bit a part of this Movement, and I look forward to working with him in the years to come.

I took enormous pride to see how many trade unionists turned out to work in the local and European elections in June in very, very challenging circumstances, campaigning for Labour in their communities and workplaces. I was devastated by how many hardworking councillors, some of whom are in this hall, lost their seats in a climate of anti-politics which was no fault of their own. I saw how the BNP capitalized on this mood, but then I saw, too, how many of you turned out to stop them, and I expected nothing less, because the trade union Movement has a long and proud record of standing up to racists and fascists. Everyone of us here feels privileged to have known and worked alongside our brother, Jack Jones, and I have nothing but admiration for his passion for equality and hatred of bigotry that led him to join the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War at the age of 23.

But I admire, too, those less well-known trade unionists who stood at home against the fascists and extremists in Hyde Park and Cable Street against Moseley and Enoch Powell. I know that we will be there next time to drive the BNP out of Brussels, out of our workplaces and wherever else they rear their ugly heads. They spread their message of hatred. I have only got two words for Nick Griffin - not the two which you are no doubt thinking about, although I have some sympathy with the sentiment - and they are the two words which were cried out on the battlefields of the Spanish Republic and in the streets of the east end: No Pasarán! Nick Griffin, you do not speak for me and you do not speak for my country. (*Applause*)

Congress, we must combat cynicism to restore trust in politics because it is only through politics that we can transform our communities and change people's lives for the better. The past 12 years have amply demonstrated that fact. As a trade unionist I have been most proud of our Government when I have seen issues first discussed here at Congress, then raised by

trade unionists within the party, argued over with ministers, argued over a little bit more, but then adopted as party policy and, sometimes, enacted into law by our Government. I know you don't want me to list the achievements that are now more than ten years old, however significant they were and however big a role we played in bringing them about. But also consider how those achievements have been built upon in response to our demands as trade unionists in recent years: strengthening the minimum wage enforcement, so that greedy employers who steal from their staff face tougher penalties; increasing holiday pay entitlement to 28 days; extending and increasing maternity pay; paternity leave and the ability to transfer that leave between parents; and a commitment to equality within the State pension scheme. I could go on listing progress which has been made, but it is important, and the important point is that none of it would ever have been possible without the trade union Movement playing a full and active role within the Labour Party. I want to thank you for that. We are a better and stronger movement when we work together, and don't let anybody tell you any different.

Although I have not gone about them today, in case anyone should feel complacent about those hard fought victories that we had in 1997, it was only this summer that Tory MPs had a Bill before Parliament to scrap the minimum wage entirely. David Cameron makes a great deal about compassionate Conservatism. Congress, there is no such thing. From the little of their plans that the Tories have come clean on, it is very clear where their priorities lie. They want to cut the pensions of police, teachers and NHS staff, slash public spending on health and also cut Inheritance Tax for the very, very rich, pouring a billion pounds into the pockets of the three thousand wealthiest estate owners in Britain. They want an economic policy based upon the principle, and I quote

Mr. Osborne, of: 'The state cannot guarantee fairness and it shouldn't even try'. This, then, is what we can expect from Cameron's Conservatives. That is not altogether surprising given that Cameron himself claims that the hardships suffered by northern towns in the '80s was a price worth paying. Even worse, he has the cheek to blame us, the unions, for that hardship. Well, we know differently, don't we? We remember the dole queues, we remember the families torn apart and the poverty. No price on earth was worth that amount of suffering. We know because our members lived in those communities, they worked in those factories, mines and hospitals that were closed by Cameron's heroine, Maggie Thatcher.

Congress, if the Tories had been in power during the last two years, this is what we would have been faced with again. They advocated leaving Northern Rock to collapse, argued against Gordon Brown's and Obama's economic stimulus package and criticised efforts to preserve jobs, homes and factories. They would have left the recession to run its course just as they did in the '80s and '90s. Another price worth paying! Maybe it is a price worth paying for the residents of Eton and Harrow, but not where I live and not where you live. So, remember, whatever our differences, and we all know that we have them, the choice that your members and my members face at the next Election is a Labour Government on our side versus a Tory Government that will leave us on our own, a Labour Government that helps hardworking families overcome difficulties they face and a Tory Government that would cut the very public services that they depend on.

Congress, I was in Australia recently at the Australian Labour Party Conference, and I listened to our trade union sisters and brothers, to the horror stories of what havoc had been reeked on them by the Howard Government, under Lynton Crosby's direction, and he is here advising Cameron on how to deal with us.

On Tuesday Gordon addressed Congress and he spoke about apprenticeships and council houses, words that we would not hear if the Tories were in power. We can win the next Election by pulling together as a movement and ensuring that those messages get across to voters. Despite our differences, there is only one choice for working people, for our members, for your members, and I urge you to get out into your workplaces and into your communities and deliver the message so we can go on and carry on under a fourth term Labour Government.

Congress, I bring sororal greetings and best wishes from the Labour Party. Thank you.

The President: Thank you so much, Cath. It now gives me great pleasure to present you with the Gold Badge of Congress. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

Campaigns and communications

The President: Colleagues, we now turn to chapter 8 of the General Council Report, Campaigns and communications, from page 164. Delegates, the FDA does not accept the amendment of PCS to Motion 83 - Democratic renewal. Therefore, the amendment to be moved by PCS will stand against the motion. First I will call the mover and seconder of Motion 83, followed by the mover and seconder of the amendment to Motion 83. I will then call the supporters of both the motion and the amendment. At the end of the debate, I will give the right of reply to the mover of Motion 83, then take the vote on the amendment and then on Motion 83. I hope that is clear, delegates. The General Council supports the motion and is leaving the amendment to Congress.

Democratic renewal

(*Insert Motion 83 - Democratic renewal*)

David Watts (FDA) moved Motion 83.

He said: Congress, in moving Motion 83 on behalf of the FDA, I will be explaining why we have not accepted the PCS amendment.

Colleagues, you do not need me to remind you of the scandals earlier this year about the successive revelations regarding MPs' expenses. If employed public servants had behaved in that way, they would, in all probability, have been sacked. Now the current climate deters the worthy from entering public life and, worse, the public's distain for politicians is rubbing off on employed public servants as well. We make no apology for bringing this motion to Congress today. It sets out measures to reinforce confidence in public life. The key measures are supported by politicians from many parties. These include evidence-based policy making. That means looking in a measured and objective way at whether a proposal will have the desired effect, not kneejerk dogmatism or popularism. It means better evaluation of what government and Parliament can do, strengthening the scrutiny of government and ministers' decisions and a re-emphasis on the Nolan principles on Standards in Public Life. These include integrity, honesty and selflessness. The motion calls for the House of Commons to set up a Select Committee on Equalities with a remit that stretches across the responsibilities of all government departments so that it can monitor progress on the objectives to which ministers are committed.

In particular, the FDA and other Civil Service unions have campaigned long for a statutory basis for the political impartiality of the Civil Service. I am pleased to say that there are now provisions to that effect in a Bill before Parliament. I would like to take this opportunity, and I hope you will support me in this, to urge the Government and Opposition parties not to allow these provisions to be lost in political in-fighting in the run-up to a general election.

Let me now turn to the PCS amendment. We believe that elected politicians should be properly representative of and accountable to their constituents. It may be that some form of proportional representation has a part to play in that, but views about PR differ. There is much argument about the value of PR and the various different systems, often based on party political advantage. The FDA has always taken great care to retain its political impartiality.

The PCS amendment introduces a substantive new issue and impliedly supports the principle of proportional representation. Proportional representation, as we see it, is a matter of political debate and controversy. We believe that our motion is not controversial. Congress should have the opportunity to vote separately on the amendment, and I am happy that the General Council takes the same view. The FDA will neither oppose nor support the amendment but leave it to Congress to decide.

I, therefore, invite all of you to form your own view about the PCS amendment, but I also urge you strongly to support the motion whether it is amended or not. Thank you.

Catherine Donaldson (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 83.

She said: Congress, in seconding this motion I would like to focus on bullet points (i) and (iii). Point (i), which states that government policy decisions should be supported by objective analysis and consultation, sounds both obvious and uncontentious. The mantra is evidence-based policy making but it does not just happen automatically and it is not just a trade union concern. In June the Public Administration Select Committee emphasized that good people, and that is good people with the correct skills and abilities, are a pre-requisite for a good government. This includes people with specialist skills. We are relying on them all the time but often only notice them when things go wrong, such as a swine flu pandemic, for example. But specialists in many areas are seen as a luxury and not a necessity and this has given way to the use of consultants, contractualisation and outsourcing. A previous chief scientific adviser said, 'A problem with an organization that outsources all of its resources is that if it does it too rigorously it no longer knows even which questions to ask.'

Recently, in my own area, we have been recruiting new field managers. Internal candidates were systematically sifted out and not even getting to interview. The attitude was, 'External, new blood, is what we need'. Well, I just hope that when the man from Del Monte is called upon to deal with BSE, Mad Cow Disease, Foot & Mouth and H5N1, the higher pathogenic avian influenza, that he knows what to do. We must retain and encourage our specialists in government.

As to bullet point (iii), *Prospect* strongly supports the call for cross-cutting select committees which, if properly constituted and resourced, could help to challenge the departmental silos in deciding-making which still exists. Such an approach could also help to avoid the need for regular readjustment to cope with machinery of Government changes. For example, when the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills was set up, the old Science & Technology Select Committee, which already had a full work programme, was suddenly expected to take

on a much broader remit. With the best will in the world, committee members could not maintain the same level of scrutiny with the university sector and entire skills landscape to consider as well and, in terms of the membership expertise, were not particularly well equipped to do so. How much better to have a committee with a clear thematic but re-organisation proof remit -- in this case, even the Government agrees, following the demise of the DIUS, the Science Minister himself was first off the blocks to propose the re-creation of the Science Select Committee - such as a Select Committee on Equalities recognizing the value and work of the Government's Equalities Office. We believe that ministers across government should be held accountable for equality issues.

The President: Would you wind-up, please, colleague.

Catherine Donaldson: Now is the time for democratic renewal. Support the motion.

The President: I now call the amendment to Motion 83, to be moved by Public and Commercial Services Union.

Chris Baugh (PCS) moved the amendment to Motion 83.

He said: We welcome and support the proposals put forward by the FDA for better governance and for seeking to restore trust in the political process, but we believe that it is necessary for a serious debate within the ranks of the trade union Movement on the question of electoral reform. In a way, this is both an old and a new debate, old in the sense that as far back as 1911 the TUC resolved without dissent that no system of election can be satisfactory which does not give opportunity to all parties to obtain representation proportional to their voting strength.

While in the same spirit, PCS believes that we need a debate now and we have tabled this amendment for four main reasons. First, the experience of PCS members and public sector workers who find that an increasing convergence of the three main parties in favour of deep cuts in public expenditure; second, compounded by the expenses scandal, the deep public disaffection with most politicians and the Parliamentary system itself; third, how the first-past-the-post system distorts the political process and produces increasingly unrepresentative results and, fourth, the current circumstances prompt the need for the TUC to conduct an open debate on the question.

PCS members could be forgiven for thinking that the Prime Minister has something of a downer on PCS members and civil servants. The only concrete example of cuts was to shred the contractual redundancy arrangements with its own workforce to assist whoever is in government to sack middle and low income civil servants more cheaply and quicker. PCS members have had five years of so-called cuts in costs, inefficiencies, low priorities and backroom functions. From our experience, it is not surprising that for PCS members the vague promises of benign cuts ring hollow. We have sought to counter the caricature through a make-your-vote-count campaign, and we find, of course, a consensus amongst the main parties that a budgetary crisis caused by the bailout of the banks now justifies even deeper cuts in public spending. While it can be argued that the Tories cut deeper and with less regard for the social consequences, accepting the Tory premise that cuts offer a way out of economic recession, it does not just prolong the recession or expect working people to pay the price but makes the prospect of a Tory victory even more likely. PCS believe a debate is long overdue. We ask Congress to support this amendment, to recognise the unrepresentative nature of the

current voting system, to recognise the growing gap between the voters and Parliamentary representatives, to recognise the growing consensus within the ranks of the labour Movement around the need for a proper and open debate, and to start to address the crisis of political representation that leaves increasing numbers of trade unionists without a legitimate political voice. Please support the amendment.

The President: I have had an indication that this will be formally seconded.

(The amendment was formally seconded from the floor)

I believe there are no other speakers for this debate, so I will move to the vote on the amendment.

* *The amendment to Motion 83 was CARRIED*

* *Motion 83 as amended was CARRIED*

The President: I call paragraphs 8.1 - 8.8 of the General Council Report, and Motion 84, Political representation of members. The General Council oppose the motion, and I will call on the General Secretary during the debate to explain the position.

Political representation of members

(Insert Motion 84 - Political representation of members)

Tony Kearns (*Communication Workers' Union*) moved Motion 84.

He said: Congress, I think that the problem we raise in Motion 84 was well illustrated by the Prime Minister's speech to Congress the day before yesterday. In a carefully crafted passage, the Prime Minister explained how public spending will be cut without essential front-line services being cut, whatever that means. Of course, we heard that the response from the Tories and the media was to seize upon that as a policy initiative and to remove some of the qualifications that the Prime Minister established around them. According to George Osborne, the Tories have won the debate now and have established a consensus on the need to cut public spending. So if recent history is anything to go by, we now face a bidding war about which parties can cut services most effectively. In reality, public spending is what has saved this economy from a slump because whilst GDP has fallen nearly 5% in the last 12 months, private investment has fallen by nearly 15%. Yet there appears to be a fear of offending private business by the Government and, consequently, history is re-written. So instead of the private sector being responsible for the recession, all of a sudden it is state spending, particularly public sector workers who are to bear the burden of the blame. That is what we mean by a problem of political representation for affiliated unions in the TUC.

Of course, there are some unions here, like the CWU, which are affiliated to the Labour Party, but many of you are not. This motion is not asking you to take a position for or against affiliation to the Labour Party. Our own union conferences and our own members make that decision. What this is about is preparing the whole Movement for the difficulties that lie ahead. We want to have a conference before the General Election where we can lay down key planks of an alternative economic strategy through a consensus that appears to be growing of

cutting public spending. It will allow those of us affiliated to the Labour Party to promote our concerns in a Labour manifesto.

For example, there is a real debate about unproductive state spending. Let me explain what I mean by that. Issues including an anticipated spend of £5.6 billion on ID cards; an anticipated spend of £75 billion over the lifetime of a replacement for Trident. Doubtless, every union present has a view to bring something to that type of debate, and there are other issues about representation.

We all know that women are still seriously under-represented and that ethnic minorities are even more under-represented. Our view is that such under-representation weakens Parliament's social and international policies on a number of issues. The point is this. It is not as if this trade union Movement and yourselves have not been debating this issue this week. I will just run you through some of the fringe meetings that we have attended and discussed this week: *Trade Unions Fighting Back: A Political Discussion*. Speakers came from the POA, RMT, NUJ, UCU, GMB and Unite. *Resistance and Representation - The Year Ahead*. Speakers came from the POA, RMT, NUJ, NAPO, the Bakers' Union, URTU, PCS and FBU.

What is going on outside of this main hall? Actually, it is the debate that we are asking for to take place inside this hall. Motion 84 is quite straightforward. It is about unifying this trade union Movement. It is a statement of fact. We are recognizing the lack of adequate representation for our members of affiliated unions, and we know that New Labour, because we have had this debate here on this platform this week, as currently constituted, is failing to attract the support of our members. You have only got to look at the election of the BNP MEP in this part of the country. The place to debate this issue in the run-up to a general election in order to get the consensus by the elected leaders of the working class is in this hall by yourselves, acting as delegates, and forming a political consensus that we can take forward on behalf of working class people. I move.

Brian Caton (POA) seconded Motion 84.

He said: Congress, I am pleased to second this motion. I am not going to go over issues that the mover has referred to. We believe in democracy. The POA wants to see a future. For those unions affiliated to the Labour Party, there is a clear voice, a clear organization and routes to put forward our beliefs on behalf of the whole labour Movement. That includes yourselves, all affiliated trade unions and the Labour Party. The POA wishes to thank all our Labour affiliated trade unions for their help over the years to try and change this Government's mind on the attacks on my union and their failures to deliver a decent Prison Service, one that serves the general public and a civil society. They have helped us and I thank them very sincerely for that. But we believe there is a need for a full and in-depth debate by the TUC for the future of politics and how they affect the trade union Movement and its members. We do not believe it will always be possible to rely on what we have had in place. We should not, in our opinion, put the burden on those unions affiliated to the Labour Party. Of course, we have heard that there is a massive move by many people to look at whether they want to continue being affiliated to the Labour Party. If that ceases to be the position, then our influence will lessen. We need to have a conference and define what we will do in those circumstances. We also need to make sure that we have in place a mechanism by which we can deal with it should Labour lose power. We don't want to see Labour losing power but we need to prepare if that happens. We do not believe, even with all the talk that we have had this week, that we have that in place. For those reasons, we ask that we make

sure that this motion goes through, that we have the debate and prepare for the future. Heaven help us if we are caught unprepared and the Tories come to power. It is clear what their agenda is and we should be prepared to fight against it. We need to have that political debate.

It is for those reasons that the POA is pleased to second this motion and we ask for your full support. Thank you.

The President: I now call the General Secretary. Brendan.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Thank you, Sheila. Let me warn Congress that I have to speak on about six occasions this morning to indicate the General Council's attitude on motions, so I intend to be very brief in those interventions.

This motion, as the mover and seconder have explained, is calling on the TUC to convene a conference to consider the question of the political representation of members. We have within the TUC a diversity of traditions and a diversity of affiliations. Many of our affiliates also affiliate to the Labour Party and support and sustain the Labour Party. Others have made the choice not to have a direct political link of that sort. Yet within the TUC we maintain a respect for the different traditions of our individual affiliates and we seek to build maximum cohesion and unity across the Movement as a whole. The General Council does not believe that looking to convene a conference of the sort proposed, looking to contemplate perhaps some alternative political movement, which is implied, a new party, essentially, which is implied as a possible outcome of such a conference, the General Council do not think that an initiative of that sort would either respect our traditions and the autonomy of affiliates, nor would it be a politically smart move for the TUC to make. So we are asking you to oppose the motion.

The President: Thank you, delegates. The mover has the right of reply.

Tony Kearns (*CWU*) in exercising the right of reply to Motion 84, said:

Brendan, nowhere in Motion 84 does it say, or use the words, 'new political party'. That is not what this is about. (*Applause*)

Congress faces a clear choice. The world, so all economic and political commentators tell us, stands still in one of the worst recessions we have seen in living memory. Potentially, our economy still stands on a depression. The notion that the Bank of England and this Government can continue to print money in the form of quantitative easing and flood the economy is going to come to a stop at some time and the recession will hit again. A Tory government, if it was elected, is going to make us the scapegoats. I don't understand how we have come from a situation five weeks ago when bankers' greed was on the front page of every paper, and it was the world markets and economists who got us into this mess, to five weeks later when it's our fault! I don't know how that situation has come about and I don't accept it. (*Applause*) It's come about because of a real lack of political will an representation for our members.

The reason why a BNP candidate was elected in the north-west of England to an MEP seat had nothing to do with an increase in the vote for the BNP because the BNP vote went down from the last time. It is because the Labour vote collapsed. That is what happened in the

north-west. (*Applause*) What we need to ensure is that situations like that do not happen again.

As I said, we stand on the verge of the worst recession, with three million unemployed and rising, with homelessness and repossessions at a rate never seen before, and the amount of personal debt never seen in recorded history. If the Tories are elected, if you read through the lines of what they are talking about, it will mean a return to conditions like the Poor Law. The richest economy on the planet, the American economy, hands out food stamps. If there is not a time for the elected leaders of the working class in this country to come together to discuss political representation, then I don't know when it is if it is not now. I urge you to support.

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

* *Motion 84 FELL*

The President: Delegates, we return to Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report - Economic and Industrial Affairs. I call Motion 32 - People's Charter. The General Council support the motion with a reservation, and I will call the General Secretary during the debate to explain the position. I believe that we have some speakers in opposition.

People's Charter

(Insert Motion 32 - People's Charter)

Bob Crow (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) moved Motion 32.

He said: Congress, I have been looking forward to this debate because since this People's Charter has been discussed and formulated, I have heard loads of reasons as to why people cannot support it. I am glad that some delegates are going to debate and oppose the reasons why, so perhaps we can have our differences out on the floor. But if we do have our differences out on the floor, let's put them out open and honestly, because what I have been told so far is that some of the reservations are that it means a new political party is being set up. Let's get something straight. We are here as independent free trade unionists this week and our job is to represent people in the workplace, whatever political party they are. Like my union and most other unions here, the vast majority of our members are in no political party whatsoever, but what they want is advancement for their class of people. We have to determine at the end of the day what political party in place has the best opportunity to advance working people's aims and aspirations.

I have also heard other delegates say that it is a wish list. I will tell you what, we've been wishing for a long while under this Government for some of the things that we wanted. You are going to have to keep on wishing, because I thought at the end of the day that we give people aspirations about what they would like to see going forward. Someone also said that the reason why we cannot accept the People's Charter is because it has not been costed. Well, that is not my job. I was always told that that was left to the bankers, the captains of industry to deal with all of that, and what a state they have got us into, and how the working class is going to have to pay for the actions of those bankers!

Let me tell you what the People's Charter is. Let's nail this to the mast once and for all. The people who want to support the People's Charter can either support it or not. Either you are in

a political party or you are not. There are people who support the People's Charter who are in the Labour Party, not in the Labour Party, who are independent and so on. This is about an opportunity to put some kind of different policies forward about what is taking place in front of us at the moment.

Is anyone going to argue that we shouldn't have a democratic say about the banks? If you can put taxpayers' money into the banks, then we have the right to say how that money is being used. *(Applause)* We don't accept that it is necessary to cut back public services, to cut back health and homes. Why don't we look at some alternative policies? I am just a simple person, but I understand that if you have got building workers in dole queues and a shortage of houses, wouldn't it be far better to stop paying Social Security to unemployed builders when they don't pay tax, but you get them back working by building the homes for people to live in, then they can start paying tax and you haven't got to pay them Social Security? *(Applause)* Let's bring the projects forward.

We keep on talking about the high speed rail lines. Why have we got to wait for years upon years for them. I heard yesterday Ed Miliband saying that there is so much red tape that we cannot build wind turbines because local councils stop the planning applications. I thought this was the government that was supposed to cut through red tape. By the way, not just Conservative councils have stopped wind turbines being built. Labour councils have done the same. I thought that the Government was here to govern, and if they can bring emergency legislation in to do A, B and C, then they can bring emergency legislation in to solve the problems that we have got with the global climate temperature increases that we know about.

Brothers and sisters, what it is all about, really, is an alternative. In the last debate, with the excellent comment that Tony Kearns just said about the BNP, unless we put an alternative forward, then what will happen is that people will move to the BNP because if they cannot see that the three main political parties, which all support privatisation, which all support keeping anti-trade union laws and all support having illegal wars, they don't they think they are being represented, they are either going to go to the left or to the right. At this moment in time, they are moving to the BNP.

When I first came to the TUC in the early '80s, I listened to fantastic speakers from the rostrum, and I went home with the hairs on the back of my neck standing up. I left as a youngster feeling thrilled. What we should be doing as a trade union Movement here this week is giving people some hope, to give them some aspirations. *(Applause)* One in five 18-24 year olds are on the dole. They want to leave this place with an injection of enthusiasm. I will say to you, brothers and sisters, don't listen to all this nonsense about it being some alternative political party. It's the People's Charter and I ask this Movement here to back it. *(Applause and cheers)*

Derek Simpson *(Unite the union)* seconded Motion 32.

He said: Congress, Bob raised a number of points in his moving speech, one of which was about a wish list. I can tell you what wish lists are. They used to be, before everybody else gets practical, and says, 'We cannot afford them, we cannot do them, we shouldn't put down things that we can't achieve here and now'. Then, when we pass motions that have been watered down, if we ever get near to achieving them, people say, 'We've done everything you want.' Actually, they have done what we were prepared to settle for, not what we actually want, because what we actually want are the things in the People's Charter. That is the clear

case. This is a question of aspiration. Yes, we should give aspiration, but it is no good giving aspiration unless you can deliver it. I do not mean that, necessarily, we achieve all the People's Charter aspirations tomorrow, next year or even in some of our lifetimes, because I am feeling a bit rough after this week.

What we need to think about is that if we don't talk about alternative parties, if we actually class the Tories, Liberals and Labour as the same, we are missing something because they are not the same, because there one of those parties which we can change, and that is the Labour Party, our party. Quite frankly, to talk about demanding this and then to take your union out of the Labour Party, out of the fight for change, means you need to get smart, wake up and smell the coffee. There is no alternative to a Labour Government except a Tory Government, and you know exactly what you are going to get from a Tory Government. So what's the point in continuing to sleight a Labour Government without actually fighting for the changes? What's the point of arguing that we shouldn't give money to a party that doesn't give us what we want? 'Oh, let's cripple the Labour Party financially so we will help the Tories get in!' 'Let's vote Green, let's vote this, let's vote that, let's not vote Labour. You might as well vote Tory!' So I am seconding this motion because our amendments states that we want to fight within the Labour Party to achieve the aspiration and the desires of our members, which are every bit as fervent as Bob's, every bit as fervent as those who argue for the alternatives. But the difference of the Unite strategy and the difference, I believe, of this Congress is to change the policies of the Labour Party to reflect our need so that we can elect a government that one day will give us the aspiration and stop, for Christ's sake, the return of a Tory Government because I don't want to see this generation have to learn the lessons that we did in the 1980s. *(Applause)*

Paul Noon (*Prospect*) opposed Motion 32.

He said: Congress, I am happy to oblige Bob by setting out some of the reasons to opposition to this motion, although not the ones that Bob mentioned. Firstly, we think that the TUC should set out its own policies and principles, not adopt somebody else's simplistic set of slogans. Secondly, although we agree with some of the aspirations in the bullet points, we do not agree with all of them and we certainly don't agree with wholesale nationalisation and re-nationalisation. There is a long list, including energy, where the main issue is effective regulation and not public ownership, telecoms and transport. We do not actually think it is a good idea to bring Eddie Stobart into public ownership. The third point is that if we are talking about re-nationalisation without compensation, then you will bankrupt just about every funded pension scheme in this country. If you are talking about re-nationalisation with compensation, you will bankrupt the country.

Finally, on Derek's amendment - I was not quite sure whether he was actually opposing the motion - he talked about building support for progressive policies in the Labour Party. Well, if the Labour Party's affiliated unions, and there are 18 out of the 59 unions in Congress, want to campaign for those policies within the Labour Party they can, but not only behalf of my union. Thank you.

The President: I call the General Secretary. Brendan.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Thanks, Sheila. The General Council is supporting the motion but with some clear reservations that I need, briefly, to spell out, and many of those are reflected by the contribution from Paul Noon expressing opposition. The first is that

the TUC does make its own policies. It does not normally take shopping lists from other organizations wholesale. We make our own policies. Many of the issues in the Charter are aspirational, they chime strongly with our objectives for social justice and for greater fairness. But it is important that we consider issues and the detail of issues for the credibility of this Movement.

The ambitions of the Charter are supported and, in many areas, very much chime, but the details are important. I will illustrate that by one point. The Charter talks about an ambition for the minimum wage of half median earnings. If that was taken seriously, the difficulty would be that that would actually mean a reduction in the National Minimum Wage - not an increase but a reduction! I prefer the TUC to do its own work on these policy issues and campaign behind our own policies.

The second reservation relates to this point about the Labour Party and, again, it goes back to the earlier debate. Look, we are an organisation with affiliates, with different traditions. It is for those unions within the Labour Party to decide on their priorities, what they are going to campaign on, what are the issues they are going to put to the fore and look to see reflected in Labour's manifesto when we get to the next election. That is not the property of this Congress. It's the property of those Labour affiliated unions.

So the People's Charter contains some ambitious aspirations for sure, but the detail matters. As for the Labour Party, that is for Labour's own affiliated unions.

The President: Thank you, Brendan. RMT has the right of reply.

Bob Crow (*RMT*) speaking in reply to Motion 32, said:

Thanks for those couple of points, and thanks, Derek, for seconding the motion, because I cannot wait to tell the rest of my comrades around the world that the biggest union in Britain now supports the People's Charter. So we are okay with it.

The reality is this at the end of the day. I never brought the Labour Party into the argument about whether we affiliate or not. Just to get my union's position clear. We can look any union in the face and look at our history about the support that we have given workers and how we have helped to build the labour Movement. By the way, we were expelled from the Labour Party. We never walked away.

To refer to Paul Noon's point about compensation and bringing these companies back. Paul, I would go a bit further than giving compensation. I wouldn't give any compensation to some of these people. They need six months in gaol. That's what some of them need. (*Applause*) By the way, Paul, when we start talking about compensation, when the Gas Board, the Water Board and electricity was privatised, I don't remember any envelopes coming through my mum and dad's door saying, 'There's your compensation, Mr. Owner, for the loss of the industry you have suffered.' (*Applause*)

It is pretty simple at the end of the day. At the end of the day nationalisation was used by the Tories as well. Margaret Thatcher was one of the biggest architects of nationalisation. She nationalised Rolls Royce when it near enough went bankrupt by putting taxpayers' money into it and sold it back out to the private sector. My view is a bit different on that. I don't want to see just lame ducks being nationalised. I want to see the white swans, the RBS's, the

insurance companies and those big movers in society, brought back into public ownership. What do you do with the money? You give it to the pensioners, the students and so on. So, yes, we have all got wish lists. I wish every day. I wish Millwall could have beaten West Ham only a couple of weeks ago but it never happened. (*Laughter*) But that's life at the end of the day. But let's not start getting all mixed up.

As a trade union Movement, our job at the end of the day is to advance the causes of working people. I am not arguing that the Labour Government are the same as the Tories. I am saying that their policies on privatisation, on the question of wars and anti-trade union laws, have been identical. I am glad, Derek, that you have got a say in the Labour Party and that you can change things, because in two weeks time when the Labour Party Conference opens, then you can reverse all those policies you don't like and put a good manifesto down for next year. (*Applause, cheers and table thumping*)

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

* *Motion 32 as amended was CARRIED*

Phyllis begins next turn: The President: Congress, I have been advised by the GPC.....

The President: Congress, I have been advised by the GPC that in order to complete all our business we will need to suspend Standing Orders. I have decided to take the GPC advice and, as a result, speaking times will be cut to the following: after the next motion movers will have four minutes and seconders two minutes. Thank you, Congress.

I now call Motion 56, Education and the Economic Crisis. The General Council oppose the motion and I will call the General Secretary during the debate to explain the position.

Education and the economic crisis

(*Insert Motion 56 - Education and the economic crisis*)

Martin Reed (National Union of Teachers) moved Motion 56.

He said: Congress, we all know that there is an explicit link between recession, job loss, and cuts to public services. We all know that as a result of reckless and irresponsible behaviour of many of our banks we face the prospect of cuts to central services. The Tory Party has already indicated that threat. The potential impact of such cuts upon education provision and the lives of young people would be devastating at a time when we all recognise that what we need is investment and not disinvestment.

The TUC has a long and proud tradition in speaking up for the young. It is a tradition born out of the knowledge that the young are our future. Our young people are the most vulnerable to the impact of economic recession facing the prospect of long-term unemployment or at best low-paid short-term employment, which means that now more than ever we must live up to our consistent pledges to our nation's youth. This motion, and let us be in no doubt, is about the TUC taking a lead as it has in the past, just as we did at this Congress when we unanimously passed Composites 21 and 11. In the same way, it represents an initiative based upon collective strength, the vision to support a well resourced education service. It is about all education affiliates working together to champion the cause of those services and the

investment within the schools and colleges that provide those services. Our motion reiterates calls we have already heard here at Congress for the broadest coalition of all trade unions working together and coordinating effective defence of public service.

There is no inconsistency in this request from the tone and positions we have heard earlier this week. It is not a new idea; it is a simple idea, trade union solidarity. It is through solidarity that we draw together all education affiliates in drawing up an education charter. The possibility is real. The NUT and the UCU have made a first step on this road, united half a million members to commonly agreed objectives on issues like pay, workload, and inspection. Congress, working together is what the TUC is all about. Four years ago when we voted unanimously to defend public services and to defend our pensions just before an election, we won. We won because we stood together, and we will win again before a general election when we stand together. We shall not be shy in promoting our progressive policies on issues like taxation, effective investment in public services, fair pay for dedicated public sector workers, and our opposition to wasteful privatisation, before a general election. When is there a better time to argue our case? When is there a better time to engage our members? When is there a better time to engage the public? It is then, Congress, that we can make our mark. Yes, we do propose the possibility of action strategies but action strategies that have been endorsed and supported throughout this Congress and only if we find ourselves threatened by those who would wish to dismantle our public services and replace them with privatised services in which the rich make money and the public that we serve suffer. That is what it is about, Congress, and that is why we must stand our ground. We have seen fantastic declarations of coordinated action and support at this Congress. Let's ensure that we build and continue that. Let's stand up for the one million young people currently out of work. Let's stand up for the four million young people who currently live below poverty indices. Let's stand up for public services. Let's ensure we have the means, the capacity, the desire, but most of all the soul of our tradition to keep that fight alive. I urge you, support Motion 56.

Brian Ingham (*University and College Union*) seconded Motion 56.

He said: I was absolutely staggered yesterday when we had a note passed round our delegation saying that the General Council were to oppose this motion. It is a motion that is absolutely consistent with everything that has been passed so far at this Congress so I am assuming that the objection that is going to come is not about an educational charter. I am assuming the objection focuses on the last paragraph of this motion, which calls for the TUC General Council to organise or assist in major publicity, public meetings, a national demonstration, and 'as appropriate' industrial action. This is not the call for the general strike that raised controversy yesterday. This is industrial action, as appropriate. If we are opposing that, what is going on?

I think the real objection must be to those words that start the last paragraph, 'Prior to the general election.' Let's be absolutely clear. If Labour lose the next election then we should not tolerate anyone pointing the finger at trade unionists who have fought for jobs, who have fought for services, who have fought to defend their living standards or who have fought to defend pensions. Instead let's put the real blame where it lies, on a war in Iraq, ID cards, cuts in services, rising unemployment, and an absolutely slavish subservience to the bankers and the financiers. I saw Cameron on the television this morning gleefully talking about cuts. They have set the agenda and Labour is going along with that agenda of cuts. I have heard it said that if the Tories do win the election, they are going to have political momentum for their

attacks upon the working class. If we prepare and organise now, we will also give the working class political and industrial momentum to take them on and to knock them back.

There has been at this Congress a growing roll call of honour, of members of our unions who are involved in action right now. There needs to be coordination. There needs to be planning. There needs to be leadership. There is going to be a lobby of the Labour Party Conference on the 27th, with unions coming together in solidarity and organisation. I believe that is the way forward. We have forged unity with other unions. We had a fantastic strike last year with PCS and the NUT. Ten thousand people were walking, marching and shouting through the streets of London. We forged unity with UNISON, with GMB, with Unite. That is the way forward for our unions. Throughout my adult life I have been absolutely certain of this point, that if trade unionists show weakness, if we bend the knee, then what happens is we get kicked in the face. But if we have a just cause and we stand up for that cause, united, if an injury to one remains an injury to all, if there is organisation, if there is preparation, if there is courageous dynamic and inspirational leadership, then no force in this country can stand in the way of the British trade union Movement.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): President, the General Council is asking Congress to oppose this motion and our colleague from UCU is right, in that principally it relates to the final paragraph of the motion which calls on the TUC to coordinate campaigning, demonstration, potentially industrial action, essentially with a political purpose in the run-up to the general election, as the opening words of that paragraph make clear. The General Council does not think that action of that sort and a campaign of that sort will advance our objectives. For that reason we ask you to oppose. (*Call of 'Shame'.*)

The President: Thank you, Brendan. Does the NUT wish to use the right to reply? Thank you.

Martin Reed (*National Union of Teachers*) spoke in reply.

He said: Thank you, President. Congress, I listened very carefully to what Brendan said in terms of his comments on the last paragraph but as in so many of these debates the essence of what we do is by looking at the wording. The proposal that there is a political purpose is a view expressed by Brendan alone. There is no mention of a political purpose or a political ideal in terms of that paragraph. What is in that paragraph is a commitment to ensure that we protect our public services if we are faced with cuts, and if we are faced with the loss of jobs, 'as appropriate' - as appropriate! There is no difference, there is no inconsistency with the resolutions and the positions we have taken on a multiplicity of positions during the way in which we have discussed issues in this Congress. It is based most of all on seizing an opportunity, about having the chance to argue. Brendan picked up the point about national demonstrations. Yes, we do demonstrate. How was this trade union built if not upon the principle of demonstration and fighting for the ideals in which we believe? How was this trade union Movement built if it was not about a desire to carry working people with us in fighting for the principles that we believe in? Please support this motion. Let's keep on track. Thank you, colleagues.

* *Motion 56 was LOST*

The President: Congress, as you know, we will be taking the debate on Palestine later this morning. The General Council agreed a statement this morning. It is being distributed around

the hall now. The GMB has withdrawn its amendment to Motion 76 in favour of the General Council's statement. I will be taking the debate on Palestine as a single debate comprising the General Council's statement and the FBU motion, as amended by the UCU, and I will explain the procedure when I introduce the debate.

I now call Motion 73, Workers in Adult Entertainment. The General Council support the motion with a reservation and I will call the General Council during the debate to explain the position.

Once again, colleagues, there is noise drifting up on to the platform. Please can you give the delegate at the rostrum some respect. (*Applause*) Thank you, delegate.

Workers in adult entertainment

(Insert Motion 73 - Workers in adult entertainment)

Christine Payne (*Equity*) moved Motion 73.

She said: This is a complex issue and Equity has brought this motion to Congress because we believe that section 26 of the Policing and Crime Bill is badly worded and that government must look at it again. In bringing this motion to Congress we are doing so on behalf of our members who work in adult entertainment, but especially on behalf of our members who work as dancers. Professional dancers, men and women, train for years and they work across all areas of the entertainment industry. This includes the Royal Ballet, on cruise ships, in pantomime, in the West End, and also in adult entertainment such as striptease and exotic dance. Over the years dancers have also worked in areas of the entertainment industry which at times were considered a little risqué; examples such as the Can-Can, and I am sure we all remember Arlene Phillips' Hot Gossip. In fact, we are now seeing a re-emergence of a very traditional form of dance, burlesque, which is a growing area of new work for our members and which does sometimes involve nudity.

The principal aim of professional dancers was then and is today to entertain. Section 26 defines the sex encountering venue as one where the person is paid, performs live, and the performance involves a display of nudity. That is all very clear. The problem is that the section also allows for a subjective judgement as to whether it can be reasonably assumed that the performance is given solely or principally to sexually stimulate any member of the audience, not half the audience but any member of the audience. We are concerned that section 26, if accepted in its present wording, could mean that entertainment such as burlesque, striptease, hen parties, stag parties, and I am sure many of you in this room have attended those sorts of entertainment, will be caught up in the legislation. The fact is that those entertainers do display nudity, they are paid, but the venue could be defined as a sex encounter venue if it was thought that their performance could reasonably be assumed to be for the purpose of sexually stimulating any member of the audience. That would mean simply that our members will choose not to work in those venues, they will be lost places to work. It will give the wrong expectation of the work that they do.

When our members are working as striptease or burlesque artistes they are entitled to join my union, Equity, and they are covered by the union when they are working. If they have an injury, if they cause an injury, if they are not paid, then Equity helps them. Already the implications of this proposed legislation have been felt by our members. Camden Council has

recently taken action which has resulted in burlesque shows being closed and a burlesque women's institute being formed to campaign against that action. But where could it end? While our members work as actors, and as actors they are working shows from Harry Potter films to Equus, it could mean, we believe, that the interpretation of section 26 would be that the performances, for example, of Daniel Radcliffe in Equus could be covered by section 26. This is why we need your help and why we have brought this motion to Congress.

It is very important to my members that Congress accepts that when my members are working in adult entertainment they are workers, that they are encouraged to join the appropriate trade union, and they are entitled to ask for support when their status as workers and their workplaces are threatened, which will be the case by this extremely badly worded legislation. Therefore, President, we urge the Government to look again at section 26. It must be reviewed to ensure that my members are not inadvertently covered by this legislation, and there must be proper consultation with both the communities where these venues are placed and also with the relevant trade unions many of whom have not been properly consulted. Thank you very much.

Cathy Murphy (*GMB*) seconded Motion 73.

She said: GMB supports this motion and is pleased that the issue of the Policing and Crime Bill has been raised. GMB has been at the forefront of the campaign to address the significant weaknesses of the draft Bill of which section 26 is a great example. We appreciate this is a controversial issue for many trade unionists. However, we believe all workers have the right to full protection of the law regardless of the part of the economy they work in. Our Movement does not turn its back on exploited workers who want to organise. The Policing and Crime Bill is intended to reduce exploitation of workers in the sex industry but the approach taken will have the opposite effect by pushing workers into the margins of our cities. It is heavy-handed and does not focus on the wishes or needs of those working in the sex industry. It makes it harder for the workers to organise and getting organised is the only sure way for any worker to get respect and justice. Despite the Government's pledge to target violence, exploitation, coercion and abuse, none of the provisions on the sex work in the Policing and Crime Bill actually refer to these offences.

Congress, actions to improve the safety, welfare and working conditions of the dancers and others in the sex industry need to focus on enforcement of existing legislation rather than imposing further licensing requirements that exists solely to maximise revenues. This draft Bill is a poor piece of prospective legislation. Its implementation will have devastating consequences for those working in the sex industry, those who were not consulted at all in developing the draft Bill. Please support Motion 73 and continue the campaign against the Policing and Crime Bill.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Thank you, Sheila. Congress, the General Council is asking you to support this motion but to do so with reservations. The motion raises a matter of real concern to Equity. They are worried that the new regulations will restrict their members' opportunities to work. However, they also acknowledge that rules are needed to prevent the proliferation of so-called sex encounter establishments, especially in residential areas. Equity rightly also draws a distinction between the legitimate work which their members do in adult entertainment and the so-called sex encounter establishments. The General Council also recognises that a balance needs to be drawn between the union's concern for its members and community concerns for their neighbourhood. It is on that basis

that we are asking you to support the motion so that the TUC can work with Equity and with other unions to pursue these issues.

* *Motion 73 was CARRIED*

TUC organisation

The President: We now move to Chapter 9 of the General Council Report, TUC Organisation, from page 174, and I call paragraphs 1.15, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5 to 9.9, and Motion 85, Young Members. The General Council support the motion with an explanation and I will once again call the General Secretary during the debate.

Young members

(Insert Motion 85 - Young members)

Nick Quirk (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) moved Motion 85.

He said: It gives me great pride to move this motion on behalf of the RMT for the proposed rule change to strengthen the voice of young trade union members at Congress. The global economic recession has hit workers everywhere but particularly young members. The hard-hitting fact is that one in five people between the ages of 19 and 24 are unemployed. Mass unemployment is back in Britain. Young workers need trade unions to be relevant and to reflect their concerns in 2009 more than ever. In the last three months more than 100,000 school leavers have joined the job market as unemployment has soared towards three million. Young workers need their trade unions and the wider labour Movement to fight the curse of unemployment that is preparing to devastate another generation as it did in the 1980s. The RMT and all of the trade unions in this Congress recognise the tremendous important role of organising young members in our industries. My own union, and yours I am sure, has made a massive commitment to youth organisation and to our young members' structures in recent years. Only on Monday delegates were greeted outside the conference venue by young members of my union demonstrating in solidarity with the Justice for Hillsborough Families campaign. They also presented the fringe meeting for The Miscarriages of Justice Organisation yesterday lunchtime. Young members in the PCS union have been leading campaigns over debt, pensions and sexual health awareness, and have a full-time youth official to help them organise young workers.

All we are asking for in this motion is for the principle that we all recognise our organisations to be extended to the conference of the Trades Union Congress. We are calling for an active voice for young trade union members at this Congress. Firstly, the principle that young members have a specific voice at the TUC has been accepted. The TUC Young Members Conference and Young Members Forum are governed by rules which include the provision to allow affiliates to send delegates to the yearly Young Members Conference and to submit issues or topics for discussion at the conference. These issues can in turn form statements which can then be considered by the General Council. So to give effect for the proposed rule change the General Council may decide that the Young Members Conference would decide that one statement, which under the current arrangements will be submitted to the General Council, will be submitted as a motion to annual Congress, or the General Council may wish to go one step further and nearer to the STUC model and allow each affiliate to submit a

resolution to the Young Members Conference, one of which would then go forward to annual Congress as determined by the Young Members Conference.

There are no practical or constitutional barriers relative to this rule change which cannot be addressed and there is a strong precedent from the arrangements that applied to the STUC. The rule change would encourage activism amongst our young members and an early strengthened voice for young people in our Movement at a time when their need for representation and our need for their involvement is greater than ever. Congress, please support this motion.

Barbara Baker (*POA*) seconded Motion 85.

She said: I speak to you as a young member, maybe not in the TUC's eyes because I am now at the grand old age of 28, but I am, and no offence to my comrades on the floor, a young member within the POA. All the statistics show that young members are becoming an increasing minority within trade unions, something that we must stop now. Does our age make us less passionate about issues we face or the issues of the labour Movement as a whole? No, I think it is quite the opposite. I think we are very passionate and we are up for the fight. I sat in a fringe meeting the other day with talk about Thatcher's effect on young members and young people. I am a Thatcher baby. Trade unions had been damaged by Thatcher and they were no longer in the forefront of the press. There were no lessons at school about the trade union history, and therefore, as my generation grew up, it was not in the minds of many of us. I was lucky; my family had strong links with trade unions here in Liverpool. I joined an establishment where the union members and committee took an active interest in young members and helped me develop within the POA.

It is clear to us all that we need to recruit young people in our workplace and I think it will be easier with the passing of this motion as it will raise the profile of trade unionism and employments rights among the young. We need to give our younger members a bigger voice because believe me we have a lot to say. This will hopefully bring specific issues that we face to the forefront and those not in unions can be encouraged to join us by the fact unions are addressing issues relevant to them and that they are passionate about. Young people are the future of this labour Movement. Let us have our voice at Congress so we can all learn how to develop as it will be the young who will lead us through difficult times. Congress, I ask you to support. Thank you.

James Anthony (*UNISON*) supported Motion 85.

He said: I am raising the important issue of representation of young workers and also recognising what we think are important reservations from the General Council. Within our union we put young members and their representation at the heart of our structures, speaking and leading on issues at our national delegate conference as well as service group conferences. The importance that we place on young member organisations has led to a vibrant young members section, including it becoming the fastest growing part of our union. Thousands of young members have joined our union in the last year coming for support at these difficult times.

There are key issues that the young members need to address. Discrimination in the National Minimum Wage has continued since it began and the TUC Young Members Conference has raised that as an issue again and again, and again. Youth unemployment here in Merseyside

last year was already at 20% and yesterday we found out that there is 20% youth unemployment across the country. There are 950,000 young people out of work, with young lives really damaged. We as young people know what needs to be done about that. We need decent training, quality jobs, and apprenticeships is a key part, but apprenticeships with good pay and good conditions. This is a key union issue that we need to be negotiating on in all of our workplaces, and of course access to education. At times like this young people turn to training providers, whether they be HE or FE, to deliver important education to them. It is not a time to shut the door. Over the years I have been at young members conferences and I have seen those debates improve and develop. Our Young Members Conference is absolutely ready to put their issues onto this agenda, but it is up to us to ask them as young people how they want to do that and how they want their issues taken forward. Congress, please support with those reservations.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Very briefly, President, Congress, the General Council is supporting the motion and the principle that we should have a motion from the young members that is brought to Congress but echoing the point made by the UNISON delegate. We do want the opportunity to consult properly with young members themselves at the Young Members Conference, and with affiliates, about the practical way in which that is actually going to be given effect. That may affect the timing of when we are able to make the rule changes necessary. So, support it but with some further consultation.

* *Motion 85 was CARRIED*

The President: I now call Motion 47, Air passenger duty. The General Council position is to leave the decision to Congress.

Air passenger duty

(Insert Motion 47 - Air passenger duty)

Reg Allen (*British Air Line Pilots' Association*) moved Motion 47.

He said: Air passenger duty, or APD, is something that you have all probably paid, if you have flown from a UK airport. The tax was introduced in 1994 by the then Tory Chancellor, Ken Clarke, but it is a tax that BALPA has very serious concerns about and those concerns are shared right across the industry. Our concerns are that APD was introduced as an environmental tax but the duty has not been ring-fenced to directly contribute to any environmental projects. We believe that this taxation approach is ineffective and what we favour is an international emissions cap and support the inclusion of aviation into the European Emissions Trading Scheme.

As Gordon Brown reminded us on Tuesday, you can only deal with a reduction in emissions on an international basis; you cannot single out one particular part of industry. The Department of Transport published figures on aviation emissions in 2007 and 2008 and those figures demonstrated that the income from the APD of £1.8bn more than offset the cost of aviation emissions. A further concern we have with APD is that the amount of tax to be paid for flying out of a UK airport is set to increase in November this year and also a further increase scheduled for November 2010, so as of 2010 the amount of APD is set to double. These increases represent a major blow to UK airlines at the very time that they are facing the greatest struggle for their existence that they have ever experienced. So, the increase will hit

airlines extremely hard, they will hit our members and their families, and they stand to pay for this increase with their jobs.

Already fewer routes are being operated from the UK, and jobs are being exported to other European countries that either do not have this tax or have dropped a similar tax exercise. What this increase tax means to a family of four travelling to a long-haul destination is that the cost of their ticket will increase by £300 before they even book the flight. It will be working class families that get hit the hardest or migrant workers returning home to see their families. By way of comparison the Dutch government in 2008 introduced a very similar tax. Research was carried out to gauge its effectiveness and the following conclusions were reached. The number of passengers at Dutch airports dropped by 10%, a million passengers went across the Dutch borders to Belgian and German airports rather than fly from a Dutch airport, airlines using Dutch airports suffered a loss of income of ?940m, and there was a loss to the Dutch Treasury estimated at ?200m per year. Little wonder, then, that the Dutch, quite rightly in our view, abandoned the scheme in July this year. The increase in Holland was ?45; the increase in the UK will be £75. You can imagine the effect that is going to have on the UK economy and jobs in the aviation industry.

Congress, APD is not a green tax, it is nothing more than a poll tax in the skies. It poses a serious threat to our industry, one that we need to act upon to defend the aviation industry. Congress, please support Motion 47.

The President: Congress, Unite has indicated that they are formally seconding this motion.

Can I say, colleagues, that if any other union feels that they wish to formally second a motion, I will not object in any manner whatsoever. I am not calling any other speakers other than the GMB who wish to put someone up to oppose. Thank you, colleagues.

Mick Rix (GMB): Worthy President, Congress, I speak opposing Motion 47. I listened to the mover of the motion and originally I was going to say that this motion could have been written by the industry bosses. Now he has absolutely convinced me that this motion has been written by the industry bosses. This tax is an environmental tax. It is a tax on the industry to ensure they green the industry. When we were having that fantastic debate yesterday morning with all those young people from the delegations coming to the rostrum, they enthused me. They made the hairs on the top of my head stand up. Concerning environmental issues, let's not pass motions one day setting a policy on environment and then the next chance we get the next day we start to support motions ripping apart that very policy. There is no evidence that this tax has contributed to a decrease in the demand for flying. I will tell you something, let's have a bit of audience participation. Hands up all working class people in this hall who are going to fly to the Caribbean or South Africa this year on their holidays? Hands up all those people this year who are going to fly to Spain or Europe on their holidays? Your tax increase is going to go up by a pound so an average family of four will be paying an increase of £4. I will tell you what, it will not even buy you a round of drinks on Ryan Air.

Colleagues, let's be serious about these issues. Let's not send wrong messages out. I am a great supporter of our aviation industry. I think it is an absolute necessity for our economy and for the people that work in that industry, but we have to balance it with our responsibility to the environment. I oppose. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Mick. Does BALPA wish to use its right to reply?

Reg Allen (*British Air Line Pilots' Association*) speaking in reply said:

President, Congress, I seem to come in behind either the rhetorical or the young and beautiful but that is just an accident of life! It is unfortunate that the opposer challenged my credentials. My background is one of an engineering apprentice and formerly a full-time officer with MSF, and I do not come here to speak for any employer so I challenge that wrong assertion right away.

I listened to the debate early in the week about the developments in Ellesmere Port, about the Vestas workers and the developments within the power and coal industries where they are trying to reduce carbon emissions. The aviation industry is no different to that. Congress, you would be in a difficult position to single out the aviation industry in terms of that debate to say it is okay to do something in the aviation industry but not with other industries. The truth of the matter is, and the fact of the matter regardless of the rhetoric, that aviation produces 6% of Co2 emissions in this country, the coal and power industries are 30%, and road transport over 20%.

This tax makes no difference, will make no difference to reducing the emissions. This is not something on which you can stamp your green credentials. The fact of the matter is this tax will cost jobs; already there are fewer flights going from the UK. My union is the union that knows about this industry, we care about it, we care about jobs, it is important to us. Please support the motion. Thank you.

* *Motion 47 was CARRIED*

The President: Delegates, please listen carefully while I explain how I am going to take the debate on Palestine. First I will call on the General Secretary to introduce the debate and move the General Council's statement on Palestine, followed by the mover and seconder of Motion 76. I understand that the GMB has withdrawn their amendment to Motion 76 in favour of the General Council's statement. I will then open up the debate on the General Council's statement and Motion 76. I will then give the right of reply to the mover of 76 and invite the General Secretary to reply. I now call the General Secretary to move the General Council's statement on Palestine. Brendan?

The General Council Statement on Palestine

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Thank you, Sheila. Congress, the Middle East is perhaps the most intractable dispute in the world and the General Council has worked hard to come up with a statement which Congress, I hope, can unite around; that has involved compromise on all sides and I am grateful to all colleagues who have contributed. What you have before you sets out principles we can all share, conclusions I hope we can all agree on, and actions that we can all take. I do not want to take you through the whole of the statement but I do want to highlight some of the key points.

First, the General Council thought that it was important to set out upfront our vision for the future of the Middle East, that we want to reach a two-state solution, the road map: justice for the Palestinians, security for Israel. The international community, including our own government but also critically the US presidency, has a key role to play.

Earlier this year the TUC condemned the Israeli offensive in Gaza and we reiterate that condemnation in the statement today. It led to many, many deaths and intolerable suffering. The rocket attacks on Israeli citizens have also been condemned. Both were unacceptable and both have led to the UN investigation concluding that war crimes may have been committed. The blockade of Gaza which continues to this day is an intolerable collective punishment.

Turning to the unions in the region, we have for the past year been trying to persuade the Histadrut, the Israeli TUC, to be more vocal in criticising the Israeli government. We think that the statement issued by the Histadrut in January, which failed to recognise the appalling loss of life and the suffering caused by the Gaza offensive, should be condemned. We will continue to press them over the crucial issues of the occupation, the separation wall, the roadblocks, and the illegal settlements, but both Histadrut and the PGFTU know that there is no prospect for peace for working people in the region if the union movements do not work together and the General Council remains committed to helping them to do that. Through our longstanding relationship with both Histadrut and the PGFTU we have actively encouraged joint working and the agreement reached a year ago on the remittance of membership subscription income from Histadrut to the PGFTU.

Finally, the General Council has considered what can be done by us to apply pressure to the Israeli government to make the end of the occupation, the dismantling of the separation wall, and the removal of the illegal settlements, more likely. We believe that targeted action aimed at goods from the illegal settlements and companies involved in the occupation and the wall is the right way forward. This is not a call for a general boycott of Israeli goods and services which would hit ordinary Palestinian and Israeli workers, but targeted consumer-led sanctions directed at businesses based in and sustaining the illegal settlements.

Congress, the situation in the Middle East is grim. Our brothers and sisters every day face terrible, terrible problems and they need our support in creating a just and lasting peace. President Obama is now trying to move things forward and we all wish him every possible success with his efforts, but we too have our part to play and the General Council's statement sets it out. I commend it to Congress.

The President: Thank you, Brendan. I now call Motion 76.

Palestine

(Insert Motion 76 - Palestine)

Mick Shaw (*Fire Brigades' Union*) moved Motion 76.

He said: We are pleased to have the General Council support for our motion which was not something we took for granted when we came here this week, but I think the fact that there is now that support shows how this debate has shifted, and that shift is undoubtedly as a result of the sustained Israeli offensive, the bombardment of Gaza at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, an assault that resulted in 1,400 deaths. That assault this week was described in an official report for the United Nations written by South African judge, Richard Goldstone, as a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorise a civilian population. I would ask, who could fail to be moved by those TV images we saw day after day of carnage, of destruction, and unbelievable human suffering? It seems fairly clear that for one the UK Government was not moved by it because they refused to call

for a ceasefire. It also seems that the Israeli Trade Union Movement was not moved either because Histadrut issued a statement in which they said that Israel had no choice but to respond to the repeated attacks and aggression as an act of justifiable self-defence. It is clear to the Histadrut that the culprit responsible for this situation is Hamas. We say that that statement at the very least raises a question about Histadrut. It is a genuinely independent organisation speaking on behalf of workers or is it a mouthpiece for the Israeli government: is it part of the solution or is it part of the problem? We are pleased to see in the General Council's statement that they are now going to engage in discussions and report back on that issue.

Existing TUC policy on Israel and Palestine was reaffirmed in 2006 as a result of a motion from the FBU and that called for a withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories and the removal of the apartheid wall. We are saying it is now time for the TUC to go further. We are saying that as a result of members and officials of ours who have gone to the occupied territories on delegations organised by both the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and by the Scottish TUC, our officials and members have spoken to Palestinian workers, they have spoken to trade unionists, they have spoken to fire fighters and they have reported back what they have heard.

What those Palestinian trade unionists want to see is a demonstration of international support and international pressure for their plight. We are saying that one of the most effective ways that can be done is through a targeted consumer boycott. Of course, we have a history of supporting such boycotts in this Movement. We saw it for many years in relation to apartheid in South Africa and there is no doubt about it that that boycott put pressure on the South African government to change their policies and eventually resulted in the end of apartheid. Perhaps more importantly, or equally as important, it demonstrates to the Palestine people, to Palestinian trade unionists, that the rest of the world cares and that the rest of the world is not idly standing by.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu interviewed last month said of the apartheid boycott. 'It gave hope to our people that the world cared. This was a form of identification.'

So, we are urging Congress to support our motion, Motion 76. Unfortunately, we do not think that the General Council's statement on the issue of a boycott goes far enough. It is not just an issue of a boycott of goods produced in illegal settlements. Firstly, we feel that that is impractical; these goods do not come with a label saying 'Produced in an illegal settlement'. We feel that we need to have discussions with Palestinian trade unionists and discussions with the PSE to identify where we can put most pressure on the Israeli government and to target a consumer boycott there. I would urge all delegates, please support Motion 76. Thank you.

A Delegate (*University and College Union*) seconded Motion 76.

He said: Thank you, President. Congress, UCU is very pleased to give support to Motion 76. We are grateful to FBU for accepting our amendment which we think was a simple addition necessary to make it possible for us and for other unions to implement the motion. We do also support the General Council's statement.

No trade unionist can fail to have been deeply moved by the sufferings of the populations in Israel and Palestinian territories over many years. The waste of lives and the crushing of

opportunities for building a peaceful world and a better life are for trade unionists truly to be called tragic. That is no cliché in this context. It is clear that the conflict is unequal and that the military blockade is illegal. Nevertheless, we also condemn rocket attacks on Israeli civilians and we recognise that individual suffering has affected helpless people on both sides of the conflict.

My own union has debated the issue at a number of its annual congresses and has expressed very clearly its wish to give support to the Palestinian people and to seek by whatever means are properly available an end to military attacks against the Palestinian population by the Israeli Army and the lifting of the blockade of Gaza. For those reasons we fully support the intentions of Motion 76 and feel that the time has come to increase pressure upon Israel and to demonstrate with practical and lawful action our wish for them to change direction. Our amendment (which has now been accepted) simply seeks to confirm that unions will enact this policy within our own rules and within the law. The amendment protected us and our members while allowing the Movement to unite around the struggle for a just peace in the Middle East. Congress, please support the motion, as amended. Thank you.

Jill Murdoch (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) supported Motion 76.

She said: Congress, much has been said behind the scenes during the course of this week about the need for balance in this resolution and the General Council's statement supposedly gives that balance. I would like to start by asking about that question of balance. When Germany invaded Poland the British outrage had to be balanced somehow. Did we demand balance in our condemnation of apartheid in South Africa? If not, why the constant demand for balance when dealing with the Israeli invasion of Gaza, its continuing blockade, and indeed the occupation of Palestinian territory in general? Everyday stories of Palestinian life make balance very difficult. A Palestinian colleague of mine, a hardworking engineer, looked forward to his retirement back home in Gaza. He goes as often as possible to spend time in his family farmhouse surrounded by olive groves that have been in his family for generations. He looks forward to retirement less now. Before the invasion of Gaza, and for no known reason, Israeli bulldozers destroyed his house and ripped up every one of his ancient olive trees, and he has no recourse. How do I tell that story with balance? Arabs living in Israel are not exempt from this treatment. Arab railway workers are losing their jobs as a result of a new law that requires workers to have done military service. This law is blatantly designed to reserve work for Israelis. Arabs with years of service are losing their jobs yet still we must show balance. Are we asked to show balance in our criticism of the way Vestas and Thomas Cook managements have treated those young women and men in the Isle of Wight and in Ireland?

My union is delighted with FBU's motion and we are pleased that the General Council's statement clearly condemns Histadrat's support for the killing of nearly 1,500 Palestinians in Gaza, but we do feel it would be healthy now to review the TUC's relationship with Histadrat in the light of its current goals and policies, just as the time has come for a boycott of Israeli goods and for our government to stop supplying Israel with the arms they use against Palestinians. We believe that would be a balanced position to take.

Hugh Lanning (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Motion 76.

He said: We support the FBU motion which we believe provides a clear framework for how we should take the campaign forward and also support the General Council's statement.

Combined, we think this represents a landmark decision. It represents the British trade union Movement deciding that it is a time for action and that resolutions, be they UN resolutions or TUC resolutions, are not enough. I just want briefly to put on my hat as Chair of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. We welcome the commitment in the resolution to work with the PSC and promise that we will sit down after Congress to help build that effective campaign. We also make an offer to every union in this country that we will work with you to help you build your campaign in your union in your industry. Nothing has changed in Gaza. The blockade is still on, the occupation continues, the settlements continue to grow, and East Jerusalem is under attack. It is our generation's responsibility to support the Palestinian people. There has been a bit of pressure, a bit of lobbying this week, and I suspect there is going to be a bit more. Let's make sure whose side we are on. Let's make sure we come out united from this Congress committed to take action on behalf of the Palestinian people until there is a free Palestine. Until there is a free Palestine there cannot be peace in the Middle East. Support the motion and make sure we take action. Thank you, Congress.

Mike Kirby (*UNISON*) supported the General Council's statement and Motion 76.

He said: I was a member of the last UNISON delegation to Palestine and Israel in 2005 and with the STUC delegation in March this year. It was important to engage with both communities, which we did. What I witnessed on this occasion was a greater sense of relative stability, particularly in the areas administered by the Palestinian authority around Ramallah and Nablus. The guns were off the streets. However, this is order under occupation. This was described to us by one Palestinian authority minister we met as 'not a classical occupation but one of trying to exclude us and remove us from our own land.' Foreign Secretary Miliband said recently: 'Palestinians cannot give us real security, it takes the whole Arab world, but Israel can give the Palestinians land,' but what we saw were further land grabs. The potential outline for the two-state solution in terms of territory, refugees and the status of Jerusalem is brought into question by the continuing construction of settlements, colonies, and the placement of outposts. Sharon Pires has said, 'The good news is the light at the end of the tunnel. The bad news is there is no tunnel.'

With BDS we can show solidarity, we can help concentrate the various governments' minds on building the tunnel towards the light, and on BDS we were told by a Palestinian minister that the boycott may affect 20% of the Palestinians in employment and construction industries, and service industries, and that they do not work in export industries 'but for the sake of the political issue of our land, we can afford the economic sacrifice.' Congress, support both of these, Motion 76 and the statement. Thank you.

The President: As there is no opposition, I am now going to move to the vote. I will take the vote on the General Council's Statement first.

** The General Council's Statement was CARRIED*

The President: I now move to the vote on Motion 76.

** Motion 76 was CARRIED*

The President: Colleagues, I am now going to move to the emergency motions. I call Emergency Motion 2, Cuts in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. The General Council supports the motion.

Cuts in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme

(Insert Emergency Motion 2 - Cuts in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme)

Mark Serwotka (PCS) moved Emergency Motion 2.

He said: First, I pay tribute to your marvellous chairing of the Congress this week, Sheila, spoken in my best Ryan Giggs' accent!

Congress, I want you to imagine for a moment that the Government is your employer, you have come as a delegate to this Congress and you have come to listen to the Prime Minister. He has supposedly come to give a statement on the problems we face in the economy and to talk to the people of this country. To your horror, imagine how you feel when, in front of your very eyes, he announces the tearing up of the terms and conditions of your members, 500,000 civil servants, thereby robbing them of their contractual entitlements and allowing him (or David Cameron after the election) to sack tens of thousands of people on the cheap. That is not the action of a Prime Minister. That is a disgraceful and despicable act by a politician using his workforce for the cheapest party political advantage. When people come here and start lecturing us about, 'Who says Labour are the same as the Tories?' No one says they are the same, but if your members have their terms and conditions ripped up on national TV, I think you would understand why members are a bit annoyed.

What the Prime Minister announced was the tearing up of contractual terms with massive detriment to low-paid workers. Tens of thousands of pounds of accrued contractual rights through redundancy and compensation are to be shredded. He then made it worse by ensuring that his officials lied - and I use the words 'damned lies' - to the press to give the impression that this was about gold-plated terms for the rich and those at the top of the public sector. He knows that is a lie because the reality is this. Less than 1% of the Civil Service workforce is in the senior civil service as 70% do frontline jobs, 53% are women, 20% earn less than £15,000 a year and the average pension is £4,200. Yet our Labour Prime Minister comes to this Congress and announces the ripping up of our members' terms and conditions meaning that if David Cameron wins the next election, he can sack tens of thousands of public sector workers on the cheap without ensuring that they get what is rightfully theirs.

Congress, Gordon Brown has now twice derailed negotiations. For months, we negotiated with Cabinet Office officials and virtually had an agreement which would have protected existing terms for staff and negotiated a new scheme for new entrants. However, along comes Gordon before the Budget to announce on television that he was going to rip up the scheme and save £½ billion.

Again this week, whilst negotiations have been going on, he chooses to announce to the whole world that he intends to make these cuts. Congress, I hope you agree that that is a disgrace. For a man to tell us that every redundancy is a personal tragedy and then to ensure that tens of thousands of people can be made redundant on the cheap is a disgrace! Our objectives are clear. We want, as we did with pensions in 2005, to protect existing employees' rights and to negotiate a good scheme, but a different one for new entrants. If we cannot persuade the management - and it is clear the Prime Minister does not want us to persuade them - we intend immediately to seek a judicial review and protect our members' rights in the High Court because we believe the Government are acting illegally.

However, we cannot put all our faith in the courts. As we sit here, we have started a major consultation exercise with hundreds of thousands of PCS members on their preparedness to take industrial action to defend their rights. Congress, if people do not want industrial action in a run-up to a general election, they should stop attacking their own workforce, stop attacking the low-paid, stop attacking our public servants and honour their contractual commitments.

We want you to support the resolution. We want you to make it clear to Labour politicians that this is a disgraceful way to act. If we cannot persuade them, we hope you will give us full support in our campaign and on the picket lines if necessary. Every worker's contract should be honoured. Public sector workers are no different. Carry the motion and tell the Prime Minister that what he did was a disgrace. (*Applause*)

Geoff Fletcher (*Prospect*) seconded Emergency Motion 2.

He said: Congress, the existing scheme that we have in place has been in existence since 1967. Obviously it is designed to recognise the long service of our members and to compensate for any end-of-career redundancies. When Gordon Brown made the original statement in March, which he did return to on Tuesday, he laid out plans to reduce the public sector expenditure by £500 million by altering the terms of that scheme. Such savings are only theoretical unless redundancies actually follow and the crucial word is 'savings'. If this level of savings of £500 million can be achieved, we have to consider how this affects the affordability of redundancy and how that translates into lost jobs.

Of course, today's economic circumstances are unprecedented and this has led to the public sector and all its associated costs being scrutinised more and more by sections of the media and various politicians. We see regular myths being portrayed about public servants. This can be about our pay, our pensions and now it has turned to our redundancy terms. It is our view that these proposals will see our long-serving members having their redundancy and pension arrangements slashed at a time when the risk of redundancy is at its greatest. This is a cynical attack on our members who cannot be blamed for any of today's economic woes, but who are seen as easy targets to be cut to help pay for the cost of the banking bail-out.

The Prime Minister said on Tuesday that the focus would be on Whitehall, but this implies to the public that the focus is on the 'Yes, Minister' stereotype of civil servant, which is not the reality, as Mark outlined, as our members work in a diversity of fields and occupations. The changes to the scheme will affect all our members right across the UK.

Our members are particularly angry that better terms had been discussed during negotiations. However, the Cabinet Office has tabled the current proposals knowing that they do not represent the best offer that is available. Our members recognise that there are huge challenges facing the whole economy, but changes to the terms of the redundancy scheme will make the Civil Service redundancy arrangements the poorest of the whole public sector. We do not believe that it is right for a race to the bottom because that is not fair on our hardworking members. I second. Please support. (*Applause*)

David Watts (*FDA*) supported Emergency Motion 2.

He said: Mark is right. We want to negotiate a good scheme. Mark is also right, and so is the previous speaker, as the proposals are aimed not just at senior civil servants but at all civil

servants. In the past, we have generally been able to avoid compulsory redundancies. Now we face the prospect of serious cuts and we are facing the worst redundancy terms in the public service. This can be no coincidence. It is as alarming to FDA members as much as it is alarming to other civil servants. As the Prime Minister made clear, it has implications for other public servants too.

The details of the compensation scheme are highly technical and negotiations have been difficult. We are joining with other civil service unions in exploring a legal challenge. The FDA will continue to seek to improve the terms of the compensation scheme, but we have not yet reached the point when industrial action needs to be considered. The consultation period is still in process and the FDA will aim to improve the terms through negotiation at this stage. I would ask you all to support the motion.

Brian Caton (*POA*) supported Emergency Motion 2.

He said: The POA totally supports this emergency motion. We are sick of the lies from the Cabinet Office and that is what they are. Mark is absolutely right. The way in which they seek to divide the Civil Service unions is little short of a disgrace.

My union demands full, fair and free negotiations and we do not support pre-determination or financially-based decisions by the Treasury or the Cabinet Office. We have seen a failure by the Cabinet Office to grant medical retirements to my members who, acting on behalf of you and the general public, have been scalded, battered and beaten out of their work as civil servants by mentally-ill, violent, vicious offenders because this Government have failed to address the need for a good, civilised penal and justice system.

In order to allow for our brave public sector workers in the violent coalface to be compensated, we have to rely on the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. We now receive, on top of everything, the threat dramatically to reduce the amount available and not to allow our medically-dismissed and battered members to receive what is a fair and proper pension in retirement.

We do not want to criticise this Government, but it seems as though we constantly must. What I say to those in high office in the Cabinet Office is to come and look into the beaten eyes of the men and women in the Prison Service who are being put into that position by this Government and explain to them why they want them to live in absolute poverty in retirement. It is an absolute disgrace. Congress, please support.

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

** Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED*

Royal Mail dispute

The President: I now call Emergency Motion 3, Royal Mail dispute. The General Council supports the motion

(Insert Emergency Motion 3 - Royal Mail dispute)

Billy Hayes (*Communication Workers Union*) moved Emergency Motion 3.

He said: As I speak from this rostrum, 130,000 ballot papers are being sent out to our members in Royal Mail today. To date, Royal Mail management has not shown that they are prepared to negotiate an agreement needed to modernise Royal Mail with the consent of the workforce. National management has allowed local and regional managers to impose staffing changes which have disrupted the lives and lowered the earnings of postal workers in many parts of the country. If you were at our fringe meeting yesterday, you would have heard a personal tale of a single mother, a postwoman, being sacked after five years' service because she refused to be bullied and harassed. As a national union, we could not allow management to impose national policy on the future of the industry just through imposition at local level. We need national strike action and that is why we are balloting.

How are we still here? It is because we have refused to allow our industry to be privatised. Last December, in breach of the election manifesto and in breach of Labour Party Conference 2008, the Government announced plans to privatise Royal Mail. That was the third time they have tried to privatise our industry. The first time was under John Major in 1994, they tried again in 2005 and then last year. The Postal Services Bill was introduced into the House of Lords. An unelected body tried to take away a

publicly-owned industry service after 350 years. We organised within the TUC, we organised within the Labour Party and we secured support in opposition to privatisation. Every single opinion poll showed large majorities against it and I would just like to place on record our thanks to the TUC, to affiliated unions and to everyone who has supported it, in particular the campaign group, Compass.

What we have in the Government now is the Jim Reeves faction. You will all remember Jim Reeves, the country and western singer. He had a song which went like this: 'Make the world go away.' We now have a Government which wants to make the world go away. The world will not go away. The problems in the postal industry will not go away. The Government cannot say that they recognise that there is the problem of pension fund deficit and regulation but then when they do not get their own way with the elected body, they simply walk away. I am sorry, Peter, Jim Reeves' song was a song that tried not to recognise the reality of the world. You need to deal with the problems of the industry created mainly by a Conservative government refusing to fund the pension fund deficit for 13 years.

Also, let us just nail this myth about modernisation. I will tell you what modernisation is not. It is not 3,000 Post Office counters being closed. Modernisation is not taking away Sunday collections. Modernisation is not imposing terms and conditions on our members without their consent. Modernisation is about what was contained in Labour's Election Manifesto. It is about a successful Royal Mail in the public sector with rewarding employment for its employees.

We do not want to move into a situation where our members spend their working lives disrupting the service, but we will. We are sending out those strike ballots because we need to have a referendum on the state of Royal Mail. That referendum is taking place today. We are confident, with our members' support, that that referendum will say, 'Yes' to strike action, if necessary, so that we can have a modernised industry with the support of the workforce and the great British public.

Tony Woodley (*Unite the union*) seconded Emergency Motion 3.

He said: Congress, we all welcomed the Government's decision to back down on privatisation. It was a massive campaign, it was like pulling teeth and it was a pity that Peter Mandelson and the Government did not have the brains to realise that in politely moving away, this was vote-winner. It was a no-brainer. People would never want to see the privatisation of this fantastic public service.

The pensions have a massive deficit, but this Government were only too willing to bankroll those pension deficits to create a nice, big, soft landing for the privateers and the profiteers. If they could do it for them, there is absolutely no excuse whatsoever why this Government cannot legislate and regulate to make sure that our posties' pensions are protected for life. That is what they should do. (*Applause*)

I was disgusted to see the massive attack on the CWU and ordinary workers in the papers this week. The simple truth is that these are not Luddites. These are not people who are against modernisation and discussions. These are people who, at the end of the day, just want to do it by negotiations. Our message is very simply this. Even macho managers have to understand at the end of the day that they are going to have to sit down and reach a willing agreement with the workforce and the sooner they do it on pay and modernisation, the sooner we can get back to living life in an acceptable way in one of our most valuable public services. Unite supports - and I am sure you will - Emergency Motion 3, protecting our posties' lives. Thank you.

The President: Congress, we move to the vote on Emergency Motion 3.

** Emergency Motion 3 was CARRIED*

Vestas and green jobs

The President: I now call Emergency Motion 4, Vestas and green jobs. The General Council supports the motion.

(Insert Emergency Motion 4 - Vestas and green jobs)

Alex Gordon (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) moved Emergency Motion 4.

He said: I would like to thank the General Council for accepting Emergency Motion 4 on Vestas and green jobs. It is an emergency, Congress. On Tuesday night, four of our members were arrested in Southampton Dock, having occupied a crane owned by Vestas. They use it for the purposes of erecting offshore wind turbine platforms. They were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. To date, solicitors retained by the union are still unable to confirm whether those four members have been released.

We have a situation, Congress, where yesterday we were addressed by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Miliband, who made what I can only describe as a speech replete with crocodile tears about the loss of 625 skilled jobs on the Isle of Wight and made reference to the Government's commitment to building a green energy sector. He made reference, in particular, to the creation of jobs in the north-east. We welcome the commitment to build wind turbine blades in the north-east. We do not believe that the jobs on the Isle of Wight are being lost because they are being replaced by jobs in the north-east. As the

Secretary of State made clear, the blades that are being made in the north-east are of a different size and type to the ones that have been, until now, produced in the Vestas factory on the Isle of Wight.

The reason we have come here today to ask for your support is because if we stay where we are and accept the word of Ed Miliband (who wants to will the ends without willing the means) we will never be able to construct and build a green jobs sector and a green energy sector under public ownership and control in this country. It is this Movement which has the power, the voice and the authority to call for green jobs to be union jobs and for union jobs to be publicly-owned jobs. That is what this emergency motion seeks your support.

We believe that the UK Government have an absolute responsibility to nationalise the Vestas factory on the Isle of Wight. We believe that those jobs should be preserved for future generations in an area which, by the way, suffers almost as badly as the north-east from high unemployment and low wages. Those jobs should be preserved for future generations and apprenticeships in a skilled industry, with people who are committed to the product they produce, in an organised and unionised context. We also believe that the UK Government need to look seriously at the whole process of making sure that there is research and development into a renewable energy sector. At the moment, this question is frankly being treated with the kind of off-the-cuff remarks that we heard from Ed Miliband yesterday, which simply will not do. They appal our members. They are no more than an insult to the 600 workers on the Isle of Wight who have lost their jobs as a result of the disgraceful decision of Vestas to withdraw their production in that facility.

We need a properly regulated public procurement process for offshore wind turbine factories. I heard what Ed Miliband had to say yesterday. I do not know how many Tory councils there are which have responsibility for offshore wind turbine applications, but I do not think there can be very many. The decision to shut the Vestas factory lies at the door of the company, Vestas, which has been in receipt of our taxes in building that facility. It is high time that this Government took responsibility for the investment that we are putting in and built a nationalised public renewable energy sector in this country. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Jack Dromey (*Unite the union*) seconded Emergency Motion 4.

He said: Six hundred skilled workers dedicated to cleaning up the global environment have been thrown onto the scrapheap by Vestas. This could not have happened in Spain. I was in Spain in August. I saw forests of windmills and farms with solar panels. It seems that 26% of their energy is generated by renewables, ten times more than here in Britain. Why in Spain? It is because in Spain, they have brought together their environmental and energy needs on the one hand with an industrial strategy on the other hand, using the power of government and the power of procurement to ensure that it is made in Spain. We have not done that in this country.

That does not excuse Vestas for one moment. They are a shower. For nine months, the Government talked to them and made them offers: 'Anything you want, we will do.' Vestas said, 'There is nothing you can offer.' Theirs was a cynical act of betrayal of those workers.

Congress, today we say, 'Never again.' In July, there was a landmark announcement by Ed Miliband, at last bringing together energy, the environment and the industry. The legacy of Vestas is that we have to make it work. We have a balanced energy policy with oil, gas, clean

coal, nuclear, wind and wave. There is a determination at last to bring those strands together. It is not before time. There are 16,000 jobs in renewables in Britain. There are 250,000 in Germany. We have trade unions at the heart of the process and, crucially, the power of Government, public procurement and putting the bite on the privatised utilities because they should not put shareholder interest over the national interest in deciding where they place their orders. We want it 'Made in Britain'.

Finally, we say to those Vestas workers on the Isle of Wight, 'Vestas may have walked away, but we will never abandon you.' Those workers will be remembered long after those who sacked end up where they richly deserve to be - in the dustbin of history. I second. (*Applause*)

The President: Congress, we move to the vote.

** Emergency Motion 4 was CARRIED*

Sri Lanka

The President: I now call Emergency Motion 5, Sri Lanka. The General Council supports the motion with an explanation. I will call Sally Hunt during the debate to explain the motion.

(Insert Emergency Motion 5 - Sri Lanka)

Vicky Knight (*Fire Brigades' Union*) moved Emergency Motion 5.

She said: Congress, after nearly 30 long years Sri Lanka's brutal civil war, which has claimed more than 70,000 lives, has finally come to an end. The war has been primarily fought by the Sri Lankan government's armed forces and the LTTE (the Tamil Tigers) resulting in a humanitarian disaster where civilians, as usual, have borne the greatest cost. It is estimated by Amnesty International that at least a further 20,000 people died during the last two weeks of the war.

Today, hundreds of thousands of Tamil civilians displaced by fighting are living in camps without adequate food, water or visitation rights for their families. When this was witnessed by the UN Secretary General, he claimed it was the most appalling scene he had ever witnessed.

Following Sri Lanka's independence from British rule, ethnic conflicts intensified under economic pressure and the growth of nationalism. Successive failures to find a political solution to the conflict have contributed to the militarism of Sri Lanka's political culture. The routine use of torture, abduction, extra judicial killings and suppression of dissent by both sides has left a traumatised civilian population, particularly in the north and east of the country. Women and children, again as usual, have found themselves directly in the front line and a 2004 Human Rights Watch report found that the use of intimidation and threats was endemic for families to provide sons and daughters for military service.

The history of the conflict, the way it has been conducted and its effect on the civilian population, raises new questions and new challenges for Sri Lanka. Those who have long campaigned for peace, justice and democracy for all people now ask whether the government will seize this watershed moment to heal wounds and bring together polarised communities.

The government, despite being overwhelmed by the humanitarian crisis, has not accepted the full assistance of the international community and continues, even up until last week, to refuse full access to humanitarian agencies. What attention the conflict in Sri Lanka has received over the last 30 years has focused on the aims and objectives of militarised groups and the government. However, as is usual, civilians living in the war zone have endured the greatest silence and invisibility.

A long line of courageous dissenters who have fallen victim to both the LTTE and government assassins remind us with their words, actions and vision that a real transformation of Sri Lanka's political culture will have to focus on those who have made the greatest sacrifices and who have borne the greatest cost for a war that was waged and suffered without their consent.

Comrades, two months after the end of fighting the Sri Lankan authorities are still not addressing properly the needs of the displaced. Conditions are unsanitary, freedom of movement is heavily restricted, displaced people have been prevented from talking to aid workers and no independent monitors have visited the camps, all further compounding the risk of abduction, arrest and sexual violence. Sisters and brothers, we must never forget that the removal of a basic human right of freedom of movement is fundamentally wrong whether it is in the West Bank, Gaza or Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Comrades, the motion is asking for simple actions which cost us little or nothing yet change lives, change leadership and the liberation of a nation. Accepting the General Council's concerns that all interventions must, of course, be made in full consultation with sister unions in the country, we ask that you please support the motion. Take action to force the emancipation of the Sri Lankan people. Congress, I move.

Donnacha Delong (*National Union of Journalists*) seconded Emergency Motion 5.

He said: Since the Amnesty International campaign to unlock the camps was launched, the Sri Lankan government has moved slightly. Only last week, they agreed to allow people who can find places to live with their families to leave. However, relatives of people in the camps have already pointed out that the screening process to ensure that they do not release members of the Tamil Tigers is likely to delay and to stop people getting out in any kind of real time.

Monsoon rains are due to start in October which will worsen the situations of the people in the camps. Furthermore, it is not simply an issue of letting people out of the camps. They need to be resettled in decent homes which need to be rebuilt after the destruction of the conflict. People need to be free to go in and out of the camps in the meantime because thousands of people are going to continue to depend on these camps like many other groups who were already in camps when the conflict intensified, for example, people who are still in camps after the Tsunami of a few years ago.

The other main issue with unlocking the camps is allowing access to humanitarian aid workers and journalists so that a true picture of people's situation in the camps can be revealed. There are hundreds of thousands of people who nobody has seen apart from the Sri Lankan authorities and nobody really knows what the situation is like, but the worst is feared. The camps need to be unlocked and the role that the TUC can play with other trade unions in Sri Lanka and around the world is to keep intensifying the pressure on the Sri Lankan

government to ensure that the camps are truly unlocked and the people who are living in them at the moment have somewhere decent to live in a reasonable amount of time. I ask you to support.

Sally Hunt (*General Council*) spoke on behalf of the General Council.

She said: Thank you, Sheila, and thank you to the FBU for accepting the clarification from the General Council.

Congress, the General Council's attitude on this emergency motion is to support with an explanation. As has been said, Sri Lanka has suffered one of the bloodiest and longest conflicts that we have seen and we have all watched this year the end-game played out on our television sets. The point is that for many thousands of people, the conflict has not ended and the suffering has not ended because they are living in refugee camps in their own country, an issue that this motion quite rightly looks to highlight.

As with any other international issue, the TUC has been in close contact over recent months with our Sri Lankan colleagues. Indeed, we have worked with them for many years, most recently to build new houses for trade union members after the Tsunami a few years ago. Our colleagues in Sri Lanka have only just begun to let us have views about the issues covered in this motion and they certainly recognise the huge humanitarian issues involved. They want to see the refugees re-housed as soon as possible. They have also indicated some caution about the wider issues which the motion raises and we would want to take their views on board as the motion is implemented. With that clarification and explanation, the General Council urges you to support this motion.

The President: Thank you, Sally. We will move to the vote, Congress.

** Emergency Motion 5 was CARRIED*

National Grid, national greed

The President: I now call Emergency Motion 6, National Grid, national greed. The General Council support.

(Insert Emergency Motion 6 - National Grid, national greed)

Gary Smith (*GMB*) moved Emergency Motion 6.

He said: Congress, last Friday members of GMB, UNISON and Unite, employed by National Grid in Newcastle, took strike action in support of the joint union campaign to defend jobs. National Grid is responsible for much of the gas and electricity infrastructure in the UK, infrastructure which, we should never forget, was built by public money. National Grid has a monopoly position which means that every time we turn on the lights or as long as we have to heat our homes, they are going to make money and big money they do make!

This year, National Grid has posted profits of nearly £3 billion. Shareholders have enjoyed an 8% return, which is guaranteed to 2012. The National Grid directors, who made great virtue of the fact that they are taking a pay freeze, have now, between seven of them, in the last few weeks, helped themselves to £9 million in bonuses. Despite these profits, the threatened

workers have been trying to find efficiencies within the business. They have come up with something like £3 million in savings already, but to National Grid that is simply not enough and the joint unions have now been formally notified that the company plans to cut jobs.

It goes further than that, Congress, because we know that the actual intention is to close the Newcastle operation with a loss of almost 200 workers and to export those jobs to low-wage economies. As our members face up to the prospect of a life on the dole queue and if you listen to the rhetoric from directors about how times are tough, it transpires that National Grid can find thousands of pounds for an executive to park his Ferrari not in any old garage but in a de-humidified garage called the Hotel for Fine Automobiles. We have National Grid directors having their children's horses exported to the US on the company to the tune of thousands of pounds.

A few weeks ago, my colleagues from the joint unions and I met with the finance director, Steve Lucas. He told us that if the workforce would take pay cuts, he would not have to export their jobs. This is the same Mr. Lucas who, in the past three years, has trousered £3.5 million in pay and bonuses. He has seen his bonus increase by a huge 66% and then we find out that, on the company, he has also enjoyed private dance lessons. What a message that sends out to National Grid workers!

Congress, the people in this country want a Labour Government which is on their side and it is time that our Labour Government intervened. They should remind National Grid about their social responsibilities and make it clear that it is hugely inappropriate for them to be talking about exporting jobs at the same time as they are going to be benefiting from the huge investment that we are going to need in the energy infrastructure. The Secretary of State talked about Ofgem and regulation and as long as we have privatised utilities we are going to need regulation with teeth. We say to the Secretary of State, 'Make sure Ofgem factors in socioeconomic considerations. When they are talking to the utilities, they should be looking at prices for consumers but also looking at retaining jobs in the UK.'

In conclusion, Congress, National Grid represents the worst type of corporate greed. Support the campaign. Visit the National Grid website and back the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Congress, Unite have indicated that they are formally seconding. We will move to the vote.

** Emergency Motion 6 was CARRIED*

TUC Accounts

The President: Could I now draw your attention to Appendix 3 on page 191 of the General Council's Report, the TUC's accounts. The auditor is present on the platform. Does Congress accept the accounts as set out in the appendix? (*Agreed*) Thank you, Congress. That completes Chapter 9 of the General Council's Report.

I call Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. That completes the formal business of Congress. I now ask Congress to adopt the General Council's Report. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*)

Votes of Thanks

The President: There are a number of colleagues who are leaving the General Council. Anita Halpin is stepping down after ten years on the General Council. She served for two separate one-year spells in the late 1990s and has been a member continuously since 2001. As the Chair of the Women's Committee, Anita has been a formidable champion for equality. Anita, I have great pleasure in presenting you with the Gold Badge of Congress. (*Applause*) It is lovely for one lay member to give another lay member the Gold Badge.

(Gold Badge of Congress presented to Anita Halpin)

Anita Halpin (*National Union of Journalists*): Sisters and brothers, sorry about this, but here is one I made earlier! As you say, President, we are both lay members as indeed is a sister who will be coming up soon.

It is 20 years since I was a first-time delegate. It was a baptism of fire. My union, with 13 others, was involved in a week-long compositing meeting. My union had a General Secretary election campaign running at the time which meant that delegation meetings were at 3 o'clock in the morning when they came back from hustings. I do not know why, but I still came back.

Some things have changed. Overall, there is greater diversity in delegations, but it is still far short of being truly representative. There are more women delegates, but still just over one-third. There are an increasing number of women speakers, particularly this year.

The LGBT and Disability Conferences became motions-based, as hopefully will the Young Members' Forum. This has provided our lay activists, who you made such a point of mentioning, Sheila, with a greater democratic voice. The voice of lay members is heard more at our Congress now the Equality Conferences have a motion that they bring to this floor. This year, as my General Secretary, Jeremy Dear, said, the trades councils finally came home with their own motion and hopefully next year our young members will join our debates.

Other aspects of Congress have changed. Exhibitors have come and gone. Particularly pleasing to me, as you can imagine, is that the *Morning Star* is here with a stall and this year free at the point of need to all delegates. (*Applause*)

There is a growing international debate thanks in no small measure to the decision of the FBU in Ken Cameron's day to commit one of their two motions every year to a major international issue, literally from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Who would have thought that 20 years ago we would give a standing ovation to a Cuban trade unionist in the 50th anniversary year of the glorious Cuban Revolution.

I would like to thank my husband and comrade of 35 years for his support. Kevin was a child of the Depression. His grandmother died in a workhouse. He led his first strike at 13 and was always a thorn in the side, or indeed elsewhere, of the bosses. Sometimes he even took on the TUC. Indeed, the first time I was ever at Congress House was lobbying the General Council to make a call for the repeal of anti-union laws.

I am proud of my union, the NUJ, for the part it played in the making of TUC policy. My union has a young leadership with Jeremy and our DGS, Michelle Stanistreet, a sister of whom I am immensely proud. I learnt my politics from my parents, both anti-Fascist refugees from Nazi Germany. I know they would have been extremely heartened by the way in which our trade union Movement has taken up the struggle against the re-emergence of the far right.

At the beginning of the week, we said, 'Not in my name.' At the end of the week, I say 'No pasaran.' (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Anita, and thank you for your years of loyal service to the trade union Movement.

Sue Rogers has been on the General Council since 2002. Sue has been a stalwart advocate of trade union rights around the world, especially in the Middle East and in Colombia. Sue, I would like to present you with the Gold Badge of Congress. As another lay member, it is no more than you deserve. (*Applause*)

(Gold Badge of Congress was presented to Sue Rogers)

Sue Rogers (NASUWT): Congress, I will be brief and I will not try to keep you long, but I do feel that being in the almost unique position of a lay member on the General Council, you have to appreciate how strange that could be at times. One day you are at work and the next day you are at the General Council - weird!

It really came home to me when I took a school visit to London and we managed to get into Downing Street. I was standing there with the pupils, all gazing with awe at the door of No. 10. When the door opened, you could hear the intake of their breath and then out walked Brendan Barber. 'Hi, Brendan', says I. 'Hi, Sue', says he, 'What are you doing?' 'I am working', says I. It has been at times a strange and unique situation.

Colleagues, the values that have driven me over the years in this and throughout my life have been striving for justice, fighting the bully, challenging intimidation and striving to improve the lives of my members, the values that dominate this hall. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve my members, to serve my union, the NASUWT, and to serve the national and the wider international trade union Movement. Thank you all so much for that honour and that privilege. Good luck. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Sue. It was a well-deserved honour having you represent us.

Colleagues, Brian Orrell joined the General Council ten years ago. Brian steps down not only from the General Council but also from his own union. In Nautilus International, Brian has shaped an innovative and new trans-national union capable of speaking up for seafarers across Europe. Brian is unfortunately not able to be with us today, but will be receiving his Gold Badge at a later date. (*Applause*)

Also leaving the General Council is Paul Talbot, who joined the General Council in 1999. Paul has made a fantastic contribution to the work of the TUC, leading the General Council's work in the regions. I personally thank Paul for helping to look after me while I was in Zimbabwe. Thank you very much, Paul. (*Applause*)

Martin Mayer, who served for two years, is a committed lay activist and campaigner, who has brought the voice of the shop floor in making Martin's case the best for the

step-up to the General Council. Thank you, Martin, very much. (*Applause*)

Congress, also leaving us is Annette Mansell-Green. Annette was elected to the General Purposes Committee in 2003 and has been Chair for the past four years. Her good judgment and calmness under pressure will be much missed by all her fellow GPC members and I am sure by Congress as well. Annette, we wish you well in your continuing work for UNISON and the trade union Movement. (*Applause*)

Finally, Congress, can I announce that next year's President of the TUC, who takes office from the close of Congress, is Dougie Rooney. (*Applause*) I personally wish Dougie Rooney well and I hope that he enjoys his year as President as much as I have. Have a good year, Dougie.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): I now call on Dave Prentis to move the vote of thanks to the President.

Vote of Thanks to the President

Dave Prentis (*UNISON*): Good afternoon, everybody. It gives me great pleasure to move the vote of thanks to Sheila. Sheila, you have been an absolutely great President and I am sure that everyone in this hall here today will agree with me that you have done us really proud this week. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

I sat next to Sheila for many years on the General Council. She is a role model to all of us - a fighter for trade union rights and a campaigner against bonded child labour abroad. She has made a great contribution to the working-class movement. More than anything for me, Sheila, you are a warm, funny, caring woman of whom the GMB should be rightly proud. I would like to say that if they are not, you are more than welcome to join our union at any time. (*Cheers*)

Sheila, I am delighted to give you some small gifts on behalf of both the General Council and our Congress. First of all, there is a small Fair Trade gift. Secondly - I am sure Mark Serwotka will be really jealous - we have a ball signed by all of the Welsh Rugby Union team. (*Applause*) Maybe it was the ball used when Wales beat England. Obviously, and probably most importantly, we present you with the Gold Badge of Congress.

(Gold badge of Congress was presented to the President)

The President: Thank you so much for that, Dave. I can assure Congress that I will treasure these gifts. I am sure that my son, my nephews and every rugby player from both sides of my family will want to touch and hold it. Thank you so much, Congress.

Congress, I now call on the General Secretary to give a vote of thanks to all the others who have contributed to the smooth running of Congress.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*) gave a vote of thanks. He said: Thank you, Sheila. As you say, it is my job to move a vote of thanks to all of those who have contributed to the success of the Congress. Let me start with the staff of the Convention Centre. I think they have done a tremendous job, always greeting us with a smile. Thanks to the stewards too, who have kept us in good order. Thanks to the sign language interpreters. They have been able to put your words into action even faster than the General Council can express reservations.

Thank you also to all those others who make such a huge contribution to Congress: the stage crew, the verbatim reporters, the tellers, the scrutineers, the crèche workers and all the TUC staff, who I know work incredibly long hours to keep the show on the road. Also, I extend a special thanks to the GPC and their team for keeping us on track and on time despite some of your best efforts.

Most of all I want to join Dave in offering my particular thanks to Sheila. Sheila, you have been an absolutely fantastic President, a real joy for everyone at the TUC to work with. I took particular pleasure in this. You kept the general secretaries really in their place and encouraged the newest delegates, with a twinkle in your eye, with a style which has been absolutely tremendous to work with. *(Applause)*

People have sometimes been a bit confused about Sheila's union, of course, which is the GMB. What does the GMB stand for? I think 'Great Marvellous Bearcroft' is the new understanding.

We have had a lot of highlights during the week, but in many ways the real star of the show has been Liverpool itself. I don't know about you, but certainly I have felt from everyone in the City we have absolutely had a smashing welcome. *(Applause)* It's been 106 years since we were last here. I suspect we may be coming back a damned sight quicker than that.

I do not get a lot of time out during Congress for reasons you might understand, but I did get a chance to do a bit of shopping the other day to try to and get some football gear. I could not get to the main shop at Goodison Park but the good news is that Everton have now opened a second store. It is called *Everton 2* and it is located in the new Liverpool 1 shopping centre near here. Congress, isn't that a tremendous address: Everton 2 - Liverpool 1? *(Laughter)*

Traditionally this is a vote of thanks to the press, and what a week they have had. Perhaps *High Points and High Heels* would be the headline. But, Congress, I think that what we have done this week is actually to really get our message across. We have shown that working people are paying the price for the bankers' recession. We have shown that cuts in public spending would have a devastating effect on our economy and our services, and we have shown that there can be no going back to business as usual.

The year ahead is going to be crucial. A general election looms on the horizon. But whatever the uncertainties ahead are, I am absolutely convinced about one thing, and that is that working people need a strong and a united trade union Movement. Our values have never mattered more than now.

Congress, let's keep fighting for what we believe in, and I think this Congress week has given us a great platform to do that. Before you leave, let's just see a short video with a few of the highlights of the week and then let's go from here united and determined to win a fairer Britain. *(Applause) (Video shown)*

The President: Congress, I declare the 141st annual Trades Union Congress closed. Have a safe journey home, a great year for recruiting and carry on with the trade union Movement. Thank you, Congress.

(Congress closed at 1.30 p.m.)

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Other update

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