**148th ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,**

**Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 11th September 2016**

**Monday, 12th September 2016**

**Tuesday, 13th September 2016**

and

**Wednesday, 14th September 2016**

**…………………………………..**

**Congress President:**

**LIZ SNAPE**

**…………………………………….**

**PROCEEDINGS — DAY FOUR**

**(Wednesday, 14th September 2016)**

**…………………………………..**

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**FOURTH DAY’S PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH 2016**

*(Conference commenced at 9.30 a.m.)*

**The President:**  I call Congress to order. Good morning. Many thanks to the *Hamptronics,* who have entertained us this morning.

As reported yesterday, we are going to be taking Emergency Motion 6: HSE Board Appointment. and Emergency Motion 7: Turkey and solidarity with the Kurdish population, which have been distributed this morning. As Congress knows, we lost business at the end of Monday and Tuesday morning. Following this morning scheduled business, I intend to take this business in the order in which it was lost from the agenda. So I am referring to Motion 43: Post-16 Education, moved by UCU and seconded by ATL; Motion 53: Hospital consultants’ continuing professional development, moved by the HCSA and seconded by BDA; Motion 29: Pay, moved by PCS and seconded by FBU, and Motion 84: Human Rights, moved by Accord and seconded by Unison. Following this, I will then take the outstanding emergency motions, and they are Emergency Motion 3: Review of the London Underground ticket office closure programme, moved by the RMT and seconded by TSSA; Emergency Motion 4: Selection in education, moved by ATL and seconded by the NUT; Emergency Motion 5: Support for the BMA and junior doctors, moved by Unison and seconded by the RCM; Emergency Motion 6: HSE board appointment, moved by GMB, seconded by FBU and supported by Prospect; Emergency Motion 7: Turkey and solidarity with the Kurdish population, moved by Unite and seconded by the NASUWT, supported by the GMB and the NUT. We have a lot to get through. I hope that is clear, Congress.

**Good services and decent welfare**

Delegates, we now start with section 3 of the General Council Report: Good services and decent welfare, the section on transport from page 54. I am now going to call paragraph 3.4 and Composite Motion 17: Public ownership of the rail and bus industry. The General Council supports this motion, and before I invite Mick to move the composite, could I draw the attention of Congress to the fact that today we have been joined, and we are proud to have been joined, by a number of workers involved in the dispute from Southern Trains. *(A standing ovation)* Congress, we know and they know that this continues to be a very challenging industrial dispute, not over pay, not over terms and conditions but about all of our safety. I am sure, Congress, will want to recognise the brilliant efforts of this group of workers. *(Applause)*

**Public ownership of the rail and bus industry**

**Mick Cash** *(RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* moved Composite Motion 17.

He said: Congress, for years we have been coming to this rostrum to tell Labour to support the public ownership of our railways. For years we have been ignored. Now, for the first time in a generation, Labour is not only committed to the public ownership of rail, but under Jeremy Corbyn Labour actually believes in public ownership. But, let’s be honest, whilst its welcome, it is a long way off from the reality of rail under this Government. The fact is that we are facing the most concerted attack on rail workers and passengers in living memory. The Government and train operators have declared war on the rail unions, and they don’t give a damn if passengers are collateral damage. How else can we explain the scandal that is GTR Southern, the worst performing train company in the country? They are late, expensive and so unpopular that passenger protests in Tory heartlands are regular events. They are so toxic that even Tory MPs have called for the service to be nationalised. They are so corrupt that Southern were given the green light by the Government to tear up the franchise agreement and create chaos by cancelling 350 trains a day. Then Southern were given £20 million — £20 million! — and at the same time, their owner, Go Ahead, earned £100 in profits. Why do we, the taxpayer, have to give £20 million when they have £100 to spare? It’s their franchise, they should pay, not the taxpayer. *(Applause)*

This company is so despicable that even the Rail Minister resigned. She said she was ashamed about what was happening on Southern. Congress, she was right to be shamed, because this company is so rotten that instead of taking responsibility, they have taken adverts out in newspapers attacking their own staff and telling lies about staff sickness. They attack RMT members for fighting to defend rail services, blaming ordinary working people for the chaos they have created.

I say to Charles Houghton, MD of GTR, shame on you. I say to David Brown, the CEO of Go Ahead, on your millionaire salary, shame on you, and I say to Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Transport, who refused to meet my union, shame on you! Congress, they are in this together. They are determined to remove the guards from all of our trains at all costs. We welcome the support that we have had from the TUC, ASLEF, TSSA and others in our struggle. We welcome the support from Labour’s Secretary of State for Transport, Andy MacDonald. What a change to have a Labour Party leadership actually backing rather than attacking workers in struggle. So, Congress, let’s get behind our train guards fighting for their jobs and your safety. Let’s pay tribute to our guards in Scotland, who have taken 13 days of strike action to defend their jobs and your safety. *(Applause)*  Let’s pay tribute to our guards on Southern, some of who are with us today, who have taken nine days of action and are going to continue taking action. We will make sure that we are in a position where we are not going to stop supporting until we get a successful resolution to this dispute. But I would applaud, and I thank you for applauding, our guards. *(Applause)* They are wearing *this* T-shirt, they are wearing it with pride, and I am proud to be associated with their campaign, and I think the Movement should be full square behind that campaign.

Congress, your guards are there to prevent accidents on your trains. They are there to protect you and the train if something goes wrong. They are there to help the disabled and vulnerable. Congress, it’s not our guards who should lose their jobs, but it’s this Government and these rail bosses who should be sacked. *(Applause)*  What do the Tories and the media say about us when we fight back? They say we are out of control and that we are fighting on too many fronts. Well, Congress, we did not pick these fights. They did. If someone punches you, you punch back!

I want to give a clear message today. We will fight on as many fronts as we need to protect jobs and safety. Congress, let’s not forget that the same privateers who are wrecking our rail industry also dominate our bus industry. Now the Government’s Buses Bill is going to allow the likes of Go Ahead, who run the Southern franchise, to bid for bus franchises. Congress, let’s make our position clear. We don’t want politicians playing politics with us our bus and rail industries. We don’t want half measures. We want a national integrated transport system. We want all our buses and our railways under public ownership. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  I now call Unite.

**Taj Salam** *(Unite)* seconded Composite Motion 17.

He said: Congress, I am a bus worker. I want to speak about the Bus Services Bill. Buses are the most frequently used and most democratic form of public transport. They are the lifeline of the community. The Bus Services Bill attempts to regulate the bus market, which is welcomed. Franchising would allow some local transport authorities to determine, for example, the frequency and standard of services and fares. But we are concerned. As a bus worker myself, I know first hand the disaster of privatisation and deregulation in the bus industry. Polls show that the majority of the British public think that local authorities should be allowed to set up new public bus companies. Research from Transport for Quality of Life found that we could save £506 million a year by bringing buses outside of London into public ownership. Yet the Bus Services Bill includes a clause that would ban councils in England from setting up new municipal bus companies. That clause should be removed.

If the Government are genuinely interested in local authorities being able to meet local needs, municipalisation needs to be available to all local authorities. There are other changes concerning bus workers that should be made to the Bill. Firstly, trade unions should be included as statutory consultees as worker representatives. Union density in the bus industry is amongst the highest in the economy. Bus workers deserve to be represented. As well as the bus passengers, passenger representatives have already been given statutory consultee status. Secondly, the Bill does not appear to offer protection for new employees, who are not covered by the TUPE and pension protections in the Bill. This could lead to operators bidding for contracts driving down costs by cutting terms and conditions for future employees, with risks to future service deliveries. Government should regulate to protect minimum terms and conditions and pension standards for new employees who are not covered by TUPE. Unite represents 90,000 bus workers, and we have been in the forefront of trying to repair the damage caused by deregulation, and we will be at the forefront of challenging any threats to bus services in the Bus Services Bill. Congress, support these changes to the Bill as part of a wider campaign for public ownership of buses for the best possible conditions for the bus workers. Please support.

**The President:** Thank you, Taj. I call the TSSA.

**Alex Stoten** *(TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs Association)* spoke in support of Composite 17.

He said: Congress, we have always known that a privatised railway is run for minimal cost and maximum profit. Railway franchises were traditionally run on a classic franchise model. Put simply, the franchisee paid the government a sum of money in order to run the franchise and then took the profits for themselves. At least with this model, it was in the interests of the franchisee to run a reliable and proper service. The franchise model that Southern are part of now is more of a management contract. The Government pay them to run the service and then the Government receive any profit. Under this model, the franchisee has no incentive whatsoever to provide a reliable service as they have already been paid.

As Mick said earlier, and it is worth saying again, Southern’s parent company, Govia, recently announced annual profits of £100 million, at the same time as announcing that they were to receive £20 million from the Government to help them shore up their shoddy service. Meanwhile, they have cut 341 services from their timetable daily.

Comrades, we call for the Southern franchise to be removed from Govia and included in the remit of the London Mayor as a TfL service. Whilst we recommend that London Overground TfL operations are not a truly publicly-owned railway, they do invest the majority of profits into the service. The Mayor of London must be able to rescue this failed franchise, at least on a temporary basis, until a Corbyn-led Labour Government removes the foetid, re-animated corpse of Thatcher from Downing Street and systematically brings all of our railways into public ownership. Once he has done that, let the utility companies, Royal Mail, British Steel and the NHS follow. Please support.

**The President:**  Thank you. I call ASLEF.

**Simon Weller** *(ASLEF, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)* spoke in the support of Composite Motion 17.

He said: Congress, I am the Assistant General Secretary of ASLEF, but I was also a train driver for 20 years, 15 of them at Brighton. This is my home depot and this is my home town. I stand in solidarity with my workmates at Brighton and on Southern. *(Applause)*  Let’s be absolutely clear what we are dealing with here. This is not just the usual spat over pay, this is not just a little bit of an argument over terms and conditions, but this is about trying to destroy decent jobs. When we had the McNulty Report some years ago it made very clear recommendations to the government that they should introduce driver-only operations. They should get rid of the traditional guard role with its safety responsibilities, but this dispute is about cost and money.

The role that they are going to introduce — the OBS, the on-board supervisor — is not guaranteed to be on the train. What they are looking at is introducing agency staff, zero-hour contracts, this flexibility and destroying decent jobs. For my daughter’s generation — she is 25 — when they work in the retail sector or in the customer-services sector, it is just zero hours. These are poor, precarious jobs. The railway is almost the last bastion of decent jobs, yet this Government are trying to destroy them. This is not just our usual fight. The DfT are funding this, the DfT are taking us on. This is something the whole Movement needs to get behind. It is about time, comrades, that we started putting our hands in our pockets and assisting our brothers and sisters on Southern. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  Thank you, Simon. We are going to move to the vote on Composite No. 17. Can I see all those in favour, please? All those against? That is clearly carried. Thank you.

* *Composite Motion 17 was CARRIED.*

**Rail freight**

**The President:**  I now move on to Motion 59: Rail freight. The General Council supports the motion, with an explanation. I will call on the Deputy General Secretary during the debate to give that position. It is going to be moved by ASLEF, seconded by TSSA, and then I will call the Deputy General Secretary.

**Simon Weller** *(ASLEF, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)* moved Motion 59.

He said: Congress, this is very important. This is about our national infrastructure. With the collapse in the steel and coal markets, we are seeing the death of freight on rail. We see private operators just cherry-picking the work. There was supposed to be competition. Competition was supposed to drive costs down, yet all they do is just fight amongst themselves to get the most profitable work. The rest of it can go and hang. We are seeing huge declines in freight moved. To give you an example, one of the Scottish depots, Millhill in Edinburgh, back in the day on British Rail, would have had about 150 drivers to move the freight that was being moved in Scotland at the time. The figure has now declined to 16. The knock-on effect of this contraction is that there is actually no one left to maintain the railway because the freight operations also do the infrastructure, the engineering trains, the repairs, the day-to-day maintenance. It is actually becoming increasingly difficult to resource basic maintenance of the permanent way. That is why we need a more integrated, strategic and structured approach to the operation of the freight sector, which is truly privatised. It is privatised in tooth and claw. We need to take something back and get control and have some forward thinking again. It cannot be the issue about whether it is publicly owned or state ownership, because the biggest freight operator in Britain is state owned. It is just unfortunate that it is owned by the German state. Deutsche Bahn operates the largest freight operator in Britain, and there is SNCF involvement in some of the other smaller freight operators. So it can’t be an issue of the inefficiencies of the state. This is just purely ideological on the part of the Tory Government. What we need to return to is something strategic and something that guarantees jobs again. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  Thank you, Simon. I call the TSSA.

**Manuel Cortes** *(TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association)* seconded Motion 59.

He said: Congress, I am very proud to be seconding this motion. Moving freight on our roads is really damaging to our environment. Do you know that 17% of all our CO2 emissions created by traffic comes from freight on our roads? Yet freight on our roads only accounts for 5% of the vehicles within our motorway and other road networks. So it makes absolute and complete sense to bring freight off our roads and on to rail. It is estimated that it is costing the British economy £24 billion every year because of the congestion it creates. It is absolute lunacy, sheer lunacy, not to be moving freight on to rail. This Government need to get eco about freight but, unfortunately, one of the first things that Teresa May did was to axe the Climate Change Department. We ain’t gonna get this from the Tories! So we need to fight and fight hard to make sure that we have an alternative to what they are offering.

Let me tell you that Simon is absolutely right. It is not an ecological fight as to whether or not freight should be publicly owned. The realities of the Tories is that they don’t mind freight being moved by the state as long as it is not our own. If it is good enough for the French, if it is good enough for the Germans, it, surely, must be good enough for us. That is why we need to bring freight back into public ownership. We need to do that as part of a plan, because left to the market we will never, ever, conquer climate change. That plan has to be about how we create the economics of the rail and transport infrastructure that our people deserve in the 21st century.

I will finish on this point. We have had decades of deregulation. We have had decades of being told that private is good and public is bad. For those decades, we have been almost a lone voice. The trade union Movement is saying that this will never work. When it comes to the public ownership of rail services, we have more than won that debate. But I am absolutely proud that, having been a member of the Labour Party for 31 years, after 30 a socialist actually became its leader. Under his leadership we are challenging the view that only the market can deliver, when plainly that everyone in this hall is well aware that it has failed and continues to fail. Thank you.

**The President:**  I call on the Deputy General Secretary.

**Paul Nowak** *(TUC Deputy General Secretary, General Council)* set out the General Council’s position.

He said: Congress, as this motion makes absolutely clear, rail freight is crucial to our economy and to our environment, but the decline in the movement of commodities, like steel and coal, poses a real challenge to the sector. That is why we need a new approach to rail freight. As part of that new approach, this motion calls on the General Council to campaign for public ownership. Let me make it absolutely clear that the General Council supports and will campaign for a publicly-owned and properly-integrated rail system for passengers and freight alike, but a word of explanation is required.

When it comes to passengers, Action for Rail\*\*\*\*, the TUC and rail unions working together, have run a brilliant campaign, built on a really solid evidence base for renationalisation. We have shown that when franchises expire, train operating companies can be brought back into public ownership, and we know what exactly the costs and, more importantly, the financial benefits of public ownership will be. So when we are talking about public ownership, and people ask us how and how much, we’ve got the answers at our fingertips. As a result, we have been able to shift public opinion and win political support. We now need to do the same with rail freight. We have to arm ourselves with the evidence, with the facts and figures, and also to set out what the Government need to do right here and right now to secure the future of the sector. With that explanation, the General Council asks you to support the motion, to campaign for the future of the freight sector, to put it at the heart of a wider industrial strategy and to make the credible costed evidence case for the public ownership of this vital part of our national infrastructure. Please support the motion.

**The President:**  With that in mind, Congress, we will move to the vote. Will all of those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

* *Motion 59 was CARRIED.*

**Maritime jobs, skills and the future**

**The President:** I am now going to call Motion 60: Maritime jobs, skills and the future. The General Council supports the motion, it will be moved by Nautilus and seconded by the RMT. Thank you.

**Steven Gosling** *(Nautilus International)* moved Motion 60.

He said: Congress, I am a first-time speaker, moving Motion 16 on maritime jobs, skills and the future. Colleagues, coming to Brighton for Congress offers a good reminder that Britain remains a maritime nation. Walking to the Conference Centre just today, breathing in the sea air and looking out at the English Channel, serves as a wake-up call to our continuing dependence on ships, seafarers and for just about everything in our daily lives. More than 90% of everything that comes in and out of our country comes by sea, from the fuel in our cars, to the clothes on our back and mobile phones in our pockets. It is almost certain that these goods have reached our shores on a merchant ship.

You would like to think that that would mean that our shipping industry is buoyant and our seafarer workforce thriving, but I am sorry to say that that is far from the truth. The sad reality is that the British Merchant Navy, which accounted for a quarter of the world fleet 70 years ago, has dwindled to just 0.8% of the global fleet today. The number of British seafarers today is less than one-third of what it was in the mid-‘70s, and on current trends will fall by a further third over the next decade or so.

The Government tell us that we must trade our way to recovery, but I have to warn you that most of that trade will be carried on flag-of-convenience ships, many of them crewed by poorly paid and poorly treated seafarers. Nautilus International has only just been dealing with the crews of two ships stranded in the ports of Aberdeen and Great Yarmouth. Even though their vessels were working in UK waters, they were being paid Indian wages, or at least they should have been. In fact, some were owed more than four months’ wages, and in total the two crews had more than US$ 250,000 owing to them. Those two ships were working in a sector where thousands of seafarers have been made redundant over the past 18 months. The oil-price crash has hit the North Sea hard and maritime employment is haemorrhaging away. It is not just jobs going. We have had companies asking our members to take pay cuts of 10%, 15% even 20% to stay competitive, but how can you compete against Indian wages, let alone unpaid wages? It is time the Government acted to end the loopholes that enable exploitation to exist and flourish beyond our beaches.

This time last year the Government published their *Maritime Growth Study,* a package described by the Transport Minister as a “Once in a life-time chance to maintain Britain’s maritime cluster”. We at Nautilus are determined, more than ever, that that chance isn’t wasted. There are 18 recommendations, half of which address training, and one year on we are anxious to get some action on them, not least as we witness several thousand seafarer job losses in the North Sea alone. We have to start by stamping out the second-class treatment of British seafarers. They simply should not have to be competing against south-east Asian wages in the North Sea. Domestic shipping services should mean domestic pay and conditions, and let’s see the national minimum wage, work permits and visa requirements being applied and enforced at sea in the same way as they are applied on land.

We need to encourage new investment in the training of UK seafarers. With an average age of more than 45, this is a workforce in dire need of new blood, but Government support for maritime training has at best stood still and at worse declined in value over the past decade. It is vital that ministers act on the united cause of the industry for improved support to make it more attractive for shipowners to train and employ British crews. Seafarers in the North Sea have helped to drive prosperity, not just in Scotland but across the UK. Operating in some of the world’s most hostile conditions, they have unparalleled skills and experience. It is vital that their expertise is not lost. Those seafarers, like seafarers everywhere, help to make our daily life possible. It is time for the Government to make their working lives tenable. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  I call the RMT.

**William Jones** *(RMT, National Union of ~Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* seconded Motion 60. Just like my colleague from Nautilus has just said, the decline in the British Merchant Navy is phenomenal. We have no skills as they have closed all the sea-training schools down. The industry itself is on its hands and knees. We are an island and we need a Navy. It’s no use having a load of boats with no one to paddle them. I ask for your support in seconding this motion. Thank you.

**The President:**  We are going to take the vote on Motion 60. All those in favour, please show? Those against? That is carried. Thank you.

* *Motion 60 was CARRIED.*

**Safety in the skies**

**The President :**  We now move to Motion 61: Safety in the skies. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by BALPA and seconded by Prospect.

**Leo Nugent** *(BALPA, British Air Line Pilots Association)* moved Motion 61.

He said: Congress, speaking as a Boeing 737 captain and also as a first-time speaker and first-time delegate. *(Applause)*  Congress, the British Air Line Pilots Association’s no. 1 mission is to make every flight a safe flight. So it is our duty when threats emerge to flight safety to highlight them and to work with others to find solutions so that flying remains the safest form of public transport.

Over recent years two new significant threats have emerged and we need to deal with them. The first is lasers. Shining high-powered lasers at aircraft is dangerous, it is reckless and it is illegal. Yet every year we are seeing more and more people doing it. I, personally, suffered the ill-effects of several laser illuminations to my Boeing 737 passenger aircraft, the results of which have resulted in minor distraction or serious degradation to the operational procedures on my flight deck. Contrary to popular myth, 99% of landings on passenger aircraft are pilot flown, manually flown, manoeuvres, and 100% of take-offs and landings require the complete focus of both pilots. When laser light hits the cockpit glass, normally at night, it can temporarily blind the pilots for up to a few minutes. This means that we can no longer see our instruments or the guidance lights ahead on the runway. This is not just a problem for pilots, as train drivers have been similarly affected, as have air traffic controllers, police and others who have also suffered reckless laser illuminations.

BALPA has been campaigning for a long time for high-powered lasers to be treated as offensive weapons. If someone is walking in the street, for example, with a knife and they do not have a good reason for carrying that, they could be arrested and the same should go for high-powered lasers. *(Applause)* There really is no reason to buy, sell or carry a high-powered laser, and this is a simple change in the legislation that I hope Congress will support.

The second emerging threat is drones. Drones need not be a threat. These are remotely piloted air vehicles, they are an exciting new development for aviation and, indeed, BALPA has opened its membership to drone pilots, who I am sure will be growing in number in the years ahead. The commercial possibilities for drones in the UK are endless, but we do need to make sure that our aircraft are protected and these do not pose a threat. So far this year there have been 42 reports of near misses involving drones, and a couple of years ago there were none. At the moment, we don’t really know what would happen if a drone were to impact on an aircraft’s engine, its fuselage or a wing, but we do know how much damage a bird strike can do and we can only surmise that a drone strike would be very much worse. The Civil Aviation Authority is launching an education programme for amateur drone operators — that is good and it is something we support — but it is the Government that need to act. The Government see drones as a commercial opportunity, as do we, but we must not wait for a drone-strike tragedy to occur before we get safe, effective rules and regulations established. The Government will be introducing drone regulation in its Modern Transport Bill in this current Parliamentary season, and I hope that the TUC will work to influence this Bill and ensure that the safety of our travelling public in the skies is protected. Congress, please support Motion 61. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  Thanks, Leo. That was an excellent contribution. I call Prospect.

**Gordon Hutchinson** *(Prospect)* seconded Motion 61.

He said: Congress, Prospect fully supports this motion. UAVs and laser attacks can be and are a significant public-safety issue. Prospect’s Aviation Group has published a position paper detailing members’ concerns and calling for a review of the regulations in a number of areas, such as integration of commercial UAVs within controlled airspace, pilot training and licensing, UAV airworthiness and certification. In the Queen’s Speech, as mentioned, the Government announced a Modern Transport Bill, which will encourage the economic development of the drone industry through light-touch regulation. Prospect believes that this light-touch regulation will not be adequate and puts commercial interests before public safety. Prospect’s Aviation Group secretary, Steve Jary, said: “It is only a matter of time before an airliner or other aircraft hits a UVA or a UVA falls and drops uncontrolled to earth.” If you want to consider or visualise the former occurrence, watch Hollywood’s version of an accident report. It is called *The Miracle on the Hudson*. It is about what happens to an airliner’s engines when it ingests something other than fuel or air. As a general aviation pilot, also in-charge of myself and occasionally one other, I understand the effects of collision, loss of vision or any other occurrence at 400ft, which is one of the proposed limits. We, as pilots, have very little time to react. As my colleagues know, I have personal experience of how short the time is between 400ft and the ground when things go wrong. It hurts.

If aviation engines struggle to cope with ingesting birds, they will suffer more if it is a 20 kilogramme UAV and they are much harder than birds. Never mind what happens if you hit a larger UAV carrying books! Not all airports have a wide river or uncluttered space to give pilots options. They are usually in built-up areas. This is a health and safety issue. Please support the motion.

**The President:**  Thank you. We will move straight on to the vote on this. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? Thank you. That is carried.

\* *Motion 61 was CARRIED.*

**Section Four: Strong Unions**

**The President:**  Delegates, we now move on to Section 4 in the General Council Report: Strong Unions, and the section on Learning and Skills from page 66. I am going to call paragraphs 1.9 and 4.4 – 4.9. UCU and Usdaw have indicated that they wish to come in. So we will take them first.

**Vicky Knight** *(UCU, University and College Union)* spoke to paragraph 4.4 of the General Council Report.

She said: Congress, on behalf of ourselves but also the BDA, BECTU and others who wanted to ask some questions but because of time pressures it was difficult to get everybody in, I am going to be asking some questions and hopefully given some information under paragraph 4.4.

Comrades, I am sure you are aware that our trade union education provision is at a dangerous funding crossroads. This time last year we had 50 delivery centres across the UK based in colleges. Now TUC Education has reduced to less than 20 trade union study centres in England. Government funding for our provision has all but gone, and colleges are seeing less and less footfall of union reps, so they are, basically, just closing our provision. Once it’s gone, Congress, it’s gone for ever.

Like with our economic arguments during austerity, now is the time for investment in trade union studies by sending your reps to our centres and supporting your TU tutors. It is the time to show the Government, like we discussed yesterday, that this trade union Movement is demand our statutory rights to time off and training, professionally delivered, movement focused and accredited training through the TUC’s brilliant Passport to Progress. While we retain this dedicated workforce of trade union educators, as you will see in the Report, that has delivered 677,000 activists in our movement over the last decade, activists from most of the affiliated unions that are here today. Whilst this situation continues, UCU feel very strongly that whilst we welcome brilliant, new, innovative and online measures supporting classroom delivery, and protecting provision, if you, like me, were a product of classroom-based multi-union discussion-centred trade union studies that can identify, support and signpost learners to additional learning needs, numeracy, literacy, IT and other courses at Levels 2, 3 and 4, or if you are not a frequent web user who is not au fait with the mook, there may be some challenges to that being the sole provision, so we, absolutely, welcome that as a supplementary provision. With those concerns, you will be wondering, like UCU is, what the TUC’s strategy to protect the remaining classroom provisions that we have is. How will we regain the confidence of colleges and affiliates to keep this TUC provision alive, because funding streams are available if we show innovation and thought towards what we want to do and where we want to go? Thirdly, how will the TUC fight to protect our tutor jobs and support us to have a workforce in place to continue delivering the gold standard for quality, integrity and innovation that is very clearly displayed in the General Council Report today?

I will finish on this point, Congress. Yesterday, Angela Rayner said that she had had a second and third chance only because of her trade union education through the Movement, that she was a product of our opportunities. Congress, let’s make sure that those opportunities are in place to give to all in future. Thank you.

**The President:**  Congress, will be aware that TUC Education is under considerable pressure, and this is, as Vicky said, an incredibly important part of our support for workplace reps. The General Council has agreed a comprehensive strategy to respond to this, and the business plan for the implementation of this strategy is in development. The General Council will continue to monitor this situation and will work with all affiliates to make sure that we continue to provide this excellent service. Thank you for that contribution, Vicky. I call Usdaw.

**Miss Pat Buttle** *(USDAW, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* spoke to paragraph 4.5 of the General Council Report.

She said: Congress, I am speaking about the trades union councils. I am also a trade union council secretary. Just to address Vicky’s previous point, you may like to know where life-long learning started in the TUC. It started by a delegate to Darlington Trades Council bringing the matter to the trades council with a suggestion and then being taken to the Northern Regional TUC. It was set up as a pilot scheme in Parsons in Newcastle and then it developed. That’s the role of the trade councils, and that has worked very well for all of our members. We have our uses. I know in the past that sometimes people have been critical of the trades councils. I want to encourage you to make sure that your branches are affiliated locally. Certainly from my trades council, you have an invitation to come to the meetings before you actually affiliate to see how we operate. The role of the trades councils is vital. We are active in the community, we are at the school gates, we are on the RMT picket lines and helping to leaflet, and we work through the parent unions.

I want to pay tribute to the Northern Regional Secretary of the TUC, Beth Farhat, who gives us excellent support. When we are doing anything, Beth will back us up. She circulates information to all the unions and it is spread activity. We also work very closely with Unite Community branches. That has got people very, very active. Once a month we have a campaign on the streets of Darlington. Everybody knows the TUC in Darlington because we actively campaign. Last Saturday we were campaigning on recruitment for all trade unions. Unfortunately, it was pissing down with rain so we got rained off. That event will have to be recalled, and I assure you it will be. We currently organise with *Save Our Health Service* in a campaign to save our hospitals. They are having a march through three trusts and we are helping to co-ordinate accommodation and support in all the towns they are going through. Mainly, we are all trade unionists. We haven’t got two heads, so do come along and get your delegates along and be part of it. I am very pleased that our latest delegate is a member of the BMA, and he is a young doctor and that has proven vital because we hold regular public meetings. We fill the room with 80 or 90 people on a quiet rainy night. That’s a good achievement. It’s done by trade unionists in cooperation with yourselves. We always work through the parent union in dispute. So get yourselves involves.

Lastly, President, I am very pleased that Sis. Kay Carberry, who was the Assistant General Secretary of the TUC, is now active in her trades council since she retired. So if you are retiring, don’t give up. Join your trades councils, get involved and get on the streets. It’s a nice feeling when somebody comes up, doesn’t know anything and you can explain what trade unions about. We also recruit, and we recruited recently a lot of young members who don’t know what the union is in their workplace and they have all become activists. They want to do things, they want to be seen and that pleases me tremendously. Thank you very much, Frances. She was a bit worried last night when I said I was going to speak. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Never give up, Pat. Never give up. We will move now on to Motion 77: Lifelong learning, moved by the PFA and seconded by GMB.

**Lifelong learning**

**Nick Cusack** *(PFA, Professional Footballers’ Association)* moved Motion 77.

He said: Congress, PFA is unique in that once you become a member of our union, you retain that membership for life. This entitles you to unrivalled levels of support and assistance long after your playing days are over. This commitment to our members has ensured that we have 100% membership among the current players, who recognise that the PFA will be there for them, on the field as well as off it, when they hang up their boots. The support for members begins at an early stage in their careers, with our education department encouraging and working with them to plan for a future after football. The competition for a contract is fierce, with 85% of scholars being out of the professional game within five years of signing on at 16. In recognition of this, we have put in place a comprehensive set of provisions to support and finance these youngsters through university or more vocational pathways.

As you can see, the PFA works hard to help youngsters who are let go by their clubs, but we also support the considerable number of players who have their career cut short by injury. Again, the PFA is there to get you back on your feet and assist you in the transition to a working life away from the football field. We drum it into players from their scholarship days that only a small number will earn enough money to live comfortably after football. This means that many players have already taken courses or acquired good qualifications when their football career ends, all backed by the union. We have forged agreements with universities across the country to put on bespoke courses, exclusively for PFA members, with flexibility built in to accommodate the unorthodox nature of the working week in football. This has led to hundreds of players graduating with degrees in a number of sports-related disciplines, making them highly employable and ready to take the next stop on the career ladder when playing is no longer an option. To have completed a degree while you still have a few years left on the football field gives a player peace of mind and enables them to plan properly for the future.

Whilst the old notion that footballers are not academically minded does not have the same credence as it once did due to the growing number of graduates in our ranks, there are still many players who want to take a more vocational course in preparation for life after football. Again, the PFA has set up a whole host of courses in different trades where players can build their skills for the future. This means that players who are not comfortable in the classroom can develop vocational skills that will one day enable them to present an attractive option to future employers.

We are acutely aware at the PFA that the vast majority of players need to retrain as their football careers rarely go beyond the mid-30s. The transition from player to non-player is a difficult one, and we fully acknowledge that it is unlikely that any future work will every properly replace life on the pitch. As a union, we see it as our responsibility to step up our support at this time. We are very proud of our work in this area and lifelong learning is a fundamental part of what we do as a union. We have funded courses so that ex-players have qualified as doctors, lawyers, pilots, teachers and ballet dancers. We have also had a big uptake for our courses from our women members, with two players from Arsenal Ladies recently graduating with degrees in sports journalism. *(Applause)*  In all, we spend £7 million a year on education and training for our members, and alongside other expenditures, such as playing for operations for ex-players as well as settling outstanding bills when they get into financial difficulty, this reinforces to members that when they are in need the union is always there. People often say that they cannot understand why millionaire footballers are in a union. The answer to this question is straightforward. They all recognise the work that is done by the union, and although they might not all tap into what is on offer as readily as players in the lower leagues, they all started as scholars and know so many of their friends from their youth team days who, for whatever reason, did not reach the top like them. They know how much the union does to help these players and their solidarity ensures that, despite the huge changes that have occurred in the game in recent times, the union is as strong and as relevant as it has always been. They also know that when the time comes and they are no longer the star player and their club wants to replace them, the union will stand up for their rights and not yield.

In conclusion, the PFA has always believed that you are in the union for life and helping our members after football is just as important as dealing with problems during their playing career. Our commitment to education and learning is very strong, and it is one of the reasons why recruitment of new reasons has never been an issue for us. We readily acknowledge the great work that the TUC does in this area but during these times of falling union membership, I believe that the way the PFA supports its members for life, with lifelong learning at its core, is a good template for other unions to follow. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  I call the GMB.

**Ken Daniels** *(GMB)* seconded Motion 77.

He said: Congress, GMB is proud to support and second this lifelong learning motion. GMB has been organising and campaigning around lifelong learning for a number of years. We have similar examples as the PFA with regard to achievements within our own sports section branches. In particular, the GMB Rugby League Players Association has created a culture of players undertaking education and learning throughout their playing career, with a view to transferring employment at the end of their career.

Also lifelong learning has played a huge part in becoming an extended membership benefit for union members as part of their subscriptions. This is combined with the role of the trade union learning rep. Lifelong learning is critical where members, sadly, lose their employment through a redundancy situation. The support that they receive is key to them entering back into the world of employment. So the GMB asks Congress to support this motion. Thank you.

**The President:** I am going to move to the vote on that one. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

* *Motion 77 was CARRIED.*

**The President:**  I want to remind delegates that any distribution of materials or calls for collections does need to go through the General Purposes Committee. So perhaps delegates could just remember that. Thank you. We now move on to Motion 78: Union learning and the skills agenda. The General Council supports the motion. It will be moved by Aegis and seconded by the Bakers. Thank you.

**Union learning and the skills agenda**

**Fiona Steele** *(Aegis)* moved Motion 78: Union learning and the skills agenda.

She said: Congress, good skills and learning opportunities are central to the trade union Movement’s vision for a fair and productive workplace, a workplace that provides good jobs and prospects for all workers, a workplace where workers have the skills to prosper and a workplace that provides opportunity for all.

As Unionlearn celebrates it 10th birthday, we, as a movement, have a lot to be proud of. The opportunities it brings to hundreds of thousands of our members and their families is well documented. It has transformed our workplaces up and down the country for the better, and it has been driven by trade unions working with employers to train and develop the workforce. The fund has supported more than 50 unions in over 700 workplaces and is regarded as a mainstream Government programme. It is applauded by all political parties, employers and partner organisations in the learning and skills world, yet despite this the funding in England has significantly reduced year on year. Coupled with this situation, the one-year bidding cycle for funds is still a huge challenge for unions. The strains that this puts on our project workers, who every year have to interrupt their valuable work that they are doing to put together the bids for the next year, can take months, while at the same time not knowing whether they will have a job the following year. The annual bidding process also prevents us putting in strategic plans to deliver the learning agenda in the workplaces and hinders an ability to engage with employers in a strategic way. Many of us have large projects which are embedded in the workplace with no guarantee that they will continue. Each year we are seeing increasingly more established projects not getting the funding they need and having to fold.

This picture in England does not compare so well with Scotland. The Scottish Government have increased the funds and last year increased the funding cycle to two years. Northern Ireland has seen no reduction in funds, and they have a three-year funding cycle. It is time that the UK Government caught up. We are also now faced with the additional threat that Brexit brings in that the impact on our funding is uncertain, but it is unlikely that we will be able to continue to access the European Social Fund when the current cycle ends in 2020, a cycle which has provided an investment of over £2 billion in the Skills Agenda. It is not clear how, or even if, this funding gap will be addressed, but it is vital that learning and skills remains on the Government’s agenda when we negotiate our exit from the EU. It is vital also that they continue to invest in good-quality apprenticeships.

We, as trade unions, continue to play a very important role in modern apprenticeships, working closely with employers to implement programmes that benefit both parties, often with union reps providing support and maintenance for these apprentices.

During the last few years, Aegis has worked with employers to introduce an MA programme in the finance sector. It began with a pilot of six MAs and has now grown to 137. While this is small in comparison with many programmes, it is a great step in the right direction for the finance sector. Whilst Unionlearn has achieved so much since its introduction, there is still much more to do. Despite the challenges we face, we have to ensure that the focus and funds remain on developing our members. For many workers, Unionlearn is their only access to education, their only opportunity to get on in life and we owe it to them to keep the pressure on the Government to keep Unionlearn and skills a Government priority, to introduce a three-year cycle of funding to allow us to develop long-term learning strategies and to promote and expand the critical role that unions play in delivering for apprentices. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you. I call the Bakers Union.

**Ronnie Draper** *(Bakers, Food and Allied Workers’ Union)* seconded Motion 78.

He said: Congress, I would like to start by saying that we should be paying a massive tribute to the work that is done by that army of Unionlearner reps who are very often unpaid in the workplaces. The valuable difference that they make to people’s lives is enormous.

Comrades, the Union Learning Fund demonstrates the stark differences between having a Labour government and having a Conservative government. From its inception in 1998, under a Labour government, and a relatively meagre cap of £50,000 given out to trade unions to run the project, we saw it flourish into millions of pounds which was poured in, and two and three year bids given to make sure that we had consistency, recognising the value of what unions can do with their network in the workplace, a network of volunteer union learner representatives who have a steely determination to give members and non-members a second and sometimes a third opportunity to learn and to improve their skills.

Since 2010 and the Tory-driven Government, we have seen continued attacks on all areas of adult education. Unionlearn and the Union Learning Fund have come under constant scrutiny and savage cuts from a Government that see education as an extension of the austerity programme. The food industry, like many others, has benefited from the leadership of ULF project workers and our excellent ULRs. But now we find the project has been forced into cutting corners.

Comrades, education, like health, should not need corners cutting. It should be protected. If we are to deliver the outcomes that we are challenged with, we need consistency and certainty in our projects. But, comrades, it is not just our projects that are under threat. It is the whole of Unionlearn, where it seems that there has to be an annual cull on the numbers who they employ every year. Unionlearn workers are trade union members like you and I. They give an invaluable service right across the whole of the ULF scheme. They are the foundation on which consistency is built. Employers are not going to put their name to a scheme that is not going to guarantee continuance.

The motion calls for three priorities for the TUC to carry out. Besides lobbying Government, we need to convince the CBI, the Institute of Directors and Chambers of Commerce that education does not just improve the education of their workers, but it improves workplace confidence, productivity and adaptability. We need a commitment from employers to give time off for courses. Congress, commitment, consistency and collaboration will bring back reliable, deliverable and ULF courses, and with it benefits to society. Thank you.

**The President:** Thanks, Ronnie. We are going to move straight to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? Thank you. That is carried.

* *Motion 78 was CARRIED.*

**The President**: We continue with Section 4 of the General Council Report, Strong unions, and the section on Migration. I call paragraph 2.6 and Composite Motion 15, Impact of refugee crisis on children. The General Council supports the Composite, to be moved by the NASUWT, seconded by EIS, and supported by NUT. Unite and Unison will also contribute. Thank you.

**GC Report Section 4: Strong unions, cont.**

**Impact of refugee crisis on children**

**Kathy Wallis** (*NASUWT (The Teachers’ Union*)) moved Composite Motion 15.

She said: Congress, we have all seen the news coverage and the harrowing photographs flashed around the world of the plight of refugee children. Who could not be moved by them? But, Congress, these children are not just one or two children, around the world today there are 75 million children and young people who have had their education directly affected by conflict, natural disasters, as well as criminal violence, development projects, and urban regeneration. Currently, there are over 21 million refugees registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and of these over half are under 18, many travelling unaccompanied, 3.6 million school age children out of school and with no access to education.

Congress, it does not stop there. The numbers are appalling as they are shocking. Over the past eight years over 203.4 million people have been displaced due to disasters and violence displaces more than 24,000 people each day, more than 8.6 million people each year. Only 50% of refugees or internally displaced persons are enrolled in primary school, 25% in secondary school, and very few have access to pre-primary or tertiary education. Yet for these children in these situations education is an absolute necessity. In the midst of destruction, violence and instability, schools are a sanctuary, a haven of normality and hope, a place of learning and opportunity.

Neglecting a child’s right to education undermines not only their future but the future of their societies. Lack of education leaves children more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including recruitment into armed groups, child labour, and early marriage. Despite this, just 1% of the global humanitarian aid budget is spent on education.

The NASUWT and the wider trades union Movement, both domestically and internationally, have done much to support our teacher trade union colleagues in affected areas, struggling in adversity to provide stability, opportunity, and hope. Across the world the majority are displaced in their own countries while the rest of are forced to move abroad, mostly to neighbouring countries, which poses a huge challenge to the host societies, most of which are themselves developing countries. The NASUWT has a proud history of working with our teacher trade union colleagues in areas such as these, providing practical assistance, including financial support and training. As well as our work in Turkey and across the Middle East and Northern Africa, our union has maintained a longstanding relationship with teacher trade union colleagues supporting the Burmese Karen refugee community in Thailand. However, much more must be done to support refugee and displaced children within their native countries, in neighbouring states, and here in the UK.

This composite seeks action on the part of the UK Government to ensure these children across the world have access to the education that is their human right and that this education takes place in an environment which is safe and supportive. It asks Congress to assert our commitment to the entitlements of all children and young people as set out in the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of a Child, which affirms the right to shelter, protection from abuse, access to healthcare, freedom from violence and the entitlement of all children to high-quality education. This is not a matter of international development and foreign policy. We must place all possible pressure on the UK Government to ensure refugee children in the UK are given access to the full range of educational; support, mental health support, and resources they need for learners to achieve and to succeed. We must give these children and young people stability, opportunity, and hope. Congress, I ask you to add your voice to ours to campaign for a better future for these children and young people and to start by voting for this composite. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. Thanks, Kathy. I call EIS, please.

**Bill Ramsey** (*Educational Institute of Scotland*) seconded Composite Motion 15.

He said: This is also the world’s oldest teachers’ trade union. Brothers and sisters, we are not the oldest in the universe; hopefully, that is not the case. Anyway, I am seconding the composite. Where there is war, brothers and sisters, there are always refugees, though the story is rarely told. To pretend, Congress, as many do that the creation of this crisis is not an inevitable outcome of war is as intellectually absurd as to suggest that bullets and bombs do not kill. Fortunately, this Movement and other progressive forces, including administrations in other parts of the UK, take a different view. Successive Scottish administrations from Jack McConnell through Alex Salmond to Nicola Sturgeon today, accept our responsibilities, accept the basic humanitarian tenets of the United Nations. A good example is a new Scottish initiative launched in 2013 and subtitled, *Integrating Refugees into Scotland’s Communities*. It is a partnership of the Scottish Government, Scottish local authorities, and the Scottish Refugee Council. The new Scots initiative has a number of strands: supporting refugees that have been dispersed, employability and welfare, housing, communities and social connections, and of course education where we in the EIS try to play our part.

If I may, Congress, on behalf of the EIS Equality Committee which I chair, express a special thanks to our sister union, the National Union of Teachers, in helping us in the EIS develop our contribution to the new Scots programme. With less than 10% of the population of the UK, Scotland has welcomed more than one-third of the UK’s refugees. However, that number is still small, far too small, and we are not complacent. Scotland is not a racist-free zone, nor is it a Islamaphobic-free zone, but that wide progressive political community spans a number of political parties, which some of us call a commonwealth, and will continue to work to fulfil our obligations, obligations that have the mark of any civilised society. Please support the Composite. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. Thanks, Bill. I call the NUT.

**Sally Kincaid** (*National Union of Teachers*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 15.

She said: It is very difficult to tell a thousand stories in three minutes. For the last mine months I have been travelling backwards and forwards from Leeds to Calais and Dunkirk. I have heard a thousand tales from a million brilliant people. I have spent too long at that camp. I have spent too long sitting in a little school in the south side of the Calais Jungle listening to people’s tales: What did you do back home. I was a doctor. I was a chemist. I was a photographer. I was a shoe designer.

This motion is about children. Let me tell you two stories about the children. There is an angry little boy. I am quite short and he is even shorter than me. I saw him two weeks ago. He kicked the cars as he was going up to school. I said, “Don’t kick my car.” So he kicked it anyway. To be honest, Congress, if I was that little boy I would kick my car too. His little arm was broken, in a sling, and as I guided him into the school he looked at me and said, “The police did this.” I said, “I know. It’s time for school.” I talked down an eight-months pregnant woman, told her not to try and jump the lorries because that horrible chemical asbestos ridden field is safer than trying to get on the lorries.

Other people bring back wine and cheese from Calais for their parties. I bring back these bloody things thrown into the school (*canister*) and guess who pays for them; we do. We, the British taxpayers, pay 80% of the policing that goes on in Calais. This was found outside a children’s bus. We have a responsibility. As the trades union Movement, we have a responsibility. We can do this. We can fix this. We can feed and help the thousands who are stuck and standing in Calais, our brothers and sisters. We can fight to get those children where they should be, in British schools. I want to see a picture of that angry little boy standing in front of someone’s front door on his way to school. (*Applause*)

People say, “I don’t want to go to Calais.” I do not care, you should go. Take a carload of chick peas, exercise books, take whatever, but do not take pasta. I cannot un-see what I have seen. I cannot un-meet who I have met. I cannot tell you of the wonderful volunteers, the people who care for Calais, side by side all of those organisations that are doing stuff.

I have two messages: they shall not starve, they shall not flee, open the doors to refugees. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I now call Unite.

**Norma Dudley** (*Unite the Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 15.

She said: I am a first-time delegate to Congress. (*Applause*) Congress, as a specialist public health nurse I wanted to highlight the health needs of refugee children and asylum seeker families; in all the trauma, relocation, and legal difficulties that they experience, their long-term health needs are often overlooked. Maternity Action in the Refugee Council found that dispersal policies made little allowance for the health and social needs of pregnant women, women experiencing high stress, depression and traumatic flashbacks could be uprooted and moved during pregnancy, adding to their distress. Health visitors like me make a holistic assessment of health needs for all mothers and babies so that no mother and no baby falls through the net, aiming to build a trusting relationship so that emotional and physical traumas may be disclosed and people can receive the therapeutic support they need and deserve.

In 2015, 3,043 unaccompanied children were granted asylum. We know from the evidence about children in care that the health outcome for children not living with their families is significantly poorer than those of other children. However, if these children are in school they will be identified and assessed by school nurses who carry out universal health screening of all children between nought and 19 years. They are well placed to respond to the health needs of refugee children and of unaccompanied minors who have no one to advocate for them, that is, if the school nursing service continues to be funded.

Commissioning these services has now transferred to cash-strapped local authorities without ring-fencing and with 200 million cuts in public health this year. A glaring example of the devastating impact of these cuts is Bromley where the council have announced there will be no school nursing service from March next year, snatching away, therefore, the only public health service dedicated solely to children’s needs. Congress, I urge you to support this motion and wherever you can to encourage local authorities to provide a well resourced and professional health visitor and school nursing service. When universal public health services are cut it is always the most vulnerable who suffer. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thanks, Norma. I call Unison, please.

**Jenny Harvey** (*Unison*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 15.

She said: Congress, this composite draws our gaze to a place which many choose not to see. It reminds us of the human cost, the moral cost, of the anti-immigration narrative and despite the Brexit vote Europe and the UK do still have obligations towards refugees. Agreements were signed when the refugee crisis started to hit home and at the time they said, never again.

Congress, I am proud to work in public services the beating heart ethos of which is a betterment of our common humanity, caring for the vulnerable, breaking down barriers, and bringing communities together, which is why it is tragic that public services are being stopped from providing help and support to the tiny proportion of refugees and asylum seekers who actually make it to the UK. The composite says child refugees must have full access to educational support, mental health services and resources. It does not say they should be used as convenient pawns to be blamed when there are cuts in education and public services are at breaking point.

Last year the Government cut meagre financial support for families seeking asylum by £16 per child. No wonder the Refugee Council found widespread poverty and homelessness amongst refugees. Unicef estimate 800 unaccompanied asylum seeker children arrive now stranded in Calais, 178 of whom have the right to come to the UK because of family links, and a further 209 children are now entitled to safe refuge in the UK because of the amendment introduced by Lord Dobbs. Congress, surely, all of those children should be treated the way we would want our own to be if they, too, had been left defenceless, homeless, stateless, without even the protection of their parents. (*Applause*)

The face of the refugee crisis worldwide is a child’s face. We see that in each and every one of the 10 million children seeking sanctuary, seeking a home, seeking a childhood. According to Unicef, nearly one in every 200 children worldwide is now a refugee. World leaders everywhere ought to hang their heads. Over the past year, it has been the reaction of ordinary people that put those governments to shame, people who do not have much themselves coming to the rescue, bringing food and clothing, bringing humanity and compassion.

We can all be part of creating the safe havens refugees desperately need. We can speak up in our communities and in our workplaces. We can change local authority and governmental attitudes, and in doing so we can change the narrative. Please support. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Right, I am going to move to the vote on this. Can I see all those in favour, please? And all those against? Thank you. That is carried.

\* *Composite Motion 15 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: I move on to Motion 83, the Immigration Act. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Mohammed Taj on behalf of the TUC Black Workers Conference, and to be seconded by the GMB, and in this debate we will have the NASUWT, PCS, and the UCU, if you could all be ready. Thanks.

**The Immigration Act**

**Mohammed Taj** (*Unite the Union*) moved Motion 83 on behalf of the Black Workers Conference.

He said: President, Congress, politicians and policy makers from all political parties have continually told us that we need to have an honest conversation about immigration, that people should be allowed to express their fears about immigration and not be accused of being a racist.

The issues on migration have nothing to do with racism. However, issues of immigration and migration continue to be a major feature of the Black Workers Conference agenda. Black workers know that every time a piece of immigration or nationality legislation is passed, it makes life more difficult for those of us from black communities. In 2014, an Immigration Act was passed that was designed, according to Theresa May, to create a hostile environment for illegal immigrants.

This Act was not about migrants but it was about turning ordinary people into immigration officers. It outsourced the role of the Border Force to ordinary citizens, turning us into internal border police. Local authority workers, hospital, and bank staff, housing workers and others, many of them our members, are now being required to act as immigration officials, checking people’s status to be in the country.

The 2016 Immigration Act was a nasty racist piece of legislation and has taken things a step further by introducing a crime of illegal working, a fundamental attack on human rights and, amongst other things, making it a requirement for public authorities to ensure the frontline staff speak English to an unspecified standard, and making it a crime for landlords to rent to tenants if they suspect that they may be undocumented.

Congress, this will lead to more racial division, with employers preferring not to give jobs to people with the wrong colour of skin, or wrong accent, with landlords playing it safe by not renting to people from black communities, with health workers denying treatment to those who cannot pay but, above all, by creating an atmosphere of suspicion, by institutionalising a culture of us and them.

Congress, we cannot allow the issue of migration to be unchallenged as the proxy for all the ills of our society. The referendum showed that many people have come to believe that if there were less or no migrants then their lives would be materially better. It is tempting to believe that we can re-connect with those who are disillusioned by acknowledging their concerns about immigration as a way of opening a dialogue. However, we do this only to validate people’s belief that migrants are the problems and give heart to the far right and the racists because we have allowed them to continue to set the terms of the debate.

The issue of immigration has been placed firmly at the workplace door and we must respond as trade unionists. We must ensure that our negotiators are equipped to ensure that these measures are introduced into workplaces in a way that protects our members and minimises the damage to those it was designed to disenfranchise.

Finally, we must promote the tried and tested universal trade union values that, in solidarity and strength, and no matter where they come from, workers have more in common than that which divides us. Please support Motion 83. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Taj, thank you. GMB have indicated they are going to formally second. So, I call the NASUWT, please.

*Motion 83 was formally seconded*.

**Michelle Coddrington-Rogers** (*NASUWT (The Teachers’ Union))* spoke in support of Motion 83.

She said: My union, the NASUWT, welcomes and fully supports this motion as we believe that this backward draconian law gives permission to racists, fascists, and xenophobes, to identify, target, and discriminate against those who are and are perceived to be non-British. I stand here as a first generation born child of immigrants but not just any immigrants, immigrants from a Commonwealth country, a small island in the Caribbean fought for by the French, the Portuguese, and the British, eventually given to them in a treaty. My great grandmother, my granny, my mother, were taught British history, English language, and to sing *God Save the Queen*. Their highest court of appeal was the Houses of Parliament and the taxes that they paid came back to the UK Treasury. I am actually older than my country by one year and that was after a long fight for independence.

Britain’s relationship with migration did not start with the EU and it will not end with Brexit. The hostile environment towards members of the black communities of Britain has always been there from when black soldiers arrived with the Romans. This punitive law gives a legal framework and compels a duty for discrimination and for behaviours of hate. NASUWT proudly campaigns on behalf of BME teachers at all stages of their careers and was vocal and active when overseas trained teachers spoke out against discrimination and exploitation they faced before this heinous law was adopted. BME teachers are already discriminated against in the workplaces with barriers to pay progression, equal pay, and promotion, and this law will only contribute to discourage BME people joining or staying in the profession.

The NASUWT BME conference, the largest gathering of BME teachers in Europe, and growing, has increasingly been told about members facing complaints from pupils and parents about the accent of teachers with a Jamaican teacher having to demonstrate how understandable her voice was to a parent and the line manager. In some parts of the country it has been reported that parents have requested that pupils be taught by a British or English teacher.

The proposal by the Government to raise the salary threshold will directly impact on BME teachers who are already facing pay depression. I am proud that the NASUWT has lobbied the Government against these proposals. The legal adoption of the racist charter means that part 7 will focus on English language requirements for those working in the public sector, which means that discrimination and prejudice can be applied from an early age.

What is the Cabinet Office trying to achieve through this law that takes us back to the 1950s? It is in a knee-jerk prejudiced divisive form of political playground bullying. The UK that my parents were taught about and the UK that I am a proud citizen of is multicultural, multilingual and multinational. We believe that we need to unite and celebrate our diversity and culture-rich country of many and not allow it to be legislated against. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call PCS.

**Zita Holbourne** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Motion 83.

She said: The Immigration Act seeks to create an apartheid-like state in the UK barring access to essential services and impacting not just on those deemed to be migrants but deepening racism experienced by all black communities and workers. We just heard the debate on refugees and, as black activists taking aid to Calais over the last 13 months, we have been stopped and searched, detained under the Terrorism Act, barred from access to Calais, labelled, our vehicles searched, our bodies searched, deemed to be refugees trying to get into the UK and delayed coming back into the UK. We are facing our own immigration barriers just by crossing the border and crossing the Channel to France back and forth taking aid.

One thing I want to say is that the aid is drying up. There is not enough food getting to Calais. My organisation will be going to Calais this Saturday: *Care for Calais* is outside. We desperately need more donations coming in. I have information and so has *Care for Calais*. Please see me after. Last week we saw one horrific aspect of the Immigration Act realised before our eyes when 50 Jamaican nationals were rounded up, detained and booked on to a privately chartered mass deportation flight in order to forcibly remove them from the UK, despite Theresa May’s assurance that those from the Commonwealth would not be targeted post Brexit.

Under the powers of Section 94B of the Immigration Act 2014, those with criminal records can be deported irrespective of having served sentences, those sentences being spent, rehabilitation, irrespective of not having exhausted the procedures for appeal or naturalisation in the UK, instead requiring appeals to be done from outside of the UK.

However, not all of the Jamaican 50 had criminal records; some of them were deemed criminals because of their immigration status whilst going through appeals. They included people who came to the UK as babies and small children, those who had lived in the UK for decades, those not naturalised as children through administrative errors by guardians, elderly people, two primary carers and spouses, a former British soldier, a woman whose British husband died at the final stages of naturalisation; it included parents, grandparents and spouses of British people with no regard for Article 8 of the Human Rights Act on the right to family and private life.

They were taken and detained without warning, with many signing in weekly with the Home Office. One who went to sign in with his baby had his baby taken by social services rather than allowing him to call a relative. Lawyers of eight were able to take eight people off the flight through seeking asylum or judicial review. The other 42 were taken to a holding centre, booked on a flight that could not be tracked, told they were flying out of Heathrow but were taken in the early hours last Wednesday to Stansted, restrained, cuffed, surrounded by police and security, driven up to the plane, taken on one by one, their bodies and heads strapped. One man was beaten up because he protested, called out in protest, and was sedated for the flight. In Jamaica, many will be destitute because they have no family there.

There was only two weeks between being detained and deported and John McDonnell has given a commitment that under a Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn the Immigration Act will be repealed. To end, with more mass forced deportations expected within weeks we need an urgent response. This is a trade union issue. It could impact on our members and our workers that are members, who are expected to participate in these processes. I will really welcome a chat with Balpa, amongst other unions, about their response to this. Please support the Jamaica 50, oppose such horrendous forced removals from the UK, and please support the motion and stand up to racism. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call UCU, please.

**Julia Charlton** (*University and College Union*) spoke in support of Motion 83.

She said: I am not speaking immediately about the Immigration Act but an Act that works in parallel with it, the Prevent Act. When the Government proposed Prevent, this divisive legislation, they said it was supposed to help reduce radicalisation; instead, it has divided people on racial lines and that is why it is important to consider Prevent alongside the Immigration Act.

In higher education it has divided not just students but students from staff and staff from staff. It has allowed xenophobia and Islamaphobia to flourish on our campuses. It has stifled free speech. Academics who teach sensitive or controversial topics are self-censoring and do not feel able to explore topics to the same depth with their students for fear of being reported. International staff are not willing to stand out for fear of being reported, for fear of being thought radical. They do not want to stand out so they do not join the union. We cannot protect them.

Christopher Hitchin said, “Every time you silence somebody you make yourself a prisoner of your own actions because you deny yourself the right to hear something.” Prevent applies censorship closing our ears and our minds in the very institutions that are meant to open them. This Act stifles campus activism. It stops us working with external speakers. It stops us collaborating with students and the National Union of Students because people are frightened. UCUC remains strongly opposed to the Prevent strategy and so should we all be. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Delegates, can we move to the vote on this? Will all those in favour please show? And all those against? Thank you. That is carried.

\* *Motion 83 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: We now turn to Section 5 of the General Council Report, TUC Administration. I am going to call paragraphs 5.1, 5.3 to 5.7, and 5.11-5.15. Okay. As I indicated earlier, we are now going to take the lost business from yesterday morning, so again could the delegates be ready. We are turning to Section 3 of the General Council Report, Good services and decent welfare, and education. I am not going to call Motion 43, Post-16 education, and because of the shortage of time it will just be the mover and the seconder, UCU and ATL. Thank you.

**GC Report Section 3: Good services and decent welfare, and education.**

**Post-16 education.**

**Rob Goodfellow** (*University and College Union*) moved Motion 43.

He said: Colleges are a community asset. They provide life chances to people who maybe did not do so well at school, only to retrain, gain new skills, or just need that certificate to validate a promotion. When I first started in an FE college the issue was how to get NEETs onto courses and the colleges actually went out to them where they lived because it was seen as the only way to do it. This was called community education. Now it is about bums on seats and an obsession with making profits.

Education makes such a transformation to people and society. It should be about quality of provision, not profit for education or education on the cheap. Colleges need proper funding. The only reason some colleges have large debts is because of the drastic funding cuts from central government. It is not the case that we cannot afford colleges. It is a case we cannot afford to be without them. Once a college disappears under the guise of area reviews, it will never return because the assets and the buildings will be sold off leaving larger and more financially stable colleges as a result. Really? Where is the proof of that? They still need funding. Forcing students to travel 45 miles each way for an evening course just is not going to work.

Courses are being closed, lecturers and support staff are being made redundant in their thousands. How does this help communities? Good jobs are going to the wall, along with the local spending power they bring. So, shops, tradesmen, etc., have reduced business. In turn they lay off staff who may need to retrain but their local college no longer exists. They have to find money for travel or lose their life chance and become another jobless statistic. They no longer pay tax so less money for the government to waste. Of course, they can always go self-employed if only the local college was there to provide the knowhow.

If I was to suggest this has the potential to lead to social unrest, I would be accused of scaremongering. Guess what: it will. Too many colleges suffer poor financial and strategic management with a total lack of vision and imagination and principals, who call themselves chief executives, on high salaries while they refuse to pay staff even paltry pay rises year after year.

This Government wanting three million apprenticeships will not happen without proper funding and it must be colleges that deliver and provide quality of provision rather than an in-house training scheme that merely allows an employer to claim back the levy rather than securing funding for a quality community resource. Next Spring funding rates for 16-18 year old apprentices will be cut by a third or even a half in some areas. The two most popular routes of business administration and construction, face cuts of between 27 and 52%. Why are we letting the Government axe Lifelong Learning, Learning for All, and Cradle to Grave Education?

As an FE lecturer I urge you to back this motion and join our campaign to resist plans to merge and close our vital colleges. We must make an overwhelming case for proper public investment in our education system and we need you to join us in doing that. Along with our colleagues in the NUS, UCU will be taking our message to the streets with a Central London demonstration on Saturday, 19th November. I do hope you will join us in that. Thank you. I move. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thanks, Rob. I call the ATL.

**Niamh Sweeney** (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) seconded Motion 43.

She said: Congress, this motion calls for an alternative vision for post-16 education and now is the perfect time. As further and higher education has been returned to the Department of Education the Government should call a halt to its flawed, wasteful, and futile area reviews, and its insistence that every sixth form or college academise, merge, or turn into a multi-academy chain.

Area based reviews were set up by the Government, led by the FE Commissioner, to ensure the financial viability of colleges. I thought fair funding did that. The view was that colleges would be more efficient and financially sustainable if they shared provision, curricula, and services, which on paper sounds plausible but in reality raises concern about the practicalities of access, does not take into account a student’s passion for learning a particular subject, or the needs of the local or wider community. The needs of students and young people do not appear to be a priority.

Little information regarding decisions taken in the area reviews has been forthcoming. Despite Freedom of Information requests from ATL, and requests for minutes of meetings, little is known about how the decisions have been made. There was a lack of transparency over the whole process, a process which involved decisions about public money. The very tight framework for carrying out the reviews is inappropriate given the large number of stakeholders involved in each and the vast amount of data to be analysed. Furthermore, college staff, with their wealth of experience and knowledge, have not been engaged in the process. It appears that the area reviews are more about squeezing extra efficiency savings out of FE, not about providing the best education we can for young people.

Colleges are already operating in an environment of uncertainty. They have to compete with students with school sixth forms which are not part of the area review, and they are reliant on LAG funding where they do not receive funding for the students they teach until the year after they teach them. There is also uncertainty around the future funding sources because we do not know how employers will react to the apprenticeship levy.

Colleges are now being told by the Government that post review there will be no more exceptional financial assistance and they will have to go into liquidation if the money runs out. What will happen to that student group who mid-course are told that their college is going into administration? If further education had been a country in the Olympics, it would have beaten Australia in the medal table. The contribution post-16 and its students make to society entitles them to an alternative vision. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. Right, we will move straight to the vote on that. Can I see all those in favour? Thank you. And all those against? Thank you. That is carried.

\* *Motion 43 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: Staying with Section 3 of the General Council Report, from page 47, I call Motion 53, Hospital consultants continuing professional development. The General Council supports the motion.

**Hospital consultants’ continuing professional development**

**Paul Donaldson** (*Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) moved Motion 53.

He said: Madam President, Congress, the culture of education is vital within the NHS but I am sorry to report today that there is a growing threat to this vital aspect in hospital doctors’ work. A standard full-time consultant’s week comprises of 10 programmed activities, each of four hours. According to the current consultant contract agreed in 2003, a typical allocation should see 10 hours set aside for supported professional activities. This is the time when consultants are teaching, learning, doing audits, developing services, managing their teams and departments or carrying out sometimes groundbreaking NHS research.

The Academy of Royal Medical Colleges rightly describes these activities as essential to the long-term maintenance of the quality of service. Just to keep our General Medical Council licence to practise it has been estimated to take a minimum of one-and-a-half SPAs, that is six hours from the standards of the contract, yet the 2003 commitment has now been torn up locally by trusts across England; some have reduced it from 10 hours a week to six, some have reduced it even to four. Six years ago in Scotland we saw an attempt to reduce it to one SPA, that is four hours, but the Scottish government realised the value of SPA time and reversed it. This now seems to be a distinctly English matter.

Trusts see lowering SPA allocations as a way of getting more clinical work out of consultants. In their view, more clinical work equals more throughput equals better value for money. This, however, ignores the value of the work that is done in SPA time, which in many ways defines what a consultant does. The HCSA’s own polling shows that half of our responding members have seen a reduction in their SPA time. In eight out of ten cases this has been imposed. Sixty percent of our affected members say their level of research has fallen as a result; 70% now do less teaching and training and more than 70% have had to cut back on their personal professional development. Of these nearly two-thirds say they have tried to keep up with their SPA activities in their own time.

Comments from our members detail the impact this is having on hospital doctors. One said the SPA squeeze has “helped me along my journey from being totally committed to my trust in this work to feeling that I cannot retire soon enough.” Many others echoed this picture of plummeting morale and say that they too are considering leaving the profession all together through either early retirement or emigration. As one consultant stated, the net result is that the NHS will lose out as consultants do not do the extra they used to do.

Congress, this situation is deplorable. It is not good for consultants. It is not good for the future of the NHS and it is not good for the patients we treat. Doctors in training will suffer as teaching is squeezed and what can be shoehorned around clinical care is delivered by increasingly demoralised consultants. For the NHS as a whole it means reduced levels of clinical governance, auditing, teaching, and research. Ultimately, all this is bad for our patients now and increasingly into the future. Today, as a consultant who has worked in the NHS hospitals for over 35 years, I have a simple message: for the future of our health service this squeeze has to stop. Congress, I move this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. BDA?

**Dennis Edmondson** (*British Dietetic Association*) seconded Motion 53.

He said: Delegates, we all understand and value the importance that education and training bring to our working lives; indeed, I am sure that all of us in this auditorium have benefited directly from training in various forms, for example, through our workplace, our unions, and higher learning institutions, and it was very eloquently described by Angela Rayner, our guest speaker, and of course in discussion this morning. We can, therefore, appreciate that career long professional development is vital for physicians to enable them to develop and hone core clinical skills and in more senior roles as consultants develop expertise in areas of their chosen medical specialisation.

I must reiterate, having spoken yesterday about the need to protect and promote my profession, that ongoing training and development is of fundamental importance not only to doctors but indeed to all NHS health professionals, and that in order to fulfil and sustain the aspiration of a world-class health service we must recognise and acknowledge the pivotal role of training and research that underpins all that we do within our multidisciplinary working teams, and in the provision of up-to-date evidence-based clinical practice and patient care.

Congress, let us therefore continue to campaign to ensure that dedicated time for professional development and training for doctors and NHS staff is firmly embedded into the NHS framework and that we are not forced to undertake this essential requirement in normal working time. I second. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. Congress, we will move to the vote on this. All those in favour please show? All those against? Clearly carried. Thank you.

\* *Motion 53 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: We continue with public sector pay, from page 20, calling paragraph 1.10 and Motion 29 on Pay. The General Council supports the motion with a reservation and I will be calling on the Deputy General Secretary to explain the position. It is to be moved by PCS, seconded by the FBU, calling the Deputy General Secretary, and speakers will be Unison, the NUT, and UCATT. Thank you.

**Pay.**

**Chris Baugh** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) moved Motion 29.

He said: The motion argues that public sector pay, and let’s just remind ourselves that we are talking about over four million public sector workers covered by the Treasury Pay Remit Guidance, have had pay frozen for two years from 2010, annual rises capped at 1% since 2012, and Osborne’s statement in 2015 set further 1% increases for the following four years. This is part of, to coin a phrase, a so-called long-term economic plan of a now past and failed Chancellor who has failed either to stimulate the economy, increase demand, or reduce the deficit that they told us was so important.

The obscene gap between the rich and poor that we have seen in the UK, and reflected in the latest Oxfam report, has accelerated since the crash and the so-called period of austerity. We have seen pay restraint, effectively, since 2010 that has meant, on average, a 20% cut in the average pay of all public sector workers. The facts are not really in dispute and, of course, the facts can never really do justice to the genuine and real hardship that that causes for members.

Now, while some of you may say Groundhog Day about this particular motion, there is little argument about the impact of the pay cap upon public sector workers. There is little argument about the agenda of a May-led Tory Government, nor, I would argue, the power that trade unions possess when we campaign and take action together. So, the real question is when a government or an employer is not prepared to listen to appeals to sweet reason, and even when we know more than they do, how do we better coordinate a collective response amongst public sector workers from sharing information, from joint campaigns, from political lobbying, and, yes, planning and coordinating strike action that is going to be necessary if we are serious about breaking the pay cap and asserting the rights of our members across the entire public sector. On that basis, Congress, I ask you to support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thanks, Chris. I call the FBU.

**Andy Noble** (*Fire Brigades Union*) seconded Motion 29.

He said: The FBU is proud to second this motion on fighting the public sector pay cap. We know that an attack on pay and on our living standards emanates from the policies of central government. We also know that this Government, the last Tory-led coalition government, and sadly the last Labour government, have used the economic downturn to make workers pay for a crisis that we did not create. The previous speaker has explained how pay cuts have hit his members and how a further pay cap will hit workers in the coming years. I would like to explain the impact that this has had on fire-fighters.

Fire-fighters last had a decent pay rise in 2008. In the first two years of the economic downturn our employers did not even bother to make a pay offer. Since 2012, we have received 1% pay rises on an annual basis. We have only just lately had our latest pay award and again the employers have gone for 1%. Despite the claims of independence, our local authority employers have stuck to the Government’s limit. The average fire-fighter is now £900 a year worse off in real terms than five years ago. Delegates may remember that in 2002 the FBU had a pay claim for fire-fighters to earn £30,000 a year for the work that our members do. Twelve years later fire-fighters still do not earn £30,000 and if it is up to this Government they will not be doing that for a long time in the future. We know that this vicious Tory Government has imposed a four-year 1% pay cap on public sector workers. It also made the projections for inflation and these have been revised upwards only serving to make matters even worse. On their figures fire-fighters and other public sector workers will be another £1,000, at least, worse off in real terms if the cap remains in place.

Congress, the trades union Movement cannot allow members to be exploited in this way. Our members are all doing more work, more productively than ever before. We simply cannot accept this attack on our members’ living standards. They have also lost the excuse of a crisis. They now want to cut public spending simply so they can give their friends in the City more tax cuts. We cannot accept this. We strongly support the PCS’s motion and applaud them for bringing this to Congress.

Our amendment to the final paragraph inserts a new bullet point for the TUC urgently to convene a meeting of public sector unions to plan joint campaigning during 2017 and beyond. It also adds a new bullet point at the end for the TUC to organise a series of major rallies and events in towns and cities across the UK to make a case against the pay cap and for united action to break it. Together we have the strength to resist this pay cap; together with millions of strong trade unionists we can still perform miracles. This matter concerns the immediate wellbeing of our members and we trust the campaign will get the support from all across the Movement. Decent wages for public sector workers is part of guaranteeing decent public services themselves. Let’s get together, discuss the strategy, and then agree to act jointly and collectively. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call Unison.

**Denise Ward** (*Unison*) spoke in support of Motion 29.

She said: Congress, there are few government policies more symbolic of the Tories’ commitment to unfairness and boneheaded devotion to a failed ideology than the public sector pay cap. Since the pay freeze took effect shortly after the coalition came to power and the pay cap began, our members have seen inflation take great chunks out of the value of their pay packet year after year. A public sector worker at the top of their pay band in 2010 experienced an average cut of almost £5,000 in the value of their wages by 2015; it is little wonder when 1% limits are set against what was happening the real world, 32% increases in gas prices, 23% increases in rail fares, and 16% increases in mortgage payments.

The pay cap is not solely a gross injustice to public sector workers; it is part of a government strategy to use public sector pay as a battering ram that dents the going rates for jobs across the economy. The dead weight of the pay cap has been the backdrop to average price sector pay settlements that have failed to flicker above 2% in over three years, and whether it is public sector workers or private sector workers, the crumbs on the table over the last five years stand in stark contrast with the part of the economy where the need to tighten belts never seems to apply. Pay of chief executives for the UK’s largest companies are up more than 20%, company profits up 24%, and total dividends paid to shareholders up by almost 50%.

Hold on a minute, though, I can hear the ghostly voice of the former Chancellor telling us to put away the politics of envy and believe in the force of the market. In fact, didn’t Gideon – sorry, George – always reassure us that the pay cap was the unfortunate but necessary price for getting government debt under control. Well, we all know how that one turned out with the pay cap helping to starve the economy of demand, we have the lowest recovery since records began over 180 years ago, and the government debt is now £630bn higher than when the Tories took control of pay policy in 2010. So, if the pay cap goes on unchallenged it is going to mean more of the same, a stuttering economy is set to take another £2,000 out of the value of average public sector wages by 2019. We cannot allow that to happen. Our members have taken enough of a hit. Millions of dedicated workers from care assistants to cleaners, administrators to nurses, have carried the burden of this Government’s venomous attack for far too long. Congress, it is time to redouble our efforts at every level and it is time to organise to defeat the pay cap.

I just want to finish on a personal plea to Unison higher education members, please vote Yes to industrial action in the current ballot. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call NUT.

**Philipa Harvey** (*National Union of Teachers*) spoke in support of Motion 29.

She said: Congress, when the School Teachers’ Review Body made its submissions to the Government this year it told the Government that an increase in pay significantly higher than 1% is required in order to recruit and retain enough teachers over the coming years and that schools will need more funding to allow for this. So, our message today is, as it was during our national strike in July, “Invest, don’t cut”, otherwise what happens in schools is deeply damaging to the children that we teach.

The acknowledged crisis in recruitment and retention is not being resolved: year on year pay freezes come on top of imposed performance related pay, ever increasing powers in individual schools, and the break-up of national pay scales. As trade unionists we recognise how this will increase inequality and discrimination in pay. Would you rather that teachers and head teachers, and governors, were negotiating over pay in 20,000 individual schools or teaching the children in those schools? So, instead of addressing pay seriously in public service we have a situation where government proposals were being recommended, where workers were being forced into accepting pay cuts by dropping down scales. Older women, in particular, would have been hit hard by this hugely discriminatory proposal. We have seen increasing disparities and discrimination in pay since terms and conditions have become deregulated. We have seen individuals opt out of their pension schemes to make ends meet. We need a coordinated response as the TUC. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call UCATT, please.

**Steve Conwell** (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) spoke in support of Motion 29.

He said: Congress, it is time. It is time we smashed the con trick that this vile government is undertaking, that they cannot afford to pay our members in public services a decent wage and give them a decent pay rise because it is purely ideological. It is up to us to unite and stand up for every member in the public services and end the cap on pay that is pushing workers into poverty.

We have heard the economic arguments but austerity does not work. Our economic recovery is weak. Society is divided with those at the top benefiting from tax cuts and the rest of us have seen our living standards worsen. It is public servants who are suffering the most. Our members and housing maintenance departments are grossly underpaid. Many are telling us that they are now reliant on in-work benefits, benefits that are being savagely cut by this Government. Tories just do not see the benefit in public services. They do not rely on them and are quite happy to turn them over to the privateers to make a profit, like they have done with our railways. Let’s get those back in public ownership, too. (*Applause*)

Congress, the latest TU report, *Britain in the Red*, makes harrowing reading, unsecured debt up, over three million households in problem debt (many who are public servants) because their pay is being cut in real terms, while the cost of fuel, food and clothing continues to rise, dragging them into a vicious circle of debt.

Congress, UCATT supports the motion. We also support challenging the Government. It is time to empower our members and when workers are offered meagre pay settlements we must stand collectively in response. If we stand together and take industrial action across public services, we can defeat the austerity politics of these Tories and win just and fair increases in pay for our members. (*Applause*) We will only do this together, united with a collective strength of all public servants. Nothing this Movement has achieved has been won without struggle and with solidarity and our Movement together we can and we will win. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call on the Deputy General Secretary.

**Paul Nowak** *(Deputy General Secretary)* set out the General Council’s position to support the motion with a reservation.

He said: Congress, Motion 29 calls on the General Council to support a range of campaign activities to secure fair pay for public sector workers and to break the public sector pay cap. That is an absolutely vital issue, as we have heard during the debate. It is one which impacts upon millions of public sector workers, their families and communities. It is one which the General Secretary highlighted in her speech on Monday.

This motion builds on the campaign work which has already been taken forward collectively by our public sector unions through the TUC’s Public Services Liaison Group, chaired by Dave Prentis, to secure pay justice in the public sector. In supporting the motion, the General Council has just one reservation and that reservation is that the proposals in the motion for a national demonstration and for regional rallies should be properly considered by both the Public Services Liaison Group and by the General Council because we will want to consider how best to take forward this important work, alongside all the other priorities and issues that we have debated during Congress this week. With that reservation, we ask you to support the motion.

**The President:** Thank you. We will move to the vote on that. Can I see all those in favour? All those against?

*\* Motion 29 was CARRIED*

**The President:** We turn to section 4, Strong unions, and I call Motion 84, Human Rights. The General Council supports the motion. It will be moved by Accord, seconded by Unison and supported by Unite.

**Human Rights**

**Tom Harrison**  *(Accord)* moved Motion 84.

He said: Comrades, friends, if, like me, you are not a Philadelphia lawyer, this human rights stuff can be a bit confusing. So, how did the UK get a Human Rights Act in the first place? Let me put on my NUT hat and give you a little history lesson. Picture the Palais de Chaillot, Paris, on 10th December 1948, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has just been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. This Declaration, arising direction from the experience of the harrowing atrocities of the Second World War, represents the first global expression of what many believed to be the rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled.

Now fast-forward almost five years to 3rd September, 1953. Following the violence and genocide of states against citizens experienced in the war in Europe, this is the date that the European Convention on Human Rights entered into force for the Member States of the Council of Europe. Supported by our very own Churchill, this international treaty was created to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe and established the European Court of Human Rights. In fact, the treaty was drafted in most part by British experts and Britain was the first state to sign up in 1951. So, finally, Congress, after only 47 years of waiting, in the year 2000, the then Labour government introduced the Human Rights Act, which incorporated the rights within the Convention into UK law, allowing us to claim our rights in UK courts.

Fast-forward another 16 years to today and a now Conservative Government (which has already hiked tribunal fees, driven cuts in health and safety and minimum wage inspections, while also decimating the Equality and Human Rights Commission) declares that they will seek to replace the Human Rights Act with a UK Bill of Rights. Why? They claim that this is an opportunity to take back control from Europe. However, the opposite is true. Despite the numerous attempts by the right-wing media and politicians to make us believe Europe dictates us in human rights, the Convention has nothing to do with the European Union and UK citizens would still be able to apply to the European Court in Strasbourg to access their rights.

So, what has the Human Rights Act ever done for the UK trade union Movement? Well, Article 11 provides for freedom of association (including specifically the right to form trade unions) and there have been some historical successes in seeking to uphold this right, e.g. for the NUJ, when an employer paid financial incentives to employees to give up their union rights, and for Aslef, when a BNP member was expelled by the union. However, there has also been more recent disappointment for the RMT, who were seeking support for secondary action.

Today, it would be interesting to consider whether elements of the Trade Union Act might be challengeable through the Human Rights Act as violations of the Convention. However, as unions, it is the wider societal worth of the Human Rights Act that we value and wish to secure. Even as recently as April, our then Home Secretary was calling for the UK’s withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights. Now, as Prime Minister, she appears to have back-pedalled. However, with a Conservative government in power, we cannot afford to be complacent. How the rhetoric has changed since Churchill.

The trade union Movement has a part to play in building the understanding and laying the ground for resistance to any potential attack on the Human Rights Act. For a kick-off, we should all support our TUC partner, Amnesty International UK, which has set up a petition at their savetheact.uk website to make citizens, communities and our members aware of the Human Rights Act and to set a marker down against abolition. We need to make common cause with Amnesty, not only by promoting the petition in our workplaces and branches, but through articles in print and online to make our members aware of their rights and of the merits and worth of the Human Rights Act.

So, finally, please remember that not only do we want to axe the Act and ban the Bill; we also now want to save the Act and our human rights with support from our Amnesty partners. Congress, do the human right thing: save the Act. I move. *(Applause)*

**Jackie Lewis** *(Unison)* seconded the motion.

She said: Congress, you have just heard some compelling reasons to defend the Human Acts Right. I will add a few more. On 26th April, the jury in the second Hillsborough inquest returned a verdict of unlawful killing in respect of the 96 people who died, giving their families some justice after 27 years. That verdict would not have been possible without the HRA. It was Article 2 of the Convention, which protects the right to life and is enshrined in the HRA, which got the victims and their families the wide-ranging inquest which led to that verdict. The HRA has also been used, for example, to uphold the dignity of people living in care homes, to safeguard asylum seekers, to bring about justice for victims and survivors of domestic violence and rape where they were failed by inadequate police investigations. These are just some examples.

Congress, the Tories have talked for years about replacing the HRA with a Bill of Rights. Instead of the HRA, which has held the Government and the powerful to account again and again, they want the law to allow those with an interest in not being held to account to be able to limit when, and to whom, human rights does apply.

So what, despite all the talk, has nothing actually happened? Perhaps it is because repealing the HRA is not going to be easy. For a start, the Good Friday Agreement requires the European Convention to remain part of UK law and the Irish government has made its opposition to any attempt to change this very clear. Both the Scottish government and the Welsh Assembly have made clear their opposition to the HRA being replaced with a Bill of Rights. The Tories will have to get it through the Lords and, in May, the Lords’ EU Justice Committee published a devastating report that set out many reasons why a British Bill of Rights is “a bad idea”. Also, there has been the expanding campaign to defend the HRA with growing awareness of what the HRA has ever done for us.

Congress, it is clear that we have a government that regards the rights of most of the population as an inconvenience to be brushed aside, but Human Rights are not the gift of politicians. They arose from struggles that were begun long ago by past generations who gave their lives for those rights to be enshrined in our laws. They belong to us all. We had to fight to win these rights and protections and now we must fight to keep them. I second. *(Applause)*

**Howard Beckett** *(Unite the Union)* supported the motion.

He said: The principles of collective rights, protection from enforced slavery, the right of assembly, the right to protest, freedom of speech, the right to belong to a trade union and, yes, Congress, the right to withdraw labour are all protected by the Human Rights Act. These are rights so important, as you have heard, to be central to international law, protected by the United Nations, integral to the Scotland Act, central to the Good Friday Agreement, rights to tell less democratic countries around the world that we respect international law and we promote the human rights of all.

It was Nelson Mandela who said, “To deny people their human rights is to deny their very dignity.” As my friend, the late, great, Davey Hopper, would have said, “These wretched Tories have no hesitation in denying trade unionists their dignity.” Congress, Unite is a union that says “No” to employers who ask us to repudiate industrial action. We are a union which has changed our rulebook to say that if you force our members outside the law, we will stand shoulder to shoulder with them. *(Applause)*

Congress, my union has always relied upon our right to protest, our right of assembly and our right to freedom of speech. Again and again, we have taken the struggle to the backyards of directors who seek to demean our members. We have taken the struggle to their homes and we have relied upon the Human Rights Act to do so. Be in no doubt that as this Tory rabble fail to deliver to the right-wing zealots the Brexit they so desire, the insular, xenophobic, racist society they seek, they will look to exit from the Human Rights Act as their succour to the right wing. They will seek to remove us from the Human Rights Act and claim that this is sovereignty reclaimed. They will offer us a UK Bill of Rights and that will be premised on the Carr Report, one which will have at its very heart how to defeat in the courts the tactics that my union has used so well. Our human rights will be entrusted to a government hell-bent on destroying our Movement and a compliant judiciary, which injuncted Aslef for no more than telling members of a failure to agree with the employer.

No, Congress, these are our human rights, our core and our essence. They deserve to be protected by international law, not subject to the whims of the ruling elite of government and not subject to the privileged out-of-touch judiciary. We must be willing to stand with Liberty, Amnesty and others and to say that our Human Rights Act is our humanity. Congress, we support.

**The President:** We will move to the vote on that. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against?

*\* Motion 84 was CARRIED*

**The President:** I am not calling Emergency Motion 3, Review of London Underground ticket office closure programme. The General Council supports the emergency motion. Can I call on the RMT, who will move it, seconded by TSSA and supported by Unite.

**Review of London Underground ticket office closure programme**

**John Reid *(****National Union of Rail, Maritime ad Transport Workers)* moved Emergency Motion 3.

He said: “The RMT welcomed London Mayor Sadiq Khan’s review of the closure of ticket offices on the London Underground. Two years ago, at a time when the underground was carrying four million passenger journeys a day, the Tory Mayor, Boris Johnson, announced cuts of around 1,000 mainly ticket office staff. The RMT and our sister unions, Aslef, TSSA and Unite, took strike action together, bringing London to a total standstill, and beat back many of the attacks facing our members, including preserving our no compulsory redundancy agreement. We also delayed the pet project of Boris Johnson, the night tube, until work/life balance was protected with 500 extra jobs. Job cuts were reduced as result of this action from 1,000 to around 850.

However, the destruction of ticket offices went ahead as part of the £2.9 billion austerity cuts being taken out on TfL London Underground. All ticket offices in all 260 stations were destroyed. The reduction of around 850 staff has had an impact on our ability to serve the disabled and visually-impaired passengers. Crime, violent incidents and sexual assaults on women have all increased. The Underground is seriously over-crowded. Passenger journeys have soared to around five million passengers a day. This is more than all other rail companies in Britain put together. The London Underground is the dearest metro in Europe and passengers are receiving less of a service, being denied the expertise of ticket office staff.

Passenger groups, disabled groups and the vast majority of passengers want ticket offices. Management at the time and the then London Mayor, Boris Johnson, refused a public inquiry, knowing that if a public inquiry took place, it would come out in favour of ticket offices. We took strike action. This strike action was supported by the majority of Londoners. We also set up “Hands off London Transport”, a public campaign which leafleted the public. Nonetheless, despite all of this support, the wanton destruction of ticket offices went ahead at the cost of millions of pounds.

Those of you who travel on London Underground will see a poster that states that all stations are staffed at all times. This is a blatant lie. Every day, there are stations that are totally unstaffed. This puts passengers at risk. Otherwise, they are seriously understaffed at increasingly overcrowded stations. We call on Mayor Khan to fight to reverse the Government cuts of £2.9 billion and also the cut of a £700 million per year subsidy, which will make London one of the few cities that does not receive a subsidy for its public transport service. These cuts will seriously harm our ability to run a safe underground. We say to Mayor Khan, “Bring back the 850 jobs. Bring back the ticket offices.”

London Undergrounds workers keep London running efficiently and safely, but these cuts are threatening our ability to do this. We need extra staff to maintain the highly-professional job that our station staff, our train drivers, our cleaners, our engineers, our office staff and our signallers bring to London. I say to Mayor Khan, “We also need our ticket office staff back to add to our professional service to the millions of passengers that our members carry every day.” Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

**Manuel Cortes** *(Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association)* seconded the motion.

He said: Isn’t it great that we now have in London a Labour Mayor who keeps his promises? Sadiq Khan promised that if he got elected, he would review the booking office closure programme that Boris had implemented. When Buffoon Boris was in place, he never kept one of the promises that he made on transport. He got elected on a promise to keep all booking offices open. By the time he left, there was not one left. Then he said that he was going to get the night tube. When he left office, the night tube was not running and again Sadiq Khan had to pick up the pieces and make it a reality.

We want this review to be a proper, independent consultation on what needs to be done. It cannot be a sham. We know – and those of you who use our tube network must know – that if they asked passengers, people with disabilities and anybody who uses the tube, the one thing they would want is more staff at stations and a booking office network. *(Applause)* Frankly, it is madness that at a time of growing passenger numbers – as my comrade from the RMT has already said over one million more people are using the tube network – and at a time, sadly, of heightened security, the one thing that you cap is the number of staff you have on our tube. 850 people lost their jobs.

Sadiq Khan has done the right thing. I appreciate that and welcome it. I am really pleased that our union backed him to become the Mayor of London. However, when the recommendations in this review are about reopening booking offices, I call on him to sit down with the unions so together we can put forward a plan that can be delivered. Just like our sisters and brothers on Southern who are in a dispute, we know that the fingerprints of central government are behind all the cuts. We know that Osborne and Boris made a deal that led to the job cuts in London Underground.

To fight this, first and foremost, we need this review to say what we already know, that the public wants booking offices back on London Underground. We then want to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Mayor to make it a reality. *(Applause)*

**Sean McGovern** *(Unite the Union)* supported the motion.

He said: Congress, the review that is now being carried out, after a concerted campaign by rail unions, communities, passenger and disability groups to keep the ticket offices open, is to be hugely welcomed. Disabled passengers have repeatedly raised the fact that having ticket offices means that there is a known and fixed point at the station where disabled people can access information and any staff assistance they need. The proposals had been that while large stations such as Euston and Kings Cross would have fixed information points that were staffed, in other underground stations, staff would be roaming, making it harder for disabled people (particularly those with visual impairments) to find staff.

The review of the London Underground is an important step. If we can win the argument for staffed ticket offices there, it strengthens our campaign outside of London against ticket office closure on our national rail network. The number of disabled people using railways has increased in recent years. The number of disabled rail cards in circulation has risen by 12% year on year. However, the closure of staffed offices and the cut of £50 million to the Access for All scheme threaten to throw increasing accessibility on public transport backwards.

Our public transport should be accessible to all members of the public and that includes disabled people. *(Applause)* For too long, this has not been the case and we still have some distance to go. Anything that moves us even further away from that goal must be actively campaigned against. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** We are going to move to the vote on this. Can I see all those in favour? All those against?

*\* Emergency Motion 3 was CARRIED*

**The President:** We have four more emergency motions and they are really important issues with a lot of speakers. Ideally, I would like to get all the speakers in so here is the deal. For those of you wanting to speak, can I ask you to have a little glance of your speech and see if you can possibly take out a couple of lines so that we can try and get all of the speakers in. I think that is fair.

Our next one is Emergency Motion 4. I hope you have scribbled something out already, Mary. The General Council support the emergency motion, to be moved by ATL, seconded by the NUT, and I would like to get in NASUWT, NHAT and UCU.

**Selection in education**

**Dr. Mary Bousted** ***(****Association of Teachers and Lecturers)* moved Emergency Motion 4.

She said: Congress, if Theresa May wants to create more grammar schools, let us be clear, she also wants to create more secondary modern schools. You cannot have one without the other. We will not be fooled by the smoke and mirrors the Government is attempting to move around this dangerous policy. The Government tries to sell it as a way of poor children achieving social mobility by giving them access to a rigorous academic education, but there is a fundamental flaw in this pitch because the fact is that poor children do not get to grammar schools. Less than 3% of the children currently in grammar schools are on free school meals. That compares with 18% in non-selective schools.

Where they do still exist grammar schools are dominated by children from affluent families whose parents can afford the private tuition to coach them for the 11+ and I know this to be a fact from my own experience. When my daughter was ten, we moved to Kingston upon Thames and from my new house, I took her round the corner to the new school. I said goodbye to her and was at the gate when two other parents came up to me and said, “For the 11+, these are the phone numbers of the tutors. It will cost you £20 for half-an-hour and she will be coached with four other children for the 11+.” I said, “Thank you very much, but no she won’t.” They said, “Why not?” I said, “Because she is not doing the 11+.” One of them accused me of playing politics with my child’s education, an accusation which left me speechless, and if you know me, you will know that is a very rare occasion.

The teachers who taught my daughter told me that it was not the most able children who passed the 11+, but those who were coached to within an inch of their lives. The Tories know that coaching forms a fundamental problem for their argument that grammar schools promote a meritocracy. They get round this by saying, “We will have an 11+ that children are not coached for”, but they know very well that there has not yet been a successful attempt to have an 11+ that actually does not mean that children get the 11+ by being coached for it.

Grammar schools do not work now. Kent has grammar schools and secondary modern schools. In Kent, the poorest children do less well than the poor children in non-selective systems. The fact is, Congress, that the effects of selection and segregation are life-long so in areas where there are grammar schools, there is a bigger wage differential between the adults who went to grammar schools and those who did not than there is in non-selective areas. It is not just a problem with children in school. The model that the Government should be following is not Kent, but London, where children from every social background out-perform children from any other area in the country.

Now, the other argument that ministers will try to peddle to get this pernicious policy through is the unjustifiable one that there is already selection in the school system, but if Theresa May is seriously worried about selection by post code then she could introduce a fairer admissions policy. She could give admissions back to the local authority so that schools could not gain-play the system. She could introduce fair banding or a lottery or any other of a number of ways of getting a fair selection of children into school. You do not impose grammar schools in order to get fairness in our education system.

Theresa May must not be allowed to get away with her fantasy vision of inclusive grammar schools. The whole point of grammar schools is that they are not inclusive; they are exclusive. There is the idea that grammar schools increase choice, but they do not increase choice for the parents and the children who fail the 11+ because they have not been coached for it. It is selection based on social class giving the privileged more privilege and taking away from the less privileged any fair chance that they have of a fair education system. *(Applause)*

Congress, I have given one personal story and I will just give another. I am from a big family of eight children. My dad was a headmaster and my mum was a teacher. Education was very important in our house. Six of us passed the 11+. Two of my brothers, who have dyslexia, did not. They both went on to be successful. One is a teacher and one ran a computer company. However, in any conversation with Tony or Edward, they will say very quickly, “Of course, I am an 11+ failure.” That failure has absolutely affected the self-confidence, self-belief and self-worth of those two lovely people. For my particular family example, there are millions across the country who carry with them the metaphorical label of shame that they were an 11+ failure. When those people achieve, it is against that terrible label that the state has put around their necks.

What is being proposed, Congress, in the reintroduction of grammar schools, is wicked, it is immoral, it is unjust, it is unethical and we most oppose it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Louise Regan** *(National Union of Teachers)* seconded the motion.

She said: It was good to hear from Angela Rayner and the clear support she gave to opposing this ridiculous policy. We have already heard in Congress about the chaos in our schools this year and here is a further example of an unwelcome policy being implemented by a government which is out of touch with the real world.

Two days ago, in Parliament, Justine Greening unveiled the Tory Party Green Paper which will allow the expansion and opening of new grammar schools and increasing selection in our school system. Their argument that this is about creating better education for all children and young people is based on myth and preconceptions.

Despite their assertions, the grammar school system was not popular in the 1950s or 1960s, nor is there any evidence that grammar schools are a path to success for the poor. In fact, the opposite is true. Yesterday morning, on the BBC news, parents were interviewed outside the 11+ test centre. They all acknowledged the financial burden that it had created. This is because they had paid for their children to be tutored to enable them to pass the test. In some cases, this had been thousands of pounds.

Grammar schools do not enable social mobility. In fact, disadvantaged students are massively under-represented in grammar schools, even amongst those who achieve strong grades at primary school. According to a 2011 study of student data comparing pupils in selective counties with those in non-selective counties, it found that disadvantaged children did dramatically worse in selective areas.

Finally, the impact on children, but also on adults who failed the 11+ is significant and Mary has already referred to her story. When the announcement about grammar schools was made, a friend of mine, who is a teacher, posted this on social media: “49 years ago, I put my head inside my desk and cried. I had just found out that I was the only one on my table of six who had failed the 11+. It was inhumane then and it is inhumane now. A few days later, my friend cried. She had just found out that she was the only one in our group of four friends who had passed and would be separated from the rest of us.”

Transition from primary to secondary school is one of the most worrying times for children. We would be making it as stress-free as possible. This policy is not about creating a better education system; it is about selection and segregation. If this Government really wanted a great education for all our students, they would talk to the experts, those who work in education. These are the people who know what would make our education system effective.

Congress, remember that every child is unique, every child is an individual and every child deserves the very best education that we can give them. The cost of our education system should not be considered a burden on our society, but an investment in our future. Congress, oppose segregation and selection. Let us fight for a well-funded, comprehensive education system. I second. *(Applause)*

**Patrick Roach** *(NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union)* supported the motion.

He said: In her first words to the country as Prime Minister, Theresa May said that she wants a country which works for everyone and not just the privileged few. We want that too: a country in which everyone is included and not excluded; where opportunity is not determined on the basis of sex, disability, race, colour, religion or family income. Congress, we should be committed to sweeping away all divisions and injustices and to building a better and fairer society that genuinely works for everyone. That is the message we should take from the Brexit vote on 23rd June.

It is sweeping away divisions created by successive government policies which have left our children at the mercy of market forces and where educational opportunity is now increasingly based on parents’ ability to pay.

Compounding these divisions and injustices is simply not the answer to meeting the deep challenges we face as a country: the challenge of a deeply-divided society, evident in the wake of the Brexit vote; a society where many feel left behind and abandoned. It is time for the Government to commit to the vision and values of comprehensive education that secures equality of opportunity and entitlement for all children and which is the basis for securing our shared values, inclusion, mutual respect and understanding.

Congress, the Government’s proposals to remove barriers to selection of pupils on the basis of ability, aptitude and religion are a distraction from the real challenges and crises our education system faces; the crisis of not enough teachers, not enough school places and not enough money as a consequence of years of public sector cuts and austerity. These proposals are a distraction from the failure of this Government to tackle the scourge of insecure employment, discrimination, prejudice and hate on our streets, homelessness, the lack of affordable housing and the lack of investment in high-quality training, skills and decent jobs, which are blighting the lives of children and young people.

The Government’s proposals on selection are about extending privilege to a few, not about tackling the problems of inequality and social exclusion which blights the lives of many in our country. Congress, we must demand a better deal for all our children. We want schools that work for all our children, a future that works for all our children, a future that does not select children on the basis of household income or brands children as rejects at the age of 11. That is not the future we want for our children and our grandchildren. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**Tony Draper** *(National Association of Head Teachers)* supported the motion.

He said: On Monday, the Government published its Green Paper on grammar schools. It is called “Schools that work for everyone”. Grammar schools do not work for everyone. They make things worse for a lot of young people and an expansion of grammar schools will lower standards and restrict opportunity. The evidence is clear. In areas with selective education today, standards for pupils outside those schools are worse than in fully comprehensive areas. The highest performing state schools in our country are comprehensive. Even worse, grammar schools take far less than their fair share of students from low-income backgrounds – just 2.5% on average. They are not an escalator for the poor and talented; they are mainly an enclave for the privileged.

As a head teacher, I can assure you that there is no way that a test at 11 can reliably measure long-term academic potential. *(Applause)* There is no way that such a test can be sheltered from the effects of hot-housing, coaching and tutoring. If you cannot afford this, you stand at the back of the queue. The Green Paper is a mess. The Government knows the policy does not work and is patching and fixing as it goes. They have talked about quotas of low-income students, but then provided any number of opt-outs. Apparently, grammar schools might be allowed if they also set up and run a secondary modern down the road. Can they even see the amount of division and segregation this implies?

These proposals are dangerous, cynical nostalgia. They create more “haves” than “have-nots” in a world where every child needs and deserves a great school. Above all, they are a distraction from the real issues of education: lack of funding, lack of teachers and chaos in exams and assessment. *(Applause)* There is one simple recipe for high standards: a well-qualified, well-supported teacher in front of every child, with the best teaching the most vulnerable. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Julia Charlton** *(University and College Union)* supported the motion.

She said: We support the emergency motion on the Government’s grammar school proposals, but actually let us call it what it is. It is a plan to increase inequality by restoring secondary moderns with all the folly of labelling and damaging children at 11, the principles of hierarchy and inequality in the school system and of restriction of opportunity and equal access to good secondary education.

We should be absolutely clear. These proposals entrench inequality. Most grammar schools have fewer than 10% of pupils receiving free school meals. Research by the Sutton Trust shows that only 17% of those who receive the private tuition needed to pass selection tests are eligible for free school meals. Research by the Policy Exchange found that grammar schools leave non-attendees behind in terms of grades, contributing to poorer outcomes for those who do not attend them. All of this adds to the inequalities as those from the poorest parts of the UK are so much less likely to get into selective schools. What an unnecessary waste of our national potential.

Plans for universities to sponsor or own schools could further restrict access as they reduce the pool from which they select. Again, the most selective courses have the most privileged intakes. Already, they are seven times more likely to go to university with high-entry qualifications than the most disadvantaged applicants.

UCU has long supported the principle that good access, equal opportunity and inclusion should shape young people’s routes from school to post-school education. Instead of following those principles, once again, the Government cobbles together a policy (unsupported by evidence) that it will benefit pupils entering secondary education, higher education or society. It is opposed by the teachers’ unions, the chief of Ofsted and even the last Tory Education Secretary. Congress, there is a very simple answer to the grammar school debate. Do not make some schools better than others; make all schools better. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** We will move straight to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? All those against?

*\* Emergency motion 4 was CARRIED*

**The President:** We move to Emergency Motion 5, Support for the BMA and junior doctors. The General Council supports the emergency motion, to be moved by Unison and seconded by the RCM. I am also going to bring in the CSP, Unite and the HCSA.

**Support for the BMA and junior doctors.**

**James Anthony** *(Unison)* moved Emergency Motion 5.

He said: The junior doctors’ dispute is an issue for all of us. A seven-day service sounds like a nice idea, but to be honest, we do not feel like the Government really knows what it means. If it means delivering the same service we do on every other day across the weekend, it is simply not deliverable with the staff that we have at the moment and the funding available to the NHS. So, our junior doctors are taking strike action to defend patient safety and to stand up for the rights of our staff.

It is also crucial because weekends are important. It was us, the trade union Movement, which won the weekend. We won the right for staff to have time off with their friends and families so they could build their social relationships. However, because the NHS never stops and we are always working, we have to be at work on a weekend, but we need to be compensated for that.

The dispute is also really important for us because this is a massive attack on national collective bargaining. The repeated threat of imposition of this ridiculous contract has really undermined the structures that we have with our employers in the NHS at national level. The NHS unions stand together against this attack on all of us. Congress, I am proud of the support that my union has given to the BMA, from technical and balanced support at a national level to close working between our reps and theirs on the ground, with many of our members on their picket lines.

Junior doctors are part of a wider team on a weekend with nurses like me, clinical scientists, porters, receptionists, pharmacy technicians and many more. That is the one team in the NHS that Unison represents. Let me be completely clear, Congress. If they come for our unsocial hours pay, we will ballot our members for industrial action and it will be our members on those picket lines outside the front of those hospitals. *(Applause)* We deserve the money we get for working at a weekend and we deserve our time off as well.

So, Congress, we stand united as NHS workers and as a whole movement behind our junior doctors because, yes, junior doctors and all of us work seven days in the NHS. People have said that Jeremy should work seven days if that is what he is saying the rest of us should do. I do not think Jeremy should work seven days; I do not think he should work a single day more. He needs to go. Congress, pass this motion. Support our junior doctors. Let us fight to keep our weekends special and our NHS safe for patients. I move. *(Applause)*

**John Skewes** *(Royal College of Midwives)* seconded the motion.

He said: I am very proud to second this emergency motion. The BMA is not an affiliate, but neither were we when we took our first strike action in 134 years. We had fantastic support from the TUC. We had fantastic support from so many unions in this hall. That really coloured our decision, within a year, to affiliate to the TUC. *(Applause)* We should give the same support to the BMA.

There are real similarities between then and now regarding imposition. Hunt seems to make the same mistake over and over again. In our case, it was imposition about what he thought the pay award should be rather than what the pay review body thought the pay award should be. In the case of the BMA and the junior doctors, it is the entire contract, particularly, as James has explained, the changes that he wants to impose to unsocial hours, weekend working, etc. If he does that for junior doctors, he will come for the rest of the NHS staff thereafter. What I would say is if he thinks he can do that, he needs to think again. James has made the point already and I want to second it. If he comes for other NHS staff (including midwives) then we will stand up, we will campaign and we will take whatever united, strong action across all the unions in the NHS is necessary to see off that threat. *(Applause)*

We have talked to the BMA and this has been a discussion amongst all of the health unions, particularly last week. They have said to us that there are three things that we can concentrate our messaging of support around. One of those is no imposition, the second is to defend our national terms and conditions and, thirdly, that our NHS needs to be funded properly. Can I just talk very briefly about that imposition issue. The first group of 600 junior doctors to suffer the imposition of the contract will be working directly alongside midwives because, in October, it will be the 600 whose specialism is in obstetrics and gynaecology. We want to stand with those junior doctors in a way which will make sure that that imposition does not occur, but it will affect other health workers at that point.

So this is a dispute that can be solved on the basis of those principles that I have set out. Instead, Hunt wants a seven-day service with less money given rising demand. The spending on the NHS is going down in this country as a proportion of GDP. Everywhere else, it is going up and that cannot continue. We must turn that around. Midwives and junior doctors already provide a fantastic NHS service around the clock. They will not do it for less. They will not do it for a poorer deal for women or if it is imposed. We stand together with the BMA. Support the emergency motion. *(Applause)*

**Jill Taylor** *(Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)* spoke in support of the motion.

She said: Congress, this is an emergency. Will someone please call 999? Our NHS is in trouble. I cannot imagine any argument against a safe, high-quality, seven-day NHS service but as with anything, the devil is in the detail. Do we want an NHS properly-funded and staffed, that delivers gold standard care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, or do we want to let this Government destroy our NHS, leaving in their wake an NHS that is under-funded, under-staffed, with care being delivered by an overstretched, overstressed workforce on their knees? I wonder if this Government has any idea of the level of physical and emotional strength it takes each NHS worker to deliver the level of care that any patient requires when they walk, or fall, into one of our hospitals, sick, afraid and in need of compassion. It cannot be done by an exhausted workforce.

Congress, we, in the health unions, stand behind our BMA colleagues. The NHS must be properly funded and any changes to save this delivery must be negotiated and agreed in partnership. In the NHS, we have a long history of working together nationally and locally. Imposing new contracts undermines this. It is insulting and, quite frankly, it is no way to do business. The Government must listen to us, the clinicians that they employ, to look after their parents, their children, their friends and their neighbours. We are the experts. We work there 24 hours of every day, 365 days of every year. What we say is, “Fund us properly. Staff us to treat everyone who needs us.” Let this be a warning to the policymakers. It may be you who needs us at one o’clock on a Sunday morning. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Alan Dobbie** *(Unite the Union)* supported the motion.

He said: I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am also an ophthalmic medical secretary in the NHS, supporting Emergency Motion 5.

The health service has too few staff and too little money to deliver the Government’s promised truly seven-day NHS. It is not the BMA’s comment, but the advice to Jeremy Hunt from his most senior advisers, advice that he tried to hide. Thanks to investigative journalism, we know about a risk register that had so many red indicators, it would do Santa proud, but their warnings are no joke.

The biggest danger, officials said, is workforce overload, the lack of available GPs, hospital consultants and other health professionals, meaning that a full service cannot be delivered. Last Sunday, the CEO of NHS Providers said that a seven-day service is impossible to implement without significant extra staff and funding. Doctors in Unite was formed in 1914. It was called the Medico-Political Union, now known as the Medical Practitioners’ Union. It has over 100 years of experience and organisation and they warn us that hospitals and CCGs are financial meltdown.

The Government’s drive to force through the junior doctors’ contract is the tip of the iceberg and ideology-driven. They tell us that we are being softened up and expect to hear calls from the right for the introduction of charges, top-up insurance and so-called co-payments. The risk management document identifies the following: Brexit (red); outcomes (red); scope creep (red); public perception (amber); publication (red/amber); silos (amber); backloaded delivery (red/amber); plans (red); tracking (red/amber); workforce overload (red); equalities (amber); negative publicity (amber); performance management (red/amber).

Congress, the junior doctors’ fight is our fight. For the love of our NHS, support the junior doctors with actions and not just words. Support our national health service and support Emergency Motion 5. I support. *(Applause)*

**Paul Donaldson** *(Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association)* supported the motion.

He said: As a union representing hospital doctors across the UK, the HCSA has watched with mounting concern the unravelling of relations between the Government and our junior colleagues. Hospital consultants and specialists have continued to provide excellent care as negotiations gave way to industrial action and if further strikes do go ahead, we will again fill in the gaps in care.

Our members have mixed feelings about a five-day strike action. We have always defended the right to strike, but in our role as clinicians, we are obliged to put the patient first in everything that we do. While doctors may not universally like the idea of doctors striking, they do understand the anger that has driven the juniors to do so.

We are a dedicated profession already working seven days a week, dedicated to patients, to our NHS and to the health and the welfare of the population. All doctors would prefer to be discussing how to deliver excellent care rather than mounting pickets so it is a tragedy that junior doctors have become so desperate that they can see no alternative but to take strike action.

We hear a lot from NHS policymakers about the need for collaboration. The imposition of this new contract is the very opposite and concerns over its implementation are very real. Every day, we hear more evidence that the push for universal, seven-day services, while welcome in principle, is being attempted without the necessary funding, a view also expressed on the *The Andrew Marr Show* by Chris Hopson, Chief Executive of NHS Providers.

In effect, doctors are being asked to bear the burden through working more antisocial hours and antisocial shifts, with the inevitable impact on their health and wellbeing and, in particular, on women, who are more likely to work part-time. In the current context of underfunding and resourcing, the notion of a safe, seven-day service is unsustainable. You can only spread a workforce so thin. Stress and low morale are already rife amongst doctors, as the TUC heard from the HCSA last year. Last year, we asked, “Who is caring for the carers?” It is time that this message was heard.

The breakdown in relations between junior doctors and the Government threatens to land a further damaging blow on the wellbeing of staff and, ultimately, the quality and safety of patient care. So, as doctors within the NHS, we urge policymakers to listen to us, to work to diffuse not inflame the current situation, to listen and act on resource concerns and to reverse plans to impose this contract. Collaboration, not crude imposition, is the way forward. Let us get round the table and talk. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** We will now move to the vote on Emergency Motion 5. All those in favour? All those against?

*\* Emergency Motion 5 was CARRIED*

**The President:** We now move to Emergency Motion 6, HSE board appointment. The General Council supports the emergency motion, to be moved by the GMB, seconded by the FBU and supported by Prospect.

**HSE board appointment**

**Neil Derrick** *(GMB)* moved Emergency Motion 6.

He said: Congress, every since this Government scraped their majority at the last election, we have seen repeated attacks on trade unionism and tripartism. It is not just the Trade Union Act, but also the deliberate removal of trade union nomination rights for seats on the boards of vital public bodies, seats on the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, to give but one example. It is an ideological attack on unions designed to undermine and silence our voice.

The latest, however, is the most pernicious yet and concerns the appointment of worker representatives on the board of the Health and Safety Executive, a board designed as a tripartite body, guaranteed in law by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. For almost 40 years, the accepted convention has been that the TUC nominated three dedicated and knowledgeable trade unionists to the board and these nominations would be appointed. Yet, over the past few years, the tripartism within the HSE has been eroded by the Government. First, a large number of industrial advisory committees were replaced with voluntary forums: no tripartite balance. Then critical bodies on chemical safety were disbanded to be replaced by technocratic groups of experts with no worker involvement. In 2013, our recommendation of Matt Wrack from the FBU to take a worker representative seat on the board was rejected, yet who could be better qualified to contribute on health and safety than the general secretary of a union whose members are killed and injured in the course of preventing others from being killed and injured every day of the week? *(Applause)*

Instead, the retired ex-general secretary of the Civil Service Union was appointed by the Government despite having no nomination from the TUC, his own union or any other working group.

So, yes, the warning signs were there, but those 40 years of consensus were well and truly ended when we learnt last week that the former CEO of the Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Susan Johnson, had been appointed as the workers’ voice on the HSE board, replacing our former General Secretary, Paul Kenny. The contrast could not be starker: Paul Kenny, the trade unionist, who has dedicated his entire life to protecting working people, and Susan Johnson (our new rep apparently), not from any trade union, not a health and safety activist or safety rep, not nominated by the TUC or any other trade union body, but a former senior manager and business woman, handpicked by the minister, simply to ensure that the balance on the board tilted towards the bosses. She is supposed to represent the workers.

Congress, this is not really just about Susan Johnson; it is about a simple principle. It is that workers have the absolute right to have a say at the highest level on how their health and safety is to be protected by the Government. *(Applause)* The GMB has long-recognised that the interests of the employer are not those of the worker, but health and safety is the one area where we will work in partnership because we know only too well the consequences when workers are not involved and health and safety is not properly managed. We have seen it time and time again: Sports Direct, ASOS, Tata Steel and Didcot. It is always the worker who pays the price for these corporate failings and, far too often, they pay the ultimate price.

We know, of course, that the actions outlined in this motion will not increase the number of HSE inspectors or give them the resources they so desperately need, but they will begin to right the serious wrong imposed by this Government. If they are not met, if we do not see proper representation on the HSE board and quickly, then we must exert the maximum political pressure on the minister and the Secretary of State to ensure that this never happens again.

Remedial action could be taken quite easily. We have a new minister in Penny Mordaunt who could, if she wanted, appoint two new TUC board members and restore the balance to the board. We have a new HSE Chair in Martin Temple, who we can work with, from whom we could seek support, but this decision was taken out of his hands by the Government. We have Kevin Rowan from the TUC, freshly-appointed to the board, to make sure that our anger and outrage is clearly heard at board level.

So, colleagues, support this motion. Make it clear to this Government that we will not stand for this ideological chicanery and we condemn it. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

**Alan McLean** *(Fire Brigades Union)* seconded the motion.

He said: Talking about health and safety is something that you would not normally relish on the last day of Congress, but this is something that is very important to all of us and the principles that we have adopted over the years, as a Congress, are the bedrock of what we stand for.

If it was not for all of you in this room and the people who have gone before you, there would not be health and safety standards in this country. We were appalled last week, as a union, when we heard about the appointment of Susan Johnson to that executive. The President is right; you do not want to steal anybody’s speech, but the former speakers stole all of mine so I will just tell you a little bit about Susan Johnson. She was thrust upon us in the North-East as a chief executive. To say we have form with Susan Johnson is a bit like saying that the man in the iron mask did a bit of bird! We have a lot of form with Susan Johnson and all of it is bad. She has decimated the service in the North-East.

She came to us as a chief executive. We did not know what a chief executive in the fire service was at the time. Before we had the chance to find out what the chief executive actually did in the fire service, Susan Johnson had got herself some fire kit. She dressed as a chief fire officer and started attending fires. Imagine having somebody like that in health and safety! I do not really care what anybody does at the weekend. You can dress up as you see fit. You can go down to the bar and do what you want. Dress up as a pilot if you want, but do not get on a plane on Monday and point it in the direction of Torremolinos *(Laughter and applause)* The fact is that is what she was doing in the fire service. She had no training whatsoever and she was just turning up at fires. I have to say that it is a bit of a hazardous job sometimes!

This is not a go at Susan Johnson. It is a go at what has actually happened to us and we need to put it right. The employers need another rep on that board and we need a rep. Susan Johnson should resign or she should be removed and we should see to it, Congress. *(Applause)* My comrade is right about the three trade union representatives nominated and he is also right about Matt Wrack, although I think I might have blackballed him because it was too big a job for Matt to take on. However, why would Matt be ignored like that? Why would our General Secretary be ignored and his replacement put in? The fact is they do not want us involved. We have to shove our noses back into that trough, right the wrongs and make sure that we have representatives on those bodies. I second. *(Applause)*

**Sue Ferns** *(Prospect)* supported the motion.

She said: We are pleased to support Emergency Motion 6, in particular on behalf of our members in the HSE, but also to defend the principle and value of tripartism more broadly.

The Robens Report, which led to the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, is based on the philosophy that those who create the risk should manage it. This requires leadership from the top of organisations, but we all know that regulating health and safety effectively relies critically on the eyes and ears of health and safety reps, reps which embody the added value that unions bring to the workplace. These same principles apply to the governance and strategic direction of the HSE. This is the model that has been acknowledged internationally since the foundation of the ILO. Convention 81, underpinning how health and safety is regulated, is one of the few that the UK has signed up to. Put simply, the health and safety of working people is only protected effectively if employers and workers come together in common purpose.

The HSE is one of the few tripartite organisations left in the UK and this is being undermined at a very dangerous time, at a time when cuts are causing deep concern among our members about the capacity of the HSE to continue to regulate and at a time when choices are made about what the HSE will not do. This latest appointment undermines effective tripartite working. Congress, it stands in direct contradiction to Brown Book guidance that the number of management reps could not outnumber the number of employee reps on safety committees and it singularly fails to match up to Nolan’s Seven Principles of Public Life.

Our members in the HSE are deeply concerned about this development. They want, and expect, their union to support them in protesting against it and they fear for a future in which worker voice is diluted. Tripartism is essential for the HSE to operate effectively so let us work together to hold on to it and to continue to demonstrate the positive difference that unions make. I support. *(Applause)*

**The President:** We will move straight to the vote on that. Will all those in favour of Emergency Motion 6 please show? All those against?

*\* Emergency Motion 6 was CARRIED*

**The President:** I now call Emergency Motion 7, Turkey and solidarity with the Kurdish population. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Unite, seconded by NASUWT, supported by the GMB and the NUT.

**Turkey and solidarity with the Kurdish population**

**Thomas Murphy** *(Unite the Union)* moved Emergency Motion 7.

He said: Colleagues, it is absolutely right that various unions have come together to submit this motion to Congress. Anyone with even one eye on the news will have seen the dramatic deterioration of the situation in Turkey and the slide towards a violent and authoritarian regime. While this has been going on, the wider world has kept disgracefully quiet in the hope that if we say nothing then President Erdogan will stick to the deal and keep the refugees from Syria in Turkey to stop them disturbing us here in Europe. The silence and lack of action is an outrage and it has got to stop.

Congress, we have always known that Turkey has had an authoritarian streak and has never been a fully-fledged democracy. It has always been a place where being a journalist, a trade unionist or a human rights activist could mean that you would very likely be locked up. Less often talked about are the sustained acts of oppression against the Kurds, who make up some 25% of the population. Until very recently, the Kurds were denied language rights, were discriminated against in employment and generally repressed on a huge scale. Even the very existence of the Kurds was denied by the Turkish state. Like in many other countries, this repression prompted a reaction and has led to an ongoing conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state.

Over the last 30 years, that conflict has led to over 40,000 people being killed, 3,500 villages being destroyed and some four million people displaced. President Erdogan initially promised to address the question and there was a brief period of real optimism when a ceasefire was called and peace talks between the PPK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, took place from 2012 until 2015.

Then, with events in Syria unfolding and a decline in popularity, Erdogan decided on a different course of action. Once he failed to get the majority he wanted in the June 2015 election, the crackdown went into overdrive. We have witnessed the mass arrest and detention of journalists, trade unionists, human rights activists and anyone who dares to speak up against his government. Above all, we have seen a brutal crackdown on Kurdish activists, who dare to stand up for their rights. At the same time, Erdogan also abandoned the fledgling peace process that had been underway with the PKK. Instead of continuing down a sometimes difficult road of peace of the sort that we witnessed in Northern Ireland and, more recently, in Colombia, Erdogan returned to looking for a military solution and this is once again costing the lives of thousands of people. Erdogan’s repression of the Kurds is not confined to the borders of his own country. It is widely reported that Turkey has been supporting Islamic State fighters in Syria and has used its own forces to attack and bomb the Syrian Kurds who have so courageously been pushing back IS in Northern Syria.

Congress, this motion quite rightly expresses support for the actions that the TUC has taken so far in demanding respect for ILO standards and a reinstatement of sacked workers as well as for a freedom of expression and assembly, but it also outlines further steps that we need to take such as demanding that governments and international organisations finally start acting to pressure Erdogan to change course and stop the oppression. Just as importantly, it calls for the release of the imprisoned Kurdish leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and for the immediate restart of the dialogue and the peace process. Ocalan has been in prison for 18 years now and is without doubt seen as the leader of the Kurdish people. A couple of years ago, over ten million people signed a petition calling for his release as the only credible means to start a real peace process. In my own union, we held our first packed fringe on the Kurdish issue this year and passed a motion calling for his release and other solidarity measures. The GMB has done likewise and other unions are also beginning to get very active on this issue. We even launched a Parliamentary Freedom for Ocalan in April of this year and we urge all of you to get involved and support this important struggle.

The Kurds are one of the few secular and progressive forces left in the whole Middle East region and their record in promoting women and minority rights in such a difficult part of the world is second to none. It is vital that we give our support, vital for them and vital for the future prospects of peace, democracy and tolerance in the region and wider world. Colleagues, it is great that this motion is in front of you and it will be a major step forward if the TUC speaks with one voice and calls for the release of Ocalan too. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Graham Dawson** *(NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union)* seconded the motion.

He said: I am a last-time speaker and 11+ failure! I am extremely pleased, proud and honoured to second this motion with our colleagues in Unite and I echo the words that Thomas has just spoken to you. As a teachers’ union, our primary focus has been with Egitim-Sen, the leading teachers’ trade union in Turkey, and we have been supporting our colleagues in Turkey for at least ten years. A series of repressive Turkish governments has used a variety of trumped-up charges to oppress our colleagues in Egitim-Sen. We have been going to Turkey for a number of years to support them in their court cases and to give them solidarity, succour and comfort as best we can.

We have also talked to our colleagues in the British government and tried to put pressure on the Turkish government as well. One of the things that I was shocked by when I went to South-East Turkey is that, unlike in Scotland, Wales and parts of Ireland, there was no bilingualism and the Kurdish language is in fact outlawed. That came as quite a surprise to me, I must admit.

Things have been significantly worse recently. There have been attacks on the Kurdish regions in South-East Turkey where cultural and architectural landmarks have been systematically targeted in what one can only describe as a cultural genocide, which is fairly symptomatic of what Isis has been doing over the Syrian border and in Iraq.

As teacher trade unionists, one of the things that we found most shocking was the fact that the government deliberately targets schools, universities and educational institutions to turn into police stations and military barracks, destroying the infrastructure of the schools and sending a very clear message to our colleagues in Egitim-Sen that they were not to be tolerated and were to be crushed. To actually take away the education of children and systematically destroy a place of learning is an act of severe vandalism.

I am glad that the TUC and other unions are joining us in our struggle to support our colleagues in Turkey. For a while, it has been one of the areas of international solidarity that we want to particularly highlight. There are a number of ways in which it can be done. First of all, politically, the NASUWT had the good fortune, with our German colleagues, to visit refugee camps in South-East Turkey and to see the dreadful impact of the work of Isis and so on. This has been made significantly worse, of course, by the attacks of the Erdogan government in that particular region for other political reasons.

Also, it was to see and support the Azizi women in their difficulties, which you will have heard about too, and to send supplies and money to South-East Turkey. We are always supporting court cases and also lobbying both our Government and the Turkish government. Finally, regarding publicity, we awarded our International Solidarity Award to Egitim-Sen this year and we have highlighted what has been happening in Turkey in international solidarity. I am very proud to second this motion. Thank you, colleagues. *(Applause)*

**Kevin Buchanan** *(GMB)* supported the motion.

He said: Congress, this motion calls on the TUC to step up solidarity activities with all progressive forces in Turkey, but especially with our beleaguered brothers and sisters in the trade union Movement, who are bearing the brunt of the clampdown following the abortive coup attempt in July. President Erdogan has taken advantage of the situation to intensify his undeclared war on the Kurdish population, particularly in the South-East of Turkey where villages and towns have been raised to the ground at a cost of thousands of men, women and children who have been killed or maimed.

Perhaps the most important symbol of Turkish state oppression is the continued solitary confinement of Kurdish leader, Abdullah Ocalan, on Imrali prison island, where he has been prisoner for 17 years. Despite his incarceration, Mr. Ocalan has consistently advocated a peaceful resolution to the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state. Consequently, his release is an essential pre-requisite to a negotiated, just settlement for a struggle that has its roots in the forced partition of Kurdistan by Britain and France 100 years ago.

Disgracefully, the European Union has chosen to turn a blind eye to the excesses being committed by Mr. Erdogan’s security apparatus because of the Faustian pact that was made with Turkey to prevent Syrian war refugees from reaching EU borders. Western governments, including Britain, bear a heavy responsibility for what is happening in Syria. By allowing Turkey to send its forces over the frontier to attack the Kurdish community there, it is risking a significant escalation to what is already an appalling situation.

In April of this year, the GMB and Unite launched the trade union “Freedom for Ocalan” campaign in recognition of how important his participation is for peace and security, not just in Turkey, but in the wider Middle East region. We therefore fully support the motion that not only demands an end to the repression and harassment of public officials, teachers, academics, journalists and opposition politicians, but also echoes our call for him to be freed. In conclusion, Congress, please join our campaign and support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Christine Blower** *(National Union of Teachers)* supported the motion.

She said: I am very glad we got to this because it would have been a terribly missed opportunity, to say the least, for Congress not to have taken a position of absolute condemnation of the escalation of assaults on human, trade union and civil rights in Turkey and Kurdistan. You have already heard from other speakers about everything that has been going on so let me just confine myself to saying this.

The National Union of Teachers has been engaging in solidarity action and activities with friends and comrades in Turkey and Kurdistan since 1996, having sent delegations to the region. We have worked alongside Kurdish members of the National Union of Teachers teaching in this country and the Kurdish community in the UK in their struggle for peace in Kurdistan. The long and unjust incarceration of Abdullah Ocalan, who is clearly the voice, the face and the leader of the Kurds, must be brought to an end. I encourage all unions here to sign up to the Freedom for Ocalan campaign and also to work for it.

October 5th is World Teachers Day. This year, the National Union of Teachers will use that day to promote the work of ETUCE (the European Region of Education International) of which I am very proud to be President, in support of thousands of teachers, very largely Kurdish, who have been suspended, harassed and, in many cases, arrested in Turkey. We will be standing, in particular, in solidarity with our comrade and friend from Egitim-Sen, who has been targeted because she is the leader of the education teachers’ union.

I invite you to join us at NUT headquarters to hear yet again, and in more detail, of the appalling situation in Turkey and Kurdistan, to call for the freedom of Ocalan, to press for a real and meaningful peace process, and to find out what more you can do to get involved. Please support this motion but, much more importantly, do something about it when you get back home. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** What a motion to end on! We will take the vote on Emergency Motion 7. All those in favour, please show? All those against?

\* *Emergency Motion 7 was CARRIED*

**Adopt General Council’s Report**

**The President:** Congress, I now draw your attention to Appendix 3 from page 96 of the General Council Report, which is the TUC accounts. The auditor is present on the platform. Does Congress accept the accounts as set out? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

I now call Appendices 1, 2, 4 and 5. Delegates, that completes the formal business of Congress. We did it! *(Applause)* Can I now ask Congress to adopt the General Council Report? *(Agreed)*

**General Council Retirements**

**The President:** There are now some retirements and presentations. I wish to make a vote of thanks to those who have contributed to the very smooth running of this Congress. They will be brief, but they are nevertheless sincere and heartfelt. I would like to start by thanking Taj for his role as Vice-President. He has been invaluable. *(Applause)* Thank you. You are a great friend too.

I would also like to move a vote of thanks to all the staff at the Brighton Centre for helping everything run smoothly as well. *(Applause)* I would like to thank our great stewards for all their assistance: a big hand for them as well. *(Applause)*. I would like to thank the verbatim reporters, the tellers, the scrutineers, the stage crew, QED, and the musicians who have entertained us so well. Thank you to you all. *(Applause)*

Congress, it is now time to say farewell to some special colleagues leaving the General Council. First, there is Joanna Brown, from the SCP, who has served on the General Council for seven years. Joanna had to go back to London, but we will ensure that she gets her Gold Badge of Congress. Thank you, Joanna. *(Applause)*

Also retiring from the General Council is Christine Blower. Christine has served on the TUC General Council since 2008 and up until her election as NUT Deputy General Secretary, Christine was a classroom teacher for 33 years. She is a committed internationalist and has led campaigns across the world for education opportunities for all children. Today, it gives me great pleasure to present Christine with her TUC Gold Badge. *(Applause and presentation of Gold Badge))*

Also leaving the General Council this year are Dave Harvey from the NUT, Janice Godrich from PCS, Fern McCaffrey from the GMB and Tim Hoyle from the NGSU. Earlier in the year, Karen Jennings from Unison, Paul Kenny from the GMB and Paul McCarthy from the GMB also left the General Council. I am sure Congress will wish to show its appreciation for the commitment and contribution that all these colleagues have made. *(Applause)*

There is a special mention too for Kate Carberry, TUC Assistant General Secretary. She retired from the TUC after 38 fantastic years of service. Kate cannot be with us today, but again, we will make sure that she receives her Gold Badge and your heartfelt thanks as well. Thank you, Kate. *(Applause)*

Finally, Congress, can I announce that the next President of the TUC who takes office from the close of Congress will be Mary Bousted. *(Applause)* Mary, I wish you well and I hope you enjoy your Presidential year as much as I have loved mine. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The General Secretary:** Can I call on Claire Sullivan to move the vote of thanks to the President.

**Vote of thanks to the President**

**Claire Sullivan *(****Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)*: Thank you, Frances. Liz, it truly is a pleasure to give the vote of thanks to you for chairing Congress this week. Now, I have been reliably informed that there is no red light for this so, sisters and brothers who are left in the hall, get settled in because we are not getting away any time soon!

Much has already been said, Liz, by both Len and Claire in their votes of thanks on Sunday and yet there is still so much left to say. I jest, of course, that this is about this week only. I do remember Dave telling me many years ago that, in the years following his first election as Unison General Secretary, he never quite got the hang of the fact that when there is a “do”, it is important for the boss to turn up, but you do not always want him to stay all night. Liz, you not only stayed all night, but talked to everyone, usually danced with everyone, and often cleaned up before leaving.

It is, of course, that absolutely genuine interest in people and effortless ability to relate to them that has made you such a brilliant Chair of Congress and President this week. It is not all soft stuff, of course. There is plenty of steel in there too. In our Movement, like in any other family, we do argue from time to time and I have, for example, seen Liz and a colleague having what I like fondly to refer to as a “Scouse-off” across the table. As soft Southerner, I was scared. I think chairing Congress probably calls for the perfect mix of the soft stuff and the steel. It definitely falls firmly into the category, “You can’t please many of the people much of the time.”

I know you have been inundated this week by requests to speak and it is tough to disappoint delegates who are waiting. It is tough too, I have observed – in fact sometimes close to impossible – to stop those who are in fact speaking long after the red light has come on, but you have done it all without fuss, calmly, unflappably and with your characteristic huge personal warmth and great good humour.

So, 84 motions; 18 composites; seven emergency motions; four speakers (plus yourself, of course); one partner; two daughters; one large Liverpudlian family; all in three-and-a-half days -- Liz, good job. We are grateful. On behalf of Congress, thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you to my lovely friend, Claire. Thank you to you all, Congress, for being patient, tolerant, but also for showing absolute dignity and respect to each other because that is what we are all about. Thank you.

**The General Secretary:** I am now going to call on Eric Roberts, who wants to give a gift on behalf of Liz’s union, Unison.

**Eric Roberts** *(Unison)*: Thank you, Frances. My name is Eric Roberts. It is an honour to be up here on behalf of the delegation which has been here this week although, unfortunately, some of them have had to go because of flights and trains. However, we had a whip-round, Liz, and we have just got you a little token to reflect our pride in what you have done over this year, for who you are and the way in which you have chaired Congress although, as Claire said, you have let speakers go on and on for far too long, including me, I have to say. I spoke and went back to sit down next to Dave. He nudged me and said, “You were 12 minutes.” That cannot be right! So, Liz, this is given to you with all of our love and pride and when we are back at the ranch, we will have another celebration. *(Presentation of gift)*

**The President:** Thank you very much. *(Applause)* There is a golden rule: you never cut off your President! Once again, thank you all for everything that you have done this week and what you continue to do for our Movement. I now declare the 148th Congress closed. Have a very safe journey. *(Applause)*

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