

143rd ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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Held at:

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

on:

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

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Congress President:

MICHAEL LEAHY

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PROCEEDINGS – DAY THREE

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THIRD DAY: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH

(Congress re-assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

The President: I call Congress to order. Thank you to Taneisha Jackson and Stephanie Forbes, who have been playing for us this morning. Please show your appreciation in the normal way. *(Applause)*

Congress, could I remind you to complete your delegates' questionnaire and return them to the TUC information point situated at the bottom of the entrance stairs. I now call upon Peter Hall, Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to give the GPC Report.

General Purposes Committee Report

Peter Hall *(Chair, General Purposes Committee):* Good morning, Congress. I can report that the General Purposes Committee has approved a further emergency motion. Emergency Motion 5 on Save Bombardier Jobs will be moved by the RMT. The President will indicate when the emergency motion, approved so far, will be taken and will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decisions if necessary before the end of Congress. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Peter. Congress, as has been reported, we now have a further emergency motion, Emergency Motion 5, Save Bombardier jobs. Along with Emergency Motion 2, Pre-abortion counselling, this means that we now have two

outstanding emergency motions and I will take them this morning after the scheduled business so will the unions involved please be ready.

Congress, we start this morning by welcoming this year's Labour Party sororal delegate, Norma Stephenson. Norma has been a health worker and active member of UNISON for 30 years. A former UNISON president, she has recently been elected as a Labour councillor and Police Authority member in Stockton-on-Tees.

Norma has served on the National Executive of the Labour Party for eight years, of which she is currently Chair, and is a passionate advocate of equality. Norma, you are very welcome here today and we look forward to hearing your contribution. I invite you to address Congress. (*Applause*)

Address by Sororal Delegate from the Labour Party

Norma Stephenson: Good morning, Congress. Thank you for giving me some of your valuable time to address you this morning.

Congress, I have been a trade unionist all my working life and a member of the Labour Party for almost as long. When my union, UNISON, asked me to be one of the trade union representatives on Labour's NEC, I could not have been prouder. It has not been easy. There have been many disputes and many disagreements but, like the rest of my trade union colleagues, most of who are in this room, I have never forgotten, first and foremost, that we are trade unionists on the Labour Party NEC and we know what that responsibility entails.

Now, here I am – a trade unionist and Chair of the Labour Party. That is something that could never have been achieved without that link. When the question is asked, “What does the modern Labour trade union link look like?”, it looks like me. That is important because to the public all politics looks like blokes and some things never change. (*Applause*)

Many women in this country have similar stories and similar lives. They think like me and they talk like me, but no one sees us. No one sees them. Without the trade unions, there would be no one like me ending up *here*. That is one reason why the link between the trade unions and Labour is so important. It is not ideal and it could be better. It could be beefed up. I have to say that a better link between the trade unions and their representatives on Labour’s NEC would be a help.

Congress, re-founding Labour – nobody asked for it and nobody wanted it, but we have got it – is a minefield. The one thing I want out of it is a stronger and equal bond between the trade unions and the Labour Party. Why? Because we are fighting the same battles. There are cuts everywhere which are hitting Labour communities, hitting local councils and hitting council staff. In all these places, Labour’s battle is the trade union battle and there are some great examples of joint working.

There is John Healey and the too-low health campaign. We had high streets up and down the country last weekend with trade unionists and Labour campaigners working together, fighting the threats to the NHS. We all know, as Brendan said last week, that this government is not just taking apart our health service. It is decimating public

services across the board, sacking people left, right and centre but they are not even content with that. They are still attacking those left in the workplace through freezing our wages yet again and they are now coming after our pensions. This is despite being told by John Hutton that *this* body and the Labour government redressed the pensions issue just a couple of years ago.

Congress, who is suffering the most? You know, I know and the coalition knows. Let us not let those Libs off the hook. It is the women and young people in this country. Now, more than ever, we need unity between the political and industrial wings of our party. We need it, our children need it and our public services need it.

I am not a professional politician. I am a trade unionist, I am a health service worker and I am a Labour councillor. I am proud to be all of these things, and I am proud to bring greetings to you from the Labour Party. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Norma, thank you for that great speech. I would now like to present you with the TUC Gold Badge. Well done. (*Applause*)

(TUC Gold Badge presented to Norma Stephenson amidst applause)

Pensions

The President: Delegates, we continue today with Chapter 4 of the General Council Report, Economic and industrial affairs, Pensions, from page 61. I call paragraphs 4.6 and 4.14 and Composite Motion 5, Pensions. The General Council supports the

composite motion and I will call on the General Secretary during the debate to explain the position.

Dave Prentis (*UNISON*) moved Composition Motion 5.

He said: President, Congress, UNISON represents over one million public service workers and the campaigns we are fighting are not just about pensions, they are not just about jobs and they are not just about pay. They are about the kind of society that we leave for our children. They are about protecting and passing on the rights that our grandparents fought for – the welfare state and universal public services. They are about breaking the political consensus that says that markets know best.

We stand for ordinary people who serve the public by caring and educating, making our communities safer, cleaner and healthier. They are ordinary people who had nothing whatsoever to do with this financial crisis and yet they are being made to pay the price. The coalition is taking away their pay, privatising their jobs, there are daily rounds of redundancies and yet, on top of this, they now want to take away their pensions. They are the pensions that our members worked and saved for every week of their working lives, not for a life of luxury but for some basic security in retirement. They have put away a little each week for dignity so that they do not have to rely on means-tested benefits in old age. There are no gold-plated pensions, but just enough to get by. An average pension for a woman in local government is £59 a week and is that to be taken away from her through some means-tested benefits?

Congress, our members are no militants. Striking is the last thing that they want to do. No, they are not asking for this conflict. We have spent eight long months

looking for an agreement, always willing to talk, to find a way through. It is less than four years since we agreed to close our health service pension scheme to new members. New schemes have been brought in recognising that people are living longer. We did that. There has been a new local government scheme capable of investing £3 billion a year in our economy because it is cash-rich. We did that.

However, now the coalition wants its pound of flesh. They are intent on re-opening the protected schemes, demanding that hundreds of thousands of health workers, mainly women, work six or even 11 years longer before they get a pension. They are intent on closing the new schemes just coming in, the ink barely dry. They are bringing in new new schemes with far worse benefits. They are intent on stopping our members who are privatised taking their pensions with them, cut off completely from their pension scheme, locked out. To add insult to injury, they are intent on imposing a tax on public service workers who save for their pensions. That is a staggering 50% increase in their contributions but, Congress, not a single penny goes into the pension schemes. Every single penny is to be siphoned off by the Treasury to pay for the deficit created by the failure of the banking system. It is an unprecedented attack on ordinary working people. They are audacious and devious means to pay for the greed of others.

Congress, we have had enough. We have been patient, we have co-operated but there comes a time when we have to say, "Enough is enough." If we do not say it now, they will be back for more and more and more again. Today, Congress, I want to make it clear to this coalition that we will negotiate with them any time, any place,

anywhere, but if they impose change by diktat, we will take industrial action.

(Applause)

Today, Brendan Barber has convened a meeting of all public service unions to look at united, coordinated industrial action when the talks fail. In moving to industrial action, I commit UNISON to work as one with our sister unions, the GMB and Unite. Today, as General Secretary of UNISON, I give formal notice to 9,000 employers that we are now balloting for industrial action. *(Cheers and applause)*

It is a ballot unprecedented in scale. It will cover over one million workers in health, local government, schools, FE and higher education, police staff, the voluntary sector, the environment and the private sector. It is a decision that we do not take lightly and the stakes are higher than ever before.

Congress, the one thing I am certain about is that now is the time to make our stand. It will be hard, we will be vilified, we will be attacked, we will be set against each other, public against private, divide and rule – the oldest trick in the book – but if we are serious, we must stay strong, united, all of us shoulder to shoulder. There should be no gesture politics or hollow rhetoric.

Our members look to us to take a lead to work together to run the public and political campaigns needed to win their case. It is crucial and we will accept none of the emotional blackmail from politicians of any colour. If this coalition is worried about the people who use the services, they should not be closing them down. If they are worried about the disruption, they should not be privatising them. If they are so

worried about the old, the sick and the young, they should stop shutting down the care homes and start getting our young people into work and giving them a future.

Congress, “the fight of our lives” may be an overused cliché, but make no mistake – this is it. We will take the fight to them. There is no time to despair and no time for looking back. We must move forward, confident in our cause, with a clear message from this Congress that we are determined and united in fighting for what is right, fighting for our members and hands off our pensions. *(Cheers and applause)*

The President: Thank you, Dave, for that rousing speech. I now call on the seconder, PCS.

Mark Serwotka (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Composite Motion 5.

He said: We are delighted to second the composite and particularly delighted to follow that fantastic speech from Dave Prentis.

Congress, the eyes of the media and the country are upon us today so we need to send a very clear and unequivocal message. The first thing we should say is that there is no case whatsoever to make any changes to public sector pension schemes. The costs are falling and the changes have already been made. All of the government’s propaganda is lies and distortion. We should say, “No case for change.” We should say, “Why should people be forced to work longer because they are living longer?” Already, the age of 68 has been announced and the government have said that they are bringing

forward the increase to age 67, with some of the private organisations saying that the pension age should be 70.

In the fifth richest economy in the world, if we are living longer why can't we have more time to enjoy ourselves in retirement? Why is it right that my grandfather, who could not afford to retire, worked until he was 76 and died in less than one year when he finally gave up work? That is not civilisation and enjoying the fruits of technology; that is working until you drop.

Why should we pay more? In the civil service, for example, we have contracts of employment which show that our pay has been reduced by the amount that we are not paying in pensions to have an even remuneration package. Now they want us to pay more at the same time as giving our members a pay freeze. That is completely unacceptable. Why should we accept that we get less for our pensions when already the average civil service pension is only £4,200?

Congress, this is daylight robbery dressed up with rhetoric and lies that the country cannot afford our pensions, but the government are determined to carry on. In six months of talks, which have been an absolute farce, we have not made one jot of progress on any of the central questions of work longer, pay more and get less. Yet, while we have been talking, they have changed pensions from RPI to CPI, devaluing them by 20%, they have announced the pension contributions increase and they have announced the increase in the pension age.

In PCS, we say that this composite is right. We say that, yes, we are happy to talk, but whilst we are talking we are now preparing for mass strike action in order to show them that we are serious.

Let me finish on this, Congress. The 30th June gave us an indication of what it could be like when we strike together. Half-a-million public sector workers such as teachers, lecturers, frontline civil service workers went on strike, there were over 100 demonstrations and rallies throughout the length and breadth of the country. What it did was to transform the mood overnight. The government, exposed in the media as liars and cheats, went to ground. Confidence was raised overnight when they saw that people were prepared to fight back. On our picket lines, we had pensioners, students, the unemployed and public and private sector workers.

Let us say this to our private sector colleagues. It is a national disgrace that your pensions are being butchered by fat cats in the private sector, but the answer is not to equalise the misery; it is to fight for fair pensions for all. *(Applause)*

I say this to you, Congress. There is not a single private sector worker in Britain who is exploited by a public sector worker. They are exploited by shareholders and fat cats who would rob their pensions. *(Applause)*

Let us support the composite unanimously. Let us build on what Dave has said. Let us show them that if half-a-million people can change the debate, imagine what it would be like if there are millions of us on strike in November and into the New Year. Marching together we can win. We will say that we are standing up for public sector

workers, service users and communities everywhere. United we stand. Now is the time to strike together with millions to make the point and tell the government “No.”

(Cheers and applause)

Christine Blower (*National Union of Teachers*) supported Composite Motion 5.

She said: I am very proud to be the General Secretary of a union which took strike action on June 30th and I am bound to say, on the question of relevance, that with a strike with the turnout that we had, with a “yes” vote of 92%, our members know that we are relevant.

Congress, our campaign is for fair pensions for all – public, private and the state pension. In this campaign, in this room, in this trade union movement, we know that we are all in it together. We are ready to stand in defence of jobs and services across the public sector, but the campaign for pensions is the one which unites us all.

One of the particularly successful aspects of our June 30th action was indeed to expose the lie at the centre of the government’s case. The government has taken the decision not to evaluate our scheme and yet we are expected to negotiate on the basis of no proper information.

We do know that the cost of public sector pensions is set to fall and we know that our pensions are affordable, fair and reasonable. Speaking to teachers, I know that my younger members are appalled and genuinely concerned at how much more they might have to pay and with the prospect of having to work until 68, or might it now be 70?

Teachers now have a retirement age of 65 and yet the 2005-2006 settlement left us with a scheme which is affordable, sustainable and fair. This government's proposals are about a raid on our pensions, as Mark has already said, to fill a hole in the public finances, which was created by bankers' greed and deregulation and not, as we all know, by anyone in this hall.

Of course, we have to use all the things that are at our disposal, so on October 26th, teachers' unions, affiliates and non-affiliates are aiming for a massive lobby of Parliament and a petition. This will not be strike action because it will be in half-term, but I am bound to say that if past behaviour is any indication of future likelihood of behaviour, that lobby is likely to be the curtain-raiser for massive industrial action by teachers in November. You have already heard it from Mark and from Dave. Enough is enough! We can win if we are united. These are our pensions and they are fair. We must stand together, we must defend them and we must do this for the whole of the public sector. *(Applause)*

Mary Bousted (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

She said: Congress, no one can say that ATL is moved quickly to anger. It took 127 years for us to strike. *(Applause)* We got there on 30th June and we were proud to join the NUT, UCU and PCS to defend our pensions. What did that strike achieve? It achieved the complete demolition of the government's case on affordability and then equity, that is what.

But let us be clear, Congress. In the coming months, we have to ensure that public service users are reminded again and again that their bin emptiers, their doctor, their benefits clerk and, yes, their teachers and lecturers are being told to pay, on top of everyone else, for the £850 billion bailout of the banks. All those public sector workers who engaged so assiduously in sub-prime mortgage lending and leverage buy-outs, you really should not have done it, you know!

There is another message that we must repeat and it is this. Of the UK workforce, 43% have no pension provision. Those workers are going to be left in pension poverty. They will rely upon means-tested benefits. This prospect alone should make the coalition stop and think, but if the government ignore our warnings about opt-out from all the public sector schemes, that percentage will escalate and so will pensioner poverty and the benefits bill for many decades to come. ATL stands for fair pensions for all and this requires retention of reasonable schemes in the public sector and, yes, reform of the private sector.

ATL wants to negotiate a pensions deal, but we cannot do it without some realism and flexibility from across the table. We cannot do it if the Treasury refuses to give us the basic data we need for the negotiations. We cannot do it if the Treasury continues to insist that teachers all live until 90, get real wage increases of 4% year on year throughout their working lives and inflation will never exceed 2%. They are also claiming that all summers will be hot and sunny and that England will win the World Cup in 2014. *(Laughter)*

We want no war, but teachers and lecturers, ATL members, are not in the mood for surrender. ATL supports a joint education union lobby at Westminster on 26th October because our members believe in the power of reason. However, I warn the government that if reason does not work, teachers and lecturers will use their power in another way. (*Applause*)

Joel Kosminsky (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) supported Composite Motion 5.

He said: Congress, why should we suffer CPI when it does not even measure domestic inflation? It is a basket of goods and services common to member states of the European Union. CPI was invented in the 1990s by the European Union to measure convergence criteria towards joining the euro so it never applied to us in the first place. It covers things that we do not use and excludes the things that we do see every day.

Let us look at the real world. Rail fares go up on a greater-than-RPI basis and so do London's bus and tube fares. Food price inflation is almost outstripping RPI and CPI together. Pension schemes also have assets which grow on an RPI-related basis so what is the justification for CPI?

Pensioner price inflation is 10% higher than working persons' inflation. They or we – I became a pensioner last weekend – are at home more often, using more electricity, gas and heat. Yes, let us charge us, the payers, and give you, the receivers, less. That is real democracy in action!

Most FTSE 100 and 250 companies – ignore the share prices – are still in very healthy profit. Only the Stock Exchange has got the runs, not the balance sheets. The employers can afford the schemes.

Accounting standards to protect the pension funds against future deficit match and turn healthy schemes into deficit. The fact that they are in deficit is not true in reality. The trustees are obliged to protect the funds on that basis for the future so they pay us less.

Transport for London, one of my former employers, increases pensions by RPI because the rules say so. The Railway Pension Scheme is imposing CPI and British Airways does what the relevant government scheme orders. Now, isn't that significant? Only the state scheme looks after its pensioners. However, indexation is done by government order. The one question that no one will answer is whether this order is mandatory, advisory, minima or maxima. As no one will answer it, there is a court case pending. There is one going on right now and British Airways pensioners are threatening to take British Airways to court over their imposition of this order.

Do you want to know what this debate is really about? It is about telling an 87-year old widow that her husband's promises of RPI continuing into her retirement, after she has lost her loved one, were absolute lies. It is not the private sector alone, it is not the public sector alone, it is everyone. It is them telling us that we are worth nothing so get it right, get it together, vote and do whatever it takes. It is our future and the future of our children who come after us. Support the composite. (*Applause*)

Jonathan Baume (*FDA*) supported Composite Motion 5.

He said: One week ago, the FDA provisionally agreed to ballot members on industrial action if ministers do not amend their proposals to increase pension contributions from next April. If necessary, we will be working with all the other public sector unions. We did not take this decision lightly. The FDA has a well-deserved reputation for being willing to engage and negotiate on the most difficult issues. Our only previous national ballot was in 2005, again about pensions.

Our members are angry about the contribution increase – in effect a levy on public servants – but we did not completely rule it out. Instead, we raised with government our concerns about pay levels and overall pay arrangements for our members. For example, will the government guarantee that the pay freeze will be lifted after two years? Will they conduct and implement comparability studies for our members, reintroduce meaningful progression through pay ranges and make important technical changes to the way in which civil service pay remits are calculated? In other words, will ministers recognise that pensions are part of the overall reward package?

If ministers are willing to make clear commitments on these issues then at least our members would face a meaningful choice about whether a pension contribution increase was acceptable. However, ministers just want to take and give nothing in return and that is not negotiation.

As to the Hutton report, yes, there are real issues about longevity. It is good news that people are living longer. We all acknowledged this in 2007 when we agreed a new pension age of 65. The civil service unions also agreed a career average scheme for

new entrants, an important change in scheme design, but this emerged from genuine negotiations and that is what has been so lacking in recent months.

I do not know whether we can reach an acceptable outcome by negotiation, but the government is not even trying. Yes, we have made some progress since the spring but so limited as to leave a union like the FDA feeling that we have no option other than to ballot. There is still time for the government to engage in compromise, but it is running out.

If we do find ourselves balloting this autumn, we should not underestimate the challenges. Our members are dedicated public servants responsible for running departments and maintaining key services. Many will find it hard to contemplate industrial action and commitment to public service runs deep. We will have to work hard to win the argument that industrial action will make a difference and to convince the wider public, but ministers must understand the strength of concern and anger about their approach to pension reform. If the public sector unions stand together, committed to negotiating if we have a willing partner but ready to take a stand if ministers simply impose unacceptable and unnecessary change, then we can make a difference. *(Applause)*

Gail Cartmail (*Unite the Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

She said: Unite's contribution to this composite was to add the private sector dimension. Over decades, private sector employers have downgraded and closed pension schemes across every industry. That is why we fought for pension reform. Unions led the campaign which achieved the Pensions Protection Fund and the

Financial Assistance Scheme, a third of pension boards nominated by scheme members and the restoration of the link to earnings.

Yet, despite all our efforts, 14 million private sector workers still have no work pension at all and not one of those 14 million workers will benefit from this attack against public sector workers. While 362 top bosses from the FTSE 100 companies have an average pension pot of £3.9 million in a direct benefit scheme, giving an annual pension of £224,000, our members and other unions at Unilever are balloting for industrial action against the company's plans to close the pension scheme in January 2012. That is just one example.

While on the subject of ballots, yes, Unite is proud to announce today that we are giving notice of our intention to ballot for industrial action. (*Applause*) We are determined to defend public sector pensions from this despicable race to the bottom and let me explain why.

When the coalition government came to power, we knew that we faced the fight of our lives. We know that they would seek to weaken and divide us to create the conditions of division – men against women, young against old, employed against the unemployed, black against white, private sector against public sector and yet we rose to the challenge, mobilising mass resistance for the alternative on March 26th.

Unite is a responsible union. We have attended every single meeting with government since February and yet we have seen RPI to CPI outside of the talks, pension attacks outside of the talks, the cost stealing still to be decided, accrual rates

still to be decided, impenetrable documentation and an unwillingness to disclose information that we and the employers want to see in the scheme-specific talks.

It would be irresponsible to ignore the writing on the wall so while we will never walk away from talks neither will we sit on our hands. Unite is committed to unity. Unite is committed to fighting back for all our members, public and private, against this race to the bottom. *(Applause)*

Patrick Roach (*NASUWT*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

He said: Congress, the campaign to defend pensions and to secure decent pensions for all will require us to use all means at our disposal to achieve victory for all working people. No one can be in any doubt that ordinary working people and families are under a sustained assault as a result of the ideologically-driven programme of the coalition government and their failed economic policy.

Congress, this Tory-led coalition government is also abusing its power. We know that the coalition has no electoral mandate, but they also have a record of abusing their legal authority. They have shown a cavalier attitude to the law and they should be put in the dock. In just 15 months, the Tory-led coalition government has been no stranger to legal challenge. When they cut the school building programme, they were taken to the court and lost. When they diverted funding from local authorities to bankroll the privatisation of schools, they were taken to court and they conceded defeat. Next month, on pensions, they will be before the courts again and we will win.

Congress, the change in pension indexation from RPI to CPI has wiped billions off the value of pensions. This stealth tax affects millions of ordinary workers – not just public sector workers but workers in the private sector too. The switch to CPI has cut the value of the Pension Protection Fund, it has cut the value of the state second pension and cut the basic state pension as well.

Delegates, we should support the joint legal action being taken by colleagues in the FBU, FDA, GMB, NASUWT, PCS, POA, Prospect, UNISON and Unite, who are challenging this abuse of power. Getting the High Court's permission for a judicial review was the first major hurdle to be crossed. We have done this successfully. The case will be heard on 25th October and if that judicial review is successful, it could see millions of workers having the value of their pensions restored.

This is but one of many battles that the trade union movement will have to fight over the coming months. The attack on pensions is only one element of the assault on ordinary working people, the assault on the public sector and the assault on the welfare state.

Congress, be in no doubt, we are in the midst of a perfect storm. That is one of the very reasons why my union, the NASUWT, is preparing to ballot its members for industrial action. It is a perfect storm of an assault on pay, on jobs, on rights at work as well as on pensions. Our campaign must fight for jobs and justice across the board to protect our members and to protect our communities from these attacks. This is the fight we must win. Support Composite 5. *(Applause)*

Chris Murphy (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

He said: What this government is attempting to do, with the help of the right wing press and the lies upon lies regarding gold-plated pensions, is thoroughly outrageous. As has been touched on by a number of speakers, the average, if you are lucky, is £5,000 or maybe £7,000 a year.

I need to make a couple of points which are really important. For my union, it is a question of admitted body status. Over the years, I know of quarry maintenance workers who have been moved around like slaves under TUPE from a private company to the council and back to the private company, and without admitted body status their rights would disappear.

Last year, Connaught, a big maintenance company, went bust. Our members were just thrown on the scrapheap like a lot of other union members doing public service work. If it was not for admitted body status, they would have got nothing, but their pensions were protected. As you know, under TUPE, it does not apply to pensions.

I need to make these final points, and I am not trying to lecture you. I have attended a number of TUCs and I have heard politicians from the Labour Party, year in and year out, telling us that changes cannot be made regarding equal pay, women's rights and so on and so forth. Many people have said that if it was not for the trade unions, they would never have come into force at all and that includes the minimum wage.

Let me just read to you a quote that I read this morning in a newspapers: “Every Labour leader in living memory has done this, but it has never worked.” It was referring to Ed Miliband’s speech. When I was listening to Ed Miliband’s speech, I thought he had a death wish. If you want public service workers to go out and work or even just come out of the house to vote for you, it is no good standing up and attacking their pensions. (*Applause*)

When moving the composite, it was said at the beginning, and quite rightly, that the new provisions to the local authority pension scheme had come into force in April 2008, but it was not an increase. We just about held our own and I believe we lost. However, those savings are coming through. There is money and investment being used to punish communities.

I have not got a degree in economics. I never passed the 11 Plus. However, the facts of life are that if you do not put money into society, people cannot spend it. That is how capitalism works. If the government keeps going, they will not have a society that is worth living in and people will not be able to buy goods. The employers and the large companies will then start screaming. We are going skint so I ask you to support Composite 5. (*Applause*)

Matt Wrack (*Fire Brigades’ Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

He said: I am a bit sick of hearing politicians from any party lecturing us about pensions. We have a political class in Britain which is either independently wealthy or live very comfortable lives far removed from the vast majority of people delivering our public services today. They are people who do not ever have to worry about

whether they can pay the rent, the mortgage or their bills or how they will survive retirement. I say to all of them, from whatever party, “Do not lecture us about what we should or should not do in relation to defending our pensions.” (*Applause*)

Regarding the truth about industrial action, no working person anywhere takes industrial action lightly. It is a very serious step that none of us want to take and none of us want to organise, but unfortunately we are being left with little alternative.

We were told yesterday that there were many good points in the Hutton Report. That is complete nonsense. The Hutton Report is deeply flawed and I believe that it is a hatchet job on public sector pensions, not least on the question of cost. The propaganda which has been poured over us for the past four or five years that public sector pensions are unaffordable and unsustainable is complete nonsense. Hutton himself demonstrates in terms of the recent report that, as a share of GDP, the cost of public sector pensions is not rising and may indeed be falling. The whole basis of this debate is built upon a lie and we need to expose that lie as part of our campaign.

A key aspect of the pension debate is around retirement age and because we are living longer we should work longer. I have to say that I think that working people should not have to apologise because we are not dying soon enough to suit the banking industry. (*Applause*)

The point we made in our amendment, which is now included in the composite, is regarding occupational schemes. We need to take account of the occupation. I speak from the point of view of a particular occupation. In relation to the uniformed

services and us, Hutton says that the retirement age will be different as it will be 60. He has no evidence to support that. Fire fighting and other similar occupations are very physically demanding, involving the use of heavy equipment, carrying heavy equipment, working in heat and so on. I would like to see some of our politicians do the job that our members do at the age of 60 and beyond. *(Applause)* It would be ludicrous and we reject completely the plan of George Osborne and the Cabinet for zimmer frame fire fighters. It is nonsensical and we will not accept it.

We do not want to take strike action but, along with everyone else in this hall, we will not allow our pensions to be stolen from us. I say here today that regrettably, at the end of my contribution, we will be registering formal and lawful trade disputes in all parts of the UK in relation to the attacks on our pensions. *(Applause)*

I will just finish on a couple of points. The vast majority of our members are already paying 11% pension contributions. They are now being told that that will go up by another 3.2% on top of a two-year pay freeze. People are asking, “How the hell do I pay the rent? How the hell do I pay the mortgage? Maybe I will have to opt out of the pension because I cannot afford to survive.”

We are not going to allow that to happen. This movement has fought for dignity in retirement for a long time. We will not allow that to be taken from us. We must stand and fight together for decent pensions for everyone. *(Applause)*

Dave Ward *(Communication Workers Union)* supported Composite Motion 5.

He said: We bring our full support to this fight over pensions and you know in recent years that the CWU has had its fair share of industrial action. We work in an industry which is facing unprecedented challenges in the changing world of communications, with privatisation on the agenda and attacks on our members' pensions.

We completely recognise and understand that the fight that has already started and which needs to grow will determine the ultimate outcome of pension provision for every single worker in the UK today. We know that it is not always easy to coordinate action. It is not always easy to say that we are all directly involved but, on the postal and telecom side, we have already seen an impact on pension reform.

We know that what we are now facing is far worse. There are many things that still unite us about this fight. There is the disgraceful change to CPI and the retirement age, as set out in Matt's excellent speech. There is the idea that we are all living longer, but there is one sure way to reverse that trend of longevity and that is to make workers work to the ages conjured up by this government at the swipe of a pen. It is not on.

This is an excellent composite. We ask you, Brendan, to lead the TUC in a fight against this government to challenge the conventional thinking and dogma that seem to exist in the world of pensions. I cannot stand listening to these pension experts and regulators with their accounting methods designed to rip our members off. We just keep accepting their logic, but it is their logic which is completely and utterly flawed.

While we are challenging conventional thinking on pensions, is it not about time that we challenged Labour leaders who continually come to this conference telling us that we are wrong? They put down the only organisations which are really standing up for workers. You have got to change your way of doing business, Mr Miliband.
(Applause)

Congress, the fight on pensions does affect everybody. Do not let anybody believe that it is not coming to your union or to all of us at some point. Let us make it a simple debate. Pension money does not belong to governments. Pension money does not belong to employers. It does not even belong to trustees. It belongs to workers. This is a fight that is going to shake the trade union movement in the United Kingdom. We are behind it and let us make sure that every union in the country is behind it too. *(Applause)*

Kathy Taylor (*University and College Union*) supported Composite Motion 5.

She said: We clearly endorse everything that has been said by the speakers so far. I do not want to repeat it all, but I think it is important that all the unions involved in this struggle put their point of view forward to endorse in public the fact that our members have said, “Enough is enough.”

The UCU would also like Ed Miliband to know that our members are proud to have taken two days of strike action in defence of their pensions already. We were very proud to have stood alongside our colleagues in the NUT, ATL and PCS on 30th June.

As so many of us have said before, it was action taken not as a first resort but in the face of this government's intransigence and their politically motivated attacks on our pensions under the fraudulent guise of reform. They are not content with cutting funding to colleges and universities. After attacks on our members' jobs and terms and conditions of pay, Cameron and his Cabinet of millionaires, in their relentless drive to make workers suffer for the failures of others, now want to make us suffer in the future by depriving us of a fair, decent and dignified retirement. It is nothing short of theft by this government of the accrual of benefits paid for by us. Our members have said, "Enough."

Trade unionists are very used to the management tactics of divide and rule, a tactic being used by this most reactionary of governments. It has sought to divide us from our students. It has said that we are making them suffer. No, just as we were united with our students in their fight on tuition fees and on EMA so our students are now fully behind us. They were on 30th June and will be again in our fight to defend our pensions.

This government seeks to divide workers in the private and public sectors by pushing the myth that because comrades in the private sector have been treated disgracefully, we should be treated the same. It is their attempt to engage us all in a race to the bottom. No, this is an attack upon all workers.

Cutting public sector pensions does not improve the lot of those in the private sector. Our campaign has to be for fair and decent pensions for all. They seek to create division between us and what they call "the public". Mr. Cameron, we are the public.

You say that we are placing an intolerable burden on the taxpayer. Mr. Cameron, we are taxpayers. The trade union movement must ensure that these tactics do not succeed.

Finally, Congress, that is why it is so vital to send a clear message to the government today that we will never give up our fight for fairness. We will use every means at our disposal. The UCU will be standing with our education union colleagues at the lobby on 26th October. It is going to be a massive lobby and demonstration. When reasoned argument and negotiations fail and the government want to impose changes then the UCU is ready, willing and very able. We will stand united with all our brothers and sisters in solidarity in industrial action to achieve justice and the victory that we deserve. *(Applause)*

Steve Gillan (*The Professional Trade Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers*) supported Composite Motion 5.

He said: In supporting Composite 5, I would like to start by paying tribute to Brendan Barber who has led from the front on this issue to pull all the public sector unions together with regard to all the different schemes. That is no mean feat and Brendan has done a magnificent job. Also, Dave Prentis, in chairing the PSOG, has also done a fantastic job in bringing everything together.

The POA is absolutely clear. We want meaningful negotiations so that we can get a deal for our members in the civil service and the NHS schemes. I am afraid there have not been any meaningful discussions at all. That is where Ed Miliband got it totally wrong yesterday. What he should have been doing is supporting public sector

workers and stating, loudly and clearly, that the pension reforms in 2005 and 2006, led by a Labour government, were sustainable and affordable. He should have been shouting that from the rooftops but he failed miserably.

In relation to those reforms, prison officers who were employed before 1987 had a normal pension age of 55 on a final salary scheme. Those after 1987 retired at 60, a normal pension age. For those employed after 2007, with the reforms which Labour had carried out which we believed were fair and appropriate, there was a care scheme brought in for age 65. Therefore, reform has taken place.

We will not be a reckless union. The POA knows that there are 87,000 prisoners and we have to maintain safety for them. However, what I will say today is that prison officers, who are legally bound not to take action, will defy those anti-trade union laws and we will be there if there is no deal to be found in these negotiations. We will comply with the law in the NHS schemes – we have members at Carstairs, Broadmoor, Ashworth and Rampton – where we can take legitimate action and we will ballot there as necessary. Support the composite. Let us have coordinated action and take it to this government. (*Applause*)

Brian Strutton (*GMB*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

He said: I am supporting the composite and, more importantly, addressing what is probably the biggest issue that has been facing our members and our Movement for a generation, the call for industrial action to defend our pensions. I have been personally involved in all the negotiations that have taken place. I have probably tried as hard as anyone to make some progress and get some sense out of government but it

is my judgement that those negotiations are not capable of reaching any sensible conclusion before the government's legislative programme to damage our members' pensions starts, so that means we do not have any more time to sit around talking about it.

The industrial ballot process has to start and it has to start now, and I confirm that that is what GMB intends to do. (*Applause*) We have drawn up our plans. We have our fighting fund in place; it is all ready to go. Believe you me, when it goes we are not talking about a day out and a bit of a protest, we are talking about something that is long and hard, and dirty as well. This is going to require days of action running through the winter, through into next year, following the government's legislative programme right into the summer. It is not nice little neat and comfortable bits of action that we are talking about. Those public sector workers that the politicians are happy to vilify most of the time will suddenly become essentially emergency workers, of course, because we are talking about hospitals, we are talking about ambulances, and we are talking about fire-fighters and the fire control rooms that run the operation, we are talking about refuse workers, we are talking about cemetery workers, we are talking about care workers, we are talking about meals-on-wheels staff, we are talking about a whole range of vital services. That is why we have to make sure, colleagues, that we get the right message across to the public.

We start with a good advantage. There are 12 million people in public sector pension schemes, people paying in, those that are deferred, and the pensioners, they are all taxpayers; 12 million people we start with on our side. We get across the argument about affordability; every academic study, the National Audit Office, the Public

Accounts Committee, even the Hutton Report, says public sector pensions are affordable. George Osborne, who makes the first raid on pensions by the change to CPI, does not tell anyone that it saves £150bn of public sector pensions. We know he is a man who likes to have the whip hand. He is not going to have it in these negotiations. (*Laughter*)

We have to tell the public what has actually happened in these negotiations. We have not been allowed to negotiate what we pay. We are not allowed to negotiate what we get. We are not allowed to negotiate when we are going to get it. What is the point of negotiating? You would think we should be able to make some progress in local government, and I wind up on this point. There have been some significant negotiations taking place on the local government pension scheme over the last few days, very serious negotiations indeed, involving cabinet office ministers, local government ministers, treasury ministers, trying to make some changes for the local government scheme, but those negotiations have not been with us, they have been with council leaders. The Government have been negotiating with the leaders of local authorities about what cuts they want to the local government pension scheme. We are not even in the room. How can we conclude things properly when they are conducted like that? Colleagues, GMB is proud to support not just this composite but the move straightaway to industrial action ballots. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

Helen Connor (*Educational Institute of Scotland*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

She said: I am very proud to be at this rostrum telling you that Scottish teachers are this week, as we meet here in London, informing our employers that we are ready to

ballot for industrial action on pensions. (*Applause*) We may not have been with you in body on 13th June due to our term but rest assured, colleagues, we were with you in spirit.

Let us be very clear and very clear to Ed Miliband, the coalition, and any members of the press who have recently said that unions take strike action lightly. I do not believe any union in the country takes strike action lightly, and Scottish teachers certainly do not, but they have had enough. Teachers are very good at asking questions. I have a question for the coalition government and I have a question for Ed Miliband, and it is this: do you seriously expect our members to pay more, work longer, and get less at the end of it? I will tell you the answer Scottish teachers will give, and you will forgive me if it is a bit of a Scottish word, it is, our members are not daft. Our members know that their pensions are deferred salary and our members are not prepared to put up with this attack. (*Applause*) The answer is, Mr Cameron, Mr Clegg, Mr Miliband, and anybody else who is in any doubt, that Scottish teachers have had enough and they will be with you, colleagues, in November whenever this industrial action takes place. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, colleague. That concludes all those unions that have indicated a wish to speak. I will now call on the General Secretary.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Congress, this has been a long debate but a completely united debate, and rightly so. When the pension security of six million hardworking decent public service workers is at stake, it is crucial that we stand together. In our campaign so far we have demolished so many of the myths that the

government have propagated on this issue. They said the system is unaffordable but even John Hutton's report and the OBR have confirmed that because of the major changes agreed only a few years ago the costs are set to fall, not to rise, in the decades ahead. They talked about so-called gold-plated pensions, a fallacy that has been comprehensively rebutted by John Hutton's report and is an insult to the millions of low-paid public servants retiring on less than £4,000 a year. Meanwhile, the FTSE 100 directors continue to accumulate pension pots of millions. All in it together: I do not think so.

They sought to use John Hutton's report as an alibi for their arbitrary decision to impose contribution increases of over 3% on members across the schemes when his report does not recommend such increases. This is the government seeking pure and simple to impose an extra tax on public servants to contribute to meeting the government's deficit reduction targets and nothing to do with the long-term sustainability of the schemes.

They talk about negotiations being the way forward rather than unions taking action. Let me be clear, that is overwhelmingly my preferred course. I know how difficult it is for low-paid workers already hit with an unjust pay freeze and fearful for their jobs to face the loss of income when they support a strike. Reasonable people instinctively prefer the idea of fair-minded negotiation rather than bloody-minded conflict, and dedicated public servants care passionately about maintaining the vital services that they deliver in their own communities, and they never take action lightly.

Of course we need wider public support and we are winning that support to put the government under growing pressure to move, but meaningful negotiations require two willing partners. (*Applause*) Where was the negotiation before the Chancellor stood up in the House of Commons on October 20th and completely out of the blue announced a savings target and the 3% plus contribution increases? Answer, there was none. Where was the negotiation before he announced in last year's Budget the change of indexation from RPI to CPI, at a stroke wiping away 15% of the value of the pension of every nurse, every teacher, every local authority home help and care worker, every civil servant, every fire-fighter? Answer, there was none. Where was the information repeatedly asked for by union negotiators on scheme valuation, demographic data, for example, the essential information without which no negotiator can fairly weigh up the options and the choices? Answer, there has been none.

Congress, I remain fully committed to exhausting every possible negotiating opportunity to resolve this issue without the need for further widespread industrial action. We will be meeting ministers again next week to engage in good faith in an effort to find a way forward but ministers have to come to the table with new ideas and in a new spirit to give those talks a chance to succeed. If those talks cannot make a breakthrough, unions are right and fully justified to plan for action.

Congress, I have asked for all public service unions to come together after the close of Congress this morning to be updated on those negotiations and also to consider together the next steps in our campaign for fairness, including coordinated industrial action if those negotiations do not yield a settlement. This morning's debate has shown immense unity of purpose and we may yet need to show that unity in further

action. Let no one doubt that our resolve and determination to win fairness and justice is absolute. Support the composite. (*Applause*)

* *Composite Motion 5 was CARRIED*

GC Report Chapter 7: Protecting people at work

Health and safety

The President: Delegates, we turn to Chapter 7 of the General Council Report, Protecting people at work, page 138. I call paragraphs 7.1 to 7.6 and Composite Motion 13, Health and safety. The General Council supports the composite motion.

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

He said: I have to say that the last debate was an extremely important debate as far as the future of the pension schemes is concerned. I also have to say that I am equally disappointed that so many people have decided to leave the room when an equally important debate on health and safety is taking place. (*Applause*)

Congress, last year 170 workers were killed at work, a 14% increase from last year. In construction there were 50 fatalities, a 20% increase. Anyone with an ounce of humanity wants to reduce workplace deaths to ensure that families are not devastated when a loved one is killed at work. This Tory-led government have done exactly the

opposite, rather than improving workplace safety they are tearing apart legislation. They believe that keeping workers safe is too great a burden for business.

There are continual attacks on our safety laws. Firstly, there was the ludicrous Lord Young Report, a man so out of touch he believed that the recession was a good thing. He recommended weakening the RIDDOR regulations. Weakening the RIDDOR regulations will not make companies take workplace safety more seriously, exactly the opposite will occur. The Young Report was just a rehearsal for a full onslaught of attacks on health and safety.

This government is hammering the Health and Safety Executive. They will lose 35% of their funding by 2015. The Health and Safety Executive was already starved of money and enforcement activities have fallen to an all time low. Already, following a fatal accident, just 30% of construction companies are ever convicted, and even then the wheels of justice move very slowly. It takes three to four years to bring companies to court. Increasingly, companies are opting for administration to avoid large fines. Then, when they are fined, it is derogatory, sometimes as low (if you can believe this) as a pound. Comrades, that is not justice, in my eyes.

These cuts mean that the Health and Safety Executive cannot protect workers. The number of vitally needed unannounced inspections has been cut by 11,000 a year, and many industries no longer receive these crucial accident prevention measures. In construction inspections remain but they will be fewer and focused on specific smaller sites. This is playing fast and loose with workers' lives. Employers can ignore safety laws safe in the knowledge that no one will catch them. This month the HSE's info

line, which allowed workers and members of the public to report dangerous workplaces, closed so not only will workers be unprotected by inspectors, there will be no discreet way they can report that they are being placed in danger. Surely, this is a recipe for tragedy.

Attacks on safety regulations will continue. We are already braced for the results of the Lofstedt Review, which will soon report and is likely to call for the scrapping of more safety regulations. Unless we fight for safety at work, these attacks will continue. Rather than ensuring workers' safety, this government is interested in cheap headlines. It is a fundamental right to be safe at work. This government is destroying that right. The vast majority of workplace accidents are easily preventable. Government policies will increase accidents.

Now more than ever the trade union movement needs to defeat these policies and show how this Tory-led government has blood on its hands. If we do not take action, more and more workers will be killed and maimed at work. It is our responsibility to keep workers safe. We must fight for the safety of our members. I move. *(Applause)*

Luke Crawley *(Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union)*
seconded Composite Motion 13.

He said: First of all, on the previous debate, pensions are very, very important and it is right that people are prepared to strike to defend their pensions. We have already had our battles, which I do not think are over yet, with the employers where we have members in the BBC and elsewhere. I have to say that health and safety is essential in the workplace because without good health and safety practice you are not going to

get to pick up that pension; you could die at work. That is why this is an important debate and I have to agree with the previous speaker, it is a shame that so many people got up and left the room.

We have BECTU members who work in permanent workplaces, radio studios, television studios and theatres. We have vigilance over safe working. It is essential. There are lights and scenery, literally, hanging over the workplace. We have good relationships with many of the employers there and very good health and safety practices. We have members who are health and safety reps in the workplace, and generally we are able to maintain standards to try and reduce, not eliminate but reduce to a very bare minimum, workplace injuries.

However, many, many thousands of our members do not work in a permanent workplace, they are on location where the workplace may change every day as the film or TV production proceeds, or it may be rigged for weeks on end. There are issues around working hours where people have to drive for an hour or two hours to get to work and then shoot for 12 hours, and then drive a further hour or two hours to get back again. So, they are a danger to themselves and whoever else they are driving because they are driving whilst exhausted.

When they are on location our members may need to rig lights, cameras and scenery in places that are dangerous in themselves, such as under water or on a mountainside. In the course of the shoot there may be fire and explosions. All of these present particular problems and by sticking to the principle of making the workplace safe by using established practices of health and safety it is possible to film safely so that

actors are safe, and everybody else involved is safe, the camera crew, the lighting crew, are all safe. It is very, very important.

Another point about health and safety is that there are employers who will not discuss collective bargaining issues with us but will talk to us about health and safety. That is at least in part because they know there is a legislative sanction against them if they make a mistake. This government is determined to try and reduce that legislation. Lazy newspaper columnists write about what they call “red tape” and “health and safety gone mad”. It is not madness but essential rules to ensure safety at work. We must oppose this attempt to remove safety regulations and campaign against the cuts in funding for the HSE. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: In order to speed up the process, I have been informed that the United Road Transport Union and the National Union of Miners are supporting the composite but they do not wish to speak. I will call Unite next. Thanks very much.

Mick Forbes (*Unite the UNION*) supported Composite Motion 13.

He said: This is my first Congress. I have sat through all the debates and I was praying I would not follow Bob Crow. After that excellent debate on pensions, I wish I was following him now. As the previous speaker said, health and safety is important. Chair, congress, I am speaking in support of Composite 13 and the Unite amendment raising the issue of occupational deaths on the road.

Unite representatives, many professional drivers, lorry drivers, bus drivers, van drivers, when they are driving they are at work. Their cabs, their seats, their vehicles,

are their place of work. Currently, one in three company drivers has an accident each year. The reasons for these accidents include fatigue and time pressures. If they are killed while driving they are killed at work. It is estimated that around a third of road traffic accidents in the UK are work related. The World Health Organisation predicts road traffic accidents will rise to be in the top five causes of death by the year 2030. Employers do not have to report any deaths or accidents on the roads as workplace accidents. Unite members have been killed at work, on the roads, on a regular basis. Recognising a death as an occupational death means that the HSE and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, the VOSA, enforcement agencies have to work together to investigate and prevent these deaths.

We want professional drivers to be given all the rights that other people have at work. We want their deaths to be prevented. We want proper investigation of the causes of any workplace accident that affects them. Any working driver deserves these rights. The huge toll of deaths on the roads must end and management must stop paying lip service to health and safety. Support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Helen Andrews (*National Union of Teachers*) supported Composite Motion 13.

She said: Congress, on 22nd March 1993 four teenagers died in the Lyme Bay canoeing tragedy as a result of a series of errors and circumstances that should not have happened. Those young people were taking part in an adventure activity organised by an outdoor activity centre. At that time in 1993 a variety of voluntary accreditation schemes were all that regulated such organisations; indeed, only a third of activity centres were accredited. At the trial of the company and the manager, the judge said that the potential for injury or death was too obvious to be left to the

inadequate vagaries of self-regulation. The campaign at the time for proper regulation, supported by the NUT, eventually led via an act of parliament to the establishment of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, which has been working since 1995 to regulate and register organisations providing exciting opportunities in the outdoors for our children and young people. But this government with its obsession for deregulation has decided to scrap those statutory rules and return to a voluntary system, a system that has clearly previously failed our young people, and we know what will happen, not all companies will be registered. Schools and parents will not be able to have confidence in the safety standards of outdoor centres. Will it take another Lyme Bay tragedy before we return to proper regulation?

Congress, health and safety legislation is absolutely fundamental to a safe working environment for all workers and those they work with. From the efforts to improve safety and reduce child labour through the Mines and Factory Acts through to current legislation and the work of safety reps, safety at work has improved and deaths and injuries have reduced. We must not, we cannot, allow such fundamental rights to be taken away from us. We must have a high profile campaign uniting workers across all sectors to retain and improve our safety legislation. Please support this motion.

(Applause)

Sue Ferns (*Prospect*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: This is the union representing professional staff in the HSE. HSE's mission is to prevent work-related death, injury and ill health. This includes securing justice for victims of poor health and safety and working in the public interest. HSE's current strategy launched in June 2009 was designed to ensure that risk management

is an enabler for business, not a burden. This is an important point because despite Lord Young's efforts last year to link health and safety to the alleged compensation culture, he was forced in the end to recognise that perception, not reality, is a large part of the problem.

So, what price evidence-based policy-making? The reality, Congress, is that the government did not blink twice before introducing deregulatory proposals for reform in March this year. Amongst other changes the new framework, innocuously entitled, *Good Health and Safety, Good for Everyone*, will see an end to unannounced inspections across the whole of the public sector as well as in public transport, road haulage, airports, and a range of manufacturing industries, including light and electrical engineering. That is quite a list. Proactive inspections will also end in agriculture and quarries.

The minister acknowledges that these are high-risk sectors but he does not agree that pro-active inspection is an effective intervention tool. Our members disagree and so, too, do most of the industry bodies in these sectors. Let's be clear, this is a big deal, particularly after a year in which fatal accidents have risen and the proportion of fatal and major injuries investigated has fallen to just one in 19. If you factor in the HSE's budget cut of 35% and the loss of over 200 HSE staff through redundancy in February this year, you can see that there is plenty to be worried about.

The government has also published proposals for cost recovery through a so-called fee for intervention. Whilst HSE has long recovered costs for work that it does in high hazard industries, such as offshore oil and gas, this is a completely different

proposition for a totally different environment. Charging by the hour will, in our view, discourage employers from working with HSE inspectors to develop solutions to problems and encourage them to minimise contact in order to minimise cost. There is also a real danger that currently positive professional relationships will be replaced by antagonism and conflict.

Prospect has no fears about evidence-based reform of the UK's occupational health and safety system and we support social dialogue to develop shared creative and genuine solutions to reform. If that is what the Lofstedt Review was about, we would support it but the new health and safety framework means Prof. Lofstedt does not start from a level playing field and so faces a huge challenge to deliver the right result. Whether he has the appetite for it remains to be seen, but we certainly do. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

Paula Brown (*Public and commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: I work at the Health and Safety Executive and I am a PCS rep. Everybody has heard about the cuts, everybody has heard about the change to RIDDOR reporting, and you have heard about the closure of the info line. What you may not know is that in 2004 we had 4,282 staff and at the end of July we were down to 2,995 staff. The cuts are having a real impact on HSE and how HSE can operate. The info line closes in a couple of weeks; instead, people are going to be directed to a website. I think it is simplistic to believe that everybody who phones up and wants some advice on health and safety is going to be able to have access to a website or have English as a first language and be comfortable with using the web to get information

instead of being able to talk to somebody for advice. The Prospect delegate has just spoken about the introduction of cost recovery. If an inspector calls and a business is found to be at fault, then that requires some formal action on behalf of the inspector, and HSE will send out an invoice. You will be able to appeal that but how many people will be able to cope with the process and procedures that will surround that system.

HSE is trying to negotiate with the minister to enable it to keep the cash that comes back from any cost recovery but it is no guarantee that they will be able to do that. If you couple those changes along with the change from reactive work to proactive work, we are expecting HSE inspectors only to make about 15,000 inspections a year. Ten years ago the figure was 75,000 inspections a year.

Next week when I go back to the office we will have our weekly meeting and we are going to talk to our senior management team and we are going to ask them what exactly they plan to do with any cash should they be able to keep it from cost recovery. They are not allowed to spend it on increased staffing so we will not have inspectors. They are not allowed to keep it for communications because of the government ban on communications spend. They are closing offices so what exactly are they going to spend it on. At the moment we do not know and we suspect they do not know.

We have European Health and Safety Awareness Week at the end of October. There are lots of campaigns that will be going on in support of health and safety standards. The TUCG will be running a campaign, Hazards no doubt will, and so will FACK, so

please go back, please ask your members to support those campaigns, and let's keep up the pressure on Cameron and his cronies who are obsessed with deregulation. Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

Ruth Strong (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: I am a health and safety rep speaking on behalf of the RMT, and for the first time at a TUC Congress. It is terrifying. (*Applause*) Thank you.

Tories do not like health and safety. They say it is an unproductive cost and we all know what unproductive costs means, it means they get rid of it. Despite the already draconian cuts to the HSE and the gap between inspections, the planned inspections growing year on year, we still have a review that wants to cut health and safety regulation.

The purpose of the review of Lord Young was not just to review the operation of health and safety law but it was also the growth of the compensation culture. What compensation culture? Somebody who loses a limb, somebody who leaves a family when they die, are they not entitled to some financial help? The Young Report reads like the evidence is gathered from tabloid headlines. The compensation culture, he said, is driven by litigation, and it is a problem. What evidence he then presents comes from the headlines and the adverts from daytime TV. He summarises it by presenting all the myths and the scare stories, which demonstrate ignorance of health and safety regulation rather than over-regulation. He uses popular phrases like, "preventing burdens on industry", "easing the administrative burden", "freeing the

system from bureaucracy”, the sorts of things we have heard before. The conclusions show that ignorance of health and safety among businesses is a major problem. To me, a viable business should have more health and safety inspectors to visit, more visits to help and even put safety management systems in place, but we have accredited consultants. That is another effort to have privatisation to put profit before safety. So, even with an increase in inspectorate we have a move for promotion of green jobs, creation of jobs, green jobs like new industries, new risks. We may need more regulation.

The government again will say health and safety is a disproportion burden on industry; they mean on profit. What about disproportionate burden on the 171 families of the 171 people who were killed last year, the disproportionate burden on those who have been injured, and on the thousands who suffer industrial and occupational ill health which will last for the rest of their lives? I have one more thing to say before the light goes red, and to coin a phrase from Hazards, and from FACK, “We did not vote to die at work.” Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

* *Composite Motion 13 was CARRIED*

Work-related stress

The President: I now call Composite Motion 14, Work-related stress. The General Council supports the composite motion.

Joanna Brown (*The Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists*) moved Composite Motion 14.

She said: Congress, stress is a persistent problem in the workplace. The Health and Safety Executive estimates that in the year 2009/2010 about 9.8 million working days were lost through work-related stress and 435,000 workers in Great Britain suffer from the stress caused or made worse by their current or past work.

Congress, we are not talking about the day-to-day pressures that occur in any workplace and keep us on our toes. Severe stress can trigger a myriad of health problems for workers, including depression, anxiety, and even a 50% greater risk of heart disease. Severe stress can lead to workplace injuries, and even suicide. Congress, things are getting worse. Both the British Academy and The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development blame the economic downturn for a sharp rise in workplace stress. Many people who still have jobs are suffering from job insecurity and are being put under pressure to work longer hours. In the public sector a fifth of workers think they are likely to lose their jobs and a quarter say they have to work increased hours. According to a study by the University of Manchester, work stress has increased since 1992, especially for women. In the past year these levels have risen at an alarming rate and there are no effective measures in place to prevent the situation from worsening.

Stress is a significant problem in the NHS, which has been ordered to make £20bn worth of costs savings over four years. This is beginning to have a serious effect on patients and also on staff. In podiatry there is mounting evidence that our members are suffering increased stress levels as a result of the cuts. Podiatry posts are being

downgraded and members are having to reapply for their own jobs. Appointment times are being reduced. Centralised booking and record-keeping systems are being brought in with little training or back-up and clinics are overrunning as members struggle to cope. There is an increase in grievances and disciplinaries and members are leaving the service and claiming constructive dismissal. In some areas patients who previously received NHS podiatry services are being discharged because trusts can no longer afford to treat them. It is podiatrists on the front line who have to tell elderly vulnerable patients that they are no longer eligible for treatment and deal with the confrontations, complaints, and local media outrage that invariably follow.

These situations create high levels of anxiety and ill health for our members but I must make it clear, particularly to our friends in the FDA who are joining us in this composite, that although the original society motion focused on the stress being experienced by frontline clinicians, this does not mean we are manager-bashing. The society has many podiatry managers in membership and they too are finding it difficult to cope with the stress created by the cuts. This is a quote from an experienced podiatry manager in the northwest who has recently been through a reorganisation: “At present I am running a 17.2 vacancy rate not including sickness or maternity leave. The only posts that are getting through vacancy management are those where patients will die unless the post is recruited to. Personally I have gone for early retirement after 25 years as a service manager. I can’t stomach ripping up services that my colleagues have worked long and hard to build up.”

As the motion says, stress is the unseen side of the cuts agenda. Union campaigns against the cuts have rightly focused on people losing their jobs but we must also highlight the unacceptable levels of stress being experienced by people who still have

jobs. Stress is damaging for individuals but it is also damaging for organisations. If employers do not take measures to mitigate stress levels, this will only lead to greater absenteeism and when the recovery comes we may just find there is nobody left. So, our simple request is for the TUC to highlight in our publicity and our campaigns the steep and damaging rise in workplace stress that has been created by the cuts. Please support. (*Applause*)

Jeff Brice (*FDA*) seconded Composite Motion 14.

He said: My members are senior public servants, the people who run tax offices and benefit offices, inspect schools and prosecute those coming before the courts. They are currently being expected to bear a very high burden for the economic crisis. They have become the scapegoats for the failings of politicians along with many other public servants. There is no doubt that individually they are facing very tough times, a two-year pay freeze, an unrestrained attack on their pensions and job losses in their thousands. Taking one at a time these things are extremely stressful, taken together they amount to a direct assault on people's health, a risk to their physical health, and a risk to their mental wellbeing.

Estimates vary on the number of public sector workers who will lose their jobs. The Independent Office for Budget Responsibility originally estimated that 400,000 jobs would be cut by 2015. That figure was then revised down to 330,000, but whatever the actual figure it is clear that cuts are being made on an unprecedented scale. For those directly affected the consequences are profoundly difficult. These effects are compounded by the culture of uncertainty that pervades the workplace. NHS clinical

staff deal face-to-face with patients and the wider public on a day-to-day basis. It is a stressful and difficult job at the best of times.

Less popular, perhaps, but equally important are senior managers in the NHS and public services, who are my members. The problem they face in this period of upheaval is double-edged. Their own job may well disappear and at the same time they have the onerous responsibility for managing staff whose jobs are also at risk. These are the people responsible for ensuring that key public services are maintained. Senior managers are often working well in excess of their contracted hours and not only does this create stress, all the recent evidence points to an increased risk in other diseases, including heart disease, an increased risk of 67% for those working more than 11 hours a day and this risk is compounded if individuals have other risk factors.

Management standards produced by the Health and Safety Executive have a role in making sure demands put on people are not excessive but, ultimately, responsibility rests with the government and other employers to ensure that people are working in a safe environment, the organisational changes are properly managed, and that people are properly supported. Unless the causes of stress are tackled this silent and debilitating illness will claim many more casualties. We must be vigilant. We must work together to highlight this unseen threat. We must not allow employers to play fast and loose with our members' health. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

* *Composite Motion 14 was CARRIED*

Maximum working temperature (health and safety)

The President: Now I call Motion 79, Maximum working temperature (health and safety). The General Council supports the motion.

Ronnie Draper (*Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union*) moved Motion 79.

He said: I would like to start off by saying a big thank you to the Trade Union Coordinating Group for the work they have done, along with John McDonnell of our own Parliamentary Group, in bringing this age-old problem to the fore. I would also like to take the opportunity to highlight the launch of the *Cool it! Campaign*, which we are launching today. We will be sending out press briefings this afternoon. It is a campaign that highlights one of the biggest threats and the biggest problems that is facing workers in the UK, and one of the potential dangerous hazards in work, that is, working in extremes of temperature. I actually believe we came near to achieving a maximum working temperature under the auspices of Lord McKenzie but, unfortunately, in 2010 we had a change of government and now we have Cameron trivialising health and safety, we have Grayling talking about something he does not know anything about, that is health and safety, and at all stages we are being obstructed.

Comrades, we actually had a talk with the civil servants about this problem and they brought together a seminar of like-minded people, and some people in this room actually took part in that. They had a consultant called Ray Kemp. I do not know where they got him from but this guy had absolutely no knowledge of working in temperatures other than he did confess that he had worked in Australia; I think he was

probably a deckchair attendant or something. From there the Health and Safety Executive have continued to ignore the call for a maximum working temperature and instead they offered us industry specific guidance, not the food industry, the baking industry, and we were never ever looking for that.

Our campaign has never been about standing at the end of a bread oven alone, it is about the people who work in foundries, it is about teachers who are in under-ventilated classrooms, it is about the people in catering and those who work on trains and in small galleys, it is about anybody who works in a temperature that they find uncomfortable. Our campaign has never been about stopping the job. It has been about getting trigger points where control measures kick in. It is about getting a level of consistency that employers will follow rather than leaving it to them to decide. More importantly, it is about how we protect workers.

The HSE, and all the companies that we deal with, have never been involved in recording statistics on thermal discomfort, neither is there any record of how many people have had injuries at work caused by working with temperature. Of course, there has never been a long-term study done into what the effects will be of working in extremes of temperature. Then, again, stress was never thought to be dangerous until we did a long-term study and found out what a killer it is. We would like the same sort of study to be done on working with maximum temperatures.

We had protracted debates in a ministerial meeting and at the end of it we came out with the guidance, as I say, that we did not want. It shows the futility of guidance when they offer it on health and safety. We had guidance, and bear in mind this is the

baking industry they made it for, which said employers should consider allowing the dress code to be relaxed and that you did not have to wear ties and stuff like that. We do not wear ties in a bakery and neither do we wear duffle coats, and neither do we wear Ugg boots; it is too hot in a bakery. This is the sort of thing we had: we should consider changing the process, the time of the day and where the process goes. It is a 24-hour process. When do we move it and where do we move it to? It is hot all the time. They talk about moving to a place where it is a lot cooler. We have some bakeries with 1,000 people in them. Do they all go along to the managing director's office or sit in the back of a car because that is the only cool place there happens to be in that factory?

This is where we are up to. They talked about communication for managers, what managers should do, and they said, "Please let your manager know if you are uncomfortable." We have been doing this for years. This is the problem we have with the campaign and this is why we have it today. The last one he said was, if 20% of people complain about heat then you should consider doing something. Of course, if I am in a bakery of 100 and 19 people are complaining, I am all right. If 19 do not complain, then whether I sweat or faint, or drop dead, so far as they are concerned it does not matter, it is still only advisory.

Comrades, guidance has absolutely no teeth whatsoever as a company can ignore it, so for all these reasons we want to ensure that this campaign carries on, irrespective of the colour of governments. We do not want industry guidance; we want protection for the working population of this country. I am going to finish off just by saying we urge you to get in touch with your parliamentary groups and the MPs that you work

with to promote this campaign, to promote the *Cool it! Campaign*, and to get your MPs to sign early day motion 2151. We urge the TUC to use their good offices to pursue this topic. With the *Cool it! Campaign*, the TUCG Campaign, and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union campaign, together we can end this misery that blights the lives of millions of people. (*Applause*)

Owen Herbert (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) seconded Motion 79.

He said: Many of our RMT members in transport and in maritime suffer under high heat temperatures, in particular with hard, strenuous, physical jobs whether it be on ship or on train, or actually on track. Saying that, a lot of people may think our track workers would not really be subjected to high temperature, in particular with the summer months that we have had recently. In Britain we do have some high temperatures and therefore track workers, in particular, suffer not just with high temperatures working outside but, obviously, the effects of sunlight and the risks that that brings along.

For maritime members, in particular working in engine rooms and galley kitchens where space is extremely tight, it is extremely strenuous activity/work and obviously with the protective clothing that individuals have to wear it puts an extra burden on their physical ability to work in high temperatures. I am a chef on board trains between Swansea and London Paddington, working on board rolling stock that is well in its 30-year old timeframe at the moment, and with privatisation coming in and the lack of maintenance on the rolling stock that we have in our transportation network many of you will have experienced high temperatures just being passengers in the

summer months when the air-conditioning and fans are not working on our high-speed trains, so think what it is like in a small kitchen on board a train, in particular if there are delays when we are stuck there for three, four, maybe sometimes five hours. It is not a matter of taking a tie off or taking a jacket off, I would love to strip down to my underpants but, believe you me, it is not a pretty sight and it will put you off your food. *(Laughter)* My food is not all that good, anyway. *(Laughter)* Obviously, there is a funny side to it but there is a serious side to it as well. Proper legislation needs to be put in place to protect our members in all industries whether they work in offices, aeroplanes, trains, buses, railways, and the maritime sector, give them a proper level of working conditions, comfortable working conditions. So, Congress, I ask you to support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I have an indication that the ATL wish to speak but I would be grateful if they waived that because we are way behind time as a result of the pensions debate. *(Agreed)* Thanks very much. I am very grateful for that.

* *Motion 79 was CARRIED*

International

GC Report Chapter 5: Global solidarity

World Trade Organisation Mode 4 provisions and EU trade agreements

The President: We now turn to Chapter 5 of the General Council Report, Global solidarity from page 98. I call paragraphs 5.1 and 5.7 and Motion 70, World Trade

Organisation Mode 4 provisions and EU trade agreements. The General Council supports the motion.

Alex Gordon (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) moved Motion 70.

He said: This is a bit of a mouthful, delegates, but I will try to make this as painless as possible after the exciting morning that you have had. I want to say to you clearly and concisely this morning that of all the important debates we have had today, and this week, this matter deserves your attention because it contains within it potentially the greatest threat to trade unionism, collective bargaining, and workers' rights in the UK. It bears with it a potentially horrific scenario of the reintroduction of forms of labour that we thought we had seen abolished in this country long ago, which bear comparison with indentured servitude and which will affect almost every affiliate in this room.

Most shockingly, the negotiations over the proposed Free Trade Agreement have been conducted in such secrecy that very little information has been brought to the attention of delegates or the wider public. However, what we do know should alarm us and call us to action. The 2009 Lisbon Treaty strengthened the European Union Trade Commission's competency to negotiate trade on behalf of member states, in particular removing member states' governance right to veto those agreements. Hitherto, the World Trade Organisation has been the main focus for trade negotiations since its founding in 1995 but as the Doha round of talks stalled over the last decade the EU itself has embarked on a programme of bilateral and regional agreements. There was a CARA form, an Economic Partnership Agreement in December 2009

and a Free Trade Agreement with South Korea that gained European Parliament assent in February of this year. It is a new EU agreement that is especially significant for the UK and in the final stages of negotiation right now is the EU India Free Trade Agreement. This centrally concerns opening up the Indian banking sector to the UK financial services market and crucially and of relevance to us in this room in return it concerns granting new rights to transnational corporations to move labour across borders without any concern for workers' rights whatsoever. In undertaking the trade commitments within the EU India Free Trade Agreement, states commit to giving transnational corporations the same rights as domestic firms but also to limit their own statutory constitutional rights to control the activities of transnationals. An inevitable corollary of this process is that governments' policy space to adjust economic and industrial policy or to introduce social or environmental protection legislation, as well as workers' rights, are lost for ever to corporate power.

This part of trading services dressed up as a trade technicality in fact represents a massive, massive ideological shift handing control of key questions, such as labour migration, to transnational corporations and it is labelled by the World Trade Organisation as mode 4. The WTO has neatly divided all the possible ways of supplying cross-border services into four modes: mode 1. services sent, such as by the internet; mode 2, where consumers cross borders, such as with tourism or with the foreign student market; mode 3, where a company establishes itself across borders; and mode 4, where workers are brought across borders.

It is crucial to understand in this debate that where a transnational corporation under the proposed Free Trade Agreement establishes itself in both London and Delhi and

contracts a worker in Delhi to work on a contract in London, that worker will have no legal right to remain in London or in Britain, that worker will have no legal redress within the legislation of this country, and that worker will effectively be being used as a form of indentured labour, something which we have not seen for many, many years in this country, but it is on the return.

What I want to say to you, delegates, is that there has been a great fear of speaking out about the enormous repercussions of these negotiations but it incumbent upon us to sound the alarm now. The TUC has correspondence with Vince Cable in relation to this matter which should alarm us all. We support the TUC's action on this matter but it is time that we let our members know that labour rights are universal and must be protected, and we should call for the content of this Free Trade Agreement to be exposed to public scrutiny and parliamentary scrutiny, and we should speak out against it in this forum. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Fern McCaffrey (*GMB*) seconded Motion 70.

She said: Free Trade Agreements, or in short, FTAs, are being negotiated in secret by the European Commission as part of the EU 2006 strategy entitled, Global Europe Competing in the World, with the express purpose of promoting complete deregulation for the benefit of large European corporations, the FTA's aim at the highest possible degree of trade liberalisation. This is to facilitate penetration by European capital through chapters on trade in goods, services, investments, public procurement, and rules for competition seeking total reciprocity in the shortest possible timeframe. Reciprocal FTAs between countries and regions that are highly unequal benefit only a small number of transnational companies able to compete in

international markets. They have a negative effect on the ability of nation states to foster national and local economic development and to promote and protect human rights. Scant regard is paid to internationally agreed conventions on worker rights and it is a disgrace that the EU is blithely pressing on with FTAs in Columbia and Central America where trade unionists and their families are being threatened, harassed, abducted and murdered.

India has not ratified four core ILO labour conventions, including number 87 on freedom of association and number 98 on the right to organise and collectively bargain. A damning new ITUC report shows the authorities do not always respect the right to peaceful assembly and thousands of detentions and arrests are reported every year. Discrimination, child labour, and forced labour, are prevalent in Indian society but the state does little or nothing to confront the problems.

We should insist that the veil of secrecy is removed from the negotiation of FTAs and that there is full consultation with all relevant civil organisations, especially trade unions, at every stage; that the investor state dispute settlement mechanism is rejected but local measures designed to protect or enhance public policy are respected; clauses converting private contracts into matters of international law are jettisoned and firm obligations are imposed on international governments and investors in the area of human rights, environmental protection, decent work, corporate accountability, and transparent tax arrangements. Congress, I second this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: We have had an indication from Unite that it wishes to speak, but in the interests of progress and time constraints, is Unite willing to withdraw the right to speak? (*Agreed*) Thank you. We will turn to the vote.

* *Motion 70 was CARRIED*

Global Solidarity

The President: I now call paragraphs 5.2 (Building stronger unions) and 5.6 (Ensuring more people have rights at work) of the General Council Report. I understand that RMT wish to raise a point.

Glenroy Watson (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke to paragraphs 5.2 and 5.6 of the General Council Report.

He said: Congress, I have a quick question. When I read the General Council Report as far as Haiti is concerned, it clearly does not address some of the issues that we are all aware of. Millions of pounds have been collected by charities, yet two years after a devastating earthquake people are still living in tents in Haiti. Clearly, this is an area that we must challenge as to what is happening. Clearly, money is put into banks and interest is being earned and being spent on charities rather than the people who are suffering in Haiti. Could the General Council make a statement on that issue as well as giving out leaflets on cholera, which was imported by the UN?

Gail Cartmail (*General Council*) replied on behalf of the General Council.

She said: President and Congress, the TUC is working with the International Trades Union Confederation, the ITUC, to help Haiti's unions to rebuild their movement and, of course, their economy. We have some sympathy for charities who are finding it difficult to spend them money that was so generously donated by the public, but

Glenroy is quite right that they absolutely do need to get a move on. They also need to pay local reconstruction workers a living wage. That is why we are working with colleagues in the region to make sure they do.

The President: Does Congress accept the response? (*Agreed*)

Peace in the Middle East/South Asian

The President: I turn to Motion 71 – Peace in the Middle East/South Asia. The General Council supports the motion.

Andrew Murray (*Unite*) moved Motion 71.

President, on Monday morning you asked delegates to renew this movement's commitment to world peace. What this motion does is address that very issue, which has been most scarred by endless wars over the last decade and beyond, wars for which British governments have been deeply responsible.

This motion addresses several issues of tremendous importance. The one on which I can be briefest is the question of Palestine, not because it is not of central importance but we all know that experience of the last 60 years teaches us that there will be no peace in the Middle East without justice for the Palestinian people. (*Applause*) However, this issue was thoroughly debated last year at Congress. Basically, our motion, with the welcome amendments from PCS, which we are accepting, seeks to strengthen that basic position. Of course, our main new demand this year must be that the British government give all out, 100% support to the demand for recognition of a

Palestinian state when it is discussed at the United Nations' General Assembly later on.

Of course, there is at least one other thing that is essential for peace in the Middle East, and that is a new Middle East Peace Envoy, because the present one is almost beyond parody. He stands there, apparently robed in white, on the banks of the Jordan, baptising the next generation of Murdochs while calling for a new war against Iran and Syria. (*Applause*) This is a war addict as a peace envoy. Frankly, Tony Blair shouldn't be paddling around in the holy river. He ought to be taken to where he can account for his aggressive actions over the last ten years instead.

Libya. Of course, there may be some colleagues who will think that the situation in Libya has changed and has changed for the better, but we need to be very careful on this issue. For one thing, David Cameron is now saying that interventionism is back. That is the last thing that the Middle East or the world needs. Let us remember, that David Cameron sought support for this war in Libya on the basis of one issue only: the protection of civilians. Well, if it was about protecting civilians, quite apart from the absurdity of bombing them in order to protect them, why did the British government brush aside one ceasefire proposal after another, and even now it continues to brush aside all peace proposals from the African Union and from anywhere else? It is hypocrisy. This is another war about regime change in an oil rich Arab country. (*Applause*)

Of course, we must hope that the new regime in Libya will be an improvement on the old one, although it is largely led by people who are deeply involved in the old one. I

would only draw delegates' attention to the fact that Amnesty International, just yesterday, said that the new regime has been guilty of major human rights abuses already, particularly in the persecution of black Africans living in Libya. So we must reaffirm the position that was taken by Unite, UNISON and other unions earlier on this year that this war was a mistake. In particular, we must reject the idea once and for all that is so prevalent in Westminster that the British government has the right to choose which regimes around the world are legitimate and which are not, and can intervene to impose regime change. *(Cheers and applause)*

In relation to Afghanistan, I believe the issues are even clearer and starker. This is a war that has now been going on for ten years, as long as the two world wars put together, and it has been going on for at least nine-and-a-half years after its original object, which was removing the bases of those responsible for the terrible atrocities of 9/11 was accomplished. It is now a war to prop up a discredited pro-western regime, which is officially the most corrupt regime in the world, which passes legislation banning women from leaving home without a male escort, which has provided over an epic increase in opium production and has now democratic legitimacy or credibility. This is a war even more dangerous in its regional implications, possibly, than the war in Iraq. It is now spreading into Pakistan, a nuclear armed country, and destabilising the situation there. It is fraught with disaster and it should be brought to an end now. There is not a single general, diplomat or expert anywhere in the world who now believes that this war can be won. Everyone knows it will have to end in a political settlement and a political negotiation involving all parties in Afghanistan. It is wrong that David Cameron should say that he won't even think about withdrawing until 2014. That will mean the loss of life of hundreds more British soldiers, drawn,

often economic conscripts, from deprived communities, in a war that is utterly pointless, utterly unjust and nothing more will be achieved. Our withdrawal from Afghanistan should begin now and without any further delay.

We ought to have a couple of questions for David Cameron. If this is an age of austerity, how can you find £4 billion a year to attack Afghanistan? How come your 'Big Society' is big enough to occupy Afghanistan and bomb Libya but not big enough to keep open care homes and libraries here at home? *(Cheers and applause)*

These are all good reasons, comrades, why our movement should, today, once more assert that the cause of labour is the cause of peace. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*

Hugh Lanning *(Public and Commercial Services Union)* seconded the motion.

He said: Congress, we are supporting and seconding the motion the Middle East and Palestine. I want to thank Unite for not only putting the motion and how they have moved it, but also for accepting the amendment. I want to focus a little more on Palestine.

When the Israeli embassy in Cairo was attacked, Obama called Egypt to tell them to honour its international obligations. Cameron told Egypt to meet its responsibilities under the Vienna Convention. If they had expended as much energy in telling Israel to comply with international law, the attack would not have happened in the first place. They should tell Israel to end the occupation, to end the siege of Gaza and to bring down the wall. At the Palestine Solidarity Campaign fringe earlier this week, the Palestinian ambassador made the plea that we should call settlements what they

really are – colonies. Israel is not interested in a two state solution. Every day it is making it less possible. That is the importance of the UN vote on recognising Palestine as an independent state. Over 60 years ago the UN voted to create Israel. The other bit of that resolution, which was a free Palestine, remains just a resolution. It is that history that means that resolutions are not enough. The global BDS campaign is necessary and is having an increasing impact.

The TUC/PSC campaign on settlement goods means that eight out of nine supermarkets now refuse to stock settlement goods. Morrisons: “This is a cheap cut too far.” Agrexco, the largest exporter of settlement goods, is going bankrupt. Veolia has withdrawn from many countries. Ahava has had to close its flagship shop in London.

At the PCS’s trade union conference, which will take place here, on 29th October, we will be discussing how to take forward the joint campaign against complicit firms. Launched with the postcard with the TUC, “Don’t buy into the Israeli occupation”, we need to develop that campaign to target those who profit from Israel’s illegal occupation, settlements and the wall.

The PCS amendment seeks to extend that principle to our relations with other organisations in Israel. There are organisations that PCS and PSC have contact with within Israel: Sawt Al-Amal, now called The Arab Workers’ Union In Israel, Cav Laved, Breaking The Silence, and many more. We have supported striking workers in Israel.

The motion asks all unions to review, and we mean to review, the relations they have, including those with Histradut, but most unions have no relationship. In judging who to work we, with say judge them on what they do. Do they support international law or are they complicit with its breach? The anti-democratic law being passed by the Knesset which is aimed at those who support the boycott, means that our campaign is having some effect.

In coming to a conclusion, today let's decide not to buy into the Israeli occupation, not to buy goods or work with organisations that are complicit. Israel must honour international law. The UN, Obama and the EU should be making Palestine a reality, not blocking their freedom. Support the motion and support Palestine.

Alex Gordon (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) opposed the motion.

He said: President, I do not wish to take up a lot of your time. My union fully supports the position reached by the Congress last year on Israel/Palestine. We welcome the resolution here from Unite. We are rising to draw attention to the wording in the amendment from PCS, which we believe contains, perhaps inadvertently, an unfortunate connotation. In particular, I am addressing the second part of the PCS amendment which is calling on review their bi-lateral relations with all Israeli organisations. I was very pleased to have heard my friend, Hugh Lanning, making clear the close working relation with Cav Laved, with Sawt Al-Amal and, indeed, my union has welcomed the Workers' Advice Centre, Munn, to our conference in previous years. We have supported the class struggle that is going on now by workers in Israel, and we fully intend to continue to support Israeli workers,

Palestinian workers and Arab Israeli workers, who are fighting for peace and workers' rights today in Israel. However, we are concerned about the implication in the second part of the PCS amendment, which calls for a review of bilateral relations with all Israeli organisations. Our view is that we should be supporting the Israeli peace movement, we should be supporting the Israeli trade union movement, where it stands up for Palestinian national rights, and that is the route to peace in the Middle East. That is the best commitment that we can give. For that reason, we won't be supporting the resolution as it stands. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much for that explanation.

* *Motion 71 was CARRIED*

Egypt

The President: I call Motion 72, Egypt. The General Council supports the motion.

Alan McLean (*Fire Brigades' Union*) moved Motion 72 – Egypt.

He said: President, just so Congress is aware, such is the importance being put on this motion in Egypt by the emerging trade unions in Egypt, this debate is going to be translated immediately and distributed to all Egyptian trade unions. I know that there are two Egyptian translators – two sisters – who we met yesterday. I don't think they quite get the Geordie "Good luck" in the translation.

Delegates, like me you will have watched what happened in Egypt unfold with some amazement and trepidation at first, but we watched a trickle become a deluge. That

deluge, after decades of exploitation, torture and repression, meant that the Egyptians succeeded in moving out Mubarak, one of the longest serving dictators on the planet. Workers did that! Workers united did that.

I have witnessed lots of acts of heroism and bravery, but the bravery of those people who, in their thousands, took on the armed gangs and the secret police, braving tear gas and bullets, will stay with me until my dying day. They are the heroes in this deluge.

One thing which has become clear to me was the role of all workers in finally seeing off Mubarak. There was an explosion of worker struggles in the final week before Mubarak fell. Workers in the Post Office, the public transport, buses and garages, including the Suez Canal service companies, organised strikes. As we heard yesterday, teachers and lecturers played a big part in the struggle. The strike was quickly broadened out, bringing at least 300,000 workers out on strike by 9th February. It was this action that tipped the balance and helped bring down Mubarak. When the history of Egypt is written, it will show that organised workers made the difference.

The role of the Egyptian workers was not all important this year. We know that previous worker struggles prepared the ground for the momentous events earlier this year, and this Congress had input into that. Kamal Abass, who is well-known to this TUC, has been supported by our unions for many years. We were inspired by his personal story when he came to our conference in May. We were inspired by his ability to organise his members. He organised massively among the steel industry. I

remember that in 1989 he organised steel workers in Helwan. I have been very lucky over the years to meet a number of heroes, some of them because I work in the Fire Brigade. They perform heroism and acts of heroism almost daily throughout the country, but to me a true hero is somebody from the working class, who will stand up for his rights. Believe me, Kamal Abass did that, despite imprisonment, beatings, more imprisonment and more beatings. He retained his values.

We also learnt about Kamal's underground trade union organising at our conference. He told us about the waves of workers' actions in recent years, which have shaken the regime. In 2007 there was a huge upsurge of activity by workers. These included mass action at the Mahala Al-Kubra textile mill, which won key concessions and acted as a green light for numerous other groups of workers. To put it bluntly, it was the workers who did it!

Since they got rid of Mubarak, there has been a tremendous surge of union organisation in Egypt. Rail workers, hospital workers, postal workers and countless others have all begun to organise their own unions. Many poor Mubarak managers have been removed after workers protested. Millions have been involved in the protests and strikes. We have heard about campaigns to re-nationalise privatised firms. I can report to you that this week a wave of strikes have taken place on issues such as pay, temporary contracts and union rights. The new Egyptian workers movement faces threats. The army hierarchy is still in place. The iron backbone of Mubarak's old state remains intact. The army continues to play a central role in government. It has already sought to ban strikes. The courts are also holding prominent strike leaders. The military, the Muslim Brotherhood and business leaders

have all condemned strikes for expressing sectional interests. We have seen a growth of Islamist fundamentalist organisations. This all adds to the great urgency of supporting the new unions.

Congress, I don't ask you to do anything new. I ask you to continue supporting a movement in Egypt which is trying its very best to follow in the footsteps of all good trade union movements such as ours. Support the motion, Congress.

Dee Luxford (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Motion 72.

She said: Congress, I am more than delighted to be seconding Motion 72 and, in doing so, hopefully, reminding a certain person who was here yesterday about what real trade unionists do.

On Monday, Congress, we talked about protecting trade union rights. We talked at length about changing the law so that we could protect the rights of workers. Ed, we do this for all workers, not just the ones in our country. That's what trade unionists do.

We have heard this week about the proud history of the trade union movement and we are right to be proud, but that pride will be shallow if we don't support workers in every single country, including Egypt. We heard yesterday how there is no one in government or opposition, it would seem, who is willing to stand up for workers' rights, so we will have to do it ourselves. Congress, much like June 30th in Britain, it was in Egypt the teachers and the tax collectors who led the way. We will lead the way again. We are organising, campaigning and readying for the fight of our lives in

this country, and it is incumbent upon us to support those who have had, literally, to fight for their lives.

It is right that we support independent trade unions in Egypt, and it is right that we respond to the fluid situation in that country in a supportive and flexible way that shows solidarity without imposing our models on the workers in that country. Ed, this is the progressive thing to do. Ed, this is the modern thing to do. Call us dinosaurs all you like, but dinosaurs have sharp teeth, sharp claws and are ready to fight. Support Egypt, support the motion and support real trade unionism. (*Applause*)

Pat Stuart (*Unite*) supported the motion.

She said: Congress, I agree absolutely with what the two previous speakers have said. A vital part of what we do as trade unionists is standing up for trade unionists elsewhere and those independent trade unionists really need our backing and support at this time.

I would make an additional plea to delegates. If your union is offering practical support, financial support and/or capacity building support to those unions, please encourage those unions to be organising women as well. It is not because they are bad people. It is because such behaviour is traditional to their society. As here, not that many decades ago, there was a serious lack of general awareness. In town this week, by chance, was someone representing the New Women's Federation in Egypt – Nawla Darwiche. I talked to her yesterday and she visited other unions as well. She has a lot to say because the organising of women because that NGO has been organising women in a number of industries so far where they have had difficulty in

doing for themselves. I would mention, particularly, textiles and electronic assembly and software. There are a great many women who are not organised into unions. Recently a very big textile strike took place. Women played a massive part in that strike. The two key women who were leading the strike were particularly targeted by the security workers for the factory. They were taken outside. Both were veiled women. They were forcibly unveiled in public to their great humiliation and they were threatened that they would be raped in front of their children if they persisted. That is what women face all the time in Egypt in these big companies. The threat of sexual violence and actual sexual violence is used to undermine their activities. We need to be able to be talking to our comrades and fellow trade unionists there and saying, "Please embrace the requirements of women workers. Don't leave them in organisations alone." We used to have the Union of Women Workers. It took years of tension before we sorted that one out. We can help the Egyptian women. We need to help these independent unions. Thank you.

The President: We will now turn to the vote.

* *Motion 72 was CARRIED*

Playfair 2012

The President: I call Motion 73, Playfair 2012. The General Council supports the motion.

Michael Kaye (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) moved Motion 73.

He said: Congress, this is my first Congress and I am proud to be here. (*Applause*)

The Olympic motto translates as: “Faster, Higher and Stronger”. It inspires athletes. So it ought to inspire Playfair 2012. This is part of an international campaign coordinated by the TUC and Labour Behind the Label. The supporters are putting pressure on the sportswear industry and the Olympic movement to take responsibility for the working conditions in their global supply chains, and to ensure that the workers’ human and trade union rights are respected. With our solidarity, this can be achieved soon. We can aim for high standards and show our strength in this movement together.

The London 2012 Olympics is a celebration of universal values, like respect and equality. The athletes are the workers who can help make the Games possible are part of this. Those workers across the world making sportswear with Olympic branded goods need to have their basic rights at work respected and to be paid a living wage. The thousands of mainly female workers in these supply chains deserve to have decent work.

The global union federation for textile workers – the ITGLWF – has looked at the conditions for workers making sportswear in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Workers are being paid neither a living wage nor even a legal minimum wage. Some have to work a hundred hours overtime per month. Women were pregnancy-tested at interview, and if pregnant, they were not hired. This exploitation is unacceptable. Decent work is part of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal to end poverty by 2015. This is a matter of social justice. Adidas could afford the £100 million fees to be the official sportswear sponsor for the London Olympic

Games. Malania, who works at making Adidas clothing in Sri Lanka, is the main breadwinner for her family. Her basic pay is around £54 a month. Malania, like us, knows it is not right. She is involved in trade union activities to protect, defend and promote workers' rights, despite already losing her job once because of her beliefs.

Many Olympic branded goods are made in China. Workers are asserting their rights more and more but independent trade unions are still not free to organise. Even when they can organise, as in Indonesia, trade unionists continue to be intimidated and workers are often too frightened to join a union. The right to form and join a union, and bargain collectively, is a worker's right, a human right. This right is at the heart of the Playfair 2012 campaign.

Playfair 2012 has already had some successes. The campaign resulted in the organisers of the London Olympic Games requiring that their suppliers comply with the standards in the Ethical Trading Initiative Code. This includes a living wage, respect for freedom of association and no discrimination. This is the first time that has happened in a major world sporting event. The campaign continues to press the Games' organisers to tell us where the suppliers are so that we can work with unions and organisations on the ground to ensure that workers' rights are being respected and that the organisers make the workers aware of their rights.

As a result of the international Playfair 2012 campaign, a ground-breaking agreement on freedom of association has just been signed in Indonesia between unions, major sportswear brands and suppliers. This will help create an environment where unions can organise workers without fear of victimisation and discrimination. Many unions

are already involved in Playfair 2012, but we need to build on our successes and keep up the pressure.

This motion calls on us to make sure that our members are well informed about Playfair 2012 and are encouraged to take actions that influence decision-makers to ensure that these workers can enjoy decent work. We need to continue to campaign on these issues after London 2012 as part of the international Playfair campaign.

The CSP supports the Playfair 2012 campaign because this is about standing side by side with our sisters and brothers around the globe who, like us, are striving for better pay and conditions, for respect, equality and social justice. Thank you.

Heather Phillips (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 73.

She said: President and Congress, the issue of sweatshop workers is not new. The exploitation of workers across the world, some as young as five, has featured in numerous campaigns by different organisations over many years. However, next year, in 2012, the Olympics come to Britain and there will never be a better time to publicise and to improve the conditions of workers around the world who are contributing to this spectacular event.

Much of the luxury goods market evolves around sportswear brands. Think Nike, Adidas and Puma, brands that many people wear and are used by thousands of athletes who will arrive on these shores.

The Olympic Games is a multi-million pound industry. A hundred million pounds sponsorship fee paid by Adidas would pay 40,000 of its Chinese workers for a whole year. An Indian football stitcher would have to sew 13 million balls a year, or a hundred a minute, to earn the same as the Adidas CEO, Herbert Hainer.

As you have already heard, there has been progress. The London Organising Committee has signed up to the Ethical Trading Initiative Code, but we can't rest on our laurels. Unions must use their relationships with the relevant employers to ensure that their supply chains stay ethical and transparent. Prospect has members in BT and EDF, both big sponsors of next year's Games. We will be working with them to ensure continuing compliance.

I urge every union represented here to affiliate to Playfair 2012. Let's make sure that no one can be exploited in the name of sport wherever they are in the world. Please support.

The President: We will turn to the vote on Motion 73.

* *Motion 73 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, that completes Chapter 5 of the General Council Report. We will return to Chapter 9 of the General Council Report: Campaigns and Communications from page 154. I call paragraphs 9.1 – 9.8. That completes Chapter 9 of the General Council Report.

TUC organisation

Delegates, we now turn to Chapter 10 of the General Council Report, TUC organisation, from page 166. I call paragraph 10.5: General Council. I call the General Secretary to speak on this paragraph.

General Council

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*) spoke to paragraph 10.5 of the General Council Report.

He said: Thank you, President. Congress, last year you carried a resolution asking for us to review the structure of the General Council. The mover in that debate made the point that, despite all the changes that we have introduced in recent years, some of the smaller specialist unions did not feel that they had an opportunity to play a full part in the TUC's decision making. They wanted every union to have a seat on the General Council. As we pointed out last year, laudable as that ambition was, there were real practical problems. Some of our unions have a million plus members. Others represent just a few hundred workers. Once we take account of the need to reflect all our diversity strands, such a body would begin to look like the size of Congress, rather than functioning as a General Council.

However, we said we would carry out a review and we did. We asked unions for their views and the message that you gave us was clear. You didn't support the idea of automatic seats on the General Council for all unions, but you did want us to make a change. You asked us to lower the threshold for automatic General Council membership. There were different views about where the line should be drawn, but in

the end there was a consensus around the proposals that we are putting to you today. Under the rule change set out in this paragraph, from next year, every union with more than 30,000 members would be represented on the General Council as of right. There would still be seven elected seats for the smallest, very specialist, unions.

The new General Council will, on current membership, be only slightly larger than the current body, but it will ensure that we are even more representative of Britain at work. I commend the rule change to you.

The President: Thank you, Brendan. No unions have indicated that they wish to speak on this paragraph. Can I take it that paragraph 10.5 is agreed?

* *Paragraph 10.5 of the General Council Report was AGREED*

The President: I call paragraphs 10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8 and 10.9. That completes Chapter 10 of the General Council Report.

Pre-Abortion Counselling

The President: I call Emergency Motion 2: Pre-Abortion Counselling. The General Council supports the emergency motion.

Sally Hunt (*University and College Union*) moved Emergency Motion 2: Pre-Abortion Counselling.

She said: Congress, for over 40 years women in this country have had the right to choose. The Abortion Act of 1967 established that right, and that is a right which is governed by clinical guidelines. Those guidelines are provided by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. It is a right within a system that successive Parliamentary debate and Select Committee inquiries have confirmed is the best way to protect women's health.

We live in a country where more than 700,000 babies are born every year. It is a wonderful thing. But we also live in a country where every year around one in five women have to seek an abortion, a country where 91% of those abortions are carried out in less than 13 weeks and 75% in less than 10 weeks. It speaks of a very well organised system. In this country, 94% of those abortions are either provided for or done by the NHS.

We also in this country support thousands of women who come from abroad in order to make that decision, that right to choose. This can be the single most important and difficult decision that a woman ever has to make. It can be life-changing. It is a choice about their family, when they are going to have a child and if they are going to have a child. It is a choice about their job, how they are going to have a career and when they are going to take a break. It can be a choice about their health, whether it is safe for them to carry a child or not. Sometimes it can be a choice about whether a relationship is one that is working or not.

We all know that we face circumstances in our lives that we don't expect and we don't plan for. We all know, too, that we end up in situations that we would rather

not be in, but when that happens to a women, when she is pregnant and needs help and support, it is exactly that that she is seeking when she goes to counselling. She needs it to be objective, fair and well informed. She needs counselling that will provide her with all those options; counselling that will cover sexual health and contraception. I would say that that counselling is currently provided for by TPAS and organisations such as Marie Stopes.

We have to be very clear because of what has been said in the last few weeks. These charities are not an abortion industry. These charities are well-respected and not-for-profit providers and ones that we should support and make sure are respected.

Many politicians in recent weeks have done the exact opposite. It is not a new issue for some politicians, because some MPs have been trying to chip away at women's rights for several years. In May 2008 MPs voted to maintain the upper limit of 24 weeks against a move by others to reduce that to 20 weeks. Our current Prime Minister voted to reduce that limit. Last week MPs rejected again a call to separate counselling from current established providers, but 118 MPs voted in favour. If they had succeeded that would have opened up women's health to those who want to bring religion and ideological agendas into the bedroom. I can tell you that I don't want David Cameron in my bedroom. (*Laughter*) I really, really, believe that we should think hard about that. If I want religion, I will choose the vicar myself, thank you very much. It is not for a government to do this. What is actually happening here is a creeping morality that is coming back into this debate and is designed to attack women's rights.

Let's be clear about this. No serious professional clinical organisation supports this change, and 75% of people in this country support the right of women to choose. So what is it? I'll tell you. This is a coalition government that is throwing a bone to the right-wing rump in order to keep their support, and it is women who are being asked to pay the price and we should not under-estimate what that means. At a time when women are being attacked in the workplace, in the benefit system and in the education system, this is a regressive step and it is one that is designed to attack women.

In this motion, Congress, we are asking for a reaffirmation from the movement to support women, to support our right to choose, our right to self-determination and our right to make the biggest choice that some of us ever have to, knowing that we will do it free from fear or morality, and knowing we will do that with the support of the trade union movement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Jane Stewart (*Unite*) seconded Emergency Motion 2.

She said: Last week we saw the Nadine Dorries and Frank Field amendment for the Act of Parliament. That was great. We welcomed that. This amendment would have been moved, counselling for medically qualified providers abortion providers like the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, Marie Stopes, to organisations like Care Confidential that oppose abortions. A poll was taken last Sunday morning on the religious show and 70% of the people watching that programme wanted to maintain the services as they are. That was a religious programme, so it was a popular decision. It was interesting in the week running up to the debate, but during the debate Frank Field changed his position and voted against the amendments, so that was interesting. Right the way through he was supporting that amendment and the Act.

Let's be clear, Congress, a woman's right to choose is a trade union issue. It was adopted by Congress in 1975 and Terry Marsland, who was remembered in the obituaries on Monday, said: "Every woman should have the right to control her own destiny." She went on to say: "This trade union movement must take up a position on this issue. We are responsible for the health and welfare of millions of women both inside and outside our movement." That is what we are here to reiterate today, Congress.

Dorothy, on her blog, attacked the trade unions, particularly attacking UNISON. She said that we were supporting abortion rights "like it was a bad thing". It is not. We should be proud that we support abortion rights.

Working class women are being attacked the hardest by the cuts. Prior to the 1967 Abortion Act poor women, when dealing with unwanted pregnancies, were forced into the indignity and danger of going to back street abortionists, while rich women have always been able to get access to abortion from a friendly doctor on Harley Street. So a woman's right to choose is something that we have to protect.

The previous speaker spoke about the road show that happened in 2008 when they attacked the time limit. We had Anne Widdecombe doing a road show around the country. She was the sweetheart of the nation on *Strictly Come Dancing*, but this is the same woman whose government tied and chained women prisoners to their beds when they were in child birth. We must remember all these things. In the words of

Mary Davies, we must be eternally vigilant because they will keep coming back. We must protect our right to choose and protect our rights as women. *(Applause)*

The President: We will now turn to the vote on Emergency Motion 2.

* *Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED*

Save Bombardier jobs

The President: I now turn to Emergency Motion 5 – Save Bombardier jobs. The General Council supports the emergency motion.

Alex Gordon *(National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* moved Emergency Motion 5.

He said: Congress, we are joined in the hall this afternoon by representatives of the Joint Union Shop Stewards' Committee of the Bombardier Derby works. Stand up, lands. *(A standing ovation)*

Colleagues, we discussed yesterday the wrongful and damaging decision to award the Thameslink train contracts to the German company, Siemens, and the impact that that will have on the train manufacturing legacy in Britain. Events have happened in the last few days and weeks which we need to take on board as a movement. Last night in Derby at a council meeting, a councillor said, like some others in this room, "I'm an ex-railwayman. I can't begin to tell you how angry I was when I heard about this decision. I think that cracks are beginning to appear in the face of the government

about this decision. We may yet manage to turn this situation around.” That was a councillor by the name of Mike Carr, who is a Liberal-Democrat. At that meeting last night, Derby City Council agreed, unanimously, to help pay the legal fees for a judicial review of the government’s decision to award the Thameslink contract to Siemens. We should welcome that.

Let me say more. At last week’s Transport Select Committee in the House of Commons, we should welcome the fact that for the first time the Secretary of State for Transport shifted from his previous position of saying that it was impossible to review the decision to award the contract to Siemens, and admitted, under cross-examination, that it was legally possible to reverse the decision. We should welcome that. We should welcome the call made by the Leader of the Opposition, Ed Miliband, the following day, on 8th September, for a Parliamentary debate on this matter. The fact is that decisions about where to award massive manufacturing contracts, such as the Thameslink contracts, are political decisions. Our political representatives need to justify those decisions, openly, on record, in public and in the face of their constituents.

We should welcome the call for a Parliamentary rally in support of the Bombardier workers on 12th October. We know that the TUC will get right behind that.

This resolution also calls, importantly, for us to put some hope behind the call for retaining Bombardier in this country, by saying that we should commit ourselves as a movement to saying that if those jobs are threatened, if Bombardier pulls out, and we hope that they don’t, then we should fight for a publicly-owned, re-nationalised train

manufacturing sector in Britain, owned publicly, accountable to the public and building trains that we use every day on our networks in this country. *(Applause)*

The maintenance of a manufacturing sector has been a victim of privatisation of railways. The so-called “vertical split” between the operators of trains and the owners of the infrastructure have impeded the research and development into new types of train technology in this country, and they have been an impediment in long-term investment. The only way to secure the long-term future of train manufacturing is by this movement keeping the call alive for a re-nationalised, publicly owned, manufacturing sector based in Derby on train manufacturing.

In 1833 Derby was the scene of the first mass lockout in British history when the silk workers were locked out by the silk manufacturers of Derby for five long months to smash their union and their loyalty to their union. In 1839, just six years later, the first train rolled off the assembly line at Derby, and in 1870, just 40 years after that, my union was founded by workers in Derby in those railway works. We are here for the long haul. We are going to fight for a re-nationalised train manufacturing sector. We believe that this joint union campaign is on a winner, and we are calling for you to get behind it and support the workers at the back of the hall and take the message back to Derby that the TUC supports train manufacturing. *(Applause)*

Diana Holland *(Unite)* seconded the emergency motion.

She said: Unite is the lead union at the Derby site, and is campaigning jointly with the RMT, TSSA and GMB. Yesterday we had a full and very powerful debate on composite motion 8 on Bombardier and the award of the Thameslink contract.

Today, as we debate this vital emergency motion, we are able, as was said just now, our reps from the site. I know that they will take back the warmth of welcome they received to the workforce in Derby.

I want to add three points to yesterday's excellent debate. First, this struggle for rail manufacturing at Bombardier in Derby is a struggle rooted in the community but which goes well beyond the east Midlands. This shameful government has not learnt the lesson of the betrayal of workers at Sheffield Forgemasters. We need an industrial strategy that supports manufacturing. This emergency motion makes it quite clear that while the government stands aside, the trade union movement, supported by Labour in opposition, is standing up for rail manufacturing in this country.

Secondly, this campaign is a huge and growing alliance. As the last paragraph makes clear, we have support from workers in Germany, across Europe and internationally. We have support from workers in Siemens as well as Bombardier, and we have support from the supply chain companies, which work both for Siemens and Bombardier. They all believe that the government should think again.

Thirdly and finally, it's not too late to make a difference. For 1,400 workers on 90 days' notice right now, for young men and women starting out in life and for the future of rail manufacturing, it's not too late. Congress, the best poster, in my view, at the rally in Derby on 23rd July had no words on it, just a picture. It was Thomas the Tank Engine as a Bombardier train with a very worried face, and David Cameron standing over him like an assassin pointing a gun.

Whatever the government ministers say, whatever the headlines suggest, this campaign is not going away. As Thomas the Tank Engine would say, “It’s not over till the Fat Controller sings.” *(Laughter)* We are determined, we are united and we are part of a huge alliance for rail manufacturing. Please support. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, Diana. We will now turn to the vote.

* *Emergency Motion 5 was CARRIED*

TUC Accounts

The President: Could I now draw to your attention Appendix 3 from page 185 of the General Council Report, which is the TUC Accounts. The auditor is present in the hall. Does the Congress accept the accounts as set out in the appendix? *(Agreed)*
Thank you.

Adoption of the General Council Report

The President: That completes the formal business of Congress. I now ask Congress to adopt the General Council’s Report. Is that agreed?

* *The General Council Report was ADOPTED*

Vote of Thanks

The President: Congress, there are a number of colleagues who are leaving the General Council. Gerry Doherty from the TSSA is retiring from the General Council at this Congress. He has served on the General Council for six years. As you all

know, Gerry has been a tireless champion for public transport and those who work within it. He has led the way on building community support for the campaign against the cuts. Gerry, I, therefore, have great pleasure in presenting you with the Gold Badge of Congress. *(Applause)* Gerry, would you like to say a few words.

(Gold Badge of Congress presented to Gerry Doherty)

Gerry Doherty: Thank you, Michael. I joined the TSSA as a teenager. I joined the railway industry. In my first day I was handed two forms. One was to join the TSSA and one was to sign up for the pension scheme, and thank God I did for both of them.

It is a great honour and privilege to end up as a general secretary of any trade union. It's a huge honour. A teacher spoke at the rostrum earlier this week and said that when they are talking to kids and asking them what they want to be when they grow up, they say, "I want to be a football player." I have heard kids say that they want to be a train driver. I don't remember anybody saying that they want to be the general secretary of a trade union. *(Laughter)* Anyway, it is a huge honour and privilege. It has given me many opportunities in life.

There are a few thanks that I would wish to make. I want to thank, in particular, Brendan and Francis for all of the support that they have given me as an individual over my years as General Secretary. I want to extend those thanks to the TUC staff as well, because they do a fantastic job on behalf of us all. I want to thank all of the General Council members who I have served with over the years. Sometimes we have our arguments, but actually we all have a common goal. It is about the worker in the workplace being given a decent return for their labour. I also want to thank yourself,

Michael, and to Sheila, including all the past Presidents who I have served under. They have always shown me great courtesy.

What an opportunity I have had with the TSSA. What an opportunity in life. It has been fantastic to serve as a General Secretary. I will never forget what the TSSA has done for me.

Lastly, I want to say “Thank you” to my partner, who also happens to be my wife. Without her support and help, I couldn’t have done any of this. I said earlier on that I came from a place called Cambuslang. Another famous trade union guy came from Cambuslang – a bloke called Mick MaGahey. I remember when Mick retired. He was being interviewed on Scottish television and the presenter said to him, “What are you going to do in your retirement, Mick?”, to which Mick said, “Old activists don’t retire. They just take the struggle on to a different platform.” Well, I intend moving on to a different platform.

Congress, this Gold Badge is a huge honour. I will cherish it. Thanks for everything. I have huge memories. I will tell you something you already know. You have huge, huge struggles in front of you. I won’t be standing behind you and I won’t be standing in the sidelines. I will be shoulder to shoulder with you but just on a different platform. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Gerry. All our best wishes go with you. You have been a great supporter.

I now turn to Mark Fysh. Mark Fysh left the General Council late last year on medical advice after representing disabled trade unionists on the General Council for almost ten years. Mark, I have great pleasure also in presenting you with the Gold Badge of Congress. I know he is with his family. (*Gold Badge of Congress presented amidst applause*) I know that Mark would like to say a few words.

Mark Fysh: Congress, I would like to begin by dedicating this badge, first and foremost, to my wife, Karen, whose unfailing support has meant so very much; to my parents, and particularly my father, who is here today, and to UNISON, who gave me so many, many opportunities and taught me so very much – I cannot thank you enough – to my comrades and officers on the TUC Disability Committee, to all disabled workers, but in particular the workers in Remploy who face a bleak future at the moment. It has been an honour, a pleasure and a privilege to have served the trade union movement as a branch secretary for 15 years and as a lead officer on the General Council. You know what you have to do about your pensions, so go out and fight for them. I salute you. (*Applause*)

The President: Allan Garley, from the GMB, has served on the General Council since 2005 and brought his experience of trade unionism in Wales and the regions to our work. Allan, unfortunately, cannot be with us but we will ensure, Congress, that he receives the Gold Badge.

Also leaving the General Council are Julia Neal from ATL, who joined the General Council in 2007 and has contributed greatly to our work in years past. She has always played a key role in the TUC's LGBT and Women's Committees.

Alan Ritchie, from UCATT, has been a member of the General Council since 2005 and was always a forceful advocate for his members and the construction industry.

John Walsh has been a member representing young workers since 2005. As a former apprentice at BAE, he has proved to be a fantastic champion for apprentices everywhere. Well done, John.

A number of other colleagues have left the General Council during the past year. Dougie Rooney was last year's President of Congress and was held in high regard by all of his colleagues.

Derek Simpson and Tony Woodley both left us at the end of 2010 having completed the massive task of bringing together two of Britain's largest unions to create Unite. That union is a major force now in the trade union world.

Jeremy Dear left us earlier this summer after completing two terms as General Secretary of the NUJ to go back to journalism and to travel throughout Latin and southern American.

Congress, also leaving is Dilys Jouvenat, who was elected to the General Purposes Committee in 2009.

I am sure that Congress will want to show its appreciation for the contribution and commitment of all our colleagues leaving the General Council and the GPC.

(Applause)

Congress President 2012

Finally, Congress, it is my great pleasure, because he is always on my right, to announce that the next President of the TUC who takes office from the close of Congress, is our good friend Paul Kenny. *(Applause)* I wish him well and I hope he enjoys his year as President as much as I have. Good luck.

Vote of Thanks to the President

Brendan Barber *(General Secretary)*: I call on Sheila to give a vote of thanks to the President.

Sheila Bearcroft *(Vice President)*: Congress, as your Vice President, it is my pleasure to move a vote of thanks to Michael. Michael, it has been a privilege to work with you this week. You have chaired this Conference with great skill. In fact, you have managed to get through the business in less than three days, whereas it took me nearly four. If only the rest of British industry could match your productivity. *(Chuckling)* Michael, you have been a great President. You have always been firm and fair, never more so than following the exodus after Ed Miliband's speech, ensuring that everyone who addresses this Congress is treated with dignity, respect and are given a proper hearing. That is exactly the way that it should be.

Congress, I have known Mick for many, many years. We both hail from the same part of the world. We were both shaped by the same values. We have both struggled for those values and the same causes. In a long and distinguished career within our movement, Mick has achieved a great deal. He has been a powerful champion of manufacturing. He has helped to secure the future of thousands of steel jobs, most recently in Teesside, and he has been instrumental for winning pensions justice for workers who stood to lose everything. None of us should ever forget that huge achievement.

Mick, you are a credit to your union, a credit to this movement and, last but not least, a credit to Wales. After we were beaten by one goal by England in the football and one point by South Africa in the rugby, I have to confess that I was getting a little bit disheartened. Could someone, please, direct the rugby referee, Mr. Barnes, to the nearest branch of Specsavers. *(Laughter)* Seeing Mick this week has lifted the spirits. Michael, you have been a great President and you have done us all proud this week. On behalf of Conference and Congress, I thank you very much. It is my pleasure to present you with some small gifts: the Gold Badge of Congress and the Congress Bell. *(The Gold Badge of Congress and the Congress Bell were presented to the President amidst applause)*

Vote of Thanks

The President: Colleagues, you know that Welshmen are unaccustomed to public speaking and, as a Welshman, I am not going to compete with Mark Serwotka, but I would like to thank a few people, particularly, my wife and family. Irene is here

today. Without her support, I wouldn't be here today. I would like to thank Sheila. She has done a brilliant job for me this week. What better person to have their finger on the button than Sheila. I would like to thank the TUC staff, particularly Brendan, Francis and Kay. Thank you for your support and all the rest of the staff. It's has been immense.

I want to say a few brief words. I take this message from this Conference. Margaret Thatcher once said, "The lady isn't for turning." I think her son, David Cameron, has been sent a clear message today that the trade union movement is not for turning either. *(Applause)* We have to face enormous challenges. My own union, Community, is in a pension fight also with Tata. It may well be that we will be balloting for industrial action before the year ends. So we will be on your picket lines and maybe you will join us as well. Without further ado, we are in a position where we have to respect the past and all our best traditions of solidarity, but let us commit ourselves to creating a far better future. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

Brendan Barber *(General Secretary)* said: President and Congress, let me begin by echoing, first, Sheila's remarks about Michael, and let me pay my tribute to the absolutely tremendous job that he has done this week, and the fantastic job that he has done chairing our General Council and Executive throughout the year. He has been a fantastic President, someone who has been a wonderful advocate for trade unionism, and I am particularly grateful for all the personal support, Michael, that you have

given to me during the course of the year. Thanks also to Sheila for her role as Vice President. As you said, she has been very diligent on the clock and the red light keeping the Congress moving.

I was interested to hear the other day when she told us that there is no letter “W” in the Welsh language, which she noted was probably just as well during our debate on the bankers. (*Laughter*) Congratulations to Paul, who has been elected to succeed Michael. We are all looking forward to Paul’s year as President.

Let me thank some of the other people, too, who have helped to make this year’s Congress run smoothly. Thanks to the stewards, who have kept us in good order. Thanks to the tellers and scrutineers, who have helped us to conduct our business properly. Thanks to the sign language interpreters, who put your words into action faster than the General Council can express a reservation. Thanks also to the stage crew who got the show on the road and the catering staff who kept us fed and watered, not just with beer and sandwiches. In particular, just let me thank all of the TUC staff because, particularly with the Congress being held here in Congress House for the first time, the TUC staff in every part of the organisation have worked fantastically hard to make the Congress run smoothly. They have done a fantastic job, as they do throughout every week of the year. They have certainly my enormous thanks, and I am sure that they have yours, too.

This year’s Congress has, of course, been very different. It is the first we have ever held at Congress House. I have already been getting reviews and people’s actions to

the arrangement, and we will be reviewing the reactions and considering the future in due course. We will look forward to your feedback, good and bad.

Finally, let me move a vote of thanks to the media who, as always, have reported the Congress in a reasonable, even-handed and balanced way. *(Laughter)* There is a certain familiarity, isn't there, in that all the old clichés have made their annual appearance. We've had more dinosaurs here than in Jurassic Park, more sabres rattled than in some medieval battle and more seasons of discontent than a disgruntled weather forecaster could complain about. Apologies to Prospect members at the Met Office. For me the highlight was Leo McKinsky in the *Daily Express*. Leo accused me of "deluded hysteria". *(Laughter)* I think the *Express*, of all papers, would certainly recognise that particular phenomenon when it saw it. *(Laughter and applause)* Leo, I do confess that there are occasions when I have been guilty of deluded hysteria but only when I am at Goodison Park.

To be fair to us Evertonians we haven't exactly got any star strikers at the moment, but from what I heard during the pensions debate this morning, there are going to be an awful lot more before very long.

Congress, whether it is pensions cuts or the economy, I think we have really got our message across this week. This may have been a slimmed down event, but there have been no half measures as far as our debates have been concerned. Together we have helped to shape the agenda ahead of the party conference season. We've shown that cuts are emphatically not the answer to Britain's problems. We've exposed the huge flaws in the government's public service reforms, and we've made the case for a new

economy in a really imaginative and powerful way. Our task in the year ahead is to build on all of these achievements, to take our arguments for change to workplaces and communities right across Britain and to build that mass movement for the alternative. On the way, we want to win pensions justice, too, for the millions of decent people who rely on us.

Good luck in all of your work in the year ahead and a safe journey home to everyone, but before you leave enjoy this short reminder of some of the highlights of the last three days. *(Applause) (Video shown)*

The President: Congress, I declare the 143rd Congress closed.

(Conference closed at 1.05 p.m.)