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TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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President: Jeannie Drake OBE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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THIRD DAY: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH

MORNING SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 9.30 a.m.)

The President: I call Congress to order. Good morning, everyone. I hope you all had a good evening and that we have a good day's business ahead of us. I would like to say, first, a word about unfinished business, so if you could listen carefully because you may be affected by this. I am optimistic that at the end of this morning's session we may be able to take some of the unfinished business from earlier in the week. If there is time, I will take unfinished business in the order in which it was lost, beginning with Motion 19 in the name of BECTU on a union diversity fund.

I now call on the Chair of the GPC to give a report on progress of business.

General Purposes Committee

Annette Mansell-Green: Good morning, Congress. I am not sure my glasses are making much difference this morning! You may be aware that the sole remaining item of business outstanding from the published agenda was Motion 75 on Europe from the RMT, with the amendment from Community. There have been discussions on a possible composite but it has not been possible to reach agreement. Consequently, the motion will stand, together with the amendment in the name of Community, which will stand against the motion. Thank you.

Pensions and Welfare

The President: We turn now to Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Pensions and Welfare, on page 43. Congress, we start this morning's business by introducing the Chair of the Independent Pensions Commission, Adair Turner. The Commission will be reporting to government at the end of November. The Pensions Commission is an independent body set up to keep under review the regime for UK private pensions and long-term savings. The Commission was announced in the pensions Green Paper published in December 2002 and consists of three commissioners. The Commission is responsible for looking at how the pensions system is developing over time. Based on the Pensions Commission's finding, the Commission will make recommendations on whether the pension system should move beyond the current voluntary approach. At the end of Adair's address to Congress there will be a short question and answer session.

Adair, we are absolutely delighted that you could join us, particularly this early hour in the morning having come all the way down from London. Please address Congress. Thank you very much.

Address by Adair Turner, Chair of the Pensions Commission.

Adair Turner: Jeannie, thank you. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to talk to Congress today, but I am also very aware that I have a problem, which is that anything I say may be taken down and used as evidence for assertions about what the Pensions Commission is going to recommend. In fact, in the Pensions Commission we are pretty much now in our equivalent of pre-budget purdah ahead of the publication of our second report on November 30th. Obviously, we already know

something about what we are going to say - it would be rather concerning if with two-and-a-half months to go that was not the case - but there are still quite a few details to be pinned down. Revealing those recommendations clearly has to wait till we have all of the details pinned down, and until November 30th.

What I would like to do today is to highlight two of the difficult issues with which we have been wrestling and which I suspect will be the subject of major public debate after November 30th, whatever we then recommend. The first relates to the demographic challenge and the state pension system. The second relates to the issue of compulsion.

We cannot avoid facing the demographic challenge. Life expectancy is increasing and will continue to do so. I have to say that, despite having spent much of the last two years talking to actuaries, I insist on calling increasing in life expectancy good news, not bad news, but it does clearly create a challenge for all aspects of the pension system, for the state system, for private sector defined benefit schemes, for public sector schemes, and indeed for defined contribution schemes, though with the crucial difference that in the defined contribution environment all the risks are borne by individuals facing declining annuity rates at any given age, not by government or employers. The scale of that challenge appears to grow with every new estimate of future life expectancy.

One of the odd things about working for the Pensions Commission is that John, Jeannie, and I, have realised that we appear to have become immortal in the sense of each year that we work we hear from the government actuaries department that the estimates of life expectancy have been increased by one year. In 1980, decisions about public pension policy and about the affordability of defined benefit promises were being made on the basis of estimates that male life expectancy for a

man aged 65 in 2005 would be about 14 years, but now we have reached 2005 the estimate is 19 years. Looking forward, the current official base case forecast is 22 years of life expectancy for a man reaching 65 in 2050, but many experts believe that will be revised up significantly as new information becomes available. I would anticipate that we will soon be looking at higher estimates still. We really do not know how high it is going to go, it is quite possible by 2050 it could actually be in the high 20s.

Taking those life expectancy increases together with reasonable assumptions about fertility and immigration, and despite the fact that the immigration assumptions have been increased significantly by the government actuaries department over the last two years, taking all of their best estimates together, the ratio of people above 65 to people of working age is going to go from about four today to about two in 2050.

As a result only four things, or a mix of these four things, can happen:

- Either pensioners will get poorer relative to average earnings;
- Or taxes or National Insurance contributions will have to rise to pay for more general state pensions;
- Or savings flowing into private pension funds must rise;
- Or average retirement ages and pension ages must rise.

In part the trade-off between those four options will be made by individuals. Increasingly in the world of defined contribution pensions individuals will have to make their own trade-offs between how long to keep working and how much to save versus their desired income in retirement. The challenge there is to make sure that those people who want to work are able to do so. That is why the Pensions Commission has strongly supported the introduction of anti-age discrimination legislation and why we would prefer there to be no maximum age to its application.

If we turn to the state pension system, the trade-off will not be made by individual choice but by decisions about public policy. The trade-off in the state system is three-way: less benefits relative to average earnings, higher taxes, or higher pension ages. Present policies have chosen the first option. If continued indefinitely, present policies will mean substantially smaller pensions for people on average earnings relative to average earnings. Public expenditure is planned to stay roughly constant as a percentage of GDP increasing only from 6.2% to 6.4% over the next 45 years. The state pension age is assumed to stay constant at 65 after the equalisation in 2020, but the proportion of the adult population over 65 will increase by around 45%. If you run the mathematics, as night follows day, that means by 2050, on average, pensioners will receive about 30% less relative to average earnings than they do today. The replacement rates that the state, on average, gives people will fall by 30%.

The government is committed to ensuring that that falling provision is not at the expense of the standard of living, relative to the rest of the society, of the poorest pensioners. To achieve that the Guarantee Credit is, quite rightly the Pensions Commission believes, linked to earnings. That in turn means the contributory state pension enjoyed by the average earner – the person on £22,000/£23,000 per year – will have to fall even further than the 30%. If we have a 30% fall on average and we are making sure the poorest are protected against that, the fall for people above the poorest will be even greater, in fact it will be a bit over a third relative to average earnings. That also means the system will become steadily more means tested over time.

All of that defines the essential dilemma of state pension policy which we have to grapple with if we are going to talk about what we need in a state system to be a coherent basis for private saving on top.

The Commission is told repeatedly that means testing is a big problem. Pensioner groups dislike it and the private pension industry tells us that it is a disincentive for private pension saving. The Pensions Commission is also left in no doubt that there would be many people, in particular business groups, who would oppose any significant increase in the level of tax or national income devoted to pensions. We are also left in no doubt that there are many people, and institutions, who do not want an increase in state pension ages.

The state pension system is either going to become more means tested, or it is going to require higher taxes or National Insurance contributions, or there are going to be higher state pension ages, or there is going to be a mix of all those three things. There is nobody clever enough to design a state pension policy in the face of the demographic challenge which does not involve one of those three things, or a mix of them.

Whatever we decide, whatever the government decides on the state system, increased saving into funded pensions will also have to be part of the response to the demographic challenge, if people are to be not only defended against poverty in retirement but to achieve pensions that they will consider adequate relative to their income in life.

Both the present government, and previous Conservative governments, have certainly believed that that increase in private savings is required. Indeed, the overt aim of British pension policy for several decades has been that the percentage of pension income coming from non state-funded sources should rise.

It is, however, clear that we are not on target for a sustained rise in private pension income, whether from occupational pensions or from personal pensions; indeed, rather the opposite. Participation rates in private sector pension schemes, be they

occupational or personal, are in slight decline and average contribution rates will fall over the long term as the shift from defined benefit to defined contribution works through the system. The state is planning to do less for the average earner and neither the average earner herself nor her employer is doing more to fill the gap.

The Pensions Commission has become increasingly aware of three inherent barriers to that gap being filled by a voluntary system:

First, the fact that many employers do not see it as their role to provide pensions simply for reasons of social responsibility, to do what they see as being the job of the state, focusing only on what advantages they get in the labour market. Many are also convinced that pension promises, deferred pay, do not bring them as much bang for their buck in the recruitment and retention market as cash wages.

Second, the fact that many individuals find it very difficult to make sensible decisions about long-term savings without encouragement and advice, particularly when the whole pension system is so complex and difficult to understand.

Third, the fact that it is very difficult for the financial services industry actually to sell pensions to people of average earnings and below, working for small and medium size companies, or to sell pension schemes to their employers, at annual management charges sufficiently high enough for them to make a profit but also sufficiently low enough to present good value for money for private savings.

It is simply very expensive to get to individuals working on average earnings for small and medium size firms and when we do that at 1.5% annual management charge, a significant amount of the total pension is going in management charges by the time somebody gets to retirement.

Some people and institutions faced with those barriers urge the Pensions Commission to recommend compulsion. We know from surveys that there are indeed

many people who say they would like to be compelled to save but we also know many who say very clearly that they do not want compulsion. We know that resolving that conflict by saying, “OK, let’s just compel employers, not employees,” is not really an answer since there is a wealth of economic theory to suggest that in the long-term compulsory employer contributions will be at the expense of cash wages. Indeed, in a major developed country which has introduced compulsory pension savings in the last two decades, Australia, that trade-off (the pension contributions were instead of cash wage increases) was a deliberate aim of the policy recognised by government, employers, and unions alike.

Finally, we know that simply compelling people to save does not necessarily fix the cost efficiency problem which we believe is a key thing to be addressed. Australia again is a case in point, they do have compulsory savings. Theoretically, compulsory savings ought to be able to reduce significantly the management charges in pensions, but actually Australia has pretty high annual management charges.

To conclude, I hope I have managed not to give away at all what we are actually going to recommend but what I will say is that on compulsion quite as much as on state pensions, taxation, and pension ages, there are no easy answers; indeed, all the Pensions Commission can promise you, or government, or business, or individuals, is that there are going to be no easy choices at all among the recommendations we present on November 30th. Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you for conveying what is a very complex issue in such a short time with such clarity. Thank you very much indeed, Adair. I am going to take a block of three questions, which I think is the best way to start.

Les Dobbs (*GMB*): Adair, what could be done to give people more choice not just about when they retire but how they make the transition from full-time work to full-time retirement?

Lorene Fabian (*Amicus*): I have a very straightforward question from our union. We believe there is a missing link. Without compulsion on employers and employees to contribute to a pension scheme, where on earth do you believe individuals will find the substantial, very substantial, proportion of income that would be required to provide retirement security, given the financial pressures that already exist in the shape of mortgage payments, personal debt, and growing educational commitments? This is the real world.

Linda Taaffe (*National Union of Teachers*): My question is about affordability. Adair Turner has mentioned the problems that are seen concerning affordability but there are some factors which I think I would like to ask him about. He says that taxes might have to rise in order to cope with the demands of the pensions but my question is, what about the taxes that are in place now? In a recent article in the Guardian it was pointed out that accountancy firms are specialists in avoiding tax, so much so that £100bn has been lost to the Treasury by perfectly respectable accountancy firms getting around the so-called laws; in fact, they are contemptuous. They say that however long it takes a piece of legislation to go through Parliament, they can avoid it within a couple of hours.

My question to Adair Turner is, what are you going to do about those firms? What laws are you going to introduce to make sure that the rich are taxed as much as they possibly can be?

Also, according to Treasury figures produced by HM Treasury, the UK spends only 5.5 % of gross domestic product on pensions when the European average is around 10%. Let us hear what Adair Turner has to say about that before he comes to us and tells us that they have to reduce our pensions or increase our National Insurance contributions.

The President: There are the three questions for you, Adair.

Adair Turner: Thank you very much. The first one, how do we create more choice in the process of retirement? I think it is absolutely the aim we want to have. I think the idea that people should work full-time up to some given date of retirement and then stop thereafter is just an old idea, in fact it has changed for a lot of people already, but we need to encourage that to change.

We will within our report have one chapter which focuses entirely on removing barriers to people who want to work late, and will set out some issues about flexible retirement. Obviously, the anti-age discrimination legislation will help.

We should also look at some of the details of the way that pensions are paid. One specific idea which we did flag in the first report relates to the ability to defer your pension and get a higher amount. Already it is the case that, although the official state pension age for the basic state pension is 60 for women, 65 for men, and at 65 you get £82 fully paid up, you can choose to defer that and get a higher figure later. For instance, if you defer it to about age 70, you get I think about £130 in this deferral option.

At the moment, that deferral option is inflexible, you either have to defer the whole of it or none of it. We should definitely be moving into an environment where

some people have the option of taking half of their state pension and continuing to work part-time, if that is what they want to do, so that they are living a bit on state pension and a bit on earnings, and deferring the other half so that that is going up. There are other issues of that sort that we will be looking at, about how we create greater flexibility for people to have periods of life where they are dependent both on pension income and on earnings in a combination.

On the point of how is it going to be afforded, is compulsion not the only way to make it affordable? Of course, compulsion on employees does not change the nature of affordability. You are simply saying you would have found it very difficult because you are quite low income and you have mortgage commitments to save, but I am now going to compel you to save. That does not actually provide more resources, it simply says I am going to make sure that you make what we think is a sensible decision to save for retirement.

Obviously, it does feel at first sight different if what you do is compel employers, but I have to say that all of the evidence of economic theory does say that over time, if you compel employers, it will tend to be at the expense of cash wages. You will tend to produce a lower level of cash wages over time. I repeat that in the only major country which did introduce compulsory savings in the course of the last 20 years, which is Australia, compulsory pensions were introduced as an overt part of an incomes policy which was designed to constrain cash wages and instead put money into pensions. Again it did not magically give people extra resources, it was an indirect mechanism of making sure that people ended up with somewhat less cash wages but higher pension contributions.

Finally, on the issue of affordability and on tax evasion, I think at this stage I do have to say that we have had in the course of our work some frisson of excitement

with elements of the government as to whether we were going beyond our remit. I think if I was suddenly to start expressing points of view on what we do about tax evasion, a missive from the Treasury would appear on the Pensions Commission desk tomorrow.

I would, however, return to the fundamental point, wherever the money comes from the choice is more means testing, a higher state pension age, or more resources devoted to pensions. If you look at the TUC pension report it is clear what is proposed by the TUC, it is honest and it is straightforward. It is proposing that the cost of state pensions as a percent of GDP go from 5.8% today to somewhere in a range of 8.7% to 10.6% in 2050. If the government was to accept that, it would have to decide where the tax revenues were going to come from, but that would amount to an increase in tax revenues devoted to pensions. The only alternative to that is more means testing or a higher state pension age.

The President: Thank you very much. I will take another three questions.

Tony Lennon (*Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union*): It seems to our union that most of the debate about pensions at the moment is framed around fairly typical workers and fairly typical employers, but on behalf of a union where we have thousands of members who work either in freelance or atypical ways, where their National Insurance contributions and their tax arrangements are through no fault of their own idiosyncratic, I would like to ask where that kind of worker actually fits into whatever the solution is for the future.

Brian Caton (*Prison Officers Association UK*): I did not actually count them but you used the word “average” on a number of occasions throughout. The average worker is going to be covered by your recommendations but what about the non average worker? What about someone who does not live much longer than 18 months following their retirement? Those are the facts and figures we have for prison officers. Are we going to be caught up in your average figures to a position where our members will not even live to see retirement? I wonder if you could have a look at that and give us an answer, please.

Angela Gorman (*UNISON*): Thank you for this opportunity. I have been a nurse for nearly 30 years and surrounded by people who are on very low wages. On the statistics that you have given we know that the lowest paid in our society do not live longer, so are you asking people to work longer to enjoy a shorter retirement? How do you square the fact that the MPs have voted themselves a higher pension and the rest of us not? (*Applause*)

The President: I had a feeling that one might come up! Adair, that is another triple.

Adair Turner: On the first one, which is atypical workers, actually many of them are typical workers. Lots and lots of people work for small firms, an increasing number of people are self-employed, and an increasing number of people dip in and out of self-employment and employment contracts during life. We are very well aware that those are some of the segments where some of the biggest problems of under-provision of pension savings exist.

That is why, for instance, I focused in my comments on people working for small and medium size firms, although there are certainly problems of participation rates and sometimes of contribution rates among large companies. The biggest problems relate to small firms, that is where you are least likely to get an employer contribution. It is also where, unless there is an employer contribution, frankly, the financial services industry is not interested in going and trying to talk to people. There is no way they can make a profit except at reduction in yield so high that it would be pretty absurd for somebody to save. That is a problem and it is one of the arguments for compulsory schemes, or national schemes, that enable people in those sorts of firms to save whether it be by employer or employee contributions on a cost efficient basis.

There is then a very particular problem for the self-employed and I have to say that this is one of the areas where we are continuing to try and work out what we do. Even in compulsory schemes it turns out to be very difficult to compel the self-employed to save simply because of the way that they settle up their National Insurance at the end of the period. That is why, for instance, the Australian compulsory savings scheme does not cover the self-employed and the New Zealand new auto-enrolment scheme - it is not compulsion but it is auto-enrolment into a national scheme - again does not cover the self-employed.

We are still thinking about this. There are no easy answers in relation to the self-employed. They are a problem in relation to pension systems, whether state or private, throughout the world but be assured we are aware that that is a significant slice of people who have particular problems.

The second point is about averages. We are well aware that there are differences in the life expectancy by different socio-economic groups. Our latest look

at the figures does not suggest that it is widening that dispersion. It looks as if there is a dispersion and life expectancies are now increasing in all socio-economic groups but they are increasing in parallel at different levels. There is something like a five-year difference between the life expectancies of what is characterised as social class one, professional people, and social classes four and five. That is what the figures show. They do, however, also show that we are now achieving increases in life expectancy in all of those groups. We will have to think about that.

I would also add that there is one way the figures sometimes get used that I think we have to be a bit cautious of. I sometimes see people taking life expectancy at birth figures which say this group of people will live on average to 70, and then say that means they are only going to get five years in retirement at 65. That is a bit of a statistical cheat. You really do have to look at life expectancy at 65. When you take in life expectancy at birth you are pulling down those figures by the fact that some people die early in life well before retirement. If you do it on that basis, you will prove that back in 1950 nobody had any time in retirement because life expectancy at birth was below the retirement age.

That, I think, is overstating the case but we are well aware of the differences in socio-economic class and, indeed, the Sunday Times reported three months ago that I had thought up a magic scheme of different retirement ages for graduates and non graduates to deal with this. Actually, neither I nor the Commission have done that but at least it illustrates we are trying to think about that particular problem.

Finally, I think the Unison point was again this point about people who do not live longer. I hope I have addressed the point by pointing out that we are aware of the figures, we have looked very carefully at the figures, we think we have the best shot at

what those differences by socio-economic class are, and we will refer to them in the report, so I think I have answered that already.

As for MPs, I will leave it to Alan Johnson to answer that question.

The President: That was a very good concluding line. I now have to close this session, I am afraid, because we have to get through other business, but I did want to say, Adair, thank you very much indeed for coming and giving that presentation and certainly for being prepared to stay and take some questions. Thank you very much indeed.

Congress, the TUC's Pensions Report, Solving the Pensions Crisis, is as a result of two-and-a-half years' work undertaken by the TUC Pensions Task Group. Pensions are one of the key issues facing the Trade Union Movement at the moment. The report outlines our vision on how the UK pensions system should be designed and what we believe needs to be done to solve the pensions challenge. You all will have received copies of the Pensions Report in your packs.

I am now pleased to call on the General Secretary to present the TUC's Pensions Report. Thank you, Brendan.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*): Thank you, Jeannie. Good morning, Congress. This is the time of year that we have to listen to employers and sundry right wing commentators telling us that unions have had their day, we are out of touch, part of the fossil record, not the future. Everyone here today could produce myriad reasons why that is wrong, but if we have to choose just one our campaign for pensions justice would be a strong contender for that award. Unions have been right at the forefront of those exposing the depths of the pensions crisis. If it was not for

union campaigning there would be no pensions protection fund, no financial assistance scheme, no continuing campaign to make sure that the people who need the support of that scheme get the resources they need; employers would still be free to scrap pensions schemes without a scrap of consultation and, indeed, it is an open question as to whether Adair would have had a pensions commission to chair were it not for union campaigning for a new pensions settlement.

We need to do more than sound the alarm and campaign to right the injustices suffered by the victims of today's pensions failures. Without radical change, millions of people at work today will face poverty on retirement. We also have a responsibility to set out how to solve the pensions crisis of the future. That is exactly what we do in the General Council's Task Group report, which we ask you to adopt today.

First, we must set out what is wrong. We need to put the spotlight on the employer retreat from their pensions responsibilities. On Sunday we published a shocking dossier of new evidence. Only one in four workers in the private sector is now a member of a workplace scheme, half of salary-related pensions closed to new entrants in just three years between 2000 and 2003, two-thirds of final salary schemes are no longer open to new members, and contribution rates to money purchase schemes are half that to the schemes they have replaced.

Our unions, and some employers to their credit, have helped to resist that tide but if the trends continue just one in ten will have a work-based pension open to them in 20 years' time in the private sector. There is one group, however, that has successfully resisted pensions cuts, Britain's top bosses. They have been happy to tighten everyone's belts but their own. The UK's most senior directors share a cool £1bn in their pension pots: even Sir Digby says it is wrong.

While it is right to put the spotlight on employers, we should not let government off the hook either. The rot started with the Conservatives, they cut the link between pensions and earnings, hollowed out SERPS and presided over the pensions misselling scandal that destroyed trust in private pensions for a generation. This government has done better. There have been real efforts to cut pensioner poverty; winter fuel allowances, free TV licences, and more, but some two million pensioners, mostly women, still live in poverty. The state retirement pension is one of the lowest in Europe and we join with the National Pensioners Convention in saying today, it is shameful that it is still not linked to average earnings. Indeed, let me say how good it has been to see Jack Jones with us here at Congress this week still battling for pensions' justice for the pensioners of today.

An awful lot remains to be done. As ministers accepted when they set up Adair's commission, current policies simply do not add up to a long-term solution, and that is what we set out today. First, we need action on the state pension. Everyone in retirement should be able to build on a strong state pension, set high enough to lift all out of poverty and ending the need for means testing. Most of all, it should be linked to earnings again so that pensioners can share in rising prosperity, not fall behind each year. It must better serve women; just 16% of women get a full basic state pension in their own right at the moment. That is why today we say that everyone should get a full basic state pension in their own right.

Second, it is time to make employers face up to their responsibilities again; voluntarism has failed. The genie has escaped from its bottle and it cannot be put back. That is why compulsory savings is at the heart of our pensions' solution through the good occupational schemes we want to retain and extend, through new schemes, and also through a modernised state second pension. But in putting forward

our solution we also have to guard against the quack remedies. Let us be very clear today. We say no to a higher state pension age and the work-till-you-drop policies of making people work until they are 70. Of course, if people really want to work longer that is fine, and finding new routes to retirement for those who do not want to work full-time one day and retire full-time the next, that gets our support too. It has to be a genuine choice, not driven by poverty or lack of proper pension availability.

This is our message to government on public sector pensions too. Public servants have been made a pensions promise and they expect that to be kept. We welcome the government's recognition before the election that they had this wrong. I welcome their willingness to negotiate on the normal pension age in the public sector. Alan Johnson, who we welcome this morning, is leading for the government and is playing it straight. I think he understands the strength of feeling on this issue and he certainly will after today's debate, I am sure. I think he is genuinely trying to find a solution with us. We are not there yet, but I believe a solution can be found, based on a genuine choice and flexibility, not on an imposed across the board increase in the pension age.

So, Congress, let us adopt the policies before us today, but let us do much more than that. In the coming months -- as Ministers consider the Turner Commission's Report -- we will have to take our pensions' campaign to the next level, to not just our members who depend on us but on pensions (as on so many other issues) we are the voice of Britain at work. Therefore, for today's and tomorrow's workers do not just vote for the report today but go back to your communities and workplaces and let us step up our campaign for pensions justice. Let us get to it.

(Applause)

Pensions and Welfare

The President: We continue with Chapter 3 of the General Council's Report, Pensions and Welfare. I call first Composite Motion 8, Public Service Pensions, which the General Council support.

Public Service Pensions

Dave Prentis (*UNISON*) moved Composite Motion 8.

He said: I am proud of the part UNISON played with our sister unions in forcing the government climb down on pensions in the spring of this year, averting the biggest strike seen in this country since 1926. Congress, I was privileged to work with eight other public service unions, more than 1.5 million members in central and local government determined to fight to defend their pensions, winning a famous victory. To those in New Labour watching and listening today, make no mistake, we will do it again if we have to. (*Applause*)

A year ago, when we last debated pensions, there were many in government who doubted the strength of feeling of our members; many in government who underestimated our members' anger at the plans to break up their pensions schemes; and many in government, Alan, who failed to understand the outrage felt by our members at the hypocrisy of politicians voting themselves the best pensions scheme in Europe whilst attacking ours. To those who think that that anger has subsided I say "Think again". To those who promised genuine negotiations who think they can get away with re-packaging their old proposals, I say "Think again". To the Tory-led Local Government Association, if you think our members will pick up the bill for the plundering of their pension fund by the last Tory Government, to reduce poll tax, you can think again as well. To John Prescott, under pressure from the Tory local

government employers to go back on his word, I say “Stand firm” because I promise you this, public service unions will not be divided; we are stronger and more united than ever. We will take strike action to defend our pensions; we will fight proposals to increase the pension age and cut benefits; we will fight for pensions that give dignity and security to our members in retirement. Those who deliver public services deserve nothing less -- those on the front line praised by politicians for their selfless sacrifice and heroism one day but let down the next.

Divide and rule will not work. Those working in the private sector would gain nothing whatsoever from cutting the pensions of those working in their local hospital, school or local Job Centre. Ministers claim it is unfair: they say it is unfair that public sector workers should get a decent pension while workers in the private sector see theirs slashed. Two wrongs do not make a right. I will tell you where the real divide is, it is between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots: the double standard that dictates that the rich and powerful can award themselves multimillion pound pensions while the average pension of a local government worker is £73 a week. Whilst the fat cat directors, the so-called captains of industry, still award themselves a pension worth an average £2.5 million, those who rely on state benefits live in poverty.

Part of our campaign is to restore the earnings link to state pensions. So no more talk of divides between public and private, between workers and state pensioners. This rejects completely a race to the bottom, utterly rejects a levelling down. On life expectancy, it may have gone up for the more affluent but for the worst off it still remains the same.

I say to the government and I say to Alan, be in no doubt, we reject the politics of envy and divide and rule, we will fight to defend our pensions, we will fight to win

better pensions deals for all workers, fight to end the scandalous pension plight facing millions of women in our country, and we will campaign to lift ourselves off the bottom of the European pensioners league table.

Congress, as a Movement we have a duty not to fail our present members. We also have a duty not to fail our members of tomorrow. We must not allow this generation of public service workers to be the last to enjoy decent pensions. They deserve more from us than that. Let us be the ones who stood up united, fighting for what is fair and just, united in anger, united in our determination, united in our belief that we can win.

Congress I move. (*Prolonged Applause*)

The President: You have a few supporters there, Dave!

Janice Godrich (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Composite Motion 8.

She said: Yesterday Congress heard Mark Serwotka outline the attacks on job security PCS members face. Working in the civil service and related bodies can be a pretty dismal place at present: the constant anxiety over job security, injustices and unfairness in pay and performance systems, now compounded by the prospect of working longer with poverty in retirement.

Over many years our employer has tried to justify holding down civil service pay levels by arguing that we get a good pension. It is vital to rebuff these myths. In the 1970s the civil pension scheme was the eighth greatest in value in the UK. For PCS members now the average pension in retirement is £4,800 -- hardly a golden handshake -- because low pay equals low pensions.

In December 2002 the Green Paper outlining major changes emerged. We have long supported and argued for a flexible decade of retirement that would allow staff to retire at any time between 55 and 65 to suit their particular personal circumstances. The government's proposals effectively shut the door on this by robbing civil service workers of their right to a full pension at 60. The government claim that the present system is unaffordable, yet they have wasted billions on failed IT systems and spent further billions each year in the civil service on private sector management consultants, whilst presiding over 25 billion of uncollected tax at the same time as cutting jobs in the Inland Revenue.

It soon became clear that the attack on pensions of PCS members affected large numbers of other public sector workers. Faced with a threat of such magnitude, only a united response would suffice. PCS has always recognised this and was pleased to place this position at last year's Congress. Earlier this year we saw this demonstrated in action. Whatever your views on the cynical timing, the threat of joint action on 23 March this year, the potential of over one million working people acting in a united way achieved what should have been the natural instinct of any decent employer -- start from the beginning and negotiate with the trade unions. Our responsibility is now to ensure that that unity continues and we are in the strongest possible position to defend our members' position.

PCS endorses the demands made within the composite. The threat of a compulsory increase in the retirement age is unacceptable. Any detriment to our members' pensions will mean more misery and poverty in retirement. Colleagues, in parts of the west of Scotland the average male life expectancy is 64. Unless we stop these proposals these members will not even live to pick up a pension. What a disgraceful legacy that would be in the 21st century.

I am confident that we will send a clear message from this Congress: we are united, we are determined. An attack on our members' pensions on this scale will mean poverty in retirement. PCS is pleased to second Composite Motion 8.

Occupational Pensions

Tom Brennan (*GMB*) moved Composite Motion 9.

He said: It is the case, and well documented, that pension benefits in every sector of the United Kingdom economy have eroded substantially in the last decade. Workers in the private sector have suffered most from unscrupulous employers who are abandoning schemes altogether or changing from final salary to inferior money purchase schemes. With this scenario, one would have expected -- and our members should have been entitled to conclude -- that under the public service umbrella at least their pensions were safe, in good hands, and particularly during the reign of a Labour Government. Not so. Despite the statement from Chancellor Brown on Tuesday, that we work better when we work together -- with which we entirely agree, of course -- if it means what it says why is John Prescott, on behalf of the government, attempting unilaterally to reduce our members' pensions benefits? That is most certainly not working together in anyone's language.

This issue is not just about raising the retirement age; it is also about raising contribution rates beyond the affordability of the lowest paid workers, and it the lowest paid workers who do not join the scheme in the first place. Raising contributions will inevitably lead to less participation and a greater dependency on state benefits in future. Therefore, economic madness. In simple terms, this government are asking our members to pay more contributions for less benefit.

It is all right for John Prescott. He is one of the endangered species who has not felt the draught in the pensions crisis. Yes, the Members of Parliament have developed an immunity against this contagious disease through vaccination that was self administered. It is not all right, Jack. I do not mean to get personal, not with Johnny One Punch, I would not dare, but he has 25 years service and probably the best pension scheme in the land with a potential income of £83,000 a year. Contrast that with an average local government pensioner surviving on less than £3,800 per annum. Even if there were local government workers on his annual salary of £134,000 and with 25 years' service, they would receive less than half of his pension for sitting on the green benches. Different standards and double standards.

This is not news, but just in case there is any shadow of a doubt GMB are not prepared to allow this government, or any future government, to reduce our members' pensions benefits wherever or whenever they work. We will take whatever action is appropriate to defend our members' pensions. Selling out future generations of public service workers, by condoning the introduction of inferior schemes for new starters, will undermine the fundamental principles of our Movement today and fracture the solidarity of tomorrow. We will not allow this government to divide our members through differing employment conditions in the same way as employers have done with pension benefits in the private sector. We must stand united and say with one voice, no forcing our members to work until they drop, no forced increase in contributions for no extra benefit, no inferior scheme for new starters.

The only comfort for many public sector workers is that they can be fairly sure -- fingers crossed, of course -- that their employer will not go bankrupt and take the pension fund down with them like those who have already suffered this fate and are looking to the financial services scheme for justice, with no guarantee that they will

receive one penny. This government is leaving tens of thousands in limbo because the FAS liferaft is too small. The £400 million available will not go far with over 100,000 potential claims in the pipeline. When that money has been spent on those nearest retirement, it will leave 50,000 plus claimants in the wilderness. An immediate injection of cash to resolve this problem is now a priority, along with proper pension projection legislation so that this does not happen again --sympathy not cash for many of the victims of bankrupt pension schemes. This government must act now.

This Labour Government needs to remember why it was created, why it was supported by working people, why it won the election. Britain needs a government prepared to protect its people in childhood, in work and in retirement. It is time they did just that.

In conclusion I will refer again to Chancellor Brown's speech. We agree entirely: what we stand for, what the Movement stands for, is dignity and financial security in retirement through good pensions. I rest my case.

Robbie Ridoutt (*Prospect*) seconded Composite Motion 9.

He said: how many times this week have we heard that the government value local government workers and, in particular, those low paid workers without whom the infrastructure of local government would collapse.

The government also tell us that they are committed to a good work/life balance policy. Is not a dignified retirement part of a good work/life balance? It is a disgrace that these people who went into local government service on low wages, and willingly paid 6 per cent of their wages into a pension scheme on the understanding that they would receive a reasonable pension based on their final salary when they

retired, now find that their deferred wages have been taken from them with no guarantee of receiving their expected pension. That, Congress, is a pay cut.

This motion recognises the immediate need for a pension tax incentive to encourage a greater level of investment in pension schemes. However, that can only be a long-time benefit. The more pressing need is to ensure the immediate security of pensions for low paid workers, workers whose average wage is only £3,700 a year, £70 a week. Yes, the government have attempted to provide security through the pension protection fund and the financial assistance schemes, but both are seriously underfunded, and by definition will only provide some assistance. They will not top-up all the short fall in pension expectations. Congress, we must not allow low paid workers to become victims. Support this motion and send a message to the government that it must take immediate steps to provide a guarantee for these pensions. I understand that there are billions of pounds of national insurance contributions sitting in the Treasury's coffers. Here is an opportunity to put that to good use.

Prospect is pleased to second this motion.

Keith Turner (*Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists*): This is my first time at TUC Congress. I speak in support of Composite 8, Public Service Pensions, and I am sure that all in this room support wholeheartedly what UNISON, in moving the motion, and PCS, in seconding it. put forward. As Adair Turner said earlier, drawing attention to this TUC document, it highlights the challenging but in the TUC's view achievable target of encouraging 80 per cent of those available to work into taking rewarding employment. It firmly rejects any notion of increasing the state pension age.

As regards specifically the NHS pension scheme, the consultation period took place earlier this year, the responses to which concluded in April. In relation to age, a familiar theme emerged: the management side partners believed that a reasonable response to demographic pressure facing the NHS pension scheme would be to increase the normal pension age from 60 to 65 years. The staff side response -- chaired by Eddie Saville from my own union -- was to vehemently oppose this.

Colleagues, podiatrists, like other NHS workers, face ever increasing workloads, creating greater physical and mental stress. The last thing that workers need to hear is that they might have to work longer to receive their contractually entitled pension. Earlier this year -- no doubt due to the threat of industrial action by other public sector union colleagues -- the government initiative appeared to be to move towards formal negotiations rather than the previous consultation based on the premise of increasing the normal pension age. In March, Alan Johnson wrote to Brendan indicating that the government were prepared to negotiate on all aspects of the proposed changes, in particular the proposal to increase the pension age. It will be interesting to hear his response in relation to that today. We appreciate, as we said earlier, that some people might wish to work beyond the normal pension age. Flexibility and choice, but moreover voluntariness, are clearly the way forward.

The TUC Pensions Group Report itself welcomes, it commends, efforts through collective bargaining to create a flexible decade of retirement, based on individual choice, taking account of the individual's differing circumstances. It acknowledges the vitally important role that unions should play in such negotiations. If I can summarise, retention of the normal pension age without increase, individual choice based on voluntary and flexible approaches, final salary bases creating

certainty. These are the objectives. The view that the NHS pension is a deferred pay, a contractual entitlement, is clearly the correct approach.

Finally, colleagues, may I commend the composite motion to Congress, congratulating the TUC so far on its work and calling on it to continue its high profile and most valuable work in defending legitimate public sector worker expectations. I thank you and ask you for your support in supporting Composite 8.

The President: Thank you, Keith, and welcome to your first Congress.

Gail Cartmail (*Amicus*) Supporting Composite Motion 8 said: Amicus's contribution to this debate is on the issue of consultation. But while I am up here and on my feet I do want really just to get a message across to Alan, which is that all our public service members in health, in local government, in higher and further education feel passionately about what they regard as their contractual entitlement to the pensions scheme that they were promised when they signed on the dotted line and dedicated themselves as public servants. It is shameful that our members have to go to the brink of industrial action to get our Labour Government to consult, to listen and to work with us, to reach agreement. We are overwhelmed by our members' anger, Alan, and we really cannot emphasise enough the power of the support in the talks that we are having with you.

To be fair, John Prescott did eventually listen and he pulled the regulations and met our demands -- no dictats, consultation, disclosure of facts, and meaningful negotiation -- but the draft regulations implementing the new Pensions Act 2004 will not give all workers the right to consultation. Small and medium size firms are excluded. Trades unions can be ignored as employers have choice with whom they

consult. Does not that word “choice” crop up in a very negative way very frequently at the moment? Ill health pension provision could be snatched away without consultation; employers would be obliged to consider comments but not required to provide a reasoned response.

The consultation Amicus wants is before decisions are made, with an expectation of proper talks to agree changes. I spent Valentines Night with John Prescott -- and not many people can say that! -- with Dave and others, in compressed talks at the eleventh hour, on the brink of industrial action. Now, happy to do that John, happy to do that Alan, but let us not make a mess of the draft regulations, let us get them sorted out and let us give all workers the right to consultation and right to influence via their recognised trades unions.

I urge colleagues to support Composite 8.

Steve Sinnott (*National Union of Teachers*): This is an important debate for millions of public sector workers, an important debate for my members, members of the National Union of Teachers; and this stage, this time, is an important time for us too. It is important because there is a real challenge being laid down to the trade union Movement and to the unions representing public sector workers. How we respond to that challenge will affect the lives of the current generation of public sector workers, but also many future generations of public sector workers. It can also influence the quality of the public services by the way in which it has an impact on the recruitment and the retention of public sector workers.

We in the NUT recognise that our pensions are important, and we also recognise that the pensions of our colleagues who are in the private sector are important too. We reject any artificial divide between those two sectors. The theme of

this debate has been set, and it includes the issues of unity and a real determination to protect and defend our members' pensions. That unity in the course of the past few months has been assisted by the real work of the TUC, in ensuring that in the public sector the PSF process moved smoothly and protected and ensured that that unity assisted us in the negotiations and discussions. The unity that was forged in the period before the general election created the success of the Movement in persuading government to negotiate with us properly on the issues of pensions. That unity was the result of our determination, some of us by the ballots that we held in order to make it very clear our determination to protect public sector pensions.

However, we all must recognise that at the moment, as we move into the details of the pension discussions, there are real pressures arising from the different priorities existing within different unions and different schemes. Now is the time for us not to be split by us looking at those different priorities in a way other than the impact in the way we press for one will have on us all. We in the National Union of Teachers are fully committed to ensuring that there is unity across the public sector. We too are fully committed to ensuring that in our scheme of specific negotiations the teachers' organisations stick together. I have to say that I am very confident that that will be the case. I am confident too that we will ensure that we say to everybody, and in particular to the government, that the real issue of the 60 to 65 ages must be properly addressed, for it is only if that is properly addressed will it have the agreement of the National Union of Teachers.

Support Composite 8.

Tom Robson (*Prison Officers Association UK*): I spent Valentine's Night in jail!

Earlier this week, the Prison Officers Association was very happy to support Motion 18 as part of Composite 7. That was regarding the giving of rights to individuals, supported by their trade unions, to make their own decisions regarding retirement. We are all different individuals with individual needs but there are still many occupations where, sadly, life expectancy is below the norm. Despite what may have been said earlier today, it ain't getting any better. Individual unions must be given the opportunity, through the TUC, to genuinely argue their case and to be taken heed of rather than having revised retirement ages imposed upon them merely to balance the budget. Trades unions can supply statistics, and have supplied statistics. Sadly, I can tell you that prison officers are amongst those who, in general, have a poor life expectancy following retirement -- and we are talking about 18 months average.

The POA in placing this amendment worries about those who may be expected to continue to cope with rigorous physical and mental demands, which not only shorten life expectancy but do actually kill our members. Individual workers need to leave essential services at a time that suits their own individual needs. For prison officers, to be fighting with inmates in controlled situations, and in riot conditions, well into their sixties cannot be safe and simply cannot be justified.

In closing, however, it must be remembered that following long service to the public the ability to retire at the right time must be linked to the provision of decent and fair pensions allowing for comfort and recuperation in retirement, because by God our members have earned it. Remember that any compulsory extension to the retirement age is wrong; it is unacceptable and it is dangerous. Reject it for your members. Support the composite and the Prisons Officers Association fully supports this campaign.

Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, President.

Steve Connolly (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*): Rising in support of Composite 8 referring to the question of pensions and, in particular, state funded pensions.

Congress, President, sisters and brothers, in 1980 the Thatcher Government abolished the link with earnings. That resulted in a cut, a short- fall in the state pension -- £30 a week for a single pensioner and £50 a week for a couple. It took away their income and it took away their dignity -- dignity that comes through a decent income, enough to feed yourself, keep yourself warm in the winter, enough to clothe yourself and enjoy a few simple pleasures in life.

So, why have not Labour restored the link? Why, when we have the most successful and buoyant economy for the last 30 years? It is a fact that we are the fourth richest economy in the industrial world, yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer says our nation cannot afford to pay a decent pension to state pensioners. It is a myth; it is a myth of monumental proportions. By the way, these are Labour politicians, people who should know better.

Last year the National Pensioners Convention published the Pensions Manifesto. It is a good read because it tells the truth. Its full title is Towards Dignity, Security and Fulfilment in Retirement -- a very appropriate title. The manifesto clearly illustrates that one in five, over two million pensioners, still live in poverty; less than 12 per cent of women receive the full basic pension in their own right. Millions of pensioners are struggling to meet the rising cost of council tax and utility bills, yet it does not end there. Pensioners who receive an income from one source or another of £131 pounds a week pay income tax. It does not seem true but it is. Over

four million pensioner households -- let us be clear, not individual pensioners -- have savings of less than £6,000.

But the problem does not end there; it does not end with current pension poverty. The government appear to have a plan to reduce the amount of the nation's wealth, the GDP, it spends on the state pension by more than 20 per cent. There can only be one result from this awful decision -- a time bomb. The problems of pensioners today will be increased sharply for the pensioners of tomorrow. Why, when there is a record level of money in the National Insurance Fund, a massive £30 billion -- not £30 million, £30 billion -- of usable surpluses? What is the hidden agenda? Why cannot our money, pensioners' money, stored in the National Insurance Fund, be spent on state pensions? The answer is clear: there is not the political will. The government that we supported and elected are putting the needs of big business first. That can be seen wherever you care to look.

It is an absolute mistake. Pension provision is a vote winner not a vote loser. Let us be clear, state pension remains the bedrock of the pension system. Hopefully, restore the link and support the pensioners manifesto.

Diana Markham (*British Dietetic Association*): Supporting Composite 8. As a dietician working in the NHS our union welcomes the government's move to formal negotiations instead of consultation on a compulsory retirement age of 65. Flexibility and a voluntary retirement age are paramount to successful pension reform. There are workers who value the opportunity to work beyond the age of 60 and receive a pension enhancement that continued employment brings them. Indeed, it was a dietician that took this issue to the European Court to enable women to have the right to work beyond the age of 60.

A recent Women at Work Commission Report has shown that women are disadvantaged in terms of pension provision. Being able to work beyond the age of 60 could obviously be a benefit to these workers. Other people may choose to reduce the number of hours they work each week as they approach retirement age. The flexibility to do this is desirable. Some healthcare workers are burnt out by the time they reach the age of 60 and the prospect of having to work to 65 in order to receive their full pension is unacceptable. Continued working could be damaging both to the workers' health and to the health and safety of the patients they are treating. The current final salary pension scheme is easy to understand, and in order to plan for retirement workers need to be able to calculate clearly the amount of pension they will receive.

In conclusion there is an issue of trust linked with public sector pensions. Pensions are deferred pay and they must be maintained on a final salary basis, not moved to a career average formulation, which is likely to be detrimental given the career patterns of many public service workers, particularly women. An increased pension age should be voluntary, not compulsory.

Congress therefore urges the TUC to continue its campaign on public sector pensions. Please support.

Jerry Bartlett (*National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers*):
Speaking in support of Composite 8.

TUC public sector affiliates have achieved an unprecedented unity around our joint determination to defend our pensioners' normal pension ages. Accordingly, we were delighted by the government's change of approach from dictat to commitment to negotiate. This conversion had nothing to do with the impending general election of course! We are now becoming extremely cynical. Hours of meetings and informal

talks post-election have failed to achieve any real progress towards maintaining current normal pension ages. Such proposals as have emerged would require public sector workers to themselves fund maintenance of current scheme provision, through the payment of additional contributions, or the diversion of funds from possible scheme improvements long campaigned for. The government must not underestimate our members' anger over this matter. The extent of their determination to defend their pensions schemes has taken some of us by surprise. It is a matter of certainty that failure to negotiate an acceptable settlement to this dispute will result in united industrial action across the public sector.

The government's determination to save money on public sector pension schemes is driven by the increasing life expectancy of public sector workers. Longer life is of little benefit to workers who, in increasing numbers, struggle to reach normal retirement age in good health. If they are required to work even longer to achieve normal pension age, then their quality of life in retirement is going to be that much poorer.

As this dispute progresses, we must not allow the government to create divisions between our public and private sector memberships. The argument is deployed that current public sector pension provision cannot be justified because of appalling provision in the private sector. We look to this Labour Government to address inadequate pension provision wherever it occurs. We want levelling up, not equity of misery in old age. What about the argument that current public sector pension provision cannot be justified because levels of pay are now alleged to be higher in the public sector than in the private? Abysmal levels of low pay exist amongst certain working groups in both the public and the private sectors. Again, we

expect this Labour Government to address low pay and inadequate provision wherever it occurs.

I appeal to you not to allow the government to play off groups of workers against each other, whether that is within the public sector or between the public sector and the private sector. We must stand together to win this dispute. Please support Composite 8 and Composite 9.

Tony Woodley (*Transport and General Workers' Union*): Supporting Composite 8 and Composite 9. Millions are facing pensions insecurity and thousands are being robbed by company closures. Opportunist bosses have taken billions from pensions holidays during the good times and -- surprise, surprise -- when they have to put their hands in their pockets they squeal like the proverbial pig.

But how do we tackle the pensions crisis? Firstly, a decent pension linked to earnings. We must find the means to restore the link, not the means testing. We have to protect occupational pensions. Secondly, if the pensions blackhole is to be closed, then we must have compulsory employer contributions. There is no other answer, irrespective of what the CBI say when they look after their own pensions. Thirdly, comrades, in the public sector we as trades unions must remain united and determined to fight for our members' pensions. If that means a national strike, as was almost the case this year, then so be it. Lastly, but not least, we must safeguard workers when their company schemes go bust. What a relief it was for MG Rover that the Pension Protection Fund came into force only the week before the company collapsed. We welcome the schemes for workers at firms like UEF, who have already seen their pensions vanish through no fault of their own. But be clear, £400 million shared

between 80,000 workers gives them less than 70 pence a day. We say that the fund and the scheme should protect every single worker's pension.

Do not let anyone tell me that the third richest country in the world cannot afford pensions justice. I do not need lectures from Adair Turner or any MPs to tell me we cannot have pensions justice for working men and women in our country when they look after themselves. It is one law for the rich and one law for the poor.

I will finish on this, comrades. He who aspires to become Prime Minister should put a windfall tax on the obscene profits of the greedy oil companies -- and when they have done that they should also do exactly the same thing with the greedy banks. Even the Tories when they were in power did that.

I support Composite 8 and Composite 9. Thank you.

* *Composite 8 was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

* *Composite 9 was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

Address by Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

The President: It is now my great pleasure to welcome Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, into the lion's den. Alan, of course, is no stranger to Congress. Last year he addressed us in his previous role as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. For many years before that he was a familiar face at the rostrum in his former role as leader of the Communication Workers Union.

Alan, yesterday we heard the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and the Chair of the Labour Party, Ian McCartney, both reconfirm the central importance of the Warwick Agreement to Labour's third term. Of course, your new department has a key role to

play in delivering that agenda so that together we can make a real difference to working people's lives. Alan, we look forward to hearing how we can make progress towards our shared goals. The rostrum is yours. We look forward to hearing from you.

Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry: President and Congress, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today, and thank you, Jeannie, for that introduction.

As Secretary of the Jeannie Drake Fan Club I have to say she serves to remind us all of how much we have lost by not being able to attract more women into senior trade union positions.

Congress, I want to talk this morning about some of the challenges of our changing society. I want to talk about the change in the context of trade, employment rights and our industrial infrastructure. Now, more than ever before, change is constant and inevitable – it can be managed but it cannot be stopped.

In Lampedusa's great novel, "The Leopard", the hero Trancredi, surveying the collapse of the old order in 19th century Italy, says, "For everything to stay the same, everything must change".

We have an opportunity to shape that change in accordance with our principles and our beliefs, or be overwhelmed by it, to the detriment of the people you represent.

The debate this morning on pensions epitomises this dilemma. In 1900 when Keir Hardie's Labour Representation Committee was established life expectancy was 47. Now after a century of progress and half a century of the National Health Service it's 78.

In 1908 when the State pension was first introduced, there were 14 people working for every one person retired. Now the ratio is 4 to 1, and by 2050 it will be 2

to 1. With a declining birth rate and increased longevity, we have a cradle to grave Welfare State with fewer cradles and a thankfully longer journey to the grave.

There is not a single trade union in this Congress which has not had to tackle the ramifications of the dramatic changes that Adair Turner highlighted in respect of the pension provisions of your members. Indeed, every trade union here has had to review their pension arrangements as an employer for their own staff. There should be no surprise, therefore, that government, as a major employer, has had to do the same.

President, I fully accept that our original approach was wrong. Public services have a right to expect proposals to change their pensions arrangements to be discussed and negotiated with their trade unions. That wasn't happening before. I hope that Brendan and his colleagues accept that it is happening now.

Whilst we do want to change the retirement at 60 ethos, this is in the context of preserving high-quality, defined-benefit, index-linked pension schemes, making improvements to other elements of the schemes, preserving the current arrangements in the unfunded for existing staff for almost a decade and introducing arrangements which give individuals a choice about when they retire – be it aged 60, 65 or later. But we can only deliver this within a scheme that is capable of withstanding the demographic changes that are bound to have a radical effect on pension provision. I look forward to further discussions and if we face the fact together, I am confident that our negotiations will succeed.

I would just like to make two more quick points on pensions. Firstly, the latest evidence shows that unions and employers are increasingly including pensions within the voluntary bargaining process. As that trend continues, pensions should become a core part of collective bargaining. And in our deliberations following the

Pensions Commission's final report we have to do more to ensure a fairer deal for women in the provision of the State Pension.

Perhaps the most prominent of the winds of change are the trade winds blowing from China and India. I have just returned from the EU summits with those countries which highlighted the scale of the challenge and the opportunity that globalisation represents. Since 1985 China's economy has grown by 9% annually, India's by 6%. In 1990 China and India together produced fewer than two million graduates between them. Now they produce four million every year.

The talks in China were initially overshadowed by stockpiles of sweaters and lingerie. We secured an agreement on textiles to resolve the problem, which as I told Peter Mandelson demonstrated that both China and the EU have politicians in command of their briefs. (*Chuckling*) He did not laugh either, funnily enough.

But the dispute over textiles is part of a much wider debate about trade and protectionism. Our industrial strategy has to be to rise to the challenge of globalisation and compete by supporting companies and their workers while they improve skills, diversify into higher value added products, and invest in new technology to drive up productivity.

Despite their enormous advances, more than 47% of the Chinese population and more than 81% of the Indian population are living on less than \$2 a day. India and China can at least look forward to increase rewards from their participation in global markets. But for many least developed countries, there are barriers to effective participation in trade. That is why I am glad that Jeannie has made *Make Poverty History* one of her themes this week because trade is every bit as important as aid and the cancellation of debt in the fight to eradicate poverty across our planet. That is

why it is crucial that we have a pro-development, pro-poor outcome to the Doha Round.

Trade represents an opportunity for developing countries to lift themselves out of poverty, but only if the rich world reduces barriers for products which developing countries can sell. In particular, that means cutting agricultural protection and trade-distorting subsidies in developed countries.

As we said in our manifesto, we do not believe that poor countries should be forced to liberalise. They must be free to introduce trade reforms gradually so that they can build their capacity and improve their infrastructure. Colleagues, if we succeed in the World Trade talks in Hong Kong in December, we can lift 140 million people off subsistence of less than \$2 a day – 60 million in sub-Saharan Africa alone – and increase global prosperity by producing benefits of between \$250 billion and \$600 billion annually.

Alongside the challenges, globalisation means new markets and new potential for trade partnerships. Chinese demand has helped our steel industry to recover. In New Delhi last week we clinched a deal to sell forty-three A320 Airbus planes to Air India. The modern world is not an easy environment for our manufacturing industries. Manufacturing has declined as a percentage of our GDP as it has in every part of the developed world in each of the last three decades.

But manufacturing continues to be crucial to this country. Our response to the challenges we face is to work with unions, employers and the RDAs to realise every element of the manufacturing strategy we agreed between us three years ago. We have established the Manufacturing Forum. The number of young people participating in apprenticeships has risen by more than 200 per cent since 1997. We are establishing the Manufacturing Skills Academy, linking FE with higher education

through vocational 2 year Foundation Degrees, and through radical reforms to secondary education, ending the prejudice against vocational in favour of academic qualifications.

Another idea emerging from our strategy, The Manufacturing Advisory Service, designed to respond to the need for expert accessible advice, has now generated £175 million of added value for the firms it has helped.

The announcement I made with Peter Hain in May, pledging £180 million of support to Bombardier Aerospace in Belfast, is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to manufacturing.

And, of course, we understand completely the importance of the new Airbus A350 project which will require investment in the latest composite technologies and advanced manufacturing techniques so that Britain can maintain its lead in wing construction and design.

Manufacturing matters but we are also fortunate to have a vibrant services sector in the UK. During the past two decades knowledge-based business services have accounted for more than half our job growth. We lead Europe in our share of the expanding services market. But the European Union has yet to honour its Constitution in this area. The Treaty of Rome established the free movement of people, capital, goods and services. A combination of Byzantine licensing systems, discrimination based on nationality and onerous requirements to register with national and local authorities hamper and restrict the growth in job that liberalisation of the services sector would bring.

The European Services Directive is necessary to address these problems. Whilst the UK now has almost 75% of our people in work, Germany is on 66% with 4.3 million unemployed, while France is on 63% with 2.5 million people out of work.

Just as unions such as Amicus have argued correctly that the European single market has secured hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, there is the potential to secure up to 600,000 extra jobs across Europe through a single market in services that provides real benefits to customers and new opportunities for British business. But this must not be at the expense of key labour standards or protection for our workers. In particular, Alan Ritchie and his colleagues in UCATT are right to stress the importance of UK health and safety legislation applying to all construction workers on all UK sites irrespective of their nationality or that of their employers. We will ensure that this and other crucial workplace standards are respected as we make progress on the Services Directive during our Presidency.

The world of work has undeniably changed for the better since 1997. Before we came to power workers could be paid as little as an employer could get away with. A quarter of a million employees, let us remember, were paid less than £2 per hour. A part-time worker could be paid less than a full-time employee doing exactly the same job. A full-time worker on a temporary contract could also be paid less. There was no entitlement to annual leave or even a day off every week; no entitlement to rest breaks and no limit on working hours.

Trade unions could be de-recognised at the whim of the employer and had no rights to recognition irrespective of how many members they had in a company. Union activists could be blacklisted. There was no right to a fair discipline or grievance procedure and certainly no right to call in a union representative – whether the union was recognised or not – to accompany a worker through the discipline process, even where one existed.

Women had a right to only 18 weeks' maternity leave. Now it's 26 weeks paid and 26 unpaid. In 18 months time it will be 39 weeks paid and eventually 52

weeks paid. Eight years ago maternity pay was almost half what it is now. There was no right to paternity leave, or to time off for domestic emergencies. Adoptive parents, who are giving disadvantaged children a stable family life, received no help at all.

There were no rights to be informed and consulted about workplace issues, no help to switch to a more flexible working pattern and no protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, religion or age.

We have addressed all of these issues and much, much more. In eight years we have put in place a comprehensive set of minimum standards and, as Ian McCartney said yesterday, established more than 50 new rights for people at work.

This Government can be accused of many things, but failing to protect people at work does not happen to be one of them.

I understand the concerns that the Gate Gourmet dispute has aroused and I will, of course, consider the points put to me by Brendan and Tony Woodley, but policy has to be decided on a wider basis than one dispute, no matter how painful that dispute has been.

This Movement abandoned its preference for legal immunities for trade unions over basic rights for all workers in the 1980s. For the first 130 of the TUC there was no collective protection for striking workers at all. This Government introduced protection for the first time and we are extending it as part of the Warwick Agreement. But that protection is conditional on all workers having the right to be balloted and on the dispute being between employees and their own employer. These are central aspects of the balance between rights and responsibilities which have to be preserved.

During the course of this Parliament we will implement the further commitments on employment rights made in our manifesto. On one aspect – ensuring

that bank holidays are additional to the four weeks statutory annual leave entitlement – I can today announce my intention of taking a power in the forthcoming Work and Families Bill to enable us to put this commitment into effect. The same Bill will extend the right to request flexible working – a huge success for the parents of small children – to workers who have other caring responsibilities such as looking after elderly parents.

We want to do more – moving towards an 80% employment rate, achieving a step change in health and safety protection, establishing the Union Modernisation Fund whose Supervisory Board, under the chairmanship of Sir Bill Connor, will be announced today.

The changes we have to adapt to are all in essence positive and progressive. Demographic changes because people are healthier and living longer, changes in trade policy that can lift millions out of poverty, changes in European regulation that could put hundreds of thousands of people into work and changes in the UK that have promoted social justice and attacked social exclusion.

Working together we can face up to these changes with confidence ensuring that continued economic stability leads to genuine social progress for all of our citizens. We can only do that if we work together and I am pledged to ensure that, despite the areas and problems we have discussed this week, we will do that and we will ensure, on behalf of your members and the people of this country, that we have a decent and fair society. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Alan, for that thoughtful speech, particularly on the issues of today's global economic challenges because I do not think there is a union in this hall or a sector in the UK that is not affected by the developments in

China, India and elsewhere. I think you were right to remind us of the action that the Government have taken on diversity and equality. We would encourage you to take more. We would certainly encourage you to do more on childcare and family friendly policies. Thank you very much for that.

I now return to Chapter 4 of the General Council's Report, Economic and Industrial Affairs and to the Media and Broadcasting section on page 62, I call Composite Motion 18.

Defending public broadcasting and UK television production

Jeremy Dear (*National Union of Journalists*) moved Composite Motion 18.

He said: Comrades, sisters and brothers, on behalf of my union, BECTU and Amicus, I want to thank Brendan, to thank you and to thank your members for the magnificent solidarity that they showed on 23rd May when, for the first time in a decade, 15,000 BBC workers across the UK and across the world took strike action to protest at the most savage jobs cull in the BBC's history. (*Applause*) We had picket lines from TV Centre in London, the Bureau in Moscow, from Brighton to Stornoway and, in a probable first for the British trade union Movement, a picket line in Kabul.

Like all managements do when faced with a massive strike, BBC bosses said our action had no impact as, first, the Today programme, then Breakfast News, then regional news, live broadcasts, Newsnight, local news and current affairs on TV and radio were taken off air to be replaced by repeats and pre-records. The 23rd May was a bad day for the BBC and public services, but it was a good day for Nicholas Parsons, who earned more in repeat fees than at any time in his life. It was also a

good day for trade unions with a 22% rise in membership of the three unions at the BBC. Those people joined and our members took action because they were angry, angry at the scale of job cuts – 3,780 job losses in public service broadcasting – one in five jobs axed; 21% of those who make documentaries; 420 jobs in News; 19% in new media and 46% in professional services. Those people were angry at the impact of those cuts.

The BBC bosses say, “We don’t want you to work harder, we want you to work smarter”, but they failed to explain how you make better programmes by sacking staff in human resources, training, health and safety and then forcing the hard pressed programme makers to take on those tasks. They peddle the lie that this is about cutting bureaucracy to fund frontline services. It is not. It is self-harm on a grotesque scale aimed at appeasing the BBC’s critics in Government and the commercial sector. If it was about cutting bureaucracy the BBC would not be sacking thousands of programme makers and support staff whilst increasing tiers of management. Not one single senior manager in TV News will lose their job, whilst journalists, producers, researchers and news gathers will be axed. They peddle the lie, too, that we are opposed to change. We are not. We are opposed to cuts which damage programmes, devalue the BBC, compromise quality and worsen working conditions.

However, there is waste that can be swept away – the tiers of management with no involvement in programme making, the £9 million spent on consultants, the £5 million on leadership courses and the hundreds of thousands paid out in bonuses for managers.

In the wake of our action, the BBC agreed to talks. We are in those talks now. We are hopeful, but the BBC should stand warned. We remain ready, willing and

able to take further action to save jobs and protect quality. Of course, you would expect us to fight for jobs but this dispute and composite is about more than jobs. It is a fight for public service values, a fight for a publicly owned, publicly accountable broadcast network, catering for all sections of the community, reaching all parts of the country regardless of cost with a remit to educate, entertain and inform. Everywhere across the globe, increasing pressure on public finances and neo-Liberal trade policies are forcing cuts, privatisation and greater commercialisation on public service broadcasting. Public service values are under threat from corporate and political pressure. Everywhere, media employers sacrifice the core principles of reliable, independent and quality journalism in the pursuit of market imperatives that serve only the narrow interests of owners and shareholders.

So it is not just the BBC, but ITV, too that slashes its regional non-news programmes, cuts jobs, closes studios, marginalises current affairs, whilst rewarding shareholders for their success.

Liberalisation and broadcasting de-regulation deliver not better quality, not more choice and not better representation. They deliver conformity, less choice and fewer jobs. Commercial broadcasting is based not on the sale of programmes to audiences but on the sale of audiences to advertisers. Media union members will stand up for jobs, for working conditions and for quality.

This composite asks you to stand with us to defend public service values.
Thank you.

Hugh Stoddart (*The Writers' Guild of Great Britain*) in seconding the composite motion, said: President and Congress, in our original motion we spoke about *Doctor Who*. We did not do that just because of the exhibition right here on the Brighton pier

celebrating that programme and we did not do it just because some members in my Guild, such as me, would all love to be like *Doctor Who* and stay the same age, or possibly get even younger. No pension problems there.

The reason why we spoke about *Doctor Who* is because it is a perfect example of what is very precious; that is to say, home grown TV drama. If *Doctor Who* had stepped into his Tardis at the end of the first programmes and stayed there until the recent series that we have just seen, written by Russell T. Davis, and stepped out again, then surveying the media landscape he would certainly have been astonished. The exponential growth of technologies and the number of channels on offer by satellite and cable have made enormous changes which the BBC and all of us have had to face.

Such an array of choice is, in many ways, good. None the less, it is worth remembering that sometimes this choice can appear to be mythical because many of the channels may be offering what is basically the same thing. It is what we might call “Product”; something which is created either with the aim of merely filling in cheaply between advertising or created for global consumption, in which case the lowest common denominator often comes into play, and the individual voice, the quirks and the particularities of a culture, are ironed out because they have to be.

A drama like *Shameless*, created by one of our members, Paul Abbott, is not product. It says something about where we are now in our particular time and culture.

Such writers as Paul work for both commercial channels and the BBC and, you may say, “Well, what’s the problem?” The problem is how are the opportunities for the best of such British TV and radio drama to be preserved? It is my belief that you can draw up guidelines and try and set standards as much as you like but, at the

end of the day, it is only if we have a securely funded public service provider that we can, if you like, hold the line.

To put it crudely, we want a situation where commercial channels are competing upwards and not one where the BBC is competing downwards.

Journalist Johann Hari, writing in the wake of the Hutton Inquiry and all that followed from that, said this: “The BBC is necessary because, unlike all the other media outlets, it is accountable to us, the viewing public, rather than to billionaire owners and corporate advertisers”. I urge you to vote in favour of this motion.

Tony Lennon (*Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union*): Since Doctor Who has been raised, I can tell you why I would like to be Doctor Who. I would like to go back to the 1980s and find out when it was that we did actually trade off our right to organise collective action amongst our members in return for the individual rights of workers. I was there and I don't remember it. (*Applause*)

Now, to the subject. I think from what the previous two speakers have said, you will understand one of the key reasons why the BBC is worth defending. It is actually, going back to what Jeannie Drake said in her address. It is one of the things we, perhaps, ought to shout about as a success and shout more often.. The BBC is publicly funded, publicly run and it delivers a service that everybody around the globe accepts is world class and it does it with a unionised workforce from top to bottom, and I think that is a success for trade unions generally. It proves that public can be good and that unions and quality can go hand-in-hand.

However, in this composite we have referred to a threat to that quality, integrity and diversity that makes the BBC so special. It is a plan that colleagues in

the Health Service will know well. The BBC hopes that it will increase, and perhaps even double, the number of programmes that it does not make itself now but buys in from other providers. That is a familiar Health Service story. If the plan goes through it means by 2007 nearly half the programmes you watch on BBC television will not have been made by the BBC but will have been bought in from somewhere else.

I am not going to say that they will, necessarily, be bad programmes because of it and I am not going to say that the BBC is always brilliant, but from a trade union point of view that shift of production means that there will be thousands more people in our sector who work as freelancers, not as staff; they work in a position of no job security; they have no pension; they have poor control over things like working hours and health and safety; they have to pay for their own training, and when it comes to who gets the work they are far less likely to be women, to be members of an ethnic minority or to have any disability than the people who work at the BBC today. In short, the plan to increase independent production at the BBC means pumping hundreds of millions of pounds into a sector of the industry that, frankly, does not support the progressive workplace policies that we heard so much about this week.

That is why BECTU is arguing that the BBC's commitment to buy in programmes from outside should remain where it is, at a level that we have all come to accept and, frankly, it should not be increased for political reasons, which is why the plan has been put forward.

I will finish, if I can, by reflecting on the industrial action of earlier this year. It breaks my heart, frankly, that in our industry, because it so high profile, when we go on strike we get on to the front page of every newspaper, yet I read in the *Morning Star* almost every day of those groups of workers who have been out for days and weeks who never get a mention in the national press. Despite that publicity, we

welcome the support of the TUC. Brendan himself took an active part in our day of action, and I hope you will follow this up by supporting our composite. Thank you.

The President: I am going to move to the vote on Composite Motion 18. The General Council supports the composite.

* *Composite Motion 18 was CARRIED.*

Diversity in portrayal

Harry Landis (*Equity*) moved Motion 64.

He said: President and Congress, we live in Britain today with a wonderful mix of people – Afro-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese, all British having been born here. The Chinese have been here for more than three hundred years. There are 18,000 in London alone. They make up our doctors, nurses, lawyers, as well as shopkeepers and civil servants. This situation is not reflected as much as it should be on our screens.

Our members are incredibly diverse, not just in their performance abilities but their ethnicity, sexuality, age and physical abilities. We have been lobbying for many years for this variety in performers to be reflected on our screens. Yes, you might say we see more ethnic minorities on our screens than ever before, but I think you will find that they are usually young and good looking. Where are the middle aged Asians, the older Chinese or black people?

It has long been recognised that there is an intrinsic value in seeing your kind reflected on screens. It is beneficial. The UK has been a multi-cultural society for

many decades. There are no longer any valid reasons for this not to be reflected on television or film. I could go into percentages and figures gleaned from Government sources but I find when that is in the offing that you suddenly find you want a cup of tea. So I will put it this way. The proportion of those from minority and ethnic groups, working in the UK performance industry, is lower than those in employment in the rest of the UK economy. Of Equity members, men are more likely to have found work than women in the past year, and the proportion of disabled people in our business is much lower than in the UK workforce as a whole.

Equity has already done much to improve on screen portrayal for performers from ethnic minorities by promoting an integral casting policy which also is included in all of our agreements. We have a very active Afro-Asian-Oriental-Caribbean committee and we want to ensure that our performers are engaged for all minorities, be they Chinese, Indian, Pakistanis, British, African-Caribbean and so on, and that the roles should be for a variety of ages.

Equity has undertaken a significant amount of work in the area of disability. We have a disability register and a guide for casting directors. Prejudice can affect the decision to engage a disabled performer, whether it relates to their needs on set or their ability to fulfil the requirements of a role. Need exists to educate casting directors, production companies and writers about the value of employing disabled performers, and the role that they play does not need to be that of a disabled person, either.

The UK Film Council is spearheading a campaign, backed by Equity, to identify and tackle the barriers that lead to exclusion and under-representation in our industry. This motion criticises the film and television industry for not doing enough

to reflect in its output the rich and diverse and mix of gender, ages, ethnic origins, disabilities and sexualities in the UK population.

Finally, Equity wants the TUC to urge Ofcom and the UK Film Council to ensure that film and TV producers engage a truly representative spectrum of performers. Thank you.

Hugh Stoddart (*The Writers' Guild of Great Britain*) speaking in support of Motion 64.

He said: President and Congress, when I was a student thesp at the end of the 1960s I was given a book on theatrical make-up, and on the cover the book's lead story was of Lawrence Olivier blacking up as Othello. Some years after that it seems to have become established that this was in fact unacceptable, and rightly so. Othello thus became, as it were, reserved for a black actor. That is progress of a kind but, in another sense, a bit of a trap and too many years passed before a black actor had the chance of playing Hamlet.

There are issues here. The first we can call the "Othello issue". We need there to be more stories in our film, TV, radio and theatre which are written about, and preferably by, people from the full range of our culture and society. Here my own union, the Writers' Guild, has an important role to play. We supply the stories, the plays and the scripts. We are not, I am afraid, as inclusive as we should be, though I think it is fair to say that we are trying and we are signed up alongside other organisations to initiatives in this regard.

The second issue, really, is that of inclusivity to be there simply without comment. Here we have a long way to go. I mean, we have, even yet, not escaped

the idea that wearing glasses signifies that a character is studious rather than happening to have, as I have, defective vision.

There are many people who want to be on stage or in front of a camera and, as a matter of fact, those who want to be backstage and behind the camera, and people who feel that they are being kept away. When Hamlet in the play is coaching his own actors before they present his own play, he tells them “Hold up a mirror to nature”. Well, let all our film, TV, radio and theatre, likewise, hold up a mirror to contemporary Britain. Thank you.

Winston Phillips (*Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union*):

Congress, if you cast your mind back to a time not so long ago you may remember the handful of black and ethnic minority actors that you would have seen on your screens. Sadly, they played muggers, crooks and rapists which went a long way to strengthening the negative stereotypes that faced our community in those days. Slowly, and thankfully, the roles are now being changed and we are now being presented in a more positive role.

Whilst we support Equity in their quest for a more diverse representation in films and television, we would like to go one step further. We would like to see black cameramen, black technicians, black engineers and the like all represented behind the scenes. Sadly, at this moment in time, we are not represented in those areas. As I look round the hall this week at Congress, I see very few cameramen operating in this arena.

So, in support of this motion, we are saying, yes, for diversity in portrayal, but also yes for more diversity behind the camera as well. Please support.

The President: The General Council supports Motion 64.

* *Motion 64 was CARRIED.*

Conscience clause

Tim Lezard (*National Union of Journalists*) moved Motion 65.

He said: Congress, not all journalists are bastards. I know some of you here will look at newspapers and have a different view, but I can assure you that some of us do have a social conscious. Sadly, though, our concerns about the state of the media are not shared by members of the media establishment. Far from it.

Take, for example, the media's coverage of refugee and asylum issues. The NUJ is doing all it can to douse the race hate flames stoked up by the national press. Newspaper proprietors and the industry's watchdog, the Press Complaints Commission, look the other way. It is hardly rocket science, but surveys looking at the coverage of asylum issues show the more prejudicial the reports, the more likely there are to be racist attacks.

I have a friend who works for the *Daily Express* and she has told me that the owner, Richard Desmond, comes into the newsroom as deadline approaches and personally writes inflammatory headlines attacking refugees and asylum seekers. What are journalists supposed to do about that? Sadly, some of them agree with their newspaper's policies, and I am making no excuses for them. But what of the others? Why don't they speak out? Some of them have.

Last year seventy of my NUJ colleagues at the *Daily Express* decided that enough was enough. You may remember the newspaper ran a story saying: "All one-

and-a-half million Roma families in Eastern Europe were planning to come to Britain when the EU was expanded”. They were all coming on the same EasyJet flight, presumably. That was the last straw for journalists who took the incredibly courageous step in reporting their own newspaper to the Press Complaints Commission, seeking their protection if they refused to write racist articles. Sadly, but not unsurprisingly, considering the editor of the *Express* sits on the PCC, the complaint was thrown out. That is nothing new. The PCC consistently lets newspapers off the hook by refusing to enforce its own code of practice, which states: “The press must avoid prejudicial reference to an individual’s colour, religion or race.” Do you see newspapers abiding by this code? I do not.

The weakness and ineffectiveness of the PCC is such that they will not accept third party complaints, for example, which means that we cannot complain about this coverage. It seems that newspapers operate with impunity, and they do.

We asked the Society of Editors to include a clause in its code of practice that would protect journalists who refused to write racist stories, but the Society of Editors refused, basically, telling journalists, “We are the editors. We will tell you what to write”.

We are not taking no for an answer. We are not giving up that easily because the NUJ will not stand for racist stories appearing in our media.

Having given the establishment the chance to stand up for our profession, which they have clearly failed to do, we have now taken it into our own hands by adopting our own conscience clause, which I bring to you today, to ask for your help and support in putting pressure on editors to accept.

All members of our Union, when they join, sign up to a code of conduct, a code that sets the standards of ethical journalism. Amongst the paragraphs in the

code are ones which say that journalists shall not mention a person's race, colour or religion unless strictly relevant to the story. They shall not write stories which encourage discrimination, ridicule, prejudice or hatred, and they must strive to ensure that the information they print is fair and accurate.

Our conscience clause would safeguard our members from disciplinary action should they refuse to write a story that contravenes our code. It will allow journalists to be able to say "no" to writing stories which whip up racial tension against refugees and asylum seekers; to say "no" to stories that incite hatred against religious and ethnic groups, which is more important now than ever before in the wake of the London bombings, and it will allow journalists to say "no" to covering the racist lies of the British National Party. It will also allow us to support journalists when they follow their conscience to stand up for their beliefs and, just as importantly, I think it will improve the standard of the media by allowing the public to engage in a balanced debate.

The conscience clause for which I am asking your support reads as follows: "The journalist has the right to refuse assignments or be identified as the creator of the editorial which would break the letter and spirit of this code. No journalist should be disciplined or suffer detriment to their career for asserting his or her rights to act according to the code."

We hope, with your help, to put pressure on editors to include that clause in journalists' contracts. There is no excuse for any editor, anywhere in the land, not to sign up to this, but not all of them will. Which editor, I wonder, will be the first to disown it? Which editor will be the first to stand up and say, "I don't want ethical journalism in my newspaper"? Which editor will be the first to say, "I don't want a

balanced debate” in their pages, and which editor will be the first to admit he or she is happy to continue printing lies?

The NUJ believes that journalists play a vital role in the democracy of this country and we are proud of that, but democracy can only truly function if people engage in debate and hear both sides of the argument so that they can make a balanced judgment, and that is not happening here. Worse than that, not only is the debate one-sided but that one side is full of lies.

I spoke to David Aaronovitch, a journalist about the idea of the conscience clause and asked him if he supported it and he said that there would be no point because journalists liked writing this rubbish, and the only way to stop them would be to march into the newsroom and give them a good kicking. So I have warned my fellows on the press bench that if they see a fat white boy coming towards them, do a runner. Because not for the first time David Aaronovitch is wrong. Some journalists do like writing rubbish, but the majority do not and our conscience clause would protect them. It is not about attacking journalists but attacking bad journalism. Please support.

Lesley Mansell (*Amicus*) in seconding the motion, said: Conference, we need a conscience clause to strengthen the code of conduct if we are to protect the integrity of our skilled journalists who are fighting to give us anti-discriminatory and positive images of black and Asian people.

I would love to be able to stand here and debate the cultural hegemony but I cannot do that in three minutes, but I can try and show the impact that our stage managed media has. Since 1990 I have organised union recruitment stalls at lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-pride, yet reporting of these events is minimal. Reporting

usually focuses on a gay man in a pretty frock, unless, of course, there is a murder and we get a bit more. So the positive portrayal of our lives is ignored and remains invisible. That is discrimination.

Since 7th July the image of discrimination intolerance has been so persistent that within one month there have been a thousand racist attacks which have been recorded but not reported. The type of incident that has carried on has been from name calling, through spitting to murder. Such incidents have not just happened in London. In the south-west, where I am based, there have been attacks in Bristol, Exeter and Chard in Somerset, and across Britain attacks have taken place in Croydon, Bedford, Halifax, Sheffield, Llandudno, Newcastle, Carlisle, Glasgow, Peterborough, Abergavenny, not to forget Liverpool and Nottingham, both where murders took place.

Of course, this is not new. James Baldwin, a black American writer, was so frustrated at the lack of positive images and also the work of black writers being portrayed, argued that white Americans should thank all black Americans for showing them where the bottom is. In just these past few weeks, we have again seen where the bottom is in America.

Comrades, we can all give examples as to how the media carefully manages what it wants us to see. In the 1980s this country witnessed race riots as termed by the media. A *Sun* journalist wrote of how black people were sheltering in doorways to stay out of trouble, but Rupert Murdoch carefully leaned over his shoulder and blue pencilled out his copy so it was not reported.

The media carefully crafts what it wants us to see and know about. This contributes to the institutionalisation of racism, not to mention sexism and homophobia. Our journalists need to have their integrity protected and they must be

able to report what they see and not the skewed image that the media barons and the Government want us to see.

I urge Conference to support the motion and to give our journalists the protection that they need at work. Please support.

The President: The General Council supports the motion.

* *Motion 65 was CARRIED.*

Against censorship

Lydia Rivlin (*The Writers' Guild of Great Britain*) moved Motion 66.

She said: The very first thing that happened on Monday morning was that somebody from the General Council – I will not say who – said, “We are supporting your motion but you have to make it clear that we do not endorse anything we might consider offensive”. That’s the little problem, isn’t it, with freedom of speech, because with freedom of speech you have to hear something you would rather not?

The alternative is censorship. The problem with censorship is that you have to say something you would rather not because censorship makes liars of us all. If there is a choice between being offended and being turned into some sort of a machine for producing lies, I suppose you can work out where my sympathies lie. But the question is, where do your sympathies lie? The point is that we are faced with a law of the most gob-smacking dishonesty. The Racial and Religious Hatred Bill says that race and religion are the same thing and can be treated in the same way under law.

Let us analyse that. Race is a physical characteristic. You cannot do much about that. Religion is an opinion, and what is democracy if it is not the testing, the criticising, the lampooning and, yes, even the hating of opinions? That is what democracy is all about.

The next thing they say is this. They are not going to apply the law to everyone! Hello! What is a law if it is not going to be applied to everyone? Either it is a law or it is not. It is a cheat.

I do not expect Rowan Atkinson to be arrested on stage in the middle of a joke, not while he is famous, at any rate. But the less famous, if they have any sense, will just shut up before they say the few words which are going to plunge them from the world of lightened reason to some sort of a lunatic nightmare which is being experienced by a young playwright, right now, called Gurpreet Bhatti. You will remember that she wrote a play in which she made the observation that sometimes men in religious authority abuse the trust of their congregants. So a mob of Sikh militants decided to take violent offence, and in the atmosphere, at least in part, I am sure, created by the discussions on the proposed legislation, they probably have half an idea that they were going to get away with riot and death threats. Do you know what? They did get away with it. To date there have been no arrests and no charges. Gurpreet is still in hiding in fear for her life in this country! Colleagues in the TUC, in this country, in the cradle of democracy, a writer is incarcerated, under a death sentence for what she has said. So the racial and religious hatred law is already being applied by proxy. It is ugly. It is a Frankenstein monster of a law. Like the monster, it has been stitched together out of grotesquely mismatching components. It was made for the wrong reasons and it cannot differentiate between good and evil, between right and wrong and between criticism and criminality. Worst of all, it

embodies the basest in human nature, the viciousness and the vindictiveness, and it lets it all out.

The Writers' Guild appeals to you to put all your weight behind our support of Gurpreet Bhatti and all your weight behind our fight for freedom of speech. The monster is still on the table. It is only twitching its fingers. Stop this reckless experiment before it breaks free and tears our democracy apart brick by brick. Thank you.

Natasha Gerson (*EQUITY*) seconded Motion 66.

She said: I am seconding this motion because at the heart of it are the principles of freedom of speech and the right to artistic expression. I fundamentally support the right of people to protest and believe that, as trade unionists, we should all fight to protect that right. However, artistic expression is a fragile and at times nebulous and controversial concept which also requires our support and protection. Without the freedom to think and express itself, humanity will never prosper.

Often in defending one right, we can inadvertently trample on another. Even in this motion, there may be a perceived danger that artistes are seeking protection from legitimate protests. That is not my view. I believe that this motion is seeking to ensure that the fundamental principles of freedom of speech and expression, which are central to the arts, are thoroughly protected. Again in my view, this motion is not about preventing people from doing things; quite the opposite, it is about precisely what it says, stopping censorship. Please support. Thank you.

The President: I call the General Secretary.

Brendan Barber (*General Secretary*) speaking in support of the motion said: Congress, the General Council supports this motion, but it has some concerns that I have been asked to explain. This is a complex debate, but it is not one that has figured on either the General Council agenda or, indeed, that of the Congress in recent years, nor has the General Council considered either of the specific instances referred

to in the motion, the cancellation of the "Behzti" play or the protests against the screening by the BBC of "Jerry Springer - The Opera".

Opposition to censorship, in principle, is certainly in line with traditional TUC policy on the arts and very much in line with our policy on the BBC Charter, which stresses the importance of a BBC free from pressure by government and commercial interests. In the same way, I am sure we would want to challenge censorship from organised pressure groups seeking to ban works to which they are opposed.

However, I encourage you to look at the last paragraph of the motion because this sets out a call for a blanket responsibility for the TUC to publicise cases of censorship and to co-ordinate resistance to them. I encourage you to consider the potential conflict that could cause with TUC policies in other areas.

As our campaigns against Fascists show, we are not in the business of condoning racism; we are not in the business of condoning sexism and we are not in the business of condoning anti-trade union activities or propaganda either. In fact, in our rules we have a clear commitment to promote equality in everything we do. So I wanted to welcome the clarification that, in particular, the Equity delegate provided in her contribution, to make it clear that this should not be seen as artistes seeking protection against legitimate protests.

I should also say in this context that we believe there has been much misinformation about the new laws on incitement to religious hatred. The offences created by these laws have a very high threshold and do not encompass material that merely stirs up ridicule or prejudice or causes offence. Parallel provisions on incitement to racial hatred have existed since 1986 and have not prevented actors, writers and comedians from addressing controversial issues relating to race and culture. Delegates, with those points of explanation, I commend the motion to you.

The President: Thank you very much. Do the Writers' Guild want to say anything in reply or are they happy to waive? You are happy to waive or do you want to say something? No. Fine. Thank you very much. I put Motion 66 to the vote.

The President: The General Council is supporting.

* *Motion 66 was CARRIED*

The President: I call paragraph 4.11 and Motion 67, Broadcasters and entertainment promoters' honesty code.

Broadcasters and entertainment promoters' honesty code

Barbara White (*Musicians' Union*) moved Motion 67.

She said: There is an increasing use of recorded and digitised music in live productions and also on TV programmes. There are obviously some instances where there is no alternative but to use recordings. We do not object to recordings which are used in an imaginative and creative manner and are artistically valuable. However, it is clear that unscrupulous companies are using them in order to create greater profit margins or to hide a lack of talent.

Unfortunately, the general public is seldom made aware of the use of recorded music backing in live shows. The Musicians' Union campaigned against the use of recorded playbacks in pantomimes a couple of years ago. Pantos have, of course, traditionally used live music. We consider that it is an integral part of the magic and spontaneity of this type of entertainment. A live band can respond to improvisation by the actors as well as adding to the excitement of the show and are able to follow the performers, whatever happens on stage.

When people going to pantos around the country were asked whether they were aware that recorded backing was being used, many of them subsequently complained to the management of the theatres that the lack of live music was not mentioned in the publicity and they, rightly, had assumed that a live band would be present to accompany the singers and dancers.

Part of the reason why theatrical and other productions are so exciting and different from, for example, film is the unique quality that live music brings to the

occasion. The sound quality is different. The performance is more spontaneous. It can be electric. The players can follow the action on stage with greater subtlety and nuance and the whole experience is enhanced for the audience and the performers. In other words, the audience has experienced a one-off performance. Similarly, certain dance companies tour with tapes and, as well as reducing valuable work for our members, it makes a difference to the quality of the performance and, therefore, the likelihood that audiences will not return.

This is the reason for our motion asking for an honesty code for broadcasters and entertainment promoters. We believe that the public have the right to know when live music is not being used before they lay out good money for tickets. We believe that the blanket use of recorded music in live events not only under-values the skills of musicians, but also undermines the distinctive uniqueness of live entertainment. The honesty code would also reward those productions that use live music, so everyone would benefit.

The MU would like to see promoters, managers and producers sign up to the code, which would require them to label clearly all their advertising productions where recorded music was being used. We suggest the statement "Recorded music is being used in this production" should be clearly visible on all promotional material, so that audiences would have no doubt as to the nature of the production.

Similarly, in broadcasts, we would like to see the honesty code adapted by the removal of microphones and guitar leads from those bands who are miming to play back. After all, they do not need them.

The viewing public have of late clearly demonstrated their preference for artistes to perform live on TV, which can be witnessed by the continued success of programmes such as Jules Holland's "Later", which features live performance exclusively, and the continuing demise of programmes such as "Top of the Pops", which still relies heavily on artistes performing to backing tracks.

We believe this motion has a three-fold benefit: firstly, to enable consumers to make an informed decision before they ostensibly pay for live events; secondly, to

reward those producers, promoters and programme-makers who continue to use live music, and, thirdly, to encourage provision of more work for our members.

Sally Treble (*EQUITY*) seconded Motion 67.

She said: There cannot be too many delegates here today who have not been to a theatre or a musical event during the past five or 10 years. It may have been because you took the children or the grandchildren to a panto and perhaps booked to see an opera or a ballet, or you just had a pint at your local social club and happened to catch the artiste who was performing. I bet you a pound to a penny that many of you watched on television the fantastic show with the artistes and musicians performing in Buckingham Palace during the Queen's Jubilee. Whether it was at your local social club or whether it was at the Party at the Palace, you will have seen, heard and I hope enjoyed singers who were actually singing and musicians who were actually playing. We are talking live performances.

However, sadly, this is changing as the emphasis on live performances is slowly being eroded. Pit orchestras, bands and backing groups are being replaced by pre-recordings. Artistes are often forced to work with backing tapes or even mime to their own recorded material.

The unions who represent artistes and musicians, MU and Equity, find this situation absolutely deplorable. However, no matter how hard we campaign and complain, we are unable to stop these insidious cost-cutting exercises. Consequently, we believe that audiences and viewers are being cheated. This motion is calling for an honesty code to ensure that all promoters, broadcasters and producers give clear and unambiguous information in their advertising, so that the general public can make an informed choice as to whether they want to buy a ticket or switch on their television.

I have already said that the emphasis on live performances is slowly changing. I would like to leave you with a thought as I ask you, please, to support the motion: in the future, a General Council of the TUC may even consider replacing your live performances at Congress with pre-recordings and video links and they would save an

awful lot of money. Isn't that the object of the exercise? I ask you, please, to support the motion.

The President: The General Council supports the motion.

* *Motion 67 was CARRIED.*

Social responsibility

Bobby Barnes (*Professional Footballers Association*) moved Motion 72.

He said: I have been coming to Congress for two or three years. I am very proud to stand in front of you representing our national game. (*Applause*) I think it is very important to remember that, as the national game, it obviously is something which touches communities all around the country. It is very important that, as a union and indeed as an industry, we are aware of the impact that football and our members, indeed the professional players, can have on their communities at large.

Football clubs are very much focal points of their communities. It is very important that communities have access to football clubs and to football players to ensure the best impact and the best use of that influence. Delegates from the NUT, for example, will know that increasingly at professional football clubs you have after-school learning clubs where children are encouraged to participate in basic literacy in order to bring them into the mainstream in terms of education.

It is all very well when you can get kids into the classroom, for example, and encourage them, but I am sure any of you who have worked in the teaching profession will know, there is no greater impact to be achieved than when players and heroes from your chosen clubs come into the classroom and speak to the children. We do a lot of work with the National Literacy Trust where we have reading champions who encourage children to read. From knowing that their heroes out on the field on a Saturday afternoon playing football think it is cool to read, young people will also follow that lead. That is very powerful.

Football has always looked at the bigger picture and we have been aware of our responsibilities. Nowhere was that more evident than, for example, when we had the terrible events of the tsunami last year. Immediately, there were appeals made and money being raised everywhere. The football industry immediately stepped forward and pledged £1 million to that particular cause. However, that was not all. Basically, we were receiving phone calls from players all over the country who wished themselves to make private donations. Some very significant donations were made by professional footballers.

Sometimes, when we look at the lurid headlines and negative press, it is worth pointing out the number of hours that our players put in to community work. This is not just the number of community work they are compelled to undertake, because you may or may not know that in every professional football contract each player is obliged to commit a minimum of two to three hours per week to community projects. That is always done willingly and is regardless of the individual charitable projects which individual players themselves carry out.

In terms of our responsibility as a union, we are conscious that, although we are a small union, we have a very high profile, whether it be in the media or in influence. We are very mindful of that particular responsibility. We will always encourage our members to get involved with charitable works and work for the community.

To give you a brief idea of some of the people we actually work with as a union, we work very closely with Oxfam to whom our players last year donated one day's salary for Christmas. We work with various cancer research organisations and the National Literacy Trust. We work very closely with, and are funders of, the Prince's Trust. Through this Trust we work very closely with young people in trying to turn their lives around. We make a very significant financial donation to the Prince's Trust every year together with other major partners, such as Marks & Spencer and the Royal Bank of Scotland.

We have worked very hard in this particular area because we feel it is our responsibility. That is why we have put a motion forward on social responsibility.

We hope that fellow unions will follow our lead. Please support the motion.

The President: Thank you, Bobby. May I say that I think you personally are a great ambassador for the PFA? Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

Before I call the seconder, I have had an indication from the CWU and POA that they would like to speak in this debate.

William Maxwell (*Equity*) seconded Motion 72.

He said: How often do you read and hear that footballers are over-paid pampered brats and that show biz people, especially actors, are self-regarding prima donnas? This motion from the PFA proves otherwise. Equity, the entertainment union, has its largest committee, the Committee for International Artistes' Freedom, which means social inclusion, which is what this motion is all about, world-wide and not just at home. This Committee has brought to international attention artistes who have suffered torture, imprisonment and death through daring to criticise autocratic regimes, which are not just politically extreme, but religious fundamentalists, which is why our Government's Incitement to Racial and Religious Hatred Bill is so dangerous. Race and religion are two entirely different things. The first must always be defended and the second must always be open to challenge.

However, at home, our social inclusion, like the PFA's, mostly concerns the young. Theatre in education: throughout the country we have provincial repertory theatres with education departments that visit schools with plays about drugs, teenage pregnancies, bullying and paedophiles, and with workshops afterwards for the kids, exercising their minds and building audiences for the future. Of course, we also have shows for the very young which are pure entertainment. They in their own way are just as worthwhile.

The Thatcher years saw drastic cuts in our business, but particularly they hit Theatre in Education companies until there were only four companies left in Wales for the whole of Britain. Then they had the gall to criticise the increase in juvenile crime!

Equity has also small-scale theatre groups touring parts of the country without theatre. Also, there are professional groups who undertake work in prisons. I undertook Shakespeare workshops in some prisons, including the Feltham Young People's Institute, where we would go one-to-one with various inmates and discuss Shakespeare's sonnets. After such a discussion with one inmate, he duly went off and came back with one of his own, which he composed in 10 minutes flat! I could not do that! That was absolutely amazing.

A young actor with a wife and two small children contracted septicaemia, which resulted in the loss of all his limbs; an elderly stage door keeper was rescued from the streets; a young actress with three children under the age of six died of breast cancer; an opera singer suffering from cancer of the throat was no longer able to perform - all these people were supported by theatrical charities which have been supported by Equity. Why do we not hear about this in the papers? Oh, no. It is much easier to tell people about the scandals in the football and entertainment industries and, besides, we are trade unions; trade unions are not supposed to do that sort of thing!

Madam President, with regard to what you said earlier in this conference, that when we do something new and innovative, we should shout it from the roof tops, well, let's shout this from the roof tops. Let's have trade unionism in general and things like this in particular reported in a proper way because it is long, long overdue. I have pleasure in seconding the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Lots of approval there!

Carl Webb (*Communication Workers Union*) supported Motion 72.

He said: First of all, I would like to thank my fellow delegates for agreeing to allow me to speak on this. First of all, I would like to congratulate the PFA for the work they undertake and for submitting this motion.

Ten years ago, CWU humanitarian aid was set up by the Communication

Workers Union. In those 10 years, we have delivered over 750 tons of aid worth over £500,000 to disadvantaged children across Europe. We have also sent aid to India and to the street children in Mongolia. We have also been involved in renovating centres for street children. We have been able to help remove children from prostitution and drug abuse in a number of countries. We have done work within the UK to raise specialised equipment for young children.

The reason I am saying this is because the other speaker mentioned that this really is not highlighted within the TUC nor within the media. I am not just talking about the work that we do as the Communication Workers Union. I am talking about the work that I know the GMB do and probably the T&G do. There is a lot of charitable work that our members perform. At the moment I have 16 lay members who are delivering 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid to destitute families in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe. They are sleeping and eating out of their wagons. With the support of Royal Mail and British Telecom, courtesy of Jeannie, who got involved and helped raise that support, we will help thousands and thousands of children and also deliver incubators to hospitals.

Like I said, I believe that we should highlight this work. I also believe that we could work maybe with the PFA because, as you quite rightly said, your members have a high profile. They are hero-worshipped. As my mate, Bob, said who is a Newcastle fan: "Get a t-shirt signed by Micky Owen" and that will raise a lot of money in the mail centre in Newcastle for our charity. Just a simple thing like that would have amazing results.

I look forward, hopefully, to talking to the PFA, working with them and raising the profile. Again, I do believe that the charitable work that all the unions do for the good of children and families should be highlighted more in the media and highlighted more by the TUC. Thank you very much.

Victoria Anderson (*Prison Officers Association*) supported Motion 72.

She said: We too deal with the organisations often in our working lives and our private lives which the Professional Footballers Association have mentioned. We

have prison officers seconded to the Prince's Trust to undertake work to help turn around those young lives.

However, I want to talk about social responsibility from a different angle. I believe that social responsibility is the common thread that underpins unionism. All the motions that are in the motion book have that common theme running through them. For example, we recognise our social responsibility to develop working environments that are decent and egalitarian. We recognise our social responsibility to protect retirees from poverty. We recognise our social responsibility to resist further attempts at privatisation and we recognise our social responsibility to demand that people's assets are returned to them and taken from the fat cats who took them. Remember, we are a society and we must also recognise our social responsibilities as a society. Remember, the work which I undertake is a social responsibility of this society; the unpleasant task of administering the justice system in order that victims may feel that they have some recognition under that system.

The Government have a social responsibility to deliver that on our behalf. That is why prisons must be public organisations, not vehicles of profit which is made on the back of misery, trauma and terror. We must remember our social responsibility as a society and we must go on continuing to remind the Government of their social responsibility to us. Thank you.

The President: I heard this is your first Congress, Vicky. You are really welcome. Thank you. The General Council support the motion.

* *Motion 72 was CARRIED*

The President: Thank you very much. Congress, I mentioned yesterday that in your delegate wallets you should have found a TUC White Band for which we asked you to make an appropriate donation. The PFA have generously agreed to match the amount of money raised by the collection. The total amount raised was £750. I would like to invite Bobby Barnes to hold to the promise and present the matching cheque. Thank you. (*Applause*)

He is also bringing with him his colleagues, Cyril Regis, John Berrisford, Warren Barton and Pete Smith. (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

Bobby Barnes (*Professional Footballers Association*) said: It is becoming a little bit of a feature of Congress over the years, but I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our delegation from the PFA. All of these guys have generously given up their time and travelled from all over the country to come along today to be part of Congress. They have been very grateful for the warm welcome they have received, not just here in the hall, but outside and around the building.

I would like to take the opportunity to give you a brief outline of the players who have come along today and some of the charitable work they undertake. On the far left we have John Berrisford who I am sure will need no introduction for you, Newcastle United supporters. (*Applause*)

To give you an idea of some of the work undertaken by John, he has been a tireless worker for all the charitable projects of the PFA. He does a great deal of work with "Show Racism the Red Card". In particular, in November, John is representing the Bobby Moore Cancer Fund, and he is going to live in a tent for 10 days in 35 degrees of heat and help rebuild a school and a football pitch. (*Applause*)

To the right of John, we have Pete Smith. Pete is a local lad who has served your local team, Brighton & Hove Albion. Pete was with Brighton for a number of years and has been a good servant to the club. Pete works with me at the PFA and does some tremendous work on all of our charitable projects, in particular, our anti-racism project, "Kick it out". Ladies and gentlemen, Pete Smith. (*Applause*)

Newcastle supporters are in for a bit of a treat today because we have someone who also needs no introduction, and that is Warren Barton. (*Applause*) I do not really know where to start in describing all the work Warren does, but just to give you a potted history, he has done the Great North Run and the London Marathon. He is an ambassador for "Show Racism the Red Card". As I referred to earlier, in terms of footballers' response to the tsunami appeal, Warren did not just write a cheque, he took a plane and went out to South East Asia and coached young kids just to take their

minds off the horrors that were around them at that particular time. He brought a lot of excitement and comfort to those lads at the time. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Last, and certainly not least, here is a fellow who I am sure everybody in the conference hall will know. He has been here with me before. Certainly, it is always a great pleasure for me to meet Cyril because, as a youngster, Cyril was one of my heroes. It is a pleasure to work with him now. He is a massive, strong, wonderful footballer, but off the field, he is a real gentleman. He never says "no". You can get on the phone to Cyril and you can ask him: "Cyril, would you come along and do that? Could you go to this project?" and the guy never says "no". I would just like to thank him personally and introduce Cyril Regis to you, ladies and gentlemen. *(Applause)* Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

The President: My street cred has just gone up with my sons! Good stuff, that! They will not believe it! Anyway, once again, Bobby Barnes, Cyril Regis, John Berrisford, Warren Barton and Pete Smith. Thank you very much indeed. It is absolutely wonderful to see you. Thank you. *(Applause)* Thank you very much for your support in backing our collection for Make Poverty History.

I would now like to read out to Congress a letter. It is a great privilege to say that we have received a letter from Nelson Mandela which is actually addressed to this Congress and signed by him. If you would bear with me, I would like to read it to you:

"Dear Trades Union Congress delegates, I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person for your annual Congress. The trade union Movement in Britain, as in South Africa, has a major role to play in the world, and it is important for all of us that you play that role well.

"This year, of course, is the year we try to 'make poverty history' and I am pleased to know that British trade unionists are contributing to the struggle to free Africa from the chains of poverty, illness and debt, just as you contributed to the struggle to free South Africa from the chains of apartheid.

"I was privileged to launch the Make Poverty History campaign in London earlier this year, and as you know, the world's leaders are gathering this week in New York for the UN Millennium Development Goals summit. The Global Call to Action against Poverty, to which you all belong through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, wants to see poverty made history at the UN this week.

"I am glad that the British trade union Movement is playing its part, and I urge you to do everything that you can in what remains of this historic year.

"Yours in solidarity, Nelson Mandela."

(Applause)

The President: Here is the original, signed, personal letter to us all from Nelson Mandela.

Union diversity fund

Suresh Chawla (*Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union*) moved Motion 19.

He said: How can you top the PFA and Nelson Mandela, but I will certainly give it my best shot!

President, Congress, sisters and brothers, this motion is about the kind of workplace you want to work in. It is about what kind of country you want to live in and what kind of society you want to be a part of. Setting up the Union Diversity Fund is about how we help make it a reality.

As we know, there has been feverish debate in the media ever since those dreadful bombings about what kind of society we are, whether multiculturalism has gone too far and what it means to be British. The fact is that Britain is already a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. The problem is that it is not integrated. Different cultures and communities are still segregated from each other to an appalling degree.

This is reflected in the workplace.

Take the film and broadcasting industries, more than half of which are based in London. Seven per cent of the industry comprises black and minority ethnic workers compared with 8.3% of the UK population and more than 30% in London. Some areas are worse than others. 2.7% of camera people are BME and 4.7% work in sound. In radio broadcasting, BME workers number just 1.8%. On the other hand, one category of the film industry has 22% ethnic minority workers - yes, that is cinema cleaners.

There have been many demands that ethnic minority communities must do this and must do that and what their leaders must and must not do. However, the really obvious underlying truth that has not been acknowledged is that no minority community can integrate with the majority if the majority does not take a step too. Demands that British Asians integrate sounds a bit like a house owner marching around to his next door neighbours' house to tell them that they ought to be more sociable and then not inviting them to his barbecue! If we really want this country to integrate, the message it has to dare to send out is that from now on integration has to be the concern of every British citizen.

This is why BECTU devised Move on Up. It involved people who can really make a difference, people who hire and fire and people who can decide which programmes to commission and which films to fund. We hoped that if BME professionals could make personal contacts with these executives, in the long-run it might lead to contracts or commissions. We organized 530 meetings on one day at the TUC. We were right; we did a survey a few months later and 10% of those who responded said that they did, in fact, go on to get work as a result of it. The executives appreciated it too. They made valuable new contacts.

After well over a year of applying and applying and applying for funding, we finally succeeded in securing funding from the Equal Fund to run three more such events. This funding, however, covers only half the costs and the rest has to be found from the union, the industry and other funders; yet one funder is now approaching the anniversary of receiving our first request, but cannot quite get around to telling us

what decision they have made. The Equal Fund itself has finished its last funding round, so it will not be available in the future.

It is absolutely clear to BECTU that trade unions could play a huge leadership role in integration in the workplace. No other organisation is so well placed to intervene and work constructively with management to bring about change for the better. BECTU has built these partnerships with key employers in our industries and it has worked extremely well.

Setting up meaningful initiatives like these reassures BME workers that the union really is serious about representation. BECTU received a 37% increase in new joiners from ethnic minorities after the event, and now 12.5% of the union's NEC is BME, up from zero less than two years back.

However, if trade unions are to lead the way to an integrated workplace, we need the resources to do it. We urge the General Council to lobby the Government to set up a Union Diversity Fund that we can all apply to specifically to help us set up initiatives to encourage integration. Integration of the workplace will take years and years if we leave it to the employers. This country cannot wait that long.

Support this motion and together we can help to build the new Britain and the new integrated society that we know we will achieve one day. Let's bring that day closer.

Sam Allen (*The University & College Lecturers' Union*) seconded Motion 19.

He said: We are absolutely delighted, as a union, to second Motion 19. This fund represents a great opportunity for trade unions. Creating a diverse workforce at every level, in every industry, is too important to leave to employers alone. If we did, it would take decades before we actually achieved it.

A Union Diversity Fund would give your union the resources to intervene in partnership with the employers to quicken the pace of change. It would not be up to the Fund to say what should be done. It would be up to you as leaders and activists

within your union to set the key factors, working against achieving diversity and then formulating a project to tackle. It would give you the opportunity to work with employers in a different way.

It may well bring you into contact with sections of the workforce you have not yet reached. It would certainly persuade BME workers that your union is really serious about representing them. It will also encourage the pace of change which cannot be fast enough.

We are absolutely delighted as a union to support this. I would urge you, not only just to vote for this motion, but to put it into practice in your individual union. I am privileged to be able to operate this magazine which has been put together. It is wonderful to see people with smiling faces who have already benefited from some of the pilot programmes. It is a delight and a joy to see. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

The President: The General Council supports the motion.

* *Motion 19 was CARRIED*

The President: That concludes this morning's business. Again, as usual, I remind you of the various meetings taking place, details of which can be found on pages 16 and 17 of the Congress Guide. We now stand adjourned until 2.15pm. Thank you very much.

(Congress adjourned to 2.15 pm)

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

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

The President: Delegates, I call Congress to order. We will now have the report from the GPC.

General Purposes Committee Report

Annette Mansell-Green: Congress, delegates, I am pleased to announce that the GPC approved two further emergency options, Emergency E4 on BNP and the Race Relations Act, and Emergency E5 on Women in Iraq. Copies of these emergency motions will be distributed to delegates tomorrow morning in time for the start of business.

The President: Thank you, Annette. Can you note that report? Congress, the oldest tradition we respect at every Congress is the address from the delegate from the AFL-CIO. Indeed, it is worth reflecting that in this age when everything about globalisation seems to be new the trades union's commitment to solidarity in fact stretches back over a century. This July I was actually very proud to take the TUC's commitment to solidarity all the way to Chicago to address the AFL-CIO convention myself. So, it gives me great pleasure now to return that courtesy. Congress, please welcome the sororal delegate from the AFL-CIO, Executive Council member, and United Autoworkers secretary/treasurer, Elizabeth Bunn. Elizabeth, welcome, and please address Congress.

Elizabeth Bunn (AFL-CIO): Thank you, Jeannie, and delegates, for the kind introduction. Let me express my gratitude to the Congress for inviting a representative from the AFL to participate and let me thank you more than that for the

remarks that Jeannie Drake made on your behalf at our recent AFL-CIO Convention. It was an emotional and inspiring moment for our delegates and for our women delegates it was a moment of pure pride, but more than anything, on behalf of the AFL-CIO and the millions of workers we represent, thank all of you for 111 years of friendship, assistance, and solidarity.

Let me also say by introduction, congratulations on the English victory in cricket!

Sisters and brothers, I bring you greetings from AFL-CIO President, John Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer, Richard Trumka, and Executive Vice President, Linda Chavez-Thompson, all of whom have had the honour of addressing this Congress in recent years. I stand here today as the proud representative of the American house of labour – the AFL-CIO – a house built with the bricks of worker solidarity and the mortar of trade union democracy; a house strong enough to withstand the hurricane force winds of the Bush Administration, global capital mobility, right-wing religious extremism in our country, a house strong enough to withstand dissension from within, a house strong enough to withstand the departure of some of our family.

My message today is a message of anger and grief, but in greater measure of gratitude and hope. My message today is of solidarity because in the struggle for justice it has always been our most effective weapon and because in today's world we are linked like never before.

Four years ago in the wake of the most terrible tragedy of 9/11 we marvelled at the courage and honour of our emergency rescue workers, nearly all trade unionists, and included in that honour roll of heroes were members of your Fire Brigades Union. Two months ago, we shared your horror, anger, and grief, at the London bombings

but it was with a dizzying sense of déjà vu that we also marvelled again at the courage and honour of your emergency rescue workers. We are all in this together.

In the last two weeks, you grieved with us again at the worst hurricane in US history striking the Gulf Coast but, please, make no mistake, although the disaster was natural, the real tragedy was almost entirely manmade. From George Bush's steadfast refusal to acknowledge the causes, the severity, even the fact of climate change that exacerbates the force of the winds, to the Bush Administration's callous lifting of restrictions on the development of wetlands which also serve to temper the winds, to the slashing of governmental funds to repair and bolster the levees, and finally to the incomprehensible, indescribable, incompetence and indifference of the governmental response to the evacuation and rescue efforts – all of these blunders resulting in the sickening and inevitable suffering and loss of lives of the poor, the weak, the sick, the elderly, the vulnerable, so many of them people of colour.

Though I stand here today as an American in mourning, I know that I share my grief and anger with the trade unionists in this room. For trade unionists solidarity has no borders, for trade unionists respect for human life recognises no colours, and for trade unionists the value of life is not measured by net worth. The AFL-CIO and the TUC have always known this. It was our past shared solidarity that beat back US corporate greed in organising and collective bargaining drives at Ravenswood, Tate & Lyle, Continental Tire and Yale University.

In a more recent display of solidarity, the support of the TUC, Prospect, and the Civil Service unions, helped us organise the local staff at the British Embassy and consulates in the United States and here in Britain. The AFL-CIO and the United Steelworkers worked with the T&G to defeat pension cuts at Imerys. Today, I tell you that the AFL-CIO, and all of its affiliates, stands in solidarity with the TUC and

the T&G against the assault on workers at Gate Gourmet. An American tycoon may have enjoyed his £10m birthday, but his party is over.

In solidarity, we supported the efforts of heroic South African freedom efforts to topple apartheid, in solidarity we supported the efforts of Polish trade unionists to overcome martial law and establish free independent trade unions, and in solidarity we assist those forced to walk minefields in Burma, and those facing death squads in Colombia. We are in this together.

We face, however, a monumental task. Since the toppling of the Berlin Wall, hegemony of global capital has been largely unchallenged and the mobility of global capital largely unrestricted. Capital has little or no respect for political borders. It is our challenge to ensure, yours and ours together, that political borders do not prevent us from continuing to foster a global trade union movement that rewrites the way capital operates for it is not the “globalness” of the economy that is the problem, it is the rules by which that economy currently operates. Sisters and brothers, it does not have to be this way.

The theme of your Congress resonates around the world – we can make poverty history. Your resolutions resonate around the world as well: the celebration and nurturing of our diversity, the battle to eliminate the persistent gender wage gap, the strengthening of public services, the rededication to organising, the commitment to getting British and US troops out of Iraq so that the Iraqi people and a strong independent democratic trade union can secure justice for its own citizens.

At our recent AFL-CIO Convention, we had many of the same debates and discussions, about diversity, organising, Iraq, preserving the social security system. We debated public policy and we also debated how to restructure our Federation to meet today’s challenges, we took bold measures to shift priorities and redirect our

energy to advance our commitment to diversity so that our leadership looks like our membership. Debate and discussion inside the Trade Union Movement keeps us energised and creative, it helps us to prosper and grow.

Unfortunately, as many of you know, several of our unions made the decision to disaffiliate because they did not prevail on certain of the proposals that they were advocating. Their suggestions were seriously considered and debated. In fact, many of the changes we adopted flowed from their proposals but in the end a majority did not support the changes; rather than accepting the results of the democratic will, they fled the house of labour.

Many have asked me over the last several days about the underlying dispute. There is not time to describe the nuances of the differences but let me be very clear about what this dispute is not about: it is not about a commitment to politics versus organising; the dispute is not about whether to pursue a progressive agenda or a conservative one; the dispute is not about service sector unions versus manufacturing ones; it is not about who has the boldest and most creative ideas to transform our movement, who is the most militant, who has the courage to change or the passion to win.

We are left now with a divided house and a divided house is, by definition, a weaker one. More importantly, the departure has caused a terrible diversion and a terrible blow to the bedrock principles of unity and solidarity from which our strength derives. It is a diversion because the time, energy, and resources, we spend on this internal struggle is time, energy, and resources, we are not spending on the struggles that really matter to our movement.

It is a blow to unity and solidarity because the fact is that none of us has all the answers and we need each other to continue learning, changing, strategising, and

growing. We need all of our collective resources – financial, intellectual, sectoral, numeric – in order collectively to win the battle against global capital in which we are engaged. We need all of our undivided collective power to take on multinational giants, right-wing governments, and the corporate trade policies of the WTO. We need all of our undivided collective power in order to organise millions of workers. We need all of our collective power to engage our allies among NGOs in the struggle for social justice, to create the conditions throughout the world in which true, independent, democratic trade unions can flourish and grow, to bring global corporations to a global bargaining table so that capital competes on the basis of innovation, design, creativity, productivity, efficiency, and not on the tragic Wal-Mart model of securing the lowest wages, the worst benefits, the least secure pensions. We need to alter world politics so that governments can adhere to a social model which nurtures communities and serves people, not capital.

In short, to win we have to continue building a unified global trade union movement, overcoming political and ideological divides, advancing the efforts of the ICFTU, and others, to unify the global movement. We must resist the temptation to let whatever strategic and tactical differences we may have hinder our efforts to unify and build together. The challenges of the global economy are daunting but, at the same time, the potential to secure worker justice, to make poverty history, is in our grasp like never before. In my AFL-CIO heart, I remain an optimist about the wisdom, the courage, and the collective power of working people.

In our generation we have been witnesses to the power of the idea of political democracy and justice, we have seen that idea topple regime after repressive regime. The ideas of workplace democracy and worker justice are equally powerful. Trade union solidarity is our weapon to breathe life into this idea. It is our creed, it is our

history, it is our foundation, and together we must make it our legacy and our future.
Thank you.

The President: Thank you for that fantastic speech. I was shown so much warmth by the AFL-CIO in Chicago and I was there at what was a very very difficult time in the history of the American Labour Movement. I hope they find a way of reuniting because the only gainers are George Bush, the Republicans, and the employers when labour movements split. Around the world trade union movements are emerging in very fragile circumstances with great suppression around them and we who have the privilege of mature trade union movements that are together and strong need to send them a clear signal that they should not split, that they should stay strong together.

I am absolutely delighted to present you with the TUC Gold Badge and also a personal present. (*Presentation of the award*)

Elizabeth Bunn: Thank you, Jeannie, and thank all of you. Your hospitality has warmed my heart for several days and it has just been a true honour for me to be here with you. Thank you.

Global Solidarity

The President: Thank you. Congress, we now go to General Council Report Chapter 5, Global Solidarity, page 69. I call Motion 73, Women Internationally. The General Council support the motion. It is to be moved by Diana Holland on behalf of the TUC Women's Conference and seconded by Anita Halpin on behalf of the TUC Women's Conference. Diana, welcome, and please move the motion.

Women Internationally

Diana Holland (*T&G*) moved Motion 73 on behalf of the TUC Women's Conference.

She said: Thank you. A young woman garment worker in Bangladesh earning just 60 pence a day, an older woman textile worker in Scotland facing redundancy, a woman railway worker in Zambia losing her job when the railways are privatised, a woman from Nigeria working at two, three and four jobs as a cleaner in London catching up on sleep as she travels between them, a woman in Argentina told by the courts that she is not fit to be a mother as she is an aviation worker, a British Airways woman pilot refused her request to reduce to part-time hours to look after her daughter, an Asian woman worker at Gate Gourmet victimised for asserting her rights, a Polish woman employed by an agency in Britain contracted to work at Heathrow: what brings all these women together? Globalisation, exploitation, and the need to organise together.

Women are half the world's population, working two-thirds of the world's working hours, earning just one-tenth of the world's income, and are the primary victims of violations of workers' rights worldwide, and yet yesterday for the first time we had the threat of the United Nations admitting that the millennium development goals to end poverty by 2015 may not be met. We cannot let this be our legacy to future generations. This is why the TUC Women's Conference voted to bring this motion here and why the struggle for fair pay and women's equality are international issues central to this global solidarity debate.

This year internationalism has mobilised millions across the world, making poverty history our shared vision. The world spends \$839bn on arms and the military, four times what it would cost to provide decent housing, healthcare, and education to all citizens. That is why we cannot let the millennium development goals be lost. The UN platform for action set in Beijing ten years ago at the World Women's Conference sends a clear message on four points: equality for women and girls is central to ending poverty; issues like childbirth are critical to women and to children's lives; women involve other women in communities, workplaces, unions, in struggle, in governments, and we need to be involved. If you get it right for women, you get it right for everyone.

As part of this international struggle the UN has called for countries in the world to celebrate International Women's Day. On 8th March this year the T&G presented a 10,000-signature petition to ministers calling for International Women's Day to be made a public holiday as it is in many other countries, one of the most popular campaigns I have ever been involved in organising. Thank you to all of you who signed up. Our voices were joined by millions all over the world that day.

Too often women are presented as victims but, as this motion says, women trade unionists in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, have been at the forefront of struggles. The messages that I received from trade union sisters and brothers after the bombings in London were extremely powerful and moving, and demonstrated what international solidarity is really about: none of us are alone.

Women in Britain, too, have been struggling for centuries and I wanted to highlight just one, the chain makers of Cradley Heath, who nearly 100 years ago organised against starvation wages; they won and established the movement towards a

national minimum wage in this country. I hope all of you will join the first women chain makers festival on October 22nd this year.

This motion calls for a fair deal for women worldwide and action in four key areas:

1. Campaigning with governments on women internationally, including on basic core labour standards and fair trade.
2. Building links with women trade unionists worldwide, like the delegation to Colombia later this year.
3. Supporting the world march of women goals on women's poverty and violence.
4. Campaigning for International Women's Day; women's rights are human rights and international solidarity needs to be practised.

In conclusion, as our sisters in South India say, "*As birds are born to fly, so are women born to be free.*" Stronger together is the theme of this Congress and stronger together is how we are.

Anita Halpin (*National Union of Journalists*) seconding Motion 73, said: I am speaking for the TUC Women's Committee on the first international motion to come from our equality conferences. Sisters and brothers, the motion graphically describes the plight of our sisters in the developing world and Diana has given you a quick sound bite of events around the world. It is the first motion in this section and thus acknowledges the particular role, I believe, that women have in building sisterhood and understanding, sisterhood to give confidence and solidarity, understanding of the perpetrators of exploitation and the causes of misery.

Like many of our unions, the NUJ has international policy on a wide range of issues covering all five continents, but all too often these stand alone, there is no strategic cohesion and they vie with each other for priority. I believe this motion and what my union is now doing is important to give a focus and a context in which we set our international work.

That is why we have been able to embark on a project that, hopefully, will create a context in which we can all set our international policies. I would urge you, sisters and brothers, to look maybe at doing the same. Our project is designed to let us work to our particular strengths as a union of journalists, to give focus to our internationalism.

There are three strands:

First, to raise awareness of the millennium development goals as Diana has outlined and obviously I hope we will give that a strong equality strand. Second, to encourage journalists to look behind the often patronising stereotypes of society and the developing countries; again, as has been said, they are more than victims, they are human beings with rights and we will support our journalists who are brave enough to tell it how it is, whether it is in Colombia or elsewhere. Third, to encourage the development of a diverse media around the world to give voice and expression to hopes and aspirations.

We were promised more public holidays. International Women's Day is a great celebration. I can remember having very close friends who were socialists and they had a tradition where the sisters would send each other flowers on International Women's Day, but there are other days when we can celebrate that together we are stronger. Please, let us have International Women's Day but do not forget, if I may

say as joint chair for the London May Day Rally, that May Day is International Workers Day; international women, sisters and brothers, we have a responsibility.

Please support the motion, take forward the millennium goals, and work to create within your union on the back of this and other motions in this section a focus of cohesion and, therefore, a much more effective expression of our international solidarity.

Mary Page (*National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers*) supporting Motion 73, said: I would like to refer to the sentence in the motion which asks us to recall the struggle by women for the right to participate in society on an equal footing to men. That is a struggle which we are all too well aware is an ongoing one. I would like to draw delegates' attention, in particular, to the proposed Iraqi constitution which has been accepted and is now being put to a referendum, and which has very disturbing implications for the rights of women in Iraq.

I do not know an awful lot about this constitution, although I know enough to be concerned, but I do know quite a lot about being a woman, albeit a privileged white Western one. I wanted to speak on this subject because of an incident that occurred at a party I went to recently. A discussion arose about beliefs and values and in the course of it I was called a cultural imperialist for criticising some religious and cultural beliefs which disagree with equal rights for women and gay and lesbian people.

Congress, I respect all beliefs and values, apart from those that are racist, Fascist, and homophobes. I know, as we all know, the true values of all major religions promote equality and respect. But, Congress, if being against female circumcision, forced marriages, the stoning of women for alleged sexual misdeeds,

and the general oppression of women and their treatment as second-class citizens, makes me a cultural imperialist, I am happy to wear that label and you can make me the T-shirt. It seems to me there are inalienable truths that there are some rights that are fundamental and are shared and practised amongst all faiths and creeds, and high among those is equality of and respect for both genders.

Congress, what is happening now, and is proposed for the future of Iraqi society, does not promote equality and respect for women. Before the invasion in 2003 Iraq, although a despotic regime, was a secular society where women played an important and valued role in civil and political society. No one wants to go back to that kind of tyrannical regime but trade unionists, socialists, all human beings, must fight for the rights of our Iraqi sisters. We must work with all trade union organisations in Iraq to bring pressure to bear in any way we can to resist any attempts to restrict and degrade the role and dignity of women in Iraq, whether in the trade unions, political parties, or on the streets and in the homes in the towns and villages of Iraq. Someone in an earlier debate mentioned a woman's right to choose. We in the UK have fought for that right and we may well have to do so again, but at least we have the right to fight, and even this right is under threat in the proposed constitution.

So, I would like you to support the motion, please, and our Iraqi sisters whose fundamental rights are under attack.

Madam President, could I digress very slightly and take this opportunity while I am here to thank everyone in this hall for the work that was done in securing survivors' pension rights for me and my partner. We could not have done it without the Trade Union Movement behind us and when we eventually sign our civil partnership next year it will be at my trade union headquarters because my trade

union, and every other union, helped me to get to the position where I could do it. Thank you very much indeed.

Barbara Murray (*Amicus*) supporting Motion 73, said: Congress, I call upon you to support Motion 73, Women Internationally. I would just like you to take a couple of seconds to think about all the women within your families; your wives, partners, daughters, mothers, aunts and nieces, all of these women in your lives are internationals. International Women's Day, March 8th, is a day celebrated by women's groups around the world. March 8th is a day which is also commemorated at the UN and designated a national holiday in many countries. 2005 brings a review of the UN decade for women, a new era for platform for action, and of the millennium development goals to eliminate poverty and promote gender equality. Every single day women are killed, kidnapped, raped, and mutilated, normally at the hands of someone they know. Women in the poorest regions are twice as likely to live and die in poverty as men; 70% of the world's poor are women, and around the world their basic human rights are being violated continually. Half a million women die every year during pregnancy or childbirth. Women's rate of HIV infection has overtaken those of men. Two-thirds of children not enrolled in school are girls. Women's work, including caring, is undervalued, underpaid, dangerous, and stressful. But women around the world are under-represented, excluded from political involvement, war, and militarization. This just breeds new levels of violence towards women.

We have all seen the news and documentaries this year of the women and girls in Africa and the Congo who are forced to fight, raped continually, and are slaves to their male paramilitary leaders. Here in the UK two women are killed every day by their partners; that means since Congress started on Monday four women have been

killed already this week and by this time tomorrow it will be six. You may think that now we are in the 21st century the lives of women would already be on an equal footing to men, but we still have a long way to go.

The idea of International Women's Day first arose at the turn of the last century, and it was only then that women in the UK campaigned for and succeeded in getting the right to vote. The 1944 Education Act only meant that women teachers were no longer required to leave their jobs when they were married. In 1964, the Married Women's Poverty Act gave wives the legal right to half of their savings from a housekeeping allowance; before this was introduced women could be thrown out of their homes and straight into poverty.

There are many more dates throughout history where women have fought for and gained improvements but do not forget, although the laws and legislation have changed, it is sometimes no different than before. The Equal Pay Act in 1970, 35 years ago, six years before I was born, still does not ensure equal pay but we are still campaigning for this basic equality. It was only in 1991 that the courts in the UK acknowledged rape within a marriage, which means that only 14 years ago it was the husband's right to force his wife to have sex against her will.

All of these reasons, and many more, are why you should support International Women's Day. Women, your wives, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, deserve the right to be celebrated for all they bring to society in every aspect. We need to campaign for International Women's Day to be made a national bank holiday to enable women around the world to celebrate together in solidarity and honour for all they have achieved. Ultimately, if successful, this motion will enable more than half of our population, who are often downtrodden, discriminated, and maligned, in a

politically correct 2005, to mark a significant day in the year for the members of their gender and to encourage men to do likewise. Please support this motion.

Tracy Clarke (*Community*) supporting Motion 73, said: Delegates, the Meddows statue outside the TUC shows a man helping his fallen brother. This is not how it is in the developing world. Women grow most of the food and they are often also in the lead of trade union fighting to end this appalling injustice. Mari Benkara, for example, was a great leader of HMS in India. She was the main inspiration behind the first equal pay legislation years before Barbara Castle. Today, women trade unionists in India lead the fight against child labour, despite the violent attacks of those who would exploit the weak and under-privileged.

In South Africa Emma Mashinini was one of the fearless women union leaders in the COSATU during the 1980s; a mother of three she was detained and tortured for six months. She has gone on to play a crucial part in promoting reconciliation in the wondrous new democratic South Africa.

In Colombia, and other Latin American countries, today many women lead workers' struggles, and many have paid with their lives. Their fight goes on.

The World Trade Organisation and the IMF are accessories in these murders. That is why Congress should applaud our government's efforts to lead the fight to make poverty history. It is pressing hard to reform the Common Agricultural Policy, which pays \$2 a day for every European cow; three billion people exist on less than that, and our government is trying to end the export subsidies that deliberately starve farmers in developing countries.

There has been another great advance: Hilary Benn understands that unions are partners in development, not obstacles. The Africa Commission this year

concluded that the absence of accountable government is the main obstacle to development. Unions can make good the crucial missing element. They did it in South Africa, they did it in Poland exactly a quarter of a century ago, and they did it in Chile.

Delegates, we should give an unambiguous call to enable unions to play the part of which only they are capable and end world poverty. Support this motion.

- Motion 73 was CARRIED

The President: I thank you for that. As Diana said, “*Birds are born to fly; women are born to be free.*” Thank you.

Globalisation

The President: I now call paragraphs 5.1, 5.2, and Motion 74. The General Council support the motion.

Tony Richardson (*Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union*) moved Motion 74. He said: Congress, this resolution is a culmination of a year-long project developed from the GFTU, international development champions programme taken through our national conference and here to the TUC. I am sure that delegates would agree that globalisation and the dominance of global capital is one of the biggest challenges facing trade unions and workers around the world today. It is a phenomenon generated by the worse excesses of the capitalist multinationals, and it flourishes due to favourable government policies, all to the detriment of workers everywhere. The

ease with which transnational corporations ply their trade across national boundaries looking to exploit poorly regulated countries and unorganised workers is abhorrent, and a practice only for the gutter. It is a practice that should sicken all right thinking people and it is up to us in the Trade Union Movement to work to mitigate its effects.

How do we combat the practice? What steps do we take in order to redress the balance? It is no good thinking it will go away; it will not. It is a juggernaut. If we are to protect our members and the workers of the developing countries, we must box clever. The only way to deal with globalisation is through concerted international trade union activity and solidarity, to educate, organise, and raise standards for our comrades in the exploited countries. Whether that be in the industrial relations field or ensuring high health and safety standards, we must manage and manipulate the situation to our advantage, to extend our expertise to those who need it.

You could ask, how does globalisation affect the Bakers Union whose industry is obviously nationally based? My answer is twofold: firstly, globalisation affects all sectors, all industries, manufacturing, services, IT, and manual work. Already a major cake manufacturer that we organise is under threat of production being moved to Eastern Europe. Secondly, all trade unions, no matter where we organise, have a duty to stand together in solidarity to fight this threat.

We all know the transnationals and multinationals will relentlessly pursue every penny of profit, they will squeeze until the pips squeak. Whether that means reducing health and safety standards or exploiting defenceless workers they will look for the cheapest option, the best deal, and the lowest common denominator in a race to the bottom, leaving misery and devastation wherever they operate.

Congress, that is why our motion, as amended, calls on the TUC to make the links at all levels with the developing institutions in the developing nations; to give

our expertise and knowledge to our brothers and sisters in those countries so they have the tools to raise themselves up and do the job against the odds; by using our affiliates across the globe we can get that assistance where it is needed; and we must campaign for regulation, decent standards, and workers' rights. We believe in a capitalist world, let us use those capitalist methods against the multinationals and create a level playing field that will benefit all workers.

Congress, we all know the multinationals will continue to drive down standards, diminish conditions, chase the profit, and ruin lives. It is up to us in the Labour Movement to begin the process, to start the programme, make the links, create the solidarity, unite all workers of the world and, yes, comrades, help them to lose their chains.

Hugh Lanning (*PCS*) seconded Motion 74.

He said: Clearly supporting everything that has been said about the role of trades unions, but our amendment stressed the role of the public sector in achieving health and safety standards, and that is the theme I want to develop.

Yesterday, Gordon Brown -- en route to New York -- said that the UK would be arguing for free universal public services. We agree, but what was not said is who will be delivering those services. We do not believe that private companies, consultants and contractors can deliver free universal public services across the world. Last year, we challenged the government on conditionality, the theme of making privatisation a condition of aid. The UK has moved its position but the World Bank has not. In the UK we still use consultants while cutting 100,000 jobs. In the Make Poverty History campaign we said that promoting public services was an important

theme, and we think that is the next logical step not just against privatisation; we believe that public services are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

The World Bank has had three phases of trying to attack and diminish public services. I quote from a report: there is a view amongst donor agencies that public service organisations in developing countries and in particular Africa are too big, unwieldy and cost too much and therefore should be cut by predetermined percentages within a short space of time. In Europe, under the Services Directive, we are arguing with the UK Government, and others, that there are core public services that should not be subject to the market. Just referring to Alan Johnson, every job created in the UK will be a job lost somewhere else in Europe under the Services Directive. As we heard from our delegate from America, the Katrina hurricane has shown that you can only neglect the public realm for so long before the levee breaks. We want the UK Government, in talks on globalisation in the UN, in the UK Presidency, in the World Trade Organisation later this year, to perhaps just cherish and develop core public services rather than demean and diminish them. Our view is that a strong public sector and free trades unions are part of the building blocks to reduce poverty across the world.

Please support the motion.

Anne-Marie Green (*Association of University Teachers*): Motion 74 clearly draws attention to the negative effects that globalisation can have. This means that there can no longer be only national or local trades unions. We have to be an international movement. The higher education sector is one that is touched just as greatly as any other by the hands of globalisation. A recent survey found that 40 per cent of new staff entrants for higher education come from outside of the UK. The greatest current

growth in undergraduate student numbers at my own university is from China and India. As an example of the effect of this, the push to gain income from overseas fees has led to ever increasing student numbers, but at the same time staff numbers are being cut.

Moreover, universities all over the UK are setting up campuses abroad in China, the Middle East and Malaysia, with my own currently undertaking a feasibility study into a Singapore campus. These campuses are often set up in countries where trades unions are not allowed, where academic freedom is curtailed and where the nature of employment rights is very unclear. Promoting the role of trades unions is crucial in fighting for common employment and democratic standards, and is a principle which the AUT amendment to Motion 74 seeks to emphasise.

At AUT Council in April this year, Abdul Hussein of the Iraqi Trade Union Federation and the Iraqi Teachers Union, and himself an academic, spoke eloquently about the real difference that having trades unions can make to working conditions. In our local context it is the trade union rep who challenges abuses of employment rights and points out the potential problems of human rights in those campuses abroad. Trades unions act as a critical challenge to senior managers as ever too caught up in the push towards University PLC.

Our amendment also reflects our feeling that the positive aspect of globalisation should be recognised. Globalisation can provide great opportunities as well as threats. Academic arenas can remove political, ideological and economic barriers. As my AUT colleague suggested, education is international and international solidarity is a benefit of globalisation. We can never forget how lucky we are to have the freedom to join a trade union. I am a teacher of industrial relations. Some of my international students had never learned of a trade union and had never

lived in a society where trade unions could even exist. Unless we use globalisation in the way in which we want it to be used, they never get the chance.

Please support the motion.

Global Solidarity

Introduction

Stewart Brown (*Fire Brigades Union*) speaking to paragraph 5.1 said: May I first of all thank you for the bucket collection for J-Flag, the Jamaican Forum for lesbians, homosexuals and gays. We raised £400. Thanks very much to Congress. These comrades have had their finances cut by the Jamaican Government, ironically at the same time as they are being forced -- through pressure from the UK Government and Amnesty International -- to amend legislation outlawing homosexuals. We welcome this climb down and continue to work with J-Flag in the struggle for decent human rights that we take for granted.

Another area of concern is the brutal killings of young innocent men in Iran accused of rape and sentenced to public hangings. I urge you to raise this most important issue with your respective membership. To continue to submit motions to Congress and the Equality Conferences on international issues is all good and well, but it is true solidarity that our brothers and sisters around the global community need. That is why the TUC LGBT Committee -- in conjunction with Owen Tudor and the International Department -- has organised a conference on 6 February 2006. This will be a one-day conference at Congress House, and we urge you to look out for the formal notification and urge you to promote this to your branches and your members. Thank you.

* *Motion 74 and amendments were CARRIED*

The President: I now call paragraph 5.4 and Motion 76, China. The General Council support the motion and I will call Sally Hunt during the debate to explain the General Council's position.

Paul Gates (*Community*) moved Motion 76, China.

He said: We need to grasp the opportunities that this development can create for people throughout the world. With the expectation that over 50 per cent of the world's steel and textile production will be coming from China over the next five years, our union has a first-hand knowledge of the rapid development of the Chinese economy. The changes in globalisation are being accelerated by China, and indeed India's rapid growth in particular. But China has the potential to raise living standards globally and we must grasp that potential. It can help and contribute to the end of world poverty.

But, in approaching it, we must not make the same ideological mistakes of the past. If globalisation is going to work for working people, then it must develop a new dimension. Currently, the growth in China is no different from what the growth globally has been in the past. Globalisation is controlled by three elements: financial institutions, politicians and multinational corporations. We need to introduce a fourth element, people, workers, and make them the real beneficiaries of globalisation.

If we are to get the benefit of the Chinese economic miracle, then so must the workers of China themselves, and a key part of ensuring that move is to provide them with the support, education and training to develop trades unions themselves within China. We have seen the benefit in countries like Poland and South Africa, the role that free trades unions can play in developing the economic and political welfare of

their countries for the benefit of working people. So, colleagues, let us roll out the whole international trade union Movement to support the development of workers in China.

Conference, I said to you that we must not make the same ideological mistakes of the past. Protectionism is not the answer to creating and developing jobs in the western world, and never will be, I have worked in the textile industry most of my life and I have seen first hand the failure of that single policy. But neither is it a benefit to workers of the world in the developing countries to allow multinational corporations to freely exploit and dispose of labour. Human rights and core labour standards are crucial. By improving the real living standards of the millions of working people we can ensure that workers everywhere prosper.

Over the past few weeks I have been asked dozens of times what was this bra war all about. Will it mean more jobs in the UK? Well, what a myth. It is what happens when a so-called arch moderniser like Peter Mandelson falls back on old philosophies and ideological terms. It was about an attempt to separate the right from the left while still trying to support them both. Mr Mandelson, not one manufacturing job would have been created in the UK as the result of your policies. Jobs may have gone to Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Eastern Europe, but not back to Europe. The price difference was far too great for that. But many jobs were on the line. Small private businesses, that had developed those businesses with high skilled design and development operations, were under threat. They had been developing partnerships and relationships with Chinese companies. Having the production and money tied up at bonded warehouses put their jobs, and the jobs of many retailers, under threat as well -- totally misguided and totally outdated.

China is creating problems for workers in the developing world through its entry into the WTO. There is the issue of the Chinese currency, but again – to the people who are concerned about this part of the resolution -- this is not protectionism, it does not affect jobs in the western world but it does affect job in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. One million textile jobs have been lost there as a result of the difference in the currency arrangements there. Conference, this is about grasping the opportunity of China.

I ask you to support the resolution, support the people and support the development of people throughout the world.

Paddy Lillis (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) seconded Motion 76.

He said: At the height of the industrial revolution Britain was called the workshop of the world. That title today undoubtedly belongs to China, the world's largest producer of coal, steel, cement, and a great deal more as Gordon Brown made clear yesterday. Seventy per cent of the world's photocopiers, half the world's cameras and virtually all the world's toys are produced in China, not just a major producer but also a major consumer -- the world's second largest consumer of energy and the third largest importer of oil. Taken together as both a producer and a consumer, China is now a massive and growing presence on the world's stage and in the global economy.

Both the Chancellor yesterday and the motion today make clear the consequences for manufacturing and manufacturing workers both here in the UK and globally, and they are right to do so. But there is a growing trend towards globalisation in the service sector too. Retailers who we always thought were tied to the domestic markets are also going global. Wal-Mart, for example, are now through Germany, the UK and into Russia. Tesco have moved through eastern Europe, south-

east Asia and have been in China since last year. These are major companies looking beyond the mature western markets and looking for immature markets they believe they can develop. With 1.3 billion consumers they do not come any bigger than China.

The challenge to the trade union Movement globally is clear to see. It is not just about trade exchange rates and fair competition, it is no longer just about manufacturing, it is about services too, and in every case it is about working conditions, independent trade union organisation and human rights. It is, therefore, about the challenge we face as a Movement not just to compete as a trading nation ourselves, to protect and promote our members' interest, but to ensure that we level up globally, and that is going to mean a massive effort in every forum and through every channel that we can reach -- the ICFTU certainly but also every Secretariat and International Federation that we affiliate to.

Whether it is in manufacturing or the service sector, China is going to figure large as a consumer, a producer or both. So, if we aspire to protecting and promoting the interests of workers globally, then our reach has to extend to China as the largest trading nation and workforce on earth. Please support.

The President: I am getting indications that there are unions at Congress who either oppose or have significant reservations about this motion. I was trying to move towards the vote, but if there is opposition or reservation I need to deal with that to give justice to the debate. I will call UCATT, then I will call in NATFHE who are going to oppose the motion, and then Amicus who I think have some strong reservations. Then I will go to Sally Hunt, and the right of reply. This will eat into time but I cannot deny that there is opposition on the floor.

Chris Murphy (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*): To make our position clear before people get carried away, UCATT is not opposed to free independent trades unions; we do wish that we had free independent trades unions in this country that could represent their workers.

Not having a degree in economics and being a common carpenter for many a year, I read this resolution the first time and, being a bit slow -- because I am getting old and grey -- I missed some fundamentally important parts. Sitting there reading it again this morning, waking up after last night, I began to get worried about it. It seems to emphasise quite clearly that all the economic ills of the west and the world, with global warming/climate change, are down to China. We take no responsibility for Europe or the United States. The United States did not sign the Kyoto Agreement. Bush walks around imagining it does not exist and that global warming or the burning of oil and other pollutants do not affect the state of the climate in the world, where scientists after scientist -- especially in Europe -- are telling them differently.

I am not here to defend the Chinese economy. I have never been to China, I cannot speak it and I cannot read it, but the facts of life are that we are looking at a country that, over the years, has been attacked because of its political system; people did not like it. It has come out of that to a degree where it is a manufacturing nation; it is trying to improve the lot of the people working in that country, who depended mainly on agriculture. They are getting foreign income. The last speaker touched on the question of importing or exporting to China. The facts are that with the economy in China, the way it is, they do not have the money to import our goods at the price we sell them for and the only way they are going to improve their lot is by exporting. I do not have a problem with trade agreements.

I will finish on this. We had a motor bike industry in this country many, many years ago. It was a famous motor bike industry, had some very good makes. It was not this country that put import controls on the Japanese so that they could not sell their bikes in this country, or the benefits or up the taxes. It was the Americans who did that for Harley Davidson; they did it for five years and virtually our motor back industry went bankrupt and theirs survived. Protectionism does not work. What does work is working with other countries, working with their trades unions. International relations has been touched on earlier today.

I ask you to oppose this resolution, basically on the grounds that I think it is misguided, ill conceived and terribly written. Thank you.

Dennis Hayes (*NATFHE*): To oppose Motion 76. Earlier in the week we were told from the platform that Congress is the biggest marketing opportunity for the trade union Movement, for the TUC and its values and principles. Ask yourself before you vote on this motion -- I hope you vote against it -- what message it will send out to workers in Britain and to people in China. As the last speaker rightly said, although it is qualified in this badly worded motion it does say that China could substantially aggravate climate change and economic problems; it could increase global unemployment; it could cause detrimental working conditions in every other country in the world. It also says it needs effective trades unions. It says it needs national policies determined over here on currency re-structuring and on opening up imports. I ask you, this is development but -- you can develop but on certain terms. You can have trades unions but on certain terms. You can have sovereign national policies but on certain terms.

International solidarity, which we made much of, is not about telling other countries how to run their internal affairs. We know where that leads. The most populace nation on earth can determine these things for itself. If you pass this motion the danger is that you will come out -- as the TUC has unfortunately many times before -- as the concerned and morally superior arm of the contemporary capitalist status quo; that is what it will seem like. Before you vote remember you are the Trades Union Congress and not the CBI. I oppose the motion.

The President: Everyone is waking up this afternoon!

Helen McFarlane (*Amicus*): This motion is not all it seems. Have you really read this motion closely, delegates? You have now haven't you!

On first read delegates would think it supports the efforts of the people of China, designed in some way to be helpful. However, second read, delegates will note it refers to China as a dominant influence in global economic development. The impression is created that this is inherently wrong or sinister in some way. Well, if that is the case, what about the dominant influence on the global economy of the USA? That is all right, I suppose.

While I am talking about the USA, who will benefit most if China devalues its currency, as the motion calls for? The good old USA, you are right, and Mr Bush, not China.

But Congress, let us think for a moment about our members. Members of Amicus -- and I am sure other members too -- work in many companies that now have subsidiaries in China such as General Motors, Ford, Kimberly Clark, IBM, and so on. There is even one that sounds a bit like "cheesecake" but I do not think that is right!

China is of central importance to our members, therefore. Amicus has been instrumental in pushing for a China policy both within the International Metal Workers Federation and within Union Network International.

We think that there are three points that are needed for any policy on China, and unfortunately the motion here only makes a start and does not go far enough. One, an ongoing pressure for China to have fundamental trade union rights. Two, we, the trade union Movement in this country, should assist Chinese workers to develop their trade union organisation. Assist, not dictate. Three, we should target multinationals operating in China to respect and encourage workers' rights through the making of global agreements. It may well be that in the new China -- sounds like New Labour, scarily -- the ACFTU, the All China Federation of Trade Unions, will be given room to adapt and change. If it is, we need to be there to offer support and assistance in that process.

Amicus supports the motion but really wanted the opportunity to express our reservations. Thank you.

The President: I now call Sally Hunt to explain the General Council's position and then I will move to the right of reply.

Sally Hunt (*General Council*): I have been asked to speak on behalf of the General Council to give an explanation of its position on Motion 76, which feels quite strange, explaining something that my union I hope is opposing! We will see.

Back to the script! Congress, it would be very difficult indeed in 250 words to sum-up everything that there is to say on this subject, and I think the comments that have been said so far have made that very clear. On that basis, that is where we felt an explanation was needed.

We all as trades unionists want to see free trade unionism develop in China, as it has developed in so many other parts of the world. That requires serious pressure on the Chinese Government to respect ILO Conventions, but it also requires solidarity with those in China who are campaigning for workers' rights, such as the trades union Movement in Hong Kong and the China Labour Bulletin. It requires constructive but critical engagement with the All China Federation of Trade Unions whose General Secretary visited the TUC in May.

We hope over the coming years to step up our work with both the Chinese and Hong Kong trades unions, and one area where we have a particular interest is the operation of the British American, Korean and other multinational companies who are currently seeking to enter the Chinese market and who are sometimes the worst offenders against human rights and trade union rights. The General Council believes that we need to make a special effort to address the organising challenges presented by those multinational companies, and that this is one area where we need to work with global union federations as well as the ACFTU who are particularly keen to develop joint approaches with us.

We know that there are concerns about the motion's focus on the World Trade Organisation, and on the exchange rate. The TUC believes that the WTO is an incredibly important tool for influencing the Chinese Government, and the WTO itself need to address the implications of China for the industries of the global south such as textiles. The TUC will continue also to prioritise the issues of ILO Conventions and deal with the concerns about Chinese exchange rates in the same way as we would look at the US Budget deficit.

These are, of course, matters for the trades unions in those countries and we must take the issue of sovereignty seriously. But the decisions of other governments

also impact on people we represent too we cannot avoid taking a view. Thank you, Congress.

Paul Gates (*Community*) exercising his right of reply on Motion 76 said: If I can reply to the three points made, on the UCATT point, I did say right at the start that this was a move away from the old right/left ideological arguments and UCATT re-introduced them back here. We are not saying that the western world does not have responsibilities in terms of climate and environmental issues, but there is a need to develop trade with environmental and climate issues throughout the world to the benefit of working people. The point that this resolution is making is that we must grasp the Chinese expansion for the benefit of working people and not for the benefit of capitalism and multinational corporations.

On the NATFHE position, again they talked about the climate situation and they talked about effective trades unions. We have a responsibility as trades unionists in this country -- along with trades unionists in every other western country -- to ensure the development of trades unions in the developing world. We must work -- as Sally said on behalf of the TUC -- with the All China Federation of Trades Unions and other working people who want to improve democratic trades unions in China. That is what this resolution is all about, and indeed it is summed up by Helen from Amicus.

I accept the Amicus reservations completely, and if we could have made the resolution even longer we could have included the three point made by Helen. Indeed, I spoke about the three points: the growing pressure on trade union rights is important, it is part of what I said; on the question of the assistance that the western trades unions need to give to the developing trades union in China in terms of education, the TUC

here is already playing its part in that; and then there are the multinationals and their respect for human rights. That is what the resolution is all about. Maybe it was not long enough to put all those things in, but that is what it is all about.

I said to you, Congress, that it is about grasping the benefits of China. Do not fall into the old ideological trap of arguing left versus right. Make sure that the people of China benefit and the people of the world benefit. Thank you.

* *On a card vote Motion 76 was CARRIED* with a majority of 386,000.

The President: While we were taking that vote a statement was handed to me. I think this is quite a serious statement I am going to make Congress, if I could just have your silence. While we were taking that vote a statement was handed to me, which I am going to read to you. It is about Iraqi bombings today, because we have just heard through our colleagues from the Iraqi Federation of Trades Unions that there were two horrific suicide car bomb attacks in Iraq this morning. Over 200 people, who were waiting at job centres for construction and cleaning work, are believed to be dead. These people were ordinary workers seeking to feed their families, and I would like to ask Rasem from the IFTU to take our condolences to the working families of Iraq. Thank you.

Fittingly, I now call Motion 77 on Iraq. The General Council support the motion and I will call on Sally Hunt during the debate to explain the General Council's position.

Iraq

Doug Nicholls (*The Community and Youth Workers' Union*) moved Motion 77.

He said: Our message in this motion is mainly for our government, but now that George Bush has finally taken full responsibility for the disastrous response to the

hurricane in his country let us say to him that it is time to take your 150,000 troops back from Iraq and send them to the Mississippi and Louisiana to save lives and rebuild the homes of our brothers and sisters there.

As a national union, with our headquarters in Birmingham, we say to our own government that if you did not believe in state intervention to save Rover and the mining industry then you cannot afford one more penny than the £5 billion you have already spent on state intervention to devastate Iraq. Bring our 9,000 troops back and invest here.

There are 27 million people in Iraq. Thirty-nine per cent of them are under the age of fifteen, and half the population are under 18. No surprise then that since the invasion two years ago at the very least 3,500 of the official 25,000 killed have been innocent kids. A quarter of the children in Iraq suffer from chronic malnutrition. Diarrhoea killed two out of ten children before the war; now it is four out of ten. US and British troops have systematically targeted water purification and sewage works; the infrastructure is in tatters. Most houses do not have safe water, infant mortality is rising, and half the houses are damaged. Whole cities like Fallujah -- as big as Coventry where I am from -- have been cleared and blitzed. Electricity supply is universally unreliable. Ninety-six per cent of families are on food rations.

War brings the poverty which we seek to make history. The average Iraqi household income in the year before the war was \$255. This year it is half that. In 1990 Iraq was ranked fiftieth out of 130 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index, which measures national achievement in health, education and GDP. Now it is right down to 127th on the list, and this represents the most dramatic decline in human welfare in recent history anywhere.

The Medical Journal, the *Lancet* estimates that in reality 100,000 civilians have been killed by the war in its first eighteen months. Most, of course, were women and children. All hospitals and schools need rehabilitation. The poverty of mass illiteracy has returned. Gordon said yesterday that poor people in poor countries should not be left defenceless against high oil prices. Well, Gordon, oil prices have doubled since the war, as they always do at times of instability in the Middle East, and we are killing people and making them poorer in a brutal, barbaric and illegal war. It is a war led by the US so that it can build permanent bases on a place it does not see as a nation but as an oil field.

The US and British Governments are past masters at occupation. Their tactics are simple: they fan the flames of sectarian hatred and seek to introduce a Constitution to divide the country into competing regions. It is they who fan the flames of terrorism. To the terrorists who killed British workers and Iraqi workers, including all those mentioned by our President just now, we say “By killing the innocent you support those you most condemn and like them you have nothing but murder in your hearts. If you do not believe you can create paradise on earth and have to kill workers to get there, leave those of us who believe we can build a better world alone.”

Gordon also reminded us yesterday how easy it is to be unambitious and not to aim high, but we must aim high on this one. Our Movement is the highest custodian of the highest aspiration, that is for world peace. We agree with Gordon, we have the power to shape history with a close relationship with this government and more power than we think.

We believe that in passing this motion we should expect Brendan and the General Council to use all of their formidable powers of negotiation, campaigning and influence and recognise that of all the mandates we have given them this week this the

most crucial. How can we really hold our heads high in the struggles we have for manufacturing, public services, education, health and social justice at home, while British troops are destroying these things in Iraq?

The UN mandate, which the British Government claim legitimises their position, is up for renewal in December. Let us make sure it is not renewed. We want the TUC and its affiliates proudly marching against the war on September 24, but above all it is not the special relationship with Bush that interests us but our special relationship with our government. We believe this will be seriously jeopardised if they continue to ignore the TUC's united policy on early withdrawal.

We do not want to have to put this motion again next year, and the extent to which we are successful in pursuing this policy will be a measure of our success on all the other issues we have debated. We are truly not free in Britain as workers while weapons of mass destruction rain down on Iraq. I move.

Mary Davis (*NATFHE*) seconded Motion 88. She said: This time last year in this very hall we passed a resolution calling for solidarity with Iraqi trades unions who had just begun a legal existence after years of repression under the Bathist dictatorship. We knew how important solidarity was. The motion was practical. Actually, the TUC has to be congratulated because it did exactly what the motion asked: we set up the TUC Solidarity Committee; we have arranged bilateral visits and things have gone ahead. In fact, there is a very good publication that tells trades unions practically what they can do to help.

I do not think, though, that when we passed that motion any of us realised just how vital that solidarity was going to have to be. I do not think any of us realised just then how it was that trades unionists now have become within that year the target of

the most violent abuse from people who call themselves -- I do not know, they might call themselves resistance but they seem to target trades unions. We have had a succession of murders of leading trades unionists in Iraq and, as you have just heard, there has been the brutal and appalling suicide bombing today of workers simply waiting to work.

That is not the only time that has happened. But there is a new situation, which is as worrying and as daunting. The new Constitution in Iraq, the long awaited Constitution, has now decreed -- Decree 875 -- that the state has to take control of all moneys belonging to the trades unions and they should be prevented from dispensing any such moneys. That means trades unions cannot function. That means that decree No. 3, which at last allowed trades, unions and the IFTU in particular, to flourish and grow, is aimed at them. The TUC, Brendan Barber, has written to the Iraqi Ambassador expressing grave concern about this, saying it is a prima facia breach of the ILO core Convention on freedom of association and a deeply worrying attack on human rights in Iraq. You cannot take control of unions' finances and still pretend unions can function because they cannot. We know that because our government tried to do it. This makes the work of Solidarity more and more vital.

Passing this motion is not just a few words; passing this motion today, and particularly the NATFHE amendment, really must mean that the Solidarity action that we have begun must be re-doubled because without trades unions civil society cannot flourish. Governments make war; trades unionists make peace.

Dave Green (*Fire Brigades Union*) said: We are pleased that our amendment has been accepted as it does enhance and support the aims and sentiments so well articulated by the CYWU and NATFHE.

It is vitally important that the message that goes out from Congress today is clear, concise and sets out a way forward. This Government – our Labour Government – are implicated and remain implicated in an illegal war and now an illegal occupation. That, I believe, we can never forgive or forget. However, we also need to look constructively forward with a sense of purpose to the future. How do we all help to re-build Iraq? Of course, this process can only begin with a speedy withdrawal, but it can also be progressed by insisting that resources are immediately made available at least to begin to right the wrongs in this disgraceful episode in our history.

The FBU has, in its own small way, attempted to carry on the ethos of us being part of a “can do” service. Along with our good comrades from the IFTU, we have identified ways to assist, practically, our fellow workers in Iraq. Myself and fellow Executive Council member, Brian Joyce, visited Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan, Brian visiting on four separate occasions. This enabled us to gain first hand experience of the incredible needs and difficulties faced every day by trade unionists and ordinary workers. Our grateful thanks are, once again, extended to Abdullah Muhsin and it is great to see him here today, along with Rasem Alawady, the President of the IFTU. This experience allowed us to identify areas where immediate support was required. I have to say the result was astounding.

FBU regions from across the UK have collected and sent to Iraq fire kit, equipment and money to help the workers.

Fire fighters in Basra, Baghdad and Iraqi Kurdistan no longer fight fires in T-shirts and trainers but in fire tunics from Bristol, Newcastle and Lincoln and, by Christ, they need it, don't they? We have offered support in as many areas as we

can, but what we have done is, truly, a drop in the ocean. By seeing first hand their problems you begin to realise how much is needed and how much remains to be done.

So what can we do? It is incumbent on all governments and institutions to act immediately and together in cancelling all debts incurred by Saddam Hussein in his crazy pursuance of power and war. These are not debts incurred by the Iraqi people. How can we even claim to want to help them when this money is clawed back? That is another hypocrisy of this sordid chapter in world history. It is essential that the new Iraq, and I call it that in a wholly positive way, has laws and practices which embody the ILO core conventions and that Iraqi trade unions are fully involved in that process. Crucially, we must, they must, reject privatisation of essential public services and vital resources, oil being the most striking example.

Comrades, it is a tall order but we all have to act. Our Labour Government must act. Support the motion.

Sally Hunt (*General Council*): The General Council wants to give an explanation to this motion. It is broadly in line with Congress policy but a lot of work has been done, as has been talked about this afternoon, and we wanted to reiterate our support for that and for the work that needs to go on in the future.

Firstly, under the auspices of the TUC/Iraq Solidarity Committee, which is reported in the General Council Report – I am sure you have read it on page 92 – considerable work is already underway to promote solidarity and provide practical support for the Iraqi trade union movement. This has included a whole range of activities, namely, exchange visits, trade union education and other material support – practical help for our brothers and sisters which, we hope, will help them to build a free society.

We have with us on the platform, as has been said, Rasem Alawady, the President of the IFTU and we are very pleased to have you with us. We rely on them to provide us with the information and advice on Iraq. It was their contact which broke the news to the trade union world about Decree 875, which has already been mentioned. As a result of that, we have alerted the ILO and they are taking action as we speak to pressurise the Iraqi Government into abandoning this move, which I think we have to say is an absolute disgrace.

Secondly, the motion reconfirms to use the existing policy to seek early withdrawal of British troops. UN authority for the presence of these troops expires at the end of this year, and at that point the Iraqi Government are due to indicate their preferences regarding the continuation of that presence and when the British Government could, themselves, set their own unilateral date for an early departure. But whatever the outcome of the current discussions on the constitution, the General Council will continue to support the development of free and independent trade unions in Iraq, recognising, as we all do, that trade unionism is a key pillar for any genuine, free and democratic society and this, in turn, can only be secured through the cessation of violence from whatever quarter and through the development, we hope, of lasting peace. Thank you.

Keith Sonnett (*UNISON*) speaking in support of the Motion and amendments.

He said: Congress, the situation in Iraq is tragic with the continuing spiral of violence that will not end until the occupation ends. So, as the motion states, we have to continue our campaign to ensure the withdrawal of British and American troops. I hope that all unions will support the Stop the War Coalition's demonstration on 24th September. It is important that we get as many members attending as possible.

Also, as the motion states, we must condemn the deliberate targeting by assassination and bombing of trade unionists of innocent men, women and children. Those who do that do not want to liberate the Iraqis. Instead, they seek to enslave them under a new dictatorship of one fundamentalist religious or political faction or another. We can only admire the brave people in Iraq who are struggling to rebuild their shattered economy and society. I am pleased that Rasem Alawady, the President of the IFTU, is here today. Next week, on 19th September, Mr. Alawady will be signing a joint declaration between the IFTU, the GFITU and the GFTU about the creation of a single trade union federation. So the trade unions in Iraq are getting their act together and making progress, but it is clear, as other speakers have said, that Iraqi and Kurdish trade unions need our solidarity but they also need our practical assistance. They face problems which are only too familiar to us in Britain and particularly the privatisation of their assets and their economy. It is disgraceful that the American administration force through orders to ensure that American corporations could buy up whole swathes of the economy. It is equally disgraceful that much of Britain's aid is provided on the same basis.

However, we must congratulate the Iraqi trade unionists, such as those in the oil industry, who are opposing privatisation. The Iraqi trade unions want a new constitution that enshrines an independent, secular and democratic Iraq, a constitution that recognises trade unions, endorses ILO Conventions and standards and provide equal rights for men and women. The draft constitution is very worrying in those respects. Order 875 recently issued, as Mary Davis said, freezes the funds and assets of the trade unions and puts them under the control of Government ministers. The Government of Iraq is also setting up a committee and preparing papers on the structure and organisation of trade unions in complete contradiction to ILO

conventions. We must support the Iraqi trade unions in ensuring their independence from the State. I very much welcome the action the TUC has already taken on the constitution and particularly on Order 875.

Congress, Motion 77 and its amendments give us a clear policy and commitment to work with the Iraqi and Kurdish trade unions. Please support.

The President: I think we will now move to the vote on Motion 77. I am conscious of these other motions that people want to get to. I know you are keen to come in, Tony, but could you keep your contribution brief.

Tony Woodley (*Transport and General Workers' Union*) in speaking in support of the motion, said: President, I am grateful for the consideration which you have given me, bearing in mind the strong feelings of my Union, and personally, on this issue. I am most grateful.

Colleagues, the illegal invasion of Iraq has been an absolute disaster and our troops should now be pulled out, and I do mean “now”. A year on we see a hundred thousand civilians dead, degrading scenes of torture at Camp Bread Basket, terrorism which was never existed before and the senseless on-going deaths of British soldiers. We have seen the total destruction of large cities, gas shortages and, unbelievably, little petrol in a country sitting on oil. Thereagain, you cannot steal £1.8 billion worth of oil and supply it.

We see the political process in turmoil and the country in chaos, where the Government lacks legitimacy because they depend on foreign military. There is no doubt that any sane person can see that the occupation is now the biggest problem, not the solution, to the Iraqis' needs. Any sane person knows that the war is helping to

make our own country even more or a target to the evil of terrorism, but that is not a reason to pull out. Indeed, that would be appeasement.

We say we should pull out because it is the right thing for the Iraqis. In their eyes, we are not liberators but occupying forces.

President and comrades, I support the amendment and motion. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

The President: The General Council supports Motion 77.

* *Motion 77 was CARRIED.*

The Western Sahara

Vicky Knight (*Fire Brigades Union*) moved Motion 78.

She said: Comrades, for decades the Saharawi people from the country of Western Sahara in north west Africa have been denied the right to self-determination. Colonized by Spain for 90 years, these desert people's right to self-determination was first recognised by the UN General Assembly in 1966.

In 1975 Morocco invaded, occupied and imposed its repressive rule in Western Sahara, undermining Saharawi aspirations for independence, dividing a nation and forcing a majority of the Saharawi people to live in exile in tented cities in south-west Algeria near the border with Western Sahara.

Women, children and elderly make up 80 per cent of the refugee population and are dependent on aid to exist. For thirty years they have had to struggle against all odds to survive in what is the most inhospitable desert environment in the world. In

summers temperatures soar to above 130 degree Fahrenheit and plummet to below zero in the winters.

Flash floods, violent Sirocco winds and locust invasions periodically wreak havoc and devastation.

Despite all these challenges, with the women at the forefront, the refugees have built schools, hospitals and developed democratic structures of governance in these camps.

Today two hundred thousand Saharawis continue to live as refugees while tens of thousands more live in a police state under Morocco's oppressive rule in Western Sahara and where a largely unreported intifada has been going on since May 20th this year. The response of the Moroccan authorities to the widespread and growing numbers of peaceful Saharawi demonstrations has been to savagely beat, rape, torture, imprison, abduct and disappear scores upon scores of participants, to the great alarm and concern of Amnesty International. Their crime was expressing their desire for an end to the Moroccan occupation and affirming their Saharawi identity.

Currently, 37 illegally imprisoned Saharawi activists are staging a hunger strike which began on August 9th. I am led to believe this afternoon by one of our comrades from the Polisario Front that the first woman prolific activist from the Saharawi camps went into a coma this morning. She is one of the leaders of this struggle to the right to self-determination. That fact should concern us, Congress.

Ever since 1975 the Polisario Front has been campaigning to end the Moroccan occupation of the Saharawi homeland in the hope of ensuring independence for the Saharawi people.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in the Hague clearly stated that "Inter alia, there is no legal basis for the sovereignty claims of Morocco

which could oppose the exercise of the right to self-determination by the then people of Western Sahara.”

So today the Saharawi people still cannot understand why the world is willing to punish some countries for violating UN resolutions and human rights and not others, like Morocco. They do not understand why the world knows about the wall in Palestine, yet are totally unaware of the 1,700 mile long wall in Western Sahara dividing every Saharawi family.

The Moroccan built defence wall is fortified by up to ten million landmines and is staffed by more than a hundred thousand soldiers.

In early 1992 the UN was supposed to organise a referendum for Saharawi self-determination after both Morocco and the Polisario agreed to a ceasefire in 1991 to end the conflict in Western Sahara through a peaceful process.

Basically, the question is whether the people of Western Sahara, including the two hundred thousand refugees in Algeria, want independence from Morocco or not.

Every independent commentator forecasts that there would be an overwhelming vote for independence in such a referendum. Because the Moroccan regime does not wish to lose control over these territories it has stalled and played for time until in 2003 it finally revealed, after wasting more than half-a-billion dollars of UN resources, that it would refuse to co-operate with a process that threatened “Moroccan sovereignty. As a result, there is no agreement on the rights of refugees.

January 2005 saw the King of Morocco pronounced again that he and his people would never give up sovereignty in Western Sahara, regardless of any UN resolution. Imagine if Saddam Hussein had said that in relation to Kuwait or weapons of mass destruction and the international community had remained silent.

All this continues whilst the world of politics looks on in silence at a nation undergoing cultural genocide.

Comrades, Western Sahara is Africa's last colony. Its people are living in poverty and oppression with the majority in refugee camps, whilst the rich and powerful place over a hundred thousand troops to militarily defend the indefensible.

Sisters and brothers, let us press the Government to put pressure on Morocco. We must highlight the plight of the Saharawi people. Please attend the fringe meeting tonight at half-past 5 in the Belvedere Hotel and here more about the struggle.

Your unions should be a part of the Saharawi people's future because that means support for a democratic Muslim people who do respect the rights of women and human rights and who, in times of extremism, pursue the path of non-violence to advance their cause and aspirations.

Comrades, join your Saharawi brothers and sisters so that they can look forward to a future with hope and optimism. Thank you.

Annette Mansell-Green (*UNISON*) in seconding the motion, said: I do not think it is really necessary to cover any of the other points. They were adequately and eloquently covered by Vicky from the FBU, but what I would like to do on behalf of UNISON and on behalf of the Movement, really, is to applaud the work of the FBU in their support for the Saharawi people, which has been an excellent job. I urge you to attend the fringe meeting.

A 32 year conflict that very few people are aware of has been going on in Western Sahara. There is a lack of political awareness and a lack of political action on the plight of the Saharawi people. It is a silent and invisible issue.

The one point that I would like to finish on is to ask you to attend the fringe meeting and find out about the Sandblast Project. They are a very artistic people. They are film-makers, dancers, singers, musicians and artists. The best method of communication, as far as I am concerned, is through the arts. Encourage people to attend. Encourage your unions to get involved in the project and support it financially and spread the word about the plight of the Saharawi people. It is a desperate situation. Thank you.

Barbara White (*Musicians' Union*) supported the motion.

She said: I will be very brief because you have been told quite a lot about what is going on at the moment. We know that the Western Saharawi refugees have occupied a region of land since 1976 and we know that these people have been forced to live in one of the most hostile and brazen landscapes in the world. We are speaking of a fiercely independent group of people, so is it any wonder that almost 30 years after their homeland was invaded, from 20th May to 4th June was an intefada. It started peacefully but, as you know, at the end of the day, protesters were beaten and injured in the streets and those detained were, allegedly, savagely tortured.

The Saharawis are of a nomadic background and draw their cultural roots from a fusion of Berba, Afro-Arabic and Spanish influences. They have a wealth of cultural identity but their life in exile poses great challenges to their culture. So I, too, would like to mention Sandblast. The main aim of Sandblast is to hold a series of artistic, cultural and educational events to mark the Saharawi's 30 year struggle for self-determination.

In recent years, with Live-Aid, we have witnessed the power of music. Please support Sandblast and encourage your union actively to support this event. By doing

this, there is a chance of not only preserving the Saharawi culture but also of a future of peace and reconciliation.

The President: The General Council is supporting Motion 78.

* *Motion 78 was CARRIED.*

Address by Carlos Rodriguez, President of the Colombian CUT

The President: Congress, I am particularly pleased to welcome to the rostrum the General Secretary of the Colombian CUT, Carlos Rodriguez. Everyone in this hall knows how brave the Colombian trade union Movement is and how much we, as British trade unionist, want to support the Colombian workers' movement. Carlos is the foremost example of the Colombian movement's bravery and his trade union confederation is the leading example of what we are seeking to support.

Carlos's words today will be translated by Mariella Cohen, who is well-known for her work for Justice for Colombia. I would urge everyone here support the work that JfC do for us and for the Colombian labour Movement. Carlos, you are very welcome here today. We are delighted that you could be here and we look forward to hearing what you have to say. (*Applause*)

Carlos Rodriguez (*President, Colombian CUT*): First of all, on behalf of all Colombian workers affiliated to the CUT, I would like to send you our fraternal greetings.

To me it is a great honour to be here and I would like to thank you for your co-operation and the continued support which the TUC has given us.

Unfortunately, I have to tell you that social and democratic rights continue to be violated in Colombia and this goes alongside the assassinations of trade unionists as well as the extermination of collective bargaining.

The assassinations continue. So far this year, in 2005, 33 trade unionists have been murdered. Just this week they murdered another trade unionist. That is 26 men and 7 women who have been murdered. Since the CUT was founded in 1986, there has been a demented campaign against trade union activity and more than 3,000 trade unionists have been assassinated.

There is no other country in the world where trade unionists suffer such violence from illegal armed groups. That is why we need your solidarity and your accompaniment for our struggle. We need you to help us to denounce these violations at the international level to help stop the wave of brutal violence.

Alongside the murder of trade unionists is also the disappearance of collective bargaining. In 2004 only 44,000 workers were covered by collective bargain agreements out of one million organised workers.

Casualisation and part-time contracts are favoured by the government. They are pushing for a flexible workforce and they are privatising public services.

Despite all of these difficulties, the Colombian trade union movement continues to be motivated and we are ready to do battle in a civilised and democratic way to create the conditions for trade union activity.

I would also like to share our joy and triumph with you at the decision made at the last ILO Convention in Geneva which was to send a high level tripartite mission to Colombia to see for itself the violations of trade union rights.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my deep thanks to the TUC and the ICFTU for their work, which made possible the visit of a Colombian trade

union delegation around Europe. I would also like to say how much we appreciate the delegations organised by Justice for Colombia which allow for a real understanding of Colombia, and they also contributed positively by making the Colombian trade union movement feel the practical support given by British trade unionists.

The Colombian Government are scared of any kind of international solidarity and that is why they try and obstruct such solidarity. An example occurred last year when they tried to block a British trade union delegation. Fortunately, thanks to the bravery and determination of the TUC delegation, the Colombian Government had to back down and let them come into the country.

Finally, I would like to say that Colombia needs co-operation for peace and not for war. Violence cannot be fought with more violence but with more democracy. We do not think that the British military aid is helping to strengthen democracy and for that reason we ask you to support the campaign to end British military aid.

Colombian workers are tired of violence. That is why we ask for co-operation and peace because true democracy needs to be synonymous with the right to freedom of association and to carry out trade union activities.

I thank the TUC and to all delegates at this important Congress. I send you a strong hug and fraternal greetings. Thanks again, on behalf of the Colombian trade union Movement. (*A standing ovation*)

The President: I would like to thank you, personally, Carlos. I would also like to thank you for your bravery on behalf of your colleagues. You can see from the response that you received the continued support and commitment of your British trade union colleagues to your cause.

Let me also say that the British trade union delegation to Colombia was led by Frances O'Grady, our Deputy General Secretary. (*Applause*) The whole delegation – I will not list them here – showed great courage in standing their ground and getting into Colombia so that they could see their trade union colleagues.

I would also like to thank Mariella, who does so much for Justice for Colombia and is so often unrecognised for her contributions. (*Applause*)

Venezuela

The President: Congress, I now call paragraph 5.5 and Motion 79 on Venezuela. The NUJ has indicated that they want to come in on paragraph 5.5. I will call them in on that paragraph after I have taken the supporting speakers, but could you make your interjection on the paragraph brief because I do want to do justice to the motions from other unions which we are in danger of losing.

The General Council supports Motion 79.

John Wilkin (*NATFHE – The University and College Lecturers' Union*) moved Motion 79.

He said: This motion on Venezuela has its origin in debates at NATFHE's Annual National Conferences for two years in succession. We take our international concerns very seriously and for a small union (soon to be part of a much larger one, we hope, when we come together with AUT to form the University and College Union) we are proud of the solidarity work that we do with link to trade unionists across the world from Colombia to Iraq, Africa and elsewhere.

Why Venezuela? An earlier version of this motion referred to the Bolivarian Revolution – a long slow burning process which started with the election of President Hugo Chavez in 1998. I have a feeling that we should have kept the word “revolution” in the motion but other views prevailed and we left it out.

What is the Bolivarian Revolution? I’ve seen it at first hand. I have just come back from a holiday and solidarity visit to meet Venezuelan trades unionists and see what is happening. Thanks to the work of several solidarity organisations in this country and of affiliated trade unions, we have a visitor here at this Congress this week from the new national union Federation – the UNT in Venezuela (*ooennetay* in Spanish). I hope he is in the hall now because to Orlando Chirino, we say: *Companero de la UNT, bienvenidos al TUC Britanico. (Applause)*

The UNT is a new federation of unions which was formed in response to the 2002 failed coup d’etat and prolonged oil industry lockout organised by the employers and supported by the old unions of the CTV. Imagine the CBI sponsoring a national lockout supported by the TUC in order to bring down a Labour Government. They wanted to replace Chavez with a right wing military regime in the style of Pinochet’s Chile. No wonder Venezuela needed a new union federation.

Until recently 80% of Venezuela’s 26 million people have been excluded from the benefits of living in an oil rich country of great wealth and natural resources. For the first time in its history, the Government of Venezuela is pumping the oil wealth into the barrios of Caracas and the depopulated countryside. They are using it to create innovative health and education systems which emphasise the development from within and the active involvement of the communities themselves. They call it “sowing the oil” so that present and future generations reap the benefits.

The oil money is being used on a massive scale to develop new social programmes which have really changed lives in the past two years. Most important of all is the so called *Mision Barrio Adentro*, literally means “neighbourhood within”, which is an extraordinary medical programme staffed by hundreds of Cuban doctors and dentists working together with Venezuelan medics in the poorest neighbourhoods of Caracas and other cities. With expertise and support from Cuba, Venezuela is building a national health service, perhaps the first on the South American sub-continent to be completely free of charge and available to the whole population.

In Venezuela I found a tremendous sense of optimism and enthusiasm among people whose lives have been blighted for generations by a privileged controlling elite. It’s the same throughout Latin America wherever US policies of total subject to the world market, with convenient lucrative access for US companies, have prevailed.

Of course, there is the opposition. But it’s like the *curcuracha* – the cockroach in the song. *Ya no puede caminar* - it can’t walk because it’s missing a leg. Without financial support from its friends in Washington, it’s would not exist.

Since 2002 the revolution has gone from strength to strength. There is a slow burning revolution with an optimism that has to be seen. It’s a revolution with a sense of humour that can laugh at itself and its president. There have been no arrests or punishments for the opposition leaders who supported the coup and encouraged sabotage in the oil industry. Even the US opinion polls brought in to give comfort to the opposition concede that support for Chavez is overwhelming and growing.

All this would be enough for us to congratulate and support the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela. But even more significant for us, as British trade unionists, is the determined opposition to the neo-liberal economic system of the IMF and World Bank.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is increasingly leading the way not just in Latin America but worldwide to show what can be done by mobilising people and resources for the benefit of the majority, not just the privileged few.

I move the motion. Please support.

Simon Renton (*Association of University Teachers*) seconded the motion.

He said: President and Congress, comrades, the AUT is delighted to have the opportunity to second Motion 79 proposed by NATFHE. The danger facing the government and people of Venezuela is acute at the moment, so this motion is both timely and important. The Bolivarian revolution has the support of the vast majority of the people of Venezuela which sets out to put right the results of decades of injustice is under attack by the globalisers and imperialists of the US and elsewhere in alliance with the exploiting elite of Venezuela itself.

We have all seen what can happen to countries which fail to fall in line with the wishes of the US and its allies in terms of economic policy.

A democratically elected government is often no defence against attacks, as the case of Yugoslavia demonstrates, I think, convincingly. But in Latin America these memories are very close to home. No Latin American who presses for social justice, progress and for the liberation of the working class, of peasant farmers and of the poor and oppressed in general can forget the case of Chile, where a democratically elected Socialist Government, that of Salvador Allende, was crushed by a US sponsored coup. Not only communists, socialists and trade union activists and their families found themselves in the national stadium in Santiago, but even social democrats and social liberals, like new Labour, were tormented and murdered by the

armed wing of transnational capital in that country. Comrades, we must not let this situation happen again.

With our support the Venezuelan people can continue to move forward, to build the health service, education system and social services they need and deserve based upon real democratic control. What can be achieved can already be seen by the example which Cuba has given us. Despite the piracy, boycotts, terrorism and blockade of the US Administration, enormous progress has been made in education and healthcare, for example. Every country that builds socialism and rejects the domination of international capital weakens our class enemies and reduces our employers' power to exploit and oppress us.

Comrades, we must support and defend the people of Venezuela, the trade unions that represent them and their immensely popular government, both because they need it and because we need it. An injury to one is an injury to all. Both locally and internationally, we really are stronger together. Thank you.

The President: The GMB has indicated a request to speak on paragraph 5.5. I will take you after UNISON.

Mitch Tovey (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) speaking in support of the motion, said: Comrades, many of us in this hall today, when hearing about the attempted coup in Venezuela back in 2002 must have thought about the very events that you have heard about in Chile some 30 years previously. The CIA and coups in Latin America go hand in glove, the CIA providing the money and the logistics and reactionary elements providing the rationale and disunity.

The very fact today that the Venezuelan revolution, and indeed Chavez's live has been maintained, is overwhelmingly the responsibility of the Venezuelan trade unions and progressive organisations and their ability to mobilise the people.

The role that Venezuela plays on the world scene today is a tremendous testament of what organised labour and alliances can do. A small country in the very backyard of the world's only superpower is showing that there is an alternative if only the will exists.

Venezuela follows another small country in America's backyard – Cuba. Cuba is standing up to the intimidation. Indeed, both Venezuela and Cuba offered aid to the United States in their hour of need following Hurricane Katrina, with Venezuela offering fresh water and food and Cuba offering a thousand doctors, and that is to a country which has spent untold millions of dollars trying to economically break them and, in Cuba's case, outright assassination.

Venezuela shares another honour with Cuba. Venezuela recently hosted the World Youth and Student Festival, with more than 15,000 people from throughout the world attending, young people dedicated to peace, freedom and international solidarity.

The Venezuelan trade union Movement has described what is happening today as “Socialism in the 21st Century”, but not that you would have known very much about what is happening in Venezuela from the mainstream media. Just as in Chile in the 1970s, good news is not seen to be news at all.

Only the *Morning Star* in the mainstream media gave a voice to those who wanted the world to know that big things were happening in Latin America, not just in Venezuela, but in Brazil, Argentina and Equador and the rest. Our association looks

forward to Congress having the opportunity at first hand to being addressed by an authentic voice of Venezuelan labour. Thank you.

Alan McQuire (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) speaking in support of the motion, said: President and Congress, I saw a programme on television called “Neighbours from Hell”. It was all about people next door acting badly. Think about this. What would it be like to be a south American? Their neighbours are the United States. Talk about the neighbours from hell!

In years past successive US governments have treated the continent to their south like an unofficial colony. Little has changed since Henry Kissinger talked about South America being the US’s backyard. It is of no importance to the US Government that an independent poll, in July of this year, showed more than 70% support for the Venezuelan President, Hugo Chavez. Chavez has been making himself unpopular in the US by having the audacity to implement changes which are popular with Venezuelans. Venezuela has oil. Living next to the US, having oil and a Lefty government is a dangerous combination. It makes you unreliable, it makes you powerful and it makes you a target, especially when the Venezuelan Government threatens, as it did last month, to suspend oil exports to the US if attacks on its government continue.

But oil is a touchy subject with Americans. Not selling oil to the United States is, in the eyes of the British Government, not a commercial or political decision but a crime. Chavez has even dared to say that his country’s oil will be for the Venezuelan people, then the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. To the Administration of George Bush, that is fighting talk.

These are worrying days for the Venezuelan Government, for its President and for the 70% of the people who support them. That is why we urge you to back them in the struggle to self-determination, for democracy and for the right to choose how they wish to live.

We salute Chavez's party, the Fifth Republic Movement, in its efforts to improve the standard of life for its citizens. We applaud its efforts to raise literacy levels and establish free health care in poor communities. We stand side by side with all people who are threatened by the desire of the US Government to make the world American. The beauty of our world lies in its diversity, both at the domestic and global level. If we want a world that lives at peace with itself, we must learn to welcome, not just accept, different customs, economic systems and cultural richness.

It is in that spirit that ASLEF asks delegates today to declare its support for the independence of Venezuela and the right of its people to choose its own government with the interference of the neighbour from hell. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Global Solidarity

Jeremy Dear (*National Union of Journalists*) spoke to paragraph 5.5 and, in particular, the section on Colombia.

He said: People have probably seen the leaflets that are in the hall which say "Colombia - the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist." Of course, there are many chilling statistics that Carlos brought home to us. Last year, 17 trade union leaders and 71 trade union members were assassinated and hundreds abducted, threatened or arbitrarily detained. However, it was brought home with a vengeance yesterday when we received news that Luciano Romero from the Food Workers' Union who had been exiled for three years and had just returned to Colombia disappeared last Saturday. His body was found on Sunday. His hands were tied behind his back. He had suffered 40 stab wounds and he had been brutally tortured

before being killed.

Now, more than ever, those Colombian trade unions need our solidarity. As Carlos said, they are asking us to pressure our Government to stop the secret military aid given to the Colombian army; military aid, which trade unions believe is reaching the very paramilitaries who kill our sisters and brothers in Colombia. Britain must end its military aid until human and trade union rights are respected.

Luckily, we have made it easy for you to show your solidarity. All you need do is go to the Justice for Colombia stall, fill in one of these post cards, hand it back to the stall and we will deliver it to the British Government as soon as Congress is over. I am sure, President, you would like to join with me in urging people to do just that.

The President: Considering you succeeded in getting a very important point over in 1 minute and 30 seconds, I certainly will urge people to do that! Thank you very much.

Mike Kirby (*UNISON*) spoke to paragraph 5.5 and particularly the section on Cuba.

He said: I want to recognise and thank the TUC for its efforts to support Cuba throughout the past year. On Monday night at a packed Cuba Solidarity reception, a message from Pedro Ross, the President of the CTC, was read out. I would like to quote from that:

"Comrades, we are grateful for all the messages and efforts made by the TUC and British unions in favour of our cause. We are strengthened by knowing that we are not alone and that in every corner of the world there are men and women like you ready to raise their voices to condemn the inhumane US blockade and hostile policies towards Cuba and to defend our right to self-determination."

Congress, that, for me, says everything about how important it is that our solidarity is shown with that small socialist island. I was a delegate last year to the conference referred to on page 90. It was an excellent occasion, not only because of

the strength of support for Cuba, as shown from our own affiliates, but also because that conference was attended by 27 Cuban trade unionists who participated as guests of our Movement.

As the Report highlights, a further conference is planned for February of next year in City Hall. It is excellent news that London's Mayor and the TUC are supporting this important event. I would urge all unions to visit the Cuba Solidarity stall on the ground floor. Pick up a copy of this leaflet advertising that conference next February and make sure that you sponsor your European counterparts and, more importantly, that your own union is represented at that Congress. Thank you very much, President.

Mary Turner (*GMB - Britain's general union*) spoke to paragraph 5.5 of the General Council Report.

She said: I will be extremely brief because some of it has been covered. I speak to paragraph 5.5 on Colombia and it is in relation to the aid that is given by our Government to Colombia. Our Government, and we have met with Hilary Benn, have said they do not give military aid to Colombia. Well, they give aid to Colombia and they are saying it is in respect of the drugs cartel. Our trade union brothers and sisters in Colombia say that aid is being used to kill our brothers and sisters in Colombia.

The aid has to stop. We have to know the value of that aid as well. I am asking all TUC members who are affiliated to the Labour Party and who have members on the NEC, like myself, to make sure that Lord Treisman answers that question. We should now bring pressure in the same way as we did for our brothers and sisters who were being murdered in South Africa. It is time the killing stopped. It is time we showed real solidarity and, while we do have a Labour Government, to make sure that they are aware of our feelings. Thank you.

The President: The General Council supports the motion.

* *Motion 79 was CARRIED*

The President: Let me just reiterate what Jeremy said, concerning Luciano Romero's appalling fate. Our brothers and sisters in Colombia really do need our support.

Address by Guy Rider (General Secretary of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions)

The President: Colleagues, we now come to an historic address. Next year, we hope to put nearly 60 years of Cold War split beyond us. We want to create a new united global trade union Movement. We want to take on the multi-national corporations at their own game. The man who has done so much to bring about that historic movement is here today, Guy Rider, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Guy, you are most welcome today and we are delighted and looking forward to hearing what you have to say. Thank you.

Guy Rider (*General Secretary of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*) said: President, Congress, greetings from the ICFTU. Thank you for this opportunity to tell you something about what we are doing in the international Movement and to say why we believe it matters to British trade unionists, and also to ask you for your support and for your engagement.

Firstly, I want to say that we are grasping the challenge that globalisation presents to all of us in the trade union Movement, not just in words but in action; action directed particularly today at creating a new united world trade union international. Very soon, the ICFTU will cease to exist and will give way to an organisation that will bring together all of the world's forces of democratic and independent trade unionism, including important national trade union centres, which, for different reasons, have not chosen to affiliate internationally in the past.

We are confident that this new international will be established next year, not long after the TUC conference next meets. This is important, but, of course, it will not of itself provide all or even most of the solutions to the issues that working people face in the global economy. However, what I do think it provides is the means. It is an instrument to build those solutions together and the opportunity to make them

stick.

In that sense, colleagues, I think that the whole thing is less about being a new international and more about building a new trade union internationalism. Global labour, yes, needs to be bigger, but it needs to be different and it needs to work differently too. We would be wrong to believe that the methods, the structures and the strategies of the past, whatever results they have given and there are plenty of them, will do the job in the future and would be well advised to put our best collective efforts into designing an international trade union Movement capable of confronting global business strategies with global strategies of our own; capable of delivering solidarity which is effective, practical and timely and not just an international concoction of tea and sympathy and capable too of bringing change to the ground rules of globalisation.

It is precisely because the logic of globalisation is bringing about a convergence of international and international trade union agenda, bargaining agenda, organising agenda, that all of this is relevant to just about every issue on Congress's agenda in Brighton this week, not just the international ones, but all of them.

The question is not so much, do we need to mainstream international issues? They are mainstreamed. The question is whether you and us are able to react to that reality and to address them adequately.

I would like to underline two of the elements that we think can help us do so. The first is very simple: unity. Our aim is a strong, unified world confederation made up of united, strong national centres, working together for agreed goals. Anything different from that is second best and, more than likely, a very poor second best. The different pieces of the international trade union Movement need to join together better than they have in the past. There are 10 Global Union Federations, in which your unions are key actors, who are themselves key players in the international trade union Movement. We need to work out the ways of co-operating together more systematically and more closely so that we truly are a single, cohesive global trade union Movement. I ask you to help us do that.

The second point I want to make is that effective trade union internationalism can only be built on lasting structures and on permanent commitment of political effort, resources and on democratic decision-making which reflects the views and priorities of workers in all countries, south as well as north. Internationalism-on-call just to react episodically to needs as they arise or built only to respond to specific national agenda, however important they may be, is again second best. It is not good enough. It is a distant relative of the permanent mechanism of solidarity that we need to forge.

Congress, as we move forward to this goal of a new international, I want to tell you also that the ICFTU is continuing to mobilise and to campaign hard. To give you an example, take the Athens Olympic Games last year. We pushed the International Olympic Committee to provide the guarantees necessary for any of you buying any article bearing the Olympic logo to know that it had been produced in satisfactory and acceptable working conditions. We did not get those guarantees. It is an on-going struggle with the Olympic movement. It is a struggle that may well go on until 2012 to make the London Games (which, in the absence of our French affiliates, I want to congratulate you on getting the Olympic Games held London) a further campaign vehicle. Throughout this year, the ICFTU has played a leading role, of course, in the Make Poverty History campaign. I think we are quite proud that our affiliates around the world have really bought into this campaign, none more so, of course, than the TUC, as the Congress theme this year demonstrates.

The G8 Summit in Gleneagles did not end poverty. That "other" conference taking place this week, the UN Summit in New York, will not end poverty either. However, the fact of the matter is the campaign has made a difference. It has made a very significant difference. We have to continue the work on debt relief and on international aid flows and we need to keep the momentum going.

Our next opportunity will be at the WTO Conference in December. That is the next White Band Day. We will be focusing there on the third element of the campaign, which is trade justice. We will be in Hong Kong marching with the Hong Kong People's Alliance to say that trade justice requires more than simply finishing off the Doha Round successfully. Above all, it requires guarantees of

universal enforcement of fundamental workers' rights and, being in Hong Kong, why not start talking about China in that respect as well?

Colleagues, the bottom line is that globalisation means interdependence. That translates as saying that your sisters and brothers all around the world need your solidarity, but it also means that sometimes you need theirs. Iraqi workers who again paid such a tragic price in blood today need your solidarity to build free trade unionism in the aftermath of a war, which was opposed unanimously by the ICFTU's membership. They need help also to secure decent labour legislation which accords with international labour standards.

As Carlos Rodriguez just told us, Colombian trade unions, whose struggle is too often not just for the survival of their Movement but for the lives of their members, also have a call on your solidarity, just as, equally, Gate Gourmet employees have a call on the solidarity of the international trade union Movement. The ICFTU will play its part in responding to that call, as we must.

I could go on. The list is depressingly long. It shows that globalisation has brought in some heavy weather for trade unionists everywhere. The right thing to do now, colleagues, is to make sure that our defences, our hurricane shelters and our levies of international solidarity are in good order. Let us invest now together in making our international Movement strong enough to be equal to whatever storms may come our way and to the task of globalising solidarity. Thank you. Good luck.

(Applause)

The President: Thank you very much. Thank you, Guy. Expanding on our Congress theme, "Together stronger", this Trade Union Congress is putting the case as to why, as trade unions, we need to co-operate nationally and, as a trade union Movement, we need to be united. Quite right, now more than ever, given what we have heard in the international debate, do we need trade union solidarity.

Delegates and attendees really do need to switch off their mobile phones. That does not mean on silent. That means switched off because it is interfering with the speaker system. Could you check? "Off" does mean off. Thank you very much.

Migrant workers

Alan Ritchie (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) moved Motion 80.

He said: We have heard this week of a global market of labour. In many instances in construction, it is being organised by agencies making billions of pounds by exploiting migrant workers. The construction industry has always relied on workers who travel to find work. We ourselves are often migrant workers. All over the world construction craftsmen have worked in Germany, Canada and America, and the list goes on. When our workers go abroad, we expect them to be treated no less favourably than they are in this country. We should expect the same for migrant workers in this country today.

Tony Woodley mentioned in the debate on Gate Gourmet about the exploitation of good, honest working people in this country. This happens in construction far too often. Workers are queuing up to get in a white van, not knowing where they are going or who they are working for. None of these workers come under the minimum standards set out in our industry's agreement. Criminal gangs operate in this underworld, threatening contractors if they do not take on their workers. For these bosses, safety is a secondary consideration. Migrant workers are forced to take up dirty, dangerous jobs that nobody else wants, working in poor conditions.

My officials came across a group of eastern European workers working for an agency in Glasgow. The main contractor was a multi-national company with a turnover of millions of pounds a year. The agency employed the workers as labourers for less than £5 per hour. If this was not bad enough, we found that an agency employed Polish plasters on the minimum wage. They were illegally deducting accommodation costs, air fares and Home Office registration fees from their wages.

This sums up the employers' attitude in the construction industry to migrant labour. It is easy to exploit, cheap to employ and easy to dispose of. It is time the

Government woke up to the reality of the treatment of workers in industries like construction.

We do not need a Thatcherite services directive that will lower labour standards across Europe. We need legislation that protects collective agreements and strengthens the right of migrant workers in the workplace. We know that employers will play lip service to the formal rights of workers, but when the enforcement authorities are gone, gangmasters use fear and intimidation to force down wage rates. Regulation only works if workers know their rights and they are enforced. That is why our role, as a trade union Movement, is so important.

Only trade unions can challenge the boss in the workplace. Only trade unions can ensure regulations are properly enforced. It is unacceptable that workers are exploited and killed for a quick profit. We have to take away the fear from challenging the boss at work. When the job is unsafe or the wages are too low, this trade union Movement must be present to organise. Our Movement is strengthened by the recruitment and organisation of migrant workers. We have to make this a Movement that is open, inclusive and relevant to migrant workers today. That means confronting exploitation in the workplace, opening up our Union to migrant workers and confronting racist sentiment whenever it raises its head.

We know that the far right have been trying to make political capital out of the use of migrant labour on building sites. They tell construction workers: "If you do not have a job, it is because foreign Joe over there has it. Vote for us and we will put that right." They seek to get influence by playing on the insecurities of construction workers by whipping up right wing nationalist sentiment. We need to expose these far right groups for what they are, racists and opportunists. We must make it clear from this TUC Congress that our Movement will not stand by and let this happen. We gain nothing from division and treating foreign workers as scapegoats for all our problems.

As the voice of working people, we must stand side by side with our brothers and sisters. Our employment rights should be their employment rights; our Movement is their Movement; injury to one is an injury to all and through unity this

Movement will never be defeated.

Bev Miller (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 80.

She said: Congress, the issue on treatment of migrant workers deserves closer attention. Migrant labour is not about race, culture or integration. Often it is just about exploitation and the selling of people like commodities. However, as the motion states, migrant workers make an important contribution to our society and our economy. For example, there are 44,000 overseas doctors, nurses and health professionals working in the National Health Service. The majority of migrant workers are women. Migrant workers are often concentrated at the bottom of the ladder in jobs which are dirty, dangerous and difficult. And how does this country pay these workers? With racism and prejudice. If we are to change attitudes and policy, unions have a key role to play. We can stand up for the rights of migrant workers and we can help them organise.

UNISON launched the Overseas Nurses Network in Scotland in 2002 to give advice to nurses from the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa and India. These nurses work primarily in private nursing homes where they secure jobs after paying agencies £2,000 to get work in the UK. Once here, they often work long hours for low rates of pay, live in appalling housing conditions and are threatened with deportation or sacked if they carry union information with them.

The ONN provides nurses and health care workers with information, in their own language, regarding trade union, employment and welfare rights. In addition, they are given the opportunity to network with nurses in a similar situation to their own. There are now migrant worker projects in London, Northern Ireland and, more recently, Oxford, all of which exist in recognition of the need to organise workers in the public and private sector.

UNISON's work with Public Services International includes a survey conducted from 2003 to 2004 which covered workers in 14 countries: Fiji, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Chile, Netherlands, Antilles, Barbados, Kenya, Ghana, Poland, USA, Canada and the UK. Of the 50 migrant workers interviewed in

the UK during phase 1, more than half do not intend to stay here due to the racism and discrimination they experience.

Phase 2 of PSI's work intends to provide information packs to migrant workers prior to departure and upon arrival. The information will be given to future migrants who are considering migrating to work in Britain. PSI are also negotiating bilateral and multilateral agreements between trade unions to provide protection to migrant workers. However, those fleeing to this country do not just need help with rights at work, they also need help into work.

The current consultation document on immigration - Making Migration Work for Britain - contains proposals that will make it harder for migrants to get work in Britain. Basically, they will only qualify if they are highly skilled or have large sums of money.

Congress, I urge you to go beyond debating these issues in conference halls and to go out and campaign, organise and support the workers who really need you. We can do this individually and through the TUC by supporting this motion.

David Lascelles (*GMB - Britain's general union*) supported Motion 80.

He said: Migrant workers are an essential component of the UK workforce. They make up a cheap and flexible source of labour used by companies to meet the seasonal consumer demand and skills shortages, but they are treated very differently compared with the directly employed. Migrant workers face daily exploitation in the workplace and are treated as a throw-away or a disposable commodity. These vulnerable workers face cultural and educational barriers. They are often unable to access information about UK systems and procedures. They desperately need our help, as my sister from UNISON has just told you.

We support all the initiatives taken by the TUC and affiliates. The GMB is particularly proud to have been given a special TUC learning project award for our work in this area. The project based in our Midlands and east coast region has identified a need for migrant workers to be able to speak up for themselves and

understand their rights in basic health and safety information.

The project has provided English language training together with advice and guidance in the workers' own languages. This has boosted the morale and self-confidence of many workers and created some very talented union representatives. I have been privileged to meet two of them. We need to continue to campaign for more and better regulation. The little regulation we have is far from perfect.

The GMB is working closely with the TUC and the GLA. We are calling on the Government to introduce legislation to regulate gangmasters and other labour providers in all areas of employment. Due to complex immigration laws, some migrant workers end up working invisibly without documents and without rights. You need a degree in bureaucracy to understand current regulations, restrictions and work permit schemes for migrant workers.

What chance do these workers have? Migrant workers are here to stay and make a valuable contribution to our society. All trade unions now face a challenge of how best to represent and organise them. This means more creative approaches. We need a level playing field. We need to work together to develop best practice so that we can reach out to these workers and not drive them away.

Colleagues, £65 a week was charged to a Polish worker, an agency worker, in Scunthorpe where I come from for a room with no window. On the third translation from Polish, I realised that meant the "window" was open to the elements. There was no glass in it. There was nothing. £50 a week each for eight people to share a three-bedroomed terraced house again in Scunthorpe. The actual rent to the landlord is £100, so the agency is ripping off £300 before they even get to the work gate. Yes, indeed, colleagues. This needs our attention. Do please support it. Thank you.

Collette Cork-Hurst (*Transport and General Workers' Union*) supported Motion 80.

She said: Organising and representing migrant workers is one of the most important priorities for the trade union Movement today. The T&G is, therefore, very

pleased to support this motion. Our Union has long recognised the valuable contributions made over many years to our economy and society through migrant workers. We all know that without migrant workers, institutions like the NHS would be unable to cope.

There are many good reasons why unions must put all our efforts into organising migrant workers; firstly, to protect these workers from exploitation from bad employers; secondly, to build and grow membership, particularly as migrant workers are likely to be employed in growth industries; thirdly, because, as we all know, it is the right thing to do.

No doubt, many of you have had experiences of unscrupulous employers who are trying to get away with employing migrant workers on rubbish wages under bad terms and conditions and with the sole intention of taking full advantage in every way possible of this often vulnerable group of workers. If that was not enough, many migrant workers also have to contend with various so-called agencies who set up outrageous operations in order to fleece migrant workers, deducting huge amounts from their tiny wages, housing them in appalling conditions and denying them basic information on their rights as workers.

The T&G was at the forefront of fighting for the Gangmasters' Licensing Act. It will continue to do its best to ensure that it is effectively implemented, but also to ensure that more agencies in more industries are properly regulated.

Congress, as trade unionists, we cannot allow employers and agencies to get away with these atrocities. We must take the lead in effecting positive change through lobbying for more legal protection but, most importantly, through good organisation. On a practical level, organising migrant workers can be challenging, but it is a challenge that trade unions must face head on. There are issues addressing divisions between different groups in the workforce; issues dealing with immigration, health and safety, housing and benefits and issues meeting language needs to ensure full involvement of all workers in organising campaigns on workplace matters.

The T&G in many of our organising campaigns has worked in a number of

ways to develop language facilities, through building links with community organisations, setting up language training courses and through supporting the migrant workers themselves in translation and interpretation. A key part of this is getting migrant worker trade union representatives.

We have also set up a migrant worker telephone legal advice line to assist on concerns such as visas, deportation and welfare rights. We continue to try to deal with tensions that can be built up when migrant workers are brought into a workplace. This is not always easy, but we have found that a lack of communication between these groups makes matters much worse. Therefore, we have a vital role in trying to unite the workforce because the only winner in a divided workforce is the employer. Whilst we know that the worst employers will try to exploit migrant workers and use them to undercut wages, when we are strongly organised, they are not able to get away with it.

Congress, migrant workers need unions and unions need migrant workers. Please support.

The President: The General Council supports the motion.

* *Motion 80 was CARRIED*

Organising in Europe

Jim McAuslan (*British Air Line Pilots Association*) moved Motion 81.

He said: There are two key challenges that I wish to highlight. These are not interesting theoretical diversions. They are real challenges that our Association faces today and which, I would suggest, one or more of us will face in the future.

The first challenge is about representing the individual. I want to give two examples. A UK-employed BALPA member working for a Swedish company doing a walk round of an aircraft, a subsidiary company, had an accident. Swedish law does not allow him to sue the employer. UK law does not allow him to sue either

because he was working for a subsidiary. Another BALPA member, a Dutch national, who is flying for a UK airline and is based in Germany, has recently been dismissed, we believe unfairly. Where is the case to be heard? Bizarrely, the solution seems to be to hear it in a German court using English law. It really feels to us that we are having to make it up as we go along.

Following the failed referenda in France and Holland, you can feel European leaders putting the brakes on the extension of the European social model just as employers get their wings and start basing their operations seemingly in mid-air floating above domestic law, leaving workers exposed.

BALPA would like to see the TUC at the forefront of those pressing for a legal framework to underpin European collective bargaining and pressing for the right to enforce individual contracts in any EU state.

The second aspect, more fundamentally, is the clash of cultures between the national approaches as to how unions operate. As we cannot seem to agree even in this hall on how we should organise workers in this country, finding a way to do it in Europe is, perhaps, a pipe dream. So what are these cultures? I know this is a huge generalisation, but some nations want to manage employment relations through the law. Some want to do it through works councils. Certainly the UK model that BALPA aspires to is to have good arguments, to deploy them with ingenuity and flair and, most importantly, to have higher levels of membership and to focus on organising people at work.

Again, this is not just a nice conceptual debate. Let me tell you about a practical challenge that we face in BALPA. In a UK company with all employees on UK contracts, negotiations over pay and conditions take place in Luton. The operation's HR function is based in Luton and the final stage of a grievance procedure for an individual is held in Luton, but with employees based in Dusseldorf and Paris and in any one of 26 countries. The logic, to me, is that a UK-based union should organise the employees, just as we would have to accept the logic of a German carrier with employees in Stansted being organised by a German union.

However, when we speak to our German or French colleagues, their answer is clear: "No, thank you very much." They would prefer to recruit those people into their union. Regrettably, they never seem to get around to doing it, or recruit them and then do little for them or, worse still, frustrate our efforts to organise them.

There are answers. For instance, a model whereby the lead negotiating union organises, recruits and services the bargaining agenda, but has a service level agreement with the other unions, making an annual payment to get legal support for individuals and influencing social issues in those countries, or, even more radical, why not create a new union just for that employer with the various unions as sponsors? A new union with no baggage and a clean sheet to start from - how liberating would that be?

Congress, BALPA does not have all the answers on how we deal with transnationals. I do not even know if I have thought of all the questions. What I do realise is that it is ambitious. It is an agenda that tackles big issues; European social legislation; the complexity of competing European employment laws; clashes of national cultures and how we organise and inter-union rivalries that we struggle with on these shores, let alone with 26 other countries. Yes, it is ambitious, but, frankly, employers are oblivious to these complexities. They just get on and do it. We need to get our collective act together and get on and do it.

Jack Dromey (*Transport and General Workers' Union*) seconded Motion 81.

He said: Sadly, since 1980, membership of trade unions, not just in Britain and Ireland, but across the world, has been falling. In the meantime, global capital is getting stronger and more dominant. Gate Gourmet, for example, has kitchens, not just at Heathrow, but all over the world from Argentina to Singapore. What is more, Texas Pacific, the venture capitalist that owns Gate Gourmet, also owns Burger King, Debenhams, Ducati, Bally, American West Airlines, Scottish and Newcastle Brewers and even Metro Golden Meyer, the giant Hollywood studio now in the hands of a Texan maverick who produced the film, *I kid thee not*, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly".

That is why support for our members at Gate Gourmet is not just here in Britain and Ireland. I am proud to say that only yesterday hundreds of workers took action in America in support of our members in Gate Gourmet. Thousands more will take action over the next seven days in America and Australia. (*Applause*)

We will not have the strength to stand up to these global employers unless we are better organised and unless we co-operate across national boundaries which they ignore. Organising means a serious co-ordinated effort here in Britain. That is what we are doing in the T&G. It is not easy, but it is essential, first and foremost, in Britain and Ireland, but also across national boundaries. That is why we are working, for example, with the service employees international union in taking on British-based bus companies that say here they encourage union membership, but in America say, "Over our dead body will we ever recognise a trade union". If we do not take that on in solidarity with them in America, soon such standards will be imported into Britain. That is why with other unions around the world we are entering into the global organising alliance, for the first time targeting major multi-national companies, moving internationally at the same time.

In Europe, we already have a long and honourable tradition of inter-union co-operation. This intelligent BALPA motion asks us to explore the next rational step. Not a free-for-all with Lithuanian unions competing with USDAW for membership in Italian stores, but a sensible, co-operative framework for effectively representing members in the new globalised world. How is a matter of judgment. What is essential is that we debate how.

Finally, globalisation demands that we act together, organise together and negotiate together ensuring no under-cutting and no competitive trade unionism as we together raise standards across Europe and the world and here in Europe defend our social model against the toxic Texan cowboy.

The President: Deputy General Secretary, Frances, to explain on behalf of the General Council.

Frances O'Grady (*Deputy General Secretary*) said: Thank you, President. The

General Council have asked me to explain their position. The General Council welcome much of the fresh thinking in the motion because precisely for the reasons outlined, globalisation and the rise of European-wide multi-nationals means that we are going to have to find new and imaginative ways to organise both workers and ourselves as unions.

In November, the TUC is hosting a summit of EU union centres with the support of the ETUC to start developing practical strategies in this area. However, the motion does raise some quite specific issues, for example, European-wide Bridlington principles and rules, legally enforceable collective agreements that are interesting but potentially quite controversial. They do require, we believe, deeper debate within the Movement.

Our own organisation and representation task group chaired by Tony Woodley and that planned summit in London in November will start to provide opportunities to begin a deeper debate and explore a whole range of ideas. Therefore, please support the motion with that explanation.

The President: The General Council support the motion.

* *Motion 81 was CARRIED*

The President: Conference, I am afraid that we are running over time so we are unable to complete all of this afternoon's business. We, therefore, will be taking all outstanding motions tomorrow. However, in the light of the amount of business outstanding, including the inclusion of emergency motions, I shall be seeking the advice of the General Purposes Committee as to whether I should consider restricting speaking time. I will report on this early tomorrow morning.

I have a couple of other comments. As a reminder, please make sure your equality monitoring forms are returned as soon as possible if you have not already done so. As I mentioned, the best party in town, the entertainment union's party, is being held in the Emperor's Ballroom at the Grand Hotel from 10.00 pm. There are various meetings taking place. They are detailed on page 17.

As a favour to the RMT, I am going to plug a book called "Railway Women", which is available at their stall, and also attended by the author. It is the history of the involvement of women in the railway industry. Conference is adjourned. Have a good evening and I will see you tomorrow morning.

(Congress adjourned at 5.31 pm)