

GMB ANNUAL CONGRESS

held on

SUNDAY 14TH JUNE – WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE 2009

at

THE WINTER GARDENS, BLACKPOOL

SIS. MARY TURNER
(President of the GMB Union)
(In the Chair)

PROCEEDINGS

DAY FOUR

(WEDNESDAY, 17TH JUNE 2009)

(Conference reported by:
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FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 17TH JUNE 2009

Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Delegates, good morning. I have some announcements to make. The money raised in the Jimmy Knapp raffle was £950, and Paul has agreed to make that a round £2,000. *(Applause)*

Northern Region wants to thank everyone for their support for the raffle. The figure of £100,000 was raised.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Oi! We ain't doubling that! *(Laughter)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Paul is doubling that. He will give £2,000.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Oi! You said "£100,000"!

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Oh, sorry. The raffle made £1,000, not £100,000. I was just seeing if Paul was awake after last night. *(Laughter and Applause)*

Just for information, next year, 2010, there will be the Tall Ships' Race at Hartlepool in August.

On a pleasant note, I have been informed that today is the birthday of Sis. June Minnery of GMB Scotland. June is 36 and drinks are in the bar at dinner. Happy birthday, June. *(Applause and cheers)*

I have just been handed another note to say happy birthday to Jim McCrossan, again, from GMB Scotland, so they can share the bar bill. Happy birthday, Jim. *(Applause)*

I ask delegates to make sure that their phones are all switched off, and if not switched off to be on silent mode. Just because Mary is not here, that does not mean that the usual penalty fee will not be expected. It will.

We would all like to thank Harry Donaldson, the Scottish Regional Secretary, and Diageo and Glenmorangie for supplying the miniature bottles of whisky. *(Applause)*

The bucket collection yesterday in aid of the Assistance Dog Charity raised £470.23, and Paul has agreed to make that a round £1,000. *(Applause)*

The competition winners of the Pattinson & Brewer's competition is Dott Peterson, Branch President from London Region, who has won an iPod. The runner-up is Bob

Welham, a convenor from North West & Irish Region. He has won a year's subscription to *Hazards* magazine. The third was Cathy Holland, a convenor from London Region who has won a poloshirt or sweatshirt from the GMB shop. Could the winners and runners up please go to the Pattinson & Brewer stand, stand 8, to collect their prizes.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 6

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will now call on Helen Johnson to give Standing Orders Committee Report no. 6.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 6.

Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been notified that the following motion has been withdrawn: Motion 167 – Unite Against Fascism, standing in the name of London Region.

Emergency motions: The SOC has accepted the following emergency motions as being in order for debate. Emergency Motion 6 – Iraq, standing in the name of Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. The SOC is recommending that this motion be heard this afternoon in the International debate.

Emergency Motion 7 – Fighting the Fascists – is standing in the name of London Region. SOC is recommending that this emergency motion be heard this morning in the debate on racism and Fascism. Vice President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 6.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Are there any questions on the SOC Report? *(No response)* Do you all accept that report? *(Agreed)*

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6 was adopted.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Conference, we will be taking Emergency Motions 5, 6 and 7 at some time today but there will be some programme changes which I will advise you of at the business progresses.

Before we go into the business, I ask if all movers and seconders would come to the front of the hall and be prepared to take the rostrum when called. This will save quite a considerable time on the day and will allow you, probably, to speak on your motions instead of having to formally move and second them. It is entirely a matter for yourselves, but it would be appreciated.

We will now go straight into Item 1, which is Composite 21, Care of the Elderly, Birmingham & West Midlands Region to move.

SOCIAL POLICY – WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES
CARE OF THE ELDERLY
COMPOSITE MOTION 21

C21. COVERING MOTIONS

- 205. CARE HOMES (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)
- 206. CARE OF THE ELDERLY (Midland & East Coast Region)
- 207. IMPROVED CARE FOR THE ELDERLY (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

CARE OF THE ELDERLY

We call upon this and the wider Trade Union Movement to hold the Labour Government to account to implement legislation ensuring **'all care will be free at the point of delivery from cradle to grave'**.

We call upon Congress to lobby the Government for a much improved care service for the elderly. General care, better resources, support from Social Services and meals on wheels are just some of the issues that need to be addressed. We need to eliminate the sheer neglect that clearly exists and urgently seek improvement.

Congress calls upon the CEC to instruct Labour Government to implement the promise that Tony Blair made the day New Labour was first elected to power in 1997, being **"no longer will people have to sell their homes to pay for their care"** and to bring about an increase to the limit of the personal wealth allowance under the current legislation in order to safeguard those who go into care homes.

(Carried)

SIS. M. CLARKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Composite Motion 21. President and Congress, care and support for the elderly in the UK remains appallingly under-funded. There is a huge turnover of staff because of low pay and a heavy workload. It is essential that we radically improve the level of care. In many instances, carers are not given the time to ensure that adequate care is given. They are under immense pressure having to meet tight schedules and targets. It is not our intention to criticise the caring people who strive to provide quality service. Given the constraints they face, they deserve lavish praise. The fault lies with the system. The present over-regulated framework chokes the best efforts of care workers. In effect, it undermines the relationship between carers and clients.

We call upon Congress to lobby the Government for better resources so that services might be improved, services such as Meals on Wheels. All too often elderly people have little to look forward to but their main meal of the day. Not only are these meals often bland but some arrive as early as 11.15 in the morning. These people deserve better. Not infrequently the media reports on cases of elderly people who have died alone and whose bodies have not been found for days, sometimes weeks. This is not just tragic but it is utterly disgusting. How can this happen in an enlightened society? It breaks my heart that our elderly are so shockingly neglected.

It is a fact that there are many elderly people whose welfare is looked after by carers within their own family. It is no coincidence that they thrive in comparison to those looked after by private services, where the main priority is financial gain. Private enterprise prospers whilst our elderly fade and sometimes die. We must push for extra resources. As a union, we must demand a better quality of life for the elderly. They have a basic human right to be cleaned, washed, fed, to have self-respect and dignity. Is this too much to ask?

In their document *From Safety Net to Springboard* the Equality & Human Rights' Commission say that they believe that the Government should update care and support services so that each person can live a full independent life no matter how much or how little money they have. People who run services can give strong joined-up services for a long time. Every person in Britain knows how care and support can make a difference to their lives. We say "Stop the neglect of the elderly" and we demand that the Government gives them the care they deserve. I urge you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Midland & East Coast Region to second.

BRO. D. BREARLEY (Midland & East Coast): I second Composite Motion 21. President and Congress, we call upon this Congress and the wider trade union Movement to hold the Labour Government to account to implement legislation ensuring 'all care will be free at the point of delivery from cradle to grave'.

We call upon Congress to lobby the Government for a much improved care service for the elderly. General care, better resources, support from Social Services and meals on wheels are just some of the issues that need to be addressed. We need to eliminate the sheer neglect that clearly exists and urgently seek improvement.

Congress calls upon the CEC to instruct the Labour Government to implement the promise that Tony Blair made the day that New Labour was first elected to power in 1997, being "no longer will people have to sell their homes to pay for their care" and to bring about an increase to the limit of the personal wealth allowance under the current legislation in order to safeguard those who go into care homes.

Of course, that it costs money to run a home – ask any MP – but if money can be found to bail out the banks, surely the cash can be found for the elderly in care. Recently a high profile TV personality would not take "No" as the answer to the plight of the Ghurkas, and rightly so, in my opinion. The trade union Movement, and our great Union in particular, should not take "No" for an answer from this Government either. We should be helping the elderly and hammering the Government until we succeed. I second the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Composite 22: Care Workers. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to move, and South Western Region to second.

CARE WORKERS COMPOSITE MOTION 22

C22. COVERING MOTIONS

208. SUPPORTING CARE WORKERS (South Western Region)

210. FAIRNESS FOR CARERS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

CARE WORKERS

Congress we are well aware of the invaluable hard work undertaken and sacrifices made by carers thus saving the economy billions of pounds; only a small minority of carers receive financial recognition from the State. This is supposed to be recognised by the Carers' Association. Whilst Congress welcomes the UK Government's extension to the "Right to Request Flexible Working" for carers of adults, more needs to be done.

Congress calls upon the CEC to continue to put pressure on Government: -

- i) to ensure there is employer action to help carers stay in work
- ii) that carers receive better financial support
- iii) the continuation of work on the gender pay gap, highlighting the high price women pay for having to take unpaid time off out of the labour market to provide care for their dependants.

Whilst there is a case for increasing the Carers' Allowance, what is of great concern is the seemingly arbitrary way decisions are made as to who is entitled to Carers' Allowance and who is not. It appears as if decisions are made on the basis of how well known the illness/disability is to the decision maker.

Rather than purely a civil servant deciding who is entitled to Carers' Allowance, Congress calls for some independent medial input to ensuring everybody who is a carer gets the help and recognition they deserve.

(Carried)

SIS. L. BROOK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Colleagues, I cannot speak from personal experience as a carer, but I do understand that, as a mother of three children, what I would sacrifice for them. Ask yourself, though, should we expect our carers to sacrifice not only their time and sometimes put their own lives on hold but to do this without any financial support because they are unable to access the Carers' Allowance? I thought that getting the Carers' Allowance would be quite straightforward. How wrong I was! There are rules from the point of what is cared for and who is the carer. Of course, this is expected. However, what is not acceptable is that making the decision is a faceless bureaucrat with no medical knowledge which, inevitably, leads to those who need the benefit most being refused access to the allowance. This is often because the disability suffered is not on the list.

An example of this is Rebecca, who has a 14 year old daughter who suffers from nephritic syndrome. I had never heard of this either, so let me explain. This is a problem

with the kidneys. It means that Rebecca has to test her daughter's urine every day, give her goodness knows how many tablets, including some steroids designed only for adults, she monitors fluid intake, makes regular trips to her GP for blood tests, goes to hospital every few months being prepared to see a specialist 40 miles away and is constantly by the phone in case something flares up whilst her daughter is at school.

Further, the steroids can cause massive fluctuations in weight, meaning the added expense of new clothes which can be ill afforded. Why? Because in the last eight years that Rebecca's daughter has suffered from this illness, she has received no Carers' Allowance.

The aforementioned faceless bureaucrat had not heard of the illness which led to the claim for Carers' Allowance being refused. Had Rebecca's daughter suffered from ADHD, a disability which is on the list, she would have received the allowance.

Carers themselves also have to meet specific criteria to claim, which again is often unfair and excludes those who need help the most. Alex, a 21 year old student, cares for his fiancé, Sarah, who has cystic fibrosis. This illness would qualify as being a disability which would appear on the list. Alex completed medical training on cystic fibrosis to enable him to care for Sarah round the clock without need for her to be in hospital. He provides care for her, such as checking that she is breathing and that her oxygen machine is still on, administers intravenous antibiotics and provides other personal care for her. He also looks after their home and he is studying law at university. If Sarah is too ill, Alex has to miss lectures and seminars to care for her. Alex had been receiving Carers' Allowance but, as soon as he became a student, due to the 21 hours study rule, this was withdrawn. And, in spite of appealing this decision and taking it to a tribunal, Alex and Sarah remain unsupported.

All over the country others are suffering the same injustices as Rebecca, her daughter, Alex and Sarah. It is time for a complete overhaul of the Carers' Allowance, how it is determined who should receive it and who makes the decisions.

Last week was Carers' Week but, please, remember that carers do not only provide the care that their loved one needs for one week. Many provide care every day of every week of every year. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. PICKETT (South Western): Congress, please bear with me as this is my first at the rostrum. President and Congress, carers save us billions of pounds a year caring for the sick, the elderly and the vulnerable because they care. Some receive no payment at all and those who do have that payment withdrawn when they become old aged. Where is the social justice in that?

What about child carers, of which there are many? They are only young once, and what is their reward? Yet we reward the rich and greedy bankers that mismanaged our money and then reward them with pensions that me and you can only dream about. What our

MPs? At the moment, words fail me! But, on second thoughts, there is one word: Corrupt!

I call upon this Labour Government to stop rewarding the rich and the greedy. They must stop it and stop it now! This Labour Government must start rewarding those who care and save us billions of pounds, and start it now!

Congress, I work in the caring industry. I have a real passion for my work, and I know what the carers of this nation have to put up with and cope with every single day. I see it when I go to work so I know. I ask this Congress to second Composite Motion 22. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now come to Motion 219: Free television licences for everyone at State retirement age. London.

**FREE TELEVISION LICENCE FOR EVERYONE AT STATE RETIREMENT AGE
MOTION 219**

219. FREE TELEVISION LICENCE FOR EVERYONE AT STATE RETIREMENT AGE

Congress we call upon you to put pressure on the government to provide free television license for everyone as they reach state retirement age, whether it is 60 or 65 years old. Blind people should be exempt from paying at any age.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): I move Motion 219. My branch calls on the GMB to put pressure on the Government for all the people who reach their retirement age, whether it is 60 or 65. Why is it in this day and age, when we can retire at 60 or 65, that we still have to pay a full TV licence until you are 75? Surely, when you retire people should not have to wait until ten years after they retire to qualify for a free TV licence, and blind people should not have to pay a TV licence at any age. It is a disgrace.

In this day and age few luxuries are afforded to us, but when you are retired and at home, if you can afford the heating bills, then it would be nice to sit and watch the TV without worrying about how you are going to pay for your next TV licence. They may be repeats but at least you don't have to stare at the wall. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

The Motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, all three motions are being supported by the CEC. So we will take them altogether. All those in favour, please show? Against? They are carried.

Composite Motion 21 was carried.

Composite Motion 22 was carried.

Motion 219 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Employment Policy – Rights at work. Motion 70 is Campaign for Statutory Volunteer’s Rights. London Region.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY – RIGHTS AT WORK
CAMPAIGN FOR STATUTORY VOLUNTEER’S RIGHTS
MOTION 70**

70. CAMPAIGN FOR STATUTORY VOLUNTEER’S RIGHTS

This Congress notes that according to Volunteering England, “22 million adults are involved in formal volunteering each year”, and “90 million hours of formal voluntary work takes place each week”. Also, Volunteers’ Week states that “In 2007 73% of all adults in England and Wales volunteered (formally or informally).”

So many adults in the UK are volunteering their time, skills, and energy to make the country a better place, yet at present they can be ‘hired and fired’ without any statutory rights.

Congress agrees that the GMB should launch a campaign for volunteers to be afforded some core rights in recognition of their contribution to society.

At present, there are no legal requirements for organisations to provide volunteers with Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures or Terms and Conditions of Volunteering. The current legal standpoint is very much “It’s their club, and their rules, they can do what they like” – advice obtained from the GMB/Thompson’s Legal Advice Line in July 2008.

These are fundamental rights that all employees, paid or unpaid (volunteers) should be afforded. Furthermore, we believe that this should be particularly the case for volunteers since they are not being rewarded for their time and efforts in the same way as paid employees are.

LOWESTOFT L43 BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. G. DOUCE (London): I move Motion 70 – Campaign for Statutory Volunteer’s Rights. Congress, each year there is in excess of 4.8 billion hours of volunteering for organizations, which generates around £5 billion for the UK economy. So volunteers contribute a lot to the economy. Our purpose as a trade union is to improve pay and conditions for workers. Clearly, volunteers are not paid so there is only ‘conditions’ left to improve.

I would like to tell you about a case from a member in my branch who had an allegation made against him that while he was volunteering for a large voluntary organization with more than 28 million members. This matter was investigated by the police, social services, his employer, the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, who all said there was no case to answer, yet this voluntary organization upheld the complaint and dismissed him without a chance to respond to the allegation.

The legal advice obtained at the time was that it was their club and their rules so they could do exactly what they liked. Clearly, this treatment is unacceptable and we should start campaigning for volunteers to have rights in their workplaces. I would like to paraphrase Paul Kenny from the National Youth Members' Conference in November. He said: "When there is something wrong in the workplace or socially, we should have a go to try and correct it." So now is the time to start the ball rolling to try and protect our volunteers who contribute so much to society. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. D. CRANGLE (London): I am speaking in support of Motion 70. Congress, recently there have been at least two incidents involving volunteers who work for the CAB. In York 28 volunteers walked out in protest of the sacking of a colleague. In March 2009 two volunteer advisers were asked to leave East Staffs CAB. Volunteers have no rights in the workplace, no formal grievance procedures and remain at the mercy of good or bad managers. They can have their practices and characters assassinated, threatening their future employment but there is no path to redress. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 71: Tax Allowances for Voluntary Work. London Region.

TAX ALLOWANCES FOR VOLUNTARY WORK MOTION 71

71. TAX ALLOWANCES FOR VOLUNTARY WORK

Congress believes we should campaign for unpaid voluntary work to be recognised by way of a Tax Allowance in order to encourage more volunteering.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. C. STEPHENS (London): I move Motion 71. Vice President and Congress, all of us in this room are part of a culture of contributing to our communities, of sharing our skills and energies to make life better for everyone. To take an example at random, at my breakfast table this morning the three people present had accumulated over 35 years of involvement in voluntary organizations. Nationally, 73% of adults volunteer. We may volunteer time and work for the GMB or with a range of other groups and organizations.

The voluntary sector is expanding and playing an increasingly essential role in society. As the voluntary sector expands the GMB needs to be expanding with it and we will do that by championing the rights of volunteers. People do voluntary work for a whole host of different reasons. Some might be retired and want to keep active, mentally and well as physically. Some might be unemployed and see volunteering as a stepping-stone back into work, and some are developing their own interests or hobbies through volunteering, or just want to put something back into the community.

Volunteers deserve to be recognized for their effort without diminishing the voluntary work ethic. Everyone doing unpaid voluntary work should be able to accrue tax allowances for their voluntary work. For the unemployed, it would be a help when they do return to work and ensure that their work is sustainable by increasing their disposable income. This would apply equally to the disabled and the incapacitated.

For those volunteers who have retired from paid work, who through volunteering are still active in the workplace, many are just as liable for some form of tax as if they were still working, and I don't need to tell Congress about pensioner poverty. I am sure we should be doing all we can to alleviate pensioner poverty. Indeed, all poverty, wherever we find it. This proposal gives us the double whammy of tackling poverty and encouraging community involvement. We want to encourage greater involvement in the community and all the better if that is encouraged and supported by the GMB, by pushing for the introduction of tax allowances for doing unpaid voluntary work. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Seconder?

The Motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Conference, the CEC is asking for both of these motions to be referred. I will now call on Peter Murphy for the CEC to explain the reasons for referral.

BRO. P. MURPHY (CEC, Public Services): The CEC is asking Congress to refer Motions 70 and 71.

Let me deal, firstly, with Motion 70. A similar motion was referred by Congress in 2006 and we raised the matter of a definition of "volunteers" to be defined as workers with the then Department of Trade & Industry. We asked them to review the employment status of volunteers. In response they said they worked with Volunteering England to produce a publication on the legal issues of volunteering work which, of course, is not exactly what we asked.

One area we wanted examined was that whilst volunteers provide an invaluable service to society there is a danger that some organizations may exploit them by taking them on as volunteers when in fact the demands or obligations placed on them equate to those of a contract of employment and places the onus on the individual to pursue a claim with all the associated difficulties.

Designating all volunteers as “workers” may have unwanted consequences. It would impose contractual obligations on volunteers as well as on the organizations employing them, and some volunteers may not wish to bind themselves contractually. Many people volunteer because they want to support an organization or cause without being tied into a contract of employment and all the associated commitments.

The CEC is also concerned that, in the current economic climate, employers may seek to substitute paid employees with volunteers.

Motion 71 covers a complex area and there is a fine line between voluntary workers and volunteers. The Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, or BERR, has recently issued up-dated guidance on voluntary workers and the National Minimum Wage, which suggests that there may be tax implications for people who are paid or rewarded in any way for voluntary work. It is a complex area. Whilst the CEC supports the sentiment behind these motions, we are asking for them both to be referred. This will allow the CEC to give full consideration of the implications for volunteers of their employment status.

Congress, please accept reference of Motions 70 and 71. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of Motion 70 want the right to reply? *(Declined)* Does the mover of Motion 71 want the right to reply? *(Declined)* Congress, both the movers of Motions 70 and 71 have accepted reference. They have both agreed to refer back. Does Congress agree? *(Agreed)*

Motion 70 was referred.

Motion 71 was referred.

**POLITICAL – RACISM & FASCISM
LOVE MUSIC HATE RACISM
MOTION 165**

165. LOVE MUSIC HATE RACISM

Congress agrees to affiliate to Love Music Hate Racism, an organisation which aims to build anti racist unity through music and has organised over 600 events including a huge carnival in Victoria Park, London which attracted over 100,000 people.

In Rotherham, where the BNP won two council seats, The Kaiser Chiefs headlined an event that sent out a positive anti racist message in the area.

We agree to pay the appropriate affiliation fee with Love Music Hate Racism and publicise events organised by them.

BARNSELY GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Withdrawn)

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 165 without the support of my region.

Love Music Hate Racism is a national organization which gets across an anti-racist, anti-Fascist message mainly to young people through music. Love Music Hate Racism is supported by acts like Belle & Sebastian, the Doves, David Gray and a whole range of other people. They put on events up and down the country getting across that message. They have actually produced an advert recently which we are trying to get into cinemas and on TV which shows a guy going into a racist record/music shop and when asking about the CDs he says, "What have you got?" They've got no soul, no jazz, no reggae and no blues. You get the idea. As I say, we are trying to get that advert shown widely. It is a film that has been produced at no cost by Ridley Scott films. Ridley Scott, for anybody who is not sure, is the director of *The Alien* and also *Gladiator*. I mean, you don't get much bigger than that. The production costs were sponsored by the PCS trade union. I think this shows the sort of level of support that exists for Love Music Hate Racism and the people who are prepared to back it.

Every year Love Music Hate Racism has a carnival. Last year it was in London. This year, only a few weeks ago, it was in Stoke. Stoke, of course, is the jewel in the BNP's crown. They say that that is the area where they are going to grow. The BNP has nine councillors in Stoke. Anyway, Love Music Hate Racism held a carnival at Stoke City Football Ground, supported by Stoke-on-Trent City Council. The 20,000 mainly young local people heard Eddie Izzard, Pete Docherty, Beverley Knight, Kelly Roland from *Destiny's Child*, Reverend and the Makers and loads more people putting on music, but also giving out a message of hope, speaking out against racist politics and the Fascist policies of the BNP. The local BBC radio station told its listeners that, for the first time ever, the BNP were on the back foot in the City of Stoke. They said that the carnival has united the people of Stoke. Another said that racism has become more unpopular, demonstrating the impact that Love Music Hate Racism had in Stoke. The next major event is in Shrewsbury this Saturday coming up. Hopefully the weather will be good. Sixteen national and local bands will be playing at Shrewsbury College which Love Music Hate Racism has put on with Shropshire Council and Shropshire Partnership. I am just showing you that these people are prepared to work with us on. It also shows the success that Love Music Hate Racism is having and the positive response.

Love Music Hate Racism is an important anti-racist, anti-Fascist organization, which we should be more involved with. We should be part of that organization much more. Paul Kenny should have been at Stoke a couple of weeks ago at that carnival, speaking to 20,000 young people about why the GMB opposes racism, why the GMB opposes Fascism and why those young people should be proud to be in the GMB and why they should be members of our Union. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

A DELEGATE (No name or branch given): President and Congress, I second the motion that Henry has just spoken to, but without the backing of our region.

Henry said nearly everything that needed to be said. This time, what with us now having BNP MEPs, is no better time to affiliate to every organization that is anti-BNP. We should all be working hard against the BNP. I am member of the Labour Party and I go to these events. If anybody in this room has not been to one, I suggest that you do. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I understand that Motion 167 - Unite Against Fascism – was withdrawn this morning by the London Region.

I call Emergency Motion 7 – Fighting the Fascists in Elections.

FIGHTING THE FASCISTS IN ELECTIONS

EMERGENCY MOTION 7

FIGHTING THE FASCISTS IN ELECTIONS

THIS CONGRESS NOTES THE LOW TURNOUT AND THE UNFORESEEN ELECTION IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS OF 4TH JUNE 2009, OF TWO BNP CANDIDATES IN SEPARATE CONSTITUENCIES AND THE THREAT THIS POSES FOR THE FORTHCOMING GENERAL ELECTION.

THIS CONGRESS RESOLVES TO:

REVIEW THE OUTCOMES OF ITS TWO YEAR PROGRAMME AGAINST THE BNP AND THE POLITICS OF HATRED ADOPTED AT THE 2007 CONGRESS.

INITIATE CAMPAIGNS THAT SEEK TO ENCOURAGE, AS A PRIORITY DISAFFECTED VOTERS, TURNOUT IN ALL ELECTIONS, LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND IN EUROPE AND PARTICULARLY IN THOSE AREAS WHERE FASCISTS ARE KNOWN TO BE STANDING, AND USE THEIR VOTE TO STOP THE BNP.

WORK WITH OTHER UNIONS AND APPROPRIATE ORGANISATIONS TO ERADICATE THE EVIL OF THE BNP AND OTHER FASCIST PARTIES.

**GMB HOLBORN BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): I move Emergency Motion 7 – Fighting the Fascists in Elections.

We have all heard widely at Congress this year the issues we face following the European Elections. Our General Secretary, rightly, raised the shocking fact that 65 years after the defeat of Fascism in Europe Britain is sending two Fascists to represent this country. The BNP gained election to the European Parliament in the North West and Yorks and Humber regions despite receiving fewer votes than at the last Euro elections.

The problem was that the BNP share of the overall vote rose as Labour support plummeted for the reasons already gone into by the President in her address. At Congress 2007 our Union adopted a two year programme against the BNP, and GMB activists up and down the country have run excellent campaigns to stop the Nazis. Campaign do have an effect on the BNP. Their manual – they actually have such a thing – advises them to move on from areas where organized opposition exists. But now is the time when we have to review our strategy, develop it, improve it and draw on our strengths and learn from our weaknesses, because we have entered into new territory now. The stakes have changed. The BNP is going to use its European success to drive a stronger wedge into mainstream politics and to use its new positions as a platform for spreading its race hatred. Calling them “Nazis” affects them. They don’t like it. They are trying desperately to be seen as an ordinary party. We must put pressure on the media to expose them for what they are and to stop treating them like respectable politicians. They are a party made up of convicted criminals, gang rapists, terrorists and thugs.

Remember the BNP member and one-time candidate, Robert Cottage. He was a co-conspirator in a massive terror plot involving the largest haul of chemical weapons to date, and this was barely mentioned in the media. If they were a Muslim organization with a similar record and a mile wide violent streak like the BNP, it would have been banned, its leaders hounded by the press and its members probably deported. But all they get are respectful interviews with John Humphreys on Radio 4. This is unacceptable. We must confront them every time they appear or when they are in our papers.

The BNP still remains, essentially, a middle-class organization, as indicated by those working-class voters who preferred to stay at home in protest rather than vote for the Nazis. Also the BNP vote in the London Mayoral election was around half that of the BNP vote in the London Assembly election, indicating that half of the people who voted BNP on the Assembly voted tactically for Boris Johnston as first preference. But this is significant for our Movement, for the simple reason that if we can organize and put forward decent working-class candidates, then we can get out the anti-Nazi vote and, as reps, we should be organizing and asking our members what questions they would have for candidates, put them to the candidates, get them in the workplaces and branch meetings and respond to them. We need to re-engage on the issues that affect them and those issues need to be responded to.

We need to do things like initiate voter registration drives and campaigns that seek to get the vote out against them. The BNP can be beaten and must be beaten. We must continue to work together with other unions and appropriate organizations to stop them. Our unity is our strength and we share a common goal, and what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

This is my first Congress, and it has been brilliant. I look around the room and see the diversity of everyone here, young and old, black and white, gay and straight. But we have just learned that the BNP plan to hold a victory rally in Blackpool this weekend. It is going to be down the road. It is going to be about everything that we would not stand for. What we have in this room is brilliant. What the BNP are doing is disgraceful. I call on the North West & Irish Region to get down to *that* hotel this weekend and support the protests that are being organized by Unite Against Fascism, drive these Nazis out of time and reclaim Blackpool for the ordinary working-class people. (*Applause*)

Finally, Woody Guthrie had a guitar with the slogan *This Machine Kills Fascists*. Comrades, we need to take up this slogan and say that this Congress defeats Fascists. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): I second Emergency Motion 7. President and Congress, there is no doubt that the BNP is a vile organization and its policies are an affront to decency and democracy. The rise in the number of votes received by the BNP in recent years and the number of BNP councillors are alarming. But, colleagues, even more alarming are the events of 4th June when the people of Manchester and Yorkshire elected two BNP MEPs effectively. As the General Secretary said, we are sending Nazis to Europe 65 years after we stopped them coming here. There is no hiding place, colleagues, in the fight to crush these messengers of hate.

The GMB can take great credit from its efforts to expose and combat the BNP, but it has been proved that we cannot do it alone. We could expect better support from some MPs such as Margaret Hodge in Barking, who has been instrumental in de-selecting GMB councillors in Barking, seemingly oblivious to the GMB's excellent record in beating BNP candidates. We could expect more help from the Government by providing funding for social housing which would help take away the BNP dogma of racial envy.

Congress, we must re-double our efforts against the BNP and take help from any appropriate quarters. Please support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Steve Kemp.

BRO. S. KEMP (National Political Officer): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 165 on Racism, which the CEC is asking you to oppose. Congress, we meet in Blackpool today when, just a week or so ago, the country to which we live in decided for

the first time to elect its first neo-Nazi Fascist members of the European Parliament, one of which will be hoping to represent the people of Blackpool, where we meet today.

I wish to proclaim from this rostrum to both Nick Griffin and Andrew Brons that they may have been elected but it is not in our name, it is not in the GMB's name, not in our members' name or, for that matter, not in the name of any decent law-abiding citizen in Britain. (*Applause*) The economy, job losses, working people, in some cases, losing their homes and, of course, the scandal of the MPs expenses all made for extremely fertile ground for the far right to exploit. In spite of this, we can be proud as a trade union and an organisation opposed to the BNP of the campaigning effort put up by the GMB and other trade unions working together with *Searchlight* and Hope Not Hate, which at least managed to keep the BNP down to two elected members.

In the grand scheme of things this is something, even in the face of dreadful results, that we can, through our campaign with *Searchlight* and Hope Not Hate, take some credit for. Let us see what we did as a Union. GMB along with *Searchlight* helped deliver some 3.5 million leaflets. One hundred and fifty thousand people signed up for the *Searchlight* campaign and, on the eve of the poll, 600,000 were contacted by email to urge them to vote against the BNP. Thirty thousand text messages were sent by this Union to its members and 200,000 automated messages were sent as well. We can be proud of the campaign that we waged against the BNP and all the regions can as well. In Yorkshire three-quarters of a million leaflets were delivered. Andy Worth in the Midlands Region, Joe Morgan and the team in Birmingham and West Midlands saw off the threat of the BNP candidate, Simon Derby, and Kathleen Walker Shaw and the Brussels' team were absolutely fantastic as well. But I would like, in particular, say thanks to the North West & Irish Region for the work and commitment shown against Griffin. He got in by a whisker, especially when some were predicting that even two BNP members would be elected. He was the one who got elected. So thanks to Paul McCarthy, Cheryl Pigeon and the hundreds who mobilised in the North West & Irish Region because you did this Union proud.

Our General Secretary, at a fringe meeting on Monday, in reference to Remploy said that we had suffered setbacks in that campaign, and this was a setback. There is no doubt about it, but we have to dust ourselves down and start again. That is exactly what we have to do in relation to the campaign against the far right.

Moving to the CEC opposing Motion 165, the last thing we need at the moment, and it is the reality, Henry, whether we like it or not, is to join up with organisations which have clearly linked with the Socialist Workers' Party, which will inevitably lead to disagreements within both the GMB and its membership. This is the time for organisation and a clear understanding as to why so many working-class people are voting BNP. The CEC believes that the best way to do this is to keep campaigning with *Searchlight* and Hope Not Hate. Make no mistake. The campaign must continue and will continue to make sure that in whatever circumstances we never ever see the results again that we saw two weeks ago.

GMB needs further campaigning with *Searchlight* to remain clear and concise and with no deviation and worrying as to whether or not one side agrees with each other and, therefore, wasting time in, potentially, arguing with other organisations when our best time is serving fighting and explaining to people what the BNP is all about.

Congress, last month I visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps, the scene of a murder on a scale that never, thank goodness, has ever been since. I stood on the site where selection took place. Fit men above the age of 16 were spared for the time being. The elderly, infirm, disabled, women and children were immediately sent to the camps. Two people who dispute that took place got elected by the British people last week to represent them in Europe. Holocaust deniers as they are. People who liberated Europe from Fascism, those involved in the D-Day landings have just been honoured for their bravery for liberating us from the Nazis. And British people voted a couple of weeks ago to elect Griffin and Bronz, who are Nazis and who think that Hitler was right. The country should hold its head in shame. This should be enough for everyone to join and support *Searchlight* and the Hope Not Hate campaign in the continued battle against the far right, represented by the BNP and to make sure that the GMB is at the forefront in the fight against Fascism and racism in all its horrible shapes and forms and to make sure that the results of last week never comes back to haunt us again. The CEC ask you to oppose Motion 165.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of Motion 165 wish to exercise his right of reply?

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): What about a debate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Right. If you want a debate, fair comment. Okay. I was not told that anybody wanted a debate. If you put your hands up, you will have a debate.

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): I have had to get up and speak to this motion. I cannot believe this. I have been fighting Fascists and Nazis since the 1970s when the NF was strong. We have just got the hammering of our life and, as has been said by everyone, we have just witnessed two BNP MEPs sent to the European Parliament. That gives them God knows how much in wages and expenses. They will start to grow in leaps and bounds unless they are stopped, and the place to stop them, I am afraid, is on the streets. We should be supporting any organisation that is physically opposing these monsters. If the UAF, *Searchlight* or Hope Not Hate, or anybody, is organising to physically oppose them when they come to this town on Saturday, we should be giving them our full support.

Comrades, I think there is a contradiction in the EC's position. The other day, when we did not affiliate to the LRC, what we were told – all right, I will accept this – was that we ought to support them on policies where they coincide with GMB policies, and where they do not we do not support them. So, therefore, we cannot affiliate. Now, isn't there a contradiction. We are against Fascism, but we are going to be against this emergency motion because it is affiliated with the SWP? I have been a member of the Labour Party

all my life. I have never had any membership or anything much to do with the SWP, apart from saying hello to them. But, for God's sake! We are now going to oppose fighting the BNP ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleague!

BRO. McKENZIE: ---- because this has got something to do with the SWP?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleague!!

BRO. McKENZIE: It's a complete and utter nonsense.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleague!!!

BRO. McKENZIE: Support the Emergency Motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleague, we are not against the Emergency Motion. We are supporting the Emergency Motion. We are against Motion 165. Would anyone else like to come in on the debate.

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): I oppose Motion 165. Comrades, three months ago Wiltshire Police visited my house to tell me that convicted Nazi terrorist, Mark Gorman, who was treasurer of Wiltshire BNP, had just been released from prison. He had been sent to prison for a racially aggravated arson assault when he threw a petrol bomb through the window of Swindon Mosque, which had people sleeping inside it at the time, with a BNP leaflet used as the fuse. He was looking for me and the police were coming to make a security assessment. People have said to me, "Are you afraid? Did that make you want to stop fighting the Fascists?", to which I said "No". We know that 350,000 British and Commonwealth Servicemen died fighting Fascism. My father fought rifle in hand in North Africa against the Nazis. We are not going to be stopped and we are not going to allow the Fascists to pass. I know that the situation is very serious, but because the situation is serious we need to be moving in the right direction to oppose Fascism.

This is not the 1970s. The British National Party in the way they behave now is not the National Front. Unite Against Fascism and Love Music Hate Racism are not the Anti-Nazi League. What we need to do is to locate ourselves in the political mainstream of those who oppose the extremism of the BNP. In so far as it ever worked, waving placards around and shouting "Nazi scum off our streets" does not convince working class voters who feel disillusioned with the Labour Party. In so far as it ever worked, throwing an egg at Nick Griffin and then getting the National Secretary of the Socialist Workers' Party on *Newsnight* to mumble about counter-revolution is not the way to address working-class voters who have been confused into voting BNP.

The way forward, when the BNP try and trick working-class voters that they stand for workers, is for working people to say, "No, the Labour Party stands for working people", and the failure is that the Labour Party is not convincing people of that at the moment.

The way we need to move on is to have not just the Labour Party but, of course, other mainstream and democratic parties, other progressive parties, to be talking direct to voters. The way forward is with the mainstream. It is with the *Daily Mirror*, it is with *Searchlight* and with all the democratic parties. I urge you to oppose Motion 165. (Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? (No response) Thank you. I will now call on the right to reply to Motion 165.

BRO. RAJCH: Colleagues, in exercising my right to reply, the *Independent* newspaper, by the way, funded the Stoke-on-Trent carnival. It is a big national newspaper which supports Love Music Hate Racism. As for the egg, I think lots of people actually cheered when Griffin got egg'd. Brilliant! He got egg'd. That is great. It is not actually the policy of the SWP to egg Griffin. The policy which makes sense is to confront the Fascists. That is what, hopefully, the people will agree to do. It is to actually stand up against them, to expose them, to get the maximum number of people out there against them as possible. That is what we attempt to do.

Anyway, on Love Music Hate Racism, I think the point is that I have never seen Ridley Scott, the director of *Gladiator* selling the *Socialist Worker*. I can tell you that he is not a member of the SWP. Stoke City Football ground does not have a red flag flying. It is red and white. The point is that the SWP is a tiny part of these organizations. Let me into a secret. The SWP is not a big organization. We are actually very small, but Love Music Hate Racism can attract thousands of people to these events, and when we get there they are mainly young people, people who are being brainwashed into thinking that the BNP is an ordinary party, that they should give them a try and vote for them. This is nonsense. It needs a big, strong organization that can put a message across to young people, and what better way than through music. What is better than having a black rapper singing and putting across music? It is a connection for white young people to have with black people. It is obvious, isn't it? They are never going to vote BNP when they are really into black music. Let's support putting black music out *there*. Love Music Hate Racism is a marvellous organization, which hopefully some time in the future we will support.

However, in the interests of unity we are prepared to withdraw the motion. (Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, colleague. Does Conference agree withdraw that motion? (Agreed)

Motion 165 was withdrawn.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: In case anyone else is a little confused, Conference is asking you to support Emergency Motion 7. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Emergency Motion 7 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to the Equality and Inclusion Report. I ask Kamaljeet Jandu to formally move his report.

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION REPORT (Pages 21 – 24)

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION DEPARTMENT

The twin principles of organising and bargaining are at the core of the GMB strategy for the Equality and Inclusion (E&I) that was launched at Congress 2008. Our journey for achieving equality through inclusion has made considerable progress since last year

The first six months of 2008 was a period of transition, raising awareness and engaging on our new E&I strategy with the Regions, the Sectors and old equality Committees. This involved spending time in the regions, giving presentation of the strategy to the Senior Management Teams, Regional Organisers, Equality conferences and other meetings such as the National Organising Team.

At Congress 08 in Plymouth, presentations were made to the three Sector conferences. A fringe meeting titled 'No Sweat' on organising the hospitality workers was arranged with the GMB young members, which included an inspirational video presentation of the experience of organising young workers in the fast food outlets.

National Equality Forum (NEF)

One of the key achievements of the year, following rigorous selection method including interviews, was the appointment of the new lay members to the National Equality Forum. The Forum has met four times since Congress. The members of the Forum are:-

- Dotun Alade-Odumosu (Vice Chair) - Race
- Nick Day - LGTB
- Sharon Harding - Gender
- Sharon Hewitt (1 Sept-15 Dec 08) -
- Tony Hughes - Disability
- Harpal Jandu - Race
- Lorraine Parker - Gender
- Jill Richards (Chair 1 Sept 08 – 15 Dec 08) - Gender
- Emma Ritch - Youth
- Alex Sobel, - Youth
- Brian Shaw (Chair 15 Dec 08) - LGTB

Jill Richards became an officer in South Western Region and accordingly resigned her membership of the NEF and Brian Shaw was elected Chair. Those Regions that were not represented on the NEF were asked to send an observer to the meetings to ensure linkage.

The inaugural meeting of the twelve member forum was held in September 2008 at Congress House. It was addressed by the General Secretary and included a message of support from the Brendan Barber, the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). Trevor Phillips, the Chair of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission also relayed his support the NEF Secretary.

Progress on E&I Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1 - Increase Membership

As a part of the adopted (2007) policy framework for Organising Migrant Workers, two pilot projects took place in the Midlands and East Coast Region and in Southern Region. Based on the outcome and findings of these pilot projects, a generalised policy framework and a Migrant Workers Project were developed by the National Organising Department. Under the umbrella of this Migrant Workers Project, the E&I department

- Supported a National Demonstration for Polish Independence in London Region and a meeting with the Polish Community in Birmingham Region
- Attended TUC Conference on developing a network for Polish migrant workers
- Rolled out to all regions a Language Skills Register. First piloted by Yorkshire region,
- Organised the GMB Young Members Conference focusing on recruitment, addressed by the General Secretary and National Organiser. All regions were represented at this conference.
- Developed an equality section for the GMB @ Work Training Manual.
- Chaired a fringe meeting of the Migration Rights Network at the TUC Congress in Brighton. The key note speaker was the GMB rep from Kastouries factory in West London.

Strategic Priority 2 - Bargaining

In partnership with National Secretary for the Commercial Sector, national and regional officers, progress was made on achieving agreements to develop Respect at Work policies. The G4S Cash; Security Services; and Aviation operational areas were engaged to agree a holistic strategy on Respect at Work, which included a policy supported by a communication plan and a training package for members and joint training for management and GMB reps. The policy was designed to define 'acceptable and unacceptable' behaviour at work and outlines a clear process for addressing any complaints. The success of this will mean that up to 35,000 employees and members will benefit from the Respect at Work Policy. This raises the profile of the GMB and will enhance the potential of recruiting new members.

Discussions have been initiated with ASDA to negotiate a joint Respect at Work policy as well as a developing a joint diversity strategy.

Strategic Priority 3 - Campaigning

Equal Pay

There is continued engagement with different Government Departments and Ministers on highlighting the GMB concerns on Equal Pay, including meetings with Harriet Harman MP the Leader of the House and her PPS Barbara Keeley MP and Maria Eagle, Minister in Justice Department.

A very successful GMB fringe meeting on 'Delivering Equal Pay in the 21st Century' was addressed by Vera Baird MP, Tess Gill Barrister, Margaret Prosser Deputy Chair of the Equality & Human Rights Commission and Brian Strutton National Secretary for Public Services

There is greater alignment between the GMB legal officer, the National Secretary for Public Service and the National Officer for Equality in driving a number of issues that linked to equal pay.

Equalities Bill

The Government's Equality Bill came out of the manifesto commitment for a Single Equalities Bill (SEB), the Discrimination Law Review and green paper equality.

Proposals in the Bill included: -

- Applying anti Age Discrimination to the supply of goods, facilities and services and to people over the age of 18.
- Public Procurement – the Government buys in £160 billion of goods and services are from the private and voluntary sectors. This leverage would be used to promote equality.
- A new Public sector duty for Equality, incorporating the existing duties on gender, race & disability and adding duty to promote faith, age awareness and sexuality.
- Transparency in pay structures would be used to highlight the Gender pay gap, EMG Employment Gap and Disability Employment Gap. This would have a Private Sector focus. However there would be little chance of securing mandatory pay audits;
- Limited positive action; and Strengthened Enforcement procedures.

Equality Reps

The GMB continued to lobby Government on securing statutory basis for Equality Reps, along the lines of workplace health and safety reps. Recognition and therefore facility time off for branch officers with responsibility for equality remain one of the key issues in the workplace hampering greater success. This issue was highlighted in meetings with Ministers.

Sharon Harding member of the NEF and Birmingham Region was the key note speaker at a Government Conference on Equality Reps and at a conference held at the TUC on the same subject.

TUC Congress

A number of GMB delegates addressed TUC Congress on equality motions, as well as speaking at two popular fringe meeting on which were chaired by the National Officer on :-

- Privatisation, Equal Pay and Procurement
- Migrant Rights Network

Strategic Priority 4 - Enhance Profile

Enhancing the profile of the GMB and in particular the work on equality remains a priority. Following a review of the Equality section of the GMB website, changes and amendments are progressing slowly.

TUC Equality Conferences

Full GMB delegations participated in the annual TUC equalities conferences in 2008. These covered the following equality strands: - Women, Black Workers, LGTB, Disability and young members.

Strategic Priority 5 - Organisational Equality

Governance – National Equality Forum (NEF)

Following the inaugural meeting of the NEF, a successful away day was held in Birmingham region to achieve a greater focus on the GMB E&I strategy and improved working and cohesion.

Regional

In some Regions managing the change from the old committee structures (Regional Race Equality Committees and the Equal Opportunities Committee) to the new Regional Equality Forums (REF) remains one of the key challenges. Following presentations of the GMB E&I strategy in the Regions, the following Regions have established functioning Regional Equality Forums (REF):-

- Birmingham,
- Southern
- North West
- Yorkshire

The other Regions are in the process of establishing Regional Equality Forums.

GMB Equality Champions (Officers with responsibility for equality)

A meeting of Equality Champions was held at the NUM Centre in Scalby, Scarborough. This highlighted the key elements of E&I strategy, role of regions and Champions. Greater alignment between the Regional Equality Forums, Equality Champions and the National structures remain a challenge for the coming Congress year.

National Equality Conference

The GMB National Equality Conference took place in Manchester.

Congress 2010

Since last Congress, considerable progress has been made in rolling out and implementing the GMB E&I strategy across the Regions and the Industrial Sections.

A number of challenges remain for the coming year. These include:-

- Closer working with the National Organising Department
- Greater support for and joint working with GMB industrial sections
- Ensuring all regions have Regional Equality Forums up and running and aligned to National Equality Forum.
- Closer work with Equality Champions and National Office.

(Adopted)

BRO. K. JANDU (National Office): I formally move my report.

The report was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Page 21, 22, 23 and 24? *(No response)* Do you all agree that report? *(Agreed)*

The Equality and Inclusion Report (pages 21 – 24 of the General Secretary's Report) was adopted.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now come to Union Organisation – Equality and Inclusion.
Motion 32: Equalities, to be moved by the Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

UNION ORGANISATION – EQUALITY & INCLUSION
EQUALITIES
MOTION 32

32. EQUALITIES

Congress acknowledges the new Single Equalities Bill will create a Public Sector Duty to promote gender equality, prohibit pregnancy and maternity discrimination in public functions and will also recognise the need for reviews of equalities procedures to be undertaken by Local Authorities. In view of real issues faced by members and these new duties. Congress calls for an exchange and establishment of Best Practice between and within Local Authorities, led by GMB, in order to meet these challenges proactively, to the benefit and protection of members, GMB Reps and the equalities awareness of the Officers of the Local Authorities.

W75 WORCESTER COMMUNITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. LEWIS (Birmingham & West Midlands): I move Motion 32 – Equalities. Congress, who would have believed that in 2009 we have pregnancy and maternity rights issues within our local authorities? Let me tell you that we do. Authorities up and down the country are discriminating against pregnant women time and time again. This is a real issue affecting our members. Authorities cannot go on sacking pregnant women via the back door. Such discrimination is decimating women’s lives and careers, as well as the future of their families. I am sure that Congress acknowledges the Single Equalities Bill which will create a public sector duty to promote equalities and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

Under this Bill there is a need for authorities to undertake a review of their current equalities policies and procedures. I, therefore call on Congress to support an exchange and establishment of best practice between and within local authorities, led by GMB in order that we can meet this challenge pro-actively and to the benefit and protection of our members. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

The Motion was formally moved.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 34 – Young Members Age Restriction. Northern Region to move.

YOUNG MEMBERS AGE RESTRICTION MOTION 34

34. YOUNG MEMBERS AGE RESTRICTION

Young member activity such as working at festivals should be open to all members of all ages.

NPOWER BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. BAKER (Northern): President and Congress, I move Motion 34 on Young Members Age Restriction. Every year GMB young members go and work at the music festivals around the country; for example, Glastonbury and Leeds. They volunteer to work for the Workers' Beer Company every year at these festivals. For volunteering the GMB gets paid an amount of money for each hour that is volunteered. This creates a pot of money that our young members use to campaign and organise. It is a fun way to bring money into the Union for young members to campaign whilst they have a good time at the same time. This motion calls upon this opportunity being opened up to more members of our Union with no age restrictions. Although the Workers' Beer Company has no age restriction on who volunteers for them beyond the legal age of being 18 to serve alcohol, it has always been, within our Union, organised entirely by our young members.

This motion is quite straightforward. It is to open up the opportunity to any of our members who wish to take part in this volunteering exercise. Let us open up this opportunity to more people and increase the number of GMB members participating at festivals around this country. Congress, please support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. D. JONES (Northern): Congress, I support Motion 34 on Young Members Age Restrictions. On seconding this motion, I want to draw to your attention the fantastic experience that our young members have when they volunteer to work at festivals for the Workers' Beer Company. On average, they work shifts between six and eight hours. In exchange for their labour, they get free camping on the staff site, a free pass to the festival, subsidized drinks and food as well as many other benefits. In the main, I believe that the majority of our members who would want to attend the festivals will be our young members, but as an organization which encourages equality and fairness, the opportunity should be given to other members. The motion is quite simple. It is about giving the opportunity to all our members to take part in the festivals if they choose to. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 35 – Motion on Abortion Rights. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

MOTION ON ABORTION RIGHTS MOTION 35

35. MOTION ON ABORTION RIGHTS

Congress notes that:

- The rights of all women to access safe, legal abortion is an advance for women and is necessary to achieve a society that values the lives and rights of women
- Before the 1967 Act legalised abortion thousands of women died or were seriously injured due to back street abortions
- The trade union movement has a proud record of defending a woman's right to choose
- Opinion polls show 83 per cent of people support a woman's right to choose.

Congress further notes that:

- The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill was used by anti-choice organisations and MPs to seek to restrict the right to abortion
- There are regular attempts to undermine and restrict women's right to abortion
- Attempts to lower the upper time limit for abortion will affect the most vulnerable women and force them to carry on with unwanted pregnancies
- The 1967 Act can be improved to remove unnecessary delays and barriers for women needing to access abortion services.

Congress resolves:

- To affiliate to the Abortion Rights campaign/send a donation to Abortion Rights and send acknowledgement of this motion being carried to the campaign
- To oppose any restrictions on access to abortion services.
- To call on and facilitate our members to lobby their MPs to oppose the restrictive amendments
- To call on and facilitate our members to lobby their MPs to support amendments improving access
- To use national communication methods to circulate information and briefings from Abortion Rights to members
- To support actions called by the Abortion Rights campaign
- To invite speakers from Abortion Rights to address union branch meetings which request them.

LEEDS GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 35 – Abortion Rights. Abortion Rights is the national campaign organization formed in 2003 which merged two of the pro-choice groups at that time. Abortion Rights is the national pro-choice organization. They campaign to defend and extend women's rights to access to safe, legal abortions and oppose any attempts to lower the abortion time limit. They are very much for women having the ability to make their own decisions about their own bodies and whether they can have a baby or not.

The problem is that there are too many restrictions, aren't there, for women. Women are meant to feel guilty if they choose to have an abortion. The Abortion Rights campaign wants to get rid of that idea. It wants to make it easier for women to have safe, legal abortions when they make that choice. They also campaign for improving women's access to and experience of abortion, ensuring that all women in the UK have equal access to safe, legal and free abortion.

The motion calls for affiliation to Abortion Rights. I can inform Congress that we are actually affiliated. I telephoned the organization last week and they assured me that the GMB is affiliated and affiliation fees are paid up until next February, which is very good. But the campaign is asking branches now to affiliate so that they can get more funds coming into the work that they are trying to achieve, because it is so important, isn't it, that women should not have to feel guilty, especially when she makes that very difficult decision, which sometimes women have to make, that they get the support that they need at that time?

Briefly, there is one area that we are working on, which is to improve rights for women in Northern Ireland which, unfortunately, the Abortion Act 1967 never extended to Northern Ireland, and women in Northern Ireland have to seek abortions in this country privately, which can cost up to £2,000 or else they will be forced into having the child that they do not particularly want or have illegal abortions in back streets, which is certainly something that the GMB would not want to see a return to. The point is that the people who are against abortion do attempt to get that time limit down. They have done it, I think, four times in the past twelve years. The campaign opposes that, as do we in the GMB. I would urge branches to support, to send financial donations to the campaign and to continue the support that the GMB has given to the campaign over the last period. I am not sure how long we have been affiliated, but we do support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. I. WALTERS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Motion 35. I cannot believe that after all of these years that we are still having to fight these anti-abortion people. 76% of the UK's population is pro-choice, but yet these people seem to have the biggest voice going, except for me. One in ten doctors are still opposed to abortion. They call themselves 'conscientious objectors'. To me the conscientious objectors are the strong people who ended up in gaol in World War II. The motion has been put forward to defend and extend the right of women in the UK to safe, legal and accessible services. Obviously, by the time a woman gets to the point where she has got to see the GP, she has had to make the agonizing choice, and nobody – I don't care where they are – makes that decision lightly. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Conference, the CEC is supporting Motion 35 with a statement. I will now call on Elaine Daley to give the CEC's statement on Motion 35.

SIS. E. DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 35. The CEC is supporting Motions 32 and 34 and also supporting Motion 35 but with the following statement, which will update Congress on the related activities on Abortion Rights since Congress 2008.

Overall, this motion is in line with existing policy. In 1997 GMB Congress carried a pro-choice motion and, again, at Congress 2008 a motion was carried on abortion rights. The Abortion Rights Campaign mentioned in the motion is the only national grass roots, membership based, democratic campaign working to defend and extend women's rights to abortion.

Since we met in Plymouth last year, we have formally affiliated to the Abortion Rights Campaign and made a donation of £250 to the campaign in support of the work around the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill.

In 2008 the pro-choice movement stepped up to meet its biggest challenge in a generation. With the support of the GMB and other organizations, the Abortion Rights Campaign was central to defeating a serious Parliamentary attempt to drive back women's abortion rights and placing a call for improved rights, including for the women in Northern Ireland, high on the political agenda.

The GMB has actively supported the lobby of Parliament during the passage of the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill. So far 2009 has been an important year in the abortion rights campaign in pressing the Governments to use its significant powers of regulation to allow Northern Irish women free NHS care and to remove unfair barriers to British women's access to services. Congress, we must remain vigilant against renewed pressure for restrictions. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Does the mover of Motion 35 accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Colleagues, Conference is supporting all the three motions, Motions 32, 33 and 35 with a statement. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 32 was carried.

Motion 33 was carried.

Motion 35 was carried.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now come to Union Organisation – Representation & Accountability and Motion 14 – Review of Selection Process to National Equalities Forum. Midland & East Coast Region to move.

**UNION ORGANISATION - REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY
REVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS TO NATIONAL EQUALITIES FORUM
MOTION 14**

14. REVIEW OF SELECTION PROCESS TO NATIONAL EQUALITIES FORUM

Congress calls for a review of the selection process for the National Equalities Forum.

The way in which candidates were selected does not reflect the GMB strategy for equality through inclusion, as there is no representative for Midland & East Coast Region.

We agree the structure for the National Equalities Forum is the way forward for our Union, but we want to propose these changes to Congress that we feel would make the selection process fair for all our Regions.

Each Region will select one member from their own Regional Equalities Forum, thus guaranteeing each Region representation on the National Forum.

The three remaining seats, under the current structure, to be allocated one each to the three National Section Committees.

An additional seat is created to cover our Retired members. This seat to be selected from our Retired Members Association.

With these changes, we believe that the National Equalities Forum will then be able to deliver equalities through inclusion to all our Regions, and ultimately to all our members.

We ask Congress to support this Motion.

GRANTHAM COMMUNITY BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. C. GUNTER (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 14 – Review of Selection Process to National Equalities Forum. Vice President and Congress, I am moving this motion with the backing of my region and delegates at the recent National Equalities Conference in Manchester.

Congress, you have adopted equality through inclusion with a 12 member led National Equality Forum as a focal point for a new vision to oversee the various equality strands. There are nine regions within the GMB. The Central Executive, which has the governance of the Union, is elected from the nine regional councils of the Union. Now, that is what I call equality through inclusion. Yes, this is personal. I am proud to be a member of this Union and I am proud to be a delegate from my region.

Midland & East Coast has no representative or say on the NEF. There is an observer but that is merely in an ex-officio capacity with no input. There are serious concerns that the new structure does not promote inclusion or promote exclusion and the formation of an elite group. We believe that it is contrary to the GMB principles, and whatever aims and objectives we have for equality, they must be supported by structures which are inclusive and allow proper and meaningful regional representation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. A. COLLIER (Midland & East Coast): I second the motion: Review of Selection Process to National Equalities Forum. Vice President and Congress, at Congress 2007 the *Review of the Equalities Structure Report* was adopted, and within that report were recommendations. One of these recommendations was that the National Equality Forum should comprise of two representatives for the following strands: race, gender, LGBT, migrant workers, youth, disability and a national officer. The National Equality Forum has not yet delivered this recommendation. If you look at your General Secretary's Report, page 22, you will see that there are no representatives for migrant workers. Congress, the Midland & East Region strongly believes that the Equality and Inclusion Strategy should include all our members, and that our Union's retired members should be included on the National Equality Forum and not excluded.

Congress, the Midland & East Coast Region asks you to support this motion and let a review of the selection process be carried out and to allow all our regions to have a representative on the National Equality Forum. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, are asking for this motion to be referred. I now call on Mick Laws for the CEC to give the reference.

BRO. M. LAWS (CEC, Manufacturing): Vice President and delegates, the CEC is asking you refer Motion 14. The report of the Review of Equality and Structures was adopted by Congress 2007, which recommended, and I quote: "That the current separate equality bodies be replaced by a single equalities body which will bring together GMB equality experts and act as a single source of information, advice and guidance, a single point of contact for all stakeholders." Congress 2007 agreed to have a representative from the National Equalities Forum, the NEF, for the following strands: race, gender, sexuality, youth, migrant workers and LGBT and the NEF reflects this. The process in selecting members of the National Equality Forum was objective, transparent and based on the required skills, experience and commitment needed to drive the NEF forward. The selection was based on the remit set by Congress. A role description and role specification was developed for members' panels. This was set up to conduct a selection process. The panel included the National Officer for Equalities, and his predecessor, a regional secretary, and an external independent recruitment professional from the campaign company. A short list of applicants were interviewed by this panel. However, although the process proceeded with a breadth of expertise from each of the equality strands, not all regions were represented on the NEF. As a temporary measure, regions without a NEF member were asked to nominate an observer with full equality and participation rights except voting.

At the core of the Equality and Inclusion Strategy is a national equalities forum that enhances and drives these twin aims. The NEF is learning. The NEF is evolving and is making steady progress, but as the National Equality Forum evolved, a number of questions have arisen which require addressing. These are regional representation, engagement of the NEF, the length of tenure of the NEF members, the representation and engagement of the National Organising Team, the industrial sector, the CEC and the Retired Members Group. It has always been the intention that the structure of the NEF

should be re-assessed after an interim period of operation. The National Equalities Conference in May of this year debated this matter and agreed to initiate a review of the work and the structure of the Forum.

Whilst the structure set out in Motion 14 has its merits, the restructuring of the National Committee must be subject to consultation across the regions. For this reason, the CEC is asking the region to refer the motion to allow full consultation and consideration and to revise any structure with a report back to Congress next year.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. Does the mover agree to reference? (*Agreed*) Congress, the mover has agreed to reference. Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*)

Motion 14 was referred.

EQUALITIES UPDATE REPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move on to the Equalities Update Report.

I now call on Kamaljeet Jandu to address Congress to update us on the progress of the Equalities Strategy which was carried at Congress 2008 and announce the timetable for the President's Award for Equality which will take place at GMB Congress 2010.

BRO. K. JANDU (National Equality and Inclusion Officer): Congress, sadly I have to raise a point this morning that you may all have heard about on the radio that in Belfast yesterday Romanian families had to move out of their homes and sleep in the local church because of the violence and the harassment from local people. That includes a five day old baby which had to move into the shelter of a church.

Listening to that, it reminded me of the time when there were posters in windows saying: "No dogs and no Irish", or when Jewish shops were being attacked, or when I was at school to walk home to try and avoid the physical attacks, or when my mother was spat at regularly. In one way we think we have moved on, but we still need to move on and create the civilised society that we need.

Since our Congress at Plymouth a year ago, we can describe that period as the good and the bad. Personally, this is the very bad, as was outlined by Kate Green earlier in the week, but also the very, very ugly. Since Plymouth internally in the GMB we have experienced a period that we can describe as learning and bedding down. We have a strategy in place, we have the buy-in from the Senior Management Team, the CEC regions, sections and the National Organising Team and department. The structures are in place and a number of projects have been initiated.

In Plymouth you agreed the Inclusion and Equality Strategy. Let me just remind you very quickly the five ways forward that you agreed. They are: (i) increased membership; (ii) drive the bargaining agenda; (iii) campaign; (iv) enhance the GMB profile, and (v) drive

our own organizational changes. I will use those ways forward to outline how we have progressed.

On priority one which concerned increasing our membership, the Equality Section for the GMB@Work toolkit is ready and will be made available to the 5,000 people who already hold a toolkit. As well as that, the new publications of the toolkit will automatically have the Equality Through Inclusion section.

As has already been mentioned, in November we had the GMB Members' Conference on Recruitment, which was addressed by the General Secretary and the National Organiser. You may be able to recognise some of your delegates from all the regions. Following the Migrant Workers' Pilot Project, a policy framework for organizing migrants was worked out. We supported the Migrant Rights' Network Fringe Meeting which was addressed by Sailesh from the west London Kastouris factory, who is a GMB rep. We have supported a number of community based initiatives within the Polish community, including the National Demonstration for Polish Independence in London.

Priority (ii): to drive the bargaining agenda. We have been working with G4S the cash section, security services and aviation to agree a holistic strategy on respect at work. This policy outlines what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour at work. The success of this policy within G4S will mean that, potentially, up to 35 employees and members will benefit from this policy. It will also enhance our profile as well as the potential for recruiting new members. Discussions have started with Asda to implement a joint Respect at Work policy, as well as a joint Diversity Strategy.

Priority (iii): campaigning. We have been engaged with Government departments and Ministers on equal pay. We organized a highly successful GMB fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference outlining delivering equal pay in the 21st Century, which was addressed by Ms. Tess Gill, the barrister, as well as Vera Baird, the Minister, and Margaret Prosser, who is the Deputy Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We have been lobbying Government and civil servants around the Equality Bill, specifically around equality reps, trying to secure legislation to have equality reps in workplaces on the same level and basis as health and safety reps. One of our National Equality Forum members, Sharon Harding from the Birmingham Region, has been a keynote speaker at a number of conferences driving forward this very point.

Priority (iv): enhance the GMB profile. We have sent full delegations to the TUC equality conferences, and these conferences include the Women's Conference, Black Workers', LGBT, Disability and Young Members. Congress, the GMB motion on economic recovery at the Black Workers' Conference has been voted upon and unanimously agreed to be the motion that goes to the TUC Congress in September. We are continuing to review the Equality Section on our GMB website, and we have done a number of press releases and statements. For example, as was mentioned in an earlier motion, there was an article prepared around: "Women at Work. Unions alarmed by claims on maternity rights may harm job prospects". The Equality and Human Rights' Commission's chief executive said: "We could not deliver maternity rights in a time of

recession”, and this is what we quoted in response to that. Let me read it out to you. “It seems that Nicola Brewer, who was the chief executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, is penalizing women for having babies in employment while implying that women should go back to the kitchen sink and have no aspirations for a career.” We got a lot of coverage for that.

Priority (v): organizational equality. We now have the National Equality Forum up and running. We had an inaugural meeting in September, and since then we have met on four occasions and established a number of working parties to forward subject matters.

In terms of the regional structures, the change from the old committee structures to the new Regional Equality Forum remain a key challenge. The following regions have established their regional equality forums. I know the regions are in the process of establishing them. Again, as has already mentioned by a previous speaker, in May we held the first National Equality Conference in Manchester which was attended by all the regions and addressed by the General Secretary and the National Organising Officer.

We now have a network of 34 GMB equality champions as well as having had two meetings of equality officers since we met last time. We have also initiated the monitoring project to update the existing information that we have. This was last done in 2006. We will be asking for information on the six equality strands, but our focus remains on ensuring a high response rate but also ensuring that people do not write, when we ask the question about ethnicity, nationality or faith, “Jedi”, as has been the case previously. This project has had a step-by-step approach.

So, Vice President, in summary, there has been steady progress made throughout the year. The challenges for the coming year remain regional representation on the NEF, to reinforce the role of equality officers and equality champions, greater focus on recruitment and bargaining, delivering the monitoring project, and also to have the formal launch for the Respect at Work project, the Equality Reps’ project, leadership in the migrant communities, and also, as you may have seen in your delegation packs, the President’s Leadership Awards for Equality, which we have launched this year. I would like to see each and every region and branch thinking from now until the New Year to identify good practice around equality that the rest of the regions can learn from, but also so that we can celebrate and acknowledge good practice and best practice.

Vice President, when the sum of the parts of the GMB are pulled together, we are unbeatable. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kamaljeet. Does anyone want to ask any questions on that report?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does anyone want to ask any questions on that report? No? Agree to accept the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

BRO. C. LAWRENCE (Southern): I actually have a question on this gentleman's presentation. He did say a march called, *Polish Independence*? Could I just clarify what that is? he gentleman in his presentation gave an indication of the march for independence for Poland and I just wanted to question what is behind that because I understand that Poland is a sovereign country and is independent. Could I just have clarification on that, please?

SIS. A. COLLIER (Midland & East Coast): I would just say that "inclusion" must mean inclusion. The Equalities Forum seems to exclude some regions so could you tell us what you are doing to include all regions in this forum? Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. K. JANDU: Thank you, President. On the first question, there was a demonstration, a celebration, that was commemorating late last year Polish independence and the GMB were supportive of that, and a lot of the regions had sent support for that particular demonstration in November. It was defined as a celebration of the independence of Poland. It is a sovereign state but I think it was commemoration of a previous independence.

On the question of regional representation on the NEF, as has already been mentioned in the report from the CEC the remit for the National Equality Forum was given to us last year and during the year we have implemented the outcome of your review. One of the flaws in that process, in that pattern, was regional representation and that was recognised even before the first meeting of the National Equality Forum. As has already been said, we will review that process to ensure that a number of outstanding questions, one of the key ones is regional representation and other questions that remain are around the tenure of NEF members but also representation from the Retired Members, the CEC, the sections, and also the National Organising Department as well, all those questions are on the table. They need to be addressed and the review will address those. We will come back to you in consultation. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kamaljeet. Accept the report? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now pass you back to your President, Mary Turner. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Morning, Congress. Malcolm, what have you been up to? I thought you would be finished by the time I got back. Colleagues, as you may have remembered from Sunday, I went to the special school to present them with their bikes this morning and they had made me some scones because they have less sugar in them. They were wonderful. You will see some of the pictures there. They had even tied little ribbons round them and we had to cut the ribbons. It was really wonderful. They say thank you, but they want their pictures so I have promised them that they will get their pictures and I will visit them again. They said thank you from everyone, really delighted.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY – MIGRANT WORKERS
UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANT WORKERS
MOTION 75**

75. UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANT WORKERS

The GMB Congress 2009 believes that the work registration scheme and civil penalty regime introduced on 29th February 2008 has had serious impacts on employment rights of undocumented migrant workers and may have negative repercussions for their equal access to employment in today's job market. The increased duties for employers, in monitoring the immigration status of their workers, has thus far had negative impacts on a wide range of migrant workers, including increased discrimination and exploitation.

The work of the Gangmaster Licensing Authority (GLA) in the agriculture, forestry, horticulture, shellfish gathering and food processing industries focuses on employment inspections with a view to enforcing workplace standards – an approach which we believe may produce more constructive improvements in working conditions than workplace raids by UKBA officials.

We believe that the civil penalty regime enforcement measure implemented by UKBA will not in any way support a resolution to the position of the 500,000 undocumented migrants estimated to be resident in the UK, many of whom are working covertly. The losers are both workers and employers in terms of fines to employers and workers losing jobs.

The merits of a one-off amnesty and/or sustainable regularisation to assist workers with documentation and period of grace should be given strong consideration, but this must be done within the context of wider Government efforts to enforce standards governing working conditions. The GMB Union to make representation to Government for fairer and workable legislations.

LONDON HOTEL & CATERING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. G. BIGWOOD (London): Congress, we believe that the work registration scheme and civil penalty regime is not working effectively or as intended. This greatly affects the employment rights of undocumented migrant workers who come here every year in their thousands, many working covertly which inevitably leads to exploitation. These are not people who should not be here or should not be working here; many just find it difficult to find their way through the minefield of red tape. We believe the civil penalty enforcement put in place by the UK Borders Agency will not help in resolving the problem of the estimated 500,000 migrants residing in the UK. Both parties lose out through the system: the employers are given heavy fines and the workers lose their jobs. On the other hand, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority looks more to enhancing workplace standards. We believe this to be a better approach which may bring about improvements in working conditions rather than raids carried out by the UKBA officials.

This issue particularly affects my branch as it is often in the hotel and catering industry that migrants seek employment. Most of these people do not even join a union let alone the GMB, any union, as they are too afraid of reprisals. We should consider a limited amnesty and sustainable regularisation to help workers with their documentation, possibly with help from employers when starting work. Everyone should have easy access to attain the correct documentation. This can only help to stop all discrimination

and exploitation and lead the way towards real protection in the workplace for all. The GMB should lobby parliament for fair and workable legislation. I move. *(Applause)*

A DELEGATE: Congress, Madam President, the migrant worker registration scheme along with the civil penalty regime has impacted on migrant workers and employers alike. Government policy and the United Kingdom Border Agency appear to be attempting to shift migrants' individual status on to the employer and thereby increasing the likelihood of abuse and discrimination by those willing to put migrant workers' lives at risk, and driving the black economy further underground through a penalty system. Gangmasters operating under the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, however, in various industries appear to be gradually improving conditions for workforces generally whereas the civil penalty measures employed by the UKBA at this time are seen as a penalty with no benefit to the individual worker's rights as a whole within the industry. Workers lose their employment and are forced to take employment at reduced standards with employers who put profits first and workers' rights last; many are of a dubious nature and with backgrounds equally dubious, in short using methods sometimes bordering on slavery.

We believe a sustainable policy should be introduced. This should be done not by penalisation of the worker but by encouraging the employer to comply with fair and workable rules in the industry they are employed in. The government should ensure fair and workable legislation to address these problems facing migrant workers today. I ask you to support this motion, as I do. Thank you. *(Applause)*

REDUNDANCY MOTION 65

65. REDUNDANCY

This Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign for improvement in the redundancy payments to those who are made redundant. The minimum payment should be increased substantially to reflect the trauma and upset that redundancy causes to employees and their families.

We are further concerned that the price to employers for making employees redundant in the UK is still too low. Redundancy should be a matter of last resort, not an easy way to restructure at minimum cost. We ask the GMB to use its influence with the Government Department for Enterprise and Work and the TUC to lobby for new or improved legislation to force employers to examine other alternatives to redundancy to ensure that they meet their full obligations to their employees. We are concerned that in the present climate, employers are using the excuse of an 'economic downturn' in order to restructure organisations and cast off the employees, expecting the Government and community to pick up the wider costs.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL D41 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. KELLY (North West & Irish): Regretfully, throughout this country we are facing significant job losses as a result of the antics of the financial markets and the gambling that has cost people jobs and livelihoods. Yet again many employers have used this opportunity to cast off employees at minimum cost in order to restructure their organisation. Unlike some MPs who are able to claim for their mortgages, duck houses, and servants' quarters, the real impact for the industry worker is a significant one, often leaving them struggling to meet the basic payments on the roofs over their head and food in their mouths.

For many years the branch who proposed this motion has argued that the cost of redundancy in the UK is far too low. Employers are not obliged to seriously consider other alternatives to redundancy or to compensate adequately for the impact that redundancy has on people's lives, their family, and the wider community. It is okay for senior bank managers who are failing the UK with their antics and poor practices, people who have had large salaries during their employment running to millions, to walk away with golden handshakes of thousands of pounds, large pension schemes and other share benefits that throw the minimal redundancy payments into stark contrast. It is not good enough that these people should walk away with the cream of the cake while those at the bottom of the ladder who have no fault in the process are left with the absolute crumbs, cast off as mere cogs in the machine, victims of greed and bad management, treated as beggars by comparison.

Congress, the time has come for us to say enough is enough. Why is the measure of redundancy not one that equates to what we call the social mortgage, in other words, a debt that employers owe to the whole of the community, not just to the individual but to the whole of the workforce? This is not just about increasing redundancy payment as compensation where redundancy is necessary and essential but a wider measure as to whether redundancy should be allowed in the first place. Many employers are casting off employees as part of the company restructuring programme but not because of any pressures from the external market. How come some employers are laying off heavily the lower paid workers while still recruiting and employing the higher paid workers at executive and management level? Why is it local authority employees are being cast off or having their pay reduced while at the same time senior executives in local authorities are still receiving productivity bonuses? It would appear that productivity bonuses are being paid based on the number of people they can cast off and how cheaply they can do it.

There is need for a radical overhaul on the way redundancy is declared, the protections that are offered to the people in redundancies and the payments that are made to them. Many employers in the light of the change to the Redundancy Payment Act some years ago only use the minimum payment levels. Why should it not be that the minimum payment level percentage of the last five years' earnings is included as part of the wider package so that employees are properly compensated for sacrificing their jobs and so that others may continue to try. A new revolution is building in this country, one that says politics, policy, and legislation is to be accountable to the real needs of the people, not just the decision-makers and the power brokers in industry or in politics. We call for an

overhaul of the redundancy payment system, procedures, and practices, to ensure that people's real dignity is met and that the GMB is seen at the forefront of a campaign to restore integrity to the redundancy and retention of work campaign in this country. Enough is enough. There have been too many snouts in the trough and too few crumbs thrown to those who have been sacrificed. Congress, we are calling on you to support this motion and to lobby your MPs and the Department of Work & Pensions to achieve an improved redundancy payment package, and procedures, that prevent redundancy in the first place. Congress, I move. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. DONLEY (North West & Irish): Congress, with unemployment over the two million mark and with more than 1,500 people a week losing their jobs, many will be facing redundancy and unemployment for the first time in their lives. There can be no assumption that people losing their jobs will find it easy to get a new one. Statutory redundancy pay is so out of date it acts as a ceiling for workers, not a floor to protect them. When redundancy pay was introduced for the first time in 1965 the limit was set at £40, more than twice the average wage of £19.60 at the time. If the limit had been updated in line with prices it would be a little over £500, and if increased in line with earnings it would now be in excess of £1,000. GMB should use its influence with government to ensure that the minimum weekly limit is increased to at least £500 to provide a financial cushion for the newly unemployed. Employers should provide evidence that they have given consideration to alternatives other than redundancy. Faced with a redundancy situation an employer should consider whether it is necessary to act on it or whether there is some other way of dealing with the problem, for example, it may be possible to restrict recruitment, introduce work-sharing, introduce short-time working, or cut down on overtime. These are only some of the ways the employer could help if faced with a redundancy situation. Congress, it is now time to end the shame that makes UK workers among the cheapest in Europe to be made redundant. I believe if statutory redundancy pay had kept pace with earnings then it is more than likely that some UK workers would still be in a job today. Please support. (*Applause*)

STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAY MOTION 66

66. STATUTORY REDUNDANCY PAY

This congress believes that UK Statutory redundancy pay is both inadequate and discriminatory.

Congress therefore agrees to campaign for the introduction of a new scheme which should provide for the following:

- (a) A significant increase in the level of statutory redundancy pay.
- (b) No discrimination of young workers.
- (c) No discounting of the first 2 years of service.
- (d) No ceiling on a "weeks pay".
- (e) No limit on years of service in any calculation.

(Carried)

BRO. T. WINTER (Northern): Congress, in the current climate the inadequacies of the statutory redundancy scheme have all been too apparent. There are far too many restrictions on who is entitled to redundancy pay and also it is simply not enough pay for the people involved. Congress, when a worker is made redundant it is a difficult and stressful time for themselves and their families. It is even more stressful with the complexity of the statutory redundancy scheme. Can you imagine how upsetting it must be to have worked somewhere for 23 months and then to find out on top of losing your job you are told you are not entitled to any payment at all? The only reason given to you is that you were a few weeks short. It is simply not a fair system and needs putting right. Congress, in the GMB we have always campaigned for people to be treated fairly and equally and it is time that these standards were applied to the statutory redundancy scheme. It is currently unfair, unequal, and inadequate; therefore, we need a scheme that is going to be flexible and easy to use. It is currently so complicated that even trade union professionals have to refer to charts, to ask people their ages, etc., to try and work out what they are entitled to. So, there you have it, a new system needs to be introduced that shows a significant increase in the level of statutory redundancy pay that starts from day one of employment without a ceiling on payment or length of service, and with equality, which in layman's terms is that it does not discriminate against young people. Congress, this is a quite straightforward motion and with that I urge you to support. *(Applause)*

BRO. A. KIGHTLY (Northern): Congress, this motion calls on the GMB to campaign for the introduction of a new statutory redundancy pay scheme which would be adequate and non-discriminatory. The current system is too complex and unfair. We are calling for a system to be set up that, one, significantly increases the level of statutory redundancy pay; two, does not discriminate against our young workers; three, does not discount against the first two years of service; four, does not have a ceiling on any weeks of pay; five, does not put a limit on any years of services on any calculation. Only with these changes will we have a fair statutory redundancy scheme. Let's start a campaign and bring fairness to the redundancy situations that face many of our friends and colleagues. Congress, please support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS MOTION 67

67. REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS

Congress believes that the current statutory Redundancy Payments Scheme is totally inadequate, and calls on the Government to increase the scheme as a matter of urgency on the following basis:

- 1) One weeks pay for each year of service for under 22's.
- 2) Two weeks pay for each year of service between 22-40.
- 3) Three weeks pay for each year of service aged 41 and over.

- 4) Remove the statutory maximum pay and replace with actual weeks pay.
- 5) Remove the statutory maximum service and replace with actual years service.

Congress further calls on all GMB sponsored MP's to support this proposal.

LIVERPOOL NO. 5 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. I. LOWES (North West & Irish): President, Congress, imagine you are an MP and have just been caught abusing your expenses. You decide not to stand at the next election. What happens? Instead of being thrown in jail like you deserve, you get a minimum payment of £32,000 irrespective of how long you have been an MP. Imagine you are a top executive in a bank or a building society, you have almost wrecked the economy, and you walk away with a load of money and a gold-plated pension. Now imagine you are an ordinary worker on the average wage, you have 40 years' service and you lose your job through no fault of your own. What do you get - a maximum of £10,500? Your weekly wage is capped at £350 and your service is capped at 30 weeks.

The redundancy payment scheme in the UK is totally inadequate. It makes it easier for UK workers to be sacked. As more and more people lose their jobs they need proper compensation and this motion would go some way to improving things. The government needs to act and needs to act now, and our supported MPs need to lobby for change and an increase in redundancy payments. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. DONLEY (North West & Irish): Congress, we call on the GMB to continue pressing the government to improve the terms of the statutory redundancy pay. Although the recent increase in the limit of statutory redundancy pay is welcome, it does not go anywhere near far enough. The current law on statutory redundancy pay means that UK workers are among the cheapest to sack in Europe. In these hard times workers deserve a fair deal for years of service. It is time that redundancy pay caught up with the real cost of living. The government should, as a matter of urgency, improve the terms of the statutory redundancy pay which currently stands at a maximum of £350 per week. The changes to the calculations proposed in this motion would go a long way to help ensure that workers are properly compensated when they lose their jobs. I believe that if the statutory maximum service was replaced with actual years of service, as this motion suggests it would reward loyal service when the employer takes the drastic step of making redundancy. Congress, it is time to stop the shame that when workers are laid off they receive little compensation, which means again that UK workers are among the cheapest to sack in Europe. Please support. *(Applause)*

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL AWARDS COMPOSITE 4

C4. COVERING MOTIONS

68. EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL AWARDS (North West & Irish Region)

69. EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS (North West & Irish Region)

EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL AWARDS

At the moment, the paltry sums that are awarded do not discourage employers from unfairly dismissing their employees.

Congress calls on this Labour Government:

- To underwrite any award that a member is awarded at an Employment Tribunal, and to take the appropriate action against the employer to recover the costs and the award.
- To increase the amount of awards given to people that win cases at employment tribunals.

(Carried)

BRO. J. POWER (North West & Irish): Congress, we see all the headlines of mega awards at tribunals. However, they are exceptional, not the rule, far from it. Employment tribunals were brought in to get justice for the ordinary working people, not City financiers. Most tribunals settle for minimal amounts, often less than £5,000. Congress calls on the government to increase the minimum awards to reflect the hardship members often suffer and to underwrite claims where unscrupulous companies go bankrupt rather than pay. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debates? No? I call Ronnie Waugh.

BRO. R. WAUGH (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motions 65, 66, and Composite 4, and support Motion 67 with the following qualification. The CEC of course supports the principle of an increase in redundancy payments. The qualification relates to the fact that the motion makes reference to improvements in the statutory scheme which are based on existing age bands. This raises the question of whether age-based factors with different multipliers fall foul of age discrimination rules. Congress should be aware that there may be a challenge at some point to age bands on the basis they set arbitrary differences based on age. No challenge has been made yet but Congress should be aware that when the government reviewed the redundancy scheme in 2005 prior to the introduction of the age discrimination rules in 2006 it proposed to remove the three age bands. However, the government later decided to keep them arguing that giving greater financial assistance to older workers was justified. If there is a successful challenge, GMB will immediately adopt a policy to ensure that any changes are not to the detriment of GMB members. In conclusion, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motions 65, 66, and Composite 4, and to support Motion 67 with this qualification. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does the region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Colleagues, I now put to the vote 75, 65, 66, 67, and Composite 4 with the qualification.

Motion 75 was carried.
Motion 65 was carried.
Motion 66 was carried.
Motion 67 was carried.
Composite 4 was carried.

REGIONAL SECRETARY’S REPORT: SOUTHERN REGION (Pages 129-136)

SOUTHERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	78,520
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	23,754
MANUFACTURING SECTION	9,437
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	45,329
Grade 1 members	48,247
Grade 2 members	24,054
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	6,219
Male Membership	38,238
Female Membership	40,282
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	13,102
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	2,402 increase
Membership on Check-off	50,334
Membership on Direct Debit	21,763

Response to Organising Agenda

The Regional Organising Team in its second full year of organisation set itself a target of substantially beating the 12,000 members recruited in the previous calendar year which was itself a record for the Region. At the end of 2008 13,122 members have been enrolled and with transfers from other Regions a total of 13,326 new members were recruited into the Region. To beat the previous record by over 1,000 members demonstrated an outstanding effort by all concerned.

The Region also continued to grow. It grew from 76,118 members in 2007 to 78,520 at the end of 2008. The second year of sustained growth demonstrated that the Region had put well behind it the problems of 2005.

GMB@Work is a core of all organising activity. Having trained Officers in GMB@Work plans are in progress to train all of the Region’s staff.

The Region also introduced in 2008 a Best Practice document that sets minimum standards in regard to secretarial and admin duties; diary and management; computer usage and assisting members with enquiries.

In response to the Green Agenda the Region increased its recycling in 2008.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

The ROT Team in conjunction with Area Teams successfully undertook organising/recruitment campaigns in a number of locations, including the South West Area, the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands.

South West Area

Within the Area the campaign saw substantial enrolment surrounding Single Status and Equal Pay in Local Government in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. In addition, in line with the Organising Agenda, a new strata of stewards was established.

Further consolidation of membership has continued within Cornwall County Cornwall to coincide with Unitary Authority status in April 2009, and has placed the GMB reps locally in a good position to secure better facilities arrangements to assist our members.

Within the Area the NHS and its related contractors remains a strong area of membership consolidation where Agenda for Change and how this policy applies to contractors within the NHS remains a key concern. Further resources are being released locally and regionally, to realise the full potential of the NHS in terms of recruitment.

There have been a number of key disputes within the South West Area of the Region and in particular Appledore Shipbuilders where the Region won a dispute over parity with other ship building yards in the UK.

South Coast Area

A joint campaign between the ROT and Area Teams established increased membership on the Isle of Wight which should continue to show developments in 2009.

The Region saw a substantial increase in its Jersey membership which resulted in Recognition Agreements with Jersey Telecom and Jersey Electric.

The Area Team was involved in a successful campaign within SGN which resulted in significant membership growth and the subsequent appointment of a number of workplace representatives. This campaign paved the way for a Recognition Agreement within the Company.

The Region undertook a successful bid to achieve monies from the Union Learning Fund to establish an office with a Learning Project Worker within Gatwick. As a result of this activity the spin-off has been an increase in membership across Gatwick although unfortunately there was also a loss of membership due to major redundancies at Aviance.

Central Area

Within the Area campaigns saw 500 new members and improved GMB organisation in schools.

The majority of ASDA membership is serviced from the Area and over 300 new members in ASDA stores following a successful campaign.

Over 500 members were recruited in G4s which is also co-ordinated through the Area. In this membership growth was achieved through employer inductions, site visits and regular communications. In addition within the Security industry 140 members were enrolled in Securitas.

Following GMB@Work training within Thames Water, 100 new members were enrolled.

The Area has played a very active part in the development of the GMB Migrant Worker organising strategy in Wiltshire. The strategy has been focused on developing workplace organisation among UK employers with large numbers of migrant workers. Efforts were made to consolidate union organisation at Airsprung Beds Ltd, and new organisation established at two local employers, PB Beauty, Trowbridge and TS Tech, Swindon.

The consolidation at Airsprung led to the election of Polish shop stewards working alongside English stewards. As the year ended plans were being put in place for a recruitment drive in 2009.

London South East Area

There have been a number of recruitment initiatives in the following companies: Biffa Waste Management, Connaught Environmental, London Borough of Wandsworth, London Borough of Southwark, Southern Cross and the Environment Agency, Kent County Council, East Sussex County Council and Wilkinsons.

Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Situation

The Region so far has not suffered substantial job losses as a result of the economic downturn. In fact the Region continues to see an increase in public service membership which is at the heart of the membership growth in 2008.

The Region does anticipate there will be a small decline in membership within Engineering and Manufacturing in the course of the coming year. For example, within the South West Area the tough economic condition has seen a subsequent impact upon our membership. Efforts have been made to help members to re-skill to find other employment through the various education skills programmes from the area, most notably at Pilkington Glass. Within the South Coast Area the manufacturing sector continues to decline with the only bright note being confirmation of the order for aircraft carriers for the MOD. Not only has it secured employment for our members at what is now BVT but continues to provide training and recruitment opportunities at the Portsmouth Shipbuilding and Repair facility on a steady and ongoing basis.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	5
Membership Development Officers	2
Regional Organisers	21
Organising Officers	5
No. of Branches	111
New Branches	6
Branch Equality Officers	25
Branch Youth Officers	12

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	NIL
Total Disablement	NIL
Working Accident	2,884.30
Occupational Fatal Accident	NIL
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	NIL

Funeral	18,986.50
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4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

The Region has continued to achieve substantial publicity around its Private Equity campaign. Although this campaign peaked in 2007 there remained considerable interest in 2008 with speculation surrounding the future of Private Equity in a number of companies as a result of the economic downturn. It is to the GMB Southern Region that a lot of journalists turn for publicity on this issue.

The Region has been involved in publicity on the following issues: Marks and Spencer, Council Housing, Banks, Government handling of the economy, Re-capitalisation of the banking system, Private Equity and Hedge Funds, JCB and Migrant labour.

In common with other Regional magazines, the Region's magazine 'Vision' in 2008 incorporated national pages and the magazine appeared three times.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
625	576

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
547	215	1	315 £3,325,859	2 £7,300	£3,333,159
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		894			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	125
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
125	49	-	45 £210,731	10 £248,812	£459,543
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		70			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
169	4	£1,746,093	28

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
7	6	-

6. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

The Regional Equal Rights committee have once again had a busy but successful time, with Representatives from the committee attending the TUC Black Workers conference and the TUC LGBT conference. We attended a number of events promoting the work of the GMB throughout the Region, including more PRIDE events than ever before in London, Brighton, Bournemouth and Plymouth and also Black Pride held in Regents Park. We were unable to attend the RISE festival this year due to circumstances beyond our control. At the events we have attended we have recruited a number of new members and handed out literature, which will hopefully attract more new members.

The National Equal Rights committee held their last meeting in Manchester in March, prior to the formation of the National Equalities Forum (NEF) led by Kamaljeet Jandu, National Equalities & Inclusion Officer.

Southern Region is at the forefront in terms of leading the way on many equality issues, thanks to the support of our Regional Secretary, and we have helped facilitate the development of the newly formed NEF. We have been fortunate to have four Representatives appointed to the Forum and the appointments were made through interviews and past work experience on equalities issues.

Southern Region has, in the past, held separate meetings for Race, LGBT & Equal Rights and recently took the decision to hold one committee meeting covering all areas on the Equalities Agenda, with Alan Fraser, Regional Education & Health & Safety Officer now being the lead Officer for Equalities, and being given the task of supporting the lay members. We would like to express thanks to the Officers who had supported us in the past Kelly Horsburgh, Kevin Mason and Kevin Brandstatter.

The newly formed committee is titled Regional Equalities Forum (REF) in line with the NEF and is attended by representatives from the three previous committees, plus Migrant Workers and Young Members attending. The REF will have bi-monthly meetings to discuss vision and strategy for equalities and how this links to recruitment and organising. It recently held its third meeting which was very successful and has given the members the opportunity to discuss plans for future work.

We held our Regional Equalities Conference in Bournemouth on the 13th and 14th of November and wrote to all Branches encouraging them to nominate individuals to attend. A number of new Branch Equality Officers attended and were elected to the Regional Equalities Forum. The Conference was well attended with the Regional Secretary and the National Equalities & Inclusion Officer both in attendance as keynote speakers.

We now have a larger Equalities Forum with members covering all areas of equalities and critically linking our discussions to practical campaigning work in the Region. This will hopefully enable us to cover aspects of equalities and organising which we have not previously been able to cover. It will also provide us with more activists to assist when working on recruitment and organising events.

The Education Department, Regional Organising Team and the Gatwick Branch organised a one day Respect@Work day for all workers at Gatwick. The event focused on rights at work, improving skills through education and training, with particular emphasis on Migrant Workers. The event helped us to strike up dialogue with members and non-members in which we were able to identify various equality issues, in particular discrimination and harassment at work. This event undoubtedly raised the profile of the GMB Gatwick Branch and has enabled us to follow up new and prospective members as well as consolidate existing members.

The GMB Southern Region continues to do some excellent work on Migrant Workers and our strategy has enabled us to recruit many migrant workers into the GMB. We have dedicated resources in three areas of the Region, namely Wiltshire, Plymouth and the South Coast. This has enabled us to have a co-ordinated and planned approach, which has helped us to link up with indigenous workers and migrant workers in several workplaces, and address various equalities issues. As a result, we have recruited significant new members to the GMB.

7. YOUTH

The Southern Region Young Members' section has seen a growth in potential activists over the past year as online joining among other things has helped boost young membership. A branch analysis also helped clarify where we are best at recruiting young members (ex. Migrant worker branches, retail etc). As a result, this knowledge can help shape campaigns in other areas. For example, the Wilkinsons branch low hours rate has had significant take up from young members. Its adoption across the Region may well help boost activity in areas like ASDA.

The section has also participated in a number of initiatives throughout the year;

Cuba

Southern Region led the way in organising a national GMB young members delegation to Cuba as part of the May Day Brigade. Activists from across the country, including 7 of our own volunteers from around the Region took 2 weeks out to experience life and trade unionism Cuban style.

The trip comprised of voluntary work sessions, visits to schools, hospitals and workplaces, meetings with trade union leaders and culminating in the May Day Demonstration. It proved to be an inspiration and educational trip for all those who went. We all learnt valuable lessons from their highly organised and politicised young people.

While there we also met with other British trade union leaders and strengthened GMB's links with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Indeed since returning delegates have attended the Miami 5 vigil at the American Embassy and participated in a TUC organised Latin American conference.

Equalities Forum

The first conference and meetings of the newly formed equalities forum were held in 2008. Difficulties in finding young member volunteers were finally overcome with the help of a new enthusiastic branch youth officer. It is hoped further delegates will come forward for future events.

The conference also made a number of key recommendations including increasing the age limit to 30, putting forward a proposal regarding membership rates and key strategy ideas involving better use of the internet and the way that we communicate with our young members. Developments like these will prove vital in promoting GMB as the union for young people.

National Young Members Conference

Thankfully the national young members' conference took place again in November 2008. There were a wide selection of workshops which led to varied discussion and some inspirational ideas. Young members had the opportunity to discuss their issues with the General Secretary and following a presentation by Dawn Butler MP, had the chance to ask her some very challenging questions! The evening social that followed proved to be the icing on the cake - thanks to London region.

Youth Project

The Somerset branch is continuing its efforts to boost young member activity through a youth project. The branch secretary has instigated a number of new initiatives designed to improve activist levels amongst young members, boost membership and promote the union as a benefit for the whole family. The section will continue to support the branch in any way that it can.

Workers Beer Company

Activities with the WBC continued as in previous years - volunteers again participated in events across the summer months.

8. TRAINING

(a) GMB Activists Basic Mandatory Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2-Day GMB@Work	22	211	86	297	594
5-Day Induction Part 1	8	66	32	98	490
5-Day Induction Part 2	8	77	23	100	500
TOTAL	38	354	141	495	1,584

(b) GMB Activists Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5-Day Union Learning Reps	7	41	21	62	310
5-Day Union Learning Reps Follow-on	1	7	3	10	50
5-Day Negotiating Skills	2	19	2	21	105

5-Day Introduction to Employment Law	2	17	8	25	125
5-Day Advanced Employment Law	3	16	6	22	110
5-Day Tackling Racism	1	6	2	8	40
3-Day Migrant Workers & the GMB	1	8	4	12	36
3 & 5 Day Accompanying Reps	(3d) 1 (5d) 2	12 15	1 2	13 17	39 85
5-Day Equal Opportunities	1	4	2	6	30
5-Day Organising & Building the GMB	1	10	1	11	55
TOTAL	22	155	52	207	985

(c) GMB Activists Health & Safety Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
5-Day Health & Safety Part 1	2	13	6	19	95
5-Day Health & Safety Part 2	1	13	4	17	85
5-Day Advanced Health & Safety	1	6	1	7	35
TOTAL	4	32	11	43	215

(d) Other GMB Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3-Day Political Education (residential)	2	14	10	24	72
5-Day Advanced Pensions (national)	1	3	-	3	15
TOTAL	3	17	10	27	87

(e) TUC Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3-Day Health & Safety Update	1	1	-	1	3
1-Day Skills Pledge	1	1	-	1	1
12-Day Diploma in Occupational Health (36 wk course Term 1=12 wks)	1	-	1	1	12

14-Day Stage 3 H&S (1 yr course Term 1=14 wks)	1	1	-	1	14
TOTAL	4	3	1	4	30

(f) GMB Officers Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2-Day Training the Trainers – National (GMB@Work)	3	25	10	35	70
1-Day Advanced Employment Law	1	5	2	7	7
2-Day Handling the Media	1	11	2	13	26
TOTAL	5	41	14	55	103

GRAND TOTAL	76	602	229	831	3,004
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COMPARED TO 2007 TOTAL	51	406	170	576	2,349
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2008 has shown an increase of 44% in the numbers of reps and officers who have attended training courses.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Region continues to engage with our members on all aspects of health and safety. This reinforces the organising agenda as it helps our Reps to have a high profile in the workplace, supported by up to date information.

We continue to offer bespoke training and education tailored to our members needs and that of the industry they work in. We then offer back up support and information to the Reps once they return to their workplace.

We are finding that in this economy downturn that more employers are cutting back on health and safety, making it all the more important to ensure that we in the Southern Region visit workplace sites, and support our Reps to enforce health and safety law.

A clear example of cut backs is in one of our Care Homes, where members are working long hours with the threat of closure if they force through health and safety rights. The GMB are very clear that this practise will not continue and, as a result, non-union members have joined so that they become protected and have a stronger voice.

Trade Union Education is an important part of many health and safety Reps lives and, as such, we continue to provide the courses tailored to their needs. In particular, courses that cover the working time directive, work life balance and stress at work.

Conclusion

Southern Region has had a successful year both in terms of enrolment and growth and is in a strong position to face the difficulties of the downturn in the economic situation.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Richard Ascough, the Southern Regional Secretary, to move his report, page 129-136. Richard?

The report was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Pages 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136? Does Congress agree to accept? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

The Regional Secretary's Report: Southern Region (pages 129-136) was adopted.

SOCIAL POLICY – GENERAL ROYAL MAIL & POST OFFICE CLOSURES COMPOSITE 18

C18. COVERING MOTIONS

177. POST OFFICE CLOSURES (Southern Region)

178. ROYAL MAIL (GMB Scotland)

ROYAL MAIL & POST OFFICE CLOSURES

Congress, in the Labour Party Manifesto 2005, we were told of the Party's driving force for innovation and competition. They commented how their Policy Document states "Britain is working; we have given Royal Mail greater commercial freedom and have no plans to privatise it". The Policy also says "The Party's ambition is to see a publicly owned Royal Mail, fully restored to good health providing excellent service and giving employees rewarding employment". To be blunt - how rewarded did employees of Royal Mail feel when they learned part of their service was to be privatised or sold off?

At the beginning of the year the government published the Hooper Report, which recognised that the contract for final delivery of letters of its competitors has been set too low. It also suggested that the Post Office should look for a private sector partner to share in its workload. Congress believes this would amount to backdoor privatization.

Congress also recognises the importance of the Post Office to local communities not only in rural areas but also in suburban areas of major towns and cities. Research has shown that having a local Post Office helps support up to sixteen other retail outlets in small town and village centres.

This Congress believes that the recent bout of Post Office closures was wrong and will be the death sentence for a number of rural villages and suburban shopping centres. We believe that it is wrong to expect the Post Office to make a profit and provide a universal service while allowing

main work streams to be put in the hands of private competitors able to compete with the Post Office by not recognising trade unions, not providing pensions and only paying rates of pay just above the minimum wage.

To sell off parts of Royal Mail, risks breaking up a great public service. Congress calls on the GMB to support the CWU trade union's campaign to keep the Post Office in the public sector and oppose privatisation by the front or back door. The Post Office should be allowed to compete on fair terms with the private sector by being able to offer high quality services to the public across the whole of the UK at a fair price.

This Congress notes that the Labour Party Conference 2008 supported a view of a wholly publicly owned, integrated Royal Mail group. Congress calls on the Secretary of State to think again and not sell out to foreign firms like TNT, support Royal Mail back to full strength.

(Carried)

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, I, like you, am disappointed to see our government reneging on its commitment outlined in the 2005 Labour Party Manifesto and the agreement made at Warwick in July 2008 which included, and I quote, "a vision of a wholly publicly owned integrated Royal Mail group". When the intention to privatise the Royal Mail was announced a very close friend of mine, a former GMB Scotland organiser and a Member of Parliament for Dundee West, and was Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister responsible, felt he had no alternative than to resign on a point of principle.

I find it utterly outrageous that Lord Mandelson continues to attempt to pass off an initial 30% privatisation as maintaining the Labour Party strong commitments to a publicly owned Royal Mail. This Congress, 2.5 million union members, and around 140 Members of Parliament, will not stand for this. We will not support our government as it breaches the manifesto commitment and implements so damaging and unforgivable policy reversal. Whilst many suggest the Royal Mail is in an impossible decline, Royal Mail has grown alongside many of the technological developments of our time: the telephone and the fax machine to name but two. Although e-substitution has reduced the volume of letters sent in the UK by the Royal Mail it now delivers more and more items ordered through new media on websites like Amazon. It is time to stop seeing technological change as wholly negative for the Royal Mail.

Since Lord Mandelson's initial announcement signalling his agreement with the recommendations of the Hooper Report, the government has agreed to pick up Royal Mail's estimated £9bn pensions deficit. However, this week it seems the government are maybe wanting to backtrack on this promise. As the Royal Mail announced that it has to consider closing its final salary pension scheme as one of the possible consequences of the government allegedly deciding not to go ahead with the plans, including, most importantly, the proposal to take responsibility for the historic pension deficit, this defies belief. The structure of the Royal Mail pension scheme was in fact changed drastically as recently as April 2008 with the aim of bringing down its long-term cost. I believe our

government has a moral duty to plug this £9bn gap, with no strings attached, after the Conservative government permitted Royal Mail a 13-year long pension holiday that allowed the deficit to grow to such grotesque proportions.

As it stands, the government has been unable to find a private partner who meets the Hooper Report criteria. Whilst the government estimated £3bn could be made from the sale of 30% of Royal Mail, CBC has offered only £2bn, TNT offered £1.7bn, and Deutschpost had to withdraw because of its own financial situation. It is evident, therefore, that the government has misjudged the state of the postal market in this proposal. I am in agreement that legislation is required to address a number of problems Royal Mail and the industry are facing, and to suggest that the industry should be left as it is, is only to bury our heads in the sand. Alternative legislation with all elements of privatisation left out would stand a greater chance of progressing through the Houses of Parliament and would, I believe, do so with resounding Labour Party and trade union support. I urge the government to work with and listen to trade unions, Party members, business, and postal workers, to ensure the Labour Party's Manifesto commitment is maintained and to ensure we collectively bring about the successful transformation, not privatisation, of Royal Mail. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

SIS. E. THEAKER (Southern): Congress, ever since Rowland Hill invented the stamp and Queen Victoria ordered red pillar boxes at the end of our streets, Royal Mail and the Post Office has been an essential part of our society and should be treasured. Unfortunately, some politicians pay lip service to this great organisation. There were plans not long ago to change the name to Consignia. Thank goodness that did not happen. How can the government expect the service to compete in the modern world and deliver a universal letter service if its mainstream work is handed to its competitors leaving them with the work others do not want? The people that run the service seem intent on ruining it with their idiotic plans. Could it be closure of 12,000 Post Offices or the lure of big bonuses for failure, which is the trend at the present time?

In a parliamentary debate last week the government was asked how a partnership would work. It was clear they had no clue. Partnership is another word for privatisation. The Post Office and Royal Mail are represented by a proud union, the CWU, who are solid supporters of the Labour Party. The Labour Party gave a pledge that it would not privatise the Post Office and we must ensure they honour that pledge. The GMB must support our brothers and sisters in the CWU. We must urge government to move away from the suicidal path they are taking by enforcing Tory policies of privatising our public services. We must be wary of a wolf in sheep's clothing. There is an old saying, *If it quacks like a duck and it acts like a duck, it is a duck*, so if it talks like a Tory and if it acts like a Tory, it is a Tory. Beware they do not vote for a Tory. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. T. FLANAGAN (London): Privatisation, yes, good deal. Lewis Day, nice company centred in London, runs a cab firm, does courier work, got a contract from Mr.

Mandelson to do work for the National Health Service and then proceeded to bill the National Health Service over a period of 18 months for jobs that did not exist, down to a driver that did not exist, and defrauded the National Health Service out of £250,000, subsequently found guilty, nailed to the wall, and made to pay the money back, but still got the contract. To me, any government that puts a Kinnock and a Mandelson in it needs looking at seriously. What are these people doing? If that is the type of people they are privatising it to, and this is what is being revealed, can you imagine what is not being revealed. I am sure Billy has a lot more information on it. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): You may be aware I am a widow and in the old days you would get your order book, you would go down to the Post Office and you would get your widow's pension paid that way. They changed it. The easy option was just to get it paid into your bank account. Luckily, we had a post mistress at our little local office who helped us all. We had to make phone calls, get forms sent out, fill those in, and get more forms. It was difficult. We had to go through hoops to still get our money paid through the Post Office but by doing that we felt that we were helping to keep them open. I still try and send letters. I went and sent postcards from Blackpool this week. We can all do our bit. We can all use our Post Offices and try and keep them open. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. B. BRITTAN (Southern): I live in what you would call a rural area which was severely hit when they closed sub-Post Offices. To close more would be devastating to local communities and the people who live there. I have three children. If my local Post Office were to close it would be more than an effort to get them in the car and go the five miles to the closest Post Office. Who am I to complain? My Dad always said, "There are people worse off than you, my son," and he is right, including those with life experience. I do not like the words "OAP" and "senior citizen" because that is derogatory. Then there are young mums with loaded pushchairs, two kids in tow arguing like they do, trying to get on public transport. It is not just where I live, it is happening countrywide. Sometimes my mail does not arrive until I get home at 3.00 p.m. That is due to different people with short-term contracts, or temporary workers. Where I live we were referred to as "dinosaur island" but I ain't a fossil yet. So, note to Julie, invest in a couple of pigeons for emergency because you never know. My message to Gordon Brown is this: look after our Post Offices and our services, look after your voters, and do not destroy our communities and their spirit. Please support C18. (*Applause*)

BRO. R. SLADE (London): Congress, I urge you to support this motion. My mother is a young 93, lives in Dover in a little place called Shepherdswell in Kent. She has to go and get her pension and bits and pieces down the Post Office, and she cannot manage it. It is not far away but there are a few hills. She relies on a younger neighbour of 75 to go down the Post Office but if they close this Post Office the village is virtually isolated: no buses, a local shop; that is it. Support this motion.

BRO. N. CHILDS (London): I have to be on my best behaviour today because my boss is sitting up there at the table. Hello, Billy.

BRO. N. CHILDS: I just want to talk a little bit about the human cost of privatisation. Obviously, when people talk about it they often talk about the fundamental issue, and so on. I want to tell a story about Blackpool last year and about Blackpool Crown Office. It is just across the road here from the Winter Gardens. Post Office Limited, part of the Royal Mail Group, announced that they were going to outsource the work to WH Smith just down the road. They closed the Post Office throwing 20 people out of a job, opened up in WH Smith down the road with people paid on half the wages without a decent pension. Within a week of that office opening, because access had been reduced and WH Smith wanted the Post Office in the basement of their store so that people would have to walk past all the magazines and would encourage people to spend their benefits and pensions on the way in and way out, an old lady walked into the store, slipped down the stairs, broke her neck and died. The human cost of privatisation is people kicked out of a job and public services reduced. It is casualisation, offshoring, outsourcing, zero hour contracts, and union-busting. Please, Congress, support this composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President, Congress, I worked in a sub-Post Office and I witnessed the devastation of the elderly and the young mothers when our Post Office closed, but one of the reasons our Post Office closed was basically due to the compensation pack my sub-postmaster received. He was offered it once to close down and it was not enough, but then he was offered it a second time and he decided to take it. The consultation is a farce because that Post Office master knew way before the consultation took place that we were going to close; but not only that, what is the Post Office doing? They are taking away the services, the services that our elderly and young mothers could use, plus the fact that the Post Office was a meeting place, it was a place that they could meet up with their colleagues to have a conversation and chat. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now put Composite 18 to the vote.

Composite 18 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you can see I have been joined by one of our guests, a very important guest to us, Billy Hayes, General Secretary, Communication Workers Union. It is a great pleasure to welcome to Congress Billy Hayes. Billy was an apprentice fitter welder before joining the Post Office as a postman. Toomey, there is another one here, a boilermaker. In 1922 he was elected a National Officer of the Union of Communication Workers representing delivery staff and cleaners, among others. After nine years as Assistant Secretary, he was elected General Secretary in 2001. I would like to invite Billy to address Congress. Billy? *(Applause)*

BILLY HAYES, GENERAL SECRETARY, COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION, ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

BILLY HAYES: Thank you, Mary. I thought for a moment, Paul, that I was at the CWU Conference listening to that debate on the Post Office. I know it is an emotive issue and an important issue. First of all, I would like to begin by thanking Paul for inviting me to your Congress to speak. Although Paul invited me first we returned the compliment a week or so ago and invited Paul to address our conference. He went down a storm at that conference in terms of talking about his past, talking about the labour movement, and what conferences mean.

Sometimes when we talk about conferences we think of conferences and resolutions but as I was saying last night at the President's do, Mary's do, it is not just about the resolutions that we carry, it is the delivering of solidarity. The way Paul described it last night to a young rep who came up to us and, funnily enough, had been a postman in King Edward's Building many years ago, he said, when you are a rep in the workplace you think you are the only one. You must all have had this experience when you are at a wedding, or a barmitzvah, or a baptism, or some social event, somebody says to you, "Oh, you're something to do with the union," like it is an affliction. The good thing about conference is you come to a meeting where everyone else has the same affliction and you develop and build that solidarity; that is what conference is about. It is not just solidarity of rank and file, but it is solidarity with the general secretary and president.

Paul, when he was at our conference mentioned that he had been a postman many, many years ago and when he joined the Post Office he was no sooner a postman than he was on strike for seven weeks. Then he went off after the strike. He supported the strike, recognised it, and moved on to other things.

There has already been made mention of the first union I ever joined, and let me get this right for those who might remember the name, the Amalgamated Society of Shipwrights, Structural Engineers, and Boilermakers of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; that is some title, that. Now you have it down to boilermakers. I was a boilermaker for many, many years, a fitter welder, and then left the industry and eventually joined the Post Office. I was only going to join the Post Office for one year and ended up staying a very long time. So, you know, we have many things in common in terms of our union. Of course, Nick was right. I think that might help the pay negotiations, Nick, that kind of speech for the GMB Staff Branch.

Could I also just mention briefly a good friend of mine now, Tim Roache. We were on a TUC *Leading Change* course, and we like to take some credit because we had to go to Boston during the presidential elections and help deliver a bit of optimism for the world in the elections of Barack Obama.

The CWU and the GMB work closely, of course. Paul is the Vice-Chair of TULO and he plays a very, very excellent role in that. I know Mary also is good friends with Andy Kerr on the NEC of the Labour Party.

I am sure GMB members, like CWU members, are concerned about the direction of our government, a government that we help elect, are its foundation, but also in more recent times, 1997, 2001, 2005, and we are now in a period where we face the prospect of perhaps a change of government, and certainly an election will be held in less than a year. I know Gordon Brown spoke to this Congress the other day. We are in the worst global economic situation since the Second World War. Public support for Labour initially rose when it became clear state intervention was necessary because of the failure, the failure, of the market system, but instead of using public money to nationalise the banks – and wasn't it strange that Vincent Cable was the first person to call for nationalisation of the banks and eventually Northern Rock was nationalised - they have used public money to prop up banks. Had the banks been nationalised they could have been directed to ensure investments continued. Instead they have used public money to rebuild their market position without increasing the levels of lending. We have a huge bill yet no control over the banks.

Compare that with the problems that many workers, GMB members, CWU members, face, compare the difference. The Financial Times produced the results of a survey last week called, Keep Britain Working Campaign. It showed that over the last nine months 27% of workers have had their pay cut, 24% have had their hours reduced, and 24% have lost benefits. The survey also showed that 37% had experienced at least one of these changes. In addition to the growing number of workers who have lost their jobs, there is also the suggestion that we could see over three million unemployed by the end of the year. So, is it any wonder this fury about MPs expenses when workers are facing that situation?

The current shock comes against the background of long-term growth in inequality. Since 1997 the top 10% of income distribution has experienced a faster growth in disposable income than the rest of the population. Maybe that is why Willie Walsh will not miss his £60,000. Well, £60,000 might not be a lot of money for Willie Walsh to give up but I bet you for the people who work for BA their month's pay means a lot to them, it means the difference between keeping up with their mortgage payments and paying for their kids, more than what it means to Willie Walsh. The top 1% experienced still faster growth, the top 1% since 1997, and the top 0.1% has experienced the fastest growth of all. Is it any wonder, then, that this has happened when we have people now in government again who say they are relaxed about the wealthier becoming wealthier. Well, I am not. We are not relaxed about people getting more and more wealth when workers face these particular problems.

When the government changes course, when they do something right in terms of good policy, there is a real kickback. For example, when the government's new top rate of tax was introduced, a more progressive tax system, you could see the benefit in the poll. It is no accident. People do not make these decisions just simply on the basis of some story about this or that MP; they make decisions on the basis of what is happening to them. So, we have seen a growth of racism in this country. I know you had a debate about it. Nick Griffin, he is intelligent, charming, and he is plausible but he is the Hannibal Lecter of

British politics, a dangerous character. (*Applause*) We need to look at it. That is not to say that the working people are racist or that the vote for the BNP represents a vote for fascism or racism but it does represent the particular problems people are facing.

The Local Government Association says that by 2010 five million people will be on council house waiting lists, and when the building industry is collapsing houses are not being built. It is an obvious case for government intervention here. Of course, the Tories will huff and puff but the Tories know how unpopular cuts in public spending will be, that is, when we hear about the 10% reduction in education, 44,000 teachers, just one figure, and what that actually means. So the government know that cuts will make a big difference in terms of their popular score and I think they are absolutely right to be on Cameron's case in terms of what the Tories have planned for us. We have our difficulties with our government but we know our enemies.

We also know when the talk is about public spending we can think of some ideas where maybe there should be reductions. I will give the government one very simple idea, and it would be massively popular, why don't they save £56bn at a stroke over 10 years by scrapping ID cards. There is a way to save money in this country. (*Applause*)

Of course, we then come on to the position of the Post Office, of Royal Mail. In 2004 at Warwick One, as it was then dubbed, we had a commitment. I know that commitment very, very well because I was involved in the drafting of the commitment that went into Warwick One. Mary was there. Paul was there. We were all there sticking together. I can tell you the great thing about Warwick One, and I was not there at Exeter but the great thing about Warwick One was, truth be told, when trade unionists act together we are unbeatable. That is what we did at Warwick One. That does not mean to say everything we want we get, but if we act in unison (pardon the pun), if we act together, we can do so much.

With Warwick One we had a manifesto commitment. Then we went into the manifesto of 2005. Let's just say this about the manifesto commitment. That manifesto commitment is not just Labour Party policy; it is a pledge to the British people. It is not just party policy. Of course, last year at Warwick Two we again copper-fastened that particular manifesto commitment. Unanimously, by the way, with not one minister, not the Prime Minister, not anybody, saying that maybe we were not right. It went through unanimously.

Then what do we get? Richard Hooper decides to do a review of the impact of liberalisation and competition. Take a test: when did Royal Mail begin to get the reputation of not delivering a first-class service? I will tell you when, in 1998 when they started to open up Royal Mail, when they started to liberalise the market. We do not have a monopoly in Britain any more. That went in 2006. It was introduced by Charles II and it lasted 350-odd years. It has been abolished. So we get this guy Hooper who comes in and does a review. We had the policy process that we went through that was agreed unanimously. We had the manifesto commitment that was agreed unanimously. Then we had this report from Hooper. Now, a lot of what is in Hooper we are in broad agreement

with, a universal service, and agreements on dealing with the pension fund deficit, which incidentally is not about the personal pension fund, it is about the historic deficit that has been mentioned by some speakers here today, historic deficit created by governments failing to pay the bill, basically.

Then he suggests a joint venture, a partnership also to work. Peter Mandelson in one minute in the House of Lords wiped away all that policymaking process, in one minute. Contrast that with the approach of the Turner Commission on pensions to Hayden Phillips' Commission on party funding. Now we face the position where the government want to privatise Royal Mail. They say if it is 49% sold off it is still in the public sector. That is a curious definition of public ownership, but there has been a rebellion, evidenced today at the GMB and been replicated in other conferences in terms of that: 180 MPs, 149 Labour MPs, have signed our Early Day Motion; 90% in the public polls do not want it, but of course Peter Mandelson and others do and they are trying to push it through.

They did a bidding process to see who would be interested in the privatisation. Here is the rub. First of all, three companies were interested, TNT, which is a Dutch firm and obviously has logistics in this country, Deutschpost, which obviously has DHL and you represent people in DHL, and CBC. They wanted £3bn or thereabouts for the 30% equity stake. Deutschpost has pulled out, TNT only offered £1.7bn as one of the speakers said before, and we are left with CBC. It was a great piece of symmetry, synergy, or pure good luck in getting Paul to our conference last week in terms of the things he had to say. Paul gave a very graphic account of what CBC is about, and that is in the AA, and very moving in parts in terms of what CBC is all about. These characters are not interested in public services. They are not interested in one price goes anywhere, Lands End to John O'Groats, and somebody knocking on your door, "Is there a particular problem?" All these characters are interested in is the bottom line, "How much money can we make?" Paul illustrated very graphically as to what privatisation would all be about.

We are on the edge with the government in terms of this particular issue. It has been through the Lords so not one person yet who has been elected - get this, not one person yet who has been elected - has had the opportunity to vote on privatisation of Royal Mail. We have gone through all this democratic process, we have had all the polls and all the rest of it, we have been through all that, and not one person has supported the privatisation of Royal Mail. But it gets better than that. There is a committee called the BERR Select Committee which is cross-party, it involves Liberals, Labour, and Tories. It examined Mandelson's proposals and it said, and this is Peter Luff, the chair, and he is a Tory, he said that this proposal would not have got past Dragons' Den it is such a mishmash of proposals. That is what Peter Luff said. There is no support for it. There is no democratic accountability on it.

I think if there is one thing that people are feeling, they are feeling that their government does not listen to them, and it does not listen to the women and men who were out on the knockers last year. At times I almost find it heartbreaking. I would bet most people in this hall, no matter what, come next year, next May as seems to be the case, will be out on the knocking and they will be saying, "There's no reason why we've got to have a Labour

government,” “It’s because of this, this and this.” That is absolutely true. Somebody once said there might only be 2% difference between the Tories and the Labour Party but sometimes we live in that 2%. I think it is a bit bigger than that these days. There is a lot of good the government has done. So, Royal Mail for us is a touchstone. It is a totemic issue. It is something that goes to our very being. We fought for our policy, we believe it is right, there is no evidence to the contrary anywhere, and we will be making sure that those MPs who signed our EDM will support us at the second reading.

I know you had Gordon here yesterday and I understood he spoke well and gave a good account of himself. I will tell you a little bit of what I feel about Gordon Brown. It is like in his youth he read papers and all that kind of stuff, but he is like somebody who has gone off with some crowd that you have always said, “They’re not really nice that crowd, you know, those neoliberals, they promise you everything and they deliver inequality and stuff like that.” And he says, “No, no, they’re all right, honest to God, they’re all right.” Anyway, a couple of years later he comes back and he says, “Oh, you were right about those neoliberals. You know, it cost me £1.3 trillion to deal with the banks but we have unemployment now, and things are really bad.” And he says, “Yeah, I’m thinking about putting up taxation for people who can afford to pay and I’m thinking of doing this, and I’m thinking of doing that,” and he starts to do all these things and you say, “That’s it.” You almost want to say “son”. “That’s it, you’re getting there. You’re coming back.” And then all of a sudden you get home one night and you find out he is still meeting them and he is still talking to them, and he is still thinking it is just a bit of a bad phase they are going through, this neoliberal agenda, it is just a bit of a bad phase and maybe things will get better.

The fact of the matter is, Gordon, you need to stick with the people who supported you from day one, who will be supporting you on day two, who will be supporting you on day three, and who will be on the knockers next year and not making announcements, and not calling for your resignation; those are the people you need to be listening to. *(Applause)*

In conclusion, thanks for listening to me. I was really interested in the debate that took place on the Post Office. I also have to say you have a great General Secretary. I missed all that joviality and I am not saying that is a bad thing. He is very, very astute and a very, very clever man. We were talking last night, me and Paul, in the bar about being clever. In our job we meet lots and lots of so-called clever people but I think to be the General Secretary of the CWU and the GMB takes a special skill. I think your General Secretary has that skill and I think this is a great union. Thank you for listening to me. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Do you know what, we will not be able to live with Paul Kenny now! I mean! We know he is a great guy because that is why we elected only the best as our General Secretary. We are proud of him and we are proud, Billy, to stand shoulder to shoulder with your members who deliver our post every day. I am lucky in London and I know my postman well, and I have always promised them total support. That is why on the NEC I give you my commitment on behalf of this Union that I will stand behind your delegation when it comes in. When we were told it was not

privatisation they were talking to the wrong one. I've been at it for years. You are right, they want to speak to the real people. Gordon made a statement yesterday and he was reading a lot of letters that he was getting, a letter from Diane, a letter from George, a letter from Fred, well, I suggest when he part-privatises he doesn't get any more so he won't be able to make a speech. *(Applause/Laughter) (Presentation made amid applause)*

Thank you, Billy. You are welcome to stay with us for a little while if you have the time, but if you have not, I understand. Okay, and while we are talking about fascists, I understand that there is a BNP rally in Blackpool this weekend at the Kimberly Hotel to celebrate their win in Europe and in the councils. If people are down here, try and make sure they do not get anywhere near that hotel. *(Applause)* Run 'em out!

I have one announcement to make, that is, colleagues, we are doing quite well on the agenda so would you agree to extend your lunch hour, we get finished, and go home? I know you all want to get back to party like we did last night. Yes? Is that agreed? *(Agreed)* I understand if there are people who need to go out, if they are diabetics or whatever, to get a sandwich but we will move business along and we should be finished by a quarter to two/half past one.

Could I ask for Tommy Hall? Where are you, Yorkshire Region? I want you, Tommy. Tommy, we will tell nobody our secret, but you have won that weekend in the hotel, Zoe's Place first prize. It is for two, and the kids. *(Applause)* He wondered what I was going to do. I frightened the life out of him! Colleagues, can we move on.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY – RIGHTS AT WORK

EMPLOYMENT

MOTION 58

58. EMPLOYMENT

Congress: Notes that an "unprecedented crisis calls for unprecedented action".

Congress: urge those in power to turn action into reality. This motion puts forward radical thinking for desperate times to halt the unprecedented rise in unemployment.

Congress: is astonished to hear that there are those still working a 60 hour week on overtime whilst others cannot find work.

Congress calls for:

1. Reducing the working week to 30 hours;
2. Increasing the minimum wage to £7 per hour;
3. Introducing job share as a positive move to reducing unemployment at one fell sweep, therefore increasing the skills factor but still maintaining productivity;
4. Government to encourage employers through subsidies and tax cuts to comply with this programme.

Congress: Calls on those in power not to throw the British workforce on the scrap-heap of unemployment but to throw them a lifeline of full employment. We cannot alone rely on employers to take the initiative, this must be taken at government level.

Congress: believes with this forward thinking programme Britain can work its way back to full productivity and a sound economy. We ask why are billions of pounds being squandered on city banks with no returns when it can be invested in the British workforce, who will succeed through hard work and comradeship with one aim: to get us out of the mess that the city banks got us into! It's time for socialist thinking after capitalism has failed.

SOUTHAMPTON CFTA S61 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A.GOODFELLOW (Southern): President, Congress, we are told we are living through the worst recession since the 1930s depression and historians tell us that history is bound to repeat itself, so how do we compare? As millions were out of work across Europe, in the 1930s we saw the arrival of fascism in Europe and, Congress, it is still out there and we must make sure it never rises again. In 1940 we saw World War Two, millions suffered inhumane atrocities, death and destruction. We have seen the secret war where capitalism has spent the last 60 years intent on destroying communism and socialism but this has resulted in its own downfall through greed and corruption. We have suffered the death of our industries, the destruction of our manufacturing base, and endured the atrocious behaviour of City banks. Like today, in 1945 the country was virtually bankrupt, in debt up to its eyebrows because of lend/lease. It took 55 years to pay the money back to the United States. We lived on rationing, one-third of the male workforce were killed, many came home maimed and injured, we had fatherless children, broken families, broken-hearted wives, a transport system in ruins, houses flattened by bombs; not quite, but it goes on. As a world leader Britain was broken. The war was won but morale was rock-bottom. Like today people were lost and shell-shocked.

Now comes the rebirth: on July 26th 1945 the British selected a Labour government, a socialist government with socialist policies. They sung the Red Flag in parliament. They were dedicated politicians who did great things for the people of this country. Like today they had a green agenda, they established national parks, something the Tories have never done, and like today they organised the 1948 Olympics, and, yes, they set up Remploy for those left disabled by war. If you want a comparison of the Berlin airlift there is a place called Gaza today that could do with an airlift.

In human terms what we are going through today can never match up to 1945 but today's politicians and the Labour government should look back and match up to the generation of reinvention by getting Britain back to work. If we can come back from post-war austerity then we can come back from today's recession. We need properly organised labour; employers should dump the old worker/boss mentality. Employers must forget the failed ideas of the past and think unprecedented ideas of the future. Government employers need to realise that British workers, our members, have special qualities that are needed to get back to prosperity: they have balls and brains.

The message to the employers is, don't use the recession to continually sack your workers. Yes, we do need 60 hours production and we can bring this country back to full

production, and its full potential. By making the working week 30 hours we would double employment on every job. We will all gain, the employer, the employee, our members, and the country. Yes, as in 1945, the rich have a role to play. They should be taxed until the pips squeak. As a socialist and humanitarian I would rather see three million people earning a wage and supporting themselves and their families by working a 30-hour week than losing their skills and wasting away on Jobseekers' Allowance.

Lastly, if you need proof that history does repeat itself, yesterday we heard that Cammell Laird are on the way, we hope, of getting justice. This coincides with the 175th anniversary of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Now, that is history. I move.

BRO. T. TRIM (Southern): President, Congress, I second Motion 58 and ask Congress to support this motion for full employment. We believe that it is time for action and to make the government bring about these changes.

Employment: 60 hours of productivity, no overtime pay, cover temporary sickness and holidays etc, two at 30 hours may be less pay than one at 60 hours with overtime pay. Employees: full employment, good work/life balances, choice of working 6 to 12, 12 to 6, leading to easier childcare in one-parent families, and a weekly wage of £210. The country: to reduce unemployment, increase the skill factor, income from taxation and National Insurance plus savings on JSA and, yes, as in 1945 tax the bloody rich. Thank you. (*Applause*)

TIPS MOTION 59

59. TIPS

The GMB Congress 2009 deplores current loopholes in the regulations that allow employers to use tips to make up the National Minimum Wage. We call on the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform to ensure this does not continue and that tips are not counted towards National Minimum Wage. We urge the GMB to lobby Union sponsored MP's if necessary to ensure this unfairness is erased.

LONDON HOTEL & CATERING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. G. BIGWOOD (London): President, Congress, from 1st October it will no longer be legal for employers to use tips to make up the employee's pay to the minimum wage. This is only happening because of the hard work done by unions. However, as with all newly-passed laws it will only work with continuing pressure from us. The practice of making up minimum wage by using tips is deplorable and must not happen at all under any circumstances. I ask, are customers aware when tipping that many of them are in fact directly paying wages and not rewarding over and above for good service? The Fair Tip Charter recommends against this and goes further to suggest that agreements are drawn up with staff on how tips are shared. It also states that no deductions should be made for breakages, as often happens, or customer walkouts. These agreements should be readily

available to staff and customers. We must ensure that this practice is not only stamped out but is seen to be stamped out. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. L. HAMBROOK (London): President, Congress, as my colleague, Gillian, has mentioned we welcome the announcement of the new legislation in October 2009 outlawing tips to make up the minimum wage. When I was researching the use of tips I was amazed to learn that when paying for your bill on a card and you have included a tip for good service, this is legally the property of the employer to dispose of the tip however they wish. Bad employers use this as an opportunity to take a cut of the waiter/waitress's tips and use it in some cases to make up the employees' wages. This is disgraceful and must stop. Traditionally, the hotel and catering industry is one of the sectors whose staff are already lowly paid, sometimes less than the minimum wage. We hope the new legislation in October will stop the exploitation of our members. We can all play a part in policing the use of tips when we leave a tip for good service. Ask the question, who gets the tip. By doing this we can make sure the person who has given us good service is rewarded. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

WORKING TIME REGULATIONS AND HOLIDAY PAY MOTION 60

60. WORKING TIME REGULATIONS AND HOLIDAY PAY

Congress requests the GMB leadership to lobby government for clear legislation to ensure that the true sum for holiday pay is made at the revised statutory minimum holiday levels. Congress wishes to ensure that the normal working week is fully converted into the pay for the job under the working time regulations. Congress wishes the government to close the loophole that allows companies to pay , for example, basic pay for holiday, when the normal working week includes shift, unsocial hours and premium payments for shift working patterns. The working time regulations must ensure that consolidated wage and shift working pay formulae account for holiday in terms of what is normally worked and any associated premiums built in to salary levels. Current legislation allows payment systems to pay equal amounts weekly/monthly, with no penalty when taking holiday, but built into the annual wage/salary, is holiday pay at lesser amounts than the payment for a normal working week at the base calculation level. Legislation must be revised to prevent this abuse.

DOVER FERRIES X23 BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I have been informed that Southern Region is going to formally move Motion 60. Will the region please formally move and second?

The motion was formally moved.

The motion was formally seconded.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY – RESPECT OUR ARMED FORCES MOTION 62

62. PUBLIC HOLIDAY - RESPECT OUR ARMED FORCES

We call upon congress to support a public holiday in respect for our armed forces. Not only the brave service men and women who died for this country.

But for all the men and women who are serving to day to protect this great nation.

Lets show our respect and have a public holiday on the Monday after Remembrance Sunday.

STOCKTON NO 3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern): At the GMB Congress for many years now we have long argued for another day for a bank holiday. With everything happening at the moment, from D-Day commemorations to our brave armed forces fighting today in Afghanistan and Iraq, what better reason to have a public holiday on the Monday after Remembrance Sunday to show our respect for our troops past and present. Our troops do a fantastic job on our behalf, working tirelessly and often in great danger personally to perform the job they choose to do. The need for an extra public holiday as well as established to combine with such a worthy cause seems to me to be commonsense. We often forget how much our troops do for us in our everyday lives. A week or so after the MEPs had been elected from the far right BNP political party it is worth remembering another far right political party was elected in 1930 that our troops had eventually to save us from. Adolph Hitler was democratically elected in the 1930s in Germany. What was then unleashed on Europe is well-documented. It was only because our brave troops fought against him that our way of life was preserved and our freedom returned to mainland Europe. That is why in the current climate it is all the more important that we ask for an extra public holiday. We do so in respect of our armed forces. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. M. MALE (Northern): Congress, as you will know the UK has one of the lowest numbers of public holidays in Europe. For people who work their best and are most productive they need to have adequate rest and holidays. Public holidays give the opportunity to workers to have a day's rest when most of their relative and friends are also off. Public holidays are essential to getting our work/life in the right balance. To have a public holiday in November following Remembrance Sunday would give people the opportunity to have a day of rest at a time of year in between other public holidays but also at a time that we can remember and show respect for what our armed forces did and do for us. It is important when our armed forces are deployed in many dangerous parts of the world on our behalf that we take stock and remember. Without their bravery and commitment both now and in previous years we would not enjoy the peace and freedom we do. We have a lot to be thankful for. Congress, please support this motion and let's campaign to get this extra day of public holiday. Thank you. *(Applause)*

PATERNITY LEAVE MOTION 63

63. PATERNITY LEAVE

This Congress instructs the CEC to lobby the Government to increase paternity leave by a further two weeks over a two year period.

R35 – ROCESTER JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, there have been many discussions concerning the equality and sometimes the inequality of the sexes. High on the list include the predominance of men in most senior positions in the finance industry and the public and private sectors, especially where pay is concerned or the opportunities for promotion. However, there is one role in society, a pivotal role, relating to childbirth and the right to maternity and paternity leave that appears to have been overlooked. This may be because of society's historical emphasis on the mother's need and the right for maternity leave, for obvious reasons. At the moment the ability for a mother to be able to take a year's maternity leave while the father or the mother's partner has only two weeks paternity leave offers illuminating insight into society's quite sexist assumptions with regard to women and men's roles in the responsibility of childcare. Surely it is more equitable on all levels, not only for the trade union ideal of work/life balance but for the parents to recognise and affirm the joint role as the primary caregivers for the child. Both parents may wish to contribute to the care of the baby and need to support each other at this new and exciting but vulnerable time. Both get exhausted and need an opportunity to bond creating a new unit of the family. That takes time and effort. Sadly, not ever pregnancy goes to plan and there may be a need for time to grieve and comfort each other. These attitudes towards parenting are affirmed in the Children's Act 1989 and 2004 mirroring the government's 10-year strategy of *Every Child Matters*. Congress, we call for the CEC and the National Equalities Forum to lobby for leave for both parents in the spirit of equality. Support this motion. I move.

The motion was formally seconded.

TEMPS TO PERMANENT MOTION 64

64. TEMPS TO PERMANENT

Congress

The CEC demand the change in legislation to reduce the maximum length of time an employee can remain on a fixed term contract as a temporary worker from 4 to 2 years.

R35 – ROCESTER JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, currently a temporary worker or employee on a fixed-term contract who has been

working continuously under a single contract that has been renewed at least once or under a series of contracts for four or more years will become a permanent worker, unless the employer can justify continuing to employ him as a temporary worker. That is straight out of the rule book but, nevertheless, is it right? Is it right to call a job temporary when you have been coming to work day after day, week after week, year after year? Of course, it is not. A job, no matter how cyclical the type of employment is, is it temporary after one let alone two years? The position of temp is what they are treated like, an abbreviation of their life, a less than whole status. More importantly, is it right to work every day and potentially be refused a loan or a mortgage, or credit, when the person next to you has the same opportunity? It is never right but it does happen. I know full well our policy of full employment rights from day one is quite right but let's not be so naïve as to think that the management of unscrupulous companies would not just go out and employ an agency worker instead. Yes, we applaud recent headways in the change of legislation but do they go far enough for a helpless growing section of 1.4 million workers, a lot of them undervalued, a lot underpaid. So rather than allowing that type of action we are recommending permanent status after two years' service. Therefore, I urge the CEC to demand legislative change to reduce the length of time an employee can remain on a fixed-term contract as a temporary worker from four years down to a maximum of two years with the aim to reduce that right down to nothing in the near future. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Is Motion 64 formally seconded?
(Motion 64 was formally seconded)

In that case, I call Liz Blackman on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. L. BLACKMAN (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC covering Motions 58, 62, 63 and 64.

Colleagues, a number of items in Motion 58 are existing policy. They are the £7 National Minimum Wage, job sharing and investment in industry and skills. However, the qualification is that the demand for seeking a reduction in the working week to 30 hours goes further than GMB policy.

On Motion 62 strong public support for an Armed Forces Day has led to the introduction of the First Armed Forces Day which will take place on Saturday, June 27th of this year. The qualification is that the CEC should continue to reserve its position on the date for a new public holiday because of the different views across our membership as to what an extra public holiday should celebrate.

Motion 64 seeks an incremental approach to the issue of employment rights for temporary workers with the ultimate objective that the rights will apply from day one. The CEC supports the motion with the qualification that the intention is not to cut across GMB objectives and employment rights from day one. We will be making submissions to consultations on aspects of agency workers' rights and the implications of the Agency Workers' Directive.

Finally, colleagues, Motion 63 calls for paternity leave to be increased to four weeks. Fathers are currently entitled to two weeks paid paternity leave. The Government proposes to extend this to six months' paid leave from October to allow mothers and fathers to share leave, which of course we welcome, particularly as it was a promise made in the last Labour Election Manifesto. Those plans, colleagues, were a key plank of Labour's Family Friendly Agenda, giving parents more flexibility on who looked after the children and would have allowed lesbian and gay civil partnerships to share maternity leave.

However, despite these proposals being sharply criticized by small firms – well, they would, wouldn't they? – they were championed by the Government's Equality Minister, including the Deputy Labour Leader. So we were shocked and disappointed last month when the Government chickened out of their pledge saying that they were shelving these plans indefinitely, blaming the economic crisis. GMB, of course, continues to put pressure on the Government to keep their manifesto promise and extend paid paternity leave to more than two weeks. But I have got a message for Gordon. Surely, the election results of the last week and the low turnout at the polls have demonstrated above all else that if the Labour Party – our party – wishes to secure a further term of office then they must return to their grassroots. They could start by honouring their Manifesto pledges.

Therefore, we are asking you to support Motions 58, 62 and 64 with these qualifications, and Motion 63 with the statement. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Liz. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Accepted*) Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Accepted*) Does Birmingham and West Midlands accept the qualification and the statement on Motions 63 and 64? (*Accepted*)

I now put Motions 58, 59, 60, 62, 63 and 64 with the statements and qualifications to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 58 was carried.

Motion 59 was carried.

Motion 60 was carried.

Motion 62 was carried.

Motion 63 was carried.

Motion 64 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, that completes this morning's business. Can we now move to this afternoon's business. I ask Alan Garley to move his report. If there are any questions to pages 136 – 144 Alan will respond in his usual way.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT – SOUTH WESTERN REGION

SOUTH WESTERN REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	11,574
MANUFACTURING SECTION	10,617
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	26,447
Grade 1 members	32,503
Grade 2 members	11,572
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,563
Male Membership	25,598
Female Membership	23,040
Total number recruited 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	5,964
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2008 – 31.12.2008	28
Membership on Check-off	32,852
Membership on Direct Debit	9,964

The South Western Region continues to fully appreciate the hard work and endeavours of Branch Officials, Shop Stewards, Staff Representatives, Activists, Full Time Officials and Regional Staff.

Due to everyone's efforts over the last 12 months the Union has made a difference to many people and the Region has maintained a high public campaigning profile which has resulted in a 2008 year end regional increase in membership.

Those who continually strive to protect the interests of GMB members, your endeavours are highly valued and the Region says to you all, well done keep the GMB flag flying!

At the time of writing this report, never before have the British people witnessed the significant levels of public funding, finance and resource being made available and brought forward in an attempt to intervene in the free market economy and to bring about much needed stability to support and maintain employment at this critical point in time. Near economic meltdown in the world financial markets will have changed the free market dogma of the unregulated, unfettered "business knows best" mantra so beloved of bankers, private equity asset strippers and far too many politicians.

The Government has had to take bold and unprecedented action to try to salvage savings, jobs and confidence in the banks, which we all have to rely on in today's world. Your Union, GMB, both nationally and regionally, has lobbied the Government for investment in public spending contracts on housing, manufacturing, education, health and capital investment/infrastructure projects to stimulate and encourage employment.

The vital lesson to be learned is that the unregulated markets created by the Tories in finance, pensions and mass privatisation have proven to be disastrous for the British worker.

You might remember when GMB was warning about the greed of the city, the Tories were opposing regulation and controls. Many will remember it was the Tories who privatised the gas, water and electricity industries, putting dividends above the needs of working people. We all know the real beneficiaries of privatisation have been the city money makers and the well known "fat cat" bosses. GMB is of the view that

enough is enough. The opportunity must be taken to make the system fairer and more accountable. Politicians must understand that market regulation equals protection for working people.

Recruitment targets and campaigns

The GMB@Work organisation strategy remains central to the Unions membership growth. The Unions purpose is to get a better deal at work by building the Union in numbers and in power in every work place where we have members.

The protection of our member's health in the workplace, the fight for better pay, decent pensions and challenging unfair practices which some employers continue to attempt to impose, must be a constant priority for the GMB. The Region will continue to offer support and assistance in the challenges ahead.

To complement the above the GMB established regional organising teams across the UK in 2006, following the Union's internal review of its organisational structure and recruitment practices.

Each Regional Organising Team (ROT) comprises of seven Full Time Regional Officers, all of whom possess significant experience in recruitment and organisational issues. The team's main functions are to allocate recruitment resources to key national and regional targets, to monitor recruitment performance in line with established targets, and to ensure that all lay representatives have the skills, experience and confidence to discharge their responsibilities in the workplace. On average, each ROT meets five times a year.

The adoption of a more structured and systematic approach to recruitment has had an obvious effect upon GMB membership growth. In fact, membership of the South Western Region alone has increased by over 8,000 members in the last two and a half years.

Despite its unfortunate abbreviation "ROT" the South Western Regional Organising Team will continue to work to make a positive contribution to developing our membership base and to ensuring GMB maintains its position as the preferred union for all employees, irrespective of where they work.

Progress on attaining a single status pay and grading structure across Wales Local Authorities has been slow going, with only a handful of agreements being achieved. This unacceptable lack of progress is one of the main factors that led GMB to undertake mass litigation against Wales' Local Authorities. Around 14,500 equal pay claims have now been lodged at the Cardiff Employment Tribunal, and a further number are still to be issued.

Some Local Authorities, such as Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, Swansea and Blaenau Gwent, have recently made offers of settlement to employees in areas with mainly female workers. With one exception these were considered to be insufficient, in terms of monetary value and the conditions attached and GMB members were advised against acceptance. The usual delays inherent in the employment tribunal system have now been compounded by the tactics of Local Authority legal representatives, who raised several defences designed to evade responsibility for years of pay inequality. These tactics result in a poor settlement of offers, against GMB advice, because of financial need and an unwillingness to endure legal action.

The Region will continue its policy of working collaboratively with such partners as the Wales TUC and the Welsh Assembly Government to tackle equal pay problems. This Union will leave no stone unturned in its campaign to achieve fair and equal pay arrangements.

The Region has campaigned relentlessly for the introduction of a separate negotiating body for school support staff, to reflect the ever changing roles and responsibilities undertaken by our members and the

crucial part they have played in education reform. GMB believes they deserve fair and consistent pay structures and conditions of employment.

The GMB campaign has influenced ministerial thinking on the matter. Indeed, a new negotiating body has been established to design and implement a pay and conditions framework. The new structure will cover all schools in England except academies and be applicable to approximately 400,000 employees. GMB will be one of three trade union signatories to the new negotiating body and is currently at the forefront of the process.

Unfortunately, the Welsh Assembly Government has yet to decide whether to adopt the English model. A formal consultation exercise is intended to allow the various stakeholders to express their views on the options. The GMB position is unequivocal: all School Support Staff should enjoy a fair remuneration level and other conditions which reflect the fact that they are a vital and integral part of our children's education, regardless of position, status or pay. GMB Officers are shortly due to meet with Assembly Government Ministers, in order to restate our policy position.

Another area of campaigning work the GMB and the South Western Region has been heavily involved in is the issue of procurement.

The Government's guidance on reserving public procurement contracts for supported factories and businesses for people with disabilities, such as Remploy, has now been published.

The GMB's European Officer, Kathleen Walker Shaw has been heavily involved in revising this guidance during 2008 and the new guidance makes a much more positive case for reserved contracts and point 7.2 of the new guidance says '*As a matter of Government policy, contracting authorities should aim to have at least one or more contracts with a supported factory or business.*' Which the Union worked hard to get extended. The Region has been working very closely with the Welsh Assembly Government on this issue and they have produced similar positive guidance in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions format.

Representing the Wales TUC and the GMB your Regional Secretary Allan Garley has been a member of the Business Procurement Task Force, chaired by Andrew Davies, Minister of Finance and Public Service Delivery and have worked over the last three years to ensure a consistent approach to procurement across the Public Sector in Wales.

One of the initiatives overseen by the Task Force has been to encourage the Public Sector in Wales to engage more with supported factories and businesses. European legislation now clearly allows Member States to reserve contracts for supported factories and businesses.

The GMB has also played a prominent role in the Supported Businesses Sub-Group of the Task Force, which along with representatives from the Public Sector and the legal profession has produced the 'Frequently Asked Questions' guidance, in order to dispel some of the myths and apprehension about applying the legislation.

Allan Garley on behalf of the TUC and GMB wrote the forward and endorsement of this guidance, in which he stressed the need for the Public Sector to significantly increase its support for supported factories and businesses.

"The Wales TUC and my own Trade Union, the GMB, welcomes the publication of this Supported Factories and Businesses 'Frequently Asked Question' document. Over many years we have been actively involved at European level in changing legislation, and at UK level in the production of regulations and their

implementation, which allows the public sector to positively promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities in supported factories and businesses by reserving contracts.

The challenges faced by people coping with a disability are immense, and supported factories and businesses play a major and valuable role in providing highly skilled employment and ongoing training, social interaction and mentoring and support to help people with disabilities become more independent and play an active part in the world of work and their communities. The factories and businesses produce state of the art clothing for military and police, quality furniture and fittings, and security support. It is vital that we provide a steady stream of work into supported factories and businesses to maintain and develop this access route for as many people as possible facing such challenges in integrating into the labour market.

Opportunities offered by Article 19 of the EU Directive for reserving contracts for supported factories and businesses, proved us with the legal means of ensuring a steady stream of high quality work and are unique within the world of procurement regulations, because the impact of providing employment for people with disabilities is universally recognised as being of significant financial and social benefit. As a matter of policy, every contracting authority in Wales should aim to have at least one or more contracts with a supported factory or business.

I am pleased to be actively involved with representatives of the public sector and supported factories and businesses in developing initiatives that promote supported factories and businesses. Accordingly, I commend this valuable 'Frequently Asked Questions' guidance document, which is designed to guide and give confidence to the public sector about the use of Article 19 and I now ask that the public sector in Wales re-examines and significantly increases its support for supported factories and businesses."

The GMB campaign for a positive future for Remploy and other supported factories and businesses remains as active as ever and clearly public procurement is the key focus for ensuring their long term success.

The ongoing fight for compensation for workers suffering from asbestos related illness continues. Trade unions have been fighting for compensation for injured workers for some decades. Sometimes it is for the worker injured in an accident, sometimes it is much more insidious and sometimes it is on behalf of tens of thousands of workers whose lives have been blighted by exposure to asbestos.

Thousands of Welsh and UK workers are suffering from exposure to asbestos while working in steelworks, repairing boilers, replacing lagging in ceilings or repairing old pipe work. The undisputed fact is that asbestos continues to be a major hazard. Employers knew of the dangers yet they did nothing until the trade unions started taking them to court.

The workers who develop mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the lungs will die painfully, often within months. Others will suffer the debilitating effects of asbestosis, a fibrosis of the lungs or even lung cancer itself.

Many thousands of others will suffer from pleural plaques, or scarring of the lungs. Often this causes no specific disability, but leaves the worker with anxiety about developing a life-threatening cancer in the future. For over 20 years insurers have been paying compensation to victims of pleural plaques. However, a recent House of Lords decision on a number of pleural plaques cases has found in favour of the employers, a decision entirely to the advantage of the insurance industry who will benefit from this decision by an estimated £1.4 billion.

The GMB considered this judgement to be perverse. A cosseted judiciary, who probably would not recognise asbestos if they came across it, decided that workers doing a heavy manual job are not physically affected by scarring on their lungs. GMB activists have led the protests against this outrageous legal

judgement. On the 28th October 2008, the Region organised a bus to take Branch Officials and Activists to attend and take part in the Pleural Plaque Demonstration and Lobby which took place in London.

With regard to the Daniel Dennis Campaign, the Region is able to report that the Court Hearing, to hear the sentencing of the person responsible for the death of Daniel Dennis took place on the 6th May 2008, when a prison sentence of 10 months was given. Daniel's parents, Peter and Anthea now believe that justice has been done, following a five year battle. The Regional Secretary, who was in attendance at the hearing, confirmed that the Region is delighted with this result for the family and all members.

A great honour for the South Western Region is for the period of May 2008 to May 2009 Vaughan Gething was elected President of the Wales Trade Union Congress. Vaughan, who is a member of the GMB's Cardiff and District Branch, is the first black President of the Wales TUC and at just 34 years old is also the youngest President to date.

Vaughan studied law at Aberystwyth and Cardiff Universities and was Student Union President between 1996 and 1998, before progressing to become President of NUS Wales. Vaughan has worked tirelessly during his term of office, making a significant contribution to building on the work of previous years and greatly assisting the Wales TUC in facing up to the organising and recruitment challenges as the economy and workplaces have changed.

Last, but certainly not least, it is great news for the South Western Region and the GMB Union that Sheila Bearcroft has been elected as President of the British TUC. Over many years, Sheila's endeavours on behalf of working people have been unstinting and second to none. "Don't forget to join the Union" were the words that Sheila's father spoke as she set off for her first days work in a South Wales factory over 40 years ago.

Sheila often recalls her father was a miner and it would never have occurred to her not to join the Union. Sheila has come a long way since leaving school at 15 without a qualification to her name, and has since risen through the ranks to become President of the Trade Union Council and will preside as chair over the TUC Conference in September 2009.

I know that Sheila is very honoured to be elected as the President of the TUC, which is the highest accolade a lay member of the Trade Union Movement can achieve. Well done Sheila, your Region and Union is proud of you. Keep the GMB flag flying!

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	2
Membership Development Officers	3
Regional Organisers	14
Organising Officers	0
No. of Branches	198
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	0
Branch Youth Officers	0

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	0
Total Disablement	0
Working Accident	1,619.50
Occupational Fatal Accident	4,517.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	0
Funeral	14,901.00

4. JOURNALS AND PUBLICITY

The Region since the last Congress has been at the forefront of the issues relating to the economy. For example, the Region has played a significant role in developing the Welsh Assembly Governments response to the Economic Summit. This has achieved significant publicity and has contributed to organising and recruitment successes. Advertising in respect of the Equal Pay campaign continues to be a very successful recruitment tool.

The Region continues to be at the forefront of campaigns in relation to the issue of the decline in manufacturing within Wales and the South West and has maintained this focus through the National Assembly for Wales, the Wales TUC, South West TUC, Wales Labour Party and South West Labour Party.

The Region has maintained established contacts with all areas of the media, greatly utilising the press releases generated from National Office. Every endeavour is made to ensure all regional issues that effect GMB members are given full exposure via the media whenever possible.

The Region has been actively involved in the affairs and business of the Wales TUC and Wales Labour Party, equally the Region has maintained its activity in the business of the South West TUC and South West Labour Party.

The collaboration of the combined National and Regional Magazine, which is now circulated to every member three times a year, has proven to be very successful, both in terms of keeping members advised of news and current issues as well as being a useful recruitment tool.

Sponsorship

The Region continues its policy of using determining factors with regard to sponsorship being granted, the main factor for sponsorship requests are publicity for the Union and the promotion of Union membership. The Region has maintained its strategy of a reduced and careful budget for sponsorship and advertising.

On the 16th July 2008, the Region contributed and took an active role in The Bevan Foundation 60th Anniversary of National Health Service, which took place in the Senedd, Cardiff Bay. South Western Regional President Sheila Bearcroft and the Regional Secretary were key speakers at the event, which was hosted by Welsh Assembly First Minister Rhodri Morgan.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
521	480

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
473	194	0	279 £1,669,144		£1,669,144
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		897			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	102
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
88	52		17 £231,918		£231,918
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2008		360			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages/ Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
Nil			

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2008
19	5	5

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

During 2008 the Region has continued to progress all areas of equality and has endeavoured to use the structure of systematically getting equality issues over to our members, via Branch Officials, the Equality

Forum and through the South Western Regional magazine NEXUS. The Region is pleased to record that several Branches produce their own newsletters where equality issues are highlighted.

The Region maintains its membership and activity on the various Equality, Race, LGBT and Pan Equality Committees on the Wales TUC and South West TUC, along with representation with the Wales Labour Party and South West Labour Party.

The Region retains its Black and Ethnic Minorities seat on the Wales TUC General Council and is delighted to report that following his term as Vice President of the Wales TUC, Vaughan Gething took the Presidential Chair at the Wales TUC Conference in May 2008. As reported last year, (when Vaughan took office as the Vice Chair) he is the first BME member to take on the role of President of the Wales TUC. During his term of Office Vaughan has also been an excellent ambassador for the GMB in areas of equality.

In line with the GMB@Work initiative, new Shop Stewards are encouraged to attend and take an active role in regional conferences, speaking to motions on all aspects of race and equality in the workplace. The GMB continues to have good attendance and representation at all events encompassing equality such as the Wales TUC Challenging Racism Conference in 2008 and the Women's Wales TUC Conference.

The Region is pleased and proud to confirm that Jill Richards, long standing activist on equality issues (now a GMB Organisation Officer) was awarded the Wales TUC Equalities Award at the 2008 Wales TUC Conference.

The Region once again participated in the Diversity Awards Wales 2008 and was pleased to sponsor an award which was presented by Vaughan Gething.

The Region's Equalities Forum has 25 members:

12 females – 1 of ethnic minority

13 males – 2 of ethnic minority

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (10 days)	3	21	10	31	310
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)					
GMB@WORK	7	62	28	90	270

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
2 day Grievance & Disciplinary	1	8		8	16

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days

3 day Risk Assessment & Inspection	2	18	6	24	72
3 day Asbestos Awareness	2	25	3	28	84

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
3 day Representing Members	3	17	7	24	72
5 Day Employment Law	1	10	5	15	75

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
TUC Various	23	34	12	46	

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The South Western Region proudly continues to provide a valued Health and Safety service to our representatives and members.

Working closely with our Region's education providers, we have ensured a network of fully trained and committed work place Safety Representatives. The Region successfully continues to encourage Health and Safety Representatives to train to a very high standard by promoting and supporting representatives on IOSH and NEBOSH courses.

Work place activity promoting health and safety issues and prioritising workplace inspections has played an important part in the recruitment of new members which are reflected in the positive 2008 Regions' recruitment figures.

The Regional Health and Safety Officer is also a member of the Regional Organising Team.

(Adopted)

BRO. A. GARLEY (South Western Region): I formally move my Report.

THE PRESIDENT: I will go through the report. Page 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143 and 144. Are there any questions? *(No response)* Do you agree to accept, Congress? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

The Report by the Regional Secretary – South Western Region – (pages 136 – 144 of the General Secretary's Report) was adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to general motions, including Motion 183 – Safety, Sex Work and Human Rights; Motion 179, The Morning Star; Motion 180, I.C.E, and Motion 181, Communications Data Bill.

SAFETY, SEX WORK AND HUMAN RIGHTS MOTION 183

183. SAFETY, SEX WORK AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Congress calls for policies on the sex industry to prioritise the safety and rights of those who work in the sex industry. Policy must always be based on the meaningful inclusion of those who will be most affected.

“Criminalisation...is responsible for the lack of employment rights, casualisation, stigma, widespread violence, exploitation and abuse in the global sex industry”. Increased criminalisation of workplaces and clients will worsen the already vulnerable situation of sex workers, and do nothing to address the vulnerabilities of those trafficked into the sex industry.

We absolutely oppose all forms of trafficking and forced labour and call upon the government to recognise that the only effective way to tackle these abuses when they occur in the sex industry is to apply the measures which are known to improve the situation of migrant workers in other industries. Trafficked persons are not found in sectors where workers are organised and where labour standards are monitored and enforced.

As trades unionists we know the solution to exploitation and abuses within any industry is the promotion of full human, civil and labour rights for those working within it. We call for sex workers' entitlement to these rights to be recognised and respected within the union movement.

LONDON ENTERTAINMENT & IUSW BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. STEPHENS (London): Congress, I move Motion 183. Madam President and Congress, I am a sex worker. I work as a prostitute and dominatrix. I love my job and I am proud of what I do. But in the nearly 10 years that I have been working in the sex industry, everyone I have met has had an opinion about my work, so both I and my branch are well aware that this is an issue which arouses strong feelings. But policies which solve problems are based in reality rather than ideology and personal, emotional reactions. The only way to address the very real abuses which take place within the sex industry is by empowering those who work within it. However, even in the union Movement our right to self organize and identify solutions to the problems that we see first-hand in our day-to-day working lives is contested. Often there is a refusal to acknowledge that our views on our own situation might have relevance, let alone importance. When people deny sex workers labour, it forces us to spend time defending the existence of our work instead of struggling for its transformation. There is no more valid group of stakeholders in this debate than sex worker ourselves.

We are the people who live with the harmful consequences of criminalization. The only way to work in the indoor sex industry, free from the risk of prosecution, is to work for yourself in complete isolation. No British legislation on the sex industry actually refers to coercion, violence, abuse or exploitation. Nor does our chocolate teacup definition of “trafficking”. Proposed legislation does nothing to rectify this omission which is, at least,

consistent in its uselessness. In fact, it maintains the tradition of framing legislation that facilitates violence and abuse of those who work in the sex industry. Already gangs target brothels for robbery and often refer to their victims criminalized state when doing so. “What are you going to do about it? Call the police, and they’ll arrest you?” Migrant sex workers, with or without papers, and street working women are similarly targeted as unlikely to report crimes against them and unlikely to receive a fair hearing if they do. The police are required to notify the UK Borders Agency if they think someone may have irregular visa status. When informed of this, most migrant sector workers choose to avoid deportation by dropping their attempt to prosecute crimes against them. Our country, effective, prioritises the security of its borders over the physical safety of migrant sex workers.

Congress and delegates, you have the chance to directly challenge the social exclusion and marginalisation of people in the sex industry. By voting for the motion, you are part of a process of change that recognizes that people in the sex industry have the right to self-organise and that we deserve the same human, civil and labour rights as other citizens, as each of you sitting here today. Congress, please support. I move Motion 183. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Congress, I second Motion 183, Safety, Sex Work and Human Rights. Sex workers experience a lack of safety and rights, lack of support, open to violence, abuse, trafficking of human beings and forced work. This motion is very simple for us in the GMB. We all believe in equality for all type of works.

I attended an equality conference in Manchester where everybody spoke about equality for all, no matter what job they are doing. Congress, I call on you today to stand together and give support where it is due, to give protection and to provide safety for people who want to work in the sex industry. Congress, let us not leave these people to exploitation and abuse by others who force them to work in the sex industry. It is the oldest profession in the world, and it needs protection and having human rights into it. We, the people of Great Britain believe in equality, diversity and human rights for all. Then why are some of us putting them on the back burners. Let us give them hope and support for those who want to work in the sex industry. I call on you not to deny these workers their right and freedom to work safely. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak in this debate? (*No response*) Does anyone wish to speak against? (*No response*) In that case, I will call Roy Dunnnett on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. R. DUNNETT (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC to Motion 183, which the CEC is supporting with this statement.

The CEC recognises that for some members this motion is a controversial issue. However, we believe that all workers have the right to be treated equally, fairly and with the full protection of the law, regardless of which part of the economy they work in. We

believe that all workers deserve the right to join a trade union and access the benefits which come from strong leadership and collective bargaining.

Congress, in 2003 you voted unanimously for the right of those in the sex industry to belong to this Union. In 2006 you formally supported the decriminalization and legislation of prostitution. However, in 2009 this motion is put to Congress against a background of the appalling murders of five sex workers in Ipswich in 2006, and the Government's response in the form of the Policing & Crime Bill. This draft Bill will criminalize sex workers operating from brothels. It will reduce the likelihood of reporting violence against sex workers and, further, it will force sex workers underground where help and support cannot be accessed.

Congress, despite the Government's pledge to target violence, exploitation, coercion and abuse, not one of the provisions of the Policing & Crime Bill will actually refer to these offences. If enacted the new law will increase violence against sex workers, waste public funds and increase the impact of street sex work on communities. This will make a repeat of the events in Ipswich more likely rather than less. Oddly enough, the Home Office's own research shows that enforcement and police crackdowns are ineffective in reducing street sex work and that the most effective solution was the right support available at the right time.

Laws which do not target abuse are useless in tackling abuse. Colleagues, we are the only union to take a progressive step of inviting those involved in the sex industry to join us. We should be very proud of that fact. This motion reaffirms our commitment to rights and respect for some of the GMB's most vulnerable workers who have the greatest need of our collective power, strength and protection. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, what hypocrisy. The Minister who brought this Bill forward is Jackie Smith. Remember her husband, and we have to pay for them! That is hypocrisy at its finest. Does the mover accept the statement? *(Agreed)* All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 183 was carried.

I now ask the movers of Motions 179, 180 and 181 to come forward.

THE MORNING STAR MOTION 179

179. THE MORNING STAR

This Congress notes the vital contribution made by the Morning Star to the Labour and Trade Union movement.

As the only daily paper of any significance reporting economic, political and social developments through the eyes of ordinary working people, the Star is the only vehicle for Stewards, Branch Officials and our paid staff to keep up to date with the facts in the industrial and political world.

Congress therefore instructs the CEC and all other influential bodies within the Union who have the authority to do so, to promote and encourage the readership of the *Morning Star* as an alternative to the bile and vomit that is spewed out on a daily basis by newspapers like *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail*.

SOLO BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): I am speaking to Motion 179. I had a woodlouse crawling in my ear this morning. The BNP had sent an advance guard down. *(Laughter and applause)*

Comrades, brothers and sisters, to get back to the point, I am often told, and quite rightly, that it is one step at a time, and I accept that point. But it is no good if you are walking in the wrong direction. The *Morning Star* is the only daily paper that provides economic, political and social reports on issues from a labour and trade union perspective. Today, they have reported on the blacklisting debate we had which has had such a devastating effect on some of our members up and down the country. They reported on the unofficial dispute at the Lindsay Oil Refinery where our members are involved, and the fact that the bosses are refusing to negotiate. They reported on Brown's visit yesterday, and had some very interesting views. It might be worth looking at. Hopefully, tomorrow they will be reporting on the disgraceful fact that the Nazis are bringing their racist filth to this town on Saturday. You would have to look in vain for anything like that in the *Sun* or the *Daily Mail*, which churns out anti-union, anti-labour bile and bigoted racist filth on a daily basis. The right-wing media in this country has got a hell of a lot to answer for. But it is no good just pointing out what is. We have got to look at what we can do about it.

I think, if you read the *Morning Star* every day, you will be likely to be walking in the right direction. If you read rags like the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, you could well be walking in the wrong direction. So what are we going to do? Everyone of us as individuals can go to our local newsagent and order our own *Morning Star* on a daily basis, but also, as a union, let's ensure that we have a few copies of the *Morning Star* on every reception desk of every office in the GMB so that any members visiting the offices get an opportunity to get a sensible take on the relevant issues for a change.

We should be doing everything we can to promote the *Morning Star*, and I would implore your support. Many thanks. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

BRO. N. CHILDS (London): Congress, I second Motion 179 – The *Morning Star*. Media ownership in this country is amongst the most undemocratic in the western world. Through their cross-sector control, corporations like Rupert Murdoch's News International and the Daily Mail Group have a virtual monopoly on the truth. Through a cocktail of celebrity culture, blackouts, misrepresentation of the facts and outright lies,

they promote the interests and world view of the rich and powerful at the expense of working people. Even the liberal press often overlook our daily struggles. Congress, we must never under-estimate the power of the media to influence public opinion.

Take the *Evening Standard's* year long campaign of propaganda against Ken Livingstone. Through relentless reporting of unsubstantiated accusations they planted seeds of doubt in enough voters' minds to narrowly swing the vote to the Tories. That is why the *Morning Star* is so important. Owned by its readers, the *Star* has, since 1929 reported our struggles and our priorities for publicizing Remploy members' fight and calling for justice for victims of asbestosis exposure.

Starved of commercial advertiing revenue, the *Star* relies on our support. The GMB does much to promote the *Star*. This week we have distributed it to all delegates, but let's continue that. Let's promote it to new reps at training schools, promote it on our websites, in our magazines but, most of all, when you get home, order the *Morning Star* and encourage your members to do so. Let's continue to build our independent voice and independent voice for working people. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 179. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 180 – I.C.E., to be moved by the Midland & East Coast Region

**I.C.E.
MOTION 180**

180. I.C.E.

Congress will actively promote and publicise the use of ICE (in case of emergency), the international mobile phone program.

MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. COPPIN (Midland & East Coast): I move Motion 180. Vice President and Congress, I.C.E. (in case of emergency). Let's have a little quick quiz. Put your right hand up if you have got a mobile phone. Lovely. Put them down again. Put your left hand up if you have actually heard of I.C.E. Thank you. Put them down. Now put both hands up if you actually use I.C.E? There are a few. That's not so bad. Finally, just give me a wave if you haven't got a clue what I'm on about. *(The majority of delegates waved)* That is what I suspected.

The acronym ICE, I.C.E., stands for (in case of emergency). It is a contact number which is stored in your mobile phone so should you become incapacitated in any sort of emergency, someone can contact that exact phone number and speak to the person who you have chosen and give vital information about you. This system was first conceived by an East Anglian Ambulance Service man in 2005 and it really took off after the London bomb attacks. The system was so simple that it immediately global and I.C.E. is

recognized by most emergency services in most countries of the world. It was even mentioned in the United Nations' public statement of May 2008.

Figures produced by the mobile phone companies show that less than 25% of us actually carry any emergency information around with us but most of us, as you have witnessed, carry a mobile phone. So just put the two together. There is a campaign to encourage mobile phone companies to install application in all new phones that will do just this but, really, all you need to do is to look in your contacts list on your own mobile phone and enter I.C.E. and then the name and number of the person you want to be contacted should you become unable to do so yourself. If there is more than one of those, just enter I.C.E. 1 or I.C.E. 2, etc. So, colleagues, it is very simple. Congress calls for all appropriate electronic and hard copy GMB publications to include and promote the I.C.E. programme. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mick. Secunder?

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): I am seconding Motion 180 – I.C.E. President and Congress, let me give you a scenario. Let's imagine a member of this Congress has nipped out on their own to get a sandwich before they moved their motion. Let us also assume that they are diabetic and have an allergy to seafood. Before they get back to Congress they collapse in the street. A passer-by dials 999 for an ambulance. When the paramedics arrive, our colleague, unfortunately, is unconscious so they cannot give any information to the emergency team. The paramedics will have to take a chance, take a range of tests, use their own knowledge and skills to try and make a diagnosis before they can start the treatment. My colleagues here in the hall would be starting to panic a bit because they would not want to do that speech. "Where's he got to? Is he coming back?" How much easier would it be if they had an I.C.E. contact on the phone listing allergies, their problems and contacts which allowed paramedics to immediately start checks on their allergies and get in touch with I.C.E. contacts. Hopefully, the information in that phone would allow them to sort everything out and allow the colleague to get back in time to still deliver the speech, so there is no excuse. That would also give the President time to sort anything out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 181 – Communications Data Bill. London Region to move.

COMMUNICATIONS DATA BILL MOTION 181

181. COMMUNICATIONS DATA BILL

Congress agrees the government was correct to exclude the Communications Data Bill from the Queen's speech.

This criminally intrusive Bill would, under the guise of prevention of terrorism, allow any form of communication between any citizens to be recorded, stored and used for any purpose, terror related or not.

It is a fundamental breach of civil liberty.

George Orwell wrote 1984 as a warning not a blueprint.

This motion calls upon the CEC to ensure it campaigns with all force to make sure this Bill is never enacted.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. OWEN (London): I am moving Motion 181 on the Communications Data Bill. Most of you will probably know something about this Bill and you may well know that it has been dropped from the Queen's Speech year so it will not become law this year. That is good news but that is the only good thing about that Bill. I am not going to give you a great load of detail about that Bill, but I will tell you that it, basically, builds data bases on us all, and that is all of you. Do remember that in a year's time you may well have a different government going through your records.

When I was researching this subject I was quite surprised to find out some of the information regarding this issue. One of the reasons why I think the Government could afford to drop this Bill that the powers they had given themselves under the Investigatory Powers Act of 2000 already enables the building of data bases based on internet service provider information. You may not know – you may know – that as from March 15th of this year all internet service providers are obliged by law to collect information on your web usage, on the amount of time you spend emailing your colleagues, who your colleagues are and who you email and all that information has to be kept by law for a minimum of a year now.

There are five hundred organizations in this country, including the Government, and all the investigatory authorities, which can research that information, and they have access to it. Under the Investigatory Powers Act they do not have to reveal that fact to you. They can keep that secret indefinitely. If you refuse to provide your encryption keys for your computer, you could do two years for that offence under that Act. I do not think that these things have been particularly well publicized. We are slipping down the road here and I think we need to wake up.

All the time this is going on, the DNA of innocent people is also being collected on a data base. Data bases are supposed to be kept secure, but I think we all know that security does tend to slip. Data bases get lost, they get sold, they get dumped on municipal tips and they get lost on trains. There is also a network of new vehicle registration cameras which you may have noticed on blue gantries which are springing up all over the countryside. They are not actually just normal speed cameras. They read your number plate and five miles further down the road they read it again and average out your speed. Great, you get a £60 fine and some points on your licence, but it also puts huge power into the Government's hands to know where you are at any one time. You have to remember that these powers can be abused and probably will be by future governments.

There are serious threats, of course, to us all from terrorism to serious crime. It is always the argument that if you have got nothing to worry about, if you have done nothing wrong, then there are no problems, but, of course, you have to think about potential governments in the future. You also have to be mindful of the dangers of giving away our civil liberties which are under attack in this country. Slowly but surely, we are losing civil liberties in this country. The last three Governments have made a point of taking away our civil liberties by stealth. Some of the things that New Labour have done we would never have allowed Thatcher to get away with, to be quite frank, but New Labour are nice people, as we saw Gordon yesterday. He is a very nice chap. But what about the people who follow nice Gordon? Think about that for a moment.

I would remind Congress that when George Orwell wrote *1984* he wrote the book as a warning. I do wonder sometimes whether people in high places have taken it as a blueprint for future development. I think we need to be very careful that we do not allow ourselves to slip down a road towards a totalitarian future police state. I am not talking about a police state now and maybe not in 10 or 20 years' time, but at some time in the future we may well look back to this time and said, "We should have actually done something about this." So I urge the CEC, the Congress and everyone of you to be mindful of letting our civil liberties go on the alter of enhanced security, fighting terrorism and fighting crime. Be careful. Thank you very much, Congress.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): President, Congress, as my colleague, Richard, has said the Communications Data Bill is intrusive, immoral, and a fundamental breach of civil liberty. It is legislation that would not be out of place in the former Soviet Union or East Germany. There may be times when it could be argued that this legislation may increase the chances of tracking down and apprehending criminals, such as a paedophile, but there already exists a system of checking bank and credit card details to achieve this, so the criminal argument does not hold up. Even more worrying is the fact that before she resigned as Home Secretary Jacque Smith said that when this bill came back once elected it would be administered by the private sector; that is mind-boggling. How many people would get this information if Capita were involved? If identity theft is a problem now, it would be pandemic if this bill gets elected and the private sector runs it. Colleagues, this bill is on the backburner. For freedom's sake let's make sure the power is turned off. Please support.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, Motion 181 is being supported with a qualification. I will now call on Gordon Gibbs to give that qualification.

BRO. G. GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, the CEC are supporting Motions 179 and 180, and supporting Motion 181 with a qualification that I will now outline to Congress. Motion 181 is concerned with the proposed Communications Data Bill. It is existing GMB policy to oppose measures that could lead to further erosion of civil liberties. However, the qualification is that it is also existing GMB policy to balance

the protection of civil liberties with the need to protect the wider public. If the proposals in the bill are put forward again in the future, the CEC would need to review them in order to reach a decision on the necessary balance and potential threat to civil liberties. Therefore, Congress, in summary we support Motions 179 and 180 and ask you to support Motion 181 with the qualification I have just outlined.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does the mover of 181 accept that qualification? (*Agreed*) Congress, Motions 179 and 180, and 181 with the qualification are all being supported by the CEC.

Motion 179 was carried.

Motion 180 was carried.

Motion 181 was carried.

**ID CARDS – AVIATION INDUSTRY
EMERGENCY MOTION 5**

EMERGENCY MOTION 5

ID CARDS – AVIATION INDUSTRY

ON 6th MARCH 2009 THE HOME OFFICE ANNOUNCED THAT AVIATION WORKERS ARE TO BE THE FIRST WORKERS TO BE SUBJECTED THIS AUTUMN WITH THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED I.D. CARD.

THE GOVERNMENT CLAIM THAT THE I.D. CARD WILL IMPROVE SECURITY AT OUR AIRPORTS AND THAT THEY ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT SCREENING IN SECURE AREAS.

THE INDUSTRY IS ALREADY AWASH WITH I.D.CARDS AND EMPLOYMENT SCREENING METHODS. WORKERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PAY FOR THE I.D. CARD EVEN THOUGH IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE CARRIED AT ALL TIMES IN THE WORKPLACE.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE I.D. CARD IS EXPECTED TO COST BILLIONS, AT A TIME WHEN PRESSURE IS AT ITS HIGHEST WITH PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND FRONTLINE PUBLIC SERVICES.

CONGRESS CALLS UPON THE CEC TO ACTIVELY OPPOSE I.D. CARDS, AND TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER TRADE UNIONS IN THE AVIATION SECTOR TO ACTIVELY OPPOSE THE SCHEME.

**BRANCH 170
NORTH WEST AND IRISH REGION**

(Carried)

BRO. K. LYONS (North West & Irish): This is my first congress, first speech. Madam President, Congress, the emergency motion was called for due to recent announcements by the Home Office that aviation workers are to be subjected this Autumn to this government's proposed identity card scheme which will lead in turn to the rest of the nation in 2011/2012. This has caused concern and anger from our members across the United Kingdom for two main reasons.

Firstly, civil liberty: we now live in a society where everybody already has some form of identification whether it be a passport which is now held by approximately 80% of the eligible population, or photograph driving licences that are also in extensive use. Migrant workers and accepted immigrants are also issued with identification. In the case of aviation workers, additional to already mentioned identification, airport employees have a photograph identification pass with controlled access to all areas of airports in the United Kingdom. These airport passes identity cards require a vetting process with the Criminal Records Bureau currently paid for by the employer. It has been said by Gareth Crossman of Liberty, why target airport workers as identity card guinea pigs for the government's national identity card legal requirement scheme. I agree.

Secondly, the cost of the new identity card is expected to be placed on the employee, which will be the same for everybody else eventually, somewhere in the region of the cost of a United Kingdom passport; completely unacceptable. I work at Liverpool Airport and I know security is already much higher than it has ever been at United Kingdom airports and yet there will be no requirement after issue for our members to carry these new identity cards, but will still carry the United Kingdom security check vetted airport security pass; absolutely ridiculous.

We who work at airports believe this is the start of a softly, softly sliding in process on the QT before the big hit for the rest of the United Kingdom. Colleagues, let's face it, there has not been the healthy open debate that should have taken place across the United Kingdom public about liberty concerns necessary for any sense of a free democracy, and the cost implications that go with it, i.e. will it be means tested. The cost of the entire identity card fiasco is expected to cost in excess of £5bn which will no doubt end up costing even more from the taxpayer at a time when pressure is at its highest with public expenditure and our frontline public services, some of which we have been listening to here at Congress. It has been said, why is a Labour government involved with the compulsory national identity card scheme? This, if I remember rightly, from the past traditionally belongs to the Conservative Party. Give it back to them and the massive justifiable unpopularity that goes with it. The money will be better spent on, say (and anyone who voted Labour will remember) education, education, education. Now, I know that is Labour's department.

Recently the worthy popular Schools, Colleges, Refurbishment and Development Policy has practically ground to a halt caused by an over-request for capital in the region of £5.7bn. I know where to find at least £5bn of that figure. Why not take it from the national Conservative identity card scheme and put it into what the Labour electorate want - schools, colleges, refurbishment and development education policy. Congress, the

aviation workers are asking for support to stop Labour creating one almighty own goal massive vote loser. Steve Turner of Unite Union already has the support of his aviation workers and members. Congress calls upon the CEC to engage with other unions in the aviation sector actively to oppose the compulsory United Kingdom identity card scheme which starts with aviation workers later this year. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. nyone wish to speak in this particular debate? No? I call for the vote. The CEC are supporting.

Emergency Motion 5 was carried.

**INTERNATIONAL
SUPPORT FOR GAZA
MOTION 220**

220. SUPPORT FOR GAZA

This Congress urges the Labour Government to use its special relationship with the Government of the United States of America to insist that Israel lifts its blockade of Gaza. By controlling all access to Gaza by air, land and sea, Israel has created the largest open-air prison in the world.

ASHTON 8 BRANCH
North West and Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. POWER (North West & Irish): President, Congress, before I move this motion, thank you to Giovanna Holt and to Mr. and Mrs. Dale Carnegie. Congress, for the first time in over a generation the free world has an opportunity to change the lives of Palestinians, and not before time. Children are born, grow up, and are killed without ever having known the freedom to play, to go to school, to have parents who can work; nothing of their life is normal. In Barack Obama there is hope, hope that the fairness he wants for Americans, the end of the warmongering he wants, the vision of the world where you are stronger by supporting others instead of crushing them is a hope we all should have. Do not - I repeat, do not – look on this motion as in any way, shape, or form, being anti-Semitic; it is not. The fact is that a nation, Palestine, is imprisoned, its people are not allowed to have any sense of normality, and regardless of the nationality of the people and the country that has imprisoned them, it is wrong; it is as simple as that. It is wrong and should stop now. We cannot keep wringing our hands and being apologists. This is an opportunity of a lifetime that will affect millions of lifetimes and has to be taken because sometimes you just have to do what is right. I move. (*Applause*)

SIS. L. RYAN (North West & Irish): President, Congress, I echo the sentiments of my colleague. The previous administration in America had no desire to stand up and prevent the violence and bloodshed that has taken place in Gaza. As the most influential state they stood silently by allowing this to continue. We can only hope that Barack Obama

will be stronger, fairer, and more visionary than his predecessor. There is hope for peace in Gaza. It is not a light at the end of the tunnel, not by any means, but a tiny flicker of hope and we should encourage our government to allow that to grow. I second.
(Applause)

GAZA WAR MOTION 222

222. GAZA WAR

Congress condemns the recent outbreak of war in Gaza, which has only made the resolution to the problems in the Middle East worse.

Whilst it condemns the use of rockets fired into Israel by Hamas militants it feels the reaction by the Israeli Government, to declare all out war on the people of Gaza, was overkill and totally unnecessary. The slaughter of so many innocent men, women and children (over 300 children were killed) was an outrage and can never be justified. The war has not only killed 1800 but has wreaked homes, schools and much of the infrastructure of Gaza.

Further Congress notes that the United Nations is now stating that many of the acts of war could be classified as "War Crimes" we would therefore support them in their inquiries. Should these inquiries find guilty parties then they should be charged with War Crimes under International Law.

Finally, we believe the road to peace in the Middle East will only be improved if UN troops man the borders between Gaza and Israel and the West Bank and Israel. Further that Britain stops supplying both Israel and Hamas with weapons of war.

EDMONTON & ENFIELD BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. BENHAM (London): President, Congress, there is no doubt the firing of rockets into Israel by Hamas militants last December was wrong and should be internationally condemned and dealt with. However, Israel's reaction was completely inappropriate and devastating to the region's infrastructure and, more importantly, its civilian population: 1,800 lives were lost, the vast majority innocent civilians with no connection to Hamas, and over 300 were children. The UN has found that some of Israel's action could be classed as war crimes and are in the process of investigating now. Shimon Peres obviously denies this and will not cooperate with the inquiry, nor will he ever make any apologies for the havoc his country wreaked on Gaza. There is little doubt that war crimes were committed. They used white phosphorous bombs, a banned weapon. They shelled a United Nations school they knew was being used as a refuge centre. They attacked medical facilities killing patients, and medical and ambulance staff. They herded Palestinian families into houses and used them as human shields. There was also a report that they locked civilians into a building and then shelled it.

The United Nations must continue its investigation with or without the cooperation of Israel and, colleagues, if it is decided that war crimes were committed by Israel then the full force of international law must be unleashed against them. They must not be allowed

to shelter behind America's protection and hopefully Obama's new administration will take more notice of international law and opinion than the previous administration. However, colleagues, this Union is committed to peace, a sustained peace in this region, and we believe this can only be achieved by United Nations troops controlling the border between Gaza and Israel. There must also be the international will to stop supplying weapons to both sides. We call on the British government to set an example in this regard. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. G. BIGWOOD (London): We have heard about the awful things that are happening out there. I now want you to look at this from a different view. In February I was very privileged to visit the Holy Land where I met with very different people, from orphanage workers, monks, cooperatives, and one man on the street who asked where we came from. When he heard England he smiled broadly. He asked us to speak to others when we came home and to spread the word that they are peaceful people who want us very much to visit. He said that they want our help and our support. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would have such an audience to relay this message to. This was a plea straight from a Palestinian. Can we really ignore him? Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

PALESTINE MOTION 223

223. PALESTINE

Congress, Over one thousand three hundred Palestinians have been killed during Israel's military offensive in Gaza during January. Almost four thousand have been injured, some with the most appalling injuries, many amputations and horrific burns, many of these civilians and most of them children. There is evidence from many humanitarian organisations including Amnesty International, the Red Cross and the United Nations that war crimes have been committed including the use of white phosphorous in built up areas. Gaza had already been under siege for 18 months before the bombardment and invasion. It was little more than an open prison, with Palestinians being under collective punishment with limited public services including electricity water, sewerage and severe shortages of food and medicines.

The people of the West Bank suffer tremendously. There will be no peace for anyone in the Region if there is no Justice. Israel has to abide by the countless UN resolutions and rulings by International bodies like the International Court of Justice. We campaigned against fascism, we campaign against racism and we campaigned against Apartheid it would be morally reprehensible if we now did nothing, we would be colluding with injustice.

The GMB will campaign to:

1. Continue working with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and to actively campaign within the Regions for the support of this organisation.
2. Send representatives from GMB on a PSC Trade Union Delegation to gain information from the PGFTU.

3. To demand the British government ends arms sales to Israel noting the sale of more than £18.8 million worth of British arms to Israel in 2008, up from £7.5 million in 2007.
4. To call for the immediate suspension of the EU-Israel Agreement providing preferential trade facilities to Israel.
5. To Lobby the UK Government to work in the international area to ensure that Israel is brought to justice.

GMB@PCS
London Region

(Lost)

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): As previous speakers have said, in January of this year the might of the Israeli Army attacked the tiny territory of Gaza. During the following days and nights the people of Gaza were subject to a horrific bombardment in which more than 300 people were killed, 5,000 injured, 11,000 jailed, and they were mainly civilians, including many children. Schools and hospitals were bombed. Israel claims this was self-defence based on the fact that Hamas fighters in Gaza had been raining rockets down on Israeli towns along the border for several years. During the past two years Hamas rockets have killed less than 30 civilians. Is this wrong? Yes, of course it is wrong. The killing of civilians must always be condemned wherever it happens. However, did it legitimize such a disproportionate response which I and other speakers have described? No, it did not.

The attack on Gaza has been described as a cornered civilian population torn to bits by a modern army. It was fight between David and Goliath. The assault on Gaza is the latest of a long list of Israel's active injustice and oppression against the Palestinian people since the war of 1948 when there were one million people terrorized and who fled from their homes. In the past few years since Israel nominally withdrew from Gaza and the West Bank it has in fact increased its stranglehold on Gaza and increased the illegal settlements in the West Bank.

This motion has five instructions, three of which focus on the role that the British government can play in the bringing about of peace. The first one is to end British government arms sales to Israel. In 2007 there were £7.5m of exports. In 2008 it was £18.8m. Although we do not have direct evidence of where those arms were going it is not unreasonable to assume that some of them were used in the assault upon Gaza. It is totally unacceptable that our government continues to sell arms to a state which militarily occupies and oppresses another people, and a stateless people, in contravention of many UN resolutions.

Instructions 4 and 5 of the motion focus on the trade relationships between the EU and Israel which basically provide preferential trade facilities to Israel. Only last week Avigdor Lieberman, one of the leading lights in the coalition government, an extremist, some call a fascist, was in Europe to discuss with the EU how those preferential trade facilities could be taken forward.

The fifth instruction talks about justice and, as Barbara said earlier and other people have said, the alleged war crimes of which there does appear to be very strong evidence. It asks the GMB and asks our leaders to work with the British government and to work with other people who are seeking to bring the perpetrators to justice. Some of the main allegations are that the Israeli government during that three-week incursion deliberately targeted civilians, illegally used weapons, killed medical rescue teams, and used civilians as human shields.

There is an initiative by the Russell Tribunal, and some people may remember the original Russell Tribunal on the war crimes in Vietnam. The Russell Tribunal on Palestine was launched in March this year with the aim of making international law the basis for solving the Israel-Palestine conflict and of waking up the international community to its responsibility in the continuing denial of Palestinian rights. It is supported by over 100 eminent people from around the world and is seeking to establish the facts and build a legal argument, with the national support committees to contribute to this preparation and publicise this work. We are asking you to support that as part of this motion.

Congress, the Israel-Palestine conflict has lasted over 60 years. We ask you to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to two independent states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. This can only happen when the occupation and siege have ended and a viable Palestine is created. There will not be peace for Israel or for Palestine until there is a free and independent Palestine. We can make a difference. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I gave that member just that little bit longer because the region did withdraw a resolution in favour of the one that she has just spoken to.

BRO. N. CHILDS (London): What is life like in Palestine today? Well, according to Archbishop Desmond Tutu and William Madisha of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions, it is a little bit like apartheid, with racist marriage laws forcing Arabs and Jews to live apart, Zionist-only settlements and highways, hundreds of military checkpoints where civilians are stopped and searched, humiliated daily, and where women and children are refused access to schools and hospital treatment. But perhaps there is no comparison with the 400-mile long illegal wall imprisoning millions behind a blockade, blocking access to clean water, or 500,000 illegal settlers, many establishing squats on the rooftops of Palestinian family homes driving and intimidating out their occupants. All this is well-documented by the United Nations who have declared Israel to be in serious violation of international law, the Geneva Convention, and the UN Charter.

Congress, we call for the GMB to continue its proud tradition of international solidarity by placing pressure on Israel to engage in the peace process, just as we did with the South African government, and to send a delegation to Palestine and report back to our members after the winter invasion. Congress, let me leave you with this, how would you feel if it was your 3-year old daughter denied access to casualty at a roadblock, or your wife forced to give birth at an army checkpoint, your mum or dad abused and spat at by

soldiers on the way to work each day, or your neighbours incinerated by white phosphorous. I know how I would feel if it was my daughter, or my wife, or my mum and dad. This is a strong and resolute motion calling for specific action because we can no longer sit on the fence with this. Please, Congress, support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

EUROPEAN TRADE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL MOTION 224

224. EUROPEAN TRADE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL

Congress holds that the special provisions which allow access to British markets of goods produced/grown by Israeli settlers on illegally occupied Palestinian Land (recognised as such by the British Government under international laws) should be abolished and instructs the Central Executive Council and General Secretary to pursue such a change in those provisions through the lobbying of MPs and MEP's sponsored by the Union.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. BARKER (London): Madam President, Congress, as a union should we support the practice that helps a nation favour their trading goods on the open British market and European markets, when that same nation tries to stop humanitarian aid reaching the people they have displaced by putting a blockade in place, stopping the sick, the young, and the old, getting the help they still desperately need? I say, no. So, why does this government give special provisions to the Israelis for selling goods grown on illegally occupied lands? Why do the labels on the imported Israeli goods often hide the facts about these items? If it is acceptable for these goods to be grown or manufactured by Israeli settlers, companies, on illegally occupied lands, then why doesn't the label on these goods say so? When these products are labelled West Bank it must be understood that they are not Palestinian goods. If Israel argues the areas are part of the Israeli state, why is there so much information hidden from us?

We are a trade union that supports organisations committed to securing peace and fairness for all in the Middle East. We should be putting pressure on MPs and MEPs to raise this issue in parliament and pressurise the governments to make sure products grown in the West Bank and marketed here, and in the European Market in general, are honestly labelled. Consumers at least should be able to have the right to exercise their freedom to choose not to buy the goods that are labelled wrongly. This government is not committing to the balance of policies for the Middle East. The trade between the EU and Israel must be ended. No such agreement must be reconsidered while Israel ignores international laws and human rights and maintains its military occupation and colonisation of the Palestine territories. I urge Congress to support this and call for justice. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. T. MORRISEY (London): Congress, our colleague has asked for the ending of the special provisions given by the European Trade Agreement to goods illegally produced on occupied lands of the West Bank. Israel enjoys a preferential trading relationship with the European Union, the second most important trading partner after the US. This EU Trade Agreement also legally commits Israel to conforming to European human rights legislation. Occupying since 1967 every aspect of Palestine life in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is controlled by the Israeli military, there are more than 600 roadblocks and checkpoints, and they also have a segregated road system. The Palestinian people are compelled to work for the settlements. There is nothing else for them. These workers are paid as little as 30 shekels (£4) a day with no contract, no sick pay, no holiday pay, no rights to unionise, and child labour is often used. When produce is grown and goods manufactured at illegal settlements in the occupied territories they are often labelled “made in Israel” and exported as coming from Israel proper enabling Israel to avoid EU excise duty. Legal proceedings are under way at present to stop this practice but getting hard proof from a territory under military occupation is difficult.

In the UK in July 2001 the BIG campaign was launched (Boycott Israeli Goods). It is now European-wide. Inspired by the boycott of South African goods and activities under the apartheid regime, Palestinian people, the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign to which the GMB is affiliated, has called for consumers to boycott all Israeli goods. Always look at the label. If it says “made in Israel” or has the barcode 729, do not buy it. Goods labelled West Bank are almost certainly made by Israeli settlements and should be boycotted. Israel profits from the illegal settlements by this misleading labelling. Congress, I support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BURMA MOTION 225

225. BURMA

Congress recognises the continued problems in Burma.

Free trade unions are illegal in Burma punishable by 25 years in prison or even the death penalty.

In spite of this the Trade Union movement continues to grow in Burma.

We call on congress to do everything we can to support this growing trade union movement.

HARTLEPOOL 2 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. BAKER (Northern): Congress, it is easy in the current economic climate for us to forget the plight of other people who are suffering in a way thankfully in this country we can only imagine. Whilst we do not belittle the current economic situation and the effect it has on our members and their families, as good trade unionists we must look beyond our shores and try and help those in much less fortunate positions than ourselves. This Congress could not take place in Burma, standing here today and talking about the many issues we have, freely, openly, and without any threat of reprisal. Free trade unions

are illegal in Burma and as such doing what we are doing here today could result in being punished by 25 years' imprisonment or even the death penalty.

It is hard for us to imagine what it must be like living in a regime as hostile to free speech as the regime in Burma. In spite of this terrible oppression and the enormous risks trade unionists face in Burma, there is a growing trade union movement in Burma. There are many ways in which we can help and support. There is obviously financial help which we can all offer, but probably more importantly there is lobbying support. When you receive an email asking for you to register your protest at something that is happening there, do not ignore it, reply to it. If you see appeals on TV or in the newspapers, respond to them. Don't let us forget our fellow trade unionists in Burma. Please support them and support this motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): Colleagues, in recent weeks you will all have seen the dignity with which Aung San Suu Kyi, the pro-democracy leader in Burma, has conducted herself. She has been charged with and appeared in court on the most ridiculous of charges. After winning the elections many years ago the military leaders in Burma could not contend with her. Therefore, she was placed under house arrest under very severe restrictions. She has now lived like that for many years. In that time, if anything, her popularity has grown. In May this year the house arrest was due to come to an end. As such, the authorities acted. An American was swimming across the extensive lake near Aung San Suu Kyi's home. He was struggling and undoubtedly he would have drowned. She recognised this and being a caring, considerate person, brought him into the house to rest. As a result of that she was charged with breaching the terms of her conditions as she is not allowed visitors in her house.

This is just one example of what is happening in Burma in recent weeks. We can only imagine the true extent of the oppression of the people who speak out against the military regime and how they must suffer, and the extent to which being a trade unionist is treated with such harshness and brutality. As trade unionists and as internationalists we must support our colleagues in Burma. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

BANKS & ARMS TRADE MOTION 226

226. BANKS & ARMS TRADE

Congress notes that five of the biggest U.K high street banks are using our money to fund companies that sell arms used against civilians in war across the world, including the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are financing an industry that sells arms to countries committing human rights abuses such as Israel, Colombia, and Saudi Arabia. We believe banks must be made accountable for their actions around the world.

This conference instructs the N.E.C to call on this government to ensure that all banks are made to publish the full details of their loans, holdings and other banking services to the arms trade.

(Carried)

SIS. M. BOWMAN (London): Congress, we all know by now that the big five banks on the high street have been using our hard-earned money in unethical ways, but it has now come to light that these banks are funding the arms trade who supply these violent weapons of guns, etc. to already war-torn countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, and so are committing abuse to human rights around the globe. War on Want has recently exposed this trade for the first time. Not only are the big five supplying these weapons but also depleted uranium and cluster bombs which, as we know, kill and maim innocent civilians and soldiers for years after. Now is the time to name and shame these banks that must now be made responsible for their social functions, such as helping small businesses and mortgage seekers and not supplying guns and bombs. We therefore call on the government to make all banks publish full details of loans, holdings, and other services, which pertain to the arms trade. We also ask that the government introduce regulations that would prevent these banks from supporting the arms trade. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. R. SLADE (London): Congress, we heard how the biggest high street banks are investing money deposited to them to fund an arms industry that supplies arms worldwide to foreign governments, and in some cases not governments. Banks appear to make no moral judgement whatsoever and appear only interested in making a profit for themselves and their shareholders regardless of the cost to life. It appears to have very little impact on them that whilst they are making a profit round the world people are being slaughtered, including many young and innocent victims. They are being maimed, killed, and suffering so that banks can show a profit. There is little legislation at the present time to stop multinational institutions hiding behind a maze of corporate computing and bookkeeping, often using foreign banks and systems deliberately built into the banking system to hide this movement of money. If it was an honest profit gained by morally accepted means, why do they need it to be so secretive? Would you as an individual be able to sleep at night if you were aware that the interest rates of our high street bank paid into your personal account were made from profits of the arms trade? I urge you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

**IRAQ
EMERGENCY MOTION 6**

EMERGENCY MOTION 6

IRAQ

**CONGRESS IS APPALLED TO HEAR THE ANNOUNCEMENT
ON 15TH JUNE 2009 THAT THE ENQUIRY INTO THE IRAQ WAR
WILL BE HELD IN PRIVATE.**

SUCH A MOVE CAN ONLY LEAD TO ANOTHER BUCKET OF WHITEWASH AND PREVENT THOSE POLITICIANS RESPONSIBLE FROM BEING HELD TO ACCOUNT.

CONGRESS THEREFORE CALLS FOR THE ENQUIRY TO BE A PUBLIC ENQUIRY, WHICH IS THE VERY LEAST THE RELATIVES OF THE 179 TROOPS WHO DIED DESERVE.

**YORK ROWNTREES (Y22) BRANCH
YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION**

(Carried)

BRO. B. GOLDING (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, on Monday a debate took place on MPs' expenses and Congress was calling for more openness and honesty. Don't you think we deserve the same openness in respect of the Iraq war? What is there to hide? Why is an inquiry being held and kept in secret? Don't we deserve to have the facts? Don't the families of the bereaved servicemen and women merit a public inquiry? Haven't the government learnt anything? Let's have the facts. Treat the electorate with respect. Treat our servicemen and women with the respect they deserve. We hear the phrase, *weapons of mass destruction*; it feels more like mass deception. Congress, I move.

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): A public inquiry is vital, I think, to find the truth behind the justification to go to war. Some of you here today will remember that we had a debate in Congress six years ago on support for the war and some delegates were arguing for war saying Saddam had weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological, even nuclear weapons, which is not surprising, really, because we were led to believe that at the time. It turns out, of course, to be false information that came from a dodgy dossier that had been on the internet for 10 years. It has been estimated that up to a million people have died as a result of this war; hundreds of thousands of ordinary Iraqis, and around 3,500 US troops and 200 British troops have been killed. Questions need answering. We also need to ensure that never again are we led into a war through false information and lies. The war has been a disaster. After six years of occupation there is not enough drinking water in Iraq. Electricity is only on half the day. It is in a worse state now than it was before.

Many of us in the hall will have been part of the two million strong demonstration, the biggest demonstration this country has ever seen against the war. We all deserve a public inquiry. At the Newcastle Congress three years ago we had a fringe meeting where a woman called Rose Gentle, whose son Gordon was killed in Iraq, talked about the military families against the war. She and all the other family members who have lost loved ones in that war also deserve a public inquiry. Support Emergency Motion 6.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. L. RYAN (North West & Irish): Congress, is it not deplorable that politicians lied to us about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction to get support for an illegal war? Is it not despicable that when our sons and daughters duly went to fight this illegal war they went with substandard equipment, if there was enough to go round? What an outrage that the families of service personnel who have given their lives to fight this illegal war will not get the justice of a public inquiry. These fallen troops are heroes and their names should not be spoken in hushed tones behind closed doors. I support. *(Applause)*

BRO. S. COUGHLIN (North West & Irish): I would like to speak in favour of the motions on Palestine. President, Congress, I went to the fringe meeting and I was quite moved by the images, they are quite scarring, about what has actually gone on. Paul Kenny in recent times has always asked us to think outside the box so here goes. I would like to see an alliance made between the GMB and senior officials and in order to do that I would like possibly to have somebody facilitate this, somebody in a senior suit, possibly Mary, with some GMB-sponsored MPs. I would like them to go and head a delegation and have a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and apparently this is what you definitely get, and I would like to see that reported back to this Congress next year, and I would like to see what benefit we can help them with. These people need our help and support and the only way we are going to do that is to get out there and do it. Please vote for these motions. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleague, can I tell you that we have sent a delegation and there is a report. We send one each year.

BRO. S. COUGHLIN: Fantastic. They were asking again yesterday and there are further things they want to do.

THE PRESIDENT: We already do it. Okay?

BRO. S. COUGHLIN: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: We will make sure that you get copies of the report. Thank you.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London) in support of Palestine, said: I did not realise until the other day that actually it all started way before the First World War. Most people that I know think that is when it all started, but it did not. I lived in the Middle East for a while so I have seen the other side. I just think we need to help these people because it is so unfair. Israel seems to get all the press; Palestine does not. I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else hiding down there? No? Tim, come on.

BRO. T. ROACHE (Regional secretary, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Thanks very much, President. President, it is more than my life is worth but I nearly missed this because you brought business forward this afternoon. I had to hare from my hotel in my

car and a copper stopped me and he said, “You were speeding.” I thought, “Crikey, how am I going to get out of this?” So he said, “Get out the car. Have you got a licence?” I said, “No, I haven’t. It’s a provisional licence and I haven’t renewed it.” He said, “Is it your car?” I said, “Well, no, actually I went into Asda car park, I clumped this guy over the head and I’ve chucked him in the boot, and I’ve nicked the car.” “Don’t move,” he said, “don’t move.” He gets on the radio to his sub, “We got a right one here, Serge, it’s almost an international issue.” So the Sergeant came down and he said, “Right, get out the car.” I jumped out. He said, “Now flick the boot open.” I flicked the boot open and it was empty. He said, “There’s no one in the car.” I said, “Yeah, he’s accused me of speeding as well.” (*Laughter*)

Colleagues, the CEC are supporting Motions 220, 222, 224, 225, and 226, and Emergency Motion 6, each with a qualification, but opposed to Motion 223, and I will explain each motion in turn. When I was asked to speak on these motions I noticed that the majority of them were on Palestine, Israel, and Gaza. I have to be honest and say that that is not something I knew very much about. In fact I thought Gaza was that bloke who used to play for England. So I went to the Palestine fringe meeting yesterday and could not believe what I heard and saw. The issue here is about Israeli occupation of Palestine, despite being in total breach of international law and against the wishes of the Palestine people. It is not just about this illegal occupation, it is about how they enforce the occupation. The West Bank, an area roughly the size of Wales, currently has 85 checkpoints and 607 trenches, road gates, roadblocks, etc. That has a massive impact on the everyday lives of Palestinians. There is the so-called separation wall, supposedly to mark the boundary but as it is being built by Israelis it does not run along the internationally agreed line but cuts deep into Palestine territory, mercilessly cutting off towns, cutting off villages, cutting off people from each other and also access to water, electricity, and other essential services.

I just want to tell you a little bit more about these so-called checkpoints and how they work. At this fringe meeting yesterday we were handed this document following a trade union delegation and there were GMB representatives on it, as the President just said, that went to Palestine in June 2008. In it is an article from a senior Thompsons solicitor, a woman called Karen Mitchell, who is a senior partner of Thompsons and no shrinking violent, I can tell you. I just want to read you a quote from Karen’s article in that document: “I experienced the Kalandia checkpoint firsthand, which controls movement from the West Bank into Jerusalem. What I witnessed made me conclude that the checkpoints are used against the Palestinian people to degrade and utterly humiliate them. Our minibus dropped us at the entrance to the checkpoint. We walked with many Palestinians to a turnstile, the sort you would see at a football stadium only higher and narrower. Only one person can go through this at a time. I watched two elderly Palestinians struggling with their suitcases through this turnstile. I felt embarrassed that I had the privilege of leaving my suitcase on the minibus. I would never have been able to carry it through such a narrow entrance in the blistering midday heat. Tears came to my eyes as I watched the elderly couple who looked about the same age as my parents. They were flustered and frightened as they struggled with their cases. This image still lives with me today. I hope they were able to get through the turnstile and continue their

journey. I could see no justification in subjecting an elderly couple to such degrading treatment. They did not appear to be any threat to Israel security.”

Colleagues, until Palestinians get their territory back there cannot and will not ever be peace in the Middle East.

Turning first to Motion 220, we think the language used in this motion is unlikely to unite people of differing persuasions to work towards a stable and constructive peace for the people of Gaza.

On Motion 222, our qualification is that Israel would have to agree to the presence of UN troops and that this is an initiative that has never been proposed by any of the players in the region.

Motion 224, the qualification is on a technical point. The title of the motion refers to the EU Trade Agreement with Israel and the actual motion refers to an aspect of EU legislation whereby produce that has been illegally grown by Israeli settlers on occupied Palestinian land is being imported free of import duties in breach of the EU Israel agreement. We support the proposal that the GMB campaign against this practice.

On Motion 226, we support the sentiments of the motion but again the qualification on a technical point is that GMB does not have an NEC, but of course we have a CEC.

Congress, the CEC are opposed to Motion 223 as this motion is one-sided and unbalanced. Its support of Hamas does not take into account Hamas’s own abuse of human rights and opposition to trade unions. This motion will do nothing to enhance the peace process.

We support wholeheartedly Motion 225, the situation in Burma remains a major concern for the British Trade Union Movement due to the repressive military regime, the brutal treatment of its citizens and the democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and the repression of trade unionists.

Emergency Motion 6 on Iraq, the CEC are supporting this with this following statement. It is already GMB policy, as agreed in this very Congress hall in 2003, to call for such an independent inquiry. An inquiry is necessary to call to account those responsible for the distortion and lies that led to war under false premises. This inquiry should make all evidence that does not compromise national security available to the public.

In conclusion, please support Motions 220, 222, 224, 225, 226, and Emergency Motion 6 with the qualifications that I have set out, and oppose Motion 223. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification to 220? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on 222? (*Agreed*) On 224, does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London on 226 accept the

qualification? (*Agreed*) Emergency Motion 6, does Yorkshire accept the qualification?
(*Agreed*)

Motion 220 was carried.

Motion 222 was carried.

Motion 224 was carried.

Motion 225 was carried.

Motion 226 was carried.

Emergency Motion 6 was carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Would the mover of Motion 223 like the right to reply?

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): Congress, President, the CEC speaker said the words, “our support of Hamas”. What? I did not support Hamas. This motion does not mention Hamas. It does not ask you to support Hamas. There is no support for Hamas. I think that is perhaps a misrepresentation. I know that the CEC, because it happened at our London Region, thinks that the motion is one-sided. I think what they mean by omitting to criticise Hamas is that it distorts the reality of the conflict. How can you be balanced when there is no balance? Many Israelis still deny the existence of the Palestinians. The international community is one-sided. When the Israeli prime minister at the weekend continued to refuse to support the existence of a viable Palestinian state the US and the EU governments say it is a positive move forward. That is one-sided. The real question is, do you support the peace process in the Middle East. This motion does. It asks our Union to carry out concrete action, which, if successful, will contribute to the peace process and bring peace for everyone in the Middle East. Congress, please support.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, the CEC are asking you to oppose 223.

Motion 223 was lost.

SOCIAL POLICY – EDUCATION

“TRAIN TO GAIN”

MOTION 174

174. “TRAIN TO GAIN”

We ask congress to support this motion which is asking that the GMB ensure that all activists and full time organisers are fully aware of funding available through the governments “Train to Gain” initiative to enable our members to meet the demands of very uncertain times.

Employers have a responsibility to make sure that they give their staff equal opportunities to gain qualifications and develop skills which will enable them to face up to the challenges of the future.

The “Train to Gain” initiative offers employers in both the private and public sector access to funding to develop their staff and meet future demands. By being fully aware of funding opportunities, we as a union can fight to ensure that our members are given equal opportunities to enable them to try to meet the demands of this very uncertain time.

(Carried)

SIS. L. AVERILL (Northern): “Train to Gain” has been a fantastic initiative to the government to support employers of all sizes and in all sectors. It is an amount of money that the government has allocated to enable employers to train and improve the skills of their employees. This gives the employers the opportunity to up-skill their workforce at the expense of the government. In the current economic climate it is important to keep people in work, to support companies through difficult times. “Train to Gain” money has proved incredible valuable at this time. For example, there are many companies in our region that are currently operating a four-day week but with “Train to Gain” money they are able to keep their workforce occupied for five days and at the same time their workforce are up-skilled to help both themselves and equip them for the future business needs. “Train to Gain” has to be a win-win situation. The initiative shows in a very practical way how this government are trying to put funding where it is needed to keep people in work rather than out of work. Congress, it is vital that the initiatives like this are used by employers and expanded by government to help us through these difficult times. Congress, “Train to Gain” is an excellent resource that we recommend to companies to use. It is great that the initiative is working. Let’s support it. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. J. JEPSON (Northern): “Train to Gain” is an excellent scheme that we need to publicise through our activists, representatives, fulltime officers, and Union Learning Reps within the workplace. It allows employers to assess their workforce skills and qualifications and match them against future business needs of their employer. When they have carried out that assessment, employers in both the public and private sector can apply for funding to meet these needs. As activists we must ensure that people and our employers are aware of what is on offer. At the time when unemployment in our region is rising at a rate not seen for many years, it is important our members keep their skills and qualifications as up-to-date as possible. Recognised qualifications for our members are vital for them to compete in the very demanding job market. We all know that the public purse strings are tightening but funding is still there so let’s use it while we can. Let’s make sure our employers access this money. Let’s make sure we give our members every opportunity to up-skill. Let’s make sure our members are able to grab any opportunities that are still open to them. “Train to Gain” is an excellent scheme which can only benefit our members. Let’s support it and support this motion. *(Applause)*

ELQ FUNDING MOTION 175

175. ELQ FUNDING

Congress urges the Government to reinstate funding for students who are studying for equivalent or lower qualifications (ELO).

YORKSHIRE COAL STAFFS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. ROSS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): According to the Higher Education Funding Council website, John Denham, the Secretary of State, confirmed that any savings made from withdrawing funding for ELQ would be redistributed according to agreed priorities which at that point they had not even decided. Despite obviously having it in for anyone wanting to increase their knowledge by studying ELQs, Mr. Denham was enthusiastically speaking about the learning revolution on BBC Breakfast in March this year because we find it stimulating to learn things, he said. Well, I agree with that and so no doubt would followers of Basil Yeaxlee, after all it was Basil who introduced the concept of lifelong learning in 1929.

So, what is this ELQ we should not be studying, you may be asking. Well, it is an equivalent or lower qualification. What the government has done if someone already has a higher qualification, such as BA or a BSc and they want to study at an equivalent or lower level, they get no funding. This means, for instance, where an undergraduate might pay tuition fees of about £3,000 a year, an ELQ student could be paying over £8,000. As you can imagine, it might put some of them off. Many universities have been fighting this new policy, including the Open University. Our Vice Chancellor wrote to us students to explain that the rationale was to divert £100m to support those students entering higher education for the first time but she was concerned the impact it would have on people wanting to renew or replace their qualifications, such as changing jobs, particularly in the present credit crunch climate. The Commons Innovation Universities & Skills Committee is also not impressed. Their report concluded that the government's decision was insufficiently justified either by persuasive analysis of its likely effectiveness in achieving the desired goals, or evidence of the likely wider impact of the policy, and they had concerns that the withdrawal of ELQ funding will remove the flexibility in the system that allows individuals who do not have employer support to acquire new skills to be able to change employment and meet the needs of the changing economy.

It has been suggested that from 2008 over a quarter of Open University students in England will lose their funding and therefore have to pay more for their courses but note, please, this policy only applies to England. Students in other parts of the United Kingdom are not affected. Losing the funding, and as a knock-on effect losing the students as has been said, will ultimately impact on the courses which universities may be able to offer and threaten the international competitiveness of the UK's highly skilled workforce, or maybe that should be England's highly skilled workforce.

The Times Higher Education published an article in 2008 pointing out that the big losers in this are women and older people, by which I mean people over 40. Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of the Equality Challenge Unit, said, "The government's policy on ELQs may well disadvantage older women wanting to re-qualify and up-skill, perhaps returning to work after bringing up a family. It is difficult to see the logic in disadvantaging this group of people. It conflicts with the government's lifelong learning agenda and is potentially discriminatory both on the grounds of age and gender." So, there you have it. So much for lifelong learning. Thank you very much, Mr. Denham. I may even have to

leave Yorkshire and move to Scotland, or Wales, or Northern Ireland. Thank you.
(Applause)

SIS. S. WALKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, before Christmas 2008 the government decided to pull the plug on funding for students studying for ELQs, or equivalent or lower qualifications. They decided to divert the funding into universities which means that any mature students who want to study for a similar or lower level qualification to any they may already have will have to fund it themselves. This will mean having to find up to £5,000 from your own pocket for you to take the degree. What happened to lifelong learning? It appears now that this is only possible for those who can afford it. Education should be available to all with the same funding for all, regardless of your financial circumstances or age. Please support Motion 175.
(Applause)

SOCIAL/POLITICAL STUDIES

MOTION 176

176. SOCIAL / POLITICAL STUDIES

Congress calls on the CEC to lobby Government to introduce into the National Curriculum, social / political studies as part of either personal social education or citizenship, thus ensuring that pupils are aware of the struggle that various groups of people have made to achieve the vote and the importance to democracy of the need to vote.

ANWICK & MID Lincs COMMUNITY BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. CARTWRIGHT (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, in the main this motion arises out of the experiences of GMB activists in the workplace, community, and family. We see young people leaving school with little or no knowledge of the struggles that various groups have made to achieve the vote and the importance of democracy, and the need to participate and vote. Although this in part has been introduced we believe this should be mandatory at all stages of the national curriculum. We are now well into the third millennium but frequently find young people leaving school with little or no knowledge of the political parties of our country. Some even have little or no real understanding of democracy and using their right to vote correctly.

Politics is something far more universal than the distant proceedings of eccentric men and women, some with questionable business interests. Whenever a tabloid rumour sparks a witch hunt, whenever a peaceful demonstration turns into a riot, whenever ideals and reality, people and principles, clash politics is happening. It is happening all the time. We can neither ignore its importance nor escape its influence. Like history, it affects us all.

When these young people do eventually go to vote in either local or national elections, we are often dealing with thousands of “no idea” votes making vast differences to election results. We only have to look at the recent election results with the BNP gaining

two seats in the Euro elections with what can only be described as apathy, of not using the vote, letting them in. Although this is not to be laid fully on the doorstep of education, it is certainly part of the overall problem. If they can be given some insight into different political parties without bias, they can at least have an informed choice to take to a ballot. At key stages 1 and 2, ages 5-11, our children are taught all about different cultures and religions. They are also taught respect for all different cultures and religions, and quite rightly so. Although this is a statutory subject with a programme of non statutory study, it is at least mandatory. Perhaps politics could be tied in with these studies and become mandatory, at ages 5-11 studying the use of citizenship skills and creating an interest that will develop further in their education when at key stages 3 and 4 citizenship becomes statutory. At key stages 1 and 2 part of the citizenship syllabus is to meet and talk with different people, for example, with outside visitors such as religious leaders, police officers, and the like.

This we believe would be a good opportunity for the GMB as a general union covering all aspects of the country's workforce to get young persons representatives into the classroom and explain where unions are situated in the political arena thus trying to correct the bad press, that unions are bad, in past years. For many young people their first contact with a union is when the workplace rep offers them an enrolment form asking if they are interested in joining.

One of my grandsons opted for leaving school at 16 to work while taking further education, thus reducing the need for student loans, but by taking this route he did not get any political input. This year he had his first voting card sent to him and was asking his family, "Should I vote and, if so, who for?" Personally, I find this disturbing. Our country's tomorrows are in the hands of today's children. As a forward looking union let's push for greater political education to be put into the national curriculum as soon as possible. We understand that there have been changes to the national curriculum that do in part give us what we ask for in the introduction of citizenship and the opportunity to get involved in the process, but if this is not a statutory subject it may well all be in vain. At the very least with the introduction of citizenship being recently new we must have a watching brief in order that the perceptions of GMB activists in the workplace, families, and communities, are changed. This will only deliver when we see young people telling us about the trade union and labour movement. Please all note that one of today's children will be tomorrow's prime minister. I move. (*Applause*)

SIS. K. SLATER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, President, democracy should be viewed as key learning in the curriculum from the earliest years of schooling. Students should be taught to question the reliability and validity of decisions and to offer constructive criticism and alternatives, not simply argue for argument's sake. Likewise, children need to understand that there are differing viewpoints, solutions, or perspectives in addition to their own. The skill of listening to others and accepting and respecting their points of view are valuable lessons taught in classrooms that value democracy. In the end, the process and discussions are just as important as the results as people have the opportunity to discuss and debate issues. It is not the aim of democracy to convert people to one view but rather seek common ground, to seek better understanding, to seek to

discover how we can improve our society all together. In a healthy democracy citizens question the motives of their politicians and scrutinise the activities of government. In all countries where people give a mandate to their elected representative, the general population should have an awareness of civic matters to ensure that the integrity of the chosen leaders is maintained. If voters are politically ignorant, how can they be confident that they will be fairly represented? Education for democracy has to begin in the primary years, the development years, when children are learning about society and how to become effective members of it. The foundation of children's skills, habits, and knowledge are laid down during these years of education. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleagues. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? I call Brian Farr, of the CEC, to speak on Motion 176. Brian?

BRO. B. FARR (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, the CEC are supporting Motions 174 and 175 and supporting 176 with a qualification that I will outline. Motion 176 calls on the CEC to lobby the government to introduce social and political studies to the national curriculum. The motion states that students should learn about various political struggles the previous generations have had to win in order to be given the right to vote and to live in a democracy, not only win but those who took part. In her opening address Mary spoke of a group of workers who 175 years ago were blacklisted for striking. They were blacklisted for striking for better pay and working conditions. These are the people that we owe so much to. These are the people that our children should learn about. Twenty-five years ago I, along with thousands of other miners, was in the throes of the biggest struggle I have ever taken part in, not against the Coal Board who employed us but against Margaret Thatcher and the Tory government. Yes, I was blacklisted too. I was proud of that black list, along with a lot of other of my colleagues. But – and there is always a “but” – we should give a thought to those men and women who fought for the vote, fought for the right to have freedom of speech, fought for their struggle. As a socialist organisation the GMB has a long history of supporting working people, both in the UK and around the world, in their struggle to win better working conditions and greater political freedom. We wholeheartedly agree with this motion that our younger and future generations should learn about the battles in the past so that they do not take for granted the hard-won rights for now or in the future.

The qualification for this support is a technical one. Because citizenship studies which cover social and political topics is already a national curriculum at key stages 1-4, the GMB therefore does not need to lobby for its introduction. Congress, in summary, we support Motions 174, 175, and ask you to support 176 with the qualification I have just outlined. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Does Midland & East Coast Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put Motions 174, 175, and 176 with that qualification, to the vote.

Motion 174 was carried.

Motion 175 was carried.

Motion 176 was carried.

ANY OTHER CONGRESS BUSINESS

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you will be glad to know that that is the end of that business. I now move to Any Other Congress Business. Colleagues, I would like to read you out a letter from Steve Gent on the success of one of our nominated charities from last year's Congress, called *Heaven Can Wait*. There is also a slide showing the General Secretary making a presentation for the charity.

It reads: "Thank you to the GMB National Congress. Our GMB members created this charity, *Heaven Can Wait*. From last year's Congress bucket collection Midland & East Coast Region members have so far raised over £13,000 shared by its local and national council of charities, the largest donation ever received by these charities. The GMB members also achieved a world record for their Lands End to John O'Groats bike ride in a day. When we started I told GMB members I would like to raise enough money for a TV to thank the hospital for the care they gave me whilst I was seriously ill. I never expected this would be so big. Without the GMB I could not have done this. Please thank Congress for their support. Regards, Steve Gent."

Can I say thank you to Steve and well done to all those who participated in raising that money, particularly Midland & East Coast. (*Applause*)

The RMA would like to thank Congress for their generosity. Their raffle has raised – are you listening, Billy - £696 but there are still some unclaimed prizes on the stall so please check your tickets.

Could I say, Congress, I would like to thank you all for the generosity that you have all shown this week in the raffles, the collections, and so on, and in particular I would like to thank you, on behalf of his wife Ava, for the Jimmy Knapp collection. Okay.

CLOSING PROCEDURES OF CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: We will now move to closing procedures of Congress and the omnibus vote of thanks from Sheila Bearcroft, CEC, South Western Region. Sheila?

OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS

SIS S. BEARCROFT (CEC, Manufacturing): I am pleased and proud to be moving this omnibus vote of thanks at this the 2009 GMB Congress. Colleagues, the first person I must give our thanks to is of course Mary Turner, President of the GMB. (*Applause*) Friends, you are probably aware that I have known Mary in her capacity as President and before that as Vice President, for more years than I care to remember at this moment but during that whole time Mary has always stayed true to her convictions, unafraid to state them, and has kept her principles on a straight and narrow road. I can say she has never turned her face away from any member of the GMB, no matter how high up the ladder or

if they are on the bottom rung, whether it be the General Secretary or a low-paid part-time public service worker, everyone is equal in her eyes. She will always be there for all of us. Mary, you are well respected outside of the GMB. You are certainly unafraid to state GMB policy to anyone; this includes the Prime Minister himself. Can I say at this point from a personal point of view, and I am sure from yours, it is not the likes of Esther Rantzen that needs to stand in the Luton seat but someone just like you who knows what the ordinary person in the street and the GMB membership want and need in a Labour socialist government. (*Applause*) What a special woman we are privileged to have as our President and for that, Mary, we can all say a very humble thank you.

Of course, colleagues, we now move to Malcolm, the rock that sits beside Mary giving all the help and support, taking quite a bit of weight off her shoulders at the appropriate times and of course always in his very cool, calm, and pleasant way. Malcolm always has a ready smile for all his friends and colleagues but at the same time is always fair in any decision-making process. This is something that some of us have been privileged to see when working on subcommittees alongside Malcolm. Your hard work and devotion to your duties as Vice President is greatly appreciated by everyone and I am sure Mary has told you this on many occasions. Mary, I can tell you he did a wonderful job during your absence this morning, and a huge thank you, Malcolm, from the rest of us. (*Applause*)

Congress, who could have failed to have been moved by the address of Kate Green on the Child Action Poverty Group on Sunday and the presentation to the children who were successful in the schools competition really proves the GMB not only cares just in work but also in the community. As a mother and a grandmother to watch the children receive their gift and to watch Mary in her caring way shake everyone's hand is something Congress will always remember. The winners of the Regional Outstanding Achievement Award on Sunday afternoon really deserved the recognition for all the hard work and endeavours they have put in on behalf of the GMB. Thanks also to the young singers from Poland who entertained us so well during Sunday lunchtime.

On Monday in respect of the Congress Gift, Tom Brennan gave a heartfelt address to Congress on the People's Kitchen which provides friendship, food, and support to the needy, lonely, and homeless in the northern region. Delegates were also shown a short video about the sterling work of Zoe's Place, one of only two hospices for children in the country which I know brought a tear to many a delegate's eye.

The GMB@work DVD was shown, a vitally important issue to the future growth of the Union, dealt with in a very entertaining fashion. Those who took part in the DVD certainly performed well enough to get their Equity cards. (*Laughter*) And can I say, General Secretary, if ever the Equity trade union is looking for a home I am sure they would feel comfortable with the GMB, so pick up the phone, Paul.

The General Secretary gave his address to Congress on Monday and, as always, inspired Congress to continue with their endeavours in order to grow our Union. The fantastic progress this Union has made since Paul Kenny took over the helm in Newcastle in 2005 is very much down to the drive, vision, and campaigning management of your good self,

Paul and Congress thanks you very much for that. As we know, congresses and general secretaries come and go in the GMB. It is really a shame the previous General Secretary did not go a bit sooner (*Applause*) because, Paul, you have proven the Union is not only safe in your hands but will grow and prosper year on year.

Thanks must also go to the Regional Secretaries who have worked with the General Secretary and developed into a formidable senior management team. They work together, which is something that has not been done in the past in this Union.

Before I move away from Monday, who can forget John McDonnell of the North West Region who made that passionate contribution outlining the sickening antics of Hazel Blears in Salford? John, I thank you for expressing the feelings on this issue. Your views on this matter reflected so clearly and concisely the views of all decent people.

We come to Tuesday. We saw the visit of the Prime Minister. I thank the regions for taking the opportunity of raising the issues that are so vitally important to GMB members. I know the Union and the regions will be following up a number of those issues with the Prime Minister.

And who could fail to be moved by Laura Walsh, resident poet on BBC Radio Merseyside, who gave us two moving and outstanding poems on the violent culture which so sadly some of our children can get caught up in, and of course that second poem entitled, *Working Class Hero*. Tuesday evening was the President's Night and I understand a good night was had by all.

Now we move to Wednesday and Congress is nearing its conclusion but before it does I want to thank Kathleen Walker Shaw for her continued sterling efforts on behalf of the GMB Union in Europe.

Congress will also recognise all of the great work done by the national office backroom and front room staff, far too many people to mention. You all know who you are. Thank you very much for ensuring Congress runs so smoothly and efficiently. Special thanks to Dolores for all her hard work. Thanks to the press team. Thanks to the stewards who gave their time to assist this week. Thanks to the Standing Orders Committee, Helen Johnson has been excellent once again. Thanks to the regional tellers, the general member auditors, and the shorthand writers. Thanks to all the sponsors, exhibitors, the staff of the Winter Gardens, and if I have missed anyone, my apologies but please do accept our thanks.

Last but certainly not least I want to thank you, delegates. You are a vital component in the engine room of this great organisation. You have made this Congress a great success, raising and debating the issues that are so important to the members of this Union. You have made this Congress a warm, welcoming, and comradely Congress, and I thank every delegate who has come to this rostrum (or the other one) and has made sure this GMB Congress will go down as the best ever.

May I thank my region; they have done us proud. May I also thank my Regional Secretary, Allan Garley, who sat diligently in the hall alongside his PA, Lynn Bowen, taking notes for me Monday afternoon and all day yesterday while I was at the TUC in London. Thank you both very, very much and thank you, region, for doing us proud back in South Wales.

Mary, my last thanks go to you, proud President of the GMB. I thank you and Congress. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to thank Congress for their best wishes. I feel very proud to be your President. Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*) I would now like to call Paul Kenny, our General Secretary, to make the closing speech.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Mary. Forgive me dropping the title "President", Mary. It has not been a bad week, all in all. Sunday was an interesting task that we set lots of people in the backroom of the Union, just arrange with the North West Region, get 200 or 300 kids here, look after them, feed them, and try not to wreck the place. I thought it was a great start. It was typical of the GMB. It was fabulous. I echo what Sheila said, Mary's style, you know, which is GMB, with the families, with the teachers, and with the kids. It was just fantastic. It was brilliant. It is us, and it was fantastic.

Like Sheila I was just knocked out by the fact that when we planned Congress we looked at making it about special people because we are an organisation of people.

Neil from Birmingham Region took the award, did not say much about what he did, but he saved the life of a young boy and that recognition by his region and by his Union is typical of the work that our members do in public services day in, day out. So the next politician that starts talking about public services, just remind them to go and have a word with the parents of that child because had it not been for Neil that child would never have grown up. That is just about typical of the work our people do.

Ken Moody came on in a wheelchair, lifelong, a life given dedicating to others.

Then the Northern Region who took advantage of the new system to actually nominate a whole branch for what they had done.

There was Cath Murphy from GMB Scotland, who received the award for her work in Scotland but actually representing everybody who had kept the GMB alive by its fingernails in Asda during those bleak years.

David Grant from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire came to collect the award on behalf of his Dad.

Chas Henderson from the Midlands and Bob Welham from North West who received the awards for Health and Safety, for their commitment and passion to make sure that

workers, many of whom will maybe never ever meet them in their lives, or people who will not even understand the importance of joining a union, will be safer today and tomorrow, and so on.

That is the GMB. It is what we do. That is why we are proud of it. That is why we do not hide under stones. We do not run away. That is what we do. We are proud of what we do. We are real people and in a peculiar way we are a real family.

There was the Congress Gift, as Sheila said, from Northern Region, all about caring for others.

We saw some interesting people this week, I thought, anyway. Laura, I will never forget Laura, and anyone who has seen her in the flesh will never forget her. Poet to the trade union movement, I think is the title that we will bestow upon her. There was also Monica, and Billy Hayes, who spoke passionately here.

Then Gordon and Sarah Brown: I thought that was very good. I actually thought that was probably the best impromptu speech that he has made in many a year. My message to him would be, Gordon, forget the whizzos at the back, forget the barn pots who have never actually had to go out and do a day's work in their life, speak from the heart and you will reconnect to the people of this country. That is what you need to do, talk from your heart, with passion. (*Applause*)

The boys and girls from Cammell Laird will be going down to Number 10. I think it is a bit ironic, in a way, because the plot to sack them and to jail them, I have no doubt in my heart, started in Number 10 so maybe going full cycle the justice that they deserve and we have been campaigning for them will finally come to fruition in Number 10. Let's not count our chickens but let's keep our fingers crossed.

Finally of the speakers, Kate Green, CPAG, I thought was brilliant; the passion and fire about the people around who share our commitment and passion about ending poverty for children. If we are about anything, as you have heard me say before, it is about changing society to a fairer society. We are not actually driven by much other than that, that we want a fairer and better life for people.

There is Vaughan Gessing, the South Western Region TUC Welsh President, and our own Sheila, President of the TUC, who is an absolute star. Anyone at the TUC General Council will tell you, she has been a brilliant President of the TUC. Those of you who are lucky enough to go to the TUC Conference this year will see that.

Mary - Mary is just Mary. There is no other. I do not know what the Thesaurus would say about you but, Mary, your best attribute is that you are just you. You don't have feet of clay. You are absolutely, completely and utterly, bedded in our own working class values. It shows every time that you deal with people. You will see some of that again today.

Malcolm, he is a rock. He is brilliant. You do not see a lot of the stuff he does to help us during the year. He has to preside over a lot of the meetings of the senior officials and, believe me, he is as tough as they come. He is really great. He is a great attribute to the Union and I am pleased to say that he has been nominated by the CEC to go on to the TUC General Council, our new seat. He is a lay member and we are putting a lay member on the General Council because we have now grown the Union to the point where we are entitled to another seat on the TUC. Congratulations, Malcolm. Well done. *(Applause)*

There have been some interesting sights around Blackpool this week, in and around Congress, and you will see some in a minute, I have an idea, on that slide show and I have seen some interesting sights. I have not seen sight of that yet but I have seen sight of a press release from the London Region which suggests that Doug Rigby is going to buy a round of drinks! *(Applause/Cheers)* The trouble is, as a couple of delegates said, you can never believe what you read in the press. *(Laughter)*

Harry Donaldson, where are you, Harry? Harry Donaldson, there has been a vicious rumour circulating in GMB Scotland that you have broken into a £5 note this week. *(Laughter)* The delegates in Scotland, those of you who know Harry know that he is immaculate. You see him at 2 o'clock in the morning, or 12 o'clock at night, wherever it is, he is absolutely immaculate. He is immaculate. He is perfect. His tie is always perfect, his suit is perfect, hair, everything. Delegates from GMB Scotland, I asked them, you know, "Did you ever see him not absolutely dead right," and they said, "Paul, we believe that he goes up to the room every night and hangs himself up in the wardrobe exactly as he is." *(Laughter)* Do you know what, I think you are right. I think you are right.

You as regions and Congress delegates, you have already raised (without what you do when you leave here) more than £20,000 for charities and events, lots of them who would just not get that money from any other source. It is just illustrative of what you do every single day, helping and fighting for other people.

We debated some interesting stuff this week, President. We did rights at work, energy policy, and protection for consumers who are also our members. We dealt with issues around energy, gas and electricity bills, banking regulations, and we have even found time to discuss the issues of the Fair Pint Campaign. I am very grateful for the 1,800 volunteers who have approached me since Monday and are prepared to go recruiting in pubs over the next six months, and I shall be writing to you with your expenses in due course! *(Laughter)*

We have used the time here this week to actually think about real policies. Some delegate made the point - I am sorry I could not catch the name at the time, the sound system up here is not as good as it could be - that there are a lot of members out there watching us on TV and they want to know that we are doing something, talking about trying to change issues about investment in manufacturing. A lot of our members are still in manufacturing. Gordon Richardson, from JCB, real world, dealt with real problems, he spoke with some authority and passion about the recession effects on real people.

There was a lot of anger expressed, and rightly so, about MPs' expenses and the abuse. We are going to give and continue to give support for the good ones but we ain't giving support for the cheats and the liberty takers. We have a little list, as someone has quite rightly said, and that little list is being checked against every little bit of detail that comes out. I will tell you now, we do not need a new policy. This is already our policy. It is a policy we made two years ago. We vet the activities of all constituency MPs who receive money or support from our organisation. That process will go on and not a single penny will be going to any of these people. What will be going to these people will be our members in droves telling them to do the decent thing and sling themselves out of the Party and sling themselves out of office, and let somebody get in who is straight and who has the interests of the constituencies and the working class at heart. That is what we will be doing. (*Applause*)

We dealt with social care, very interesting, about volunteers and carers. I made a note about that because I think we are will want to do some work on it. We want to change the way some of the work is done when you refer resolutions to the Executive. I think some of the movers of resolutions should be involved with us during the year when we go through the policy. Sometimes people do think it falls off the agenda. It does not. A lot of work goes on but perhaps another new extension is drawing in the people that we ask to refer items to us, getting them engaged in looking at the policy proposals that we can bring back next year. That seems sensible to me. I do not know why we did not think of it before.

Racism, I think we have all made a very fair, clear position where we stand about the BNP.

We talked about redundancy rights and inequality, how MPs can sit on fat cheques themselves, and the captains of industry, and then talk about the damage increasing protection on redundancy rights or redundancy payouts might do to the economy.

We talked about jobs because they are important, and homes and people; real issues, really, about real people.

I want to say thank you to a few other people. Thanks to the National Officers. I am not going to make a cheap joke about stand up and be recognised but, you know, thanks to the National Officers. They do a great job. They have been here all week. I know that a lot of members have had the opportunity to speak to them and to go through stuff with them, and I appreciate your time spent. Congratulations and well done.

To all the Union staff all round the regions who make the Union regional delegations tick and do a lot of work for their regional delegations. Thank you very much for what you do.

Thanks to the SMT, as Sheila said. We now have three Pauls in the SMT, Paul McCarthy, Paul Hayes, and Paul Kenny, and to Tom and Andy, and Tim and Richard, and Joe and

Harry, and Allan, publicly I say thank you. I echo everything Sheila said. We operate as a fantastic team and we look at problems and we come up with solutions. We do not look at how we may advance a particular position irrespective of its impact on the organisation, and the outcome of that is what you saw in those reports about the Union structure and finances. That is why the GMB effectively has been moving up the league table, people have focused on providing solutions to problems rather than blocking solutions to problems. I publicly pay tribute to the work that the SMT, the regional secretaries have done.

There are a few others. Our Campaigns and Press team, Stevie Pryle, Rosie Conroy, and Charlotte Gregory, what an outfit! They have more talent than Ronaldo, more energy than a power station, and they have more commitment than the whole House of Commons put together. My deep thanks and the thanks of Congress for all the work you do for us year in, year out. They are the ones that drive our campaigns. I thank all three of you. *(Applause)*

And now what I am going to call the “super crew” because these are the people that do all the work. I sit up there and make out I am, yeah, yeah, but there are loads of people who actually make this tick: Katie, Kevin, Anita, Barry, Marion, John McCargo, Kevin Sweeney, Tom Hazeldene (new), Barbara Casher, Heidi, Laura, Phil, Naomi, and Steve Short. They are at the back of the hall. They are incredibly shy, they are incredibly retiring, and they have all got hangovers! Apart from that, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

The national organising team are all looking smart and suave down here, Avril, Paul, Bob, Keith, and Martin. A great year you have had, all of you. Well done.

Robert Badlan, who is at the back, those of you who know him. Robert is in charge of collecting all those sponsorship dues from people and encouraging people to donate money so that we can cut the deals of Congress, put on a few freebies, make sure you have free tea and coffee, and an occasional free drink for those who want that sort of thing. Robert, I think, this year raised about £65,000, which obviously not only just offsets the cost of Congress, it makes sure that all those other things that I have talked about come out of other people’s pockets, and not out of the members’. Thank you, Robert, a great job. *(Applause)*

Alex McMillan and Allan Wylie from the National Admin Unit, and the Finance Director, have both been resuscitated twice by ambulance personnel while Mary has been giving away all the various donations during the week. Thank you, Mary.

Just a quick word for one of the sponsors, Pellacraft, Steve, Rosemary, Samantha, and Nicola Pella, they have supported the Union, the Midland & East Coast Region, and then most of the regions, supported events thick and thin. They have helped branches. They were there again this year. They are donating to different functions, donating prizes, helping us. They had a stall up the top. They have been great supporters, and I just wanted to give them a mention, Mary. They are really good people. *(Applause)*

And now we are getting to the end of a long list. Where am I? Dolores, I might have told you earlier in the week that for Dolores it was her anniversary this week. I also know that it is her birthday very shortly. She will start work on Congress 2010 in about four weeks. This does not happen by chance, trust me. She is a great attribution to the team. There is a little phone that she has there and there is a phone at the back, and on the phone at the back the staff have stuck a bat. She thinks it is a term of endearment (*Laughter*) and I am not going to disabuse her! Dolores, this is from all the staff so don't lash them up too much in the next 24 hours. Thank you very much. (*Presentation amid applause*) Well done. Happy Birthday. (*Delegates sang, "Happy Birthday"*) Well done, that fellow. Well done. (*Applause*)

Ida, where are you? There's Ida. Ida, occasionally, just occasionally, panics in between clocks ticking, like each second. Laila, her daughter, is with us this week, and they have been fantastic. Ida is the other half of the General Secretary's Department. You know we have these great titles, the General Secretary's Department. That is me, Dolores, and Ida. The Press and Campaigns Department is Steve, Rosie, and Charlotte. We do not have a thousand people at head office. What we do have is a thousand percent. Thank you very much, Ida, for everything you have done; brilliant. (*Applause*)

Kathleen Walker Shaw, who works tirelessly in the Brussels office, she is just sheer brilliance. I mean that, she is pure brilliance. She guides us through very complex sets of European potential legislation, she builds agreements and treaties with all sorts of other unions across Europe to try and swing votes our way. She is truly brilliant. I think she doesn't herself realise how much she is appreciated by the regions. I know all of the regional secretaries who have worked with Kathleen think she is the tops. Mary and Malcolm have worked with her. Head office staff think that. From my point of view, I cannot give you high enough praise. Kathleen, I am just so pleased that we have you and Unite have not. Thank you very much. And don't you ever go there, either. (*Applause*)

I have a couple more things. Charlie King: I missed Charlie out of the staff call and he must have been sitting there thinking, "That's nice, ain't it. I've been 'ere a few years. I'm retiring shortly and he don't even remember my name." You come up here, Charlie. Charlie started work as a gasman working at British Gas from 1964 to 1994, 30 years. He was shop steward in the Southern Region. I remember him well. He served on the Executive. I remember him on the Executive. He applied for and became a researcher at the National Office in 1994. In 2005, after 30 years with the organisation, he retired from London's Travel Watch, what used to be called London Transport Users Committee. He was instrumental in a whole range of strategic decisions and initiatives, in talks also which have led to improvements on loads of routes, including Watford to Gatwick. He was awarded an MBE actually, quietly, for service to public transport in 2007. I am reliably informed that he is chair of East Coulsdon Residents' Association and chair of the East Surrey Transport Committee. He is retiring shortly, after 15 years.

I think everybody in the National Office who knows Charlie knows that he is an attribute. He is a great guy. He is a really good guy. He is a stickler for detail. If you ask Charlie to

knock you up a short note, you will get 40 pages. I mean, this boy knows his stuff. Everybody is going to be sad to see you go. I think it is right to honour you for your service. We have a few other things to give you but just as a token we want to give you some glasses, but it is a token. I am sure we will find something to put in it. Charlie, you have been a great servant to the Union as a lay member, on the Executive, and in the Research Department. You have been brilliant. Now you are going to get something you have not done for a long time, you get to say a few words.

CHARLIE KING: Thanks, Paul. (*Applause*) Thank you. Since I have been staff you do not usually get much chance to come to the rostrum and when you see me running up here it is usually when something has gone wrong, so I was wondering what had gone wrong this time. I would just like to say thank you, particularly to the GMB, because not only was I a shop steward, a good Union member I hope, but when I worked there the GMB helped educate me. I left school with no qualifications whatsoever yet I stand here, as Paul said, with an MBE which is not really a qualification but I also managed to get myself an MA during the course on my way up, and a few other things, and I was a good qualified service technician at British Gas.

I would just like to say a few other things. I would really just like to say a thank you on behalf of all my colleagues at National Office and I will include the National Admin Office on that, who tirelessly work away and sometimes under difficult circumstances. Working for Paul has been a real pleasure, to actually have a General Secretary that cares about the Union, the members, and the public; and he cares about his staff. But all my colleagues have worked solidly all the time. It was not so long ago, and Sheila made a little reference to it, all the staff were told on the Friday before Christmas that they were not worth a toss and they could all leave over Christmas as far as somebody else was concerned. Two weeks after Christmas, we were told that was all off, just get on and get back to work. Well, I am proud of my colleagues because they did just get back to work and do everything they could for the members.

I would also just like to say that I have been a Labour Party member since 1972. I am also chairman of my constituency party, just. I really felt like leaving a few times the last couple of years but I am still there, still stuck with it. I would just like to thank some of my old colleagues who battled along with me in the London Labour Party years and years ago. I would like to thank Mary, who was from London Region, and John Cope, who is here, who were good mentors for me when I represented Southern Region on the London Labour Party and we really had to fight a load of battles, and they were always good friends and good colleagues. And I would just like to thank you all for letting me address Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlie. Good luck.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Charlie. I would like to say thank you to visitors. You have been very supportive, supportive of Congress, supportive of your partners and families, and I think as Mary often says, many of us could not do what we do without the support of our families and our partners. Thank you very much for your

participation. (*Applause*) I hope you come back as delegates. Certainly this year I have met a lot of first-time delegates. There are quite a few first-time delegates. Did you enjoy it? (*Confirmed*) Will you come back? (*Confirmed*) Job done!

Now just a bit of self-indulgence. I would like to say thank you to my wife, Pat, who is over there. (*Applause*) We will have been married 40 years this year and I think we might just have a party, kid, eh?

THE PRESIDENT: “*And it don’t seem a day too long.*”

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes. (*Laughter*) It really does not, Mary, actually. I love her dearly. We have had a great life. She has been supportive of me beyond my wildest dreams. She took a disproportionate amount of time helping to bring up our kids. My son, Warren, was here this week. You know how proud that makes me. When we talk about the GMB family, it runs through us. So, Pat, I love you dearly and I promise you we’ll have a quiet weekend. How’s that? (*Applause*)

The final thank you is going to our minute takers, Michael and Phyllis. Phyllis, we are very pleased and proud to have had you here and we have a special poster – you have a choice, actually, and we will get it back to London - we hope that you will put it up either in your office or your house.

Michael, come up here. He really doesn’t know. That’s why I was stalling because we had to get him round the back. He had gone to the toilet or something. Michael has been taking down notes at GMB Congresses and Regional Councils for a very long time, and he is also an avid collector of trade union memorabilia. That’s right, isn’t it? Last year we gave him a plate which he cherished with his life and carried all the way home wrapped in bubble-wrap, got inside the door, fell over the post, and dropped the plate. (*Laughter*) We have found another one! There you are, mate. (*Presentation of plate*) Thank you very, very much. Instead of writing the words down, why don’t you create a few?

THE PRESIDENT: He’s stuck! He’s stuck!

MICHAEL THEAR: Never having been put in this position before without any warning, but this happens to be my 24th conference of the GMB that I have reported on. (*Applause*) During that time I have become an avid collector of all sorts of trade union memorabilia, much to my wife’s annoyance, I think. She does not quite share the enthusiasm that I have for it all. Actually, I did not fall over it when I went in; I was cleaning some of them. I have about 80 of these, not this particular one but various ones. (*Laughter*) You see why my wife gets a bit annoyed. Anyway, it just fell off the wall. I was mortified as I know they are very difficult to come by. I hope to be doing this for many more years to come. I do enjoy coming here and I have great fun, actually, preparing the transcript, even though sometimes when I look at four or five days of proceedings that I have to proof-read, it tends to send a bit of a shiver through the spine.

It is tremendous enjoyment coming here and doing this job and I would like to say thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Finally, as Sheila said, thank you to the delegates. I will nick this phrase from Martin Smith. He sent it to me. He said I could nick it but I am going to give him the credit for it. He said: "Remember that the GMB@work is not just for Congress, it's for life." The GMB is really, really proud of you. My heart beats with a passion about what we do. I am proud that we stand for social change and justice and we will never retreat, ever, from those goals. Thank you very much for everything you do for the members, thank you for your attendance this week, and just thank you for being part of the family. It's a bloody great family, I'll tell you. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Paul. We are very proud of you. Michael, before you put that back up on the wall, will you make sure you go to SpecSavers first because you missed the notch!

Colleagues, I would like to now come to the closing ceremony, which is in two parts. We will have a short slide show with some of the highlights of Congress, and the music this year is *Proud* by M People. Then we will stand and sing *The Red Flag*.

Video shown to Congress.

Congress stood and sang The Red Flag.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can I say thanks to you all, a safe and pleasant journey home, and see you in Southport next year. Thank you.

Congress concluded.