

GMB

CONGRESS 2016

.....
SIS. MARY TURNER MBE
(President)
(In the Chair)
.....

Held in:

Bournemouth International Centre,
Bournemouth

on:

Sunday, 5th June 2016
Monday, 6th June 2016
Tuesday 7th June 2016
(Sectional Conferences)
Wednesday, 8th June 2016
and
Thursday 9th June 2016

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PROCEEDINGS
DAY ONE
(Sunday, 5th June 2016)
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FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
SUNDAY, 5TH JUNE 2016
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

THE PRESIDENT (Mary Turner): Good morning, Congress. Will Congress please come to order.

BANNER CEREMONY

THE PRESIDENT: We are now going to move into the Banner Ceremony. For those of you who are here for the first time, the Banner Ceremony is the traditional opening of Congress. This year Birmingham Region will be forming the Banner Party with the National Banner, and we also welcome Regional Banners and the Unity Banner into the Hall. Please stand to greet the National Banner. *(Congress was upstanding for the Banner Party to the singing and music of Jerusalem)* *(Applause)* Congress, I want to thank all of those involved with the Banner Ceremony because they came to the Hall earlier this morning and yesterday to practise. Well done to all of you.

VIDEO MONTAGE

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we start with a short video showing events and campaigns from the last year. *(Video Montage shown)* *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Very good, and well done to all the regions that participated. I am going to eat that Gingerbread man before I leave Congress this year. You will find details of the fire and evacuation procedures on page 119 in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide document. Please take time to look at these and familiarise yourself with your nearest exits. We practised last night in our hotel at 2 o'clock this morning. Unite will do anything to stop our Congress. *(Laughter)* If the BIC Operations Manager comes into the hall to the stage it will be to announce an evacuation. Please listen carefully.

WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND VISITORS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would now like to introduce the members of the platform. On my right is my right-hand, the Vice President, Malcolm Sage, and sitting next to him is our European Officer, who will be assisting the Vice President, Kathleen Walker Shaw. Welcome Kathleen. On my left is the our General Secretary and Treasurer, Tim Roache *(Cheers and applause)*, and in case he needs advice, sitting next to him is Maria Ludkin, our Legal Director, and also someone who works extremely hard with her team to make this Congress run is Ida Clemo, Executive Policy Officer. Well done to all of you. *(Applause)*

Congress, could I please welcome the following guests and visitors. I would like to welcome ex-Regional Secretary Allan Garley from Wales and the South West. I hope you've got your phone on, Allan. We also welcome Vic Baines. It is good to see you back and in good health. Vic is from the Midland & East Coast Region. I welcome

Billy Smithy and Paul Evans from the North West & Irish Region, and Frank Rowberry, Wales & South West.

Of course, a very warm welcome to our verbatim shorthand writers, Phyllis Hilder and Michael Thear. They have been doing this for years. I don't know how, sometimes, they even understand the names. Could I ask you, when you do come to the platform, to help them and us, to give your name clearly and your region. That would be appreciated.

Could I remind all delegates that ALL Congress sessions are transmitted live on GMB Congress TV, so watch your words. This means that your speech will be shown live over the internet through the GMB National website, so please don't use any inappropriate language, unless I've used it first. Also mention if you are a first-time speaker. I ask delegates to take a moment that you have the following three important documents: Firstly, the one page Delegate Outline Programme. Next we have the Income & Expenditure Report. These are the Annual Accounts. Lastly, we have the Final Agenda & Congress Guide. Do we all have those documents? (*Agreed*) This document gives you all the information you need on motions, fringe meetings and the exhibition, and you will also need this on Tuesday when you go to your Section Conference. All Congress documents are printed on environmentally-friendly paper.

Free tea and coffee is available from the Café in the Solent Hall Exhibition Area. This has been sponsored by TU Fund Manager, Leigh Day Solicitors, Vivid, TU ink and Netrix. So thank them very much every time you have a cuppa. I would also like to thank our other sponsors, who are UnionLine for lanyards, wallets and the T-shirts; Pellacraft for the Congress notepads in your wallets; LV for the water in the Hall and Organise Consulting for sponsoring the GMB Internet Café. Please make sure, Congress, that you visit these areas and to thank them.

ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT: Could all Regional Secretaries, please, notify the Congress Office of any changes to their delegations.

OBITUARIES

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Congress to stand in silence as a mark of respect for departed GMB colleagues. Names will be shown on the screen and a copy of the Obituary List is on page 118 of the Final Agenda & Congress Guide. Additional names not on the printed list are: Tommy Grimes, the founder of the Jim Connell Society, who addressed Congress last year. Tommy was a great friend of the GMB. He kept going until he found where Jim Connell was buried in County Meath. With the Union, we opened a memorial in his honour. I always called "Tommy the Commie". He was a wonderful man who stood for principles that we all admire, him, his wife, Anne, and the family. We send them our most sincere condolences and wish them well without their Tommie the Commie. Could I also pay tribute to Ann McLaren, a member of GMB Scotland, who was a CEC member, a devoted trade unionist and a really lovely, lovely person. Ann will be missed so dreadfully in the region and by her family. We do send them our condolences and wish them well also for the future.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN COPE

I now come to someone who has been my mentor as long as I have been in this Union. He was the London Regional Secretary, his name was John Cope who guided many of us, including Paul Kenny, who is in the room, and many, many others—officers, trade unionists and activists—to make this Union a great union, and particularly in this Congress where democracy would rule he and he alone made sure that you, you in this hall today, like we were, mandated to vote for resolutions that we did not believe in. John Cope, when he spoke—I just wish that our young members could hear the speeches that he made—he took on the Executive with great power and taught many of us to do the same. I worked with that man. I became very close friends with him and his family for most of my working life. John Cope was the GMB and the GMW through and through. When Perivale branch resolutions were on the agenda, we were proud to listen to a man who cared very, very deeply about honesty and everything that we respect. He stood for months outside Hoovers with other trade unionists on behalf of the GMB on strike to make sure that the women in the factory that they worked in got the same rights of pension as the men did. That was the stature of that man. He will be missed dreadfully by London and by all of us who knew that man. I am in close contact with his family and always will be, because John Cope was my trade union man. Thank you, colleagues. Would you now, please, stand? *(Congress stood in silent tribute)*

APPOINTMENT OF TWO TELLERS

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Malcolm Sage): Could I now inform Congress that the names of the Regional Tellers who have been appointed are now being shown on the screen. Could I, please, emphasise that Tellers must remain in the Congress Hall whilst Congress is in session and that delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken.

Could I also welcome the General Member Auditors, who will be supervising the counting of votes. They are John Swainson from the Northern Region, and Andy Burgin from the Midland Region.

Delegates, if you could, please, look down at your Congress credentials, and if it says the word “Delegate” on it then you are able to vote. All others in the Hall are not eligible to vote.

CONFIRMATION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The members of the Standing Orders Committee and the CEC observers are now being shown on the screen.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Could I congratulate Helen Johnson on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for the ninth time. Well done, Helen. *(Applause)*

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1

SIS. HELEN JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President and Congress, as your Standing Orders Committee Chair, I formally move SOC Report No. 1. President and Congress, you will find a copy of SOC Report No. 1 in your Final Agenda, starting at page 24. I formally move adoption of that report and, in doing so, the SOC would like to thank the delegates and their regional secretaries for agreeing the 15 composite motions that also appear in your Final Agenda, starting at page 93.

At this time, there are a number of motions on the agenda dealing with the Trade Union Bill and the European Union, which are due to be debated later in the week. These motions would normally be considered for compositing as they cover the same subject matter and, broadly, adopt the same policy position. However, as the Central Executive Council is recommending that these motions are withdrawn in favour of CEC Statements on each subject, the SOC will advise Congress of any progress in due course. Would colleagues also please note the long-standing guidelines for Congress business on page 19 of your Final Agenda, as this will help all of you, especially new delegates, in understanding the procedures and guidelines that the President and the SOC work to.

Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 191: Abortion legislation within Scotland and support to Northern Irish Pro-choice Lobby, standing in the name of GMB Scotland, and Motion 288: Insurance for Cyclists, standing in the name of Southern Region. Would Congress delegates please note that if any further motions are to be withdrawn during the week, then the following procedure should be adhered to. Delegates should notify their regional secretary. The regional secretary should then inform the SOC in writing that the motion has been withdrawn, and the SOC will then report the matter to Congress so that all delegates are aware of the position and will be able to follow the Congress Agenda.

President and Congress, as agreed by Congress in 2007 the SOC, again, is recommending that motions are dealt with by Congress or Section Conferences, as appropriate, according to the subject matter for their debate. All of these motions are printed in the Final Agenda or in the appropriate Section Conference Agenda.

Existing Policy Motions. President and Congress, also in accordance with the 2007 decision, the SOC is, again, recommending that motions which are existing policy are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate. The Central Executive Council has advised the SOC which motions are in line with existing policy and the SOC has accepted this advice. You will find that these existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 at page 25 of your Final Agenda, and the letters “EP” also appear at the side of each such motion. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC at page 109 of your Agenda. This explains when the policy in question was reached.

President and Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 1.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Does Congress agree Standing Orders Report No. 1? Yes, Kim. If anyone else wishes to speak, please come to the front of the hall.

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): Congress, I am speaking with the support of London Region asking you to reference back Motion PS8, which is in the Public Sector Conference at the moment, and on page 206 of your Conference Agenda. My branch submitted this motion and it was submitted as a national policy motion, so, therefore, we are asking that it be transferred back to the National Congress Agenda. With respect, the SOC has made a mistake in placing this on a sectional agenda, which is about advisory and not a policy forum. The grounds of our reference back are as follows: The terms or instructions of this motion are far broader than just affecting public sector employees. Instruction 1 calls on the Labour-led Councils to set legal no-cuts budgets. It gives examples of legal and responsible measures that Labour councils can make to avoid any further budget cuts. Instruction 2 says that these measures should be taken and combined in a fight against the Tories' anti-austerity programme. The SOC has said that it should be on the Public Services Sector Agenda because it mentions council funding, but the demands in this motion affect everyone in this hall, everyone in the GMB and all of our families and friends because council funding, as we all know, funds refuge collections, libraries, social services, adult care, education in schools, leisure, swimming pools, parks, housing and youth. It affects every single one of us. Therefore, it is a policy and political issue. If it gets transferred back on to the National Conference Agenda, it will be debated properly. Therefore, if it is supported and carried by this Conference, it will become a policy. If it gets supported in the Public Sector Service Sectional Conference, it will only be advisory, and something of this importance really should be debated on the floor of Congress by delegates. *(Applause)* I will wind up by saying — I know it is the start of Congress and that people are still getting their bearings — that this is one of, if not the, most important votes that you will take this week, because so many of the motions that we are going to be debating are about austerity and aspects of austerity. What this motion does — that you will take this week, because so many of the motions that we are going to be debating are about austerity and aspects of austerity. What this motion does —

THE PRESIDENT: Kim, will you wind up, please?

SIS. HENDRY: — is set out a concrete and realistic way to fight the Tory cuts. Please support the reference back of PS8 to the National Agenda. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kim. Helen.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, I am responding to the representations from London Region on the allocation of the London Region motion — Local Council Budgets — to the Public Services Section Conference. Motion PS8 appears on page 206 of your Final Agenda. Congress, in recommending the allocation of motions, the SOC does not consider the merits of the motion but only the subject matter as written in the motion. Section conferences deal with the policies and strategies that the sections cover in a sectional-conference year. The SOC has twice considered this motion and previous representations from London Region, and the SOC view remains that the subject matter — Local Council Budgets

— falls within the remit of the Public Services Sectional Conference. President and Congress, accordingly the SOC recommends that the motion is dealt with by the section conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Congress, I am now going to put it to the vote. I will now put to the vote the resolution. Then I will take a separate vote on any challenges or reference back. Now I will take the vote on the SOC Report. All those in favour, please show? I shall put the reference back first. All those in favour of the reference back, please show? All those against? The reference back is carried.

The reference back to Motion PS8 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: As I said, the reference back is carried. One up, two to go. Thank you. Thank you, Helen. Can I now move the vote on the rest of the Standing Orders Report, No. 1. All of those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Standing Orders Report No. 1 was ADOPTED.

Thank you, Congress. These are the rules that you have adopted for the conduct of Congress for the coming week. Malcolm, over to you.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, President. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to call our President to address Congress. Mary Turner. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Thank you, Congress. I would like to welcome all the visitors who are sitting upstairs in the gallery. Welcome and well done.

Congress, I would like to give a warm welcome to all delegates, visitors, staff and exhibitors. I'd particularly like to welcome all the first-time delegates, and we are delighted to see so many of you here. Colleagues, it's great to be back in Bournemouth. Last time we were in Bournemouth was in 1991 — some of our young members weren't even born then, but I remember it well: Margaret Thatcher had just resigned — hip, hip, hooray; John Major had taken over as Prime Minister, and over two million people were unemployed and we were in a deep recession. Congress, as much as things change, they stay the same or even get worse.

Today under Cameron and his Bullingdon Cabinet, we have 1.6 million unemployed with young people bearing the brunt. Many of those who are in work are insecure, badly paid, zero-hours minimum hours contracts, jobs that make the Tories' figures look better but makes harder for working people and non-working people. Our young people are struggling. They are working hard, paying in but not being given the chances their parents had. They can marry, have children, join the army and vote (although we'd like to see them vote a bit earlier, as we support votes at 16) but they are being targeted with attacks on housing benefit and a lower minimum wage that no-one can afford to live on.

In Cameron and Osborne's Britain, if you're under 25 they seem to think your rent, food bills and transport costs are somehow lower than when you're 26. And then the poorest, most vulnerable and disabled — remember the quiet man, IDS (like a book for unemployment, which it was) who resigned over cuts to disability benefits that he was the architect of. What a hypocrite! It's a pity that you didn't stay quiet all those years ago instead of making the disabled and poor suffer.

The housing crisis is worsening. Rents go up, young people can't afford to get on the housing ladder, the cap on housing benefits is socially cleansing our inner cities, especially London and everywhere we go we see more and more people with a begging bowl and sleeping bags on our streets. And, Congress, this links to a wider injustice and view of the working class from those born with a silver spoon in their mouths.

Look at the injustices in our communities. We see whole communities devastated by successive Tory governments. Look at the miners and the Cammell Laird workers. Look at our manufacturing and textile industries, all sold to the lowest bidder. Our steel workers are now going through it. Our social services, and now local government, are being brought to their knees despite warm words on devolution. Consider our Remploy workers. Now they have turned their drip, drip, drip of privatisation on to the National Health Service, one of our most important institutions, attacking our junior doctors and support workers. Well, Mr. Hunt, you should be ashamed of yourself and you should resign. (*Applause*) But they are not content with that. They don't just want to come after our services, but they are coming after our very right to organise and defend ourselves.

Congress, the Trade Union Act. This is a direct attack on me, on you, on our union, on our Movement and on our politics. And it's nothing to do with them. What we democratically decide in this hall this week is nothing to do with this Government. The contractual arrangements we have with the employers is our business, not theirs.

Who our union, which was there at the founding of the Labour Party, chooses to support politically is our business and nothing to do with them. This Government are trying to restrict our political fund to stop our members having a say in politics while fat cats in the City of London use their slush fund, hedge funds, to prop up their Tory friends from Eton. Congress, we need our political fund to continue the fight whichever the government is, so make sure you sign up to direct debit. They are making us meet strike ballot thresholds when precious few of them couldn't manage this at their own election to Parliament. We have been successful in our campaigning to moderate the worst of the Trade Union Act, and we thank the House of Lords for their support.

But, Congress, don't think it ends there, because it doesn't. This lot came for our eyes and they will be coming back to nick the lashes. You can't trust them. They dislike the trade union Movement, as Margaret Thatcher did, but we will continue our fight. Today we are on the back of generations of struggles before us. We must never forget those who have gone before us, fighting for the rights we now enjoy and those who are still with us today fighting for justice and what they believe in. People such as the Chainmakers. Some of you may know that the National Federation of Women Workers, which Mary Macarthur created, was a founder member of the National

Union of General and Municipal Workers, the GMB, as it is today. Mary and the Cradley women were role models for all working women.

Those women had the guts to stand up for what they believed in and risked being sent to the poor house, and even death, for doing so. They organised, campaigned and fought for the first minimum wage, but these Tories are turning back the clock on equality and women's rights. They are cutting the benefits that part-time and often low-paid workers depend on. Women still make up the majority of the public-sector workforce so every attack on our public sector is an attack on women, too. As generations have done so before, we'll stand up against it.

Congress, we've got a packed agenda. This year we will be celebrating our women and you will hear from Rachel Holmes tomorrow as we present the first Eleanor Marx award. We will be launching the Harry Harpham Parliamentary Programme aimed at getting more working people and women into Parliament to bring debates back to reality, and we have a question and answer session with a fantastic panel of women MPs tomorrow morning.

Nationally, we have put justice front and centre, and this week we will be celebrating our successes and victories. Later today we will hear from some of the blacklisted workers who have won compensation and an apology, at last, for the untold suffering they have had to endure by being denied the right to work because they were trade union members. Together with the Cammell Laird workers and miners, they are still fighting for justice. On Wednesday, we will hear from Margaret Aspinall and the long-awaited justice for the Hillsborough families. They are only halfway there, but we've got to make sure that they get the rest of the way. We will be celebrating some of our successes while looking at the next. GMB doesn't lay down. We will continue to fight for better pay, better housing, better rights at work and better opportunities for young people. We will defend our NHS to the bitter end, and we will take on zero-hour contract employers who make their millions on the backs of insecurity, poverty and fear.

On Thursday we will be debating the EU Referendum and we will fight for that, too, a Europe that works for our members and a Europe that defends our rights at work, not the employers' right to exploit. We will be very, very clear in the next few weeks that GMB stands for all workers. We do not blame those who are exploited. We damn those who exploit.

As always, delegates, I am proud of our long history, proud to be the President of this great union and of our growing and powerful union.

I would like to congratulate Tim on his election to General Secretary and wish him every success in his first Congress. Welcome. (*Applause*) Tim, together we can take on any battle, just as we did in London supporting GMB Sadiq Khan to overcome a racist campaign from his opponent. Our capital city overwhelmingly rejected Zac Goldsmith's divisive campaign, and Cameron's, and elected the first Muslim Mayor of a majority city in Europe. Mr. Goldsmith — you're not fit to shine Mayor Khan's shoes. (*Applause*)

Congress, we have a busy week and a busy year ahead. Let's get started, but before I go, in the words of Alan Sugar: "Cameron & Co.....You're Fired!!!!!" (*Applause and cheers*)

Congress, before I leave the platform, I would like to give a personal message from myself and my family. I would like to thank this union, from the General Secretary at the time, who still is around, Paul Kenny; my Executive, Malcolm and all the staff, everyone, for all the support they have given me over the last few years and, in particular, last year in Ireland. I would like to thank my Region, very much, the officers and staff there, who also have given me their support. In particular, I would like to thank Paul Hayes, who is not very well and not with us, and I wish you, Paul, a very, very speedy recovery. Congress, you gave me and my family, when we were in Ireland, the strength to do what I did and the strength to get through it. On behalf of them, I thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Conference, I would now like to call on Kathy Abubakir, the CEC member from Southern Region, to give the Vote of Thanks to the President.

SIS. K. ABUBAKIR (CEC, Public Services): President and Conference, I am the CEC member from Southern Region moving the Vote of Thanks to the National President.

Congress, I am delighted to move this Vote of Thanks to Mary Turner, the President of the GMB. Over the years, I have sat in Congress Hall, as you all know, as a delegate, and have listened to many people call Mary quite a few names, such as "icon", "legend" and "hero". I can't add to these names as they have all been said before. However, when asked to move this Vote of Thanks, I decided to do some research on Mary to see just what she had done in her working life. I wasn't disappointed. Mary started her working life in Jacksons, the tailors. This is where she first joined a trade union and her activism in the trade union Movement grew from there. Mary got married, had children, decided she wanted to be at home for her family, and when she went back to work part-time as a dinner lady, Mary was elected their shop steward. Apparently, that was because she was the most vocal of them all. I find that hard to believe. The rest is history.

Mary was elected GMB National President in 1997, but she had worked tirelessly for working class people throughout her life. Mary made this very clear when she said: "The GMB doesn't just care about one group of people. It cares for all. As long as you have the principles of caring, that's all that matters." Mary has caring in abundance. Mary has also been an active member of the Labour Party for many years, and has been the voice of the GMB on the National Executive Committee, making sure that our priorities are, at the very least, taken into account when Labour policy is made. Many leaders and policies of the Labour Party have come and gone, but Mary is still there with the same beliefs and principles. During her 19 years as President, Mary has been the one constant figure in the GMB, as General Secretaries have also come and gone.

Last year, Mary had, as I am sure you are all aware, a very tough year in her personal life. I did wonder whether she would decide that enough was enough and retire, and no one would have thought any less of Mary if she had. Well, how wrong I was! Here we are at Congress 2016 in Bournemouth, Mary is sitting in her chair and ready for business as usual. Thank you, Mary, for your continuing commitment to the GMB, its members and all working class people. We are really proud to have you as our President. Congress, please join me in thanking Mary Turner. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. It is my honour.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before we begin our first debate, I would like to explain a few points of procedure. Please listen carefully. To save time, I will take motions in groups. Your session programme will show you the grouping. When I call a motion, can the movers, seconders and anyone who wishes to speak, come up to the chairs in the front of the rostrum ready to speak as this saves a great deal of time. At the end of the group, I will call the CEC speaker to reply, rather than deal with each motion individually. Where the CEC is supporting a motion, I will advise Congress. Where the CEC has any other position, the CEC speaker will give the reasons for their decision. We will then move to a vote of all the motions in that group. Where there are no speakers against the motion, I will call for the votes on motions in a block. Should any delegate wish me to take a separate vote on individual motions, please make this known to me in good time.

Finally, I would remind Congress that existing policy motions are marked in the Final Agenda with a large “EP” against them. These, as outlined by SOC Report No. 1 will not be listed in the detailed programme as they will not be debated.

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, CEC Rule Amendments can be found on page 106 in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide, and the CEC is supporting all of these. I call Malcolm Sage to move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, moving the CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2 and 3.

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 1

Our purpose

We work to improve the quality of life and provide new opportunities for all our members and their families. We aim to improve the lives of GMB members and make sure that their achievements lead the way for working people in Britain and across the world. Every GMB member should have the opportunity to discover and develop their talents. All our members should enjoy work that is fulfilling and rewarding.

- **We will work with employers who are aware of future possibilities, and negotiate useful and beneficial agreements that help to achieve our purpose.**

- We will work to widen the understanding of employers whose experiences, knowledge and aims are more limited. We will aim to end exploitation, discrimination and injustice.
 - We will persuade non-members to join, encourage members to become active, and help active members to take full part in the life of the GMB. In particular, we will recruit and help develop young people so that we improve their lives and protect the future of the GMB and our values.
 - We will train local representatives to represent GMB members in a skilled and professional way, so that they win respect for their members, us and themselves.
 - We will recruit members through providing an outstanding service to working people and their families, encouraging people to stay with us for their whole lives. We aim to achieve the reputation as the best trade union in Europe.
 - We will create an atmosphere of teamwork in which every GMB office holder and employee will feel personally responsible for achieving our purpose.
 - We will strive to ensure that GMB's profile reflects all equality strands in the union at all levels of the lay and employee National, Regional, Branch and Workplace structures
- Adopted at Congress 1990

CECRA1

Our Purpose

Delete "Adopted at Congress 1990"

(Carried)

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 2

Rule 29 Audits

5 The members will have the same access to our books and information as the chartered accountants, under the conditions of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974.

CECRA2

Rule 29

Clause 5

Line 3, after Relations insert "(Consolidation)"

Line 3, delete "1974", insert "1992"

Clause to read:

5 The members will have the same access to our books and information as the chartered accountants, under the conditions of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

(Carried)

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 3

Rule 60 Election disputes

2a The Central Executive Council may rule that, before making a decision is made about the complaint, the candidate appearing to have the highest number of votes should take office or be excluded from taking office.

CECRA3

Rule 60

Clause 2a

Line 2, delete "is made"

Clause to read:

2a The Central Executive Council may rule that, before making a decision about the complaint, the candidate appearing to have the highest number of votes should take office or be excluded from taking office.

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I hope you will agree with me that none of these rule amendments are controversial. Rule Amendment 1 removes the reference to our purpose being adopted at Congress 1990 because the Union's purpose was updated in 2015.

Rule Amendment 2 alters rule 29 so that it now refers to the correct Act of Parliament.

Finally, Rule Amendment 3 removes unnecessary words from Rule Amendment 60 so that the wording now makes sense, correcting an earlier printing error.

Please support the CEC rules changes 1, 2 and 3.

The proposed rule amendments were formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. I will have to put these proposed rule amendments separately, colleagues, and you will have to vote on them separately as they are rules. All those in favour of CEC Rule A1, all those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Rule Amendment CECRA1 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of CEC Rule A2 — Audits — please show? Anyone against?

Rule Amendment CECRA2 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Rule A3: Election disputes. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against?

Rule Amendment CECRA3 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we are now moving on to the first of the Congress motions. Could the movers and seconders of Motions 25 and 27 please be ready to speak after Motion 18. Also, if anyone wishes to speak in the debate, please come forward. You will note that Motion 32 is not to be debated as you have agreed this as existing policy on SOC Report No. 1. Motion 18 is to be moved by the London Region, and we are supporting it with a qualification.

**UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL
CENTRAL NATIONAL I.T. SUPPORT
MOTION 18**

18. CENTRAL NATIONAL I.T. SUPPORT

Congress agrees that there is a need for a National I.T. Support position to increase branches effectiveness and impact when the requirement is needed.

This would take the form of support to branches plus promoters of the GMB through technology and information from a single professional person or body. Currently there is limited support for sourcing logos, pictures plus information that is nationally acceptable and of a universal quality to use to promote the GMB.

Congress therefore asks the CEC to create such a post.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 18. I am not going to say a lot about this motion because I believe it is really self-explanatory. However, I will say that IT moves at speeds at which many branches have neither the experience nor knowledge of to keep up with. Nevertheless, it is an essential tool that branches heavily rely on when recruiting and representing members as well as campaigning on behalf of them. At the moment, many branches are left to find their own IT support and many struggle to do so. Therefore, creating a national IT support position that branches can access will not only increase their effectiveness and impact on promoting GMB, but it will also increase their ability to better represent, recruit and campaign for on behalf of its members. Please, Congress, let's help the branches with IT support. It will save costs, help members and it's a win-win situation. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

BRO. A. CHOLERTON (London): Congress, I second Motion 18. Information technology has changed enormously over the past 20 years, and its impact on how we communicate with each other has been massive. As time goes by, it will impact on everyone and replace more traditional means of communication. For many, IT skills are second nature, but for a lot of us it can be a minefield.

GMB has an excellent website with a lot of information for both members and activists. Many branches, including my own, have their own websites, and they will become our new notice boards for many of our branch members, especially the young. However, a lot of us would benefit enormously if we had better training and national IT support. Many of the things we need are very easy to access if you know what you are doing, but if you don't it can take for ever. Many of the skills we need could be learnt easily with the right support. Those skills could then be used for the better running of branches, which would lead to better retention of members and, therefore, stronger and more active branches. With national IT support, learning could be tailored to our needs. Please support this motion.

ORGANISATION/COMMUNICATION MOTION 25

25. ORGANISATION/COMMUNICATION

This Conference is asked to look at how we must effectively organise ourselves and communicate with the membership when disputes within companies/organisations that cross over regions occur. We believe that the sovereign representing region be elected/appointed as the focal point and the position maintained throughout the dispute. This is to try and ensure we have a clear and consistent approach during the dispute, transparency with our members and provide a clear route for the input of ideas and debate.

N45 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Withdrawn)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 25: Organisation/Communication, to be moved by North West & Irish Region.

BRO. M. GILLOW (North West & Irish Region): Withdrawn.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does Congress agree?

Motion 25 was WITHDRAWN

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Motion 27.

FULLY ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS MOTION 27

27. FULLY ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS

This Conference restates its full commitment to equality for all, regardless of disability or impairment.

With this in mind, it commits to making all **GMB** communications fully accessible to all members, regardless of any hearing impairment. To this effect, it will – in future – ensure that all video messages on YouTube GMB Channel, or on any other platform used, will be professionally subtitled and NOT left to the auto-generated, phonetic type captions that are usually used.

Furthermore, **GMB** agrees to use whatever influence it has to push for a similar policy within the wider Labour movement (TUC, Labour Party, Unions Together, sister unions, etc.).

Members will note that auto-generated subtitles usually bear little resemblance to what is actually being said, and frequently appear as “gibberish”. It is essential that the work is done by competent, professional staff with a clear ability to ensure the subtitles reflect the content being spoken.

Conference notes that Government statistics shows some 11,000,000 individuals in the UK are deaf, deafened, hearing impaired or have some form of restriction upon their hearing. Many of those are fully dependent upon subtitles for the understanding of TV, DVD, video or such media.

The **GMB** prides itself on being an inclusive family of members. We must not unintentionally exclude anyone in future.

CARDIFF 1 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. SMITH (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 27. President and Congress, this motion is pretty straightforward in its objectives, some of which have been met already. It is very simple in its desired outcome. We believe that any communication that this union puts out should be completely accessible to as many members as possible. That seems reasonable, doesn't it? Recently, an active member of the GMB branch in Cardiff, who happens to be severely hearing impaired, found that the GMB YouTube account used the auto-generated phonetic sub-titles provided by YouTube themselves. Unfortunately, these automatic sub-titles often appeared incomprehensible, bore little resemblance to what was being said and, frankly, were gibberish. In short, the phonetics can't cope with accents, with speech patterns, etc. In short, they couldn't cope – period. Being a good GMB workplace representative, he plugged away at getting Head Office to change and to use professional sub-titling services. This they have now done after a bit of nagging from him, if only to shut him up. That's great. But should he or anyone else have to ask? Surely, in 2016, after many years of the Disability Discrimination Act, then the Equalities Act of 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which places upon service providers, we have a duty to think these things out beforehand, not wait to be asked. The TUC has adopted the social model of disability since 2008, which is eight years ago. We are part of the TUC so it applies to the GMB, too.

In conclusion, we believe in fighting to remove the barriers that still exist and impede progress to equality. With that in mind, we want to see our Union fully committed to maximum accessibility. We want that to be a thought when ideas are being developed, not after they have been published. We would not build a new office and wait for someone in a wheelchair to complain about the absence of a ramp. Would we? Such things are considered and included at planning stage, and quite rightly. So let us think of sub-titles for any visual communication in the same way. Let us think of induction loops for hearing-aid wearers in the same manner, too. Disabled members should not have to apply for equality of access. It should be there from the start. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. P. KEMPTON (GMB Wales and South West): What a great video at the start, wasn't it? Pity there were no sub-titles, but never mind. In seconding this motion, I raise my hand and say "I am Spartacus". I am that deaf member who raised this issue. My colleague had outlined the reasons, so I will concentrate on the qualification that we are aware that the CEC is going to support this. Yes, the CEC acknowledge that there is a need for proper professional sub-titling, and we are grateful for that, but their qualification is that the motion also asks for influence to be exercised on the wider labour movement, and that is, apparently, beyond their capability. Pardon? Why do we send delegates to the national TUC conferences in Wales, Scotland, the UK-wide one and in Ireland? Why do we also submit motions and attend national and regional Labour Party conferences? That is very easy to answer. We send delegates and we submit motions, and those who attend network with other delegates to influence, to inform and to share experiences. That's all we are asking. Note, we are not demanding and we are not insisting. The motion does not say "We instruct" and it does not say "We insist". It simply says: "Furthermore, GMB agrees to use whatever influence it has to push for a similar attitude" in like-minded organisations. Is this unreasonable? We don't think so. Being pragmatic, we will, of course, accept the qualification but I would be especially interested to hear the CEC possibly admit that they never seek to influence other unions. Congress, I take pleasure in seconding this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on these two resolutions? (*No response*) No? That's a good start. In that case, I call Mary Hutchinson to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are seeking to support Motions 18 and 27 with qualifications. Firstly, on Motion 18 — Central National I.T. Support — Congress support for branches can and must be enhanced for our IT and communication functions, and from other departments. The motion asks for national support for branches in supporting technology and providing content, but the post currently exists. However, we recognise the need to modernise branch accounts. Therefore, the qualification is that what the motion is asking for can be done from existing resources without creating an additional post.

On Motion 27 — Fully Accessible Communications — as a result of feedback from a member of the branch who highlighted the problems with our GMB YouTube Channel, we have made changes and our transmission now feature transcribed sub-titles. We continue to welcome feedback from comments. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that auto-generated sub-titles do create problems. The qualification is that the motion is asking us to influence the policies of the wider union Movement, but GMB can only lead by example, as other organisations have their own accessibility guidelines and policies.

With regard to other GMB-member communications, GMB has existing accessibility guidelines that cover the GMB website, publications and videos. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 18 and 27 with these qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 18. (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on Motion 27? (*Agreed*) I now put them both to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against? They are carried.

Motion 18 was CARRIED.

Motion 27 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I move on to the next debate, I will be calling Motions 30, 31 and 43. Will the movers and seconders come to the front please, and anyone who wishes to participate.

UNION ORGANISATION: General
FAIR TRADE AND ECOLOGICAL PURCHASING WITHIN THE GMB
MOTION 30

30. FAIR TRADE AND ECOLOGICAL PURCHASING WITHIN THE GMB

This conference agrees that there should be a policy for GMB to support Fair Trade and ecological purchasing for basics such as tea, coffee and sugar. We resolve that the union should be at the forefront of environmental issues and initiatives that support better working practices and trade union membership around the world. Therefore, we resolve that all procurement of basic items should be done in a more environmentally conscious way than at present and all purchases should be Fair Trade wherever possible. The same should also be fully considered when arranging catering for all GMB organised events, conferences and meetings.

B61 BRACKNELL FOREST & WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCILS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Colleagues, I am a first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Cheers and applause*) President, Congress and Comrades, from one angle this motion is about something really small. In fact, it is about something really small and round. I'm going to talk about teabags. It is not exactly glamorous or hard politics. They are just teabags. So why am I moving this at all. This came about because of a discussion in our branch. We were just surprised to come into the offices of a trade union that we might do our training in and find that the GMB was purchasing things like Nestle coffee, made by a very evil corporation, and buying sugar in those little individual bags instead of buying a bag of sugar and using a spoon. It is standard ecological practice. We chatted about this, and we thought that it is not the norm in our houses and it is not the norm in a lot of our workplaces.

As I said at the beginning, this motion is about teabags, coffee, sugar and all of those humdrum things, but, looked at from a slightly different angle, this is actually about something much, much bigger. It is about an international approach to solidarity across the world and supporting our fellow workers wherever they might live. Fair Trade does try to guarantee better, reliable, year-round wages for workers in developing countries. It tries to promote decent environmental and ecological standards, and it supports the rights of women to equal pay. It also encourages investment in social products that communities desperately need. So Fair Trade does all of this. But, most importantly for us, it supports the principle of trade unionism.

One of its core principles is to encourage collective bargaining and to encourage workers to join and form unions wherever it is legal to do so.

Having said all of that, to address the negatives, there are criticisms of Fair Trade, and I fully appreciate that the label is not perfect. It does not always achieve all of its aims but, if you think about the words “Fair Trade”, I guess the problem is right there. Where there is trade there’s profit, and where there’s profit there’s generally one person getting rich off the back of a load of exploited workers. We live in an imperfect universe. Still, I do think we have to try to make some slightly more ethical choices rather than just avoiding this issue altogether.

To finish, this motion will make a tiny, tiny financial difference to the GMB but could, potentially, make a huge life-changing difference to some of our comrades struggling against devastating poverty, forced labour, the exploitation of children and numerous other abhorrent practices that go on in other countries. Please vote with your conscience. Thank you. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nikki. Secunder.

BRO. A. ALLEYNE (Southern): I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Just to say, very shortly, that I can’t really follow what Nikki said so eloquently. It is important that we encourage colleagues in our workplaces to use what power they have at their disposal to support these causes. It is looked at similarly with recycling and so on, that people usually do much better in their own homes than they do at work because they don’t feel a sense of ownership. We need to encourage a sense that all of us can make an impact. We should not just leave to other people in procurement. Who knows what kickbacks they may or may not be getting. They may just not care and do what’s cheapest, but what’s cheapest is not necessarily what’s best. So I take pleasure in seconding Nikki’s motion.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask GMB Yorkshire Region to move Motion 31.

GMB’S CARBON FOOT PRINT MOTION 31

31. GMB’S CARBON FOOT PRINT

We ask this Conference to review and improve the eco friendliness of the Union and improve the carbon footprint of the union as a whole trade union body. Last year the global temperatures rose by 1 degree. Does not sound much but it has a global effect causing massive disasters such as the flooding on Boxing Day in Calderdale, West Yorkshire.

The GMB can achieve this in many ways some small, some large but overall the GMB will save money in the long term. To do this we need to look at the medium and long term investments needed to achieve this goal. We could cut the amount of printing done and try digitalise some of the processes, switching lighting to low energy lights and have sensors instead of switches we could look at staff working from home rather than offices if possible to save on transport and increase security where they live.

In the longer term electric car (EV) charge points could be fitted at all GMB offices, free to use for EV & PHEV (petrol hybrid electric vehicle) users.

Currently there is a grant to help cover charging units and fitting points to commercial premises. This could also be helpful in attracting people to join or learn more about the GMB as we will look greener & friendlier.

Overall we call this Congress to review and improve the carbon footprint of the GMB. We also call upon GMB to press national congress to do the same and report back on the progress at next Congress and future Congress. We also call upon the Congress to raise and push this matter with other UK trade unions and other international trade unions plus the TUC.

BRIGHOUSE GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Referred)

BRO. A. BUTT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 31.

President and ladies and gentlemen, like any organisation, the GMB has a morale duty to ensure that it reduces the carbon footprint in line with many organisations that have stepped up to try and contain the damage we inflict on the planet. As many of you may be aware, last year global temperatures rose as scientists predicted, as they have been doing in recent years. Scientists now believe that the rise in global temperatures is the reason why we are seeing flooding and other natural disasters, from which the UK has not been immune. It is all a result of global warming.

We, as a responsible union, have to play our part in minimising the impact of our actions in our day-to-day operations, and many of the potential solutions are not exactly rocket science. Given the time constraints of putting the point across, I will focus on our communications and how we can make some changes that will reap tangible benefits to the planet and to everyone of us here. Allow me to give you an example. I was given *these* printed documents at the planning meeting for Congress some time ago, but was sent a revised copy again in the post. Like many of you, I read them all word-for-word from start to finish. The change to be considered is one that asks us to move to a digital platform for our day-to-day communications. Instead of sending out paper copies of memoranda and information, we should move to have email addresses of our members and communicate our information thus, but recognising that some people won't have email addresses and, hence, we should only do targeted mail shots to those people and that, too, by using recycled paper where possible. Many colleagues will be aware of this, and I know that it is a bugbear for us in our region and in our branch, but getting people to attend meetings is hard enough. However, having to write up the information, print it off and then post it is not only time inefficient but it is also not cost efficient. Given that almost half the UK population — over 31 million people — now use Facebook and 15 million people are now on Twitter, including myself, a sensible suggestion would be to use social media platforms wherever possible, and combine that with the fact that two-thirds of the UK population now have smart phones. Access to social media is instant and, probably, more likely to be read rather than thrown into the bin.

If we are to have a sustainable planet, to have clean air and keep the natural balance of planet Earth as it should be, then we need to start making those changes and implement those ideas to limit the damage we do. Only when we and every other

organisations as well as we individuals make that change will we be assured that we will have a safer, cleaner and more natural living environment for generations to come. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. J. JACKSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Madam President and colleagues, I speak in support of the motion that the GMB review and improves its carbon footprint. Some of the facts about carbon emissions or CO₂ are quite startling. For instance, for each gallon of petrol 10.4 kilograms of CO₂ is produced. One kilogram of CO₂ is produced as follows: public transport, every seven miles; a plane, every 1.3 miles, and a computer every 32 hours. In production, one kilogram of CO₂ is produced when making five plastic bags, two plastic bottles or, believe it or not, one-third of a cheese burger. The GMB has taken steps to keep its CO₂ down by our use of hybrid cars. Advancement will enable us all to have electric cars before long. Other things are to use email instead of travelling by car. Heating and lighting can be improved by the use of low-engineered lighting. Meetings could be held by the use of conference calls, thereby eliminating the need for car travel. The GMB could explore the possibility of installing small wind turbines where possible. Roof-mounted solar panels are another option.

The GMB Union is a high-profile union and by demonstrating that improvements can be made, we can influence other unions and companies to follow its lead. The GMB could be a pioneer on this issue and protect our planet for future generations. I second the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to Motion 43, to be moved by London Region.

**UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY
ENVIRONMENT
MOTION 43**

43. ENVIRONMENT

This Conference calls on the Central Executive Council to renew efforts to combat climate change and invest time and money behind an education programme to promote the need for an Environment Rep in every branch and the need for a “Just Transition”. The COP 21 talks in Paris led to a global agreement to limit global warming to no more than 2°C above pre industrial levels and where possible limit rises to 1.5°C. Such a task will require the efforts of all not just a few to achieve this goal and see change in industrial policy.

GMB UNITE BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. A. CHOLERTON (London): Congress, I move Motion 43 — Environment. President and delegates, the COP 21 Climate Change Meeting in Paris in 2015 led to a deal that unites all the world’s nations in a single agreement on tackling climate change for the first time in history. Coming to a consensus among nearly 200 countries on the need to cut greenhouse-gas emissions is regarded by many observers as an achievement in itself, and is being hailed as historic. The key elements are to keep global temperatures well below 2 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial times,

and to limit them even more to 1½ degrees. It is also to limit the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by human activity to the same levels that trees, soil and oceans can absorb naturally, beginning at some point between 2050 and 2100. It is also to review the country's contribution to cutting emissions every five years so that they scale up to challenge. It also calls for rich countries to help poorer nations by providing climate finance to adapt to climate change and switch to renewable energies. The world is already nearly halfway there at almost 1 degree centigrade, and many countries argued for a tougher target of 1½ degrees, including leaders of low-lying countries that face unsustainable sea-level rises in a warming world. This pact promises to make an assessment of progress in 2018, with further reviews every five years. As Analysis points out, Paris is only the beginning of a shift towards a low-carbon world, and there is much more to do. That is where we come in. It is not purely the responsibility of nations to ensure that global warming is stopped. It is also the responsibility of all organisations and of all individuals.

That is why this motion calls on the CEC to renew efforts to combat climate change and invest time and money in an education programme to promote the needs for an environment rep in every branch. Although there is a cost element to this motion, there are also benefits that this initiative can bring. This is a great way to engage with all of those who care for our planet and will appeal to all young people and, potentially, be an aid to recruiting. Although many think that climate change will only impact on people in the decades to come, it is now clear that it is no longer science fiction but science fact. The time to do nothing has long since passed. Only by leading the debate and by engaging people can we be involved when it impacts our members. Some industries will be hit by emission policies while others will thrive, but history shows that we can adapt and provide a better world for our members. Years ago there were the heavy smog clouds caused by burning coal. Smog is returning now due to vehicle emissions, but we do have the technology to deal with this problem. By being involved now, we have a greater chance of being able to influence decision makers, to protect those who are vulnerable and push forward in areas where we can thrive. Please support this motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tony. Secunder.

BRO. H. PRANLAL (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 43. Like a pension, there needs to be a consultation effort by all. We have to make investments to combat climate changes in order to protect our environment in the future. We must invest to avoid changes on the global scale that will end life, as we know it, for future generations. Trade unions traditionally support their members in particular industries to stay in the role and to maintain or improve the status quo. We believe that industry support should assist workers in opposing things like fossil-fuel extraction. We must use technology and establish a new way of working which has a net effect to the respective industry. New technology will prevent enormous harm coming to the environment. We must adapt to new laws that combat climate changes.

Courses for environment reps need to promote sustainable workplaces. We need to accept that education is the first way to stop our environment being highly damaged. We must have help in finding alternative employments and methods which will result in lower carbon footprints. This alternative could assist companies to promote a

carbon-capture network, a system reducing the use of water, electricity and fossil fuels. We should also assist them in designing and creating ways of obtaining new fuel. Heat loss could reduce from the development of new building materials and electricity could be solar generated. Wind and a bio-digester could assist workplaces in achieving a zero-rated policy.

This motion calls on the CEC to renew efforts to combat climate change and invest time and money behind an education programme to promote the need for an environment rep in every branch and the need for a “Just Transition”. Please support this motion. I second. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hitendra. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate on 30, 31 and 43? No? Okay, I call Barbara Plant, CEC, to speak on these motions. The CEC is supporting with qualifications 30, asking reference for 31, and reference back on 43. Barbara.

SIS. B. PLANT (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 30, but with a qualification, and seeking to refer Motion 31 and 43.

On Motion 30, on Fair Trade, GMB’s longstanding policy is that Fair Trade standards should be seen as the minimum. In line with the 2007 CEC Special Report on the Green Agenda, we currently purchase Fair Trade products, wherever possible, and will arrange external conferences and meetings. The qualification is that there are a number of different Fair Trade standards and not all these being better working practices and trade union membership. Fair Trade has a long way to go before it could be considered trade union friendly.

On Motion 31 on GMB’s carbon footprint, we have made strides in this area with dual fuel cars, less paper, and more emails, but there is still more that can be done. The CEC is therefore requesting reference back to review all aspects of our activities to see what we have achieved and how we can make use of green technology in line with the Green Agenda Special Report.

Finally, turning to Motion 43 on Environmental Training, as we will hear in more detail tomorrow, it will be difficult for GMB to deliver additional training due to funding cuts for trade union learning. Ahead of the CEC Special Report on training to be debated tomorrow, the CEC is seeking reference back of this motion to allow for full consideration of how future training will be delivered.

Congress, please support Motion 30, with the qualification that I have given, and refer Motions 31 and 43. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks very much, Barbara. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? Yes? Speak up! (*Agreed*) Thank you. I am now going to put 30 to the vote. All those in favour please show? Thank you. Any Against? No.

Does Yorkshire Region accept reference back? Yes? (*Agreed*) Congress accept reference back? (*Agreed*)

I come now to London Region, will you accept reference back? Yes? (*Agreed*)
Thank you. Congress accepts reference back.

I now put both of those to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against?
They are carried. Thank you.

Motion 30 was CARRIED.

Motion 31 was REFERRED.

Motion 43 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to stutter on the next page! I will now be calling Motion 102 by the North West and Irish Region. I have had another few drinks so I am not going to pronounce 103, Yorkshire Region; 104 Northern, 106, Southern, 107, Yorkshire, and 108, Birmingham. Would you please all come to the front, and seconds. As they move away, would those who wish to take part in the debate please come forward. Thank you.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH & SAFETY LEGISLATION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
MOTION 102**

102. HEALTH & SAFETY LEGISLATION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

This Congress notes the massive contribution of the European Union Parliament in legislating for improved health and safety conditions throughout the United Kingdom.

This Congress deplores the ridicule placed on Health and Safety legislation by the Conservative Government and its stance on removing what it dubs 'red tape' and its culture of blaming the EU for Health and Safety controls that in effect help prevent workplace accidents and fatalities.

Recent Red Top newspaper headlines have helped to convince the general public that health and safety legislation is controlling and spoils fun. However, in excess of three times as many Britons die from asbestos related diseases as through road accidents and the Government's disdain for health and safety legislation is deplorable.

We call upon the GMB at all levels to campaign for improved Health and Safety controls and for existing legislation to remain in place alongside UK membership of the EU to ensure that further improvements are introduced and to lobby Government and local Authorities to increase awareness of the positive benefits of health and safety legislation as no one deserves to die at work.

B23 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. R. PITCHFORD (North West & Irish): First-time speaker. (*Applause*) Thank you. Whilst the current government responds to Health & Safety legislation with disdain and ridicule, calling it red tape, in this decade three times as many people are still dying through asbestos-related conditions than in road accidents, every year.

As the daughter of a retired trade unionist and an ex-corporation plumber who was working in the 1970s when PPE and asbestos-related conditions were unheard of, this

fills me with fear and with anger. In addition, later this month we will be facing the European referendum and you do not need me to tell you that a result for Brexit is likely to erode the hard-won legislation that generations of activists have fought for. With Cameron now going on record as saying he is more than willing to kill off the Health & Safety monster, this leads us into worrying waters indeed.

Whilst the European Union is not perfect, it has given us in the UK regulations that have forced the existing regulations to be tightened up as they were not good enough, for example, in the area of construction and, yes, from 1974 onwards with the UK Health & Safety at Work Act a downward trend did commence but in 1992 there were still 362 worker fatalities, and even last year 142 deaths still occurred.

Without the EU, without EU legislation, how will Health & Safety be protected against a government that just does not care? It derides risk assessments for small businesses. This motion calls for the GMB at all levels to continue regardless of the result of the referendum, to continue with the battle for improvements and maintenance of existing current Health & Safety legislation, to continue to lobby both Government and local authorities on positive benefits of Health & Safety. Congress, I move this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. R. HOLDEN (North West & Irish): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, this motion cannot be more important at a time when the country is at a crucial turning point deciding our future in or out of the European Union. What this motion clearly shows is that this decision matters and should not be reduced to a Tory Party drama.

Congress, it is not right that in the 21st century we should still have to talk about deaths at work. In 2014/2015 142 people were killed at work and one death at work is one too many. Work should also never make you ill but 1.2 million people suffered from a work-related illness in 2014/2015.

Congress, the European Union is our frontline for protecting our Health & Safety in the workplace whilst the Tories “Leave” campaign are rubbing their hands with glee at the possibility of getting rid of our hard won rights. So, it is an angry Yes to Europe and an angry Yes to protecting our Health & Safety from Tory deregulation. Congress, I second this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF CARCINOGENIC SUBSTANCES USED WITHIN THE WORKPLACE MOTION 103

103. TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF CARCINOGENIC SUBSTANCES USED WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

This Conference is concerned with the serious problems and the economic cost to the nation associated with workers exposure to carcinogenic substances within the workplace.

We call upon this Conference to lobby and actively participate with the government, regulators, professional organisations and industry and for companies to demonstrate their commitment to managing harmful substances within the workplace.

SHEFFIELD MCP & LIGHT BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. HENSBY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Madam President, Congress, thousands of people, men and women, many of our members, are exposed to such substances as asbestos, solvents, diesel fumes, silica, and many others, on a daily basis, and some of those are only brief exposures but the damage can still be done. The creation of jobs is not a problem, the problem is the money-pinching, penny-pinching employers that I work for that put profits before the health and safety and wellbeing of our colleagues. That is a problem.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer says that about 50 products to this day are being used in this country that are cancerous-forming. That is not a problem in itself. In this country alone we have statistics that show that 14,000 new cases a year are registered with a view to cancer, and many others are out there that we will never know about in this moment in time; 4,000 of those are caused through asbestos and nearly 10,000 through diesel fumes and silica dust. The impact can be felt widely with families, friends, and businesses alike. Remember this, folks, let's make no bones about it, cancer does not discriminate against anybody. If you are exposed you are exposed and it could lead to horrendous debilitating quality of life and some can take between 15 and 60 years to develop.

In Europe alone a staggering 102,500 people a year die through exposure to cancers. In our country alone the Health & Safety statistics tell us that 8,000 people a year are exposed and will die. That is the HSE figure. However, another body, an international body on research, stipulates that figure is wildly, wildly misinterpreted. It is something like 13,500 people a year that die from cancer in this country. If that be the case, that puts the UK just behind Germany with a view to how many people die of this disease each year.

So, what can we do about it? First of all, folks, is there a solution? Yes, there is. The Government, for starters, can highlight the cost to individuals, businesses, and society alike and maintain a comprehensive national database on occupational costs on carcinogenic substances that are used within the workplace, and fund more research into developments of occupational cancers and finding solutions. Then we have our regulators, the Health & Safety Executive, what can they do. First of all, they can deliver a more effective complaints strategy for preventing such exposures, take a more proactive approach, for example, promoting the fact that nightshift workers are entitled to free health assessments, and professionals working together in industry, what can they do. They can achieve a strong multidisciplinary drive to raise awareness and engage workers in trade unions in solutions and join the dots between employers, doctors, consultants, and everyone else. Industry itself, we can design exposure prevention measures through reasonable procurement, manufacture and supply, and embed work cancer awareness in all new trainees, and those alike.

Colleagues, we are a powerful union led by a powerful leader – shame he’s an Arsenal fan, but never mind – and we will always have a powerful voice in the workplace and will continue to send out powerful messages. Let’s get this particular message and make it loud and make it clear to everyone, let the Tory Government Ministers in Parliament, and unscrupulous penny-pinching employers in all corners of the British Isles know this, we, the GMB, are not going to sit in silence, we are not going to live in fear, we will not be happy until every person in this country across the British Isles is safe from exposure to cancers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kevin. Secunder?

BRO. N. TOWNEND (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, carcinogenic substances in the workplace are a hazard to all employees who come into contact with them. Employees have the right to be safe in the workplace and if a hazard cannot be eradicated, then a suitable PPE should be provided by the employer. Exposure to carcinogenic substances causes cells and living organisms to mutate and this develops into cancer. There are different forms of carcinogenic substances, for instance, radiation, biohazards, coal dust, asbestos, and inorganic substances such as lead, mercury, chlorine gas. Many workers are unaware that they are in contact with such dangers to their health and unscrupulous bosses are not always quick to come forward and protect workers; sometimes the effects of contact comes later in life when it is too late, as we have seen in the asbestos cases over many years.

The Factories Act 1961 is an Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom. It consolidated much Health & Safety in the workplace. Although some of it remains in use today, it has been superseded by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, and regulations made under it. However, the Act continues to have legal importance as cases of chronic workplace exposure to hazards such as carcinogens often extend back in time beyond the current legislation. We call upon the GMB and CEC to lobby the Government to ensure companies and businesses are committed to the management of harmful substances, particularly carcinogenic substances in the workplace. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. The mover of 104, Northern.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE MOTION 104

104. SUBSTANCE ABUSE

This Conference believes that substance misuse can have a major impact to physical / mental health and general wellbeing within society and the workplace. Congress notes that substance misuse and addiction can have serious consequences to individuals, their families, friends, employers and work colleagues. More than ever national and local companies are imposing substance misuse testing on their own employees as well as their contractors. Congress believes that employers need to take a balanced approach to the management of substance misuse in the workplace and intervention for the employee. Congress believes that it is essential that proper training and support is required not just sanction after sanction to help general health and well-being of workers.

Z46 STOCKTON NO.3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. DEWART (Northern): Congress, as we know in some of our workplaces we have managers who bring their own prejudgments to work and some of our workplaces in our region we even have ex-police officers working in senior roles in security and they are abusing company policies to settle some old scores with individuals they could not get when they were in police communities. Good employers have a balanced setoff policies that help their workers if they are addicted or in need of support. One way to help people who are hooked on substances or to help them generally is not to demonise them; it is to provide a balanced set of sensible policies that have some basic principles, advertising help in the workplace, signposting people who need help and support that the NHS charities and other agencies provide, ensuring that managers are well trained and meet relevant competencies, and ensuring testing regimes do not impinge rights.

Congress, there could even be benchmark standards or charters of good practice that could help companies and individuals in the workplace to get the support they need. To get off substances, get clean, these measures could improve morale. It could also mean that the employers do not spend valuable time on sham investigations, sacking people with no thought for mitigation or how the company policies could help people in need of vital support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. V. DAVISON (Northern): Congress, we know from workplace organising and reps helping members that substance abuse is not handled correctly in many cases. The company or manager too often jumps to conclusions, and personal opinions and views of managers come into play. We know the policies are worked out and negotiated with employers on a case by case basis. However, Congress, what we are arguing for is a better understanding by employers and managers. We want more standards and principles put into policies on substance abuse and the same goes for testing.

Employers have a duty of care to their workforce. They have a duty not to be judge and jury. Managers need to have the relevant competence to manage substance abuse in today's workplace. Training and support should be at the heart of company policies and employers should have a more even-handed approach in this area of policy. It needs to place support to overcome substance abuse as part of the support mechanism and not to sanction. I second. *(Applause)*

INDUSTRIAL INJURY IS NOT A SICKNESS MOTION 106

106. INDUSTRIAL INJURY IS NOT SICKNESS

This conference believes that many UK Employers treat Industrial Injury as sickness and deduct any time off from the employees' absence quota and in the process put employees at risk of dismissal.

We ask Congress to put pressure on UK Employers to consider the impact their actions have in order to protect workplace injured staff.

They are not sick they are Injured.UK Employers should bear the financial burden and loss of working time if people are injured in work time.

We ask Congress to support this Motion.

X99 GMBAA BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. T. McLAUGHLIN (Southern): Madam President, Congress, we have concerns that UK employers are treating absence from work because of industrial injury as ordinary sick leave. This appears to be the case within the AA. Not only do they prefer to call this absence sick leave, they prefer to use a much beleaguered NHS and then when the NHS cannot cope with the strain, they choose to blame the employee. Rather than being proactive in dealing with the convalescence and rehabilitation of employees, companies, in particular the AA, are instead relying on the public purse to foot the bill. We feel this is not acceptable in any way, shape or form.

Industrial injury takes several forms, the least if I dare say less glamorous and probably never fully recorded repetitive strain injury caused in many different ways, be that a worn or broken chair that cannot be adjusted, causing bad posture resulting in back injury, or old or inferior tools and equipment failing and causing who knows what serious or long-term damage, damage that may result in the need for physiotherapy, a visit to a chiropractor, or an osteopath, and even surgery, almost certainly paid for by the employee or the NHS rather than the employer.

Any time off work is sick leave, say the employers. Too much of this will put the employee at the risk of falling foul of their employer's sickness and absence procedure. They are not sick, they are injured. If the case of the injured comes under the care and management of their GP and it is decided that the patient needs to visit a consultant, the target time for this is 18 weeks. Whether or not this target is met is very much a postcode lottery. For someone who is labelled sick by their employer, these 18 weeks are eating into their sick leave. Without a diagnosis there is no prognosis and, therefore, no return to work date. It is at this point employers seek to dismiss on the grounds of capability.

It is our fervent belief that employers should be wholly accountable for the convalescence and rehabilitation and loss of earnings of anyone who has suffered an industrial injury. They should not be classified as sick. They are not sick. They are injured.

Another form of injury in the workplace, anxiety, stress, and depression, which is often silent and invisible, and more often than not recorded as an injury but is very often invariably called a sickness. We believe this is in fact an industrial injury. How much of this is caused by an employer pushing their staff to limits with reduced staffing levels, more work for less staff, hard to achieve targets, staff working longer hours under greater pressure. Is it any wonder that mental health issues are on the rise, with many experts now saying flexible working patterns are causing more stress, anxiety, and depression, than ever before. Mental health is now to be afforded the same timescales as all other issues, 18 weeks. They are not sick. They are injured.

In the AA, I work within a cohort of around 3,000 uniformed frontline patrols, almost completely male. Our work brings with it a higher than average risk of work-induced injury. We are performance-managed to insane levels. Over a two-year period we had three deaths from suicide, four-and-a-half times the national average. We have around 2,000 indoor staff, who, like so many of you, are under immense pressure. With our employer, the AA, the turnover in staff is extremely high and many staff just resigning because of the continued pressure they are expected to work under. They are not sick. They are injured.

We believe that injury in the workplace should be supported by the employer and should not be allowed to take the preferred option of dismissing the employee. They should see their staff member through to full recovery and return to work. Again, they are not sick. They are injured.

We ask Congress to put forward and drive an initiative to remind the AA and all employers to bear the responsibility of looking after their employees when they have been injured in the workplace and not to proceed to dismiss staff. I move.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. P. CURTIS (Southern): My foot first became sick 18 months ago. In a particularly virulent outbreak of foot sickness at work, myself and three colleagues are now suffering; in fact, one colleague's foot sickness is so bad it has spread to his leg. Of course, it is not a foot or leg sickness, our feet and/or legs are broken, or, as our employers may say, malingering in pieces.

The attitude of employers to people who hurt themselves or injure themselves at work is nothing short of disgusting. We are put into a position where because an employer does not recognise industrial injury or any type of injury, we have to go on statutory sick pay, forcing unfit employees back into the workplace long before their time, causing further stress, injury, and even depression.

I second this motion and urge this Congress, and everyone, to go back to your branches, to your regions, and fight this ridiculous situation now before we end up a nation of blue collar cripples. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Can Yorkshire move 107, please?

BACKS FOR THE FUTURE MOTION 107

107. BACKS FOR THE FUTURE

This Conference is concerned with the increasing number of workers within the United Kingdom that are suffering from musculoskeletal injuries and the impact and cost it has on the nation and industry.

We call upon this Conference to actively participate and continue to lobby government and for them to demonstrate their commitment to providing solutions to managing manual handling within the workplace.

(Carried)

SIS. S. WALKER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, in figures produced by the HSE in 2014/2015 the number of workers in the UK suffering from muscular skeletal injuries total 553,000, with 169,000 of that figure being new cases that were reported in that 12-month period. These types of injuries can affect muscles, joints, and tendons in all parts of the body, with most developing over a period of time through constant and/or repetitive pressure, impact, and strain.

These injuries have high incident rates in the building trade, nursing, personal care, agriculture, postal workers, and couriers, with manual handling being the main cause of back disorders. Approximately, 40% of disorders affect the back while another 40% affect upper limbs. A high percentage of workers are over 45 years old and are more prone to these injury types as their body has had more years of wear and tear and exposure to bad working practices.

Latest estimates suggest that 44% of all work-related illness is due to muscular skeletal injuries with a massive 9.5 million working days lost per year. This cannot continue. We need to lobby government for them to provide solutions to manage manual handling better in our workplaces. We need a commitment that they will work towards reducing these figures by working with us and other specialists who are expert in this area.

Listen to what the people doing the jobs have to say and work with them. The cost to industry and the nation when workers are off ill due to these injuries must be a staggering amount but it is not just about the money, it is about minimising the risk; no-one goes to work to get injured. Let's put the pressure and the strain on the Government to act. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sue. Secunder.

BRO. D. SHILLITO (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* I am here to support Motion 107, Backs for the Future. The reason for most of these things is down to the management and education, not of the workers but of the management. They are here to manage their sick but the first thing they do not do is manage it. If they are trained and they are active with their presence in the workforce and made sure that they did what they are meant to do, these accidents with the backs and muscular skeletal injuries as we have described would not occur. They do not allow rest or reduced jobs. This gives it. They also force people in offices and at desks to push. These are injuries of repetitive strain. If we can reduce the strain on people, they will reduce the accidents and they will reduce their sickness, which is what they are paid to manage. I vote that we support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. 108, First Aid, Birmingham to move.

**FIRST AID REFRESHER
MOTION 108**

108. FIRST AID REFRESHER

This Conference believes lifesaving skills are vital in and out of the workplace.

HSE recommends all first aiders take up a 12 month refresher particularly around CPR and the recovery position, however presently there is no obligation for this to be carried out.

We call upon the CEC to lobby wherever possible to ensure these recommendations become obligatory.

S85 SANDWELL COMMUNITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. FAGAN (Birmingham & West Midlands): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, lifesaving skills are vital both in and out of the workplace. Currently, emergency first aid at work training will qualify you for three years to do that role. Currently, there is no obligation, it is not compulsory to do any refresher training in that time despite the fact that the HSE does recommend that there is refresher training every 12 months, basically, to consolidate your knowledge in the role.

We feel that a refresher, particularly around the CPR position and the recovery position, is vital to ensure that all first aiders are both current in their training and also to maintain their confidence in their role to give emergency first aid. We have heard the fellow delegates earlier today speak about injuries in the workplace. The position that I do not want us to be in is for one of those to have an injury, be in need of lifesaving skills, and then a first aider comes along to assist them, they have had no incidents in the two-and-a-half years that they have been trained for, they have had no refresher training, and then all of a sudden they have no confidence to do the role or they cannot remember how to do the recovery position, and we could end up with a loss of life, whereas if they had a refresher they have the confidence, they have the knowledge, and they can save that life. That is what it comes down to at the end of the day. Because of that, we call on the CEC to lobby wherever possible to ensure that the HSE's recommendations of a 12-month refresher for emergency first aid at work become obligatory. I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sam. Secunder.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Thank you. I call Phyllis Riddell, on behalf of the CEC, to speak on 102, 104, 106, 107, and 108. Thank you.

SIS. P. RIDDELL (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, we are supporting Motions 102, 104, 106, 107, 108, but with qualifications.

On Motion 102, on Health & Safety law, the GMB needs to have a voice at all levels of policy-making and to continue pressing for improvements. The qualification is that we continue to do so regardless of the outcome of the EU referendum.

On Motion 104, on substance abuse, we negotiate the workplace policies with employers on an ad hoc basis. The motion gives the GMB some clear principles we can use reforming our policies. The qualification is simply that we expect employers to take more than a balanced approach, with rehabilitation and support for the workers.

On Motion 106, on industrial injuries, GMB are aware that some employers exploit workers until they are injured or exhausted leaving the NHS and the state to pick up the pieces. This is clearly wrong. The qualification is that the GMB is not in a position to pressurise all GMB employers to end these practices. We can only lobby for change through umbrella groups, trade associations, and government departments.

Turning to Motion 107, on muscular skeletal disorders, including neck, back, limb pain, which is a key health risk to all GMB members. The qualification is that muscular skeletal disorders are not just caused by manual handling so we will campaign on a range of health risks.

Finally, on Motion 108, trained first aiders make a critical difference in the workplace and refresher training keeps the skill sharp. The qualification is annual refreshers could be costly for some employers, such as charges that should be determined by a risk assessment and the nature of the work.

To summarise, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 102, 104, 106, 107, 108, with the qualifications I have outlined. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Phyllis. Does the North West & Irish Region accept the qualification? Speak to Mary! (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does 104, Northern Region? (*Agreed*) Thank you. 106, Southern? (*Agreed*) Thank you. 107, Yorkshire? (*Agreed*) Noisy lot! 108, Birmingham? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

With that in mind I am going to put 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108 to the vote, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 102 was CARRIED.

Motion 103 was CARRIED.

Motion 104 was CARRIED.

Motion 106 was CARRIED.

Motion 107 was CARRIED.

Motion 108 was CARRIED.

DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD 2016

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we move on now to something that is very dear to the GMB, our Health & Safety. Congress, this award is in the memory of a young Welsh teenager, Daniel Dennis, who in 2003 tragically died at age 17 in his first week of working for a roofing firm. He had received no training and had no safety equipment.

With the help of the GMB, Daniel's parents took legal action and won a landmark case on corporate manslaughter. This is the 10th year of presenting this award in his honour.

Congress, I will announce the winners before I have to leave this seat to present the awards. This year we also have a Highly Commended Award as there were three worthy nominations. I am pleased to announce that the High Commended Award and Silver Badge goes to Michael Hinchliffe, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. *(Applause)*

Michael, would you like to come down the front for a minute? Sit there and I am going to call the three of you up together. Oh, you're there! I will have to go to Specsavers in a minute, George!

Michael is from Sheffield, Waste & Recycling Branch, and has been a GMB Health & Safety Rep in Veolia for 10 years. He has faced and overcome hostile management and turned around the health and safety culture to improve conditions and standards for our members. Michael has been the convenor since 2010, and has been elected to the National Joint Forum, and European Works Council. He has become involved in the National Waste Industry Safety & Health Forum run by the Health & Safety Executive and also represents GMB at the ETUC sector group in Brussels. Michael takes all of these opportunities to ensure that health and safety maintains a strong profile and stays high on the agenda.

Colleagues, I move to the runner-up of the Daniel Dennis Representative of the Year, which is awarded to Ian Dobbins from Midland & East Coast Region. *(Applause)*

Ian is from Nottingham City Branch and has only been a GMB Health & Safety Representative for 18 months. In that short time he has already delivered substantial improvements for members and has tackled a wide variety of hazards and issues. Ian has organised health and safety training days for his branch, and ensures that members are kept informed through emails, regular newsletters, and surgeries. As a result, he has recruited 27 new members to the branch, including two Senior Managers. Ian is unable to be with us today but Gary Langley from his branch will accept the award on his behalf.

Colleagues, I now turn to the winner. It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner, and it is Catriona Goldhammer from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. *(Applause)*

Catriona works at Asda Harrogate. This award is in recognition of her work at her Asda store, in her region, and also at national level as a member of the Asda Retail Health & Safety Forum. At local level, Catriona has a highly visible presence, challenging local management over a range of issues, from asbestos to PPE. She has been so effective that her store now has a dedicated manager covering Health & Safety. Within the region, Catriona has carried out over 100 store inspections, ensuring that standards are being met. She always makes a point of wearing her GMB high-viz jacket so everyone on site knows that the Union is active there. She has helped to recruit and mentor new Health & Safety Reps, and gives them advice and support day or night. She has helped to recruit over 100 new GMB members, and is

helping with the creation of a new North Yorkshire Asda Branch. She has been pushing the GMB Safeguarding Campaign across a number of “hotspots” in Southern, London, and Birmingham. Nationally, Catriona has taken the lead in discussions on mental health and stress management across Asda Retail, where she has made strong links to the Equality agenda. As she says, “Wherever you work, whoever you are, I will talk GMB to you.”

I welcome Catriona, and Ian, and Gary Langley for Michael, to the stage, please. (*Applause*) Thank you.

(*Presentations amid applause.*)

SIS. C. GOLDHAMMER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Thank you for this Health & Safety Award. I am honoured and delighted to accept it. I would like to say thank you, first, to Colin Kirkham and Chris Murphy, who fuelled my interest in Health & Safety and its ability to do good in the workplace; to Lynn Brooke, my officer, whose steadfast support as I walked into walls is to this day very much appreciated. I also get the pleasure of working with Deanne Ferguson, whose enthusiasm for organising mine and other challenging workplaces never fails to sustain me. Finally, I would like to thank all the other national reps I work alongside, including Keith Dixon, who encourages me that it is possible to affect wholesale change every day.

I became involved with the GMB and Health & Safety in order to try and help young people in the workplace. People with a lack of knowledge of their rights accompanied by their desire to please made them easy targets. If it is your first job, you just assume you will not be asked to do something that might harm you. You never expect to be humiliated by managers screaming abuse at you in front of your fellow workers, and you never consider that profit might be put in front of your personal health and welfare, but in my non-unionised workplace this was the exact environment, the same environment where 17-year old Daniel Dennis lost his life in his first week at work.

Health & Safety is often seen as a hindrance to good business where actually the opposite is true. In order to achieve a safe, happy, and healthy workforce with a low turnover, Health & Safety is the key. In the short term it may mean spending some money but the long-term goals should never be forgotten. Whether it is unidentified areas of asbestos in the workplace, falling down ceilings, or lack of suitable PPE, it is worth the cost. A workplace must be suitable for all and if HSE standards on workplace stress are ignored can it be any wonder that absenteeism becomes a day-to-day problem at all levels of a business. Should a worker really be told there is an expectation they will be well when they ring in sick?

Each store visit I make brings more problems, more opportunity to engage management in discussion around Health & Safety and more opportunity to encourage people to join the GMB, learn their rights, and let their voices be heard. It has not been an easy ride. A more sensible person would have given up but I will not stop until every worker knows they have a right to say no if they have not been trained to do a job. I will not stop until every worker knows they have a right to say no if the equipment they are asked to use is broken or inappropriate to the task. Finally, I will not stop until every member knows and feels safe and happy to come to

work free from torment and then go home safe and well, just as it should be. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. G. LANGLEY (Midland & East Coast): Good morning, President, Congress. I am honoured to be here to collect this award on behalf of Ian Dobbins.

Unfortunately, Ian is unable to be here today but he would like to express his thanks for this award. He said it is a great honour and a privilege to be given this award. I am honoured to accept it on his behalf. I would like to thank my branch, Nottingham City Branch, for the nomination and I would also like to congratulate all the other winners in this category. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. HINCHLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Greetings, everybody. I can see Neil is panicking now because I do not have a piece of paper in front of me so he does not know what I am going to say next but I will just keep it brief. I would like to give a thank you to my manager at Veolia, Mick Burton. He is actually no longer with us now. He died a couple of years ago. He once said to me, "You'll never make a Health & Safety Rep, you're just a bin man." Well, how wrong he is, then. We can see that today.

A big shout out to Uncle Colly, Colin Kirkham, who inspired me over the years and been the world education officer, has trained me to such an effect that I now have a seat at Veolia's top table. They take me seriously. They take the GMB seriously. Health & Safety is about commonsense and it is about a continuing battle sometimes. You will all have experienced that in your workplaces. All I say is just keep up the fight. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Catriona, we are so proud of you we will nominate you for the TUC Health & Safety Rep Award. (*Applause*)

Congress, the winners and runners-up will also receive a GMB Health & Safety Rep T-shirt, which they can pick up from Stand 3. I have been advised that if any delegate who is a Health & Safety Rep would like a T-shirt, please go to the stand. It is first come first served.

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move to 19, which is the Union Organisation: Equality & Inclusion debate. I call on Motion 77, 80, and 101, to come down to the front first, please. The first one is the mover of Motion 77, Southern Region.

EQUALITY AUDITS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY MOTION 77

77. EQUALITY AUDITS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

This Conference notes with concern that social mobility has only continued to deteriorate in recent years. The most senior positions in Britain's institutions and public sector organisations are, once again, becoming dominated by those who had privileged educational backgrounds.

Congress believes that the positive impact of equality audits and equality impact assessments would be enhanced by the collection of information on whether staff attended public or state

schooling. This would cast light on whether public sector organisations need to do more to encourage social mobility and prevent discrimination due to educational background and perceived social standing.

Congress calls on the GMB to be at the forefront of promoting social mobility by campaigning for questions on educational background to be included in equality audits that would further reveal issues of discrimination.

L25 SOUTHWARK BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. ALLEYNE (Southern): I hope I am not the first person who is going to break the rule about swearing because this is something that I care about quite a lot and I have a bit of a potty mouth, so I will try and keep it clean.

We all know, hopefully, that progressive social mobility is a sign of a healthy society but we also know that we live here in the UK in a class ridden society. Those two things are, broadly speaking, incompatible and, as Nicky said this morning, we live in an imperfect universe so we have to understand what we work with.

Wearing a suit or “whistle”, as we call it down South, is a concession I am prepared to make but in terms of changing the way I speak or cutting my hair, or adopting some other trope that is seen as being that of my “betters” is not a concession I am prepared to make, nor should I have, nor should anyone else here, to prove they are smart enough to do a given job. That is something I have come up against time and time again and I will not even get into the colour of my skin, which is another issue, but I am not here to talk about that.

Let’s see if we can mix some facts in with what people would see as my poorly educated opinions. Within three years, and this is based on research from various groups, privately schooled graduates are earning £4,500 more than their comprehensive school peers. As we know, with school fees, university fees, that has quite an impact long term on whether people think it is even worthwhile going to university in the first place. That difference either maintains or accelerates in the years after that. It is acknowledged that this is at least partly attributable to non-academic attributes, i.e. assertiveness (which we could pass differently as being called entitlement). Also, other things like networking, which again I could put in brackets and say that is called nepotism. It works for some and not so well for others. So, graduates and rich families earn more than those from poorer families. I would suggest that this is unacceptable not just because they pay the same fees but on a purely human level it is unacceptable.

Alongside the other protected characteristics I move that we use our negotiating strength in the workplace, particularly local authorities, to negotiate with them, to get them to see sense. The private sector, and there is plenty of boos and hisses for them when they do wrong, are doing right on this one. They are way, way, way ahead of the public sector in terms of recruiting from all different backgrounds. The business case already exists. It does not need to be written. It is there. I have no problem with it at all. The public sector equality duty, though, does extend to local authorities and that needs to be taken seriously. I suggest if you suspect it is not, whistle blow. Look

at your policies and whistle blow, or maybe suggest whistle blowing and before you know it announcements may be made. Do not facilitate their wrongdoing with your silence, please speak out.

Barriers to social inclusion must be removed. Let me be clear, this is not a name-and-shame. I have nothing against middle-class people, upper-class, some of them are my best friends, and all that kind of stuff. This is not about lowering the bar either. That is not what I am asking for. I am talking about equal opportunity, equal access to opportunity, not lowering the bar. I do not want to be let in because of some quota system. I want to be given a fair chance where someone does not dismiss me from a job potentially because of how I look or how I talk. They do not know anything about my experience. We have a clear picture of social mobility in government. We know, roughly, statistically that 7% of our population goes to private schools whereas 37%, roughly, of politicians are from private school backgrounds. We have no idea what is going on in local government. This needs to change. I move that Congress accepts this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Secunder.

BRO. D. ODUMOSU (Southern): Equality audits are not just for the tick box issues, they are meant to work for us, but in most cases, most of the ones that have been done so far, provided variance in the archives of such documents. I am sure we have gone through this before and we will continue to push it as long as we can so we can help ourselves to more opportunities for everybody equally. In terms of social mobility this is a necessary part of any human being's personal development. If I have no motivation to go upstairs and get better in my work, I will not give as much as I can in any job I do. It is important that we give each and everybody that is interested in moving up socially the opportunity to do so. In asking for this we are asking for the equality audit to be done in a way that is presentable and achievable to everybody. In terms of social mobility, we all want to progress in our life. We want to do better so we should all have the opportunity to do that. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, Vaughan.

BRO. V. WEST (London): Morning, Mary.

MUSLIM WOMEN AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MOTION 80

80. MUSLIM WOMEN AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

This Congress believes that David Cameron's recent announcement about Muslim women and the English language does nothing more than stigmatise Muslim women and far from reducing radicalisation, is in fact more likely to encourage it.

Congress also notes that the reduction of funding for ESOL in FE colleges has had a major effect on migrants and BAME communities (of whatever nationality or religion) ability to access language classes.

This Congress instructs the CEC to highlight the hypocrisy of Cameron's policy and to continue to campaign against the frankly racist and Islamophobic policies of this Tory Government.

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Here we go again. Yes, it is the short guy again! In the current feral debate and climate of the referendum, we are seeing the Tories racking up the temperature on immigration and integration, whichever side of that debate they are on, whether it is Leave or Remain. This is exactly the same attitude that they take to the existing immigrant and BAME communities of our country. Hypocrites, that is what I call them, that is what I call Cameron and his cronies; yes, Congress, hypocrites. At the same time as they stigmatise Muslim women for not speaking English, they are making savage cuts to the ESOL funding. I agree that we as a country should be doing all we can to encourage and assist migrant and BAME communities to integrate but what I do not agree with is that they should be demonising Islamic or any community for their lack of language skills. Mr. Cameron, you cannot have it both ways. Integration costs money. Integration needs support. Integration needs encouragement. Do not demonise those communities, do not frame the debate by means of Islamophobia and racism; that only encourages and fuels radicalisation. Restore ESOL funding and encourage integration. Do not demonise it. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder.

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Last January the Prime Minister proposed a £20m scheme to teach English to Muslim women. He claimed that this would help promote liberal values and reduce discrimination. Well, Mr. Cameron, I have a proposal as well, you should stop discriminating against the Muslim community, believers or non-believers should be judged by their contribution to our society, not as scapegoats for the way they speak. Mr. Cameron argued that those who could not speak English would be more at risk of radicalisation from extremist groups. He seems to forget that such sweeping attitudes targeting specific communities, in part is the problem. Meanwhile, reducing funding for ESOL courses, colleges, continues to prevent migrant and BAME groups from improving their language skills. It is like expecting a fisherman to catch a fish by sending him to the desert; a laughable matter.

I call upon the CEC to continue highlighting the racist and Islamophobic policies of the Government. We cannot tolerate it any longer. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mo. London Region to move 101, Grunwick.

GRUNWICK 40 MOTION 101

101. GRUNWICK 40

This Congress recognises and celebrates the solidarity and fight, predominantly by Asian women immigrant workers at the Grunwick photo processing plant in West London which began in 1972, in gaining Union recognition. The battle for Union recognition went on for over two years led by Asian women workers.

This Congress recognises that 2016 is the 40th anniversary of this dispute which brought the establishment to its knees and eventually won union recognition. The intersectionality of the workers themselves made this a unique struggle and victory at the time where intimidation and exploitation was rife.

This Congress recognises that the dispute was not only about workers' rights, but also about human dignity. This Congress recognises that the Grunwick dispute epitomises the need for Unions than ever before. The Government Trade Union Bill aims to eradicate unions, making them defunct so that workers are once again open to even more exploitation with the same make-up of the workers involved in the Grunwick dispute being disproportionately affected.

The woman who led the dispute, Jayaben Desai was a guest speaker at GMB Congress 2007.

We call upon Congress in commemoration of the battle of the Grunwick workers' 40 years' ago to:

1. Encourage and somehow involve branches and regions to be involved in the Grunwick 40 Groups celebration.
2. Work with the equality structures to set up and include the contribution of BMER workers within the Union.
3. Consider setting up an award for BMER workers who have made a mark within the union to recognise their contribution.
4. Consider an educational training programme for BMER workers so as to involve them further in Union activities.
5. To consider a commemorative plaque to Mrs Desai for the valiant struggle by her and the Grunwick workers either at Head Office or in the Houses of Parliament.
6. Be involved in the Grunwick 40 Campaign events this year and show GMB visibility and solidarity with this victory.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. T. CHANA (London): President, Congress, 40 years ago a group of mainly Asian immigrant women led by Jayaben Desai walked out of their factories in protest at pay and conditions. What followed made history and changed the face of the trades union Movement. On 20th August 1976, workers walked out of the Grunwick film processing laboratories in Willesden, North London. This walkout led by Asian immigrant women went on for two years. The solidarity of the workers at Grunwick remains inspiration to this day. This was an historic dispute which changed the face of trade unionism and it shattered the stereotype about Asian women workers in Britain and inspired many people to challenge injustices.

As the Tory onslaught on our trade union rights continues, the Grunwick story is as relevant as ever. The workers walked out the workplace not only due to the atrocious and Victorian conditions, such as having to put their hands up to go to the toilet, and low wages, but as their leader of the dispute, Jayaben Desai said, "This is not so much a strike about pay, it is a strike about human dignity."

The trades union Movement was seeing intersectionality of its workforce confronted by racism, sexism, class, issues of honour, shame and exploitation of immigrant

workers. “Workers united will never be defeated,” that was a slogan which brought trade unions from across the UK in support. Hundreds were drawn to the picket lines from Yorkshire, Scotland, Wales, miners, individual feminists, and the local postal workers started a boycott of Grunwick mail on Jayaben’s personal request.

Black workers were fighting for the right of all workers. The dispute broke the myth that black workers were undercutting white workers at a time when Enoch Powell’s rivers of blood speech had not even dried up. Workers solidarity, support, and unity was evident and a threat to the establishment. The Government’s use of power to stop the workers involved the deployment of a Special Patrol Group, the SPG, a paramilitary force used in terrorist cases and later used in Orgreave and in other mining communities. This paramilitary force was disbanded after it murdered anti-racist campaigner Blair Peach in Southall. There were 550 arrests on the picket line, Congress.

The struggle, the fight, the solidarity of the workers collectively never gave up the fight in two years for union recognition. This is the first dispute where the workforce was Asian female immigrants. There will be a fringe meeting today at the Purbeck Lounge at 12.45 on Grunwick 40. I will finish by saying that this dispute, which ran for two years, was a landmark of the trades union Movement. At a GMB Congress in 2007 where Jayaben Desai was honoured, she said: “I am proud of what I did. They wanted to break us down but we did not break. A moral victory had been won.” I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Taranjit. Secunder.

SIS. J. SALAMI (London): Good morning, Madam President. First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, having a single body for negotiating terms and conditions for workers is simpler than dealing with workers individually. If you negotiate terms and conditions and consult on workplace issues that are recognised in the union, the workers are likely to feel more involved in the way the business is run, which in turn may help the business by improving potential rates. Another benefit is experience of employment relations.

Congress, trade unions represent not only the workers in the business but many others in similar related organisations. Therefore, they are likely to have a broad perspective on many issues affecting an organisation. Congress, it is especially useful during difficult times, for example, during proposed collective redundancies or business transfers. So, it is in the interest of workers that union recognition is given utmost priority. Congress, please support this motion. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I just want to say that the GMB, or the GMW at that time, was heavily supportive of Miss Desai and the Grunwick women and, as a matter of fact, I can’t believe it is 40 years. The man I spoke to you about this morning, John Cope, was the organiser getting the workers together, whatever colour, creed, religion, to go and support those wonderful women. We did that and we did it because we wanted to do it. London is now very heavily involved in organising the support and organising so that we remind the whole of the country, and the world, that it can be done if you look after those who look after us. I just want to say that point. There are many

things in here that John did. I was there feeding them. Wonderful women. Wonderful people. I now call Julia Brady to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. J. BRADY (CEC, Commercial Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 77 and 101. First, on Motion 77, equality audits and social mobility, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. Equality audits generally and equality impact assessments specifically focus on a range of equality characteristics but not educational background. Although the sentiments behind the motions are laudable, under the current climate it will be difficult to persuade the Government to incorporate this into the EIA process.

On Motion 101, Grunwick 40, at a time when trade unions are still under continual attack by the Conservative Government, as shown by the passage of the Trades Union Act last month, a commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Grunwick dispute which formed the basis of attacks on trade unions will be a fitting tribute. These workers are mainly Asian women who were members of APEX and now part of GMB. The dispute highlighted three principles: firstly, vulnerable workers, especially Asian women, do fight back; secondly, the importance of trade union solidarity and, thirdly, the issues faced by the Grunwick workers are as relevant today as they were 40 years ago.

In 2007, Congress awarded its highest honour, the GMB Gold Badge, to the leader of the strikers, Jayaben Desai. We also further welcome being involved in Grunwick 40 events in honour of the strikers. GMB has led the showing of the Grunwick films at the TUC Black Workers Conference attended by nearly 150 people. We are updating the book of the dispute and today at lunchtime will be launching the GMB Grunwick 40 exhibition in the Purbeck Lounge. If you are looking for inspiration, then come along.

The CEC qualification is on bullet points three and four. We already have an equality award in place and these are the awards annually at Congress. We are in the process of reviewing our education and training programmes. With these qualifications, please support Motion 77 and Motion 101. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Julia. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. Does London Region accept the qualification on Grunwick? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. I now put 77, 80, and 101 to the vote, please. All those in favour please show. All those against? That is carried. Well done.

Motion 77 was CARRIED.

Motion 80 was CARRIED.

Motion 101 was CARRIED.

PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP AWARDS FOR EQUALITY

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the next item on our agenda, colleagues, the President's Leadership Awards for Equality. We launched these awards in 2009, so this is the seventh year of recognising the exceptional work of our members in regions and branches. There are four categories with awards given to those who have inspired

and championed various aspects of the Equality Agenda. You will find more details about the winners in a separate document in your wallets.

Congress, it gives me great pleasure to announce the Most Inspirational Individual on Equality in the GMB at Work, her name is Patricia Gumbria, from Birmingham Region, for her tireless commitment to fighting race discrimination in her Care Home. Patricia, would you like to come to the front, please? I am going to call a group up together. *(Applause)*

The Most Inspirational Regional Equality Forum is Midland Region Equality Forum for organising regional events such as on Prostate Cancer and their work on the Dying to Work campaign. The award is to be collected by David Lascelles and Dawn Lovatt. *(Applause)*

Most Inspirational Equality Project for Organising is GMB Race London Region for their campaigning work and organising equality activities in the region. The group will also include Taranjit. *(Applause)*

I now move to the Most Inspirational Project for Making a Difference at Work, Pauline Keily, Yorkshire Region, for her improvements to Health & Safety in the Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

The Most Inspirational Individual on Equality in the GMB or at Work is David Hope from Lancashire, North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)*

Most Inspirational Regional Equality Forum is Southern Region Equality Forum. *(Applause)*

Most Inspirational Equality Project for Organising, once again Patricia Gumbria from Birmingham Region. *(Applause)*

Most Inspirational Project for Making a Difference at Work is the Time to Talk Campaign, GMB Wales & South West Region. *(Applause)*

You noisy lot! Okay, I will now go and give them their awards and thank them.

(Presentations amid applause)

SIS. P. GUMBRIA: I just want to say thank you from all the GMB Race Committees and all the black workers both here in the UK and internationally, and also we would like to say rest in power to Mohammad Ali, civil rights campaigner against colonialism, against slavery, against racism. This is for you. *(Applause)*

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Just a very quick mention from our Southern Regional Equality Forum, a bit shout out to Paul, who is a visitor here today, he does tireless work for our Southern Shout Campaign, so big up Paul Sony. Cheers! *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Conference, we would now like to show you a quick clip of Pauline at work, which has been used by the TUC in their Heart Union Campaign. I have just been told we are not showing it! *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I think all those were worthy winners with their involvement in the branches and the equality forum.
Could I please remind you to pick up your delegates' gift of a T-shirt from the Ethical Threads stand in the Exhibition Hall.

Congress, this concludes Congress for this morning. Please be back in the hall promptly at 2 p.m.

Conference adjourned till 2 p.m.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I have two important announcements to make. The first announcement is that Mary would like to hold a President's Bucket Collection on behalf of the Alzheimer's Society at the end of this afternoon's business. This is a cause which is dear to Mary's heart.

The second announcement is that later this afternoon we will be joined by Jeremy Corbyn who will be addressing Congress as our guest. Please make sure that you treat him with respect.

Before we move to Congress business, I would like to show a short clip on domestic violence, which will be debated later this afternoon. *(Video on domestic violence shown)* Thank you, colleagues. We are now going to the motions. I call Motion 190 from London; Motion 83 from London; Motion 86 from London and Composite Motion 7, Northern to move and London Region to second. I call Motion 190.

POLITICAL: DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM REPEAL 8TH AMENDMENT MOTION 190

190. REPEAL 8TH AMENDMENT

Congress notes that the 1967 Abortion Act does not extend to Northern Ireland where abortions are illegal except in very limited circumstances where the life or mental health of the mother is in danger. Anyone who performs an illegal termination could be jailed for life.

On the 30.11.15 in Belfast a High Court Judge ruled yesterday that the almost outright ban on abortion breaches human rights legislation. The landmark judgement delivered to Belfast High Court could see a relaxation of the strict laws prohibiting women accessing terminations in cases of rape, incest or where there is a diagnosis of fatal foetal abnormality.

However, the Attorney General John Larkin has expressed "profound disappointment" and said he is considering grounds for appeal.

In light of the launch of the Amnesty International report and the campaign entitled “She is not a Criminal” highlights the “violation of women and girls right to life, health, privacy and non-discrimination” in Ireland North and South.

Congress agrees:

1. To campaign for the repeal of the 8th Amendment to the Irish Constitution on abortion.
2. To support the Trade Union Campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment and to support the Abortion Rights Campaign in Ireland and the Alliance for Choice campaign in Northern Ireland.
3. GMB should lobby MPs to table a motion in Westminster Parliament to extend the rights afforded to women under the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.
4. Not to accept that our members in Ireland North and South are denied access to equal fundamental reproductive health rights.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. E. HUGHES (London): Good afternoon Congress and comrades. There is a near total ban on abortion in Ireland. There is no exception. There is no legal option for an abortion for a girl or a woman who is pregnant through rape, incest or neglect. There is no abortion option for a woman carrying a foetus with a fatal foetal abnormality. There is no choice for a woman. If you conceive, you must carry a foetus to term whatever your personal circumstances. I repeat: you have no choice!

I had assumed that the Northern Irish constitution and the constitution of the Republic of Ireland mirrored the laws and rights of women that we all enjoy as European citizens and as UK subjects. We carry the same passport, so aren't we all equal? But if you are a female in Ireland or Northern Ireland you don't have the same rights of equality in healthcare as women in Wales, Scotland, England and the rest of Europe. Let me quote from John Larkin QC, the Attorney General for Northern Ireland: “Abortion in Northern Ireland is a criminal offence, which is punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.” That is not just the woman who has the termination but anyone who assists her, including doctors, nurses and other health professionals. The abortion laws are in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights by not allowing for terminations in cases of rape, incest or the fatal foetal abnormality. There is a horrible stigma around abortion around in Northern Ireland and in mainland Ireland as well. It is very damaging. There have been many public demonstrations against abortion and harassment of workers and clients outside reproductive health clinics. My mother's huge family is Irish, and to say that they are against abortion would be an understatement. Despite their differing opinions on almost everything else, abortion unites them as no other cause can. It is a deeply-ingrained pro-birth attitude, venerating the sacrificial mother in Irish culture that has been expressed in laws that prohibit a woman's right to choose whether or not to continue with a pregnancy through to birth. It is the foetus that is given rights, not its mother.

In the 1950s and '60s Irish women emigrated to the UK to give birth abroad without their families knowing. Now over one thousand women a year from Northern Ireland

alone come over to the UK to have NHS and private abortions. It is iniquitous, comrades. If we believe that men and women are equal in law, then our fellow British subjects in Northern Ireland and our fellow European citizens in the Republic of Ireland should have our full support to obtain the reproductive rights that we have in the UK and throughout Europe. Access to good healthcare services is a right for all residents across the UK, not just for men, not just for women in one area, a post-code lottery. This is not a post-code lottery. It is even worse. It is a country lottery. I would, if I had more time, outline some of the horrible cases that have been reported in Northern Ireland, such as the 21-year-old woman given a three-month suspended sentence this year after procuring her own abortion using a poison. That poison was a legally-obtainable abortion pill elsewhere in Europe; the British Hindu woman who died in an Irish hospital due to a complicated miscarriage because doctors were too frightened to induce an abortion and, possibly, be prosecuted for doing so.

My final point in support of this motion is anecdotal. As a copper in the 1960s in London, my dad was approached by a Roman Catholic priest who had buried his third young woman in three weeks, with the cause of death given as septicaemia, which is blood poisoning caused by the interference of an illegal backroom abortionist. The abortionist was arrested and imprisoned. I do wonder how many women are driven to desperation today in Ireland by an unwanted pregnancy. Comrades, women are not sacred vessels. We cannot make that choice to be a mother or a whore. We are people with rights to equality, including the universal right to equality in healthcare provision and in reproductive healthcare rights. Comrades, I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elizabeth. Secunder.

SIS. J. HUNT (London): President and Congress, seconding. The last time I checked, we were living in the 21st century. Women have a right to choose what to do with their own bodies. We have a right to control our own fertility. It is a basic human right. The trade union Movement has played a proud part in supporting a woman's right to choose for the provision of safe and legal abortions. The 1967 Abortion Act, although in my opinion not robust enough, went a long way to providing this. Sadly, this is not the case in Northern Ireland where the 8th Amendment opts the Devolved Government out. This is not an issue about whether you, personally, advocate abortion. This is an issue of human rights for women. The High Court in Belfast has ruled that this almost outright banning of abortion in Northern Ireland breaches human rights legislation. Of course, it is always the poorer, working class women who are hit the hardest.

Recently, we have seen the conviction of a woman in Belfast for taking a pill, as the mover said, to induce an abortion that was legally obtainable from the NHS because she could not afford the trip to mainland UK. This is an unnecessary financial and emotional worry in itself for the hundreds of women who do make that journey. Even the judge who sentenced her said that she was on trial because she was poor. Criminalising women for exercising their right to control their fertility is not acceptable in the 21st century. We want no return to the back streets that my mum and her generation had to face. At the very least, Northern Ireland has to come into line with the rest of the UK. Repeal the 8th Amendment and defend the right to choose! I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Julie. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting this motion. I will now take the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 190 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 83: Domestic Violence.

**UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
MOTION 83**

83. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Congress notes that there is no time limit to report rape or child abuse. However, domestic violence falls outside of the time requirements, leaving vulnerable victims who finally find the courage to come forward after years of domestic abuse, to then be told there is nothing the police can do after the three month period under the present law. Even though the evidence of abuse has gone on for years.

This Congress calls on the GMB to highlight this issue and campaign for change.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. McNULTY (London): President and Congress, I am speaking on Motion 83: Domestic Violence. Chair and delegates, I stand here before you today as a victim and a survivor of domestic violence. In 2013 I suffered an horrendous attack and I was left in hospital fighting for my life. I helped a woman and a children get away from an abuser. I succeeded. The woman and her children are safe. However, the price I paid for her freedom was nearly my own life. I am one of tens of thousands of victims through domestic violence. So this motion is close to my heart and I nearly paid the ultimate price. The sacrifice that I made was nearly my life.

Congress, this motion urges a need for change of an antiquated law. If I told you that the Crown Prosecution Service used historical evidence for paedophilia and sexual abuse, such as rape, for prosecutions, you would applaud it. Well, they do. However, with domestic violence cases, no historical evidence can be used after six months. No statutes of limitations are in place for domestic violence. Unfortunately, victims who believe that coming forward to the authorities and finally having the courage to speak out against their abuser and thinking they would be listened to, thinking the law was on their side, after years of suffering in silence, would be wrong. Our legal system is failing victims of domestic violence.

Congress, in December 2015 the law changed. It now has a statute of limitations of two years, unlike rape and paedophilia. However, this is only a token gesture. The historic abuse suffered over many years is still being removed for consideration to the courts. Domestic violence victims could only go back six months prior to the introduction of the new amendment in 2015. However, paedophilia or rape victims can go back indefinitely. Congress, this is a token gesture and completely inadequate.

An assault charge under the domestic violence legislation has to be submitted to the court for a prosecution under the law within six months at present. If it is not proceeded with, it is then thrown out. This means removing all of the previous sufferings, beatings, mental torture, abuse and mentally and physically going beyond the six months deadline. However, the new law, Congress, allows victims to go back two years only on psychological and controlling abuse towards the perpetrator. This is a token gesture. This new law is too little, as it is still failing every victim of domestic violence throughout the United Kingdom. Six months will never be enough time for victims of domestic violence. It can take years for the victim to take the final first step to come forward, to then be told that they will fall at the first hurdle as they can't go back more than six months. However, you can use the historical two years on psychological and controlling measures, forgetting the stalking, beating, black eyes, torture, bruising, drugging, sexual abuse, broken bones, their screams and their living nightmares, not forgetting the deaths.

Survival victims have endured many years of domestic violence and are left with deep debilitating injuries. By having the courage to come forward, victims should be encouraged to catalogue their abuses historically, and that history should be considered for prosecution without limitations identical to that of rape and paedophilia, empowering the police to prosecute over many years going back through decades of incidents of domestic abuse, suffered in isolation and silence.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can you wind up, please?

BRO. McNULTY: I will leave you with a victim's true story. She has written —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. Can you wind up now, please? You've got the red light.

BRO. McNULTY: Congress, please support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

SIS. N. CLOUDEN (London): Congress, I second Motion 83: Domestic Violence. Domestic violence is an abuse of human rights within a relationship where there should be love and trust. It is a common problem which can happen to anyone. It has devastating and far-reaching effects on the lives and health of those who suffer and on their children. In 2013 the Government defined domestic violence as: "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse." Domestic violence happens right across society, whatever gender, race, sexuality, social class or age people may be.

Previously, domestic abuse cases were frequently prosecuted as common assault. However, victims had to report the abuse within six months of it occurring, which many do not have the courage to do. Shareen Jamil raised the concern, and a petition under Shareen's law lobbied Parliament. This law was passed on 29th December 2015 as an amendment to the Serious Crime Bill, and domestic violence is now prosecuted as coercive behaviour. Under this new legislation victims now have up to two years to report the crime. Whilst we welcome this landmark change, there should be no time limit. Victims are fearful of what the abuser will do to them. It takes a great

deal of courage to leave someone who controls you and intimidates you. Many victims attempt to leave several times before making the final break. Here are a couple of quotes. Janet said: "I was frightened and shocked but he was always so sorry for what he had done and promised never to hurt me again." Emena, Usar and Thom said: "My mum was sad in the old house because my dad used to hit her every day. Sometimes we tried to stop him." We owe it to these victims to continue to fight on their behalf. Two years may seem like a lifetime, but to the victims of domestic abuse trying to escape and reveal their lives, it is no time at all. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now come to Motion 86: Sexual Assault Referral.

SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL MOTION 86

This Congress resolves that GMB will support the work of SARCs (Sexual Assault Referral Centres) – there is one in each borough in London and one in each County outside London. They should be given recognition for the excellent work that they do.

Regions should publicise the situation of victims because:

- They are not always believed by police
- They often have to wait up to a year for their case to come to court – and this will get worse because the Tories are currently cutting the court services even further
- Counselling or psychiatric help before their case has been to court is counter-productive
- They are not automatically allowed the protection of appearing by video-link in court.

GMB will also campaign for employers to support rape victim employees by:

- Being sympathetic to the need for sick leave
- Allow flexible working where needed
- Allowing time off to see solicitors and advisors.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. CLOUDEN (London): Congress, I move Motion 86: Sexual Assault Referral. Unfortunately, every day we hear on TV or when reading the newspapers horrific stories about victims of sexual assault, be this a lecherous person on the Underground accidentally touching someone inappropriately or more serious assaults like rape and child abuse. Many victims find it extremely difficult to come forward and report these crimes, whether for cultural or family reasons, out of sheer fear or their own misplaced guilt and self blame. The Savile case has highlighted that many victims afraid to speak out are affected for decades by the atrocities they suffered. Whether someone has been abused on a single occasion or whether this has been continuous abuse over a number of years, the impact on their life is the same. In many cases, the brain is able to block out the trauma of abuse as a protection and defence mechanism. However, all too often, memories are unlocked throwing the victim into turmoil. This can be days, weeks or even years later. If someone seeks help from their GP, they are referred to an NHS counselling and psychiatric service. Thanks to the Tories' cuts, they may only have to wait 18 months. Yes, the average waiting time is 18 months to two years, and then it is group counselling, not one-to-one. Counsellors then have a

duty of care to encourage the victim to report the crime to the police. The victim then faces more trauma and anguish from this process. Questions such as “Will I be believed?”, “How will I cope with giving a statement?”, “Will the CPS prosecute?” and, if so, “How will I be able to stand in court giving my testimony, feeling as though I am on trial re-living events?” “What if the CPS doesn’t prosecute?” Can I go through all of this and not have my day in court?” The panic attacks and anxiety flashbacks can all be too overwhelming and result in the victim falling into crisis and even attempting or succeeding in suicide. Those who do report the crime to the police go through similar feelings, but they may not receive counselling, but it is felt that when they give their statement it is better for the court to see their raw emotion, not a watered-down version of someone who has been counselled and helped to cope with many debilitating effects of sexual abuse.

Sexual assault referral centres, often known as SARCs, provide services to victims of rape or sexual assault, regardless of whether the victim chooses to report the offence to the police or not. They provide a safe, private space for interview, examinations and can also offer counselling. But how many of you have heard of this service? Congress, regions should publicise victims’ plights. We should recognise the excellent work that SARCs does and the service it offers victims. We need to urge employers to support sexual-assault victims by allowing them sick leave, allowing them to attend counselling or to see solicitors, to allow victims to become survivors. This should not be a question of tokenism. It should be their right.

The subject of this motion is extremely emotional. As a victim but also as a survivor, I am proud to move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. K. DUDLEY (London): Congress, I second Motion 86: Sexual Assault Referral Centres. President and Congress, too many women have been silenced for far too long about the horrendous acts of betrayal perpetrated against them. Exactly how many women have been raped or sexually abused and are living with this terrible secret is something we may never know.

The Sexual Assault Referral Centres, sometimes referred to as SARC or havens, were sent up to make it easier for victims, survivors of rape or sexual assault, regardless of whether the survivor/victim chooses to report the offence to the police or not, to come forward for treatment and advice. It is always important to check the options that SARC offer as they can differ. SARC/havens can be life saving and provider the survivor/victim with a choice of what she wants to do. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now move on to Composite 7, which is Female Genital Mutilation, with Northern to move and London to second.

**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
COMPOSITE MOTION 7
(Covering Motions 87 and 88)**

C7 Covering Motions:

87	FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION	Northern Region
88	FGM	London Region

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female genital mutilation is illegal and an abuse of children, an abuse no different to the abuse of children in carers' homes that is now being brought before the courts.

We must demand that the government brings into play a more forceful approach in dealing with this abuse of young girls in the UK. Only one case has come to court that failed whereas in the EU there have been many more cases of prosecution and prison sentencing. There is a need for the Labour movement to be more aggressive in demanding the protection of our children.

This practice of FGM should be stopped in all our communities and whilst legislation can have a deterrent effect, it also requires working with communities to ensure an end to this barbaric practice.

The GMB calls on public community funding to be made available, not at the expense of other public sector funding, to enable the tackling of FGM and to seek its eradication in the UK.

This Congress recognises that the Union's policy towards female genital mutilation has not been effective and calls for an on-going campaign by the GMB against the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

(Carried)

SIS. E. STOBART (Northern): Congress, I move Composite Motion 7: Female Genital Mutilation. The subject of FGM in some parts of our communities is a difficult one to talk about. We know that the practice is illegal in the UK. However, we also know that it is carried out by doctors in some of our communities. Congress, we realise that some would defend this practice, and we need to say loud and clear to those who encourage this practice that this subject is about equality. It is about the rights of women, it is about the rights of young people and it is about empowerment.

We need to ensure that, as well as FGM being illegal, there is also a publicly-funded programme of education and well-being to support the communities. The consequences of FGM can be serious physical and mental on-going harm. This can have a life-long impact on those who are affected. Case history and personal accounts taken from women show that FGM is a traumatic experience for the girls and women who experience it, and that this stays with them for the rest of their lives. Young women receiving counselling in the UK report feelings of betrayal by both their parents and family members, as well as regret and anger.

Through our equalities network, which is part of the heart of our union, we are calling for efforts to be renewed to help eradicate this practice in the UK, working with and

not against our local communities, through education and support. In supporting this composite, it is worth noting that a recent survey of the British public has taken place, and in the response FGM was noted as being on a par with equal pay in concern for female rights. Let us protect any female who might be harmed or at risk of FGM. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: London to second.

SIS. P. WALLIS (London): Being a woman, I find FGM a disgusting form of abuse of young women and girls. It is not acceptable to mutilate young girls either here or in their country of origin. The choice of sex within a loving relationship is a woman's right. To deny these girls such a choice is against their human rights. I have two daughters and two grand-daughters, and the thought of any one of them being mutilated is beyond abhorrent. I call for people who do this to be prosecuted by the law. I think that France is about the only country that has actually done it, so we ought, seriously, to consider that. I second this composite motion, and I ask Congress to support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pauline. Colleagues I will now put Motions 83, 86 and Composite 7 to the vote. The CEC is supporting all the motions. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They are carried.

Motion 83 was CARRIED.

Motion 86 was CARRIED.

Composite Motion 7 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We are now combining items 3 and 4, and I will take a vote following Motion 20 after the CEC speaker. So could I, please, have the movers and seconders for Motions 307, 308, 309, 310, 311 and 20 to the front of the hall, please.

INTERNATIONAL STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING & MODERN DAY SLAVERY MOTION 307

307. STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING & MODERN DAY SLAVERY

This Conference, August 23rd was the UNESCO International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its abolition.

In 1791, a slave rebellion paved the way for the demise of the transatlantic slave Trade, and yet 224 years later, modern forms of slavery still exist, robbing an estimated 2.5m people of a normal life.

In Britain, it was estimated that as many as 13,000 people are victims of human trafficking and slavery – forced into prostitution, domestic staff and workers in fields, factories and fishing.

Victims are primarily women and children from Romania, Poland, Albania and Nigeria forced into prostitution and domestic servitude. However, the NCA also estimates that the UK is the third most common country of origin for victims of slavery.

Yet little is being done outside of the justice agencies and a few national support

agencies to highlight, identify and support victims of human trafficking and slavery.

We therefore ask the GMB to:

1. Re-affirm its commitment to end all forms of human trafficking and modern-day slavery;
2. Join with other organisations across Europe and the rest of world in the fight to stop what is a global issue;
3. Hold an annual GMB National Day of Support for victims of human trafficking and slavery;
4. Work with international, national and local organisations to support victims of human trafficking and slavery as well as highlight their plight and the need to stop this disgusting and degrading trade in human misery.

LEICESTER SERVICES BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Referred)

BRO. K. DUDDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 307: Stop Human Trafficking & Modern Day Slavery.

Vice President and Congress, we see and hear of human trafficking and the tragedy that unfolds with refugees fleeing Africa, Syria, Iraq and other countries where conflicts are occurring every day. The traffickers take advantage of these people and, after taking their money, they then leave them to their fate at sea. Instead of fleeing to freedom, as they hope, the ones who are lucky enough to survive the journey are then kept in camps. I am proud that I come from a city that led against slavery — Kingston upon Hull. This is where William Wilberforce was born and lived, one of the leading abolitionists of the slave trade. He said: “God Almighty! There are set before me two great objects: suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of morality”. If we move forward 183 years and slavery is still as prolific now as then. More than 45 million people are living in modern slavery within the world. Forty-five million is quite a number, with Asia accounting for two-thirds of the victims. These are the figures from the 2016 Global Slavery Index from the Walk Free Foundation in Australia. In Britain alone, it is estimated that as many as 13,000 people are victims of human trafficking and slavery, forced into the sex industry as prostitutes, working as domestic staff, working on the land as well as on the sea, working in sweat shops: the list goes on. Thousands of people do not know what it is like to live a normal and free life.

I would like to read a poem from a multi-cultural primary school from our city, which a pupil wrote. The pupils were asked to write about freedom, and they made up a booklet which is called *Freedom Is*.

*“Freedom is having a choice;
Freedom is playing in the sun with my friends;
Freedom is listening to the birds in the trees;
Freedom tastes like popcorn when it’s warm;
Freedom is like cuddling my fluffy teddy;
Freedom smells like dark chocolate;*

*Freedom makes me proud;
Freedom takes us to a new world”.*

That is a child’s view of what freedom is like, but for hundreds of thousands of children and adults, they do not have the choice to taste freedom.

We, therefore, ask the GMB to reaffirm its commitment to end all forms of human trafficking and slavery. We must join with other organisations across Europe and the rest of the world in the fight to stop what is a global issue. We ask that we hold an annual GMB National Day of Support for victims of human trafficking and slavery. We ask that we work with international, national and local organisations to support these victims as well as highlight their plight and to stop this disgusting and degrading trade in human misery. Please support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kev. Secunder?

SIS. V. WASS (Midland & East Coast): Conference, I second Motion 307: Stop Human Trafficking & Modern Day Slavery.

When I was a kid I lived on a dead-end street in a mining town. I knew everyone on that street, all the kids, their mum and dads and all the relatives. The focal point in the street was when the ice-cream van along and everyone came out with a bowl to be filled up with ice-cream. Today it is a different story. I know a handful of neighbours, we nod and exchange pleasantries. Modern-day life of working shifts, family commitments and everyday use of technology means that I have lost the bond with my neighbours, but in every city, town and down all our streets modern-day slavery and human trafficking is happening. Mainly women and children from Romania, Poland, Albania and Nigeria are brought over here with a promise of a job in the UK and a better way of life. As soon as they are here, the traffickers have control of their passports and they are forced into prostitution and domestic slavery. An estimated 13,000 victims are currently forced into slavery.

I am asking GMB to reaffirm our commitments to end modern-day slavery and human trafficking, not to shut the door and close the curtains when we get home, but to remember that this is happening now, in our streets. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vicky. I call Motion 308.

NO TO WAR AGAINST SYRIA MOTION 308

308. NO TO WAR AGAINST SYRIA

This Conference notes that the UK Parliament voted in favour of military action against Isis in Syria on the 2 December 2015.

This Conference believes that:-

- The US and its allies, including Britain, were already bombing Isis in Syria and Iraq without significant effect. Isis is a violent and reactionary organisation but more bombing will only increase bitterness against the West.
- The “War on Terror” has brought nothing but blood and destruction to Afghanistan and Iraq and has destabilised the Middle East and large parts of Africa. The 2011

intervention in Libya dramatically increased the rate of killing and led to Islamist radicalisation. There is no reason to think the outcome will be any different in Syria.

- The West's main allies, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, are among the most authoritarian regimes in the regions and have no interest in democracy in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia beheads more people than Isis and the two countries support Jihadi groups in Syria. If the West were really concerned about tackling terrorism, they would not be supplying weapons to these tyrannies.
- The UK Government shouldn't be committing billions of pounds to a new war at a time when savage cuts in public services are being implemented. The extra billions would be better spent on schools, housing, the NHS and jobs.
- In Syria the American, Russian, French and British warplanes aren't helping the millions of ordinary people that are suffering. Neither is it helping those fleeing as refugees.
- Further military escalation will only lead to greater collateral damage. More deaths of innocent Syrian civilians will create more resentment potentially leading to more terrorism.

The results too can be catastrophic for the whole region.

As former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan put it, "Syria is not Libya, it will not implode, it would explode beyond its borders".

This Conference therefore resolves to support all future mobilisations against the bombing of Syria, and against military escalation and to affiliate to Stop the War Coalition (www.stopwar.org.uk).

ASDA STORES BRISTOL & SOMERSET BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. SIBLEY (GMB Wales and South West): Conference, I move Motion 308: No To War Against Syria.

President and Congress, sometimes it is necessary for political leaders to review past decisions in order to understand how they relate to or may have contributed towards contemporary problems. The choice to take part in the 2003 Iraq invasion produced a dilemma for both the Labour Party in government and the country generally, and played an important part in ending Tony Blair's premiership. There can be no dissent that the invasion has caused widespread sectarian conflict, resulting in millions of Iraqi people becoming homeless, and facilitated Sunni rebellions that proved to be productive breeding grounds for both Al Qaeda and, subsequently, ISIS. In these situations a very careful balance needs to be made between diplomatic, military and developmental forms of intervention. Twelve years on and our government, again, votes for war. This time it is against Syria and the mistakes of 2003 have been repeated.

Congress takes the view that the success of any intervention initiative will largely depend on the ability of the local political and military leaders together, with other national powers, to broker a settlement.

With regards to Syria, it is apparent that the destruction of ISIS is not the top priority of Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia or the Syrian government itself. Critics, quite rightly, state that the foreign campaign and the civilian casualties that accompany plays into the hands of ISIS, helping it to propagate the narrative that it is waging war against the west to protect Muslims. Given that ISIS militants are deeply embedded in Al-Raqqah amongst some 200,000 civilians, it is almost impossible to avoid casualties within innocent, non-terrorist groups. Dropping more and more bombs on Al-Raqqah is not the solution to fighting ISIS. The futility of that strategy mirrors the story of Iraq, and the UK Government should assume the role of a responsible world power and determine what it can do other than military aggression. To help the collective effort to resolve the problems of other countries, it should also realise that, on its own, there are very few international problems that it can solve.

The first step to solving the problems in Syria must, surely, be to de-escalate the conflict and to bring the Syrian Sunni armed groups on side by supporting them on the ground and assisting them in the formulation of a coherent strategy.

Jeremy Corbyn may be finding the transition from free back-bencher to be difficult and has been, predictably, pilloried in the media for showing weakness on Syria, but his take on what comprises responsible and reasonable foreign policy in the crisis of the Middle East and north Africa must be the right one. He cautioned against the direction of travel that leads to more harm than good, and that our main goal as a country should be to ensure that other countries become their own problem solvers by encouraging greater ownership of their own difficulties and solutions.

Congress, as the Stop the War Coalition points out, the main action to be taken on ISIS should be to reduce the number of weapons sold to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and to cut off the ISIS supply lines through Turkey. Those two countries are among the most reactionary and authoritarian regimes in the region and sponsor terrorist networks in Syria. As this motion proposes, GMB should show some resonance with the work of the Coalition by affiliating to it. None of us here will fail to see the evil face of ISIS and sympathise with the families of the victims in Paris, Brussels and elsewhere.

Public support for bombing in Syria is dropping very sharply with less than half of the voters now being in favour of air strikes. This shows that wider opinion recognises the horrific consequences of bombing in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, how it rejects Cameron's claims of 70,000 moderate forces on the ground and realises that only a negotiated peace settlement can overcome the ISIS threat. Please uphold the position of the GMB as being anti-imperialist abroad yet agitators for social and political reform at home. Let's ask the real question, namely: in whose interest is force in Syria really being used and with what effect on whom? This time military force is not the answer. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. M. WILSON (GMB Wales and South West): Conference, I second Motion 308 on the emotive subject of Britain's intervention into Syria.

Vice President and Congress, few issues in the last 10 years have roused a scale of controversy as a case for and against the war in Syria has done. As Robin Cook famously said at the 1999 Labour Party Conference: “We must not turn a blind eye to how other governments behave and a deaf ear to the cries for help of their people.” This comment embraces a responsibility to protect when a population is suffering serious internal harm, and where the relevant government is either unwilling or unable to stop it. Interventionism, therefore, should be firmly based upon the protection of civilians, unlike the support of the Labour Government for military action in Iraq.

Congress, the Government should have learnt from the relevant lessons of Iraq with the crafting of a strategy which has the protection of civilian life at its very core. Instead, Syrian foreign policy has firmly focused upon the eradication of ISIS. In my view, that is the wrong priority. The overriding need is for the moderate forces on the ground to be able to free their country from the evil of ISIS, but that won’t happen as long as the bombing offensive continues. All this does is perpetuate our inability to protect those who are at the most risk of most atrocity crimes and conflict with our efforts to both achieve a lasting political settlement and to defeat ISIS itself.

Again, colleagues, we have not learnt from the UK-French intervention in Libya where airstrikes that were initially designed to help civilians changed the balance of forces on the ground and led to the conditions that have caused the chaos that still afflicts that country today.

Our position on this motion is not really about the simplistic matter of being pro or anti military intervention. It is more concerned with the fact that atrocities in foreign parts cannot just be resolved by applying military punishment in the form of dropping bombs from the safe distance of —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Wind up now, Mike, please.

BRO. WILSON: Sometimes there are some problems from war with an unsuitable response, and times when the thirst for revenge—

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Mike, please wind up! You have got the red light.

BRO. WILSON: It is time to think again. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 309.

SYRIA — THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST MOTION 309

309. SYRIA – THE CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This Conference believes that the Tory Government’s decision to bomb Syria will merely exacerbate the problems facing the people of the Middle East.

Conference notes the genuine internationalism in the response of working people throughout Europe to the refugee crisis in Syria. The unity of working people stands in sharp contrast to the narrow aims and petty diplomacy of the Tory Government, the Americans, Russians, Saudis, Iranians and Turks, the despotism of Assad and the obscurantist barbarism of ISIS and the other fundamentalists.

- We condemn the decision to continue the bombing of Syria, which will lead to the further deaths of thousands of innocent working people and their families
- We congratulate Jeremy Corbyn
- on his continued opposition to the bombing of Syria and urge all Labour MP's to give him their utmost support
- We condemn the continuing British arms sales to Saudi Arabia
- We stand in opposition to imperialism, terrorism and fundamentalism and for a genuine socialist solution to the problems to the Middle East, based on the unity of working people and the abolition of the crisis ridden system that offers no future but the horror of war, disease and want.

RIPON & THIRSK GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. B.ALAM (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Conference, I move Motion 309: Syria — The Crisis in the Middle East. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. ALAM (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. I move Motion 309: Syria and the Crisis in the Middle East is a topic which I could, literally, stand here and talk for hours about, but I will try my best to keep my contribution as short as possible considering I only have about four minutes.

If you are not aware, it all started as a peaceful protest just over two years ago. Since then it has morphed into something else. It has been hijacked by sectarian thugs, ex-military men, Jihadists and gangsters. The UN has come up with a report of torture, beheading, suicide bombing, the use of child soldiers and chemical weapons. On other occasions, a Syrian rebel commander cut the heart out of a dead man and bit into it. A few weeks later, our Foreign Secretary pushed the rest of the EU to lift the arms embargo so that we can supply arms to this man's ally. What we need to make sure of is that while fighting these monsters we don't become one ourselves. The Assad regime comprise of monsters by killing and bombing civilians. Sadly, the rebels have become the same.

All of our previous wars have gone so well, haven't they? What could go wrong if we attack another country? We have broken Iraq into a hundred pieces, with millions dead. We bombed Libya and destroyed it. These wars have made every matter worse. By joining Syria to this long Middle East list will end no better.

As to encompassing the feeling of our people, only 11% of the public, according to the *Daily Telegraph*, supported Britain becoming involved in Syria. However, the Tories decided to bomb indiscriminately, not caring whether innocent women and children were killed or maimed. We have examples of schools and hospitals being bombed. This behaviour must stop.

Let me get this straight. At home we are fighting against extremism and countering radicalisation, and abroad we send arms and weapons to radical organisations. That is not just double standards but insanity! One of the reasons why the rebels have support from foreign countries who do not care how many people are getting killed is because they are pursuing their own interests. Now is the time for us to draw a line and say that we are not supporting any more killing. We need to stand together and say “Enough is enough”.

I would like to commend Jeremy Corbyn on his opposition to the bombing in Syria and urge all Labour MPs to give him their utmost support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

BRO. W. HINSLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Chair and Congress, I am second Motion 309. We have talked about this hassle that we have had with bombing Syria. The one person I blame is Assad. He is an invisible figure who sits in the background just generating war. He wants flushing out, because all he is doing is bombing hospitals and camps where refugees are going for some kind of solace. The Russians are in the background backing him up. Russia is supposed to be just bombing ISIS but they are bombing the rebels as well. The only way they are going to solve this problem is by talking. Everybody in this room at some time has negotiated from an impossible position. It is only by talking and talking that you can resolve a bad situation. Every time they drop a bomb, it kills human beings and destroys the whole structure of the country. It has all got to be rebuilt at some time, whenever they do finally solve the problem.

What they want to do now is to make sure that they get round the table. Assad is going to have to answer for war crimes eventually. I think it is the only way we can get round it. We want to stop bombing and start talking. They want to cut the trigger out and use their tongues. That is the only way I can see out of this situation. Otherwise it will go on for ever. It will never be resolved in my lifetime. We have got to look to the future and the war will have to be resolved eventually. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, William. I call Motion 310.

ISIS BARBARIC TREATMENT AGAINST YAZIDI COMMUNITY MOTION 310

310. ISIS BARBARIC TREATMENT AGAINST YAZIDI COMMUNITY

This Conference calls on the GMB to campaign against the barbaric treatment, killings and torture of thousands of Yazidi people, and to help campaign for the release of captured women and to restrain and prevent British Muslim volunteers governing and leading in the ISIS Sharia Police Force.

HENGOED ENGINEERING BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. HARRISON (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 310: ISIS Barbaric Treatment Against Yazidi Community.

Vice President and delegates, during the siege of Mount Sinjar last August thousands of men were brutally murdered over a matter of weeks, but amid the slaughter Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists chose a different fate for women of the town. Women of every age were taken, with ISIS fighters grabbing thousands of young girls and elderly grandmothers in the largest single kidnapping of women this century. After the attack, those who survived faced the impossible task of trying to rescue their women from the ISIL territory. No government has offered to intervene and help to free the women, so it is left to the Sinjar citizens to get their sisters, daughters and mothers back. One man, a lawyer, named Khaleel ah-Dhaki, is the front man of this improvised rescue mission. So far his network has saved 530 women and children from the hands of ISIL. Khaleel's work began in September last year, when he started compiling details of all women and children who had been kidnapped by ISIL. After talking to every family from Sinjar, he had a list of more than three thousand names.

In the beginning it was difficult to rescue the captured. In fact, the very first girls to escape ISIL territory managed to do so without any help from anyone at any time. ISIL was more focused on their weapons and were not paying much attention to the girls, which is why they managed to escape, but they gave insight knowledge of the ISIL territory to Khaleel to assist his on-going rescue mission. The girls who escaped were able to describe how the vast majority of women, including young children, raped by ISIL terrorists. Official documents claimed that it is acceptable to marry nine-year old girls and to sell children as wives to strangers of any age. They beat the women, they gang raped them and they made them have forced marriages with many men. Some women had their infant babies taken away by force. They take them to slave markets and give women to each other like a gift. If the women try to resist they are put into single jail cells or left out in the boiling sun for long periods of time. Sometimes they are killed. A nine year-old girl was brutally raped by a middle-aged ISIL fighter who tore her vagina. She was then made to have genital mutilation surgery, after which the terrorist tried raping her again.

Congress, we must, as women, activists and human beings campaign to get these women rescued by any means possible. Please support this motion and get the barbaric treatment stopped. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. Secunder.

BRO. D. FRENCH (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 310: ISIS Barbaric Treatment Against Yazidi Community. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

President and Congress, the captured women suffered tremendous psychological distress and the trauma does not fade easily. ISIL is one of the world's most brutal regimes for women, and even those who live there by choice face constant oppression. Women cannot leave their house without a close male relative and must wear three veils over their face. They will be lashed if their eyeballs are visible and stoned to death if they are accused of adultery. British female Jihadists who are leaving Britain are running brothels. The women in these brothels have been kidnapped and are also forced into slavery by Islamic State militants. It is understood

that these women fleeing Britain are becoming members of an ultra-religious police force who are tasked with looking after girls captured from the Yazidi tribe in Iraq. Sources suggest that women Jihardi members of the Al-Kansata Brigade in Iraq and Syria are running brothels to satisfy the fighters' desires. These women are using barbaric interpretations of the Islamic faith to justify their actions. They believe the militants can use these women as they please as they are non-Muslim. The Yazidi people are being ethnically cleansed and their women are being subjected to the most brutal treatment. It is the British women who have risen to the top of the Islamic State Sharia police and now they are in-charge of the operation. It is bizarre as it is perverse. Please support this motion and help us make this barbarism stop. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Daniel. I call Motion 311.

DOCTORS AGAINST FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING MOTION 311

311. DOCTORS AGAINST FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING

This Conference asks to support the work of the Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) which is campaigning to end organ removal from prisoners of conscience in China (without the benefit of anaesthetics) for sale to organ tourists.

Since 1999 exponents of Falun Gong, which is a practice of slow moving meditation exercise similar to yoga, have been persecuted by the Chinese authorities who regard them as an ideological threat possibly because practitioner numbers exceed members of the Chinese Communist Party. In 2013 DAFOH initiated a petition to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calling for immediate action to end this unethical practice. The petition also calls for an end of the persecution of the spiritual group, Falun Gong, the primary victim of the forced organ harvesting. Other minority victims are Tibetans, Yighurs and House Christians.

Between July and November 2013 nearly 1.5 million people in over 50 countries and regions signed the petition and expressed their support to call for an end to this unprecedented evil. On December 12, 2013, the European Parliament adopted an urgent **resolution on organ harvesting in China**.

I ask conference to support this motion to add our voices to the above bodies with a view to ending this unprecedented abuse of human rights.

B01 BIRMINGHAM FORWARD BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. CARTER (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am proudly wearing my 2016 Congress badge. I am moving Motion 311: Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting.

The figures in this motion have come from investigations by the *Epoch Times*, which strives to provide independent and mainly uncensored news to the people of China and the rest of the world. I ask Congress to support the work of Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting, which is campaigning to end organ removals from

prisoners of conscience in China. For a country with such a large population, China has a minimal organ-donation system. Research has shown that in the years up to 1999 the number of organ transplants performed in China each year was, approximately, three thousand. However, by 2004 this figure has surged to around 13,000, with current figures believed to be at least 10,000 per year. So where do these organs come from?

The official information is that only formally executed prisoners are used, and that relies on the credibility of the number of transplants corresponding, roughly, with the number of executions. In the city of Tianjin, in northern China, that would be about 40 executions a year. That's the number derived from calculations of the city's population against the national death row total. It is not a nice subject, I know. However, by 2006, in the Tianjin First Central Hospital, Dr. Shen Zhongyang, had performed over 1,600 liver transplantations. Chinese media reports says that Tianjin First Central Hospital, whose transplant ward he leads, was getting a new, well-funded building courtesy of the local government, and that this doctor had patented his own surgical technique for rapid liver extraction. An official transplantation website was calling him "China's great transplant pioneer".

Official numbers from the hospitals are scarce, but in a detailed study of this activity, which is based on publicly-available documents, the *Epoch Times* found sufficient evidence to throw into great doubt, if not demolish entirely, the official narrative of organ sourcing in China. There are just simply too many transplants reflecting the numbers of prisoners and criminals who are executed. This is the same across the whole of the country.

Given that it is only recently that a voluntary organ-donation system had been attempted in China, these organs could neither have come from volunteers in any significant numbers as the system is still in its fledgling stage. As a comparison, in the UK the average waiting time for an organ transplant is three years, whereas in Chinese military hospitals the claim is that the matching of suitable organs for sale are within two weeks of recipient submission.

With all the celebration in the Chinese press about the doctor's life-saving operations, little attention was paid to the source of the organs he transplanted. Coincidentally, since 1999, which was the start of this massive increase in organ transplants, exponents of Falun Gong, which is a spiritual practice combining meditation, exercise and with a moral philosophy at its core, have been persecuted by the Chinese authorities, who regard them as an ideological threat to the Chinese Communist Party. Practitioners of Falun Gong are not criminals, yet they are detained in large numbers. These people are routinely blood-tested and have their organs examined whilst other prisoners are not. Nor are they legally executed, yet before cremation family members have seen the corpses of Falun Gong practitioners with organs removed. An interview with the surgeon's ex-wife revealed that the husband admitted removing 2,000 corneas from living Falun Gong prisoners.

In 2013 —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Steve, can you wind up? You've got the red light.

BRO. CARTER: Forced organ harvesting —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No. Wind up, please, Steve. You've got the red light.

BRO. CARTER: Okay. Whilst this horrific practice continues, I am pleased to tell you that —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Steve, will you wind up!

BRO. CARTER: Last paragraph. I am pleased to tell you that —

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No! Steve, you are taking time off other people. Can you say, "Please accept", and stand down?

BRO. CARTER: Please accept.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder. *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)*

**UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT
MOTION 20**

20. INTERNATIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT

Congress endorses the work of the International Officer and the department and asks the CEC to give a greater weight to its work and greater publicity to its campaigns. Further urges all branches to better fund the International Offices appeals.

EDMONTON/ENFIELD BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. FREETH (London): Vice President and Congress, I move Motion 20: International Office Support. Colleagues, the reason why the London Region is supporting this motion is to raise the profile within the GMB of the work of the International Office. For over 10 years London and the GMB Executive Committee have supported our sister union, SITRAP, in Costa Rica by helping them build their union facilities and, more importantly, purchasing motor bikes, thus enabling them to organise means of transport to travel to their members to expand their membership, whilst operating in an extremely hostile environment. Further organisation is necessary in the fight against employees who are keeping many of their workers almost in slave-like conditions.

We have, as a union, been involved in a number of supporting campaigns from Indian workers in Bangladesh dismantling very large rusty ships on the beaches, and are raising the matter of health and safety with their members, and we have strong links with the Ghanaian sugar workers' union, whose leadership visited our Portsmouth Congress a few years ago. The region believes that the work of the International Office needs a much larger voice, and it has worked for greater publicity to its campaigns within the GMB. Trade unionists across the world need to support one another, sometimes in a very simple low-key way, such as the recent help given to

purchase replacement motor bikes for the SITRAP union. We urge all branches to be better funded and need to recognise that whatever our problems are in Britain, many ordinary trade unionist members across the world face much greater hardships than most of us. The hand of friendship amongst the trade unionists must go around the world. Therefore, please support this motion to raise the profile of the International Office. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rob. Secunder.

BRO. K. DIXON (London): Congress, I second this motion as we believe the work that is being done by the International Office is of the utmost importance and must be supported. Internationally, the working conditions of the employees is extremely bad, and they are treated by their employers appallingly, with little or no regard for rules, regulations or working ethics. With nowhere to go, they look and turn to their union and their International Office for support and help, but with resources at an all-time low and against all odds, the union and the International Office struggle. This is where our support is imperative within the GMB, to help in the fight. I urge you to support. I second.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Keith. I now call on Colin Gunter from the Midland & East Coast Region to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. T. CHANA (London): President, I want to oppose.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes. I am sorry. Come forward.

SIS. CHANA: Congress, I am opposing Motion 310 in the name of ISIS Barbaric Treatment Against the Yazadi community. The mover of the motion has given a very emotive speech about the treatment of the Yazidi women. But, Congress, we really need to be careful about the language that we use in our motions. We agree with the sentiment in this motion, but the wording of this motion refers to “British Muslims”. This motion targets British Muslims. These are exactly the words used in the media by the *EDL* and the *Pobjeda UK*, and it is targeting all Muslims. Our Muslim brothers and sisters are all bearing the brunt of the “prevent” strategy and the Islamophobic and racist strategies by the Government.

Congress, to support this motion, the sentiments of which, I am sure, we all agree with about the barbaric treatment, we will be agreeing with what *Pobjeda UK* and the *EDL* are perpetuating on our streets. This is what the far-right is doing. I implore you to look at the wording of this motion and not target British Muslims and oppose this motion. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Would the mover of Motion 310 like the right of reply? (*Declined*) No. Thank you very much. I now call Colin Gunter to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. C. GUNTER (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I reply on behalf of the CEC on International Motions 307, 308, 310 and Motion 20.

Firstly, on Motion 20, we thank the branch for highlighting the work of the International Officer. Members can see the latest international news and campaigns on the GMB website, and there is the usual summary of the department's work over the last year in the General Secretary's Report. We are asking that you support the motion with a qualification that funding appeals is a decision for individual branches to make for themselves.

The CEC is asking you to refer Motion 307 on trafficking. It is impossible to disagree with the sentiments of the motion and we can comply with bullet points 1, 2 and 4. However, point 3 needs further research into the practicalities of organising a GMB National Day of Support for victims of human trafficking, whether or not there is already a date in the calendar.

The CEC is supporting Motion 308 on Syria with a qualification. We can readily concur with the general call to mobilise against imperialistic aggression in the Middle East but for the request to affiliate to the Stop the War Campaign will have to be referred to the CEC Finance and General Purposes Committee. It should also be noted that our policy on Trident submarines is contrary to one of the aims of the campaign.

Finally, Motion 310 is also being supported with a qualification. GMB can add its voice to those campaigning against the escalation of violence in the Middle East generally in line with the content of Motion 308 and, particularly, with reference to the appalling treatment of the Yazadi people. The qualification is that we can't prevent people going to Syria and joining terrorist groups.

In summary, we ask you to support Motions 20, 308 and 310 subject to the qualifications I have described, and refer Motion 307.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Does Midland accept the reference on 307? *(Agreed)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Wales and South West accept the qualification on Motion 308? *(Agreed)* Does London accept the qualification on Motion 20? *(Agreed)* I will now put Motions 307, 308, 309, 311 and Motion 20 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Any against.

Motion 307 was REFERRED.

Motion 308 was CARRIED.

Motion 309 was CARRIED.

Motion 311 was CARRIED.

Motion 20 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now move back to Motion 310. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on 310? *(Agreed)* Thank you. The CEC is supporting this motion. The qualification has been accepted. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against. That is carried.

Motion 310 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: The driver has stopped to change. (The President took the Chair)
Good afternoon, all. Thank you, Malcolm.

Can we now move on to Motions 90, 91, 92, 93, 94 and 95.

**UNIONS ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION
SUPPORT RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL
MOTION 90**

90. SUPPORT RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL

This Conference believes that GMB should affiliate (including a bucket collection at Congress) and work with Rainbow International to support them to enable activists working in the many countries across the world where LGBT people continue to face persecution and in some cases, death.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. GIGG (Southern): President and Congress, I move Motion 90: Support Rainbow International. The Rainbow International LGBT Solidarity Fund exists to empower rights activists working in countries where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are criminalised and face persecution and, in some cases, death. Rainbow International supports them with grants and project funding to further equality for LGBT people in the most disadvantaged communities and hostile regions across the world. 2015 saw progress in terms of LGBT equality from same-sex marriage and the passing of the Gender Recognition Bill in Ireland. However, in many countries across the world the battle for LGBT rights is scarcely just beginning. There are 78 countries where being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is criminalised. This represents 40% of the world's population. Many other countries, such as Cameroon, have harsh anti-gay laws. Ten countries continue to apply the death penalty to LGBT people, and 70% of the world's population live under laws and regulations that limit freedom of expression around sexuality and gender. Forty out of the 53 Commonwealth countries retain old colonial anti-gay laws that continue to criminalise LGBT people.

The brave activists that Rainbow International support are often working at great personal risk of violence and attack in many countries such as Nigeria, Russia, Jamaica and Uganda. Discriminatory anti-LGBT laws fuel a shocking rise in homophobic and transphobic violence and murders. In the countries that criminalise consensual same-sex relationships, LGBT people are routinely denied access to employment, healthcare and housing. Please show your solidarity by supporting this motion that GMB should affiliate to Rainbow International so that they continue to promote the human rights of LGBT people worldwide. Until we are all free, we are none of us free. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. L. ADAMS (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 90: Supporting Rainbow International. It is vital that the GMB shows its support to Rainbow International as the suffering of our fellow LGBT friends around the world continues, which in

today's modern world is not right. Rainbow International provides funds and resources to the LGBT groups in many countries to campaign for LGBT rights where there are no rights at all for the many LGBT people who are being attacked, bullied and, in some cases, killed, even though these are made out to look like suicides. Just because they are LGBT and want to be who they are and not anything else, by supporting Rainbow International our fellow unionists in countries where being LGBT is deemed to be wrong, we can start getting our fellow LGBT friends the rights they deserve and the life they should have.

We, as a proud union, as supporting LGBT equalities, can make a difference around the world by saying that we support our LGBT friends who have the right to be LGBT, and we support them. Please support this motion and help to raise funds for the Rainbow International. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 91.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE MOTION 91

91. TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

This Conference believes that GMB should hold a national event to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance and honour those who have lost their lives as a result of discrimination.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. ADAMS (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 91: Transgender Day of Remembrance. We believe that the GMB should hold a national event to mark Transgender Day of Remembrance. The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to remember those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honour Rita Hester, whose murder on November 28th, 1998, kicked off the Remembering Our Dead web project, and the San Francisco candlelit vigil in 1999. Rita Hester's murder has yet to be solved.

We live in times where we are sensitive even more than ever to hatred violence, whether it be religion, politics, race or sexual preference. Over the last decade more than one person per month has died due to transgender hate or prejudice, regardless of any other factor. These trends show no signs of abating.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate kinds against the transgender people. The Day of Remembrance is a day that publicly mourns and honours the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. The Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgender people that everyone is someone's son, daughter, parent or friend. The Day of Remembrance gives our allies a chance to step forward and stand in vigil, in support of those who died by transgender violence.

As a union, we need to continue to highlight the issues that our LGBT members encounter every day of their lives, especially those who are transgender. By holding a national event, in partnership with Shout! groups, to mark Transgender Day, we can

highlight the issues they face and remember those who have lost their lives. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

SIS. A. REYNOLDS (Southern): Congress, this is my first time as a delegate and my first time as a speaker. *(Applause)*

I am second the motion on the Transgender Day of Remembrance to honour those who have lost their lives through discrimination. I wanted to second this motion because transgender people still do not have the same equality as cisgender, heterosexual or homosexual people. This variation is wrong. A Transgender Day of Remembrance is a step forward in recognising that a lot of work is needed on this issue. It was only in 1990 that the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from its list of disorders. A 2014 WHO recommendation pushes for disorders associated with sexual development and orientation to be removed from its next publication, but not until 2017. This is not fast enough. The European Parliament has an action plan on gender equality and diversity which tackles transphobia and to develop a culture devoid of harassment. If the EU can be this progressive, then why not at a worldwide level? I second the call for a Transgender Day of Remembrance in the GMB in the hope that one day we will not need to have one because we are inclusive enough in our diversity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 92. Midland.

EQUALITY MOTION 92

This Conference asks that the GMB either jointly with other organisations or on our own, campaign for the same legal rights for partners in same sex marriage as granted to partners under the Marriage Act 1949.

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. L. LANGLEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 92. Although the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 is a very welcomed and important advance, it still does not reflect full equality. The Government are maintaining the ban on civil partnerships for opposite-sex couples, and this is discrimination, not equal human rights. Same-sex marriages were legalised under a new law that is separate and different from the Marriage Act 1949. Separate and different are not equal. There are six aspects of discrimination in the Marriage Act. Pension inheritance rights are fewer for the same-sex marriage spouse. The surviving partner is not entitled to receive the full value of their deceased partner's pension. Employers are required, by law, to pay same-sex survivor's pension based on contributions made since 2005. Although many employers are likely to pay out from 1988 onwards, this is discretionary and may not be the full value of the lifetime pension contributions by the same-sex spouse.

Heterosexual couples continue to be prohibited from having a civil partnership, although David Cameron argued that same-sex marriage is an issue of equality. The ban on opposite-sex civil partnership remains.

The grounds for the annulment of a marriage or a divorce, namely, non-consummation and adultery, do not apply in the cases of same-sex marriages. There is no restoration of marriages of transgender people that were forcibly annulled as a pre-condition for them securing a gender recognition certificate. The Church of England and the Church of Wales are explicitly banned from performing religious same-sex marriages. The special requirements for registering premises for the conduct of religious same-sex marriages are also more restrictive. Congress, this is not equality. This is out and out discrimination. This law needs to be changed. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 92 on Equality. If you agree that Lee made a splendid job of outlining the mess made by those wastrels of Westminster – the Conservative Party – of the LGBT equality agenda, then, when speaking on the same subject, the soon-to-retire US President said of this subject back in April in London: “If you call it something different, it means less in the eyes of society”.

This motion calls for equal treatment for all in relation to the Marriage Act 1949, no more and no less. I am proud to second it and to call for your support, hopefully to be delivered by the next Labour Government.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I call Motion 93.

HIDDEN DISCRIMINATION MOTION 93

93. HIDDEN DISCRIMINATION

This Conference is urged to support the following motion to end hidden discrimination.

It should no longer be a legal requirement to disclose any disability on application forms when applying for employment, only a voluntary disclosure if at all.

This could reduce both positive and negative discrimination that is blatantly undertaken by some employers when assessing applicants.

Positive discrimination mainly used by the public sector and large corporate companies to meet the Equality Act criteria for interviewing set percentages of disabled applicants. This result in either interview

being offered regardless of suitability for the position with no intention of looking at the applicants skills further than that and patronises disabled people.

Or, negative discrimination criteria used by some employers which is becoming more and more widespread to disregard applicants because they are disabled.

Those employers not employing people purely because of a disability regardless of the severity of the disability or not and the ability to do the job or not is an unacceptable practice.

Conference therefore instructs the CEC to fully research this practice and bring a full report on hidden discrimination to the 2017 Conference.

As both positive and negative discrimination are hard to prove and very rarely challenged. This is why this motion calls for research that gives disabled people a better chance, to let people be assessed on their ability not disability to do the job – not a tick in a box, disabled people want to work, they want the self-esteem and dignity to be treated equally let the chance be given.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Referred)

BRO. B. COOKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for allowing me time to give you the reasons why I pushed for this motion to go forward. Please bear with me. It is the first time that I have spoken at the rostrum.

THE PRESIDENT: Take your time sweetheart.

BRO. COOKE: No problem. Let me first start by telling you a bit about myself. My name is Byron Cooke, like the poet but without the money and the glory that goes with it. I have a visual impairment. It is called achromotopsia. I can't see distance. I can only see about 10 feet, depending on the light. I am light sensitive, hence the dark glasses and I am colour blind. One of the first things I would like to do is to start by saying that this motion I put forward is not having a moan at the Disability Discrimination Act. Without the Disability Discrimination Act so many wonderful things would not be possible. People would not be able to get to places and do things. In fact, I wouldn't be here talking to you as I am now. My point is to do with getting into work, getting a job and being treated as a person. Myself and my family run a part-time business during evenings and weekends building wooden buildings, but that is a hobby job. My main job is that I work part-time in the marketing department for a small company. It is a dead-end job, there is no career potential and the only real way to do that is to look for another job, a better job, with better goals, so on and so forth, but then reality hits with a big X, like the X-Factor, and Simon Cowell saying no. Allow me to explain more. I will keep it brief.

When filling in application forms for mainly big multi-national companies or councils, you have to declare your disability. It is not an option. You have to do it. If you don't do it you are lying on an application form, so that becomes null and void, then. So before I even go for a job I have alerted the possible employer that I have a disability. I'm different. So they have a couple of options. They can either look past that and see that I've got the qualifications, I can do the job and I might be the best employee they have ever had, or they could use what I call "hidden discrimination", they could look at it, throw it in the bin and hope that I will go away. Or they could offer me an interview, knowing that there is no real chance that they are going to offer me the job, but they have to by law.

Let me give you an example of that. A couple of years ago a job came up within the local council within the visually impaired support service, supporting blind and visually impaired people. I saw that and I thought "Result. I can do that." It was a bit

like the blind leading the blind, but I could do it. (*Applause*) Thank you. So I filled in the application form. I disclosed everything about myself and I waited. About a month later or so I phoned them up and just asked for a bit of feedback. Obviously, I wasn't offered an interview so I hadn't got the job. The one thing they told me was "Yes, you didn't get the interview because you don't drive". I said, "But you are a visually-impaired support department. Surely, you should know about things like Access to Work?" But, no, nothing. So it is banging heads against a wall. Honestly, this is just one example. There are others. It is not bad. It is not all good but it is not all bad either.

The point of my motion is not to change the world but to change one little bit of it that can make a big difference, and that is on application forms it can be an option whether you disclose your disability. It is not something that should be mandatory. It is an option thing. In that way, you are assessed on your ability to do the job, not if you tick a box. I think it can be done. What you need to do is to look at the facts and figures. You look at the disability interviews and employment before the DDA, and you look at it at the start of the DDA and you look at it now. I think you will see a trend going down. I am giving this speech to everyone here as you are all influential people. You are intelligent people. You can make things happen. As I say, this is a small thing and I think it can make a big difference. I would like to say thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Byron, with your skills and your abilities, the employers have lost out. Keep it up. Byron has just spoken about the real world out *there*. Secunder.

BRO. A. ENGLAND (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am supporting this motion, and in doing that I recognise that ensuring people with disabilities get a fair crack of the whip when applying for work is enshrined in employment practice now. ACAS states that an employer must ask whether an applicant needs access requirements and must take positive action to assist disabled people to apply for jobs.

Byron's motion, supported by branch and region, is based on his experience of being judged by his disability, not his abilities. Hidden discrimination is an unfortunate side effect of very worthy policies. Byron's experience is that he is being filtered out by having to declare that he has a disability and does not get interviews even though he may well have the skills to do the job. Byron is well versed in IT, he has a job, he also works for his family building firm and he tells me that he is even licensed to use a nail gun. (*Gasps!*) So he should be judged on his application and his CV stating his skills and experiences and, of course, any references.

Equality provisions have been introduced restricting the use of health questions or asking questions about health or disability, and that was the Equality Act 2010. It should be the choice of the applicant to declare in advance whether he or she has a disability. They, then, hopefully, get an interview and the disability becomes obvious, even if it is obvious or relevant to the job. Due to the complexities of the motion and that it questions some of the rules that exist to give people an even chance, we ask that the CEC research custom and practice in this area to identify whether hidden discrimination is prevalent and a problem for people with disabilities. We ask that you come back to Congress next year with findings and recommendations. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 94.

ADULT TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE MOTION 94

94. ADULT TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE

This Conference notes the ever increasing trend towards workers being disciplined and dismissed for matters that could well relate to undiagnosed and historic disorders, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and a range of matters that today would be supported from age 3-18. Congress believes that there has to be a much more open and transparent process in the workplace to encourage all employers to test their workers for disorders, the remedies for which could be life changing. Congress calls on the GMB to campaign to promote and practically work with employers to try and help and support vulnerable workers, who for no fault of their own, may have been failed historically by the system. Congress notes the considerable efficiencies that can be made by simple training and education techniques and the boost to worker morale and productivity that would follow.

G13 GATESHEAD LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. CARR (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 94: Adult Training in the Workplace. Congress, through many generations of workers, many people have been failed by the system. They have been failed by an education system that is often imperfect and too frequently under-funded. They have been failed in a world where information is abundant, often in print, and for many, plainly, unreadable. At one time, we had those who were studying to go to university and those who went into apprenticeships. We had student grants, maintenance allowances and other similar supports that we look back on now with nostalgia. We had meaningful apprenticeships and for some economic security.

Then, as a result largely of the Tories in the 1980s, heavy industries went into accelerated decline, and the system broke down. Government training boards became training companies, which eventually folded, or in many cases were simply abolished. It is a fact that many thousands of workers who have gone through the school system and gone into the workplace with disorders, like dyslexia, that have not been picked up as the motion outlines.

Many of us have been representing our members in the workplace, who we have worked alongside, have met such people and witnessed their difficulties. Recently, I can tell you of one notable case of a worker in the nuclear industry who was sacked, sacked simply for having learning difficulties that were not dealt with but could have been. When he went to his job club, they discovered that, almost without doubt, he suffered from dyslexia. This is not a one-off case. This man was in his fifties. His problems could have been and should have been picked up many years earlier. There are many cases like this one. Employers could save time and money, boost morale and increase productivity by simple measures, like raising awareness. Our equality forums and the work of our reps in helping and supporting learning at work could be a massive influence for the better. This motion is about helping those in the workplace who have been lost to the system for whatever reason. It could also be a huge boost

to the GMB, but it is just the right thing to do and the right motion to support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Secunder.

SIS. C. CONWAY (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I second Motion 94: Adult Training in the Workplace.

Congress, with cuts in funding by this Tory Government, it means that following on from cuts for educational support for working-class people, there are also going to be less opportunities for people to be classed as “mature students” to get educational support. In the past there would be training and education support in the workplace, and then there was help with night classes. The situation now, with less funding, is that employers are now more reluctant to provide support. Now more than ever before our members in the workplace needed help and support to be able to cope with the disorders that may have gone unnoticed, with nobody checking and nobody giving support. This shows up in countless disciplinary cases and grievances. Employers who have and are providing help and support are ahead of the game, receiving benefits in many ways, especially to boost morale and productivity.

Congress, our equality agenda could help branches and officers in identifying needs. It would help our GMB @ Work campaign and help those learners whose needs are hard to identify. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now move to Motion 95.

DISABILITY EQUALITY MOTION 95

95. DISABILITY EQUALITY

This Conference welcomes recent TUC reports on the subject of disability equality.

We note especially, two reports entitled:

- ***A manifesto for Disability Equality;***

and,

- ***“You don’t look disabled”: supporting members with invisible impairments.***

Both reports draw upon the earlier TUC report (“***Trade Unions and Disabled members: Why the social model matters***”) and seek a more inclusive and supportive approach to facilitating members with disabilities.

We call upon our Union, at national and regional levels, to promote these reports, to actively discuss and promote the issue within Equality forums, and to give consideration to compiling information about members’ own experiences, with a view to producing our own report.

Conference further notes that the disabled in Britain have been subjected to the most pernicious and sustained attack by, first, the previous coalition and, now, the current Conservative Westminster Government, with scapegoating and misinformation being used to undermine the Welfare State in the UK.

The GMB remains an inclusive and supportive Union, with the needs of all members, and their families, at the core of our activities, and we demonstrate this constantly reviewing and renewing our understanding of disability and its effects upon the individual.

CARDIFF 1 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. KEMPTON (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 95: Disability Equality. President and Congress, this motion seeks to draw your attention to some excellent and informative TUC publications and to try and widen the debate on the issue of disabilities at the same time. Many of you may well have enjoyed the excellent BBC drama over Christmas called “Dickensian”. As a lifelong fan of Charles Dickens myself, ever since I saw David Lean’s stunning adaption of *Great Expectations*, I loved it, too. However, it reminded me in many ways that our society in the UK is returning to Victorian Dickensian values in so many ways. Some, like this current Government, often appears never to have left it. Take disability, for example. Disability to this Government is something that far too many claim without a valid reason. They are a financial drain upon limited resources. Frequent reference is made to the hardworking people of Britain, who this Government insists they are the exclusive representatives of. They are tired of scroungers, of the malingerers, of the feckless, of the workshy and of people who are pretending to be something they are not. These stereotype images are often validated simply because many disabilities are invisible to the naked eye.

For example, you have to look closely at me to see that I wear a hearing aid in my right ear. I do so because without it I can’t hear much. Some assume that they should talk to me in my left ear because there is no hearing aid in that one. Sorry, I’ve no hearing at all in that one. A minority of disabled people exhibit visual signs, like a wheelchair or a guide dog, not that visible signs are a guarantee of better treatment. For many, though, the absence of a visual clue means that society simply assumes that you are okay. There are a whole host of physical and mental conditions that go unnoticed – crohn’s disease, ME, depression, bi-polar disorder, diabetes — the list is long and the suffering, usually, is longer. As trade unionists, we all endeavour to ensure that everyone is given an equal opportunity in this life but a real problem arises when the disabled person themselves is conditioned and manipulated into believing that they are not sufficiently or suitably deserving of any reasonable adjustment or support.

The Leonard Cheshire charity, hardly a renowned left-wing organisation, estimates there to be 11 million disabled in the UK, and just under seven million of them are of working age. That is 19% of the workforce. So it is not a minor matter of little consequences. Further, that same organisation states that eight out of 10 disabled were not born with their disability, like me, but acquire it due to injury, accident or illness. That period of adapting to a disability is often a slow, painful and challenging process. It can only be made harder if your work colleagues, your neighbours or your peers question it. No wonder many hide it away or learn coping strategies that mask it, or simply deny that they have a problem.

I am not going to recite endless statistics and quotes but, rather, invite you to all to download, print and, most importantly of all, read the publications referred to in the motion.

Further, we want our regional equality forums to review and revisit their priorities and to seek and find ways of allowing more members to express their experiences. Colleagues, please find time to read these publications and to remember that disability is often invisible to you but never to the individual who suffers it. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paul. Secunder.

SIS. L. PARKER DELAZ AJETE (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 95 on Disability Equality.

President and Congress, the very fact that every fifth person in Britain has a limiting long-term health impairment, and the disabled people constantly fair worse in employment terms than their non-disabled counterparts, emphasises the need for us all to seek effective solutions for the future. Central to the media-social model of disability used by the GMB and the broader trade union Movement is the idea that it is the workplaces and not the workers themselves that need to be adapted in order to allow disabled people to fully integrate into employment. There is so much that can be done to offset the barriers to employment faced by disabled people which are even more pronounced for women compared with men. The stigma around mental health, particularly in the workplace, remains with still far too many people feeling uncomfortable about discussing their position with their employer.

Congress, the level of understanding of the workplace problems faced by disabled people is way short of what it should be, and is in need of significant improvement regarding its impact on employment prospects.

The GMB has a long and proud record of campaigning for disability equality and will continue to fight the corner of all our members in order that each and every one of them is recognised as having the right to work in a wider society. The on-going challenge is for strength and trade union awareness, the capacity to support disabled workers and to highlight the Government's policies that impact so badly on them. The TUC also runs campaigns that aim to be pressure on the Government and employers. We must seek to end discrimination against disabled people. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Lorraine. I now move to Composite 8.

**GOVERNMENT CUTS AND DISABLED PEOPLE
COMPOSITE MOTION 8
(Covering Motions 98 and 99)**

C8 Covering Motions:

98 GOVERNMENT CUTS AND THE DISABLED
Region

London

GOVERNMENT CUTS AND DISABLED PEOPLE

Congress is aware that five years' of Coalition Government policies have driven into poverty hundreds of thousands of disabled people who rely on benefits, as well as the closure of Remploy factories, and that the new Government is introducing more cuts.

Disabled workers have increasing difficulty in securing work, training, and career progression because many employers fail to make the "reasonable adjustments" required by the law, and through caps on the Access to Work fund. Many employers use sickness absence procedures to unfairly dismiss disabled workers. Mental health problems have reached epidemic levels with people terrified to disclose them for fear of never working again.

As a particularly vulnerable group, they are suffering under this Government's austerity measures and welfare cuts.

Congress asks that the Union increase awareness of these issues facing members and that these are part of a broader attack on all disabled people.

Congress therefore proposes:

- i) That GMB establish Forums through which disabled members' views and experiences can be brought to the attention of the union;
- ii) Training for workplace representatives and officials in the issues facing disabled members;
- iii) That the union supports campaigns to defend all disabled people by organisations led by disabled people themselves (such as Disabled People against Cuts- DPAC) which backed union campaigns to save Remploy. GMB should encourage regions and individual branches to affiliate and join in with local DPAC campaigns.
- iv) That GMB should affiliate to DPAC in order to show our solidarity and promote their issues. This Conference acknowledges the excellent work that Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) do in fighting for justice and human rights for all people with disabilities.

(Carried)

BRO. S. STRATTON (London): Congress, I am speaking on Composite 8: Government Cuts and Disabled People. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

The Government have ruthlessly cut the budget on funding for disabled people. When the Government announced the cuts, there was an outcry around the country, especially from disabled rights' groups that work closely with families and friends of disabled people. Not all disabilities are visible. Just because someone is seen walking, they are presumed to be normal. This, as we are all aware, is not the case. One in five of us will suffer with mental health difficulties during our life. Within employment, due to little awareness of disabilities by our employers, members continue to receive further discrimination. They are receiving warnings, final warnings and are losing their jobs and income due to their absence, even though their absence is due to their disability. They are being denied jobs, promotion, progression and security in employment, as our employers have little awareness of the

requirements to provide reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Why should we tolerate this?

We need to gain an understanding of the problems our disabled members face, to provide suitable training for our representatives and officials and apply pressure for an understanding of all disabilities to ensure that these are taken into account for all our members within employment.

Finally, we need to support other campaigning organisations to promote this message across as wide an audience as possible. Let's ensure that our disabled members are treated on a level playing field to everybody else when it comes to employment.

I am proposing that the GMB establishes forums through which disabled members' views can be brought to the attention of the union; that there is training for all workplace representatives and officials in the issues facing disabled members; that the union supports campaigns to defend all disabled people by organisations led by disabled people themselves (such as Disabled People against Cuts – DPAC) which backed the union's campaign to save Remploy. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steven. Secunder.

BRO. K. JONES (Southern): President, Congress and Comrades, I would like to second this proposal and this motion, if I can, and I would like to start by saying that I fully endorse and second this motion, having seen first-hand the atrocious way that disabled staff in local authorities are treated, as well as the people who are unemployed. The disabled are now viewed as an easy option to achieve savings in this current climate of ever more draconian cuts by this Dickensian and disgraceful Government, whether in or out of work. The disabled are used as a scapegoat, which is quite unacceptable. If you are in work with a disability, you are penalised because of it, and if you are out of work it is an ever more difficult struggle to get even the most basic of benefits. This situation was highlighted earlier this year with Mr. Osborne's atrocious Budget. I could go on and on and on. I would like you to support this composite. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on this very long but worthwhile debate?

BRO. D. TUCKWELL (Southern): I want to speak on Composite Motion 8. President and Congress, in October 2010 Disabled People Against Cuts was formed by a group of disabled people to fight the austerity cuts and their impact upon disabled people. It now has branches across the UK. As a result, in March 2011 disabled people joined a mainstream TUC demonstration as an organised block for the first time since the 1920s. Campaigns and protests organised by Disabled People Against the Cuts have been highly effective and publicised. As an example of self organisation, they are to be applauded. However, solidarity is the name of our game, and we should not stay silent about the injustices disabled people face from this Conservative Government. We cannot allow the lives of people to be destroyed just because they are or become disabled or have chronic health issues. We cannot allow anyone to be the scapegoat for the financial mistakes of governments and the banks, and an easy target for the Tories' austerity measures. We cannot allow the poor to be

targeted while the wealthy remain unscathed, but we can and must join them in their fight and campaigns for equality and justice. We must show our support and our solidarity. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. BAGNALL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, can you remember 2006 when the Labour Government decided to close 43 Remploy factories? It was our then General Secretary, Paul, who approached the Minister at the time to campaign against the closures. They decided to keep open 24 factories, but with 11 under review. I stood alongside those disabled Remploy workers when they came to Congress. I was in tears standing with them, trying to defend their jobs. I was ashamed at what was happening to them. I still have tears in my eyes when I listen to the Remploy workers being put out on the scrapheap by that Labour government. I have been a Labour member for 50 years, and I was ashamed to hear that it was rubber stamped by Anne McGuire, a Labour Party minister at the time, the closures of our Remploy factories. That was continued by this discredited Government. I say to Jeremy Corbyn: start campaigning now to get our Remploy workers back into their jobs. There are plenty of disused factories. They could be used for making British uniforms for our nurses, British uniforms for the Army. Let's get back to making British and not having all of this crap that is coming from the Middle East. *(Applause)*

BRO. P. DUFFY (Scotland): I have spoken on this many, many times. I was born visually impaired. The comrade who moved Motion 93, the hidden agenda, you better believe there is a hidden agenda. I will tell you where it is, it is in local government. I worked in the private industry all my life. I never worked in Remploy. They told me I could see too much because I could see two feet in front of me in Remploy. Believe it or not, I was a butcher. Think of that one! *(Laughter)*

Seriously, the highest unemployment amongst disabled, other than people with learning disabilities, is the visually impaired and blind. When the DDA came in things did improve slightly. I worked for a local council. The only way I held my ground was I joined the GMB. I have been a trade unionist all my life. I started in the 1960s in the GMB, the T&G. I joined the GMB when I went to work for the council. It is the greatest thing I have ever done. I was frightened of nobody. With the GMB I learned all my stuff down in Manchester and it is one thing we are missing, believe me, and I held my own against them because I used the DDA many many times and as soon as I used the DDA they came up with the goods; I had access to work, the lot. I had no problem. I would say to the people, fight. Do not be bullied. Do not be cowed. I said this at an STU disability conference, stand up and be counted. I told them I was disabled when I went to the council so do not hide it. If you can do the job, get in there and tell them. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Congress, before I call David Hope I have heard the debates. Do we have another one? Come on, then. Sorry.

SIS. D. LOVATT (Midland & East Coast): I am supporting all these motions. The only thing I would like to say, first of all, is what is the goal or the reason why we ought to have a remembrance day. Then the other one is, thanks Byron for raising that very vital point about hidden discrimination. It is bad enough that we accept the monitoring forms giving them an excuse to tell us to go. I had my appraisal two or

three weeks ago, marked highly on my job and marked low on my sickness rate. I cannot help having a disability; it is one of those things. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I have listened to this debate, as everybody here has, and we fully understand the feeling and what is going on out there. I for our new delegates will say to you, no union – no union – in this land has done more to save Remploy jobs than the GMB, with Paul Kenny and Phil Davies. (*Applause*) This Executive moved heaven and earth and we did not give a monkey's what political party was in; they were hurting the very people that we wanted to remain in their jobs. When Peter Hayne in the TUC got up and said he had not seen those redundancy notices, I will tell you this, he did because I asked Phil Davies to take them up in a black sack in the middle of his speech and throw them on the floor and let him see we were not lying, Remploy were lying. I regret every single job that we could not save as a union and it was not for the worth of trying. I give you that. I know James is here from Yorkshire. The offices of this union worked their socks off. We went around the country and every single region, every single region, who had a Remploy factory in their areas did exactly the same, day and night. We will keep on fighting for the disabled to have the right to live like everybody else. As a result of this debate, I believe, I honestly believe, and so do my colleagues on this side – for Motion 93 the seconder asked for reference, we spoke to the mover and he would love reference back – I believe that we should change our stance from withdrawal to reference back so that we can look at this issue quickly and honestly, and come back and deal with that issue. They deserve that right. (*Applause*) Now poor David Hope has to change his speech. Where are you?

BRO. D. HOPE (CEC, Public Services): Before we start, thank you. It is quite heartless because I have a bit of dyslexia, too, so bear with me. I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on a number of motions in the equality debate. The CEC is supporting Motions 90, 92, 94, and Composite 8, with qualifications, and asking for Motion 93 to be referred. I will cover each motion.

Motion 90, on Rainbow International, the motion asks us to affiliate to Rainbow International, a charity raising money for activists' solidarity fund for LGBTI people facing prosecution and violence. The qualification is that requests for affiliations are referred to the CEC's Finance & General Purposes Committee to investigate, and also any requests for bucket collections at Congress need to be submitted in writing to the SOC by the Regional Secretary and have support from the regional delegation.

Motion 92, Equality, the Same Sex Marriage Act came in force in 2013 but did not eliminate some issues arising out of same sex marriages under the 1949 Act. The branch has highlighted some aspects of discrimination that still need to be addressed, which include pension inheritance rights, the annulment of marriages for transgender people, the cost of special requirements for registering premises, the ban on opposite sex marriage in religious premises, and the treatment of same sex marriage in the Church of England and the Church of Wales. The CEC supports the call for a campaign for the same legal rights. However, the qualification is that there may be limitations of what we may achieve, in particular, as the Church of England is a self-governing body.

On Motion 94, Adult Training in the Workplace, the motion highlights workers with hidden disabilities who have missed out on testing that occurs today. The motion is correct that training is a key and the GMB supports workplace training. The qualification is that the National Equality Forum should access the needs and awareness and race techniques from expert bodies with a view to issuing advice to branches and officers. In addition, where we are organised our reps and union learning reps can assist in developing and engaging learners that would otherwise be hard to identify.

Composite 8, this highlights the work of disabled people against the cuts and the GMB continues to expose discrimination experienced by disabled people. Much of what the motion is asking for is current policy. We already have forums for disabled people's views. The Equality through Inclusion Strategy encourages GMB activists to be self-organised in the workplaces, branches, and at regional level. The union already supports a number of like minded campaigns to defend disabled people. On mental health, in this year's National Equality Conference, in Cardiff, the GMB launched this guide on mental health at the workplace, and this is now being rolled out and driven through the regions. The qualification is, as before, that all requests for affiliation or financial support referred to the CEC's Financial & General Purposes Committee to ensure they organise and meet with the aims and values of the GMB.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, discrimination, Motion 93. The general legal position is that it is unlawful for an employer to ask a job applicant about their history of disability and health. There are provisions in the 2010 Act that allow positive action in respect of employment and positive discrimination continues to be illegal in many cases. We agree with the motion that forms should not be used by employers as criteria to select jobs for applicants. The CEC would like to ask this motion to be referred so that we can look at its implications and report back at next year's conference.

To recap, Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 90, 92, and 94, and Composite 8, with the qualifications I have just said, and refer Motion 93. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Well done. Southern Region, do you support the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Midland accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Yes. Northern Region, agreed? *(Agreed)* Composite 8, does London and Southern agree the qualification? Yes? *(Agreed)* London? Yes? *(Agreed)* I will put 90, 92, 93, 94, and 95 – 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, and Composite 8 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 90 was CARRIED.

Motion 91 was CARRIED.

Motion 92 was CARRIED.

Motion 94 was CARRIED.

Motion 95 was CARRIED.

Composite 8 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now come to 93, does the region accept qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Congress accept – referral, sorry – referral. Speak to Mary! Yes?

(Agreed) Okay, colleagues. Thank you very much for that long debate. It was very worthy of all of you. *(Applause)*

Motion 93 was REFERRED.

SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE RIGHTS AND SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Section 6 and call Motion 300, 301, 303, 304, 306, and 305. Can Yorkshire Region please move and second? Will all others please come to the front?

GMB CAMPAIGN AGAINST BENEFIT CUTS AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE

MOTION 300

300. GMB CAMPAIGN AGAINST BENEFIT CUTS AFFECTING WORKING PEOPLE

This Conference calls on the GMB to mount a campaign on the vindictive benefit cuts where many have been affected whilst trying to maintain employment and the negative impact that this has on those members.

Where unbelievable sanctions have been imposed on vulnerable people in JobCentre Plus (JCP) on a Daily basis, these people affected are the elderly, vulnerable, sick and disabled people claiming job seekers allowance, income support, pension, credits and job seekers allowance .

We should produce a campaigning leaflet on sanction advice and lobby the trade union council to help highlight the plight of many and support community groups through our education learning programme.

Congress, we call on you to support this motion!

DONCASTER CENTRAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. IQBAL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, since the coming to power of the coalition government in 2010 the Tories have indulged in a sustained and ideologically driven attack upon the most vulnerable in our society, the sick, the disabled, and others dependent on the state's help to survive, the very people, in short, that a caring and decent society strive to protect. They are all suffering under draconian sanctions imposed by the Department of Work and Pensions through their various arms, including Job Centre Plus.

We have all heard the horror stories of people suffering from depression, of families being made homeless, and even suicides, as a result of constant bullying tactics used in these places leaving them with no hope and nowhere to turn for help. It is not just the unemployed who these sanctions are hitting. There are also people who are pushed into zero-hours contracts and minimum wage, or struggling to top up their wages, having their benefits stopped or removed. Thus, I say the Tory Government's mantra of helping hardworking families rings hollow.

In one of the wealthiest countries on earth where our government proposes to spend £42.6bn on an expensive train set available only to the well off and by some estimates £100bn on the renewal of Trident. Over half a million people are using food banks, the rich are getting richer, and the poor are paying for it. They do not have offshore hiding places for their money. Dodgy Dave and Gideon must be so proud; after all, it is the Tory way.

As proud and upstanding socialists it is imperative that we do our part to help. Our union is, as it should be, in the vanguard of the fight back against these brutal sanctions and cuts, these merciless attacks on those with the least ability to protect themselves, but we must always ask ourselves can we do more. We are calling on our union to carry on the fight against these cruel sanctions and to look at producing leaflets and other documentation to offer support and guidance. We need to use our influence to get the TUC to do more by highlighting the great work in our community service groups and our learning projects to help educate people when they are sanctioned. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nadia. Secunder.

SIS T. HUMPHREYS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am a first time delegate and first time speaker. (*Applause*) Madam President, and Congress, I wanted to hand out this award to all the unemployed winners who have benefited from getting benefits helping them get back into employment. I have worked with unemployed people for 16 years and have always felt privileged to work with them because they have always reminded me where I could be. I have a home, a car, I have had a privileged life, but they always remind me that could end.

There are only losers of job claimants getting sanctioned for missed appointments, and being pushed further into poverty. Between 2011 and 2014, the official data shows that 1.9 million sanctions were imposed and endorsed by Iain Duncan Smith. Whistle bowers from the Job Centre revealed hit squads were set up so that claimants missed appointments when advisers had not told them about the appointment and as a result were sanctioned. Some of the following examples of sanctioning claimants for missing appointments: one, a 60-year old war veteran doing voluntary work selling poppies in memory of fallen comrades, four-week sanction; a claimant's grandmother dies during the night and their partner rings the Job Centre Plus the following day to book another appointment. The Job Centre Plus agrees. A letter is then sent out telling them that they had not attended the appointment; they were sanctioned, again for a missed appointment. A claimant suffers a heart attack during an assessment. He is sanctioned for not completing the assessment. Dr. Rachel Loopstra from Oxford University said: "Sanctions are driving people away from social support to food banks." This quote reflects that not only do claimants seek food banks to eat and the homeless seek begging in the streets as a way to survive, there are no winners until this harsh regime has ended. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I now ask the mover of 301, London Region, to move.

OUT OF TIME CLAWBACK OF STATE BENEFITS MOTION 301

301. OUT OF TIME CLAWBACK OF STATE BENEFITS

Congress agrees to investigate the plight of members whose employers have been forced to deduct payments from their salaries as a consequence of HMRC seeking to claw back overpaid benefits that were made:

- a) without a member's knowledge and;
- b) outside a timeframe that would be considered fair and reasonable under natural justice.

RCN GMB members are aware of instances whereby HMRC has used welfare legislation to reclaim benefits over-payments directly from a worker's salary via arrangements made with their employer, and without the prior knowledge or consent of the employee. We believe this to be contrary to natural justice, and an approach that undermines good working relationships between workers and employers.

Congress agrees to challenge this practice via our sponsored MPs and all other avenues open to us.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. PLATT (London): I am also workplace organiser for the Royal College of Nursing. I am supporting nurses and healthcare workers across our health and care services and the hundreds of them who marched in London yesterday to stop the Government scrapping bursaries for student nurses. I urge you to support them all.

(Applause)

Congress, there seems to be a long line of us. I am a first time attendee at Congress and I am a first time speaker. *(Applause)*

I am moving Motion 301, Out of Time Clawback of State Benefits. This issue was highlighted at my last branch reps meeting. One of our reps reported an incident of someone having a deduction taken from their salary by their employer under instruction from the tax authorities using welfares legislation. It is reported there had been no prior notification. When asked they were told that it was for an overpayment of benefit. Quite some time had elapsed between this overpayment and the deduction. The loss in earnings was both distressing and financially challenging for the individual.

Colleagues, in-work benefits are supposed to help working people and mistakes by the state should not lead to distress of any kind but especially for workers on low wages. We think this issue is probably affecting many other low paid working people and we believe that it needs the resources and strength of our union to find out. We welcome Congress support for further investigation and challenge to this practice. I look forward to supporting GMB work to stop it. Congress, I move this motion.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mark. Secunder.

THE PRESIDENT: Formally? Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of 303, Southern Region.

**LOBBY FOR AN UNCONDITIONAL BASIC INCOME BENEFIT FOR ALL
MOTION 303**

303. LOBBY FOR AN UNCONDITIONAL BASIC INCOME BENEFIT FOR ALL

This Conference notes that Switzerland will be holding a referendum in 2016 about the introduction of an Unconditional Basic Income for all of its citizens. In the UK, an Unconditional Basic Income could effectively eradicate the worst levels of poverty completely and would fund itself partly by removing the need for the very costly administrative task of assessing individuals for other benefits such as JSA and Working Tax Credits. Conference agrees that the GMB should support the campaigns by the New Economics Foundation and others, and politically lobby for the introduction of an Unconditional Basic Income.

B61 BRACKNELL FOREST & WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCILS BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Congress, President, comrades, there is an idea in our Movement and I have heard it from all areas of the political left, I have heard it in trade unions, I have heard it from other people, this idea is that when things get bad enough people are going to start to fight back. Okay, we hear it all the time. It is well meaning. It seems logical. When the Government cuts get bad enough, when the work conditions get bad enough, when whatever gets bad enough people are then going to start to fight back. It seems like it makes sense but what I think a lot of us come to realise is that that simply is not true.

If you imagine I am stood up and I am healthy and I am well. If somebody walks up to me and punches me I am likely to think about punching them back. I am going to defend myself. But if I am already laid on the floor battered and bruised, and somebody comes over and sticks the boot in, I am not going to do anything about that because I cannot.

I think that is a bit of an analogy for how people feel at the moment in our society, we are brutalised by our bosses, we are beaten by austerity in every direction, we are degraded by redundancies, exploited by zero hours cuts. This is not the type of climate that is going to help the GMB or any other union to build.

So, what do we need? What we need is a success. We need a great big epic win for the working class. I genuinely think that basic income is that win. So, for any of you who do not know what a basic income is, the principle is that every single person irrelevant of how much money you have, whether you are in work or not, irrelevant of all of that, you get given enough money to live on. Full stop. All the cost of what we have at the moment, the bureaucracy of means testing and of paying individual pensions, housing benefit, unemployment, all the rest of it, that would go and that money would be ploughed in to part-funding the basic income, which in turn then keeps the economy ticking over healthily. Of course, the most important thing about

this is that if the rate is set right, it basically means the end of poverty. Can you imagine poverty eradicated in a stroke. If you think it sounds like a fairytale, do check out that the Swiss are having a referendum today with incredible timing and there are trials of this planned in Finland and the Netherlands next year. The campaign is building up steam all over Europe at the moment.

I am delighted that the CEC is supporting this motion. I know there has been some reluctance in the past with similar motions. I think it is because of that belief that if workers were not totally reliant on their income to survive they would have less need for their union but, as I hope I have pointed out, a society full of poverty and depression, slum housing, and food banks, does not make people become fighting trade unionists. It just makes people tired and scared. When you add to that, even the slightest knowledge of the advances in automation, digitised industries, the growth in precarious work, bogus self-employment, very quickly you start to see that if we do not provide a basic income very soon our society and millions of people's lives could start collapsing on a scale most of us cannot even imagine yet.

Fundamentally, we deserve this success. We need this success. Let's vote to free the working class from the kicking they have been taking and lobby hard for a basic income for every single one of us. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nikki. Secunder.

BRO. A. KALLU (Southern): President, Congress, comrades, brothers and sisters, I am a first time speaker. (*Applause*) We find ourselves as a Movement where we are bearing witness to regression of social progress. The scourge of poverty is on the move. This plague does not discriminate. It spreads regardless of gender, race, or disability. The only common factor that holds these people together is our class, the working class that built this country from the bottom up.

I strongly believe that the last ConDem Government, and now the Tory Government, has offered us nothing but misery. They have no idea for solutions to social progress. What have they brought, poverty, poverty, poverty. They have brought us food banks that are on the increase; nothing but poverty. They have brought us zero hour contracts that empower the rich and undermine hard workers; nothing but poverty. They have brought us tribunal fees to restrict our access to justice and our rights, resulting in nothing but poverty.

We need new ideas that break our shackles from exploitation by the rich. We need a threshold below which our standard of life must not and will not fall. In other words, we need clearly defined accessible social and economic rights, a universal basic income. The income should be paid to individuals rather than households. It should be paid irrespective of any income from other sources. It will contribute to better working conditions, less working hours, and better distribution of jobs. It would help promote equality and would particularly help the position of women and people with disabilities. But it would require reform of tax law to ensure that the rich pay their fair share for the money that they have earned at the expense of our labour, the working class.

I do believe that taking forward this important policy will be a boom for the union Movement, the union Movement making progress on real issues that matter to our members. I urge you to support this motion. We must make a difference for poor families, the working poor, and our children. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Southern Region to move 304, Carers Allowance.

CARER'S ALLOWANCE MOTION 304

304. CARERS ALLOWANCE

This Conference should campaign to allow carers to earn a living wage.

Those who receive carers allowance get £62 per week. This is in exchange for a minimum of 35 hours per week caring for loved ones. This equates to £1.77 per hour.

They are also prevented from earning more than £105 per week in paid work, otherwise money is deducted from carers allowance and other benefits.

The vast majority of carers are women.

We wish to campaign for carers to be allowed to earn an income equivalent to a living wage.

K19 LONDON SOUTH WEST GENERAL BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. HUGHES (Southern): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, no one is fully trained to be a stay-at-home carer nor are they lining up to get this very hard job role in life. However, when a family member or relative or even a friend becomes ill, housebound, or disabled, then sometimes you have no choice but to give up your time and support that person with their everyday needs.

I have been a carer for over 40 years. Carers like me have to rely on benefits unless you can earn enough money doing part-time work to live on, which in most cases never happens. To get carer's allowance you have to be looking after that person for 35 hours or more a week. However, if you as that carer want to get out of the home and go to work in your spare time, it is then you find it is not easy. If you earn more than £110 per week the benefit agency then starts chipping into your carer's allowance of £62 a week but this can also affect any other benefit or support that you may get.

Our army of hardworking carers around the country save the Government billions of pounds each year. If you break down the benefit payment that you receive over the hours and days and nights that a home carer normally puts in, no one would get out of bed in the morning to do that job. Every stay-at-home carer earns less than 90p per hour for a round-the-clock job. The majority of the home carers are women. Carer's allowance should be reflect a carer's true worth and allow carers, if they want to work, to be able to earn a decent living wage.

We as a union stand up for our members' rights at work and many of them, I am sure, are also part-time workers and full-time carers as well. If all carers chose not to do that vital job role in society and went on strike, this action would cripple the benefit agency and the council budget overnight, having to pay out for care homes, etc. Carers are also isolated with no voice of any form of negotiation etc. This leaves most carers unable even to afford to go out with their family and friends, let alone join a union. Carers have to sit in silence and cannot rattle the benefit cage. Some carers totally rely on their benefit such as top-ups from income support, housing benefit, council tax reductions. Every year thousands of hardworking carers struggle to fill in mountains of forms to make sure they, and also the person they care for, get their benefit on time.

I believe that carers should not only get the £62 weekly allowance as an automatic right for already fitting the Government's 35-hours or more government guideline, I also believe they should be able to earn up to £200 per week in their own right. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Maggie. Secunder.

BRO. R. GALLAGHER (Southern): Greetings, Madam President. Greetings, Congress. First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* I am here to second Motion 304 and I speak from personal experience. I am a carer. I care for my disabled wife and I have done so for four years. £62 a week is not a lot for what I do. It is a world away from the job I gave up to care for my wife, which was a job in the Civil Service with decent terms and conditions. According to the Carers Trust, carers save the British economy £87bn a year. That is about half of the National NHS budget. What we are doing is caring on the cheap.

I am unusual in this situation because most carers are women, so my circumstances are quite exceptional. The majority of carers are women. They already have institutional inequalities and let me tell you in this situation to earn anything close to the living wage is an impossibility. What I am telling you is that this is not just a poverty issue, this is an equality issue. I urge you to support a GMB campaign for carers to be able to earn equivalent of the living wage. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ryan. I now ask Southern to move Hidradentis Suppurativa, in other words, 306.

HIDRADENTIS SUPPURATIVA (HS) MOTION 306

306. HIDRADENTIS SUPPURATIVA (HS)

This Conference calls upon government to recognize the need for a broader selective of mobility for people with Hidradentis Suppurativa (HS), a rare but painful skin condition that causes abscesses and scarring on the skin, usually around the groin, breasts, buttocks and armpits.

C23 CARSHALTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. E. HEASMAN (Southern): First time speaker, first time delegate.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

SIS. E. HEASMAN: President, Congress, you should have a copy of Jason's story, *I Just Want Out*. I ask the question, can you imagine what it might feel like if you could not sit down here today, not because you could not get a seat but because you could not physically sit in it? This is what will eventually happen to some of the sufferers of Hidradentis Suppurativa, often referred to as HS. This is a chronic recurrent and painful disease which is the inflammation of the sweat glands which are found in the armpits, groin, buttocks, inner thighs, which causes a blockage of the hair follicles. This in turn causes boil-like lumps with areas leaking puss and causing scarring. The areas will swell up and burst and become infected and at their worst these often will become abscesses. These need then to be drained numerous times. There is no cure for this illness, despite some research, and it needs to be managed by the use of medications and surgery, often repeated surgery. There are three stages and the last being the most painful and aggressive to the body.

Now it is the impact on the person's mobility that the pain and condition causes which is hard to get recognised by health professionals, DWP, and the assessments they need to carry out. There needs to be more understanding of the suffering and pain and to acknowledge that not all sufferers are going to be able to attend these assessments and when they do it is simply the fact that the assessors have no knowledge of the disease and its impact. Whilst doing my own research I am aware of an assessment tool the DWP use during these assessments and it does not appear to be cascaded to all who complete the assessments let alone give them an understanding of what HS is. It is also the fact that the amount of sick notes required to get the benefits in the first place is what will cause the sufferer to be brought up in front of the medical board.

It will depend on the mobility of the person as to whether they can attend and if they cannot make their appointments this is when often their benefits will be decreased, especially with the new changeover to the PIP, the person independent thing, this is even harder. The sufferer will then be feeling anxious and depressed as they feel they are not understood so the sufferer is sent away with no support. Depression is a huge factor in this illness and will only cause more flare-ups which will make the person more ill.

This now leads me to mobility associations like Mobility UK, Britain's well-known provider of mobility solutions. I have spoken with many many departments and I find that they only offer leasing a car, a powered wheelchair or a mobility scooter, which is why I said at the beginning not all can sit down. How will these options then be of any use to any man in this situation? So, I researched some more and I found the E Equal Spin Raptor (which is attached to your sheet), a three-wheeled stand-on electric vehicle which is currently in use by police departments, security firms, paramedics, airports, the list goes on. It is used across the world and it is the first vehicle that has obtained approval for road legal status in the UK.

It is stated in the Equality Act 2010 that the disabled person should have access to any equipment which will promote their independence. Just so you know, Jason in the story is my kid brother and as a big sister I made him a promise to get him mobile. I

have been doing all I can and in my quest I have mentioned everywhere GMB and how I was addressing the subject at Congress. I embarrassed many along the way. Friday evening at a quarter to five guess what happened before I came here, I got a call from Mobility Solutions, Britain's only mobility provider, and they have told me that they will take on board any suggestion from a customer and if they do not currently supply the equipment needed, they will support the customer to get it. Jason will finally be on his way to having a stand-on scooter. (*Applause*) Thank you.

I will be continuing my fight for all across Britain who may be suffering like Jason. So I call upon this Congress to support me in my quest, one, to get this illness recognised, advertised, and inform potential users that there is other available options, and two, to publicise to all that alternative mobility options are out there and that you should be supported to think out of the box. I hope I have been able to show how if we all stick together and fight through the cause, GMB results will be gained. GMB is our voice. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Thank you, Liz. Secunder.

SIS. C. HYMAN (Southern): First time delegate, first time speaker. President, Congress, I second Motion 306 for a broader selection of mobility vehicles for all who need them, especially those afflicted with HS. There is bespoke equipment available for sufferers of this disease but the availability is not published by the mobility organisations, such as Mobility UK. HS sufferers are unable to live independently so become housebound. This direct discrimination against this group of vulnerable people cannot continue. With this bespoke equipment HS sufferers will be able to live independently and be a part of their community.

In Jason's case he is housebound because he was not able to access the stand-on scooter. Due to his illness, Jason is unable to sit down so conventional scooters are not suitable. The stand-on scooter was not recognised or covered, or available, from the mobility scheme until my colleague, Liz, the mover of this motion, advised them of her intention to bring this to Congress today. The DWP when assessing claims for personal independence payments need further training on this illness and the impact this illness has on the life of the afflicted. This debilitating and painful disease needs to be highlighted and the awareness raised so sufferers receive the help and support they require and are entitled to. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Charmaine. Well done. 305, Local Housing, Midlands to move.

LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE MOTION 305

305. LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE

This Conference is asked to consider the motion to lobby against the unjust changes to local housing allowance (LHA).

Where a restriction to that of one room in a shared house for single people under 35 will lead to an increase in rent arrears and homelessness, a reduced opportunity for individuals to gain independence and impact on personal dignity.

(Carried)

BRO. A. LE-BLANC (Midland & East Coast): This Congress asks the GMB to lobby against the unjust changes to Local Housing Allowance which will lead to the increase in rent arrears and homelessness, and reduce the opportunities for individuals to gain independence, and impact on personal dignity.

The Conservative emergency budget of June 2010 announced the proposals for a range of changes to the housing benefit, and local housing allowance. At the time the DWP impact assessment predicted that 937,000 households would be directly losing income to support the cost of their accommodation. From January 2012, further reforms meant that for a single person, 34 years and under, housing benefit was limited to the amount of renting a room in a shared property; this was the case even if they live alone in a self-contained property.

Today in Derby that rate is £58.00 per week, in Cardiff it is £55.23, Bournemouth £65.48, Leeds £62.48, Norwich £61.45, Westminster £136.52. For many low paid or workless people this leaves a significant rent shortfall. Previously that rate only applied to people under the age of 25. It applies to the private renting sector where Large Scale Voluntary Transfers and social housing development is at an all time low. For the past 10 years this is where the majority of this type of accommodation is not to be found.

There is a widely accepted view that the housing market supply is dysfunctional and all sectors face a crisis of affordability. The unavailability of both social housing and affordable mortgages has created pressure on the private rented sector so that as a consequence choice is more limited and costs are rising. The under-35 age group now make up over half the tenants in the private rented sector. The Office for National Statistics' figures for 2014 show that across England 25% of under-35s are still living in their childhood bedroom. In 2014, a DWP survey determined that 47% of landlords said they are experiencing an increase in rent arrears since the reforms were introduced and 31% of tenants said that they borrowed money to cope with the rent shortfalls. The latest estimates suggest that 61% of all rental income in the PRS is deferred from housing benefit and about two-thirds of those people being of working age and the rest of pensionable age.

Housing itself is not welfare; it is about providing a decent roof over somebody's head and a home that they can afford to live in. Although the term "homeless" is often applied in everyday language to people who sleep rough, the legal definition is much broader, anyone who has no home in the UK or anywhere else in the world available to occupy. This not only includes people without a roof over their heads but people whose accommodation is insecure, those facing eviction living in temporary accommodation, squatting, people at risk of violence, those housed in property that is a potential damage to their health, and those who cannot afford their accommodation. A range of circumstances denoting homelessness means that there are several categories of homelessness defined and measured in different ways. People experiencing homelessness may move in and out of all of these categories as the circumstances change and their needs change accordingly. The only people by law

entitled to be provided with housing are the statutory homeless who meet the criteria for priority needs.

In shared accommodation you have no real way of finding out about the people you will be sharing with. Where is the dignity in having to share a bathroom, cooking, and communal facilities, as an independent adult working person? Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Albert. Okay, seconder.

BRO. I. HODGKISON (Midland & East Coast): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, I will endeavour for all our sakes to keep this as short as possible. These reforms are patently unfair to the under-35s. We as a union cannot support unfairness in our society. I therefore second this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ian. You can finish tomorrow! Thanks, Ian. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Come along.

BRO. T. DONEGAN (Scotland): First time delegate, first time speaker. Madam President, colleagues, I am afraid I am not a very great speaker. With your permission, I would like to give you a personal account. My mother and stepdad were cared for by my sister and myself. My sister would be up at 6.00 a.m. in the morning, worked at a care home until 3.00, she would then go to my mother's home, do cleaning, washing, cooking, shopping, and then get home at 6.00 p.m. and do the same for her own family. This she did not for money but for the love of our mother.

All the while our mother was alive, my sister felt guilty that she could not be there the whole day but with the allowance being so low she had to work at the care home to earn a living wage. Our mother had a lot of falls and my stepfather passed away on his scooter with no one there. My sister again felt guilty about these things because with a proper care allowance she could have left her job and looked after our mother when she was at her most vulnerable.

There are lots of families in the country going through similar experiences. Do not let them suffer like we have. Give them the finances and the support to look after their loved ones. I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tom. Anyone else? No? Okay, I call Michael Husbands to respond on behalf of the CEC on Motion 300.

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 300, Benefit Cuts, which we are supporting with some qualifications. The motion is in line with our policy on repealing the Welfare Reform Act and we continue to campaign against welfare cuts to the benefits of vulnerable working people. However, whilst we support the sentiments of the motion, it asks us to produce a leaflet on sanction advice. We would need to qualify this strongly as we would need to register our opposition to benefit sanctioning. In addition, we would need to be careful because giving any welfare advice requires specialised expertise. The motion asks us to work with the trade union councils and community groups and we note that there is an existing campaign being promoted by the unemployed centres

on the welfare charter, and many signatories to this campaign are better qualified to produce this high quality advice. Therefore, please support Motion 300 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Okay, I ask Yorkshire Region, will you accept the qualification? Yes? (*Agreed*) Okay. Now I go to the vote on 300, 301, 303, 304, 306, and 305. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you, colleagues.

Motion 300 was CARRIED.

Motion 301 was CARRIED.

Motion 303 was CARRIED.

Motion 304 was CARRIED.

Motion 306 was CARRIED.

Motion 305 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Helen Johnson from the SOC for Report No.2. Helen.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.2

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Withdrawn Motions. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 25 Organisation and Communication, standing in the name of North West & Irish. This was removed this morning.

Bucket collections. The SOC has given permission for the following regions to hold bucket collections:

Southern Region, to hold a collection for the Rainbow International Fund. The SOC recommends this takes place at the end of the afternoon session tomorrow.

North West & Irish Region, permission to hold a bucket collection for the Belfast Children's Hospice. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the end of the morning session on Wednesday.

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, to hold a collection for PACT, the Parents Association for Children with Tumours and Leukaemia. (*Cheers*) The SOC recommends that this takes places at the end of the afternoon session on Wednesday.

Would the Regional Secretaries please note that when the collection has taken place, the region should provide the SOC with a written note saying how much has been collected so that this can be reported to Congress. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.2.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. (*Applause*) Does Congress accept the SOC Report No.2? (*Agreed*)

Standing Orders Committee Report No.2 was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, these are worthy charities. I understand why a certain charity is not in there. I am moving that the President's Charity be a bucket collection tonight. The SOC and the regions will get the buckets. It is my charity in memory of those who cared for my husband, and many of us in this room have someone we know with that dreadful, dreadful disease. SOC cannot grant me that permission but I can as your President. I would thank you very much if you give generously to help others who are worse off than ourselves. Thank you. (*Applause*) Will Congress agree? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to the next item. Jeremy is not here yet. I bet the train stopped. Virgin took it into privatisation! Composite 15, Social Housing Campaign, I call it Council Housing, but there we are. London Region to move and second.

COMPOSITE 15 SOCIAL HOUSING CAMPAIGN (Covering Motions 269 and 275)

C15 Covering motions:

269	HOUSING	London Region
275	SOCIAL HOUSING	London Region

SOCIAL HOUSING CAMPAIGN

Congress agrees the housing situation in London, the Southeast and elsewhere has become impossible. For those who are low-paid it is becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet, often because of inadequate social housing provision. Many of our members are being priced out of their homes and forced into over-priced privately rented housing which will make it impossible for them to work in London and other towns and cities.

This Conference notes that disadvantaged groups (women, BAME, elderly, sick, young and people with disabilities) suffer the most and are the most vulnerable, with the loss of tax cuts in benefits and massive rent rises.

Congress congratulates London Region Sisters and Young members' groups for the work they have done to highlight the situation. However, the problem is not just confined to London – even though it is particularly bad there.

This Congress resolves GMB to actively campaign around housing issues and liaise with Regional Committees and Branch Political Officers. A national campaign is needed to:

- Lobby sponsored MPs to work towards a policy of massive social housing building, taking into account the need for appropriate siting, sustainability issues etc. GMB policy is to defend social housing and not sell it off to developers
- Meet with all sponsored GMB Councillors and MPs to advise them that we expect them to defend and extend social housing – not sell it off to developers etc.
- Instruct the Law Advice Service to advise on housing issues.

- Support local community actions to defend social housing and fight evictions e.g. with: E15 Mothers, Sweets Way, West Hendon Housing Group, Defend Haringey Housing, Brixton Housing Campaign and Reclaim Brixton, Aylesbury Estate Campaign, and many others.
- Publicise and attend housing demonstrations around housing issues and efforts to resist evictions.

(Referred)

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): I am moving the motion on what I call council and public housing as well. I cannot tell you how deeply angry, frustrated, and worried I am that we have to face the Tories' hated Housing Act, a bill that has recently been pushed through despite vigorous opposition across the country. Make no mistake about this it is an attempt by the Tories to end the provision of council and public housing for good and a major attack on those of us who are current tenants.

Talk of housing always reminds me of my granny's and mum's generations who tell horrific stories of life before public housing, before the concerted national effort to build council housing after the Second World War to provide working class people with decent homes, unbelievable stories of Rachmanesque landlords who made millions of pounds whilst forcing entire families to live in pest-infested hellholes without proper sanitation and charging exorbitant rents for the privilege. My mum still worries and lives in fear of a return to those days.

Unfortunately, comrades, I have to report to my mum, and this Congress, that those days are back with a vengeance. I am speaking from a London perspective as that is where I live but I know that this is a general picture throughout the country. Sorry to all the Islington delegates who have probably heard me say this a million times but this Act will make a desperate housing situation ten times worse. Homelessness, which is already at critical levels, will be exacerbated. The pay-to-stay element in the Act, which says households who have an income of over 40 grand in London and 30 grand elsewhere in the country, will be devastating for many council and housing association tenants, including many of our GMB members. Think about it, two adults in one household earning just over 13 grand a piece will be forced to pay market rents.

Just let me tell you a wee thing about market rents, round my way in London market rent for a two-bedroom flat is over £2,000 a month. I live in a council flat and I am proud like Mary to support council housing. As far as I am concerned, my monthly rent goes back to the local authority to reinvest in housing. It does not go to a fat cat bank that is going to filter it off and pay the directors. Our public housing stock has been bought and paid for over and over and over again.

That is why it incenses me when I hear these Tory Eton boys and the Cheltenham School for Girls referring to council housing and public housing homes as subsidised. We are not subsidised. We pay our way. It is their second and third homes that lie empty for months on end, their country pads that are subsidised. They do not understand collective living or what it feels like to want a secure tenancy, a basic right; a home is a basic right for our people.

The GMB has played a key and lively part in fighting against the Housing Act as many of our members are going to be hit by it. The London Region sisters and our

young members section have been doing a fantastic job highlighting the added burden on women and the disabled, and young people. Let me just say a thing about young people. They cannot afford a home, either public or private. As much as I love my children dearly, I do not want them staying in my house until they are 30 or 35.

Congress, I urge you support this motion. We need to oppose and resist the tax on public housing at all levels. We need to make this Housing Act unworkable. Resist further sell-offs of our homes, we need to build council houses, we need to organise ourselves and if it means me handcuffing myself to my house, I will do it. Let's make this Cameron's poll tax moment and send him down the same chute as Thatcher.
(*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. A. COUSIN (London): Despite what you saw on the screen behind you, I am Alison Cousin, originally down to move this motion but I got beaten by someone that is faster than me, so I am quite happily going to second it. You do not need me to tell you that the housing situation in this country is a joke but this joke is sadly on us, the working class. For the low paid it is becoming harder to make ends meet, despite this Government giving us such a generous living wage of £7.20 but, of course, only if you are 25.

Trying to afford a decent home at an affordable rent is practically impossible. Young people are forced to stay at home because they are unable to afford their own home and have an independent life. London Region sisters and young members have been actively supporting homeless campaigns. My branch, Lowestoft L43, wants to congratulate them from the podium today. It is time for GMB to set up a national campaign. Our sponsored MPs and councillors must understand that we expect them to defend social housing, extend it and not sell it off to developers. We believe the Union Line service needs to be widened to include legal advice on housing issues and evictions. The GMB banner and our voices need to be there at housing demonstrations and when efforts are being made to resist evictions.

For too long those who can afford to buy property cheaply and rent it out for exorbitant profit have been leaching from the low paid. It is time for it to stop and for GMB to be in the lead demanding decent affordable social housing. Let me correct myself because, as Mary pointed out, at the London Region pre-congress meeting it is not social housing we should be talking about, we want back what Thatcher and the Tories took from us, council houses for the working class. Please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alison. Motion 276, Birmingham.

MODERNISATION OF NEW TOWNS HOUSING ESTATES MOTION 276

276. MODERNISATION OF NEW TOWNS HOUSING ESTATES

This Conference calls on Government to fund Local Authorities with New Towns Housing estates built in the 1960's and 70's, to upgrade them for modern day living and transport needs. Whilst many houses on these estates are now privately owned or in the hands of housing

associations and private landlords, the infrastructure, roads and car parking fall well below that of modern housing estates. Funding to be supplied to Local Authorities to modernise infrastructure and where appropriate redesign the estates to create a fit and proper place to live and raise families.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Lost)

BRO. A. ENGLAND (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, many new town estates were built in the 60s and 70s, based mostly on the American Radburn design. At that time it was award-winning, in fact I recall the Queen came and opened some of the houses. Now it is thoroughly discredited, rented housing built to kick-start new towns very successful at the time, highly concentrated housing, limited parking, and a considerable number of flats. Over time many of the houses have been bought up by tenants but many also bought by private landlords. This motion is not about the scourge of private landlords, it is about bringing these estates into the 21st century.

Prior to austerity government funds were made available to modernise some estates or at least part of them. However, little or no finance is available to modernise the estates at present. Flats were demolished, extra parking provided, and a more serviceable area to live in, raising the standards and raising the quality of life for residents, many of whom are our members. The quality of life is something that I am concentrating on here.

I live on and represent as a borough councillor one of those estates where we have concentrated housing, high levels of social deprivation as a result, limited parking for cars, limited play space for children, and many two-car families are having to convert garden space into additional parking. This is not just about my estate. It is about making representation to government to release funds to modernise estates, not just new town but any area that would benefit from regeneration. Physical regeneration can lead to social regeneration, pride of place, and a better quality of life for residents.

I urge Congress to adopt this ten-point vision for housing estates regeneration and lobby government for resources for improvements so that we can create, one, a self-sustaining property market, an attractive physical environment to overcome the weakness of the Radburn layouts, a range of tenure, including removing speculating private landlords, a range of property types overcoming the monotony and regularity of these estates, a strong and viable village style centre for the estates, create viable opportunities for private sector led housing, connecting estates to district centres, accessible to local employment opportunities, addressing the concentration of indicators of deprivation within estates. In fact, I live in one of the top ten deprived states in the country. A locally based consultative and inclusive, and I will touch on that again, organisational structure for delivering physical and social regeneration, and ensuring estates' future management.

One of the things that we have done on the estate that I live on is a massive consultation exercise with residents and that in itself has helped to bring people together. We have created a number of CICs. We have rebuilt the community centre. We have set up a café, at very good prices for local people, with excellent results of

inclusion and consultation. Some of the project activities would include (and I will finish when the red light comes on) demolition of homes suffering from very low demand, remodelling estates using secure by design principles which will help to eliminate crime, black spots and unsafe areas, redevelopment of existing resale facilities as I have said, provision of multiuse centres which bring together public sector providers within the neighbourhood, which is very important, environmental improvements to help improve the public open space within the estates, neighbourhood management of the improved environment houses and community facilities.

Physical improvements alone are unlikely to deliver long-term social regeneration, multi-agency partnerships are required to enable social regeneration, but only if residents are fully involved. Thank you. I move and I believe it is going to be formally seconded. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Arnold. Secunder. Formally. Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 277, London, mover.

HOUSING BUY TO LET BUSINESS RATES MOTION 277

277. HOUSING BUY TO LET BUSINESS RATES

Congress recognised in 2015 in the GMB Special Housing Report the scandal of corporate and private Buy to Let schemes in the UK, especially from overseas organisations buying up properties from abroad and letting at high costs as an investment and business.

These schemes produce nothing for the much needed provision of social housing in the UK where waiting lists for low cost social housing is rapidly increasing.

Congress agrees that all existing and new buy to let Landlords should be subject to business rates as clearly buy to let schemes are operating as a profit making business.

This should also apply to Housing Associations that moved from Trust status to private housing providers like we have seen with Sutton Housing Trust in Kensington and Chelsea.

Congress agrees that the introduction of business rates for these properties should be introduced at a time when Local Councils will be able to keep 100% of any new business rates. This will help many Councils in income that can be reinvested in social housing provision as they can keep the 100% of new business rates for local use, but also stop or even slow down the current land grab, reduce market rates, reduce the price of the housing market, decrease buy to let greedy investors (especially overseas companies) by reducing social housing provision where at the moment they are buying up established social housing blocks and/or land where Local Councils could build the much needed social homes.

Conference therefore calls on the CEC to pursue this policy with the Government and start to campaign to reduce private sector housing and increase social housing by introducing business rates for buy to let operators who make a profit whereas Local Authorities will be exempt as a social landlord.

(Carried)

BRO. G. BOLISTER (London): First time speaker, first time delegate. *(Applause)*
This country is in the middle of a housing crisis, not enough homes have been built for decades, and those that have are often unaffordable for ordinary working people. Ever since the days of the Thatcher government and the disastrous right-to-buy scheme successive governments have talked about creating a homeowners democracy. What it has created is a crisis that has frozen ordinary working men and women out of affordable homes leaving them at the mercy of the rip-off landlords.

We all know people who have sons and daughters in their 20s and 30s living with parents because they cannot afford the rents or buy a home for themselves; even people in those relatively well paid jobs can no longer afford rents or mortgages. Last year most property sales in London involved homes which sold for an average of over £476,000 and some terraced properties sold for an average of £615,000 whilst semidetached properties fetched in £602,000. Average rents in London for one-bedroom flats alone are approximately £300 to £600 per week and even more expensive for larger properties.

This situation has been made far worse with buy-to-let landlords who are inflating the market buying up properties and effectively having their lucrative business subsidised by not having to pay business rates when effectively they are running a business. Congress, we need a whole raft of new policies to ensure this crisis is urgently addressed. We all know we need a massive house-building programme of affordable homes to rent. However, we also need to continue to fight the Tories' housing bill. We also need ways in which overseas absent landlords are prevented from inflating the market at the same time as reducing the available housing stock.

Congress, we need, as this motion says, to ensure that if any buy-to-let landlords want to continue to operate then these same landlords' income should be taxed as a business rate, which is in fact what they are. When we have achieved this, we need to ensure that local councils are to keep 100% of those rates so that they can reinvest this money into building new affordable council houses for the next generation of this country. The right of a decent home for everybody is something that this country has long forgotten.

After the Second World War the Attlee government embarked on a massive programme of social house building, building decent homes for all at rents that ordinary hard working people could afford. If we can do this after the devastation of a war, then we can do it again today. A decent home for us and our families is a basic right for all, not a privilege for the few. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Secunder.

THE PRESIDENT: Just a second, we want to hear this full debate.

(Standing ovation for Jeremy Corbyn)

THE PRESIDENT: That was just for you, Vaughan! (*Laughter*)

BRO. V. WEST (London): That is the best welcome I have had all week, Congress! Welcome to the MP from the borough that I work in. Welcome to Jeremy. It is great to see you, mate.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you get on with this council housing so we can get them built!

BRO. V. WEST: Sorry. I am not going to ask for any more time, Mary. President, Congress, we have already heard about the crisis that we face in the housing sector. We have already heard that many of us face the prospects of our sons and daughters remaining in our homes until their 20s and 30s because they cannot afford either to get into the rented sector or to get into the mortgage market. I am not going to repeat all that. All I am going to say is that in 1945 a reforming Labour government led by Clement Attlee rebuilt this country. They built the NHS. They invested in education for all. They built homes that were fit for people to live in. In the '80s the Thatcher government started to nibble away at that. They introduced a disastrous right-to-buy policy that not only took stock out of the market but stopped councils reinvesting that money to replace those houses. That same thing is happening again. Our members face a double whammy, a whammy of buy-to-let landlords who are not being taxed properly, and a whammy that does not allow councils to reinvest to create not social housing but, as has been said, council housing.

Congress, support this motion and ensure that we have a campaign that taxes buy-to-let rogue landlords appropriately and ensure that that money is used to reinvest to solve the crisis that we face as a nation, to create affordable homes to buy and to rent, to rebuild our housing stock, our council housing stock, so that our young people face a future where their housing is a right and not a privilege.. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Vaughan. I now ask for the mover of 278, Southern. You will wear the carpet out, Nikki!

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Back again. Last time. Sorry, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: No, do not worry. Do not be sorry.

ALL HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD BE PUBLICLY OWNED MOTION 278

278. ALL HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD BE PUBLICALLY OWNED

This Conference recognises that Housing Associations are providing what used to be known as Council Housing. In the light that Housing Associations have now been reclassified as Public Bodies and their debts added to the national debt, Conference calls for all Housing Associations to be taken in public ownership.

N10 BERKSHIRE & NORTH HAMPSHIRE BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): We as a movement and as a union have a longstanding commitment to nationalisation. It is a very simple question. If we ask ourselves, who should own the NHS, should it be a bunch of profit-hungry corporations or should it be us the people. If we were looking at our schools should we want nasty academy chains run for profit at the expense of our children and the staff that work in them, or do we want to run those schools as the people. Who should own our railways: Us. Royal Mail: Us. Our steel, our docks, our water, our energy, the people should own collectively everything that is pivotal to their lives and crucial, and what could possibly be more crucial and pivotal than the roof over your head that you call home.

The background to this is that in October 2015 housing associations were reclassified as public bodies and what that did was added £60bn to our national debt. Now, why did that happen? Well, I am going to be the fourth person to mention her name but, of course, fundamentally it happened because Thatcher, may she rest in hell, sold off our council houses and did not replace them. (*Applause*) Housing associations were all that was left and they have had to pick up the slack so much so in recent years that their status was changed from private registered providers to public corporations. This status is not what we actually want. We have the debt but we do not have real control over that housing. We need to push for full nationalisation of all social housing back into public ownership where it belongs. We may have lost a lot of battles since the days of Attlee and Nye Bevan's massive building of social council housing and we may feel pretty disheartened when we look at the state of society today in terms of what we own, but this housing crisis is massive and I think it demands that we do everything to fight to get real council housing back for everyone. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nikki. Secunder. Secunder? (*Formally*) Thank you. I suppose they are outside having a cup of tea! Okay.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? No? Okay. I call Dean Gilligan to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. D. GILLIGAN (CEC, Public Services): Thank you. The CEC supports Motion 277 with a qualification and is asking for Composite 15 and Motion 278 to be referred. If the region is not withdrawing Motion 276, the CEC will oppose. I will take these in order of debate.

Composite 15, on the Social Housing Campaign, this composite highlights the impact on low paid and vulnerable workers living in the private sector and asks GMB to have a national campaign around housing issues, but we should not be restricted to the organisations listed in the motion, neither should we automatically accept these organisations without investigating their aims and values. We need to have flexibility to link up with groups with the same aims and values as ours.

The motion also refers to instructing our law advice service, i.e. Union Line, to advise on housing issues. The CEC is mindful that in order to do this we would need to look at getting a specialist in housing law as our law advisers specialise in employment law

and personal injury. This will be at a cost to the union. We are aware that many local Citizens Advice offices can give this advice at no cost. The CEC is asking that the composite be referred back to the SMT so that the SMT could investigate this as a members' benefit with Union Line.

Motion 276, Modernisation of New Towns Housing Estates, the motion asks Congress to agree that buy-to-let landlords should pay business rates on property. To do so would require a change in the law and local councils will lose funding as all business rates will go to central government, the same as council tax, so income will not increase. Therefore, the CEC is asking for this motion to be withdrawn.

Motion 277, Housing Buy-to-Let Business Rates, the CEC supports this motion with the qualification that many of the housing associations are cash rich and should pay for the upkeep and refurbishment of properties as opposed to this falling on local councils whose budgets are being cut by the Government, not increased.

Finally, on Motion 278, Democratic Ownership of Housing Associations, as carried by Congress 2009, Composite 19, our policy position is to invest in public housing through local authorities, but this funding should not be diverted from other avenues of public spending although we would welcome empowering local authorities to develop and expand the housing. The call to take housing associations into public ownership is a difficult one. Housing associations have existed for some time alongside local authorities as a provider of social housing and have a role to play, although over the years they have merged and lost their founding social objectives and they are less democratically accountable than local authorities. The CEC is unsure what the situation would be if housing associations were brought under the local authority umbrella where they are already struggling to cope with staff and budget cuts. We suggest referring this motion as the Housing and Planning Act has only just got Royal Assent in May and we need to see what benefit would be gained from this proposal under this new legislation.

To recap, if the region is not withdrawing Motion 276, the CEC will ask you to oppose. The CEC is supporting Motion 277, with a qualification, and asking for Composite 15 and Motion 278 to be referred. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Dean, would you stay there because I will give Birmingham the right to reply in one moment. Okay. Congress, Composite 15, does London accept the reference? You do? Thank you. Southern, do you accept the qualification on 277 and reference on 278? (*Agreed*) Okay, thank you. I now put those to the vote. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? They are carried.

Composite Motion 15 was REFERRED.

Motion 278 was REFERRED.

Motion 277 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Birmingham Region, do you wish the right to reply on 276? Carry on.

BRO. A. ENGLAND (Birmingham & West Midlands): Thank you, Madam President. I think there may be a slight error, maybe some confusion in motions, if I quickly read the motion to you. It mentions nothing about private landlords paying anything. It is 276: "This Conference calls on Government to fund Local Authorities with New Town Housing estates built in the '60s and '70s to upgrade them for modern day living and transport needs. Whilst many houses on these estates are now privately owned or in the hands of housing associations and private landlords, the infrastructure, roads and car parking fall well below that of modern housing estates. Funding to be supplied to Local Authorities to modernise infrastructure and where appropriate redesign the estates to create a fit and proper place to live and raise families." There is nothing about landlords paying anything. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Colleague, we are seeking withdrawal. Will you withdraw? You will not? Okay. Thank you. In that case I am asking you to oppose; yes, oppose. All those in favour of the resolution please show. All those against please show. I repeat, all those against please show. Come on, wake up. I am not calling a card vote on ten each! Right, let's start again. Last time. All those in favour of the resolution please show. That is better. All those against please show. Keep your hands up. That is lost. Thank you. (*Calls for a card vote*) That was lost. I am counting him over there and over in the back there. I am looking at it from both sides. You only had a few down here in favour of your own. Sorry about that. I have been to Specsavers today!

Motion 276 was LOST.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyway, we now move on and I have one announcement. Dementia Friends are outside as one of our exhibitors and they have asked me to ask you, please, to sign up with them to help anyone that you know that has dementia to give them a knock at the door, or make them a cup of tea, or see them across the road, they would be extremely grateful. Thank you.

Colleagues, on the platform, as you well know, we have Jeremy Corbyn, our Leader of the Labour Party and I would like to say a nice welcome to Jeremy. I am not going to call Jeremy yet because I am delighted that we have a number of our blacklisted workers here with us to celebrate their recent success. (*Applause*) I ask Maria Ludkin, our National Legal Director, to introduce this part of the agenda. Maria, will you give a few words of introduction, please?

BLACKLISTED WORKERS

SIS. M. LUDKIN (Legal Director): President, Congress, in 2009 the Information Commissioner's Office alerted by a whistle blower, Alan Wainwright, who is actually here with us today, carried out the only raid in their history on the offices of the Consulting Association. This was a company set up by 44 of Britain's largest construction companies, household names, like Carillion, McAlpine, Skanska, and Belfour Beatty. The sole purpose of that company was to gather, store, and share secret information they had collected about construction workers and environmentalists, workers that the companies had decided were too much trouble to employ on their sites. The Consulting Association carried out this work in absolute secrecy because they, and the companies involved, knew that what they were doing

was unlawful. They gathered information on thousands of workers who had raised concerns about health and safety on sites, or acted as trade union reps, or had been involved in completely legal trade union activities. They secretly shared this information amongst themselves so that those workers would be turned down for work that they applied for and were blacklisted from the biggest construction contracts in the country, often for decades.

The Information Commissioner seized just 10% of those files and wrote to the construction companies involved and told them not to do it again. They took no further action at all. Eventually, we realised that there were probably GMB members' details contained in those files and we contacted the Information Commissioner to find out when they planned to advise all the workers that they had been secretly blacklisted, and the Information Commissioner told us to get lost.

One of our most important jobs as a union is to give advice, support, and representation to our members when they are in trouble. Being told to get lost helped us decide to take legal action to force the Commissioner to show us the files so we could figure out which of our members were involved and advise them of their legal rights. Under threat of legal action, the Commissioner was forced to cooperate, which they eventually did, and then we organised a campaign across the whole country involving all our regions and officers, to identify and find our members who were on the blacklist. As a result of that campaign, we eventually located hundreds of people who joined our legal action.

GMB was the first union to start legal proceedings in 2012 and we eventually became part of a large group litigation involving other unions and the Blacklist Support Group representing almost 800 claimants. It has been a long and difficult legal action. All credit is due to a superb activist campaign from our Press and Communications Department, who made sure that the blacklisting story stayed in the national headlines. (*Applause*) I do not think there is an editor of a newspaper in this country who could resist reporting on one of the GMB crocodile tears demonstrations held up and down the country to name and shame the managers and directors involved in running the blacklist where we sent a seven-foot crocodile to their places of work.

We had brilliant advice and representation from our lawyers, Leigh Day, Chris Benson and Michael Newman, who are also here today, even when GMB and our members were not always the easiest or most patient claimants. We were also very lucky to have the support of Ian Davidson MP and his Scottish Affairs Select Committee, who worked tirelessly to investigate and uncover the blacklisting scandal in Parliament.

Last month, after four years of campaigning and fighting, the construction companies caved in just days before the start of a High Court trial. They finally settled all the claims against them and gave a full public apology for their actions. GMB's campaign continues to ensure that local authorities who promised not to use blacklisting companies will now stand by that promise. (*Applause*)

Today, some of our blacklisted members are here at Congress to speak to you and in a few moments I would like you to welcome them to the stage but before that could you

listen to this short clip which shows the terrible impact of the blacklist. Thank you.
(*Applause*)

Short video clip shown to Congress.

SIS. M. LUDKIN: Could I now ask you to welcome our blacklisted colleagues to the stage. (*Applause*)

A SPEAKER: A couple of our members are going to say a couple of words and then Dave Smith from the Blacklist Support Group will round off the whole event.

BRO. D. McPHERSON: Good afternoon, brothers and sisters, comrades, I have been advised by the GMB hierarchy that swearing is not allowed. This is going to interrupt my flow of eloquence, I am afraid. To simplify proceedings, I shall refer to the employers as the enemy because that indeed is what they are, and still are. I have been a welder in the construction industry for 45 years, as a steward, a spokesman, or a lone voice arguing the toss in the site offices. I have been branded a troublemaker. Too many times I have been sacked and denied work by the enemy. My claims have not been demanding more money but for better safety regimes, respect and fair play for my brothers and sisters.

Now, due to the tireless efforts of the GMB, the BSG, and our lawyers, Leigh Day, I have been awarded quite a handsome sum of money. Now, ironically the enemy who have denied me work and wages have now placed me in a position where I can deny my labour. (*Applause*) Every time I have a pint of cider in the pub, at 12 o'clock because I have not been to work, cheers, the enemy!

We have had a famous victory. We have collectively kicked the enemy in the bollocks. (*Applause*) But despite our famous victory, these people will not take it lying down. I suggest that their blacklist will go covert. So we must always be on our guard against the enemy. Now, many non-trade unionists I worked with say, "Why do you keep standing up? Why do you put your head above the parapet?" My answer is, because I believe, as most of you people here believe, the working class of this nation demand and deserve respect and fair play. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Dirk, I am doing some writing, is that spelt with two "L"s?
(*Laughter*) Yes.

BRO. J. BREEN: Hello. My name is John Breen. I would like to say that blacklisting is a real evil thing. Other colleagues here that were blacklisted with me all have different stories. Personally, it affected me and my wife. We were planning a bigger family than what we had. We have one daughter but we could not afford to have any more. The depths that the blacklisting goes into is incredible. All I would like to say is, as a lifetime member of GMB I would like to thank GMB and Leigh Day for the work. Now me and my wife do not need to worry about a bill coming in through the work of the union. Thanks. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. SHAKESPEARE: Hello, my name is Mike Shakespeare. In the late '70s, an employer I was working for had some kind of sense of humour because he says, "Mick," and I had already been blacklisted for a few years, "got just the job for you,

on a union office in Wimbledon for NUPE.” He said, “You can’t miss it.” So I goes down to the NUPE offices. A friend both then and now was having a chat one day and he says, “That young chap, yes, young official, he’s not too bad, he’s got similar views to yourself.” I looked at him and I thought to myself, “I don’t know so much.” Obviously, it was Mr. Jeremy Corbyn up on the stage there. From that day to this I have just thought to myself, “Well, I’ll wait and see.” Thank you very much.
(*Applause*)

BRO. A. WAINWRIGHT: My name is Alan Wainwright. I am the whistle blower who exposed all this. (*Standing ovation*) Thank you. I have absolutely nothing prepared for this because I did not know this was going to happen. I think what I would like to say is that many people think blacklisting has continued past the raid on the Consulting Association in 2009. I personally know it did and I will prove, I promise this room I will prove that those companies continued the blacklisting and what most people do not know here is that I have been getting help from Maria and Justin, and Michael Newman at Leigh Day, and I have over 50 new claims against 34 construction companies, live. So, if you could all just get behind that and go on the internet, have a look at what is happening with this because it continued, and I promise I will prove it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. D. SMITH: Thank you very much, people. My name is Dave Smith. I am the secretary of the Blacklist Support Group. First of all, I would like to say thank you very much to the GMB for inviting me. This is the third time I have had the privilege of speaking at a GMB conference and I feel like I am talking amongst friends. Fortunately, I will not do the same speech that you have heard before because some of it has already been shown on the video. There is some stuff that I do want to talk about.

Seven years ago almost to the day, I think it was actually seven years ago today, the Blacklist Support Group had their first ever meeting. It was in the House of Commons and there were ten of us in the room and one of the people in the room, the person who chaired the meeting, was John McDonnell MP. I don’t know whatever happened to him! Fair play to him. So, there were ten of us in the room and it was after Alan had blown the whistle and the Information Commissioner’s Office had found the files, and seven years ago when we got the files. When we were going to employment tribunals at the time every single one of these companies denied everything. They denied what they had done to us even though they had the evidence. They refused to pay us a penny in compensation. They fought us in every single employment tribunal and most of them got thrown out.

What we have done in seven years is built a mass movement around blacklisting. It started off with ten people in a room and we have brought in MPs, we have brought in the trade unions, we have brought in the lawyers, we have brought in investigative journalists, and most of all we have brought in activists like yourself from the Movement who have come and supported us because on our own we would not have achieved this.

Now, after seven years of this campaign, they are no longer denying it, they are no longer refusing a penny, we have multimillion pound payouts from these wretches and it is because of you. Give yourself a round of applause for coming and

supporting us. (*Applause*) They were forced to read out in the court a six-page grovelling apology, grovelling where they named all of the senior directors of these big multinational companies that had had secret meetings denying us work and spreading lies about us.

We always knew the truth. When we were being sacked, we knew it was because we were standing up for workers' rights, because we were standing up for health and safety on sites, and in the background something very, very wrong was going on. They have made this public apology. There are as part of this campaign we have been waging over seven years local authorities across the country who have passed resolutions at the council meetings saying that none of these blacklisting firms should be given publicly funded contracts. There was a select committee inquiry led by Ian Davidson MP that passed a report saying that none of these companies should be given publicly funded contracts. Now we have the apology and the admission of guilty in the High Court, this is now when we should be throwing them off of the publicly-funded contracts. None of them should get any taxpayers' money. (*Applause*)

This has been a massive victory for the trades union Movement. It is not just for us but for the entire trade union Movement for anyone who is prepared to stand up for their rights and try and improve the conditions for working people, wherever they work. We are hailing this as a massive victory but – but – it is not over. There is still a fight to go on. This is unfinished business. The reason it is unfinished business is just like Hillsborough, just like Orgreave, just like the Shrewsbury Pickets, blacklisting demands a public inquiry for what these people were up to. We have gone to David Cameron and asked David Cameron, MPs have raised it in Parliament and asked David Cameron, why isn't there a public inquiry into blacklisting. The Tories have point blank refused to give it to us, not surprising because all of these construction firms are major donors to the Tory Party, which is why they do not want their dirty laundry exposed. (*Applause*)

The reason we need a public inquiry is because when this first started off this was an industrial relations issue. This was big business against trade unions. That was the dispute. It is only as the process has gone on that we have found out that it was not just that. The stuff that is more shocking is actually what has not been said about so far, that the information on most of the files comes from managers of building sites.

When I complained about overflowing toilets that was written on my file, passed on by a manager from a building site. When I complained about unpaid wages in 1992 that was written and put on my blacklist file. When I got elected as a safety rep my safety rep's credentials were photocopied and added to my blacklist file. Some of the information on the files does not come from managers on building sites, it comes from the police.

When we first said this people said we were conspiracy theorists and that we were making it up. No one ever says we are making it up now. The undercover police officer, Peter Francis, the one who has blown the whistle, was and has been on the TV talking about he was spying on the Stephen Lawrence family, people probably remember that being in the news. I knew him back in the 1990s. When I knew him his name was Peter Black. He turned up to our meetings and followed us. When his

deployment finished he worked for a special group within the police called the Special Demonstration Squad. They did not just used to send people undercover to turn up on a demonstration, they used to give them new passports, they used to give them new National Insurance numbers, and they used to live amongst us and live as activists for years on end.

When Peter Francis left, another one turned up. His name when I knew him was Mark Cassidy. Now, they say, the police, that they were trying to find out about crime, that is why these police were undercover. This is a letter that we have from Mark Cassidy that was written in 1997. This is about a campaign. This is the title of the letter, "Building Workers Safety Campaign". Building Workers Safety Campaign is an organisation run and organised by building workers to campaign against deaths on building sites. This is writing to people asking for information. It is amazing because this letter written by Mark Cassidy, the undercover police officer, is sent to the charity, Inquest, the organisation that looks into deaths in police custody. You do have to wonder what exactly these undercover police officers were doing when they were infiltrating our organisations.

This Mark Cassidy, the reason I knew him is because he claimed to be a carpenter. I have been to meetings with him. I have actually been to some meetings where chaired the meetings. UCATT, the building workers union, has checked through their membership database and between 1997 and 1999 Mark Cassidy was a member of UCATT. His union subs were paid from the Special Branch bank account. That is the kind of infiltration of our Movement that we have.

There is a man down here, his name is Andrew Wyatt, the official photographer for the GMB during this conference. Me and him met in a pub in North London a couple of days ago. There is another undercover police officer who has just been exposed in the press. His name is Carlo Neri. I knew Carlo Neri. I knew him very well. One of my friends lived with him and he proposed to her at a New Year's Eve party. They were going to get married. He was already married with kids, a copper, but while he was infiltrating us he was living with my friend and proposed to her at a meeting.

Me and Andrew went through some old photographs of picket lines and there is a picket line in 2004 at King's Cross where a union activist was sacked on the job and loads of workers walked off the job in support of him. We have photographs there and who is standing there giving out the leaflets, the undercover police officer, Carlo Neri. The dispute ended up having loads of meetings in a pub next door to the site, called *The Cock Tavern*, and the meetings were organised partly by the GMB, the GMB's officials, at the time, Steve Kelly and Kelly Rogers were attending those meetings in the pub, and stuff about those meetings turns up on people's blacklist files.

This is an absolute disgrace. Blacklisting is no longer just about industrial relations, trade unions, and big business, this is about multinational organisations in collusion with secret organisations, shady outfits within the British Police Force spying on trade unions for perfectly democratic peaceful activities. John McDonnell, about a year ago, named in Parliament Det. Ch. Insp. Gordon Mills, from one of these undercover police units who actually turned up and gave PowerPoint presentations about how to stop activists getting jobs with your company to this secret blacklisting organisation.

We actually have the notes from the PowerPoint presentation. When we published it in my book – sorry, forgive me, my publishers say I am contractually obliged to hold up the book every now and again for this. (*Applause*) If anyone hasn't got it, it is for sale out there in the stalls. Get the plug in while I get the opportunity!

This Gordon Mills has turned up and is a DCI, giving a PowerPoint presentation at an illegal organisation where the sole purpose is to blacklist trade unionists. Why, because in any major dispute between big business and trade unions the state is not neutral. The state is always on the side of big business whether we like it or not. That is why we need a public inquiry to see what these people have been up to, what these anti-democratic organisations within the British state have been up to. If David Cameron won't give us a public inquiry, I am hoping Jeremy Corbyn does give us a public inquiry. (*Applause*)

Look, our Movement has had plenty of setbacks. Our Movement fighting for a better world, for a better society, for a fairer world, has had plenty of people spying on us. They did worse to the suffragettes. They did worse to the African National Congress. They did worse to the Civil Rights Movement in America. The difference with every single one of them is they won. Every single one of them campaigns won and we are going to win as well. (*Applause*)

As I said, we think this is a massive, massive victory for the trades union Movement and something we should shout from the rooftops. Our Movement needs victories and what we have proved is that coming together, bringing the best of our Movement together and concentrating our fire on the enemy, actually gets results. When their lawyer stood up in the High Court and read out their apology, the six-page apology, he got to a part of it where he said: "And this is a genuine sincere apology and we hope this is the end of the matter" and it was at that stage that 50 construction workers – where is the T-shirt – all wearing that T-shirt, the blacklisted T-shirt, all stood up in the middle of the High Court and did one chant, which was, "*No justice. No peace.*" No Justice – *No Peace*. No Justice – *No Peace*. No Justice – *No Peace*. Solidarity. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: For Dave, and all the people who were blacklisted, justice has not fully been done because you and your families were imprisoned in poverty for all those years, and those employers should have been given a prison sentence as well behind bars. (*Applause*)

Congress, it was a delight to meet the individuals concerned, so many of them and their families. There are many, many more of them outside. Congress, we will move on and I will now ask the Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, to address Congress. As you are all aware, Jeremy was elected last summer with an overwhelming vote, and many hundreds of people joined the Party to support him. I know Jeremy wants to attend as many union conferences as he can and I am pleased that he has been able to join us today. Jeremy, please address Congress.

JEREMY CORBYN, MP, LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, ADDRESSED CONGRESS.

JEREMY CORBYN: Thank you, Mary. Thank you very much for that introduction and the welcome, and thank you all for inviting me. It does not seem that long ago I was at the hustings at the Congress last year in Dublin and I have had a very quiet year ever since then. *(Laughter)* Mary, you and I have worked together over many years. We worked together in North London on school meals campaigns, on Justice for Cleaners, and were opposed to privatisation by local authorities way back in the 1970s and 1980s. So, our friendship goes back a long way because our duties have always been to represent those people who are suffering because of the economic strategies being followed by that government then led by Margaret Thatcher and now the Government led by David Cameron.

I am very proud to be sharing a platform with the people that have fought such a brilliant and brave fight on behalf of those that have been blacklisted for standing up for the rights of others. Dave is quite right in his brilliant speech when he said this is a major victory for the trades union Movement. It shows that if you stand up for fellow workers, if you stand up for health and safety at work, if you stand up for the right to represent people, and you get knocked back and you suffer so grievously as so many of them did for so long, eventually you get justice. That justice was gained because of the union, because of the union membership, because of the support, because of the legal representation, and because of the support given by John McDonnell MP and Ian Davidson MP, particularly in the enquiries that they put forward.

So, when we win a victory like that, obviously it makes a huge difference but cannot return all the lost years that every one of those blacklisted workers suffered when they could not work, could not properly enjoy their lives, could not properly support their families, the anger and humiliation they must have felt. Their victory is a victory for them but it is also a victory for every other worker that stands up in the future against the same levels of injustice. *(Applause)*

Dave was quite right, and I am glad he mentioned it, the Hillsborough campaign, many, many similarities, a working class community traduced by the media, lied to by officials, dishonestly damaged by allegations of their behaviour during that dreadful day at Hillsborough, they knew the truth all along, they all knew the truth all along, yet it took 27 years to drag it out, 27 years to get to the truth of that. But we are not done there yet. I want to congratulate all those that campaigned so hard on Hillsborough and so many others. We want an inquiry into Orgreave as well and what happened there. We are not going to give up without that. *(Applause)* And we want an inquiry into the Shrewsbury 24 and what went on there. I remember that as a young man living in Shropshire at the time and the way the media reported it. There is always a connection, allegations, media connivance, cover-up, injustice, and years and years later eventually the truth comes out.

So, we will be supporting those public inquiries. We will be looking at ways to introduce comprehensive legislation that protects those that have been elected to represent others from the grossly unfair and unjust acts of employers acting in secret to deny them their right to represent other people. It is a fundamental of our history as a trades union Movement that all along it is our representatives who get fingered by

the powerful in order to strengthen the employers' hand against that of the workers. That is why trade unions are so important and so central to our lives and why I am proud to be here addressing your conference today, as indeed I have addressed many trade union conferences this summer. (*Applause*)

I want to congratulate Tim on his election as General Secretary of the Union. We have many things in common, one of which will be deeply controversial to this Congress, and that is our support for Arsenal Football Club. (*Cheers*) How to divide a united audience all in one go! We go through the pleasure and the pain of supporting our team every year.

I want to wish you all the best, Tim, in the work that you have taken on, the work you have taken on in being General Secretary of the Union and I say this, our party was founded by the trade unions, the trade unions are a very important part of the Labour Party. I want to work with you and you want to work with us to ensure that we gain support, that the members of the Union feel fully involved in the Labour Party, and as we go forward towards 2020 we develop all the policies that are so important to empower and change the lives of the poorest people in this country, to give justice for working people, and to ensure that trade unions have their proper place, their central place, in our society as the biggest voluntary sector organisation representing six million people and six million people's views are very, very important.

I want to say thank you to the GMB for the support you give to the Party over the years, the support you gave in the May elections, the support you helped get in those council elections and the mayoral elections that were so successful in Liverpool, Salford, London, and Bristol.

I will just say this, I am so proud of the results we achieved there. When the Tory Party and the media decide to run a smear campaign, a scare campaign, a campaign of dog whistle politics, appealing to the basic instincts in people, I am so proud that the people of London and Bristol utterly rejected that and elected Labour candidates as mayors of those two great cities. (*Applause*) We as a community, as a Movement, as a people, have to be united together in achieving the social objectives that we want.

I am also really pleased that you have launched the Harry Harpham Parliamentary Programme to break down barriers between Westminster and working people. I feel very strongly about this. As you know I have been in parliament a long time and that building is a very odd place, I have to confess, and much of the procedure there is very strange.

We all have to remember when you are elected as a shop steward you are elected to represent your fellow workers. When you are elected to a senior position in the union you represent the union. When you are elected to parliament, you represent the people that have put you there. So, I am never happy with the theatre of parliament. I see it our job to represent the people that sent us there and ask questions on behalf of those people, which is why I conduct Prime Minister's Question Time in the way that I do, trying to put forward the questions that are put to me by people that want answers from a government that seems very unwilling to give them.

I was very proud to know Harry Harpham and very proud that his last contribution in parliament was a question to the Prime Minister about the plight of the steel industry,

of Sheffield Forge Masters on behalf of his community. In Harry's memory let's get more people like Harry into parliament, let's get more people that have that lifetime experience into parliament, who can use that place to speak up for others in order to bring about the kind of social justice that we want, and our party and our Movement becomes the social movement it was always designed to be, campaigning for justice however difficult and sometimes how unpopular it can be to do that. Thank you for naming that after Harry and thank you for the support you have given to him and his family.

That support follows in the best traditions of your union. Will Thorne was one of the first Labour MPs in 1906 and the banners around the hall here today indicate the origins of the union, the work of those at the Canning Town glassworks and other places. It is those people that founded our union that we owe a great debt to, to understand what they were trying to achieve.

One of my first jobs was working for the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, as union workers chasing down missing employers, and then very controversially, and this again may divide the hall, I am not intending to do that, I worked for the National Union of Public Employees, who enjoyed a very close working relationship with the GMB throughout its time. It is now part of Unison. But competition and rivalry between unions has to be put aside in the interests of getting good working conditions for everybody, fighting against privatisation and fighting against the discrimination that exists at the workplace, the glass ceiling that exists against so many women workers trying to get promotion or develop their careers.

Will Thorne's mother and sister spent a long time sewing hooks and eyes for a living and Will himself, the founder of your union, a child labourer from the age of six, his mum thought he was slowly being killed at work. He worked turning a wheel and a rope for a twine spinner, working from six in the morning to six at night, half an hour for breakfast, an hour for dinner, until his mother declared the work too hard, the distance too long for him to walk. He said: "My mother's rebellion against the way I was being worked is a rebellion of many mothers. It is rebellion I feel and will continue to carry on."

It is the trade unions, it is the pioneers, who stood up against the injustices of the 19th century when trade unions were often barely legal and often under legal attack as they have been throughout their very existence, that have achieved so much and changed so much in the workplace and other places, but it has not stopped there. We have a Trade Union Bill, now a Trade Union Act, that has just gone through parliament.

This country already has the most restrictive anti-trade union laws in Europe and the Tories want to make it even worse. Through the hard work of all of the unions campaigning together, we won important concessions on electronic balloting, check-off, changes to union political funds, and on facility time. I do not say that this is enough but well done and thank you for all those that campaigned on it. Just as an injury to one is an injury to all, let's celebrate a victory for one is also a victory for all as the blacklisted workers have shown today. (*Applause*)

To those people that think they can manage without a union, I ask them to look at it objectively. When there are good union organisations at the workplace, usually the wages are higher, the terms and conditions are better, the exploitation and discrimination much less, and the opportunity to redress grievances is there. That is why it is very important that we spend as much time talking about the culture and value of trade unions to society as a whole as well as obviously recruiting to individual unions. It has been my pleasure to talk to a lot of young people over the past year in colleges and other places and explain to them the centrality of our history of what trade unions have achieved and why they should think about joining a union and being fully involved with a union.

So, the next Labour government is going to repeal the Trade Union Act and we will go further and extend trade union and employment rights. Trade unions are a force for good and a force for equality. (*Applause*) I want us to make policy in a different way. A couple of weeks ago Angela Eagle, Ian Lavery, Jo Stevens, and myself, went to launch Workplace 2020. Workplace 2020 is looking at what the workplace is like now, what it is going to be like in 2020, and what changes we want, what legislation we want, what rights at work we want.

The UK workplace is one of the most unequal in the modern economies. Those at the top earn very high wages and low pay is very widespread. Six million people in Britain earn less than the UK living wage and in-work poverty is at a record high. The share of wages in national income has plummeted. When they talk about the cost of housing benefit, the cost of in-work benefits, many of those are paid to people in work, some of those on zero hours contracts, some of those just on very low wages. We want a real living wage, not this concoction that George Osborne developed, and that is why I applaud the TUC and the campaign that it has mounted for it and, indeed, the campaign that has been mounted in the USA and other places for a \$15 an hour minimum wage across the USA. It has been a pleasure to welcome American trade unionists to Labour meetings in this country. In reality, it is the same companies and the same employers that are underpaying people, it is the same companies and the same employers that are busy trying to evade tax and send it off to tax havens. We have to have a commonality with trade union colleagues across national borders, not just within our national borders. (*Applause*)

Wealth creation is, of course, a good thing but we have to have a debate about how wealth is created and, above all, how it is shared. It is a cooperative process between workers, public investment, and services and, yes, often innovative and creative individuals, rewards have to be shared fairly. Technology is changing the way we work. Digital technology, robotics is transforming jobs and whole sectors of the economy. Globalisation means that greater international trade is altering where jobs are based and where workers are in demand. Work for many has become insecure and we want to change that because we believe that a happier more secure workforce is a more productive workforce. Employees want to play a part in successful workplaces.

We want to develop a vision of the workplace of the future with working people, starting with the unions, but we also have to recognise that the growth of high technology, the growth of incredibly advanced robotic systems, and many other things, has often resulted in a greater inequality in companies and workplaces,

massive wealth at the top end and very little at the other end. Surely, it is the challenge of all socialists everywhere to say, well, all this great technology that is coming along, and we all admire it, has to be the opportunity to share wealth more fairly rather than more unequally, and to bequeath to the next generation a better standard of living than the current generation has rather than following the paths that we have been lectured by Conservative economists for the past 30 years that somehow or other it is inevitable the next generation will have less than this generation, and the one after that will have even less than that generation. That is the challenge that we face and that is where Workplace 2020 is a start in that discussion and a start on that debate within the labour Movement.

David Cameron's agency Britain with zero hours contracts, insecurity, wage undercutting, and all the horrors that go with it, is the place that we start from and the alternative that we want to offer; instead of a race to the bottom in jobs, pay, and workplace rights, we will be shaping a different approach to the 2020s, based on full employment, high skilled workforces, with decent pay, rights for employed and self-employed, and a voice at work through collective bargaining. That is the basis of a new business settlement in the economy of the future, one that benefits all and breaks with the low pay, low investment, and low productivity record of Tory Britain. These events are now taking place and I hope you will join in.

I also want to congratulate a number of campaigns that the GMB union has been involved in. I have been very impressed with the work of GMB Young Members on housing and issues – they are over there, obviously – (*Applause*) - particularly on housing and the insecurity of the private rented sector, and the need for far greater investment in housing.

I also welcome the work they have been doing on mental health and, indeed, the work many of the unions have been doing on mental health. I appointed Luciana Berger as our Shadow Cabinet level member for mental health because I wanted to make a statement, a statement from our party that mental health is a serious crisis-ridden issue. One in four of us in our lifetime will go through a serious bout of depression, or a crisis of some sort. Too often people suffer alone during that crisis. They suffer alone because they are frightened of the stigma; they are frightened to talk about it. Too many young men take their own lives because they are frightened to talk to others about the crisis they are going through and our mental health services are often underfunded.

So, we start with the approach that we support people; that we are proud enough and strong enough to talk about mental health and the mental health crisis that so many are going through. We also recognise that it is stress at work, it is stress over housing, it is stress over finance, it is stress over many things that contribute to that. I thank the union for the support that it has given on that and we will continue that and I want to be sure that come 2020 a Labour government will be there properly funding our mental health services and end the stigma that is so often attached to mental health conditions within our society. (*Applause*)

I was asked a question by Dave and others about the way in which blacklisting companies operate. I absolutely agree with that. We want, as I said earlier, a proper inquiry into this. We also, I think, have to use public procurement policies, and this is

an area we can have a lot of debate on, to ensure that we do get of course good contracts but we also get companies working for the public sector that do recognise rights at work, that do provide sufficient apprentices, that do not blacklist workers and do not discriminate against trade union activists. It is a very powerful tool local government can use, and often does use. I do not see any reason why that cannot be a part of our central policies of what we are trying to achieve. (*Applause*)

This Government is underfunding public services, massive cuts in local government, underfunding of our National Health Service, and continuing the Health and Social Care Act which requires 49% of all NHS services to go out to the private sector. I am proud of the fact we have a National Health Service, a health service free at the point of use as a human right. It is a fantastic achievement made by the whole Labour Movement which came to fruit after the Second World War when Anuran Bevan introduced the National Health Act.

It is under threat. It is under threat by a thousand cuts. It is under threat by underfunding. It is under threat by the rationing of supply of medicines and services in so many local health services so we have to defend the principle of the National Health Service and always argue for it. Again, it is going to be a Labour government that is going to ensure that we do return to a proper National Health Service where the principle is that staff are employed by the National Health Service, not outsourced to somebody else, and that the centrality of the health service is the point of first port of call for all of us when we need a health service and it is universal for everybody, not the health service of last resort, which it is in danger of becoming if this Tory Government carries on with its strategy. It is our health service. It is not for sale. It is there for all time for everybody. (*Applause*)

We have to challenge the economic offers that are put to us at the present time. We are being told that austerity is a good thing; that austerity is working. What I really admire about George Osborne, I really do, is his now affection for the idea of the five-year plan, the five-year plan that everything will be solved. The only problem with George Osborne's five-year plan, it is always five years away. It is five years until anything is going to be done whatsoever. So we have another five years of cuts, we have another five years of austerity. I say this. The austerity that is being proposed, that is being carried out, is actually about rebalancing the economy. It is a political choice, not an economic necessity. If we were serious about rebalancing our economy, we would be investing much more in infrastructure, we would not be so grotesquely underfunding local services and health services, we would not be freezing public sector pay; we would be investing more in people in order to expand our economy.

What they have done is capped low paid workers' pay, they find billions in tax breaks for the very rich, and a million people rely on food banks, and at the same time they have tried to take away personal independence payments for the disabled. Their objectives and their principles are the very opposite of everything that we want and everything that we believe in. They cut adult social care budgets, denying the dignity for the elderly and disabled, and that ends up too often with many women having to give up their jobs in order to care for elderly and dependent relatives. Sorry, this is not right. Sorry, this is wrong. Sorry, this has to and it will change. That is what we are determined to ensure actually happens. (*Applause*)

But an economy has to be one that invests, invests in the key infrastructure to building a secure economy, and underpinned by decent rights for everybody. We now have the European Referendum coming up in a couple of weeks' time. I know the position of the Union on this. I have been following very closely what the Tory Brexiteers have been saying and they think the 24th June is going to be the day of the bonfire of regulations. I just put it to them, which regulations are they going to burn first, is it the four weeks holiday a year, is it the transfer of employment undertakings, is it the non-discrimination legislation, is it the maternity leave, the paternity leave, all the things that trade unions in this country, and, colleagues, in other European countries fought for and managed to get into legislation. So, we have to think very hard about this.

I support Remain and Reform because I think we can bring about a lot of changes in Europe that would be good, we can and will recognise what the Tory Government is doing, blocking moves on tax avoidance, blocking moves to sign the Posted Workers Directive which would prevent the undercutting of workers moving from one jurisdiction to another, but also to work with people across Europe to put forward a different economic agenda and, above all, to challenge and oppose the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership in what it is trying to do, which is importing the worst conditions from the USA into Europe. *(Applause)*

Our campaign is a realistic one, a realistic one in order to work with other people in order to bring about those social changes that we want. This is a government that has refused to do anything about tax havens and tax avoidance. This is a government that has brought greater and greater inequality to our society. Our party has to offer something very, very different. It has to offer a different economic agenda but it also has to offer real human rights and social justice that we have talked about.

I conclude by simply saying this, after the Second World War the agreement came together, the horrors of that war had to be put behind us, there had to be a different world, a Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed, the European Convention on Human Rights was signed, the European Court of Human rights was established. It is attacked mercilessly every day by ignorant reporters in some of the more right-wing newspapers but I tell you this, if the Tories think that the way forward is to repeal the Human Rights Act and walk away from the European Convention, we are in no position to criticise any oppressive regime anywhere in the world for its denial of trade union rights, its denial of workers' rights, its denial of the defence of journalists or human rights defenders. *(Applause)* We have to stand up for human rights here just as much as we do anywhere else.

Trade unions were founded by people with vision. They were founded after the most enormous struggle. They are a very central part of our society, a central part of our society. In opposition, we can indeed force the Government back and win things. We forced them back on the cuts they tried to introduce on tax credits; three million families have not had a cut of £1,000 this year because we managed to defeat them on that. We forced them to back down on cuts to personal independence payments which would have been so appalling for those with disabilities. Also, after quite a short time, they were forced to backtrack on the forced academisation of schools, and we will take that a bit further and try and return, I want to return to the idea of the

local authority leading the family of local education rather than a series of competing schools and colleges. (*Applause*)

We have achieved those things because everyone in the labour Movement came together to achieve it. We were founded to give people hope. We were founded as a party to give people opportunities. We learned from those that founded our Movement and all the bravery that they showed, Kier Hardy and many, many others, what they showed in those very difficult days. It is not a question of looking back, it is a question of adhering to those principles of a community coming together and the social justice that goes with it so we meet the challenges of the 21st century, of the overwhelming power of global corporations vis-à-vis national democratic governments, how we ensure that we protect our National Health Service, we extend our social rights, we do not penalise all our young people because they want to go to university or college, how we give real opportunities to everybody. There is nothing more wasteful than poverty, there is nothing more wasteful than young people not getting the education they deserve, not being able to get the qualifications they want. At the end of the day, we all lose. If somebody does not become a doctor we are all one doctor less. If somebody does not become an engineer, all our engineering is one engineer less, and so it goes on through society. It is about opportunities, it about education, it about culture, it is about the kind of society we want to live in. That is why the Labour Party is so different and so special because of the way it was founded, because of the structures we have, because of the way we exist, and because of our ability to unite people, to give them hope of a better world, to give them hope of a world based on justice, and a government that would respect human rights in this country and, indeed, be a force for good and human rights all over the world. Thank you very much for inviting me here today. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I know you have worked late, please note, Health and Safety, but I think it was right and proper that you heard the leader of our party, Jeremy Corbyn, and I thank him so much for giving up his time to speak to us. I would like to present you, Jeremy, with something you are short of, I suppose, a thing or two. On behalf of the GMB will you accept this gift as a token of your visit to us here in Bournemouth?

(*Presentation amid applause*)

JEREMY CORBYN: An absolute pleasure. Thank you very much. It is a notebook, a little black book I can write lots of things down in of things that have to be done.

THE PRESIDENT: We have made a note of all that you said!

JEREMY CORBYN: It is all in there already, is it? Well done. You are a fast writer! Thank you very, very much indeed. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now close Congress until 9.30 in the morning, and thank all of you. Please make sure you fill the bucket! Tonight, do not forget the President's do at the Pavilion from 8 o'clock; no food!

Conference adjourned.