

**GMB**  
**CONGRESS 2015**

.....

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

.....

Held in:

**Citywest Hotel, Conference and Event Centre,**  
**Dublin**

on:

**Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2015**  
**Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015**  
**Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015**  
**Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015**  
**and**  
**Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

.....

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**DAY THREE**  
**(Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015)**

.....

**(Transcript prepared by:**  
**Marten Walsh Cherer Limited,**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Quality House,**  
**6-9 Quality Court, Chancery Lane,**  
**London WC2A 1HP.**  
**email: [info@martenwalshcherer.com](mailto:info@martenwalshcherer.com))**

.....

## **THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS TUESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2015**

### **MORNING SESSION**

*(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order! Good morning Congress. Did you all have a good night? *(Calls of "Yes")* I'll soon find out from the video at the end of the week. We have a couple of announcements.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

THE PRESIDENT: The *GMB Politics* magazine has been distributed. To register to vote in the contest to choose the next Labour Party Leader, complete the form on the back of the magazine and bring to Exhibition Stand 27. You can also pick up other leaflets there to take back to your workplace to sign up online.

The Pellacraft branch website has been very successful. This is the outcome of the work achieved by the Branch Working Party. If your branch does not have a Pellacraft branch website, please go to the Pellacraft stand to find out about how easy it is to purchase and manage the branch website. Also visit the stand if you would like some help or refresher training on managing your website. I'm first in the queue.

Rianne Greenway, a member of staff for Wales & South West Region, wishes to thank Congress for your kind donations and wishes to say a massive thank you to everyone. We wish her luck. *(Applause)*

Congress, we have a guest speaker from across the seas with us this morning. I would like you to welcome Joe Maloney, Vice-President of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers in Canada. *(Applause)* Joe has been in the building and construction industry all his working life and started as an apprentice and moved up through the ranks to be manager and organiser. In January 2000 he was elected as Secretary-Treasurer of the Building & Construction Trades Department for the AFL-CIO, representing over — listen! — three million workers. He is passionate about training and was the driving force in the establishment of the "H2H" Helmets to Hardhats Program, which links returning military veterans to jobs and training. Joe, welcome to the GMB Congress. Please address Congress. *(Applause)*

### **ADDRESS BY BRO JOE MALONEY**

BRO J. MALONEY: Thank you very much, and thank you for that kind introduction. It's a real pleasure for me to be here today to bring greetings from Canada. I also bring you greetings from our International General President, Newton B. Jones, and our International Executive Council.

I would like to start off by saying that the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers in North America represent approximately 60,000 very highly-skilled workers, and in Canada we have about 10,000 workers out of the 60,000. We only work in heavy industrial facilities throughout the nation. We build power plants, ships, oil refineries and that kind of stuff, so it is very high pressure, very intense work and it needs intense training. With the 10,000 members that we have in Canada and the industries we represent, we control approximately 85% of our market share. That is very good for a small union like ourselves. The main reason that we control a large market share is that we are able to supply qualified boilermakers and welders on a regular basis to our fair contractors.

Over the next several years, as we are enjoying right now, we are going to be experiencing a major increase in demand for boilermakers and welders. Currently, in Canada it takes us four years to train a qualified boilermaker or welder. We cannot train boilermakers fast enough to meet the demand. We control our own apprenticeship programmes, we control the intake of apprentices and referring them out to employers. Unfortunately, we cannot train them fast enough with the understanding of the demand that is coming our way. In order to prepare and be pro-active, we have developed our own temporary foreign-worker programme, as it is known in Canada. It is a union programme, It is not an employer programme and it is not a government programme. It is a union programme developed by us in the union and run and operated by us. With that in mind, you have to understand that all over the world there is a lot exploitation that goes on and there are many labour brokers who are dealing people around for cheap wages and stuff like that. We don't do that. We don't deal with labour brokers and we do not take any money for what we in our programme. This is a service provided by us in the union.

With that in mind, we came over in January and met with your General Secretary, Paul Kenny. We discussed the situation, and the UK has a great relationship with Canada. I, personally, work with a lot of boilermakers in Canada who came from the UK. We thought where better could we, hopefully, establish a relationship with an organisation such as the GMB to help us recruit welders and boilermakers on a temporary basis for our peak periods in Canada, which are the spring and fall in each year. After that meeting, things progressed a little bit and we have developed a protocol, a protocol between the GMB and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers representing Canada. I have the protocol With that in mind, you have to understand that all over the world there is a lot exploitation that goes on and there are many labour brokers who are dealing people around for cheap wages and stuff like that. We don't do that. We don't deal with labour brokers and we do not take any money for what we in our programme. This is a service provided by us in the union.

With that in mind, we came over in January and met with your General Secretary, Paul Kenny. We discussed the situation, and the UK has a great relationship with Canada. I, personally, work with a lot of boilermakers in Canada who came from the UK. We thought where better could we, hopefully, establish a relationship with an organisation such as the GMB to help us recruit welders and boilermakers on a temporary basis for our peak periods in Canada, which are the spring and fall in each year. After that meeting, things progressed a little bit and we have developed a protocol, a protocol between the GMB and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers representing Canada. I have the protocol *here*. It's a protocol that respects each other's organisation but, mainly, it respects the working people who will be working under the protocol. I want you to keep in mind that when a worker, a boilermaker or a welder, from the UK, comes to Canada, they will operate and work under the same terms and conditions as a Canadian boilermaker. They will get paid the same money, they will receive the same benefits, they will be entered into our pension plans and our health and welfare plans. Every penny that is offered under our collective agreement the member from the GMB will get the same benefits. They will be flown over free of charge and they will be housed free of charge (*Applause*) The bottom line with us is that there will be absolutely no exploitation of anyone, anywhere, when they come and work under our programme. (*Applause*) It is very important to us. We are very strong union-minded in Canada. We respect people and we respect the hard work that they do in building our country. We want people to come to work every day, to get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and go home and enjoy the evenings with their families. (*Applause*)

I would, especially, like to thank the GMB for agreeing to enter into this protocol with the boilermakers. It is going to be a great relationship and you are, really and truly, doing us a tremendous favour by helping us supply to these contractors in Canada, because if we can't supply qualified

boilermakers and welders we will lose work. As long as we can supply, we will maintain a high market share and we will maintain a good union presence. With that, I thank you again. Thank you for the opportunity to be here and I am looking forward to the future. Thank you so much. *(A standing ovation)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, how often in the last 10 years have I said to people that if you want to do something, you must do it yourself. When I first met Joe, this seemed to be an ideal opportunity for union to reach out to union. We cut out the agencies, we cut out the gangmasters, we cut out the exploiters and we don't need government patronage. This is workers supporting workers, unionisation, good pay and good conditions. *(Applause)*

Now we sign the protocol. Mary Turner has asked if you would take three hundred Tory MPs as the first batch. *(Laughter and Applause)* Duly signed. *(The protocol was raised to the Congress by both Paul and Joe)* *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Joe, it was a great pleasure to listen to you, and we won't even charge you to take the Tory Party. Just make sure that Cameron is in the front. You can exploit him like he has exploited our workers.

BRO. MALONEY: This will be an interesting day. *(Laughter and Applause)* *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: There you are, Congress. It shows how it can be done, doesn't it, when the will exists.

We will now move on to item 2 in today's agenda.

## **SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION & TRAINING**

### **DECIMATION OF EDUCATION MOTION 327**

#### **327. DECIMATION OF EDUCATION**

This Congress must oppose the calculated and vindictive destruction of the right to education of our working class young people.

B90 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. McMURRAY (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 327 — Decimation of Education. In my lifetime we have been through the tightening of belts, restructuring, the New Deal, RPA and other Government policies. Through them all, we kept hold of the right of a good education and the hope that we could lead to a fairer and better way for our young people. The actions of the last Westminster Government were loosely disguised as policy restructuring and budgetary imperatives, but they were nothing more than the calculated, vindictive destruction of this right. This attack has now been brought to bear on the north of Ireland via Tory puppets that are in our Assembly. The plans for this financial year include the axing of the following services: support for children and young people with below average reading and writing skills; the Youth Council, which is key in championing young people in our society; music therapy, which is used for those with learning or behavioural disorders; language support for newcomers; the reduction in the number of courses and places in

further education colleges and the same applies to universities. This is our children's future. They are destroying it. Congress, I call on you to resist this destruction by any means possible. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Seconder?

SIS. R. HALL (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker (*Applause*) seconding Motion 327 and speaking against the decimation of education. Trade unions and student unions have stood together for a long time to protect our education. There are seven million students in the UK and there are hundreds of colleges and universities that make an incalculable contribution to our societies and communities. Access to education for everybody is an important part of our union's fight for social justice, and yet this Tory Government announced this week £450 million worth of cuts to the Education Department. Realistically, these cuts will disproportionately affect further education, and for generations further education colleges have helped millions of students access quality education, and we need to make sure that they can continue to do so. We know that when the cuts come they target the most vulnerable students first, the Access and Living Grants, aid to financial hardships and bursaries for student parents and carers of students. We know that those will be the first to go and it is a disgrace.

Congress, this situation is not happening just in England but in the devolved nations, too. In Northern Ireland the recent Stormont House Agreement and the attached budget outlines 4.6% of budget cuts to the Department of Employment and Learning. That is £50 million. It means the reduction of hundreds of student places, course closures and staff redundancies. Queen's University, Belfast, wants to reduce student numbers by over a thousand in the next three years, and over 230 staff are being made redundant this year alone. How many working-class kids will never see the inside of a lecture theatre? How many will never be able to afford the sky-high fees? I was the first person in my family to have the opportunity to go to university, and I want my union to hold out their hand to people just like me and to families all over the UK and Ireland and stand against the decimation of education. I second this motion.. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on Motion 327? (*No response*) Colleagues, the CEC is supporting. I put it to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 327 was Carried.*

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS SOLIDARITY APPEAL MOTION 380**

#### **380. INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS SOLIDARITY APPEAL**

This Congress notes "The Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign" (P.T.U.D.C.) was formed in the wake of the Trade Union Leader, Arif Shah's assassination in 1995. The P.T.U.D.C. has waged many campaigns against cuts, privatisation and the exploitation of women and children. It seeks to unite workers, regardless of their sex, ethnic origin or nationality, in a common struggle against capitalism.

Recently, Islamic Fundamentalists blatantly issued threats of attacks and assassination against P.T.U.D.C. Leader, Ghufuran Ahad. Early on the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014, at 5.45 am, Ghufuran Ahad's home, in the village of Allahdand in the district of Malakand, was attacked by hand grenade. Fortunately, no one was injured, but the house was severely damaged.

Congress believes that this highlights the need for the British Labour Movement to strengthen links with the Pakistan Trade Unions and give its full support to those fighting against repression and for workers' rights in Pakistan.

Congress further calls upon the T.U.C. International Committee to respond to the solidarity appeal and send messages of support to Brother Ghufuran Ahad.

SUNDERLAND 1 ENG BRANCH  
Northern Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. RIDDLE (Northern): I move Motion 380 — International Trade Unions Solidarity Appeal. Congress, the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign was set up as a result of the killing of its leader, Arif Shah, in 1995. Oppression is not unusual. We understand that we, as a union, are one part but an important one of a wider TUC. We know that there will be limits on what we can get done through the TUC's International Committee, and there can be no guarantees of the outcome. We believe that there can be no justification for the attacks on the lives of activists, whether they are trade unionists involved in political activities or trade unionists involved in the workplace. The leader of the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign survived an attack on his life in November 2014. Apparently, his organisation does not operate in the area where he lives. This was an attempt on a trade unionist's life because of his activities. We have equality principles and practise equality in this great union as well as within the TUC. We must stick by them and promote them. Human rights apply globally. It could be any group from any walk of life trying to persecute members of trade unions. On this occasion, it was the Islamic militants who were doing the persecuting.

Congress, we understand the qualifications that the CEC may have with this motion. We accept the qualified support but ask that Congress supports the motion so that we can work with and through other groups to give help and speak out against those who want to stop trade union activity in Pakistan. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. A.M. BRYAN (Northern): President, I second Motion 380 on International Trade Unions Solidarity Appeal. Congress, the key pledges of the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign are the defence of trade unions in Pakistan from physical attacks by employers, the right to organise, to stop the privatisation and plunder of state industries, a minimum wage, the abolition of child labour, the abolition of anti-trade union laws, the abolition of laws against women and equal rights for women.

We know that in Pakistan there is a vastly different state culture and social structure. However, these pledges are not just those that still stand in all countries but they are at the heart of our Movement in this country. I know that they are at the centre of the GMB, both in the workplace and in our wider campaigns. It is, surely, not too much to ask that we send messages of support, perhaps through our work in the TUC and help the solidarity appeal. Attacks are going on daily against our international brothers and sisters by people who seem to have hatred in their hearts. I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Alison. I call Motion 382.

## 382. AFGHANISTAN

### 382. AFGHANISTAN

This Congress calls on the British Government to protect the women of Afghanistan who are being murdered daily. Many of them are teachers, doctors, politicians and professional people, murdered simply for being an educated woman trying to improve the quality of life for their people and country.

With the gradual withdrawal of British forces from Afghanistan these people cannot be left unprotected. There needs to be a plan to safeguard them.

We ask the GMB to urge the Government to work and finance a plan of protection that Amnesty International calls for.

MILTON KEYNES CITY BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. A. THOMPSON (London): I ask, quickly, that you don't start the timer because I would like to make a request of the President. I was wondering if, today, we could get an impromptu fringe meeting, get President Michael D. Higgins along to give some of these Labour leadership candidates a quick lesson on how to address properly the workers that they are supposed to be representing. *(Cheers and applause)* I don't know how practical that is, but it sounded like a good idea.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you were going to ask me to marry you. *(Laughter)*

BRO. THOMPSON: I will be sensible now. Congress, I move Motion 382 — Afghanistan. We started this week by hearing about the great strides that we, as a union and as a society, have made in trying to achieve equality between men and women. Yet the advances that we have made are not shared by all women and we are often, quite sadly, reminded of the seemingly insurmountable work that is still left to do.

As we have witnessed first hand, the advancement of women benefits everybody, and so any erosion of their rights is damaging to everybody. Very few countries can claim to have reached the point of absolute equality but Afghanistan is reported to be one of the most challenging places in the world to be a woman. The Afghanistan Constitution quite clearly states that every citizen of Afghanistan, whether man or women, have equal rights and duties before the law. Sadly, this does not reflect the day-to-day situation that many of these women find themselves in. 85% of women have no formal education and are illiterate. Only 40% of girls attend schools up to the age of 11 and only one in 20 beyond that. The effect this has on a woman's ability to question gender inequality in their society and their ability to express their rights cannot be emphasised enough, yet it is not surprising that so many do not attend school, given that many girls will face threats of violence, physical harm and sometimes even death simply for expressing their basic human right to education.

When you also consider that more than 50% of Afghan girls are married or engaged by the age of 12, it becomes even more apparent as to the difficulties they have in accessing education. They, therefore, remain illiterate and, effectively, will become subservient to the will of the more educated male population. Not only this, but child marriage leads to pregnancy in young teenagers, who are five times more likely to die during pregnancy and child birth than an adult woman. It becomes easy for us to see how this directly impacts on the opportunities of these girls when they grow up but, even so, some refuse to accept these supposed norms and they go through to become doctors, teachers, shop workers to name but a few. It would be wrong of me to suggest that things have not changed since the

Taliban were deposed because there has been some progress, but it is slow. The Taliban's influence and programme of intolerance remain.

Amnesty International has stated that the laws meant to be support women are poorly implemented, if at all. They have also wanted to question the international community's commitment to the plight of these women. We must insist that our Government steps up and supports campaigns such as Amnesty's, and engage with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure that it cannot continue to ignore its human rights' obligations.

Mother Teresa once said: "If I look at the mass, I would never act". Given the volume of death, violence and persecution that we often see on our screens, read in the papers and casually scroll past on social media platforms, the words seem thin. We, as a society, are becoming unable to comprehend such horror when it occurs on such an immeasurable scale. The women of Afghanistan, however, are forced to comprehend these horrors daily. Someone else one said: "A single death is a tragedy. A million deaths are a statistic". That is a controversial quote.

Congress, I urge you to vote in favour of this motion, lest we allow the women of Afghanistan simply to become that statistic. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. R. PUDASAINI (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 382 on behalf of London Region. President and Congress, I was very nervous yesterday as a first-time speaker, but it was very easy as a result of the great welcome you have provided. Thank you very much. All the speakers, including the President of Ireland, have highlighted the importance of empowering women. The motion itself is explanatory. You can imagine how Afghanistan women are feeling every day when they wake up in the morning. They wake up in the morning, and they lose family members. If a female family member goes to school, their experience is brutal. Afghan women are suffering a brutal experience. I would like to second this motion. In 2001 the British Army entered Afghanistan, never mind whether the arguments for doing so were right or wrong. We have a responsibility, as the motion says, to protect the women who are under daily attack, and face being murdered just for being a woman. This is the nature of Afghanistan today. Women live in a society where they are treated as second-class citizens. They are brutalised, attacked and murdered for the crime of being a woman. So we need to ensure that, as a union, we support this motion and support the plan of Amnesty International to protect the women of Afghanistan. We also have to go further. We have to ask this Government to implement the plan and support the women of Afghanistan.

Congress, before I finish, I want to introduce myself. I am from Nepal, which is a beautiful country, where a recent earthquake has devastated our infrastructure and cost our country tens of thousands of people's lives. It has made millions of people homeless. I ask you to support us in this critical time. We have many shattered lives. Congress, we need your solidarity. I second. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) Then I call Brian Farr from the CEC.

BRO. B. FARR (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, asking you to support Motion 380 on strengthening links with the Pakistani trade unions but with a qualification. The underlying aim of the motion is to support those fighting repression and for workers' rights. It calls upon the TUC's International Committee to respond to an international solidarity appeal that, presumably, refers to the motion in general as no further detail is given.



While we have no difficulty in supporting the motion about trade unions under threat, we are only one voice in the TUC. So we cannot guarantee what action they will take. With that qualification, please support Motion 380. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Now you have heard the qualification, does Northern Region still accept? (*Calls of "Yes"*) Thank you. Congress? (*Calls of "Yes"*) I now put Motions 380 and 382 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against? Carried.

*Motion 380 was Carried.*

*Motion 382 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you heard the seconder to Motion 382 speak about his country, Nepal. The Nepalese people have suffered the most devastating earthquake and I ask you, locally, when you go home, there will be some Nepalese men and women who are collecting for the charity. They are very short of food, clothes and drinking water. Any donation will help to keep them alive until they get proper food and water. Please be generous. Think about them when you go back. Anyone who has seen the reports on television will be heartbroken. So, yes, Rajendra, we will. (*Applause*)

### **ADDRESS BY GILBERT BERMUDEZ**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to our next guest, who is Gilbert Bermudez, who is the leader of the Latin American plantation workers, who produce tropical fruit for export. He is the co-ordinator of the Latin American Federation of Trade Unions (COLSIBA). He was previously the general secretary of Costa Rican agricultural and plantation workers' trade union, SITRAP, which has longstanding links with the GMB. Gilbert worked in the banana industry himself and is widely respected for his unswerving dedication to improving the lot of his affiliate members, often in extremely challenging circumstances.

Gilbert, I would like you to address Congress. (*Applause*) Colleagues, Gilbert will speak in Spanish but it will be translated on the screen. Fingers crossed.

BRO. G. BERMUDEZ (COLSIBA) Brothers and sisters, delegates to the Annual Congress, please accept warm fraternal greetings from the Latin American Banana and Agroindustrial Workers' Union Co-ordinating Body, COLSIBA. I want to thank you very much for inviting me to such an important event.

As we speak, the world of work is facing very serious challenges in almost all the countries of the world. Latin America is no exception to this complex reality. In the banana and other agroindustrial plantations of the continent the labour, social and human our unions are having to confront problems generated by employers who are trying to erase the achievements of our movement over the last decades, achievements won at the cost of many sacrifices.

In many plantations, there are still excessively long working hours, persecution and sackings of union members, low wages, sexual harassment and discrimination of women workers, and threats to people's lives. It is very worrying to see the rise of intolerance and aggression from company representatives, with support from – or a refusal to act on the part of – many governments.

To mention a few examples, we have to cite countries like Guatemala where the institutions of government that are meant to enforce labour and other laws are practically non-existent. Or Peru where the government's interest in promoting exports by opening its doors to foreign investment in

agriculture and horticulture has led to hundreds of thousands of men and women having to work in conditions of modern slavery in the vast stretches of desert along the Pacific coast. Worse still, this agro-export boom to supply consumers in the rich North is leaving rural and urban communities without drinking water and leading to a rapid increase in poverty.

In spite of the big problems in many Latin American countries, the trade union movement continues to resist and is growing ! This is the case in Costa Rica, the world's number 1 exporter of pineapples and the fourth biggest exporter of bananas. SITRAP, an emblematic trade union, has seen its banana and pineapple membership growing over the last few years, especially in multinationals like Del Monte and Dole, as well as in big national companies like the Acon Group (a major Tesco supplier) and the DeSanti Group, owned by one of the country's leading right-wing politicians. Slowly but surely, the women and men who work in the plantations and packhouses are losing their fear, taking their courage in their hands and joining the union's ambitious efforts to confront all the manœuvres of the employers.

This ambitious agenda includes: Decent work, Living wages, Job security, Freedom to organise and bargain collectively, Education and training, Legal defence

On this last point about legal support to members, SITRAP has been winning more and more important victories in the labour courts ; this means, that for the time being at least, there are less sackings.

All this work on the ground, together with a very active political agenda at national level in Costa Rica and the support of sister unions, means that SITRAP, ANEP and the Juanito Mora union confederation are the undisputed agenda-setters with the current government and the employers

Add to this the historic support from GMB, and you will understand why we are feeling optimistic. This support gives us the faith that we are on the right road to being able to fully reestablish the trade union movement in Costa Rica's agroindustrial plantations. Similar dynamics, each in its own specific context, can be reported in the different countries where we have a presence : Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador.

We hope that at this crucial juncture we can continue to count on the international solidarity offered by workers in the 'first world' and their fraternal organisations like the GMB who have believed in our struggle and support our cause concretely. Long live the authentic solidarity! Long live our friendship!

*(Bro. Gilbert Bermudez address Congress in Spanish, which resulted in a standing ovation by Congress delegates)*

THE PRESIDENT: Gilbert, please accept this small token, and you can rely on the GMB. It is a great tragedy that other people who fight for justice in other places cannot see what you have to suffer just because you care about human beings. Good luck to you. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE INTERPRETER: He said that after he drinks that, he is going to speak English perfectly. *(Laughter)*

BRO. BERMUDEZ *(Interpreted)*: I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mary, Paul and to all the GMB. A few years ago I was quite ill. While I was ill I received letters and cards of support from the GMB, which gave me a lot of strength. It gave me a lot of strength and I am extremely happy to be here. Thank you to you all. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: You are looking well now. What a lovely man. It is sad that people get killed because they believe in freedom and justice.

I now move to Motions 282 and 283.

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**  
**INTERNET TRADE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES**  
**MOTION 282**

**282. INTERNET TRADE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES**

This Congress recognises that the sale of endangered species and their body parts through the internet is at an all time high.

An intense six-week investigation by IFAW found a total of 33,006 endangered wildlife and wildlife parts and products from species listed on the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix I and II available, for sale via 280 online market places across 16 countries.

At a time when roughly one in every 12 African elephants is killed by poachers, IFAW investigators found 3,047 advertisements for ivory or suspected ivory online.

It is essential that governments, policy makers, law enforcers and online marketplaces do not turn a blind eye to online wildlife crime. Governments must ensure they have laws in place that tackle the unique challenges of wildlife cybercrime and that these laws are supported by enforcement capacity.

We ask a future Labour Government to strengthen legislation under the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (COTES) and create a criminal offence for those advertising animals, or body parts, listed under Appendix 1 or 2 of CITES who do not include a valid CITES permit number with the advertisement.

Further, the GMB will request of their GMB sponsored MPs that they attend every session within the house that has this issue at its centre

M15 BRANCH  
North West & Irish Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. L. WINSON (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 282 on Internet Trade of Endangered Species. Illegal online trafficking of imperilled wildlife is rampant. Attempted controls are few and ineffective. Log on to any international internet store that deals in wildlife and you will find a charnel house of endangered and protected species, sold openly and in violation of the CITES Agreement, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Live cheetahs, baboons, chimpanzees, poison dart frogs, humming birds, lion and tiger cubs are all on offer to the highest bidder.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare investigators found the market for animal parts was flourishing, including ivory ornaments, polar bear rugs, rhino horns, tiger claws and snow leopard teeth. Research has found that 33,006 wild live animals and body parts are available on 280 sites in 16 different countries in just a 42-day period. At a time when at least one-in-12 African elephants is killed by poachers every month, the International Fund for Animal Welfare found 3,047 advertisements on-line for ivory products. Elephants are now being killed faster than they are being born. In the UK 1,087 items were found on sale, valued at more than £300,000, for this is a rich man's game. Powdered rhino horn costs twice as much, weight-for-weight, as gold. This trade is often on e-Bay. Two months ago

the black rhino was declared extinct, despite the best efforts of rangers to protect them, just because someone wants to think that powdered rhino horn will cure his rheumatism. This is ridiculous!

In 2012 the World Wildlife Fund called on Government Ministers to recognise the importance of the National Wildlife Crime Unit and to commit to providing sustained long-term funding, beyond March 2013. This was achieved in 2014 when the Government extended their funding for the unit for two years, and the World Wildlife Fund will continue to campaign for the secured future of the unit. That includes funding for a specialist, dedicated internet crime officer, a post that was dis-established under the Tory Government.

Congress, if you were to look at half the photographs of slaughtered and dismembered wildlife that I have while researching this motion, you would be sickened to your stomach and saddened by the enormity of it all.

So what do we as trade unionists have to do with wildlife internet crime? Someone said to me the other day that the GMB would be better going back to doing what it does best, which is defending jobs and terms and conditions. But we do that already, and I think we do it well. But I think we have a duty as residents of this planet to protect our indigenous species no matter where they are in the world. I believe that trade unionists would all like to pass on a better world to those who come after us and that the world will be a poorer and sadder place without its wildlife. Trade unionists are passionate about people and I would like you all to become trade unionists who are passionate about preserving wild life and ending wild life internet trading. Legislation needs to be strengthened and the Government need pressurising to making sure that the funds are available. We might be on a hiding to hell with the shooting, hunting chinless wonders that we now have in Government.

THE PRESIDENT: Lorraine, will you wind up, please.

SIS. WINSON: But, hey, we like a fight, don't we? Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. Seconder?

BRO. D. MARCHBANK (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 282. Endangered species are under attack like never before. As well as the loss of natural habitat from invasive non-native species, we are also under attack from less obvious sources, such as the internet trade of endangered species.

Congress, we must ensure that governments and law enforcers tackle the challenges of wildlife cyber crime, and for this reason I urge Congress to support Motion 282. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

## **WILDLIFE SLAUGHTER MOTION 283**

### **283. WILDLIFE SLAUGHTER**

Congress calls upon this government to condemn the Faroe Islands for slaughtering whales and dolphins in the most barbaric way in order to cling on to a 1000 year ancient tradition. To butcher some of the most intelligent animals in our ocean in this way amounts to nothing more than animal cruelty.

BEDS COUNTY BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Congress, I move Motion 283. Colleagues, this motion calls upon Congress to condemn what can only be described as the mass slaughtering of some of the most intelligent animals in our oceans today. This involves men, women and children of the Faroe Islands carrying out a premeditated act of butchery in order to cling on to a thousand-year old tradition. This tradition is called the Grindadráp, which translated means “metal murder”. It involves driving whales and dolphins into shallow waters. Then, disorientated, exhausted and terrified, these animals are forced to beach themselves. Once beached, the islanders then launch their attack, using blunt-ended metal hooks to spear the whales’ blow holes and drag them further up the beach. Once there, they murder these helpless animals with a knife by cutting into their blood vessels.

I will go off script now. I would like to say that if John Toomey was here today, who brought many of these animal-cruelty issues year-on-year to Congress, he would probably agree with me when I say that I would like to find one of those blunt-ended metal hooks and spear their blow holes and drag them up the beach to see how they like it. *(Applause)* God rest you, John. Colleagues, during this unnecessary and so-called festival, the residents of the Faroe Islands slaughter hundreds of whales, not to mention dolphins as well. Although each islander receives about 22 lbs of whale meat a year from this mass slaughtering, most of the animal is dumped and left to rot.

Congress, there is absolutely no justification for killing these animals and their festival only continues for the sake of tradition. Their claim that this is done for the need for food does not justify this cruelty. In the same way, our need for labour does not justify slavery. Therefore, let’s put an end to this barbaric tradition once and for all, and leave these highly intelligent and peaceful animals to live their lives in peace. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. G. SHARKEY (London): Congress, I second Motion 283 — Wildlife Slaughter. Delegates, despite continued campaigns by activists to stop whaling in the Faroe Islands, locals cling to an ancient tradition referred to as “Grindadráp” or “grind”. During a grind a flotation of small boats drive whales and dolphins into a shallow bay where they are, apparently, killed with knives. On average, each year, 838 pilot whales and 75 dolphins are slaughtered for the sake of this so-called tradition. You may like to know that there is no whaling fleet on the islands. Everyone has a regular job and the technique for the killing of these mammals is to slit their necks and break their spinal chords. Therefore, although these people insist that they die quickly in the name of tradition, the majority of these mammals suffer considerable pain before they die. The main target for this inhuman tradition are long-finned pilot whales, although they will take Butternose, White Sided and Risso dolphins. The risso dophins have not even been put on the Government’s list of species approved for hunting. Congress, I ask you to support this motion to stop this out-of-date tradition or we could be faced with yet another extinction of a species brought about by humans, if not now but in your children’s future. Please support, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)* All right, colleagues, I will go to the vote. The CEC is supporting. I now put Motions 282 and 283 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Motion 282 was Carried.*

*Motion 283 was Carried.*

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**

THE PRESIDENT: I have a couple of announcements to make at this point. The first concerns the Union Learning Fund Fringe. Where it is taking place will be on the screen later, so please support it.

The second announcement is on Equalities and Inclusion. This fringe meeting will be taking place in Brittas Suite 3. Speakers include Annette Drylie, Brian Shaw and some regional speakers.

I call Motions 258 and 259.

## **POLITICAL: DEMOCRACY & CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

### **EXTENDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

#### **MOTION 258**

##### **258. EXTENDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

This Congress agrees to campaign for the Human Rights Act to be extended to the private sector that provides a public service; i.e. utilities, transport and privatised industries generally.

For example; it is not currently part of the Memorandum or Articles of Association of any energy company to prevent the death of any customer from hypothermia, thus encouraging and ensuring greater reliance on energy efficiency.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Referred)*

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Motion 258 — Extending the Human Rights Act. Some might believe that events have overtaken this motion given the outcome of the general election. My old branch secretary — he knows who he is, and he is out *there* — would probably tell me that this motion only has two hopes of being implemented: no hope and Bob Hope.

The Human Rights Act itself is under attack from the Tories before even considering its extension into other areas of public provision. I do not agree. We should still campaign on this. Admittedly, this motion was written during the long general election campaign when there was a hope, desire and some measure of expectation that we could, possibly, be one step nearer that promised land of a Labour Government. We lost, and we need to get over it. I have no desire to re-fight the last election, although I recognise that we all need to learn from the experience, but that does not mean abandoning our principles, our GMB values, regardless of us now being stuck with a Tory Government. It certainly does not mean pandering to the right-wing press and media who tell us that the electorate has spoken. I know all too well that we lost but, to me, when the electorate “spoke”, and I put that in inverted commas, it was, in reality, an echo of the right-wing press. Congress, our values are as solid as they ever were. Just because the Tories won, it doesn’t mean that we stop campaigning. We have got to re-double our efforts to get our message out *there*.

When the Tories continue to privatise public services, and they will, our basic human rights cannot be taken away from us, although the establishment and the right-wing press will tell us that the Human Rights Act no longer applies to these privatised companies. We know what our rights are. We don’t need, want or expect a Tory Government to be looking out for the rights of trade unionists or vulnerable members of society. We have heard the electorate and that voice is still echoing in our ears, but that does not mean that our principles and values are wrong.

As I recall, there was a man 2015 years ago who wouldn’t compromise on his principles and could not get a seconder at the time. Congress, we are GMB and we do have a seconder for this. I move.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Vaughan. And here is the seconder.

SIS. S. WILSON (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 258 — Extending the Human Rights Act. This is not just about extending the Human Rights Act. This is also about extending the scope of GMB campaigns. As a union we have been campaigning for 125 years to secure employment rights, welfare rights, women's rights and rights relating to health and safety, while at the same time employers have been seeking ways to get around these rights. We have to continue this campaign to stand up to these employers and this Tory Government. We now have to take full advantage of our human rights while we still can, and use this to continue to fight for more and not accept less. Congress support this motion, I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. *(Applause)* I call Motion 259.

## **EMANCIPATION DAY BANK HOLIDAY MOTION 259**

### **259. EMANCIPATION DAY BANK HOLIDAY**

Congress, the purpose of this motion is to ask Congress to press the government and parliament to examine the possibility of recognising Emancipation Day as a National Bank Holiday. Emancipation Day is recognised in many countries such as Canada and America and various islands in the Caribbean and is celebrated as a public holiday as a mark of respect. Britain made vast amounts of money during the slave trade and many establishments in Britain were built on the back of it.

LEEDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. A.H. EQUIANO (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 259 — Emancipation Day Bank Holiday. The emancipation of slavery took place in August 1833. Although Britain, which played a big part in the slave trade and, consequently, played its part in the emancipation, it has never celebrated this day as an important event in our history. The slave trade lasted for centuries and resulted in millions of people losing their lives, mainly those of African descent, a vast amount losing their lives in horrific circumstances. The slave trade affected everyone on the planet, whether they be a slave, a slave owner, ship owner, crew member, family member or an innocent bystander.

We celebrate many things in Britain but something as important as Emancipation Day has not been looked at. Why should we look at the emancipation of slavery? Britain owned a vast number of colonies across the world during the time of the slave trade. The slave trade contributed towards the multi-millions of pounds which made up the British Empire. Some countries, which were formerly British colonies, celebrate and observe this day as a national holiday, as well as do some parts of America. Only this year in Britain we celebrated the liberation of the concentration camp where Anne Frank spent her final days. In May we proudly celebrate 70 years since VE Day. The Second World War was a great tragedy and lasted over six years. But we need to remember that slavery lasted for centuries.

I ask myself where are the celebrations that acknowledge the end of one of the greatest human tragedies in our history? The emancipation of slavery was led by great people, and such an act has played a great part in the human rights campaign, such as Marcus Garvey, Jessie Owens, Nelson Mandela, Dr Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and also Mary Seacole. But we also have to remember that all of those people would not have had a voice to speak if it was not for emancipation. The struggle and fight for emancipation of slavery was not just taken on by blacks but also by whites as

well. We have to recognise the black and white activists, because without them where would this world be today?

The campaign and personal pressure that those people went through should always be remembered not only by the old but also by the young. But having Emancipation Day as a National Bank Holiday would make the people of Britain more aware and understanding of our past history. Many people turn a blind eye and believe it should be dead and buried and that it is not their problem. If that were the case, why do we recognise VE Day, St. George's Day, St. Patrick's Day, the 5<sup>th</sup> November and, to top it all, the Tories wanted to make the current Bank Holiday in August "Margaret Thatcher Day".  
(Cries of "Boooo")

I call upon Congress and the GMB to lobby Government and all political parties to make the first Monday in August a Bank Holiday, where everybody could take ownership of emancipation to lead to better unity and understanding of people of all races. Congress I move.. (Applause)

BRO. G. LEE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. Madam President and Congress, when I put my hand up to second my colleague on Emancipation Day Bank Holiday, I had no idea what it meant, to be honest. I know now that it means to free from restraint. This happened 150 years ago when they intended to stop slavery. Unfortunately, today, there are an estimated eight million people trapped in some form of slavery. This involves forced labour and, of course, the sex trafficking mainly of women and children.

William Wilberforce, a Yorkshireman, a political and an evangelical Christian campaigned for over 20 years for the abolition of slavery. As I am a Christian myself, I pray for Congress and I pray for the leaders. I pray for wisdom for our MPs and I pray for a more tolerant nation. Therefore, a Bank Holiday would deliver a message that GMB and the UK will not tolerate any kind of slavery. Congress I second this motion.(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Graham. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. M-L HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I want to offer my support to Atu and Graham. I thought that was a wonderful motion. However, is a question that we could put to the prospective Labour Party candidates this afternoon, whether they will support an Emancipation Day on the first Monday in August? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary.

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): I support the motion on the floor of Congress. We have to realise that there is still slavery going on. We talk about emancipation but slavery is still going on. I come to this rostrum with a very heavy heart because I am a product of the slave trade. Until the United Kingdom, the USA, Italy, Spain, Germany and the rest of the western nations look at what has happened, there will never be emancipation. I support. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Michael. I call Ann Leader to respond on behalf of the CEC. Ann.

SIS. A. LEADER (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, asking you to refer Motion 258. GMB has a long-standing policy against privatisation. The CEC is sympathetic to the mood of the motion and supports the idea that utilities, such as a right to water, should be a basic human right. The motion is asking for the Human Rights Act to be extended to cover the privatisation of services. Much of the Human Rights Act already applies to the privatised public services, in the



same way as it does to publicly-owned ones. This is a complex area. For example, the European Convention, which the Human Rights Act incorporates into UK law, does not contain a specific article addressing the issue. The Convention does include articles for other matters, such as a right to life, prohibition of torture and a right to freedom of assembly and association. The CEC, therefore, recommends that the motion be referred to allow for further consideration and development of union policy in this area. Furthermore, our ability to carry out the request in the motion depended on having a sympathetic government elected on 7<sup>th</sup> May. Sadly, this was not the case, of course.

We also know that the present Government is committed to both privatisation and to replacing the Human Rights Act with some form of British Bill of Rights. The CEC is, therefore, asking you to refer Motion 258 to allow for further consideration.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ann. Does London Region accept reference back? (*Agreed*) Does Congress agree? (*Agreed*) All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 258 was Referred.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I put Motion 259 to the vote, which the CEC is supporting. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

*Motion 259 was Carried.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: JUSTICE**

### **SLAVERY IN MODERN TIMES MOTION 293**

#### **293. SLAVERY IN MODERN TIMES**

This Congress believes GMB should do more to highlight the issues involving slavery in the UK.

While some people think it's just GMB jumping on the band-wagon where slavery has been highlighted in the past year, GMB as a union still have a role to play in this modern times in highlighting this issue with so many members by making members be more aware of the signs to look out for if they suspect someone is being used as a slave and what action to take.

There are members who because of the job they do can play a vital role in spotting if something is not right to make them believe that someone is being used as a slave.

GMB should not only campaign against slavery but to look at ways of educating members to be more aware of their environment around them so that they can spot using tell tailing signs if someone is being treated as a slave and what to do.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH,  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 293 — Slavery in Modern Times. We are concerned that in this modern age that slavery still exists in various forms. While we are slaves to our work, at least we can go home to our families and friends, have a roof over our heads, able to provide food on the table, having clothing and the use of modern technology and so on. But there are others who do not have any of this. They have no rights, no family, often work long hours and face abuse.

Some people think it is just GMB jumping on the bandwagon where slavery has been highlighted in the past year. GMB, as a union, still has a role to play in these modern times in highlighting this issue by making our members more aware of the signs to look out for if they suspect that someone is being used as a slave and what action to take. We have members who, because of the job they do working on the front line in both the public and private sectors, can play a vital role if something is not right to make them believe that someone could be used as a slave in one form or another by their behaviour or the way that someone else is treating them.

We must send a clear message to all that we, as a union, condemn anyone who unfairly treats their employees. Employers must be told to treat them with the respect they deserve. We must ensure that employees have a better quality of life like most of us have here. We urge this Congress to join Anti Slavery International to look at ways of educating our members to be more aware of the environment around them so that they can spot the tell-tale signs if someone is being mistreated as a slave and what to do. Colleagues have to be informed as to what to look for and what to do. We urge Congress to undertake a series of campaigns to highlight the slavery that is still taking place not just around the world but in this country. We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not the dark ages. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: You are always welcome to come to speak, Paul. Secunder?

SIS. J. OKOTURO (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 293. The world suffers from poverty, global recession, climate change, terrorism and more. Well, at least we have eliminated slavery. Actually, no, we have not, because there are more slaves in these modern times than at any time in human history. Just think about that for a moment. We have more slaves nowadays than there ever have been!

Modern slavery, as it is known, has two chief characteristics. It is cheap and it is disposable. Today's slavery focuses on big profits and cheap lives. It is not about owning people like before, but about using them as disposable tools for making money. Slavery is everywhere. It flows into our homes, our offices, our schools and is involved in many of the products that we buy. Many products are tainted by slavery, such as tomatoes, tuna, diamonds, sugar and gold. There are tens of millions of people trapped in various forms of slavery throughout the world today, generating billions of pounds every year in illicit profits for traffickers. Slave labour, including human trafficking, exists in every region in the world. It affects both international and domestic markets. No sector or industry can be considered immune or untainted by slavery. Key industries affected by slave labour include those working in farming, fishing, on building sites or as domestic workers, such as gardeners, maids or dish and pot washers.

The Modern Slavery Act became law earlier this year, which should give greater protection to victims and increase the maximum sentence for abusers to life imprisonment, but we all have a role to play in bringing slavery to an end, and we can do this by raising awareness, internally and externally, and by campaigning that corporate policies are established to tackle forced labour and human trafficking. There was a time when slavery was legal and people considered morally acceptable. The fight to build a global consensus that slavery is unjust has been won, and we now need to finish the job by freeing those still trapped in bondage. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Motion 294.

## **ASSISTED DYING MOTION 294**

### **294. ASSISTED DYING**

This motion recognises the question of assisted dying is an ongoing issue and will be decided upon by the Government of the day.

However, this motion specifically concerns the protection of GMB members who work in the care profession. They are front line; one to one personal carers to very vulnerable people. They are dedicated people performing a very important role in our society.

These vulnerable people can and may be caught up in the very grey area of assisted dying; our members should be protected by this Union from any intimidation or coercion as they may experience at work within that grey area. This motion raises the point that it is very easy to point the finger and accuse the innocent over any suspicious event that may occur.

This motion calls for the GMB legal team to brief our members of any risks that they may face if legalisation of assisted dying comes about; and with the spectre of hedge funding sharks involvement in the social system of this country, being a personal carer can become a very dangerous environment.

S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH,  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. T. HOOD (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. I am moving Motion 294 — Assisted Dying. Please be clear that assisted dying is not the same as assisted suicide. The Assisted Dying Bill was proposed to Parliament by the former Labour Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thornton. This Bill is to enable competent adults who are terminally ill to be provided at their request with specific assistance to end their own lives. *This* is a brief outline of the Bill. If you would like to read it in full, you can Google it.

Lord Falconer states that certain safeguards must be put in place to protect all of those involved. The person has to have been diagnosed with a terminal illness, with a prognosis of six months or less to live. Their GP and an independent GP have to sign for the medication. A specific nurse will collect and deliver the medicine to the patient, and the patient must be able to administer it to themselves. I am a care worker and, over the years, I have provided palliative care to several people. God bless them. This is a very, very sad time and difficult time for them and their families. Once diagnosed, arrangements are made for that person to go into a hospice or, if they want, they can stay at home. An all-singing, all-dancing, bed is delivered to their home and it is usually set up in the middle of their lounge, with a hoist tucked under one end and a commode at the other. In the corner, there are usually stacks of incontinent pads, large nappies, and these are there for all to see. Family and friends all come to visit with the patient being the centre stage.

As their illness quickly progresses and the pain gets worse, a district nurse will set them up with a syringe driver, which pumps more and more morphine — that is poison — into them. They are no longer given food or water, resulting in starvation and dehydration. Their body starts to shut down. This is when they can go in and out of a coma for days, sometimes weeks. Their family are in emotional turmoil as all they can do is sit, watch and wait for them to die.

Before I became a carer, I and my family had to sit and watch our mum die just like this. Believe me, those memories still trickle down my face today. Colleagues, GMB promotes dignity and respect.

Why should anyone have to die like this. Congress, please, together, let's support Lord Falconer's Bill and give people dignity and respect in death. I move.. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder?

BRO. C. BARKER (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding Motion 294 — Assisted Dying. When I put my hand up to support this motion, the motion itself read as though it was about supporting our members at a very emotional and stressful time, supporting very vulnerable people who are nearing the end of their lives. Having looked at it and gone through it, I realise it is much more than that. Four times, so far, in my life I have supported very close members of the family during these sort of situations. I supported my mother for a number of years with visits to specialists dealing with cancer and various other things. She reached a point where medical intervention decided that she could no longer be within her own home and, therefore, she needed to move into a hospital. The indignity she suffered, the anguish and distress, her cries for the hospital staff to let her go were completely ignored. Our moves to put her into palliative care were also ignored, and it should not have been that way. I ask you to support this motion.

We ask you to look at Falconer's Bill and to support that. This motion, I believe, if you carry it, will support our members in their work and support those trying to protect the most vulnerable at a frightening time of their lives when they have to make that decision on ending their life. I ask you to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 285.

## **PARDONS FOR HISTORICAL CONVICTIONS MOTION 285**

### **285. PARDONS FOR HISTORICAL CONVICTIONS**

This Congress fully agrees with the pardon of Alan Turing for "gross indecency", granted in 2013. However, Congress believes that Turing should not have been singled out for pardon simply because of his achievements and fame. There are many men whose lives were ruined as a result of convictions due to their homosexuality. These men are just as worthy of receiving a pardon as Alan Turing. Throughout history, the law has been used by the ruling elite to defend their privileged place in society and maintain the status quo. The victims of their laws, the majority unknown or forgotten, are also deserving of being pardoned.

Congress believes it is time for those untold numbers of people who have suffered punishment, including execution, as a result of unjust laws, socially and politically biased, to receive pardons. Therefore, Congress calls for an Enabling Act giving the Home Secretary the power to pardon those punished as a result of unjust laws no matter how long ago in the past and for the GMB to highlight past injustices and to campaign for pardons. It would be a step towards the state recognising past failings and the injustices carried out by it over the centuries.

PARKGATE BRANCH  
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am the delegate with responsibility for motions that nobody knows anything about. I move Motion 285.

President and Congress, 1,500 followers of Watt Tyler in 1381, over a thousand labourers during the Bloody Assizes of 1683, starving workers during the agrarian and industrial revolutions, the Shrewsbury 24 and the striking miners in the '80s are just a fraction of the victims of injustice over the

past millennia. For centuries the state has used the law to maintain the power and wealth of a small elite. It has supported the wealthy and punished the poor. It has used the law to oppress and as a form of social control. Comrades, who is going to speak for those who are victims of unjust laws, many of them whose names are long forgotten? Who is going to fight to give them justice? I will tell you who, comrades. Us!

The extremely rare use of pardons is in the hands of the Home Secretary. While this might be suitable for what you might call “contemporary cases” of individual injustices, in this case we are not talking about just a couple of years ago. What about the names who are not known or where records do not exist, or for whole groups that were punished? The precedent for a general pardon, certainly in the modern era, was set by the use of an Act of Parliament to pardon those executed during World War One. But, comrades, do we really want Parliamentary time taken up by debating, for example, the trial of the regicides or the convictions following the Cato Street Conspiracy? Look in your history books if you don’t know what I am talking about. That is why we need an enabling Act to have both individual and general pardons for those convicted because of unjust laws in the past.

The question is how historical is historical? Whilst I am, personally, open-minded, I suggested a starting point of 5<sup>th</sup> July 1189, which is the legal definition of time immemorial. As for the most recent times, what about 30 years ago, as is used for Cabinet records. I know, comrades, that the past is a foreign country. They did things differently there. I also know that values change over time, but, comrades, oppression is oppression, no matter what time and period of history it occurs in.

Comrades, the reason why we are active trade unionists, the reason why we are here in this hall, is because we want economic, political and social justice for all. Our fight is the same fight as many of those who were punished under oppressive legislation in the past. This motion is the first step in getting the state to admit its use of the law to oppress and punish and for getting pardons for those who dared to fight to improve their lives, who dared to question, who dared to be different! Their fight is our fight. They deserve better. They deserve the justice denied in their lifetimes. History might have forgotten their names, comrades, but we will always remember them. Support Motion 285, comrades. Support justice for those who went before. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Ian, I can add to that list, the Hillsborough families who lost their children, the Cammell Lairds who were in prison for just carrying out their rights, the Remploy workers who were sacked, and the people who were blacklisted and their families who are still suffering today, and many, many, many more. So, yes, I agree with you. Now I will let you cheer. *(Cheers/Applause)* Secunder?

SIS. E. ROBINSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I had a long think about what to say on this issue and, really, where do you start? I am stood in a room full of like-minded people on the issues of social injustice. It is what we all strive to fight against every single day. We all know how abhorrent it is for people still to be sacked with a conviction of homosexuality all because their love did not align with the common belief at the time. Thankfully, we have moved forward a lot since then and Ireland’s ground-breaking result and the vote to legalise same sex marriage is testament to that, but we still have a long way to go.

We then move on to people wrongly convicted for other crimes. What about the miners convicted during the strikes? What about people convicted of terrible crimes that DNA advances have cleared, yet the conviction remains? What about people convicted of crimes as adults in the past that, if tried today, would be recognised as vulnerable adults? There are many injustices in the world and we should fight to clear each and every one. It is the right thing to do. I know that I really do not have to

convince all of you sat here today to vote in favour of this motion. As I stated earlier, we are all like-minded people fighting issues of social injustice every single day. It is what we are good at. Thank you all. Congress, I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Colleagues, Composite 16, Police Specialist Training in Dealing with Victims of Rape and Sexual Assaults, Birmingham to move, Wales & South West to second.

## **POLICE SPECIALIST TRAINING IN DEALING WITH VICTIMS OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULTS**

### **COMPOSITE 16.**

Motion 290 – Rape Culture – Birmingham & West Midlands Region

Motion 291 – Police Specialist Training in Dealing with Victims of Rape and Sexual Assaults – Wales & South West Region

## **POLICE SPECIALIST TRAINING IN DEALING WITH VICTIMS OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULTS**

This Congress calls upon the CEC to make steps towards addressing rape culture; attention is drawn particularly to the on-going campaign put forward by West Mercia Police. Posters have been distributed across the region, warning women of the dangers that come with drinking too much – an all too frequent rhetoric used to deflect the responsibility from the rapist, onto the victim of sexual assault. These posters are destructive to the dismantling of such a culture which vilifies women's civil liberties; a campaign is needed to raise awareness that rape is never the victims fault.

This Congress calls on the GMB to put pressure on the Government to ensure the police receive specialist training so that victims of rape and assault are treated with dignity and respect and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

<b>Birmingham &amp; West Midlands Region</b>	<b>to Move</b>
<b>Wales &amp; South West Region</b>	<b>to Second</b>

(*Carried*)

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Moving Composite 16, Police Specialist Training in Dealing with Victims of Rape and Sexual Assaults. (*Crying*) I am sorry. (*Applause*) This issue personally led me to write this motion because in 2010 my partner subjected me to a sexual assault. It was an extremely dark period in my life. I was 20 years old and it happened after my granddad passed away. It took me years because I was then unable to see what he did was wrong but I can now see how coercion is used to silence the victim from making a case.

In 95% of cases it is male to female rape but I can also see how males are affected by rape in same sex relationships and in female to male, but I do not have enough statistics to support this. However, I am aware that it does happen. Many thousands of women have their cases dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service and 70%-90% of women do not have the courage to speak out, just like me, because they are scared that it will happen again or they will not be believed. They are unable to speak out like me for fear of being gaslighted or having their assault or rape minimised.

Two years later in 2012 I came across a campaign called *Safe Night Out*, which was brought forward by West Mercia Police. It vilified the accountability of women in rape and sexual assault by suggesting that they were at fault for drinking too much. When I was sexually assaulted by my partner I was

sober. That does not make a blind bit of difference whether you are sober or what it is that you are wearing. (*Applause*)

At the time when this campaign was brought forward I was a graduate. I was 22 years old and I felt extreme anger, not great anger because that is a word not strong enough, I felt extreme anger towards West Mercia Police. They say it is okay for men to perpetrate rape and sexual assault on women who are vulnerable in such situations. How is that okay for West Mercia Police or any police force across the UK to say it is okay for a man to do such a thing to a woman?

The other thing I wanted to say was about the *SlutWalk Movement*. Around 2011, a Toronto policeman said that it was women's fault, that they were sluts because of what they wore at the time of sexual assault. How should that even be a question, again from a police force in another country?

Also, at the Magdalene Laundries in Ireland, where for many years until 1996 when the last Magdalene Laundry was closed down, families acted in collusion with the church and with the state to imprison women for their penance in laundries because they were too pretty, they had been raped, or they had had a child out of wedlock. Why has it taken so long, and I have to ask this, for the Irish Government to apologise to these women whose fault it was not? It is not good enough. (*Applause*)

To close the motion before I move it, Congress, the CEC and also lay members need to consider the implications of what rape culture means. They should be prepared to take steps as a union to campaign against West Mercia Police. They need to view this campaign of *Safe Night Out* and other campaigns, and other instances of rape culture, with great contempt. It is an infringement of women's civil liberties but also men's too, those silent men who cannot speak out, and also all those silent women. It is an infringement of their civil liberties to suggest that their actions are the cause of rape and sexual assault. The onus should be solely placed on the perpetrator. Congress, I move. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we have heard from a young person called Hannah, and I think she is such a brave young lady to stand up here. (*Applause*) We will never understand the fear that she went through, not only under her partner but when she went to get help from those who should have been helping her, the police. Carry on.

SIS. L. MOORE (GMB Wales & South West): Rape is a horrendous and degrading crime, whether the perpetrator is either a stranger or, possibly worse, known to the victim. The attack will leave both physical and mental scars on the person involved. The police, by their own admission in an article in the press recently, say they are not adequately equipped or trained how to handle or deal with rape cases. If a victim reports a rape, they have to go through the humiliation of a medical examination, the stress of having to make a statement, and also having to identify the perpetrator. It can take months for the police to investigate these crimes and failure to do so properly can leave the victim feeling very vulnerable and let down by the justice system. It is hardly surprising that victims of rape would rather try and forget it happened and not make a complaint than go through all the distress of being believed.

Training officers in the dynamics of sexual assault and the effects of trauma is important to counteract inherent assumptions of the police, like many people have, about sexual assault and how real sexual assault victims behave. Police training should address these assumptions and biases. Training in the effects of trauma on memory can help officers understand that there can be inconsistencies and these should not be confused with a false report.

Congress, victims are dying because of the consequences of failing to identify and believe allegations of rape and sexual assault. Colleagues, I call upon you to recognise the importance of this motion and

call on the GMB to put pressure on the Government to ensure that police receive the specialist training to bring about successful convictions. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak, in particular in the last debate?

SIS. T. CHANA (London): Supporting Composite 16. President, Congress, if I get drunk it is not an invitation for me to be raped. If I get on a night bus on my own, it is not an invitation for me to be raped. Being drugged, being 12 years old, being of limited mental capacity, being terrified, being coerced, being asleep or being in a coma or incapable of giving consent, is not an invitation to be raped.

What would you do, Congress, if someone made a joke saying, ‘It’s not rape when he shouts, ‘Surprise’, (a) do you smile because it is a joke, (b) say nothing and walk off uncomfortably, or (c) challenge them? Society’s joking attitude to rape could be the reason why so many rapists get away with it. Ninety per cent of crimes of rape are not reported because of the shame and the normalisation of victim-blaming in the media and posters like this in the motion. Ending sexual violence against women is everyone’s responsibility so the answer must always be (c).

We must have responsible journalism and not just report false rape claims. When you hear or see something on TV or the radio, or the newspaper, make a complaint. Laura Bates on the Everyday Sexism Project did a research project on young people. An 11-year old said, ‘It’s not rape if it’s your girlfriend or she’s drunk.’ Rape is the rapist’s fault. We should not be telling women how not to get raped; we should be teaching men not to rape. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else?

SIS. C. CAMPBELL (GMB Scotland): Chair, Congress, supporter of Motion 293, Slavery in Modern Times. I have to say thank you to the Executive Branch for bringing this motion to Congress. It is the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are still talking and discussing the horrors of modern slavery. What exactly is modern slavery? When we think of slavery we think of chains and shackles, and people boarded in ships for hard labour. What about that young man who works up to 18 hours without a break, getting paid £4 an hour, and sharing a room with seven other men he hardly knows, in very appalling conditions? What about the woman that is hidden in the back cooking, cleaning, and taking care of a family without pay, nor a chance even to go outside? What about that young beautiful girl you see very day who has been forced into prostitution, trafficked to this country, promised to come and work to support her family, just to come here to be exploited?

Those who exploit have become more cunning, calculating and brutal. Poverty, sexual slavery and cheap labour have been top of the list for those who use slaves. There is the fear of deportation, being injected into your veins and the fear of being locked up. Congress, there is no culture or religion that condones slavery. Remember, these people have no voice, but me and you have a voice. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Caroline.

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Supporting Motion 294. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a motion that we all dare to speak on and working in the ambulance service is quite near to me. I see people each and every day asking for them not to resuscitate but as we know our family members we call for 999, we call an ambulance because they are not feeling too well, but nobody knows exactly what is going on. I want to make an appeal to this Congress that while people are fully conscious they have the ability to



decide how they want to leave this world in peace. Look at that people and decide that because this is a motion that there are a lot of palliative care people out there, those who actually do not want to be here. They come to that stage where they have no ability to decide but they have already made their mind up beforehand whether they want to stay or they want to go. Please support this motion and if they are wishing to go, it is their wish and how they want to end. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mo.

SIS. S. JAMES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Thank you, President. Firstly, I would just like to say I am so proud of my colleague and sister, Hannah, for getting up and speaking on Composite 16. Well done, Hannah. (*Applause*) I am speaking in support of Motion 285. I had the pleasure earlier on this year of meeting Terry Renshaw. Terry was one of the Shrewsbury 24. He was 24 years old in 1972 when he took part in strike action, strike action for decent pay and safer conditions, something we all take for granted now in our work. His story touched me as well as it did with many others we met when we spoke with him. The conspiracy to intimidate is what he was given a suspended sentence for, not used for 98 years at that point.

I just want to offer my support for Motion 285, especially now with the Tory Government attacking our right to strike. Do we want to be stood here in another 43 years still waiting for the miscarriage of justice to be overturned? The names Ricky Tomlinson, Des Warren, John McKinsie Jones, Terry Renshaw and Edward Williams are just a few of the Shrewsbury 24 that we need to keep this fight going for. Congress, I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now call David Hope.

BRO. D. HOPE (CEC, Public Services): Before I start, I will take a little bit of a licence. Hannah, wherever you are, we are your family and we will help you. Trust us, we will. (*Applause*)

I have not come to the rostrum, probably, for nine years now when I was on the CEC and people who know me know what my motion was then. The other thing that has changed is that I wear glasses now, Paul!

President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 285, Pardons for Historical Convictions. Congress, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The central thrust of this motion is the pardoning of people unjustly sentenced for crimes that no longer are considered a crime today. The CEC supports this. The qualification relates to the process for putting pardons in place and the scope of such pardons in light of the political environment we now operate in.

First, consideration needs to be given to the legislation process for pardoning; that is, whether it should be an existing legal process or perhaps new legislation as the motion suggests. Secondly, in this very hostile environment we now operate in following the recent General Election, and the public mood that appears to be in place in certain areas, a blanket system of pardons could result in pardons being given to those we would find to be abhorrent.

Congress, these are difficult issues and whilst the CEC supports the general sentiments of the motion but does so with the qualification just given. Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motion 285 with a qualification. Cheers. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Davey. Well done. Does Yorkshire accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Congress accept? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put Motions 293, 294, and 285 with the qualification, to Congress. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 293 was Carried.*

*Motion 294 was Carried.*

*Motion 285 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Composite 16. The CEC is supporting it. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Composite 16 was Carried.*

## **UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Motion 13, Workers' Memorial Day to be moved by Yorkshire Region. Will you bring up the aspirins when you come? Motion 107, Health & Safety, London Region, 108, Health & Safety, North West & Irish Region, and 109, Asbestos, Midland Region. Please come forward, one and all!

### **WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY MOTION 13**

#### **13. WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY**

This Congress calls on all GMB national and regional offices to observe 1 minutes silence and a short commemoration for those workers killed or injured at work on Workers' Memorial Day each year.

LEEDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH  
*Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. BURLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Delegates and visitors, I call upon this GMB Congress to support this motion for all GMB National and Regional Offices to observe one minute silence and to organise events to commemorate workers killed or injured at work on Workers' Memorial Day. Workers' Memorial Day happens on 28<sup>th</sup> April every year with its purpose to remember the dead and fight for the living. As a trade union we need to focus on both areas. We need to remember our work colleagues who have sadly passed away through ill health or suffered injuries through poor health and bad safety conditions within their workplace and, at the same time, to fight and campaign to ensure these tragedies do not happen again. Over 20,000 people die each year because of their work. Most of these people die due to being exposed to hazardous substances which are found in almost every workplace within the UK.

My own son-in-law had a workplace accident around this time last year. He worked for a well known ice-cream factory but was an agency worker. The machine he was working on had a broken safety guard. He followed his manager's instructions to fill the sugar bucket underneath the machine without turning it off as this would reduce production. Unfortunately, the machine malfunctioned and trapped his left hand leaving him with a crushed palm, a broken thumb, and of course a lot of pain. My son-in-law made an accident claim against the company and during this process lost his job all because the company failed to implement and operate good health and safety policies. This company does not have any trade union involvement and this is just not acceptable for accidents like this to continue within our workplaces.

As a trade union, I believe we should continue to campaign and highlight these issues on Workers' Memorial Day and all year round. If all GMB National and Regional Officers promoted and organised events for this day, this would highlight and inform all of their rights to work in a healthy and safe environment. After all, we spend most of our lives at work. It would also highlight the importance of GMB's health and safety representatives and the excellent work they do every day to prevent deaths, injuries, and ill health within the workplaces and to make employers accountable for incidents due to their poor health and safety procedures. This would assist employers to operate and implement good health and safety policies for all our futures and our families. This would also certainly assist to reduce the statistics of workers being killed or injured at work.

We all have a right to return home safely after a day at work. Let's remember the dead and fight for the living while remembering a trade union workplace is a safer workplace. Please support this, Congress. I move this motion to Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Amanda. Secunder?

BRO. G. JARVIS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Seconding Motion 13, Workers' Memorial Day. Workers' Memorial Day is a time to reflect, a time to honour the ones we have lost and a time to renew our commitment to the fight to protect workers from illness, injury, and death. This Congress calls on all GMB National and Regional Officers to observe one minute silence and a short commemoration for those workers killed or injured at work on Workers' Memorial Day, 28<sup>th</sup> April.

As a trade union Movement, we need to highlight the fact that unionised workplaces are far safer workplaces than non-unionised workplaces due to the tremendous work done by all of our workplace safety reps. Remember the dead, fight for the living. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Graham. I now call Lynn Huson, a CEC member from the Unity Fine Manufacturing Section, to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. L. HUSON (CEC, [from Unity] Fine Manufacturing): Vice President, General Secretary, first-time speaker, proud to be speaking on behalf of the CEC. (*Applause*) I would also like to thank you on behalf of Unity for the hospitality, kindness and friendship in welcoming us into your family and long may it prosper.

The CEC is supporting Motion 13 but with a qualification that I am about to give. Congress, International Workers' Memorial Day is held on 28<sup>th</sup> April each year. It is when we remember the dead and fight for the living. We recall all those killed and injured at work and we strengthen our resolve to raise standards and improve conditions until no one is harmed and every worker goes home from work in the same condition that they entered it. The day is truly an international day and it is fitting that we are here in Dublin where the Irish equivalent of the HSE, the Health & Safety Authority, fully supported the Memorial Day event held in Parnell Street. If only our new Conservative Government would show the same respect.

Congress, the CEC fully supports the intention of the motion and the qualification is simple. The commemoration in the workplace may have to be held on a day other than 28<sup>th</sup> April where this day falls on the weekend. We would want our members to have the flexibility to hold commemorative events on either a Friday or a Monday where the 28<sup>th</sup> April is at the weekend. So, Congress, the CEC is fully supportive of International Workers' Memorial Day. Please support the motion with the qualification that I have given. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lynn. Does Yorkshire accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting this motion with the qualification. All those for please show. Any against? That is carried.

*Motion 13 was Carried.*

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT**

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on the mover of Motion 107 to come to the rostrum, please, and once again, colleagues, we are a little bit behind on time, so with your help we will not be calling any extra speakers until we have caught up with time. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY EDUCATION MOTION 107**

#### **107. HEALTH & SAFETY EDUCATION**

This Congress calls for the CEC to lobby government to put health and safety as part of the schools national curriculum so as to build a better understanding of health and safety in the workplace and to build a health and safety culture at a young age. Thus improving health and safety in the workplace for the future.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. J. MOFFETT (London): Congress, we ask the CEC to lobby Government to put health and safety on the curriculum. Teaching health and safety to our children sounds obvious. It would be great when a young person starts work and they already have a health and safety culture embedded. Sadly, at this moment in time this is not the case. I have written loads down here but I had this conversation with someone at work and he said, "My Dad says health and safety is an excuse for lazy people not to work. You can get out of anything using health and safety." This is disgusting and it needs changing now. We need to teach our children health and safety is not about stopping work, it is not about stopping our fun, or spoiling anything, it is just about a commonsense approach to everything. Thank you very much. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Seconder?

BRO. R. PUDASAINI (London): It is me again. Sorry to come up so many times. I am seconding motion 107 on behalf of the London Region. President, Congress, as we all know, with Tory cuts and caps all the training and education is reducing in the workplace. The Health and Safety Act only applies in the workplace and in the school as well to support the law. It just gives a checklist, a tick box training to make sure that the health and safety regulation is adapted in the workplace. But we need to explore more about it because in the school your children do not know how to cross the road, children do not know how to carry things, and when you go to the workplace you obviously end up being injured, all sorts of accidents and injuries, and you end up going to A&E. I work in A&E and I see children of various ages from the primary school to high school not knowing what health and safety does in relation to the school, in school classes. We need to teach them from the primary school.

I have just read through some literature and found that the Austrian Government's Occupational Safety at Work legislation sets out that all schools must have a curriculum starting at pre-school level so that the children will know how to be safe and how to promote their health and wellbeing as they grow up.

Another example is Cyprus, in the process of mainstreaming health and safety education into the curriculum. Similarly, the Czech Republic has adopted ILO Convention 155, which says that the measures should include occupational health and safety courses at the school level. In Denmark, health and safety is in primary school level; it is cheaper than legislation. That gives high priority to the health and safety curriculum in the school itself. Finally, Ireland is in the process of doing the same, so why don't we as a trade union carry this motion and work towards having health and safety in the curriculum at school level. *(Applause)*

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

BRO. R. PUDASAINI (London): Thank you very much. Sorry, this is my last speech. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: That won't win you a second either! Motion 108.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY IN CALL CENTRES MOTION 108**

### **108. HEALTH AND SAFETY IN CALL CENTRES**

This Congress calls upon the GMB and Government to lobby for a change in Health and Safety law to ensure all call centre staff are issued with a headset that is their own. Currently, many call centres force staff to share headsets only offering spare ear pieces and mic attachments. In some instances the situation is even worse staff cannot even have their own ear and mic attachments. Instead they are offered cleaning wipes. The Health and Safety concerns are obvious and the practice must be brought to an end.

S11 BRANCH  
*North West & Irish Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. M. MOLD (North West & Irish): President, Congress, the motion presents several large challenges, the biggest one for me was how I intend to make a speech about headsets in call centres at least relatively interesting so I am going to tell you all a little story.

Once upon a time there were some workers in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and as a result of the management decisions around health and safety in the workplace the workers started to become ill. They started to take time off for sickness, they started to experience things like ear infections, stomach bugs, sore throats, throat infections, flu, and they worked for a company whose managers put their health and safety at risk. They docked their pay if they were late, they disciplined them for having too much time off sick, sickness that they contracted within that workplace, and a company that only allowed them seven minutes per day to go to the toilet, a company where the work rate was constant, pensions were virtually non-existent, pay was low, verbal abuse was prevalent, and noise levels were such that it led to hearing loss. But, as with every good story, there is a twist.

This is not a workplace in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this is the life that call centre staff in the UK suffer here, now, in 2015. What happened to this group of workers? Fortunately, they were in the GMB and they had some shop stewards. The shop stewards went to management and they told management that this practice of sharing headsets was making members ill. Congress, the response from management was absolutely overwhelming, bowled over by the generosity we were because management in their infinite wisdom issued us all with one of these, this small round piece of foam, the cure to all illness. Well, Congress, the share price of Beechams went through the floor the

following day. So, drug companies shaking with fear and if only the NHS knew that that was the cure to all illnesses.

It is all a load of rubbish. We need some facts. It is a fact that the members in my workplace are now ill as a result of that policy. It is a fact that 67% of them have reported multiple short-term illnesses. It is a fact that 75% of those members have reported sore throats, stomach bugs, flu, and ear infections. Congress, I am proud of the members in my workplace, proud that they stood together to challenge this disgraceful practice, proud that they have with one voice rejected not one, not two, but three insulting pay offers and, Congress, it is my privilege to stand shoulder to shoulder with them on that picket line this Friday. *(Applause)*

The GMB has a proud history, Congress, and a long history of campaigning so let's campaign for this change, let's improve the conditions of those call-centre workers, and let's send that message out to those companies and those managers that put profit before people and put shareholders before safety. It is not right. It is not fair. The GMB and its members will be there to fight you every step of the way. Please support this motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Seconder?

BRO. K. ALI (North West & Irish): I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress calls upon the GMB and the Government to lobby for a change in health and safety law to ensure all call centre staff are issued with a headset that is their own. Currently, many call centres force staff to share headsets only offering spare ear pieces and mike attachments. In some instances the situation is even worse, staff cannot even have their own ear and mike attachments; instead they are offered cleaning wipes. This has a clear impact on absence rates in contact centres across the globe at the rate of 11% absence. To the lay person this might not seem particularly high but the stark reality is that this will mean 89% of contact centres are occupied at any one time. It is recommended that headsets should not be shared among operators for obvious health reasons. The microphone is in close proximity to the user's mouth, there is accumulated exhaled moisture from the user's mouth which could prove to be unhealthy if the headsets are being shared. Therefore, it is recommended that a headset be assigned for use by one and only one operator. Congress, I support this motion and second it. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 109, Midland Region.

## **ASBESTOS – THE HIDDEN KILLER CAMPAIGN MOTION 109**

### **109. ASBESTOS – THE HIDDEN KILLER CAMPAIGN**

This Congress calls upon the GMB to look again at the Asbestos – The Hidden Killer campaign.

Twenty trades' people die each week from asbestos related diseases. Over the next thirty years, 60,000 deaths will be put down to asbestos. We ask the CEC to put pressure on the HSE to kick start their Asbestos – The Hidden Killer campaign.

We want to put pressure on the Government to give adequate budgets to the HSE to promote this campaign and take action against employers flaunting laws with bigger fines.

We want this to be the headline story on the HSE website.

We want the GMB to push for advanced TUC training for workplace Health & Safety Reps.

We want posters, leaflets, and TV advertising.

We want this campaign to have started within a month of the end of the GMB Congress in the summer of 2015.

NOTTINGHAM CITY BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Carried)*

BRO. W. KIDGER (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I am asking you to support this motion. The fact is I know only too well that asbestos kills. I have seen my colleagues and friends die from asbestos diseases, families left broken, exposed by dust on contaminated workwear and school uniforms, not knowing they have a killer in their homes. This killer has been in hiding for too long. It is time to expose this killer and bring the companies who keep it hidden to justice. Let's put this killer on the most wanted list. Nobody deserves to die from going to work or school. Please, delegates, support this motion, Asbestos – The Hidden Killer Campaign. Expose the killer. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. T. GREGORY (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* This motion needs to be supported. I feel strongly about this hidden killer. It is now 2015 and according to the Health and Safety Executive every week 20 tradesmen die from asbestos-related diseases and the number is set to increase. Many workers, mainly tradesmen, think they are not personally at risk to exposure to asbestos and the diseases it can cause. Asbestos may be present in any building constructed before the year 2000 and it is estimated that around 500,000 non-domestic buildings could contain asbestos. So, I urge you to vote yes so that the CEC can pressure the Health and Safety Executive to kick-start the Asbestos – The Hidden Killer Campaign. Vote for this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. I call the mover and seconder of Motions 112, 113 and 115.

## **TIGHTENING OF WORKING TIME REGULATIONS MOTION 112**

### **112. TIGHTENING OF WORKING TIME REGULATIONS**

This Congress is being asked to push for a tightening of the current legislation regarding shift work. We are all aware of the physical health problems posed by working shifts, ranging from ulcers, cardiovascular disease, to some forms of cancer, but it is becoming apparent, due to an in depth study by scientists from Swansea University and renowned European Universities that little is known about its potential impact on brain functions.

The consequences of cognitive impairments on shift workers could be disastrous regarding health and safety, but also their own quality of life.

Therefore, we urge the GMB to campaign to cap night workers' hours to 8 hours maximum, regardless of occupation on any single night, and not open to flexibility by using reference periods.

SCUNTHORPE FOOD & ALLIED BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Referred)*

BRO. S. ALEXANDER (Midland & East Coast): Good morning, madam President, Congress. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, there have been many reports and

studies done into the negative physical effects on working shifts. Harvard University found links to increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, stomach disorders, ulcers and high blood pressure. Other respected bodies have highlighted serious sociological effects, such as lack of sleep causing mood disorders, isolation, alienation, and depression, creating problems within the family setting and giving a decreased quality of life.

The physical problems are mainly a result of something called metabolic syndrome, the disruption of the body's natural rhythm. The risks of developing this are three times higher amongst nightshift workers and this risk accelerates and increases with the length of the shift. These are all widely known so why call for the tightening of the Working Time Regulations? A new study carried out by Swansea University and a renowned European university based in France has revealed another issue. The study of over 3,000 past and present nightshift workers has shown a serious neurological effect, decreased brain function in regard to memory, processing speed and overall brain power has become apparent. They found that even when sleep deprivation was factored out, the effects persisted and that they increased markedly in people who had worked nights for over 10 years or more. Indeed, the study concluded that the long-term effect on shift workers in their cognitive reasoning was so steep as to equate to almost seven years of extra age-related decline in brain function. This level of cognitive impairment could lead to potential serious health and safety risks within the working environment. Therefore, Congress, we urge the GMB to campaign to cap night-workers' shifts to an eight hours maximum and that this is not to be open to flexibility by the use of reference periods. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Motion 113, Midland to move. Sorry.

BRO. I. CLARKE (Midland & East Coast): First-time Congress, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 112, the Tightening of Working Time Regulations, because as a shift worker myself for more than 26 years working 12-hour shifts, nights and days in the security industry, I have noticed a higher level of cardiovascular and obesity-related problems within my industry. A health survey data in England showed shift workers were in worse health despite being young. Another quote from a BBC News article dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014, a scientist said: "It is fairly clear now that shift workers were unhealthy." We need more research into shift working. We need more health screening for night workers and, finally, we need more support from this Government to enforce the maximum eight-hour night shift working for everybody. Congress I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ian. I now call Motion 113, Stress.

## **STRESS MOTION 113**

### **113. STRESS**

This Congress calls on the CEC to campaign with the TUC to recognise that stress is a health and safety issue and that there should be a specific law to deal with stress.

GMB MID LINGS BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. JENKINS (Midland & East Coast): Stress, what is it really? It is an illness and if not treated correctly can be quite serious. Stress can affect anyone or everyone in different ways, no matter how old, young, healthy, intelligent, or mature you may be. The causes of stress differ in individuals from work-related stress, home-related stress, social-related stress, or a combination.



Ten weeks ago I did not feel very well one day but thought nothing of it. I blacked out. I can't remember what had happened in my life for 24 hours. I scared myself. I scared my family. I went to the doctors: stress. It really scared me. I thought I was British, stiff upper lip, nothing would bother me. It bothered me.

I call upon the CEC to campaign with the TUC to recognise that stress is a health and safety issue. We have illnesses. I class stress as an illness but some of our illnesses in today's society are protected. We call them protected characteristics and you cannot be disciplined if you suffer with them. Therefore, we should say that stress is an issue in its own right and should have a specific law to help deal with it. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. J. SHAW (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, stress at work has become a major issue across all industries. It is fact that one out of five people in the UK are presently suffering from this. Some are GMB members whom I have personally represented and supported. Sadly, this number is on the increase, whether as a result of cutbacks or plain recklessness of the employer for the wellbeing of their staff.

Within the UK there is no law directly addressing work-related stress, albeit there are a number of separate laws and regulations that can be used to deal with its causes, such as health and safety and employment law. Unfortunately, multiple routes are time-consuming adding additional stress to our members. There is now a greater need for people to have proper work life balance at all levels. Employers who choose to run roughshod over our members leave themselves open to challenge. They have a responsibility to tackle and address these issues but we are unable to address this via one route. This is why there needs to be a law for work-related stress.

To move forward we need to establish who will benefit and what we want the law to achieve, the Government, the employers, less days lost to sickness, reduced training costs through staff turnover, and our members, enhance and promote their health and welfare, one route, one law. Together with the TUC we can create a law to help our members and reduce and eliminate this issue before it is too late. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Motion 115.

## **EFFECT OF DRUGS ON WILDLIFE MOTION 115**

### **115. EFFECT OF DRUGS ON WILDLIFE**

This Congress notes that the GMB also concerns itself with environmental issues and animal rights. To this end, Congress is disturbed by the effect of prescribed drugs on wildlife. After the drugs are naturally expelled by the body they enter the food chain of various animals. Studies have shown that this has a detrimental effect on wildlife, such as behavioural patterns in starlings and the fertility of salmon. Although there is no evidence to suggest the human food chain has been affected, the potential for this exists. Whilst fully accepting the need for these drugs, something needs to be done to ensure that wildlife is protected from the unintended consequence of their use.

Congress, therefore, calls on pharmaceutical companies to look at this use in order to produce drugs with a reduced half-life and for water companies to look at whether treatment can be altered to remove drugs from the system before entering the food chain.

*(Referred)*

BRO. M. HINCHCLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I move Motion 115. “*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.*” That is not strictly true, it was actually a collaboration of gods that made the animals on earth and we need to look after them now.

This Congress notes that the GMB is concerned about environmental issues and animal rights. To this end, Congress should be concerned about the adverse effects of prescribed drugs on our wildlife population. Prescribed drugs are commonly found in the nation’s water supply countrywide and enter the system as they are passed through our bodies into the water treatment plants. People have been known to flush unwanted drugs down the toilet which only compounds the problem. What is that all about?

Although the pharmaceutical giants will deny it, research has been taking place for a number of years and the results on the face of it are quite frightening. The aquatic population has been adversely affected with male fish, frogs, and lobsters, all displaying signs that they now possess female reproductive properties, development of eggs, etc. Scientists believe this is due to the relatively small increase in the amount of oestrogen in the water supply.

The bird population has also suffered over the years with wading birds picking up an increasing amount of the cocktail of drugs that is prevalent in their food chain. The common starling, which you will have all seen larking about in the sky, regularly finds itself at the water treatment plants scattered throughout the UK. Is it any wonder that they have started to behave irrationally and swarm in groups? They have also been found dead in large numbers with no apparent cause of death. The detrimental effect on the wildlife population is our early warning system and although there has been no research done on the effect on the human population, we are already seeing a large number of males developing man boobs as can be seen here today, and fertility levels in the general population are falling. *(Applause)*

Congress, we need to act now. We are the guardians of the planet and while we are here we need the Government to take the lead and call on pharmaceutical companies to develop drugs which will biodegrade quickly in the body and call on the water companies to do more to eradicate these toxic pollutants from our water supply. In closing I am a sort of glass half full type of person so I want to finish on a bit of a high. Believe it or believe it not, I have still managed to one positive side effect. There seems to be an increase of Viagra in our water system and the males in our society seem to be standing taller collectively! I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. MILLARD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. *(Applause)* I feel we should create more awareness on this matter, not just for the wildlife but also for the livestock and fish farms, the factory chickens and other bred-to-eat animals, and fish, they pump their weak and injured stock with drugs to keep them alive so the companies can make more profit. These drugs contain substances that stay inside the animals and are consumed by us, the customers. More research needs to be done on these drugs to see if they have an effect on the human body. Twenty years ago people were not aware of the effects of passive smoking and the damage it caused to us. Let’s act now before the same thing happens. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I ask Dan Shears to give the CEC position.

BRO. D. SHEARS (National Officer, Health, Safety & Environment): Madam President, Congress, the CEC supports Motion 108 with the qualification I am about to give, it is seeking withdrawal of Motion 109, it is requesting reference back of Motion 112, it is supporting Motion 113 but also with a qualification, and it is requesting reference back on Motion 115.

Turning, first, to Motion 108, the CEC supports improvements in call centres and the qualification is simply that we would require headsets to be classified as personal protective equipment rather than work equipment so that the employer will pay for these rather than the workers themselves.  
(*Applause*)

On Motion 109, the CEC understands the sentiment of the motion well but the practicalities mean that we seek withdrawal. It is unclear who will provide the publicity specified in the motion and GMB is not able to determine the content of the HSE website. We continue to campaign against asbestos as a union but, unfortunately, most of the actions in the motion cannot be delivered by GMB and if the region will not withdraw the motion then the CEC is asking Congress to oppose.

Turning to Motion 112, the European Commission has recently consulted upon the Working Time Directive and we cannot effectively formulate policy until we know the outcomes of that consultation. The CEC is therefore requesting reference back for the issue to be fully considered once we have the European Commission report.

On Motion 113, the qualification is that, whilst we support a formal legal framework to tackle stress rather than voluntary standards, we require more detail on the specific demands to be covered by any new laws.

Finally, Motion 115, acting on the motion will require the GMB to look at the research basis for the claims made in the motion and therefore before we can undertake any campaigning, any lobbying activity, we need to do detailed research work, and reference back will allow us time to do that.

Congress, to summarise, the CEC ask you to support Motion 118 with the qualification I have just outlined, to oppose Motion 109 unless it is withdrawn, to refer Motion 112 for further consideration, to support Motion 113 again with the qualification outlined, and to refer Motion 115 for further consideration. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dan. I ask the North West & Irish Region, do you accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Congress accept the qualification? Yes. (*Agreed*) I now move over to Motion 112, Midland Region, will you accept reference? Yes. (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Congress accept? (*Agreed*) Midland Region, do you accept the qualification? Yes. (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept Motion 113? Yes. (*Agreed*) Motion 115, Yorkshire, do you accept reference? Yes. (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept? (*Agreed*) Right. Thank you.

I now put those to the vote, Motions 107, 108, 113. All those in favour please show. (*Majority*)

*Motion 107 was Carried.*

*Motion 108 was Carried.*

*Motion 113 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now move back, and I am doing this methodically, Motions 112 and 115. All those in favour of reference back please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 112 was Referred.*

*Motion 115 was Referred.*

THE PRESIDENT: I now go to Motion 109, Midland & East Coast Region. We seek withdrawal. Pardon? (*Request for right to reply.*) Yes, you can.

BRO. W. KIDGER (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, to reply to the CEC, our school children are the workers of the future. Let's kick-start the campaign. We have in the public services section produced and highlighted Asbestos – The Hidden Killer, with success. We can put pressure on the HSE as this motion calls for. In the words of Keith Lemon, let's have a look through keyhole. Who sits on this board? Sir Brendan Barber, who was here yesterday, and also our General Secretary sits on the HSE. Please support Motion 109, expose the killer. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Do I take it you are not withdrawing? (*Not withdrawing*) Thank you very much. I now put Motion 109 to the vote. Midland & East Coast Region are not withdrawing. We ask you to oppose. All those in favour of Motion 109 please show. Those against? It is carried. (*Applause/Cheers*)

*Motion 109 was Carried.*

### **DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD 2015: WINNER & RUNNER-UP**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, this award is in the memory of a young Welsh teenager, Daniel Dennis, who in 2003 tragically died, aged 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. We will continue to honour the memory of Daniel Dennis and this is the eighth year of presenting this award. I will announce the winners in reverse order.

I am pleased to announce that the runner-up and Silver Badge goes to Neil Hannon, from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. (*Applause*) Neil works at Leeds City Council, working tirelessly to make his workplace safer. He highlights any safety concerns to management and makes sure that they carry out regular inspections. This has resulted in a store room having to be closed because of a faulty heater and resulted in better lighting in an area where gritter bodies are changed. He makes sure that hazard report forms are completed and that all members know how to do this. He has also been involved and involved the workforce in the first new risk assessment for six years, which has also resulted in better protective personal equipment for the workers. He has ensured that his employer engages in proper consultation on H&S matters and has highlighted problems with driving hours and negotiated special paid leave for some members with diabetes. Through his efforts, the depot has almost 100% GMB membership and he has also recruited 15 members at the local ASDA store.

Unfortunately, Neil is unable to attend in person and Graham Lee from his branch is picking up the award on his behalf. Graham is invited to say a few words. Graham.

BRO. G. LEE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Madam President, Congress, I have known Neil for about 12 months now. We both took on union duties and he is doing his training at Wakefield. Neil is dedicated to public services and has a real passion for union work. Well done, Neil. I am proud to accept it on your behalf, and get well soon. Thank you. (*Applause*)

*(Presentation amid applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Neil, if you are watching, the whole of Congress wishes you well, and hurry back.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the winner of the Daniel Dennis Safety Representative of the Year Award is Tony Smith from Southern Region, G36 Security Branch.

Tony works in Kennington Jobcentre Plus and has been pushing the GMB Safeguarding Campaign across a number of “hotspots” in Southern, London, and Birmingham regions. This has resulted in the introduction of the first Zero Tolerance Charter, trials to introduce lapel cameras, changes to the uniforms worn so they become less of a target, and improvements to the reporting procedures.

Tony ensures there is joint working with both the management of G4S and also the DWP, so that workers are supported if they are attacked and supported if they are witnesses. Tony has ensured that our members do not suffer financial loss if they have to go to court, and he has worked with DWP to review incidents.

Our members are aware that GMB is making a difference in addressing serious issues in these workplaces. G4S has recognised this work as this initiative has been given two internal awards. Tony, you are invited to say a few words. Welcome to the platform. *(Applause)*

BRO. T. SMITH (Southern): President, Congress, I would just like to say thank you on behalf of the Safeguard Committee, the TT attached working group, which consists of Vaz from Birmingham Region, Dave Higgs from Southern Region, Nigel Booster from London Region, and myself. The lapel camera was an idea that we came up with, that was the easy part. The hard part was done by Jude Brimble who had to push the DWP and Group4Security, to get these accepted and into job centres so that we can work with them for the safety of our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

*(Presentation amid applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Well done to both of them. Congress, before I move on to the CEC Special Report, I would like to thank John McClean, our National Health and Safety Officer, and wish him all the best in his forthcoming retirement from GMB. John, where are you? *(Applause)* John started working with GMB in 1993 when he was a Regional Health and Safety Officer in London Region. In 2005, he became the National Health and Safety Officer. John, I know you have been committed to fighting for workers’ health and safety and I am sure that you will continue to fight the cause. We all wish you a long and happy retirement, from the Congress and from the union nationally. Good luck, John. *(Applause)*

## **CEC SPECIAL REPORT: HEALTH & SAFETY**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now come to another Special Report. I will explain how I intend to take this debate. The Special Report will be moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. Regional speakers will be invited to come in on the debate when we move to a vote on the report. Dan Shears is to move the report and John McDonnell to second. If anyone wishes to speak, please let me know and then I will call for the vote. Okay, Dan, please, if you would.

## YOUR HEALTH, YOUR SAFETY

### REPORT TO ANNUAL CONGRESS 2015

*“Congress recognises the valuable role of Regional Health and Safety Officers and urges the Central Executive Council to ensure that each Region appoints an officer whose prime responsibility will be health and safety”.*

Motion 40, carried by GMB Congress 1985

#### **The value of GMB Health and Safety Representatives:**

GMB Health and Safety Representatives have the most powerful set of rights of any workplace organiser or shop steward. We have the means to organise our workplaces to ensure that employers set the highest possible standards, and achieve the performance that allows our members and colleagues to leave work the same way they entered it each day – healthy, safe and alive.

These rights – given by a Labour Government after years of struggle – were hard fought for. GMB members have been challenged, attacked and blacklisted for asserting these rights, and it has never been more important to use them in the workplace than today.

Since the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations became law in 1977, GMB has trained thousands of members to identify hazards, inspect their workplaces, investigate incidents and represent the concerns of our members.

Indeed, the history of GMB’s activity on health, safety and the environment is heavily linked with the development of UK law. Our National and Regional Health and Safety officers were introduced following the decision of the 1978 Congress, in order to provide training, guidance and support for the brand new GMB Safety Representatives.

In doing so, we have helped to reduced injury rates, stopped our friends and colleagues from being seriously hurt or killed, and resolved issues to ensure that each new generations of workers feels the benefit of those improvements.

But we have to do more.

#### **The challenges of the past five years:**

The past five years have seen the health and safety system in the UK put under strain like never before.

We have seen an attack on workers’ rights on health and safety from three sides:

- politically, through cuts to the funding of the regulator and the repeal of regulations;
- legally, through access to justice and cuts to compensation; and
- socially, through weakening of employment contracts and the very right to be considered an employee.

Since 2010, the use of Zero Hours Contracts has exploded. We know only too well how many employers base their entire business models on exploiting zero hours contracts and agency labour, often provided by migrant workers, to avoid having to provide even basic workplace safety protections. Add to this the huge numbers of bogusly self-employed workers, particularly in the

construction sector, and it is obvious that huge areas of the economy are not reporting incidents and injuries. This means there is no scrutiny of the employer, and no pressure on them to raise standards. These workers have no representation, no voice and no exposure for their concerns.

These workers will never be compensated when they are injured, and there are many others who won't see redress for accidents or illness caused by negligent employers. The Liberal/Conservative Coalition Government made it harder to access to compensation when diagnosed with the asbestos disease mesothelioma; removed liability from employers for some types of accidents; and made injured parties pay to take claims and tribunals against their employers.

It's only by joining GMB, and gaining access to our UnionLine legal experts, that these workers can begin to claw back some kind of justice and recompense.

Whether you work in construction, manufacturing, retail, security, the utilities or the Public Sector, the resources that the Government put into looking after your health and safety, and protecting your work environment will have been cut, and in some cases drastically so.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – created more than 40 years ago following a Labour Government review of health and safety in the UK – has never faced such challenges and restrictions in its history. Even the introduction of Fee for Intervention – the 'polluter pays' scheme that allows HSE to recoup the cost of advice and enforcement against negligent employers – is only partially offsetting the impact of years of cutbacks.

#### **The importance of Fee For Intervention:**

HSE has faced years of real terms funding cuts – flat cash settlements regardless of inflation – which have been compounded by savage resource reductions since the 2010 General Election. In October 2012, legislation was enacted to allow HSE to recover the costs of inspection and enforcement activity from organisations that breach health and safety law.

Where Inspectors find material breach – a contravention of law serious enough to warrant a written notice – they can charge the negligent dutyholder for their time at a current rate of £124 per hour. This scheme, known as Fee for Intervention (FFI), has raised millions of pounds of revenue since it was introduced, transferring the cost of accidents and ill-health from society to employers, and helping to safeguard HSE's dwindling resources.

The stark truth is that at the time of writing there are less than 1000 active HSE inspectors in the field, and many of these operate in construction and the high hazard sectors. As a result, GMB Health and Safety Representatives will no longer easily be able to contact Inspectors for advice and guidance. Added to this, the likelihood of a proactive HSE inspection was already on average once in 40 years - literally once in a working lifetime - the reality is that most workplaces will never be inspected by design. Only in the most serious of circumstances can we expect the Inspector to call.

Local Authorities have also been hard hit by government austerity cuts, and inspections by Environmental Health Officers have decreased by a massive 92% since the government made health and safety inspections optional for councils.

Unfortunately, whilst employer groups complain about red tape, the sad truth is that laws that are not enforced have no teeth. Bad employers know that costs of being caught are high – Fee for Intervention charges and court fines if prosecuted – but the likelihood of being caught is minimal in most cases.

And there is no realistic prospect of resource increases in the next parliament.

To make matters worse, we can no longer look to Europe to introduce new legislation and drive standards. The European Commission's REFIT Programme, which is the equivalent of the UK Government's Red Tape Challenge, seeks to reduce business burdens and cut back on laws, with health and safety squarely in its sights.

The game has changed.

But do we accept this? As trade unionists, activists and workers, we have to do all we can to protect our members, our colleagues and ourselves at work. **We have to organise our workplaces and branches to take control of our health, our safety and our environment - the Regulators are not going to step in to help us anymore.**

### Counting the Cost:

*"The sad reality of the situation is this, that the road to economic recovery will be paved by the bloodied bodies and broken bones of the workers"*

Paul Kenny, GMB General Secretary

This is particularly crucial right now, as the economy slowly emerges from years of depression and recession. We know from bitter experience that the situation will worsen as the economy recovers, with new and inexperienced workers introduced into the workplace, creating new risks and potentially suffering more serious injuries. We know that whilst recorded numbers of fatalities and major injuries are at historic lows, under-reporting hides the true scale of suffering and death.

We know that the hidden costs - both human and economic - of mental and occupational health failings are severe:

- 131 recorded fatalities – but the true figure from disease and stress is much higher
- Anywhere from 10,000 to 50,000 deaths from occupational disease each year – most of which are from cancers and heart disease. It is known that asbestos related deaths are over 4,000 and still rising.
- 1.2 million are made ill by work each year...
- ...resulting in 28.2 million lost working days...
- ...at a cost of £14.2BN to the UK Economy.

We know from our own bitter experience that this is only the tip of the iceberg. Our members have died at work due to the failings of their employers. Every GMB Region has a number of cases each year where members have been seriously hurt at work, suffering life-changing illnesses and injuries that drastically impact their quality of life. Many never work again, and the strain that this takes on their families cannot be quantified.

**Stopping these accidents; removing these hazards; and preventing this ill-health would remove the need for austerity measures altogether.** We know that good health is good business. HSE have been promoting this simple truth for at least 15 years. We also know that the presence of active health and safety representatives halves the likelihood of serious injury in the workplace. So it's in everyone's interest for GMB to have the strongest possible presence on health, safety and environment in the workplace.



## **The Plan for the future:**

This is why GMB is reviewing and renewing its activity on health, safety and the environment, to give our Health and Safety Representatives the tools, the training, the support and perhaps more importantly the confidence to take on the challenge of organising the workplace around health & safety and the environment.

This work and the time required to recreate a GMB union-wide Health, Safety and Environment Service, which delivers support to our Health, Safety and Environment Reps and provides fast, accurate and consistent information to members requires full compliance with the 1985 Congress policy of dedicated Regional Health and Safety Officers in each Region to develop reps individually and collectively.

The whole field of Occupational Health is vitally important for our members and their families. Workplace deaths, injuries and the legacy of industrial diseases cost Billions to the UK economy and create untold misery and pain for workers.

So it is time to pick up the gloves, step back in to the ring and face this challenge head on once again.

The benefits for the Union; the members; their families; and the whole economy are undeniable.

The consequences of the failure to improve health and safety in the workplace are just as clear and stark.

One of the most overused phrases is that *"it's not a matter of life and death"*. **How Wrong Can You Be?**

The limited actions outlined in this report can make a big difference to whether a member – a parent, wife, husband, colleague, and friend - comes home safely or not at all.

**GMB have led this field before – it is time for us to step up to the plate and lead again.**

## **GMB Action Plan on Health and Safety:**

### **1. Support and lay democracy:**

GMB will:

- Reaffirm our commitment to the policies set out by Congress 1978 and 1985, and the Special Reports on 1993 and 1995 – a dedicated Regional Health and Safety Officer in every GMB Region *"who should have enough time allocated to provide the support necessary to fulfil the requirements of this report"*.
- Create a national Health, Safety and Environment forum, modelled on the National Equalities forum, populated by delegates elected from Regional Health, Safety and Environment forums, and with the ability to submit a resolution to GMB Congress.
- Ensure that Regional Health, Safety and Environment forums are organised and take place at least twice per year, directly reporting to Regional Committees.
- Hold a National Health, Safety and Environment conference each year.

- Survey our members to find out what your issues and concerns are, and what extra support you need.
- Link in to the wider equality agenda to help to recruit the next generation of GMB Health, Safety and Environment Representatives, with a particular focus on young members, BME members and women. We know that only 36% of GMB Health, Safety and Environment Representatives are women, and that the number of BME Reps is low, so we will look at innovative ways to engage with these groups.
- Better recognise the achievements of our Health and Safety Representatives beyond the annual Safety Representative of the Year award at GMB Congress.
- Look at the opportunities around Health, Safety and Environment as part of the ongoing GMB Branches Review, particularly looking at simplifying access to training beyond that offered by GMB and the TUC to address specific hazards, issues or concerns.
- Seek to appoint more lay Health and Safety Representatives to HSE Industry Advisory Committees (IACs) and sectorial forums

## **2. Advice and Guidance:**

GMB will:

- Refresh and update the GMB Health and Safety Representatives' Handbook as part of the GMB Workplace Organisers' Toolkit.
- Ensure that all new GMB representatives complete basic Health and Safety training as part of their induction programme to ensure health and safety is part of our industrial and organising agenda in every workplace where we have members.
- Make the GMB Inspection Report Form available to complete online using tablets and smartphones.
- Develop simple one page 'quick guides' on key health, safety and environment topics
- Publish new guidance and case studies on organising in the workplace using health, safety and environment issues.
- Use new technology and new avenues, such as Twitter, GMB TV on YouTube, and podcasts to communicate developments and campaigning activity.
- Ensure that the GMB Website on Health, Safety and the Environment is regularly updated and has the most up-to-date information possible.
- Publish a GMB Health, Safety and Environment newsletter every month.

## **3. Campaigning:**

GMB will:

- Deliver a campaign to reassert Health and Safety Representatives' Rights and reinvigorate inspection activity.

- Develop new campaigns and guidance on emerging issues such as mental health, bullying & harassment, nanotechnology and occupational health, particularly around the aging workforce.
- Encourage and train GMB Health and Safety Representatives to make use of regional and national media communication channels to publicise both success stories with reasonable employers and the poor performance of negligent employers.
- Co-ordinate GMB activity around International Workers' Memorial Day
- Regularly lobby parliament to ensure that health, safety and environment issues retain a high profile and remain in the public eye.

BRO. D. SHEARS (National Officer, Health, Safety & Environment): Madam President, Congress, Dan Shears, still with the GMB Health, Safety & Environment Department. Humbled, honoured, privileged, and very proud to be moving this Special Report on behalf of the CEC and for eight years working with John McClean, who has been an inspiration.

Congress, it has been a fundamental tenet of this union since Will Thorne founded it in 1889 that we protect each other and that we are stronger when we stand shoulder to shoulder together. That is why health and safety has been at the heart of the GMB for more than 125 years. Congress, this report builds on a 40-year history of activism and organisation on health and safety since the introduction of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act.

The report sits in the long shadow of the decisions of the 1978 Congress, the 1985 Congress, and the two Special Reports of 1993 and 1995. Congress, ours is a proud history. It is of dedication, of action, of struggle, and of victory on Health & Safety in Parliament, in Europe, in the workplace, and in society. We know only too well that health and safety at work is a constant struggle for our members. It is an issue right across every sector, every region. New hazards are being continually introduced into the workplace and it is only when workers assert their rights that employers take action.

This report could not be more timely. With the recent election results what was an aspiration has now become an imperative. I will not dwell here on the attacks and cuts of the last five years on health and safety save to say that the worst is yet to come. We cannot rely on regulators to help us. As the report states, we have to organise our own workplaces, we have to organise our branches, we have to take control of our health, our safety, and our environment. We have to do it ourselves but in truth we always have.

I pay tribute to you, I pay tribute to our army of GMB health and safety reps, who tirelessly campaign to improve standards and raise awareness of health and safety issues in the workplace. I know from my own experience and from talking to all of you here this week at Congress, it can be a hard task, a thankless task, but the rewards for a job well done cannot be measured. It is for GMB as a union to create the best environment we can to help our reps to succeed and when any one of us is hurt we fail in that goal; we can do more, we must do more, and we will be do more.

This report gives a blueprint for reinvigorating our health and safety performance. It is a plan not just to make us self-sufficient because in GMB we do not just survive but to thrive. This report will provide for a dedicated health and safety officer in every region, which will give a consistent level of service across the union. It will give members access to fast and accurate advice and support when they need it. This is a considerable investment for the union. It is a considerable increase in resources

but we know that injury and ill health costs us more than £14bn per year as a nation. Just preventing that harm will remove the need for austerity at a stroke. We know that our active health and safety reps halve the number of people seriously injured at work so it is an absolute no-brainer.

It is why lay member activism and representation are at the heart of the report. We will build on the work that many regions have already done by ensuring that every region has a Health and Safety Forum that meets at least twice per year, reports into regional committees and elects delegates to a National Health and Safety Forum. That national body will in turn help to set and drive the priorities for the union on Health & Safety. It will ensure that everything we do meets your demands and your requirements. It will reinforce our commitment to health & safety both regionally and nationally. This truly is your health and your safety and because it is a universal issue the report commits us to formalising the link with the equality agenda.

We know that only one in three of our health and safety reps is female and we must do more to understand why that is, understand the issues, and expand our representation. Likewise, we can do much more to make the role of the health and safety representative attractive, for young members, for LGBT members, for disabled members, for BEM members, and for members for whom English is not their first language. This report will deliver this goal by making sure those members are fully consulted and fully involved.

We will have a National Health and Safety Conference every year where progress can be measured and decision-makers both within GMB and from the wider world can be held to account by you. Congress, we have to be prepared, we have to be ready, we have to be confident to put our heads above the parapet, challenge the employers, raise the standards, and fight for our rights. We do that together because you are never alone in the GMB.

We owe that to the memory of those who have been killed before entering the world of work, like Daniel Dennis, whose award we gave here today. We owe it to the memory of those killed at the end of their careers, like Raymond Holmes of the London Region. We owe it to every member in the 125-year plus history of GMB who has been harmed or killed by work.

Congress, this report is not revolutionary. The actions within it are not revolutionary. They build on solid foundations to make our union stronger as a whole. This is not root and branch but it is life and limb. Congress, I commend this report to you, the CEC commends this report to you. I urge you to support the programme it outlines. I gave my maiden speech here a few minutes ago. You overturned one of the motions. I ask you to support this one, and I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dan. While John is coming up and since you saw Dan last year he has become a father, him and Heidi, a baby girl. Well done. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. McDONNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, visitors, our General Secretary asked for this report well before the election and it could be argued that it is even more important now based on the result of that election where we have a Tory Government and we all know what ruthless bastards they are. (*Applause*)

As a union we have always been proud to be leading, campaigning, and challenging on health and safety matters, from asbestosis to occupational health provisions, from stress to bullying in the workplace. This report, if accepted, will only serve to reinforce that position. It is important but it will require resources and good planning. It will require applying from branch, regional and national level. It will need commitment from safety reps and, as we know, we already have this in spades, but for us

to move forward positively we will need even more commitment from delegates here and their colleagues back in the workplace.

Make no mistake, the greatest result from adopting this report will be in the workplace, better protection for our members, better organisation, better recruitment, and a better understanding of the important role of our many safety reps. Congress, adopt this report and send a message out to the wider world, including colleagues in other trade unions. In case you had forgotten the GMB is not giving up on health and safety. Indeed, we intend to step up our attitude to it. We intend to use our hard won rights even more. We intend to represent our members even better on workplace issues and concerns. This is no back to basics. More back to our roots and our heritage and what we fought for over the years. So, Congress, use this report. Publicise our intentions and let the members and employers know of these intentions. Congress, support this vitally important report. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. John, go and sit on the naughty step for swearing!

SIS. C. BESTWICK (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am also a young member speaking in support of the CEC report, *Your Health, Your Safety*. President, Congress, I must remind members even when safety representatives and some safety committees regulations became law in 1977 it was hard to find safety reps on most construction sites for fear of being blacklisted. Now, due to the GMB campaign on blacklisting this will allow our members to fill the safety reps positions as described in the CEC Report. This Government's administration advocates that one of its main purposes is to abolish red tape and burdens on business. It seems absurd that the HSE has, in effect, been the subject of three major reviews in less than four years. The Minister has stated that he wants to go further and to introduce reform to the HSE to ensure that it delivers value for money. So, in response to the Minister's statement which came from the Hazards Campaign, and I quote, "was irrational, preconceived, market-driven, ideological claptrap, and which is likely to increase the risk of injury or death to our members." Congress, we need to support this report. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. Next one, please.

BRO. R. TYLER (Wales & South West): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) President, Congress, it is really quite remarkable that before 1974 there was no law in this country requiring employers to introduce and maintain safe systems of work. Just 40 years on the real threat is that we will be returning to the high risk, unregulated, and uncaring type of approach to health and safety that prevailed before the Health and Safety at Work Act was introduced.

Toxic culmination of political, legal, and social attacks have served to weaken the very fabric of worker protection in the United Kingdom to the extent that worst employers' practices will go largely undetected and not liable for compensation recovery. As the report correctly states, there is little immediate prospect of Parliament showing the necessary moral and practical commitment to worker health and safety. In this crucial area charity will begin at home with the GMB. Where union safety representatives are present and active in the workplace, then the work environment is much safer than where they are not.

Three elements of the action plan require an investment both nationally and regionally, in time, commitment, and money, sufficient to ensure that the GMB continues to be best in class for health and safety matters in the British trades union Movement. The support, advice, and campaigning proposals in the report are all essential to delivery of health and safety services to GMB members that will,

hopefully, counterbalance the serious deficiencies in legislative and enforcement processes and procedures.

Congress, GMB has a long and proud tradition in leading the way on Health & Safety and this report provides the inspiration and the practical means by which we can continue to do so. The protection of our members at work must be of paramount importance now and at all times in the future. Therefore, my region fully endorses the report and commends it to Congress. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*  
THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

SIS. J. WADRUP (Birmingham & West Midlands): Birmingham & West Midlands welcomes the report and the GMB action plan. Our region fully agrees with the points and how important they are for the health, safety, and wellbeing of our membership. Training on health and safety is imperative and GMB needs to get this message across to our workplace representatives and our membership so that we can all work together for a safer and healthier working environment. Birmingham & West Midlands Region particularly welcomes the recommendations contained within the report in relation to campaigning, International Workers' Day, and lobbying Parliament. Congress, I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Next, please.

BRO. K. HENSBY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Madam President, Congress, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, it is a fight that our health and safety is a right, not a luxury when we are at work. We expect to turn up every single day and come home every single day without fear and risk to our health, our safety, and our welfare.

Fact, unionised workplaces are safer than non-unionised workplaces by 50%. That shows what we are doing we are doing correctly. However, we still need help. When we look at the legislation that is out there, it did not come by chance, it came because we worked hard, we fought hard as a union alongside others to put that legislation in place. You will never ever find a bigger piece of legislation than the Health & Safety at Work Act but we need to continue, we need to get the message out there. What is concerning to myself as a health and safety professional is that the Health and Safety Executive have now got less than 1,000 factory inspectors out there inspecting the workplace. What does that mean in reality? It means there are a lot of workplaces out there, folks, who will never ever be inspected. That is an injustice. What does that mean for us? Well, I know that Mr. Kenny here, our Secretary, said: "The sad reality of cost-cutting in the area of health and safety is that the road to economic recovery will be paved with the bloodied bodies and broken bones of the workers!"

I would like to expand upon that. I would like to expand by saying, Mr. Secretary, that legislation is written in blood, the sweat and the tears of every worker that is out there that has been injured whilst at work. *(Applause)* Surely, that cannot be allowed to continue. Over 131 people lost their lives last year, 4,500 people suffered debilitating diseases, such as asbestosis, mesothelioma, and silicosis. Disease does not discriminate, Congress. Disease will catch anyone, young and old. The unfortunate part about it, if you catch a disease when you are young, you are probably not going to live until you are old because of that debilitating disease.

What can we do as a union? Most certainly we can fight the cause. We can go out there and get our union reps that we do very well. I work alongside union reps as a health and safety professional. I urge Congress to actually carry this motion forward. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: You have done well. Okay. Any others? One more? Quickly! You were late coming down.

BRO. W. McEWAN (GMB Scotland): I am a GMB Health & Safety rep. I have also been trained by GMB to a professional level. I believe this report should be renamed, "GMB Health and Safety Plan" and, even better, it should be adopted as our policy. It should receive the full support of Congress. The GMB must support safety reps in the workplace and must use the legislation that is in place, namely, the SRSCs to allow GMB reps to carry out their legal functions in the workplace. Too many employers get away with breaching this legislation. Since the SRSCs became legislation in 1977 approximately 11 employers have been taken to task. I do not believe for one minute that only 11 employers have refused a safety rep time off for training since 1977.

This Health and Safety plan states quite clearly that GMB will challenge employers that the safety reps have a legal right to carry out their functions. The plan will make the GMB the leading union for health and safety with every region having a dedicated health and safety officer. However, like all health and safety plans I believe the plan needs to be audited. This would allow the plan to evolve and make sure that all regions were compliant. I ask Congress to support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Okay, thanks for all those who participated. I now put the report to Congress. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*The CEC Special Report: Health & Safety was Carried.*

## **GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT AND ADDRESS**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we move on to the next item, and I also have to ask for your support. Our General Secretary is now going to address you and move the General Secretary's Report. This will take a little time but with your endurance and help, and tablets from over there, then we will extend the lunch hour by 15 minutes. Is that fine? (*Agreed*) I will bring the sandwiches round. Paul Kenny, General Secretary of the GMB

### **GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTRODUCTION**

Dear Colleagues  
[Céad Míle Fáilte](#)

A warm welcome to all delegates to our 2015 Dublin Congress and particularly to those experiencing GMB Congress for the first time.

The General Election has come and gone. And with it at least for now are so many of the policies our Congress and our Members told us the country needed to revitalise a fairer economy that benefited millions of working people and their families.

I have been dismayed by the sighs and sounds of old has beens lecturing the Labour Party about being too Left in political terms and suggesting the election was lost because the British people wanted a return to New Labour. Throw in a few attacks on trade unions just for good measure and we have the very essence of why millions of working people stopped voting Labour after 1997.

From their long gravel drives and the funny smells of the House of Lords these people so quick to attack as Left wing things like outlawing zero hours, protection against the exploitation of working people, the NHS, tenants' rights, building homes and making Non Dom's and corporate tax dodgers pay their whack, they show their real hand about the new Leader of the Labour Party they want.

It has taken us years to gain back the trust of our members and our communities after the wealth and inequality gap widened under New Labour. Now we must put these broken old worn out lovers of privatisation, unregulated labour and finance markets back in the museums they have escaped from. The General Election of 2015 may be lost but the GMB is neither lost nor repentant about standing up for our members' interests.

This Congress was always going to be about our Union and our members, how best to serve them and how to continue on with the changes we started in 2005 bringing a wider and more inclusive Union back to its members. For those of us privileged to have been on this decade long journey it is truly amazing what has been achieved and more importantly how those changes were achieved.

Returning to our real purpose as a Union, organising, campaigning and winning for workers we healed long running wounds about National versus Regional interests by understanding they were exactly the same thing.

The changes we had the courage to make have turned GMB from a Union bankrupt in everything but a hard core of dedicated activists who knew GMB was better than a sweetheart Union that was sitting on the edge of oblivion because we had lost our purpose and our pride in who we are.

The list of those changes since 2005 is just too long to map out here but putting the Union's finances right, expanding Congress and pushing ourselves to rebuild our Union and respect our branch officers and activists actually signpost the road to this Congress agenda.

GMB doesn't fear change but it wants to be sure that in whatever we do, we make the right decisions not the popular or even the easy ones.

This year we have two far reaching reports coming back to Congress after interim reports last year.

The Branch Activity report which has produced some soul searching but brilliant debate and recommendations to secure the future of GMB branches as we always promised would be the case in 2005.

The Women in the GMB Project report marks a significant milestone in our recognition that 50 per cent of our Union are now women.

During the last decade the Union has seen many brilliant women come through our ranks. Our appointment systems at the most senior level must match the progress and confidence achieved around the Union on other appointments, that posts are always filled on merit and a clear ability to fulfill the role. The new inclusive proposals in this area bring together the strength and knowledge of our national and regional bodies to ensure we get the full value of the skills we possess when it comes to making appointments.

This week we have a full programme of motions, guest speakers including some old friends and some very senior and respected guests from the Irish Government. At the time of writing these notes we are working on a hustings debate and a surprise guest.

The UK Referendum on membership of the EU, the Labour Leadership Campaign and of course the proposed Tory governments announced crack down on trade unions and civil rights means this will be a lively week of debate and opinion.

I hope you participate fully, you enjoy the comradeship of GMB Congress and the pure joy and enthusiasm that helping to represent working people and fighting for social justice brings.

Fraternally yours



**PAUL KENNY**  
**General Secretary**



# CONTENTS

NATIONAL ORGANISING DEPARTMENT .....	7
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT .....	8
EXECUTIVE POLICY SECTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE .....	9
REPORT OF DECISIONS MADE BY CONGRESS 2014 .....	10
ACTION ON MOTIONS REFERRED TO THE CEC BY CONGRESS 2014 .....	19
EQUALITY AND INCLUSION DEPARTMENT .....	21
EUROPEAN OFFICE.....	23
INTERNATIONAL .....	25
HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT .....	26
LEGAL DEPARTMENT.....	27
PENSIONS DEPARTMENT.....	28
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT .....	29
APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS .....	30
TUC CONGRESS 2014 AWARDS .....	30
<b>SECTION REPORTS:</b>	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION.....	31
MANUFACTURING SECTION .....	33
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION.....	37
<b>REGIONAL REPORTS:</b>	
BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION .....	40
LONDON REGION .....	41
MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION.....	43
NORTHERN REGION .....	46
NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION.....	47
GMB SCOTLAND .....	49
SOUTHERN REGION .....	50
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION .....	51
YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION .....	54

### A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Update

This report audits the progress that has been made towards implementation of the 23 recommendations set out in the CEC Special Report *A Framework for the Future of the GMB*, and carried by Congress 2005. Where it has been previously reported to Congress that the recommendation has been implemented, the recommendation itself is no longer shown.

1	<i>Implemented</i>
2	<i>Implemented</i>
3	<i>Implemented</i>
4	<i>Implemented</i>
5	<i>Implemented</i>
6	<i>Implemented</i>
7	<i>Implemented</i>
8	<i>Implemented</i>
9	<i>Implemented</i>
10	<i>Implemented</i>
11	<i>Implemented</i>
12	<p><b>The CEC will examine the issue of “tidying up” some regional boundaries where any alterations to these could enhance and improve the service to GMB members.</b>  <i>Some changes made. Further review if required.</i></p>
13	<i>Implemented</i>
14	<i>Implemented</i>
15	<i>Implemented</i>
16	<i>Implemented</i>
17	<i>Implemented</i>
18	<i>Implemented</i>
19	<i>Implemented</i>
20	<i>Implemented</i>
21	<i>Implemented</i>
22	<i>Implemented</i>
23	<i>Implemented</i>

## NATIONAL ORGANISING DEPARTMENT

The result of the May 2015 general election will have significant consequences for our members but will not change GMB's organising strategy and approach. GMB will continue to fight in the workplace for an end to zero hours and casual working, for wages and hours our members can live on free of benefits, for the right of all workers to have the GMB come into their workplace, and a return to industrial justice and protection for GMB activists. This would have been easier to do with a Government not set on actively oppose our agenda – but we will continue to build our membership as we have done under both Labour and Tory governments for 10 years.

Guided by the GMB Regions via the National Organising Team, GMB has changed many things about our approach to building our organisation at work in the previous 10 years. But the pace of change inside the union will need to increase even faster if we are to keep up with the speed of change in the world of work. 5 years ago less than 500,000 people faced the harassment and working poverty of zero hours work – it is now touching 3 million. Today most jobseekers face long periods of agency work before they land a permanent job and the right to join and be active in a trade union – or even challenge your boss has been seriously eroded. GMB will continue to honour its past and its traditions and at the same time evolve to meet the challenges of this emerging dog eat dog world of working poverty

Yet despite these challenges GMB has grown by 12,000 members since Congress 2014, with over 80,000 new members joining us. A third of new GMB members joining in 2015 work in a shop or a school and these occupations now make up the two biggest industrial groups within GMB. It is no co-incidence that, as a result, for the first time in our history 50% of our membership are women.

In the next year we will face escalating industrial and organising challenges as a result of the new Tory Government. But neither will our current strategic challenges go away: making sure the remaining collective bargaining machinery in the industries we traditionally organise stays in touch with the needs of our members and helps us grow GMB; making sure we maintain, increase and better manage the paid release our workplace organisers have fought hard to win from their employers; defending our union from further attacks from the removal of check off; organising to ensure more privatisation of public services does not mean fewer GMB members and cuts in pay and pensions for the workforce – and tackling the 2, 3 and even 4 tier workforce in existing contractors through sectoral organising and bargaining.

Millions more workers in the UK will live with the working poverty, fear and insecurity that this Government will produce by its deliberate policy of cutting public services further and help tax dodging multinational companies make even bigger profits by raiding their employees pay and working hours. Our task will be to turn these challenges into opportunities to grow the union even further by being seen as a credible and realistic vehicle for people to improve their working lives.

The main principles behind GMB@Work have helped GMB protect itself from the worst effects of the recession and expansion of insecure work over the previous 10 years. Since adopting the policies in 2006 GMB has grown in good times and bad, through boom and bust and under both Labour and Tory Governments – shattering many of the myths the media hold dear about how unions grow.

The bottom up, flexible and pro-active campaigning approach of GMB@Work will enable us to better exploit the opportunities to grow our union while protecting us from the worst excesses of a the Tory government. But in the end no Government could build GMB for us – but neither can any Government stop us. Only we can build GMB.

### **Decisions of Congress 2014 referred to the NOD for action.**

Motions 12 and 265 on Organising Young People and Opposing Workfare have formed part of the work programme of the Young Activists Network in 2014/15, leading to the adoption of the £10 Now campaign with direct action planned for later in 2015

Motion 13 Organising Around Equalities resulted in the promotion of the new joiners survey across all Regions and the inclusion of equalities data in the format

Motions 26 and 27 Training Reps Ready For The Workplace and Language Barriers were referred to the Regional Education Officers Group as part of their on going assessment of regional training programmes

Motion 28 on Domestic Violence awareness training has produced an initial programme for officials to be held in June 2015

Motion 29 on briefing around Covert Surveillance is underway with the NOD and Public Services Section working jointly to issue guidance in this complex area

Motion 30 asked GMB to organise a meeting of members working across the movement as ULF Project Workers with a view to campaigning for their rights. A meeting takes place on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

## COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

### **GMB Press Releases**

In 2014 GMB secured 628 million mentions in all media. That is an average of 12 million a week. As at May 2015 5,963 people follow @GMBPressOffice on twitter, up from 4,716 at Congress 2014. Since Congress 2014 to 12<sup>th</sup> May there have been 507 press releases covering a wide variety of issues as follows:

### **Blacklisting**

The next High Court hearing was scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> May on compensation for 122 GMB members blacklisted by Carillion and other construction firms. The hearing on ET claims for the Carillion Swindon hospital workers starts 2nd November 2015. The Crocodile Tears Tour protested outside 16 firms across the UK to shame managers who organised the blacklisting.

### **Economy and jobs**

GMB commented on the economy and jobs: real value of earnings down 15.1% and GDP per head down 1.5% on 2007, MOD Order Govern, TATA Steel, new apprentices shipyards jobs, new jobs A&P Falmouth, the National Minimum Wage (NMW), job growth linked to low paid and precarious jobs, mansion tax, pensions and abuse of EU free movement of labour on Teesside.

### **Political**

The Labour Party election campaign was supported with many press releases.

### **Disputes and pay claims**

Disputes covered in NHS, Local Government, Brighton City Clean, M&S Swindon depot, ISS Woolwich hospital, Kier North Somerset, Bolton Engineering, Northern Ireland Water, Anglian Water, Haribo Pontefract, EDF Field Services, civilian Police staff, Jacobs Liverpool, Sheffield recycling, Leicestershire polymer plant, Barking & Dagenham refuse pay cut, North West ambulance service, Wiltshire MOD base, Mears housing Brighton, King's Lynn refuse, Cammell Laird, SERCO in Mid Sussex, parking attendants Wandsworth and Greenwich and Nuneaton school support staff.

### **Job losses and public sector cuts**

Job losses covered were Environment Agency Thames lock keepers, KP Consett, Monckton Coke plant closure, McVitie's Glasgow, North Sea Oil, Fife Glass, Leeds care homes, Surrey County Council care homes, Cornwall County Council, South Ayrshire Council, Prospect care homes, Nuneaton Academy, Abbey special school Rotherham, Wandsworth & Richmond Councils merger, Cumbria County Council. South Wales recycling plant, Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew and Sussex, 6,000 jobs going at Birmingham City Council, Sandwell Council Children's Services and Northamptonshire Children's Services. GMB provided press office for Peoples March for NHS. Also covered were various local NHS protests, impact of 40% cut in local council's budgets, ambulance response times and Care Quality Commission reports.

### **Housing**

Details of top 20 private landlords in each council area getting millions in housing benefit have been released via FOI to promote Congress 2014 Housing Special Report.

### **Energy and Utilities**

There have been releases on lack of comprehensive energy policy and the impact on prices, supply and planning for the future needs of the UK, Hinckley Point C, Sellafield, Ofgem, tidal power in Pembrokeshire, Drax biomass, Scottish nuclear power, home insulation, Ofgem, fracking, North Sea oil, Dungeness B extension, flood defences, E.ON, National Grid, and Eggborough power station.

### **Other**

We covered better pay for care workers and paying for social care, pay for NEXT workers where Tory boss disputes the idea of a living wage, asset stripping by private equity at AA, Amazon, US UK transatlantic trade and investment partnership, zero hours contracts, equal pay and other equality matters, poor air quality, tied pubs, health and safety

issues, mesothelioma, Campaigns for Justice Conference, UBER taxi service, tax avoidance scheme, and World Cup in Qatar.

All 507 press releases are published in full on GMB website [www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)

### **GMB MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS**

All departmental work is framed by and fits with GMB@WORK: industry & company newsletters, press releases, websites, twitter, emails, SMS messaging, publications or merchandise.

The use of SMS (text) messaging and email to members by GMB Regions and GMB Sections has increased significantly. With almost 1 million text messages sent to members in the first 3 months of 2015 we have been able to negotiate the rate down to 2.2p per message. Development of an in-house system means GMB no longer pays for emails to members and the media.

The 'GMB New Member Welcome Pack' is getting membership card, regional and UNIONLINE news to new members within 24 hours of them being registered on the GMB central membership system.

The GMB App is the quickest and easiest way to keep up with GMB News.

The online joining facility at [www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk) continues act as a 10<sup>th</sup> region enabling 2,000 to join each month. The national website and mobile website for smart phones get 54,000 visitors each month. Members use the national website to update their membership details and access services and information.

GMB regions produced another 3 editions of their magazines. The July 2014 editions carried the GMB Political Fund ballot saving the cost of a separate mailing. Over 231,000 members read their GMB mag on line at

[www.gmb.org.uk/gmb-magazine](http://www.gmb.org.uk/gmb-magazine) saving thousands of pounds in postage and meeting the GMB Green Agenda.

A year on from the launch we have been able to move to use the wording 'free to members' in the updated literature and advertising for UNIONLINE. We also have a pop up stand that is available for all GMB meetings or conferences.

We promote UNIONLINE on every piece of material we produce.

## **EXECUTIVE POLICY SECTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE**

The Section services a number of internal bodies and provides support for the General Secretary, CEC and National Officials at GMB Congress, CEC meetings and TUC Congress in matters relating to the Governance of the Union, and areas of national policy.

The Section leads in the co-ordination of policy work for GMB Congress; prepare the preliminary and final agendas; advise the CEC on policy stances; co-ordinate the compositing of motions and the drafting of CEC speeches; finalise the programme, produce the President's running order; and "Congress Explained" document and co-ordinate and draft the President's address. During Congress, the Executive Policy Section supports the President, Vice President, and General Secretary to plan and manage the Congress timetable and supervise the recording of decisions. We also work backstage in the Congress Office preparing delegate documentation and assisting the Standing Orders Committee.

### **Review of GMB Congress 2014, Nottingham**

There were 397 delegates of which 35.5% were first time delegates to Congress. Over the week, lay delegates made 427 contributions (moving and seconding and answering questions). There were a high proportion of first time speakers and of all those who spoke, 73 were first time speakers and of those first time speakers, 33 (45%) made Moving speeches. 172 Motions were debated at Congress 2014 (-5 on 2013). We heard from seven guest speakers: Ed Miliband MP, Glenis Willmott MEP, Margaret Curran MP, Ricky Tomlinson, Rachel Reeves MP, Lord Larry Whitty and Monica Smith. On Fringe events, special thanks go to Paula Keane for leading in the co-ordination, planning and liaison with the Venue especially as we were oversubscribed with 27 fringe events to manage.

### **Review of TUC Congress 2014, Liverpool**

The Executive Section ensured that relevant Congress decisions and GMB policy were taken through to TUC Congress and are responsible for supporting the GMB delegation and planning and organising the GMB stand and office. We ensure that GMB delegates are at the forefront of debates and once again, GMB delegates spoke in many of the key debates. From our delegation of 46 (24 Male, 22 Female) we had 15 speaking opportunities; moved 2 motions, seconded 9 motions, and spoke in support on 4 motions in addition to asking questions to Chuka Umunna MP and the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney.

### **Special Projects**

GMB Congress 2013 set up two working Groups: Ida Clemo is a member of the Women's Taskforce and Paula Keane is a member of the Branch Review Working Party. Both groups continue to meet and have produced Interim Reports to

Congress 2014 and 2015. The Section assists the General Secretary by undertaking special projects and duties as directed, producing presentations, briefings, statistics, profiles and research intelligence to use in internal or external meetings

### **Information Systems and Other Resources for Bargaining & Representation**

We provide research information systems to National Office and Regions which are used for pay and bargaining support, recruitment initiatives and company research. On Welfare Rights, we arrange for GMB Regions to have online access to the CPAG Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook

### **LRD Executive & LRD Information Systems**

Ida Clemo represents GMB on the LRD Executive and GMB Staff and all GMB Members continue to have free access to all LRD Publications and LRD PayLine systems. Password free access is also available via the Member's area of the GMB website.

### **Central Arbitration Committee Applications and Voluntary Recognition Agreements**

We produce a regular report for the CEC on Voluntary Recognition Agreements and over the year, GMB Sections and Regions have reported 32 new recognition agreements.

### **Policy Work**

Ida Clemo submitted the GMB Response to the Low Pay Commission on recommendations for National Minimum Wage rates for 2015 and also responded to the first public consultation of the new Low Pay Commission in Ireland. Following Congress 2014, 36 Carried Motions were allocated to the Executive Policy Section to progress. As a result, we have produced a Negotiators Guide to Bereavement Leave which is available on the GMB website [www.gmb.org.uk/gmb-at-work/representing-gmb-members](http://www.gmb.org.uk/gmb-at-work/representing-gmb-members). In addition, we have worked with CWU on progressing EM1 and Motions on the Royal Mail (132/133) and we continue to work on actions on other congress motions. However in the light of another 5 years of a Conservative Government in power, we will need to re-examine how far we can carry out the policy requested by a number of these motions. Any branch or delegate can contact us for more information on [policy@gmb.org.uk](mailto:policy@gmb.org.uk)

The Section are updating our policy briefings and improving policy information. We hold an electronic database of Congress Policy decisions dating back to 2005, however the section is in the process of collating these key Congress Policy positions in a user-friendly format which will be accessible from the GMB website. We see this as a very useful resource for staff and members and we hope to progress this work further by producing a GMB Policy Guide.

## **A. REPORT OF DECISIONS MADE BY CONGRESS ON RULE AMENDMENTS, MOTIONS, REPORTS AND STATEMENTS**

The CEC Action on Decisions table below sets out the responsibility for the actions on all motions carried and referred by GMB Congress 2014. It is also available on the GMB National Website [www.gmb.org.uk/congress](http://www.gmb.org.uk/congress)

<b>CONGRESS 2014 REPORTS</b>	
	<b>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>General Secretary's Report</b>	General Secretary (GS)
<b>Annual Accounts and Auditors Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Secretary</li> <li>• Finance Director</li> </ul>

<b>CEC REPORTS</b>	
	<b>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>GMB Branches – A Future That Works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Secretary/Senior Management Team (SMT)</li> <li>• Executive Section (GS Office)</li> <li>• Branch Review Working Party</li> </ul>
<b>GMB Women's Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GS/SMT</li> <li>• Women's Project Taskforce</li> </ul>

<b>CEC REPORTS (continued)</b>	
	<b>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>CEC FINANCE REPORT:</b> Financial Proposals to Congress 2014 (containing Rule Amendments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMT</li> <li>• CEC Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee</li> </ul>
<b>CEC Housing Report</b>	CEC Political, European & International Committee

<b>CEC STATEMENT TO CONGRESS</b>	
<b>CEC Statement on the NHS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> <li>• Section National Secretary Public Services</li> </ul>

#### **MOTIONS REFERRED BY CONGRESS 2014**

<b>MOTION</b>	<b>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: General</b>	
<b>6</b> Christmas opening hours	GS/ SMT
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Representation &amp; Accountability</b>	
<b>15</b> Young member reserved seats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GS / SMT</li> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)</li> </ul>
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Representation &amp; Accountability (continued)</b>	
<b>18</b> Affiliation to National Shop Stewards' Network	CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee
<b>UNION ORGANISATION Equality &amp; Inclusion</b>	
<b>32</b> Raising the age of young members	CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)
<b>C1</b> Affiliation to international Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) (37,38)	CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Rights at Work</b>	
<b>93</b> Terminal illness	CEC Organisation Committee (Legal / Equality)
<b>97</b> Bullying	CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)
<b>POLITICAL: Labour Party</b>	
<b>147</b> The Bilderberg Group and Labour MP's	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: General</b>	
<b>179</b> End term time fines for parents	SNS (Public Services)
<b>183</b> Regulating the press for balanced reporting	CEC Organisation Committee (Communications)
<b>190</b> Drug reform	CEC Organisation Committee (H,S & Environment)
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Education &amp; Training</b>	
<b>220</b> Tuition fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)</li> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Housing</b>	

<b>C23</b>	Housing crisis (234,235,236)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Comms)</li> </ul>
<b>C24</b>	Social housing solutions: end the right to buy & compulsory purchase of housing (238,239,240)	
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Housing (continued)</b>		
<b>MOTION</b>		<b>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>241</b>	Housing social cleansing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Comms)</li> </ul>
<b>C25</b>	Updating property valuations for Council Tax (242,243)	
<b>C26</b>	Private landlords & the buy to let housing market (244,245)	
<b>246</b>	Regulate landlords	
<b>247</b>	Landlord Licensing	
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>		
<b>283</b>	International Nicaragua	CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee
<b>284</b>	GMB support for the Western Sahara campaign	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>290</b>	Holding UK businesses accountable for human rights abuses overseas.	

#### CEC RULE AMENDMENTS CARRIED BY CONGRESS 2014

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS			
<b>CECRA1</b>	Rule 17a	Officials – authority over	RULE CHANGE
<b>CECRA2</b>	Rule 17e	National Officials	
<b>CECRA3</b>	Rule 17f	Procedure for electing organisers	
<b>CECRA4</b>	Rule 18	Qualifying for office, and the definition of officers	
<b>CECRA5</b>	Rule 31	Members' superannuation fund	
<b>CECRA6</b>	Rule 35	Branches	
<b>CECRA7</b>	Rule 45	Contributions	
<b>CECRA8</b>	Rule 47a	Retired life members	
<b>CECRA9</b>	Rule 48	Qualifying for benefits	
<b>CECRA10</b>	Rule 53	Funeral Benefit	
<b>CECRA11</b>	Rule 56	Fatal accident benefit	

#### EMERGENCY MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS 2014

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>EM1</b>	Royal Mail's Diminishing Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)</li> <li>• Section National Secretary, Commercial Services</li> </ul>
<b>EM2</b>	Withdrawal of the Independent Living Fund	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)



## MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS 2014

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Congress</b>		
9	GMB Youtube Broadcast (GMB TV) <b>CEC position was Oppose</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Communications)
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Recruitment &amp; Organisation</b>		
12	Encouraging young people to become members of trade unions	CEC Organisation Committee (National Organising Dept)
13	Organising around equalities <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
14	Membership records <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GMB National Admin Unit</li> <li>CEC Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee</li> </ul>
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Union Benefits &amp; Services</b>		
25	Review of membership benefits	CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Education &amp; Training</b>		
26	Training reps ready for the workplace	CEC Organisation Committee (National Organising Dept)
27	Language barrier <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
28	Domestic violence <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
29	Covert surveillance of electronic equipment	
30	Union Learning Fund (ULF) in England and impact on GMB members working in TUC and trade unions <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	
<b>UNION ORGANISATION: Equality &amp; Inclusion</b>		
34	Widening equal opportunities for BAME <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)
35	BME & LGBT hate crimes	
36	The impact of the press based bullying of the transgender community	
C2	Class as a strand of the Equality Act (40,41)	
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Health, Safety &amp; Environment</b>		
42	Privatisation and commercialisation of HSE <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (H,S & Environment)
43	Throw Resilience out	
44	Health awareness (stress & mental)	
45	Health & Safety	

MOTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Health, Safety &amp; Environment (continued)</b>	
46	Mesothelioma Bill
47	Flood prevention <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Pensions &amp; Retirement</b>	
C3	Retirement age legislation (49,50) <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
51	A living pension
52	Pensioners Christmas bonus <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
53	Part-time workers' pensions <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
54	Pensions
55	Pension black hole
56	Pensions <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Rights at Work</b>	
C4	Trade union rights & anti trade union laws (58,59)
C5	Zero hours contracts should not become the norm (62,64,65,68,69)
63	Zero hour contracts <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
C6	Zero hours contracts, casual contracts & employment law (66,67, 70,71, 72,73)
76	Employer who is also the landlord
77	End minimum wage abuse
78	The scandal of employers' low pay and the benefit trap
80	A fair day's pay for a fair day's work
81	A living wage campaign
83	Living wage
C7	Exploitation of agency workers on short term contracts (85,86,87)
91	Changes to the Transfer of Undertakings (protection of employment) Regulations 2006 <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>
92	The impact of employment tribunal fees on discrimination claims <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Rights at Work (continued)</b>		
<b>C8</b>	Statutory Bereavement leave (94,95,96) <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
<b>98</b>	Criminalising corporate bullies	CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)
<b>99</b>	Blacklisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Section National Secretaries</li> <li>CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> </ul>
<b>INDUSTRIAL &amp; ECONOMIC POLICY: The Economy</b>		
<b>C9</b>	The real UK economy and a national campaign against austerity measures (100,102)	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>101</b>	Supporting the fightback against austerity <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
<b>INDUSTRIAL &amp; ECONOMIC POLICY: Social Justice</b>		
<b>105</b>	Capitalism – not working	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>C10</b>	Growing inequality and the widening gap between rich and poor (106,107)	
<b>108</b>	Championing social value	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>INDUSTRIAL &amp; ECONOMIC POLICY: Social Justice (continued)</b>		
<b>C11</b>	Bankers Bonuses (111,112)	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>INDUSTRIAL &amp; ECONOMIC POLICY: Taxation &amp; General</b>		
<b>113</b>	Tax avoidance HMRC funding	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>115</b>	Progressive tax system	
<b>120</b>	Taxation of farmland	
<b>121</b>	Borrowing money to purchase a company <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
<b>122</b>	Hedge funds	
<b>INDUSTRIAL &amp; ECONOMIC POLICY: Public Ownership &amp; Control</b>		
<b>C12</b>	Public ownership of utilities (127,128)	Section National Secretary, Commercial Services
<b>130</b>	Re-nationalise our water industry	
<b>131</b>	Renationalisation studies <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>132</b>	Post Office sell off	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
<b>133</b>	Selling of Royal Mail <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	

MOTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>POLITICAL: General</b>	
134 Support for the Centre for Labour and Social Studies	CEC Political, European & International Committee
135 Combining trade union strength and organisation	
137 Keep May day	
138 'No' to a 'Margaret Thatcher day'	
<b>POLITICAL: Labour Party</b>	
140 Full employment	CEC Political, European & International Committee
141 Live livestock movements <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
C13 Financial incentives for employers to take on the long-term unemployed and mandatory living wage (142,146)	
C14 Lobbying Bill (143,144)	
<b>POLITICAL: Labour Party &amp; Constitutional Reform</b>	
151 Branch Labour Party delegates	CEC Political, European & International Committee
152 General Election 2015 <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
153 A new Clause 4 <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
154 Internal Labour Party elections code of conduct	
155 Support for the 'no' campaign in Scotland's Referendum campaign to prevent further UK privatisation of the NHS and public services	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>MOTION</b>	
<b>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</b>	
<b>POLITICAL: Labour Party &amp; Constitutional Reform (continued)</b>	
160 Freedom of information	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>POLITICAL: Racism &amp; Fascism</b>	
161 Combatting the far right	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>POLITICAL: Immigration &amp; Migration</b>	
162 Internationalism	CEC Political, European & International Committee
163 Migration <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Political, European & International Committee
164 Immigration	
165 Bulgarian and Romanian Workers	
166 Regulating globalisation	

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>POLITICAL: European Union</b>		
167	EU Food aid fund	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: General</b>		
C15	Food banks and economic poverty (168,169)	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
C16	Payday loans and excessive interest rates (170,171)	
172	Credit unions/alternative banks & payday loans <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Management Team (SMT)</li> <li>• CEC Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee</li> </ul>
173	Promotion of Credit Unions	
174	Cuts to children's centres	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
C17	The cost of affordable childcare (175,177)	
176	Free childcare for all	
178	Fair priced holiday	
180	Quality care for the elderly	Section National Secretary, Public Services
181	Community alarms	
182	CCTV cameras and surveillance <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
185	The 'No more page 3' campaign	CEC Organisation Committee (Communications)
186	Images/sexualisation of children and young people	
C18	Food costs, removal of hydrogenated fats from food the regulation of Food Industry (187,188,189)	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
191	Outrageous call charges	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
192	Phone and broadband and BT Open Reach performance <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
193	Child labour – Britain's industrial revolution & Victorian periods <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
196	Water cannons	Section National Secretary Public Services
197	Campaign to keep the local high street shop and shop workers' jobs	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Justice</b>		
198	The law in Plain English <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
201	Victim protection Slavery Legislation Bill	CEC Political, European & International Committee
202	Victimised miners	Section National Secretary Manufacturing
C19	1984-5 Miners strike and the 30 year rule (203,204)	

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Justice</b>		
206	Cammell Laird 1984	CEC Political, European & International Committee
207	Lack of provision provided to female young offenders within the youth justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section National Secretary (Public Services)</li> <li>CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> </ul>
208	Deaths in custody <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
209	Police shootings	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: National Health Service</b>		
210	NHS Care provision <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	Section National Secretary (Public Services)
212	Patients denied key treatments due to NHS cost cutting <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
213	Waiting times for NHS services and the loss of employment <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
214	G.P. waiting times <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	
215	Breast screening – age of screening to be lowered	
217	1 <sup>ST</sup> hour free parking at all NHS hospitals	
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Education &amp; Training</b>		
221	Benefit to young children in Wales brought about by investment in early learning via flying start	CEC Political, European & International Committee
222	Rise in domestic violence and crimes against women in the UK	
C20	Youth unemployment, real apprenticeships and the impact on the UK economy (218,223,224)	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
225	Support for Apprentices	
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: The Energy Market</b>		
C21	Energy market & company controls (226,227) <b>Carried with a Statement</b>	Section National Secretary (Commercial Services)
228	Domestic heating oil regulator	
229	Combating fuel poverty <b>Carried with a Qualification</b>	Section National Secretary (Commercial Services)
230	Equalising energy prices	
231	Energy companies	
C22	Fracking (232,233)	

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Transport</b>		
248	Energy rises and rail fares	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
249	Transport <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	
250	London Underground ticket offices	CEC Political, European & International Committee
251	Keep train guards on trains	Section National Secretary (Commercial Services)
252	Unfair Aviation Tax <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	
253	20mph Speed limits <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	CEC Organisational Committee (H,S & Environment)
254	Automatic entry onto National database of motor accidents <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights &amp; Services</b>		
255	Social security benefits <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)</li> </ul>
256	Budget outrage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> </ul>
257	Universal benefits and means testing	
259	Domestic violence service providers	
260	Who benefits	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
262	Unemployment	CEC Political, European & International Committee
263	Under 25 benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)</li> </ul>
264	Social security benefits for young people <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	
265	Opposing workfare schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (National Organising Dept, Equality)</li> </ul>
266	Introduction of mandatory reconsiderations for benefits	CEC Political, European & International Committee
C28	Work Capability Assessments (268,269)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC Political, European &amp; International Committee</li> <li>• CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)</li> </ul>
272	PIP issues from assessment delays	CEC Organisation Committee (Executive Policy)
C27	Bedroom Tax (273,274,275,276,277,278,279)	CEC Political, European & International Committee
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>		
280	The impact of the Greek crisis on women and children <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	CEC Political, European & International Committee
282	Solidarity with progress in Latin America <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	
285	The Amritsar Massacre	CEC Political, European & International Committee

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
<b>INTERNATIONAL (continued)</b>		
291	Global workers' protection <b>Carried with Qualification</b>	
292	Call for global peace, equality and prosperity	

In January each year Executive Policy ask colleagues at National Office to include progress on all motions carried at the previous Congress in their section of the General Secretary's Report. Action on any Referred motions is set out in B) below.

**B. ACTION ON MOTIONS REFERRED BY GMB CONGRESS 2014**

MOTION	ACTION TAKEN/ PROGRESS
6 Christmas opening hours	There are systems in place for out of hours contact and representation. UnionLine's legal helpline is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday with emergency out of hours services. The SMT agreed to retain arrangements for using UnionLine as a contact for members. In addition, the current IT Review which is taking place could look at how technology might assist members further.
15 Young member reserved seats	The motion was discussed at the SMT, Regional and National Equality Forums and at the Young Members Network. There are impracticalities with some of the proposals outlined in the motion. To have reserved seats for young members would be complicated and add in an unnecessary level of bureaucracy especially with the age restriction suggested in the motion. Current proposals allow young members to select their own reps for the CEC, a general ballot would not do this. The Young Members Network currently selects two ex-officio observers to attend CEC meetings with the right to speak, but not to vote. This was introduced in 2014 and indications are that this is working well. This gives Young Members continuity of representation and avoids lengthy gaps in the event of resignations. The Young Members Network should continue to decide who they send as observers. Furthermore, on Youth Officers, the CEC Branches Special Report carried at Congress 2014 recommended that a branch can fill or not fill rulebook offices, including Youth Officer, at their discretion according to the needs of the branch.
18 Affiliation to National Shop Stewards' Network	The CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee agreed that rather than affiliate nationally to the National Shop Stewards Network, GMB would continue to work with them on issues of mutual interest
32 Raising the age of young members	GMB has an established active Young Members Network and this motion was debated at one of their meetings and also at the National Equality Forum. The recommendation from both groups was that the upper age of a GMB Young member should rise from 27 to 30 years old and this was endorsed by the CEC Organisation Committee. It may be relevant to note that if carried at Congress 2015, Motion 87 seeks to examine this 2014 Referred Motion further
C1 Affiliation to international Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) (Motions 37,38)	This motion was referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee who agreed consult with the National Equality Forum (NEF) before coming to a decision. The NEF looked at the work of the ILGA and determined that their aims and policies are in line with GMB work on the discrimination experienced by LGBT members and issues faced by LGBTI people on Asylum, education, employment, families, freedom of assembly, hate crimes, health, multiple discrimination, human rights and trans and intersex issues. Therefore, the NEF supported an affiliation to the ILGA



MOTION	ACTION TAKEN/ PROGRESS
93 Terminal illness	Following Congress 2014, the Midland & East Coast Regional political team launched a "Dying to Work" campaign and published an article in the Regional Winter 2014 magazine "Contact". The campaign highlighted problems with employer capability procedures and asked for additional employment protection to strengthen the rights of people with terminal illnesses. In addition, an early day motion was submitted, the matter was raised at the Labour Party Conference and MEP Glenis Willmott agreed to raise this sensitive issue in European Parliament.
97 Bullying	A Working Party of the National Equality Forum is being set up to carry out further research on workplace bullying and harassment. In addition, GMB have updated our Respect at Work Policy to include a reference to LGBT and this has been loaded onto the GMB website.
147 The Bilderberg Group and Labour MP's	It is not for GMB to instruct the Labour Party NEC over internal disciplinary matters and it is not within the remit of the NEC to dictate what organisations or meetings people attend as individuals
179 End term time fines for parents	In 2013 the then Secretary of State for education, Michael Gove, issued a prescriptive edict that any child taken out of school term time for a family holiday must automatically be classified as unauthorised absence and the parents must be fined £60. There was a huge public outcry against this and it also gave rise to this motion. As a consequence however, in October 2014, a new Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan announced a relaxation of this policy allowing local authorities and schools to effectively go back to the previous regime of using their local discretion. Therefore no further action was considered necessary regarding the motion
183 Regulating the press for balanced reporting	TUC held a Conference on this subject which was attended by a representative from GMB. However the main policy work arising from this motion has been done with the Labour Party to ensure legislation is put in place to regulate the press and media.
190 Drug reform	The National Health, Safety & Environment Department researched the health, economic, and safety aspects addressed by the motion and made reference to a Home Office Report produced in October 2014. This investigated the national and international approaches to drug reform but had reached no definitive position. The position reached was that GMB should explore the rehabilitation and education path and bear this motion in mind should the new Government consult on any drug reform.
220 Tuition fees	During the 2015 General Election, most political parties considered changes to university funding in order to improve access to Higher education. The Labour Party announced a cut in fees to £6,000 from September 2016 to be funded by reducing tax relief on pensions for those earning over £150,000 per year. The Labour Party promised to lift the maintenance grant to £3,800 a year for students for families who pay basic rates of income tax. To pay for this, the interest rate on loan repayments for the highest earning graduates will rise from 3% to 4%. The demands in the motion have been fulfilled as the Labour Party made this a clear manifesto commitment. However, we will consider this motion if the new Government consults on any new policies.

MOTION	ACTION TAKEN/ PROGRESS
<b>C23</b> Housing crisis (Motions 234,235,236)	These motions were all supported by Congress in line with the CEC Special Report on Housing which laid down GMB's policy and recognised the importance of affordable social housing. Policy recommendations from this report have been fed into the Labour Party National Policy Forum. Speakers referred to the Report at the 2014 Labour Party Conference and Senior shadow cabinet ministers gave enthusiastic feedback on matters contained in the Report. GMB sent a copy to all GMB Local Councillors and all Labour MPs. In response to this intervention, the London Borough of Newham agreed to set up a Landlords Register. GMB will continue to campaign to highlight the injustice in the new Governments housing policy and the unregulated private rented market.
<b>C24</b> Social housing solutions: end the right to buy & compulsory purchase of housing (Motions 238,239,240)	
<b>241</b> Housing social cleansing	
<b>C25</b> Updating property valuations for Council Tax (Motions 242,243)	
<b>C26</b> Private landlords & the buy to let housing market (Motions 244,245)	
<b>246</b> Regulate landlords	
<b>247</b> Landlord Licensing	
<b>283</b> International Nicaragua	This motion was referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee who have agreed to affiliate to the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign.
<b>284</b> GMB support for the Western Sahara campaign	This motion was referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee who agreed to affiliate to the Western Sahara Campaign.
<b>290</b> Holding UK businesses accountable for human rights abuses overseas.	The specific measures addressed in the motion required to hold UK business to account overseas were debated at a meeting of the CEC Political, European and International Committee. Their decision was to continue with our existing campaigns on corporate behaviour and not to affiliate with the third-party organisations mentioned in the motion

## EQUALITY AND INCLUSION DEPARTMENT

Since Congress 14, the cost of living crises as continued to impact on people's lives, with zero hours contracts, involuntary part time working, false self-employment and the presence of food banks in every town. Equality matters have continued to be under attack and much of the equality infrastructure has been dismantled, as well as significant changes to employment and discrimination legislation.

**Access to Justice** - The imposition of employment tribunal fees since 29 July 2013 has proved to be a devastating obstacle to access justice, denying justice to thousands of victims of discrimination who cannot now afford the fees and have been deprived of free legal advice and representation. The number of race, disability and other discrimination claims have stabilised at about one-third of the pre-fees level and it is likely Conservatives will maintain a fee-charging system. The use of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (in place since 2008) has in some cases been able to delay or stop some cuts in public services where it has been possible to show that the authorities failed to have "due regard" to the impact on one or more equality groups.

Our journey for achieving equality through inclusion continued to make progress, particularly with the launch of the women's development programme in the GMB, as well as the success of the Presidents Leadership Awards for Equality, (PLAE) and the organising of the highly successful seventh GMB National Equality Conference

**National Equality Forum (NEF3)** - The National Equality Forum met on a minimum of six occasions during the year to oversee the work on Equality through inclusion as well as a number of NEF Working Parties. NEF4 is now in place

**Strategic Priority 1 - Increase membership.**

Two key projects were commenced during the year, one was engagement with ASDA on Equality and Inclusion and secondly, the establishment of the National Young members Network.

## **Strategic Priority 2 – Bargaining.**

**ASDA** - Following the signing of the National Agreement at Congress and working with the National Officers to develop and implement a joint strategy on Equality. A leaflet on 'Caring Responsibilities' was circulated to ASDA employees. Initial findings of the results show that 58% of our members had a child to care for; 32% were responsible for caring for an elder relative and 10% for disabled relative or neighbor. 70% of the members had taken time off to provide care for these relatives.

**Sellafield Power Station** – Worked with disability strand NEF member, Convener and National Secretary to develop a joint strategy for equality and diversity at Sellafield.

**GMB Young Members Network** - Following the highly successful GMB Young Members Summit in November 2013, the second national summit was held in Yorkshire and a new GMB Young Members Forum was elected, including new Chair and Vice Chair. Furthermore, the Young Members Forum now have two observers on the CEC, directly elected from the Summit.

**Workplace Equality Reps** - GMB continued to lobby and drive for statutory recognition for Workplace Equality Reps, as they could bring benefits to employees and employers alike because they have a brief to put equality and inclusiveness at the heart of workplace culture and negotiations. GMB motions on Equality Reps were passed at two TUC Equality conferences, a number of meetings were held with the TUC, Equality Law experts, Labour Party Equalities Committee and a joint fringe meeting on the subject was held at the TUC Congress 14, which was addressed by Sir Bob Hepple, Angela Eagle MP and a workplace Equality Rep. This was included in the Labour manifesto.

**Swindon Hospital** - A number of meetings were held with members employed by Carillion, working in Swindon Hospital. Supporting these workers will be a priority project in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2015.

**Wandsworth, South London Parking Attendants Dispute** – Support was given to local officers and Communication Department on the dispute with their employers.

## **Strategic Priority 3 – Campaigning**

**Britain Needs a Pay Rise Demo** - Nearly 100,000 people attended the October National Demonstration. GMB presences on the march was second to none and all the Regions, many branches and GMB equality groups were present on the march.

**Female Genital Mutilation FGM.** 'Contact was made with 'FGM – Forward' an organisation working to safeguard girls at risk of FGM and supporting affected women. Discussions took place of potential work to raise awareness, support their training module and GMB affiliation.

Actively supported **TUC Young People and Housing** project, the focus of which was private rented sector alongside lobbying for 1million more homes. Issues included :- Rent control, Ending no-fault evictions, Deposit protection reform, Investment in social housing, Regulation of landlords, Banning of letting agent fees to tenants. Other campaigns included:-

**Equal Pay** – Dialogue was opened with the Emily Thornberry MP at which the difficulties we faced as practitioners raised.

**Abortion Rights Campaign (ARC)** - During the year we continued to actively support the work of the ARC, including opposing Fiona Bruce MP's proposed an anti-choice amendment to the serious crime bill. **Valuing Maternity Campaign** - Public criticism of maternity rights has emboldened some employers to treat women badly. GMB has supported the campaign to protect and promote maternity rights. GMB was a co signatory to a letter in the Guardian on dismissals due to pregnancy.

## **Strategic Priority 4 - Enhance Profile**

**TUC Equality Conferences** There was full participation of GMB delegations to the TUC Equality Conferences. Women's – motions on (1) Carers (2) What Women want from the next Government?; Black Workers – 'Stop & Search' (this is going to TUC Congress); Young Members – motion on 'Employment Journey'; Disability Conference – motion on 'Disabled workers deserve better'; LGB&T –motion on 'LGBT Private Rented Housing'. **Labour Party Conference** (1) National Negotiating structures in Local Government (2) Why Ethnic minorities should vote Labour in 2015.

**Press release and interviews** included - Blacklisting; Zero Hour Contracts, Youth employment, housing benefit, GMB 125 Anniversary, GDP, and Employment Tribunals. This resulted in radio interviews and one with Sky news.

**Presidents Leadership Awards for Equality (PLAE)** - Presidents Leadership Awards for Equality (2014). The winners were – Inspirational individual David Braniff Herbert & Farzana Jumma; Inspirational Regional Equality Forum (REF) – London; Most inspiration project for making a difference at work - National Young Members Network & Putting the 't' back into LGTB; Inspirational Equality Project for Organising - Kerry Humphreys & Delcan Downes.

## **Strategic Priority 5 - Organisational Equality**

National Equality Conference 2015 – The theme of the conference was ‘Putting Equality into No 10’. Up to 100 delegates attended the 7th E&I Conference speakers included the General Secretary, Kate Green MP, Emma Lewell-Buck MP, Bryan Nott – Simpson Miller; Ann Lafferty GMB Women’s Project; George Frazer London Region; Alice Smart Leeds Councillor. 18 Motions were submitted by the Regions, plus two from NEF.

**Training on Social Media** for NEF strand members were given training on the use of social media to improve GMB Equality presences on social media. **Heads Up Black Asian Ethnic Minority (HUB)** – Supported this initiative from BAME members in Southern Region at their Black History Month event in Lambeth Town Hall.

## **Summary**

Since Congress 14, progress on equality through inclusion has been considerable. Next year will be a challenging time with further hostility to equality. Priorities will include:- encouraging activists in the development of Regional and then National self organised groups.

## **EUROPEAN OFFICE**

The GMB European officer and research and policy officer continue to campaign at EU and International level on a wide range of issues of importance to our members across all regions and sections. We work in close co-operation with trade union colleagues in the European and International trade union sector Federations, with the ETUC, ITUC and with a large number of MEPs in the European Parliament. Updates on our work are provided in a monthly EU news brief, which can be accessed on the GMB website.

### **Our Future in Europe**

People across Europe bought in to the idea of the European Union because they wanted to see peace, improved living and working conditions, social and economic progress and prosperity for the many, not for just the few.

Whatever the European vision was on integration, solidarity, social and economic advancement and political stability, what we currently have isn’t it.

Last year’s European elections confirmed that public support for the current direction of the European Union is waning. The growth of Eurosceptic and far right parties such as UKIP on the back of this disenchantment cannot go ignored. Everyone is talking about EU reform, and few would disagree that the EU needs reforming if it is to survive. However, views vary widely on the shape and direction these reforms should take.

The Tory Party has engineered a situation whereby Britain’s future will be traded on the outcome of negotiations on a range of reforms followed by an “in or out” referendum.

They want reforms that benefit the few – their friends in business and the City to get richer – at the expense of many people across Britain.

They intend to rob us of vital EU employment rights and protections - health & safety, paid holidays, protections in redundancies and TUPE transfers, equality rights, protection from discrimination, equal treatment as part-time, fixed term or agency workers, and will make zero hours contracts the order of the day. Labour is committed to protecting these hard won rights and reforming the EU so it works for people in Britain.

The shape and direction the reforms take will either seal or sever trade union support for the EU. The stakes could not be higher.

### **New European Parliament and European Commission**

GMB’s active campaigning in the European elections in May 2014 saw a welcome increase in the number of Labour MEPs from 13 to 20 MEPs, with a majority of women (11-9). GMB’s Glenis Willmott was re-elected as Leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party Group (EPLP). MEPs give consistent support to our campaigns and policy positions mentioned below.

A new European Commission was confirmed in November 2014. Following a lot of political haggling, former Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker was elected President of the Commission. Within weeks he was mired in the *Luxleaks* scandal of institutionalised tax avoidance on a massive scale under his watch as head of state and finance minister. There is no optimism that strengthening social Europe lies at the heart of the new EU Commission strategy, which means that working in solidarity with our trade union colleagues across Europe and supportive MEPs to fight for a Social Europe will remain as important as ever.

### **Economic crisis, cuts and austerity**

The effects of the economic crisis continue to be felt across much of Europe, as many governments persist with cuts and austerity measures even though they are clearly stifling rather than stimulating economic growth and job creation. The fall-out of this botched handling of the crisis has created a growing social crisis. The lid on the pressure cooker is now blowing, with the Greek people saying *enough is enough*, and overwhelmingly electing the left wing anti-austerity Syriza party in to power in January. In line with composite motion C9 (motions 100 & 102), and motion 280 adopted at Congress 2014, GMB has been actively challenging the austerity measures in solidarity with our EU trade union colleagues and MEPs. We call on the EU institutions and governments to adopt another path and invest in sustainable job led growth that will drive economic recovery.

### **EU Trade agreements**

GMB has long been critical of EU Trade policy, driven as it is by corporate interests and generally to the detriment of people and their families across the globe. GMB has voiced major concerns about the ongoing negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement with the US, and has called for the EU-Canada agreement (CETA) to be rejected, which we see as a Trojan horse for all the dangerous elements corporations want to push in TTIP. Acting on motion 291, GMB was co-author to a TUC Congress composite motion in September 2014, which called for outright opposition to TTIP and other EU trade agreements. We have also been actively involved in campaign actions with EU and US/Canadian Unions, and NGOs to block the trade deal. We have responded to a number of consultations at EU and UK level on the trade deals, given evidence to the House of Lords, produced regular trade updates, and have organised meetings and fringe events, including a major fringe with the Canadian public service union at the European Public Service Congress in 2014. We have also been working with MEPs to seek amendments to various reports being produced on the trade deals by the European Parliament, and have participated in meetings hosted by the EU Commission on the trade deals.

### **Agency Workers' Rights**

GMB has been actively campaigning for the removal of the "Swedish derogation" and other avoidance loopholes in the UK Agency Workers regulations, in line with Congress 2014 Composite motion C7 (motions 85,86,87). In January 2015, a delegation of GMB members from Marks & Spencers' distribution in Swindon met with MEPs and EU Commission officials in the European Parliament to explain the exploitation they were suffering under this derogation. MEPs have called for urgent action on this case and the TUC formal complaint lodged with the EU Commission in 2013 to end the avoidance of equal treatment. MEPs also briefed Ed Miliband, and the Labour Party is committed to end this derogation. GMB raised the issue in the formal EU Social dialogue meeting with the Agency Employers. A recent EU court case has confirmed that the agency workers directive does not prevent collective agreements limiting the use of agency workers.

Labour MEPs are supporting GMB's call for EU level action to end abuse of workers through zero hour contracts.

### **Public Contracting that works for people**

Having played an influential role in the development of stronger social and employment clauses in the revised EU public procurement Directives, GMB has been actively involved in the UK implementing stage of the Directives. We are highly critical of the Government for fast tracking regulations through Parliament which fail to implement the social and employment considerations in the legal text. Together with the TUC and supportive MPs, a motion to block the regulations was launched, but sadly not debated with the election being called. It will be picked up in the new Parliament. The Scottish Government implements these provisions separately, and GMB has submitted a detailed response to their consultation urging strong measures to promote employment and social considerations in contracting.

### **Tackling tax dodgers**

Acting on GMB Congress motion 113, GMB continues to campaign at EU and national level for tax dodgers to be taken to task. The "Luxleaks" scandal has prompted further urgent action from the European Parliament to clamp down on tax evasion and tax havens. Labour MEPs are leading on this action.

MEPs support GMB's call, reflected in GMB Congress 2014 Composite C11 (motions 111,112), for strong action on Bankers Bonus's and we welcomed the decision of the EU Court against the UK Government, who tried to block the bonus cap.

## **Posting of Workers**

GMB has been working in co-operation with the TUC to urge the UK Government to put in place strong measures to prevent abuse of posted workers, and to fulfil their obligations on measures covering liability across the subcontracting chain.

## **Blacklisting continues in agency work**

Following up on GMB Congress motion 99, GMB has been working closely with our EU trade union colleagues in the construction sector to expose blacklisting practices spreading to employment agencies. GMB was featured in an Irish Television documentary uncovering these practices by the agency Atlanco Rimec across several EU member states.

## **Combatting the rise of the far right**

In line with Congress 2014 motion 161, GMB has been working with MEPs and trade union colleagues at EU level to challenge the rise of far right parties and groups. Parties such as the French national front made major gains in the European elections in 2014. Anti-islamic movements such as Pegida have spread from Germany to Belgium, France and the UK, attempting to fuel racial and religious intolerance on the back of recent terrorist attacks.

## **Migration**

Responding to GMB Congress 2014 motions 162,163,164,165 and 166, GMB is actively campaigning for the protection of- and organisation of migrant workers in to trade unions. We are challenging anti-migrant rhetoric and myths at all levels, working closely with Hope Not Hate, the media, and through factual briefings and training for our members, highlighting that it is tax dodgers, vicious cuts and austerity - not migrant workers - that are damaging the economy in the UK and the EU. We urge politicians to have a strong and coherent approach on challenging anti-migrant rhetoric.

## **EU funding/ EU Food aid Fund**

GMB has joined with Labour MEPs in condemning the UK Government for delaying the take up of major allocations of EU social and regional development funding on purely party political/Eurosceptic grounds, denying many regional and community based projects in England vital funding to continue their work. In line with Congress 2014 motion 167, we have also supported MEP challenges to the government where they also failed to draw down EU Food aid funding. Some funding has now been released to the Trussell Trust.

## **Cammell Laird**

In the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Cammell Laird dispute, and responding to Congress 2014 motion 206, GMB has made major progress at EU level with the Cammell Laird Petition of 2013 being heard in the European Parliament in December 2014. Eddie Marnell was warmly welcomed by MEPs who gave unanimous support to the Petition remaining open for further investigation. The Petitions Committee has also written to the UK Government demanding access to information and a formal apology for the gross miscarriage of justice against the striking workers.

## **Supporting GMB Organising**

The European Office has provided support on a number of GMB organising campaigns and disputes including: DHL/M&S agency workers, Hinkley Point C investigations, ISS, Savile Row Tailors and against Atlanco Rimec.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

Perhaps the most dramatic development of the last twelve months came in December when the remaining 3 members of the 'Miami 5' were released from American prison cells as part of the agreement to restore diplomatic relations between Cuba and the USA after a hiatus of over 50 years. In common with other affiliated trade unions, GMB supported the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in their efforts to have the 5 Cubans released after they were arrested and incarcerated on extremely dubious grounds in 1998. President Obama's willingness to restore formal links with Havana is not based on an acceptance of Cuba's socialist system but on a pragmatic realisation that half a century of cold war politics and an illegal blockade of the island has merely strengthened the resolve of its people to resist US aggression and united the rest of Latin America in opposition. The Republican majority in Congress has so far refused to countenance the lifting the of the blockade which will be the subject of further discussions between Obama and his Cuban opposite number, Raul Castro, as will the US occupation of Guantanamo Bay where their infamous concentration camp is situated.

Previous motions to GMB Congress have reinforced our commitment to the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and if Washington has given up on enforcing what they would describe as 'regime change' in Cuba, they have redoubled their efforts to unseat the constitutionally elected government of President Nicolás Maduro. Deploying tactics disturbingly similar to those used to bring down Chilean President Allende's government in 1973, the US has poured millions of dollars into opposition groups engaged in efforts to sabotage the economy and destabilise the country. Whatever mistakes have been made by the Maduro administration, his government and that of his predecessor, Hugo Chavez, have taken millions of Venezuelans out of poverty and transformed the lives of poor people previous governments have largely ignored. It is therefore, vital, that GMB Branches and Regions not only affiliate to VSC but also are proactive in countering the anti-Venezuela propaganda that passes for news in so much of the British press. If US hegemony cannot be asserted by threats and intimidation, then soft power is deployed in the shape of free trade agreements (FTAs) designed to lock other countries into the global capitalist order, thus enhancing the ability of their transnational corporations to shape the world's economy according to their shareholders' needs. 10 years ago, the then President Bush failed in his attempt to install a Free Trade Area of the Americas stretching from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego, when his proposals were roundly rejected at a summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Undeterred by this reverse, the US has sought to conclude a series of bilateral deals with those countries more sympathetic to their aims such as Colombia, Peru and also with the Central American sub-region.

The European Union (EU) has pursued a similar path of seeking to sign free trade agreements for the benefit of its own multinational corporations, all of which have been opposed by GMB because of the negative effects for ordinary people in their jurisdictions. Having failed to convince the European politicians that FTAs should not have been signed with Colombia/Peru and with Central America, we have adopted a fall-back position of doing everything possible to ensure that the so-called sustainable development chapters of the agreements are adhered to and that trade unionists from third countries are included in their implementation. Owing to the lack of resources dedicated to this process by the EU, it is not going to be easy to achieve. GMB is now represented on advisory groups for both the above-mentioned FTAs and in November the International Officer was present in Nicaragua for the inaugural civil society meeting of the Central America FTA where the scale of our task was illustrated by the absence of trade unionists from all the participating countries with the exception of the hosts.

GMB recognises that FTAs are less to do with trade and more to do with removing obstacles in the pursuit of profit by big business but we also opposed the Latin American FTAs because of the appalling human rights violations in Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras, to name but three places where our colleagues are intimidated, attacked, murdered or disappeared just because of their union activities. In February of this year, the President and Treasurer of Colombian banana and sugar workers union, SINTRAINAGRO, were fortunate to escape unscathed when they were victims of an assassination attempt. GMB wrote strongly worded letters of complaint to both the Colombian Ambassador in London and the Minister for Latin American at the Foreign Office, Hugo Swire MP and has yet to receive a reply from either. Mr Swire has form in these matters, repeatedly praising overseas governments for their willingness to embrace British capital whilst ignoring attacks on trade unionists, something we have had to take him to task over on more than one occasion.

The pursuit of profit predicated on infinite economic growth as expressed in GDP has severe consequences for the environment and it is almost universally accepted that global warming caused by the burning of fossil fuels must be curtailed if there are not to be catastrophic changes in climate. The main polluters are energy generators and if we are to find ways of meeting our energy needs that will also protect the planet, it cannot be left to the markets to decide how this will be achieved. GMB policy is for energy utilities to be publicly owned and on the international stage we are participating in the "Trade Unions for Energy Democracy" network. We were present in New York for their conference and to participate in the largest climate change demonstration the world has seen. We subsequently attended the COP 20 global climate change talks in Lima (December 2014) where we supported TUED activities around the alternative peoples' climate summit whose final declaration was more grounded in reality than the vague promises of the international community preparing for COP 21 in Paris later this year.

In any given year, the International Department receives requests for help and assistance from a wide variety of causes and campaigns. We simply do not have the resources to meet every demand so in addition to the day to day cooperation with GMB departments and Regions, the TUC, the ITUC, the IUF and other trade union bodies, the focus is on the issues identified by Congress. As well as organisations previously mentioned, we are currently affiliated at a national level to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Western Sahara Campaign, Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, Justice for Colombia and War on Want. We are members of the European Banana Action Network (Euroban) and

continue to collaborate with Banana Link with whom we run the International Solidarity Fund for our work with trade unions representing tropical fruit workers in Latin America. We also work with Union Solidarity International (USI) and the Global Labour Institute but for all our endeavours the object of policy is not just to pay an affiliation fee or declare an allegiance, but rather to include as many Regions and Branches as possible in our international activities, activities that have become increasingly relevant to today's inter-dependent globalised world.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

### **Policy & Consultation**

The HSE have appointed a new CEO, Richard Judge, who while claiming no detriment to the performance of the HSE has a brief to encourage greater commercialisation .

The department responded to a consultation from the EC on the Working Time Directive. In light of the REFIT agenda in Europe, similar to the "red tape challenge" in the UK, we decided to take a holding position.

The department responded to a consultation from the Ministry of Justice on sentencing guidelines for Corporate Manslaughter, serious H&S and food hygiene offences. In our response we emphasised the need to deal with "phoenix" companies, and for there to be quicker justice for victims and their families.

The department also responded to a EU Commission consultation on the derogation on asbestos electrolyte filters.

### **Asbestos**

Following campaigns and lobbying pressure on the government it decided that in April 2015 that Mesothelioma victims and their families would receive 100% of the compensation they were entitled to (Motion 46, 2014).

The asbestos in Schools campaign is on-going with some progress including putting pressure on the DfE to publish its report on asbestos policy before the suspension of parliament.

The department has supported the efforts of the Manufacturing section to recruit workers in licenced asbestos contractors.

### **SUPPORT TO SECTIONS**

#### **Asda**

The department continues to negotiate and support the in house ergonomics policy following the 4<sup>th</sup> phase HSL study. Following the initial ASDA /GMB H&S Forum, chaired by GMB, a first in Wal-Mart, on the retail side we are currently looking to tackle a number of issues including violence and aggression, check out activity and manual handling for future discussion and action

We are also currently heavily involved in the development of a proto-type trolley to assist with top stocking and other shelf replenishment activities.

#### **Security industry**

We are supporting new NNC arrangements within G4S Solutions and negotiating with Securitas on a national health and safety consultation and involvement structure.

#### **Gas Industry**

We are negotiating on a range of technical issues across the industry, including changes to competence schemes, asbestos management, and complex working time issues.

#### **Waste & Recycling**

Following work on Worker Engagement this group has merged with the Leadership group as there was an overlap on outcomes and the work is on-going.

Unfortunately the industry continues to suffer a disproportionate number of serious injuries and fatalities.

#### **Environment**

The department continues to be involved with other unions on TUSDAC looking at possible future developments on the Green Deal, the Green Investment Bank and the Energy Intensive Industries.



## LEGAL DEPARTMENT

### **Legal Services**

At Congress 2015 GMB and the Communication Workers Union launched the first trade union owned law firm in the country. UNIONLINE is a one stop shop providing a broad range of legal services, free to members, and with some services being available to their families. This is our commitment to providing a quality legal service to our members. UNIONLINE is operated from a head office in Sheffield where it employs 44 staff directly. These staff work with the nominated Regional Officers to ensure that we do everything we can to support members within the union, before sending work out to a network of highly regulated panel firms across the country who act as agents for our law firm. UNIONLINE also monitors and controls the quality of service provided by these law firms to ensure we have the best, most effective legal service for our members across the entire country.

### **Employment Tribunals**

The introduction of fees for tribunal claims has continued to restrict access to justice for many workers. There has been a dramatic drop in the number of claims generally. A renewed legal challenge to the introduction of fees was unsuccessful.

GMB has been able to maintain services to members in this environment. Early decisions by the judiciary on the recoverability of fees in successful tribunal and appeal cases have posed particular challenges for the union as we strive to maintain our service.

Mandatory early conciliation through ACAS in all cases has also required changes to our internal procedures.

### **Collective Rights**

Changes to the law on collective consultation periods in relation to redundancies have impacted negatively on worker's rights alongside detrimental changes to TUPE.

We continue to brief and support Regions and Officers on industrial action matters including the Local Government and National Health Service ballots. We also continue to brief and support Regions and Officers on Statutory Recognition claims with the Central Arbitration Committee.

### **Individual Rights**

The onslaught on individual rights by the present Government has continued as the impact of changes to the law on unfair dismissal are felt alongside other adverse developments.

We have briefed and supported Regions and Officers on these developments including those relating to holiday pay linking up with our legal service provision with UNIONLINE.

### **Blacklisting**

We continue to be the leading trade union in the fight for justice for blacklisted workers. We continue to run a very effective national campaign locating blacklisted workers, making those responsible publicly accountable, and providing a continuous stream of news to regional and national media to ensure their story is told. We also lead an important High Court action brought by four separate groups of claimants against the forty-four construction companies who signed up for blacklisting. That case will finally be heard in early in 2016, when we look forward to getting a just outcome for our members.

### **Litigation**

We continue to manage large multi-party cases in all areas of the employment rights field in order to assist Regions. Due to government cuts and changes in the law, the protection of employment rights by trade unions has become more important than ever, and as a result GMB is involved in some of the most complex and large scale employment litigation in the UK.

### **Policy**

We continue to contribute to union policy in areas such as industrial action, trade union rights, and zero hours contracts.

### **Personnel**

The Department comprises Maria Ludkin and Barry Smith

## PENSIONS DEPARTMENT

### Motions from Congress 2014

**Composited Motions 49 and 50** – called for a campaign to allow flexibility in state pension age. These have been discussed with Labour. A review of state pension age is planned early in the new parliament, and is due to report by May 2017. It will consider a report from an independent body on factors impacting on state pension age. GMB will advocate our policy to this forum.

**Motions 51 and 52** – directly covered pensioners' income, in terms of calling for both a living pension and improved Christmas bonus (the latter being qualified as being secondary to an improved pension amount). Labour has been encouraged to establish a better level of state pension, thereby giving themselves a more attractive platform compared with other mainstream parties. The amount of Single Tier State Pension (applicable from April 2016) is set to be finalised in Autumn 2015 the months leading up to this, and post-election, will be the ideal time to make a push on this and work to draw parallels with the Living Wage will be undertaken.

**Motion 53** – called for part time workers to be better served in terms of accruing state pensions. This has been conveyed to the Labour Party who are interested in aggregating earnings across different employments for the purposes of qualifying for National Insurance linked benefits. Our work on occupational pension enrolment also calls for equal treatment of low earners/part time workers.

**Motion 54** – called for improvements to the statutory minimum level of workplace pension provision. This has been a constant feature of our work on workplace pension provision, from contributions to the media, responses to consultations, discussions with Labour and through briefing workplace officials. Whilst there is a broad consensus that the statutory levels are too low (even after they rise in 2017), there seems to be little political will to enforce further obligations on employers at this time.

**Motion 55** – called for continued challenge to rip-off pension schemes. This has featured in our work responding to government consultations and in discussions with DWP, as well as in a vigilant approach to looking at employer's pension arrangements.

**Motion 56** – called for a campaign for clarity on age discrimination legislation allowing justification of compulsory retirement. We have continued to advise officials on age discrimination around pensions and retirement; however we have not had a government sympathetic to creating favourable conditions for workers.

### General Pensions Policy

Legislation has been passed which make **Pensions Freedom and Choice, Defined Ambition and Collective Defined Contribution** (CDC) schemes legal. The first of these has had a lot of press coverage, and we continue to express reservations about the reduction in security that will accompany this new Freedom. There are no signs of any employers seeking to adopt the new forms of workplace pension allowed through Defined Ambition or CDC. In addition legislation has been passed that will see a cap placed on the charges that can be applied to workers' default pension savings. These issues, and more, are covered in the updated "GMB Guide to Pensions". This can be seen at our website [www.gmb.org.uk/pensions](http://www.gmb.org.uk/pensions)

At the time of writing, party manifestos have been studied, but the election outcome is unknown. Analysis of the manifestos does not suggest that there will be any imminent attacks on or improvements to state or workplace pensions. Most parties look set to restrict the tax relief given to pension contributions for higher earners, in order to fund spending elsewhere.

### Support for Officers, Activists and Members

The Department has offered support to National and Regional officers in respect of pensions matters at Local Government (UK wide), NHS (UK wide), Civil Service (UK wide), EDF, National Grid, British Gas, Asda, Babcock, Burtons, Nestle, Northumbrian Water, Speciality Minerals, Northumbria University, Parliamentary Staff (IPSA), PCS, the Royal Hospital School, NI Water, Anglian Water, Eastmans, Edrington, North British Distillers, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, CapGemini, Sigma Aldrich, DC Welsh Water, Thames Water, Survitec, Tata Steel, Wincanton, Lafarge, Cargill, Sanofi and Pilkington.

In order to support planned campaigns on pensions in the Commercial Services Section, the Department has begun collating information on pensions provision in Energy and Utilities and retail sectors.

For public sector schemes a large amount of time was spent developing and delivering briefing sessions on new Local Government Schemes and the new local Pension Boards, and on the new NHS Pension Schemes. The Dept has also represented GMB on various national bodies linked to these schemes.

The Department has assisted regions on more than 100 queries relating to individual member concerns in the last year.

### **Department Personnel**

At present, GMB Pensions Dept consists of Keir Greenaway. This is the last report to be written by Phil McEvoy, who leaves GMB in May 2015, and offers thanks and best wishes to all members, activists and staff.

## **POLITICAL DEPARTMENT**

### **General Election work**

Throughout the last year we've supported candidates from the beginning of the process from their selection contests through to the general election. We've helped to design and distribute hundreds of thousands of letters, leaflets and emails. Hundreds of GMB members knocked on doors and spoke to voters. The result of the election wasn't what we hoped, needed or worked for but that work means there were some silver linings as the dust settled such as former miner Harry Harpham, NHS worker Paula Sherriff and Richard Burgon who we will hear from at this congress all taking seats in the House of Commons. Our candidate training and the support of the political team has helped some new MPs to go from being an activist to being on a select committee.

We also took part in the most sophisticated communication strategy ever used by Trade Unions with a number of other TU's in targeted marginal seats this work will help inform and set the strategy going forward.

Now we start the process again for the 2020 election. We will be visiting branches and working with our Regional Political Officers and Industrial officers to identify GMB activists who want to become politically active helping and supporting them to become future candidates for any and all elected office. But as importantly we need to re-politicise our own members encouraging and supporting them to understand why Politics matters and the importance of becoming active in their CLP's Using GMB@WORK and Political education materials we've developed.

### **Councillors Network**

The GMB Labour councillor's network continues to grow despite Labour losing seats in the recent local elections. Currently the network membership is just below 900 members. We are also building communication via twitter and have around 5,800 followers on.

During the past year the network has gone through various levels on consultation on a number of issues, from TTIP, Living Wage, Minimum wage enforcement, Zero Hours contracts, and the provision of Social Housing.

With the recent General Election results, the future for local government looks bleak. More cuts to Local Authority budgets by central government are predicted, which will lead to a devastation of Local Services and problems for union membership.

Most council will be looking at partnerships with other councils and organisation.

We are involved in developing local conferences in each region as a means to build greater relationships between the union and the party in joint campaigns.

We have built up good relationships at a local level and wish to maintain, and improve working relationships through difficult times.

### **Other Political Work**

We have supported our Industrial Officers in getting questions asked in Select Committee's in giving evidence before the select committee in the Chemical industry during the proposed takeover of Astra Zenica by Pfizer. We have assisted our officers in Lobbying MP's and organising meetings with various politicians.

GMB is serious about recovering, recording and promoting its own history and achievements. To this end: the earliest minute books of the Gasworkers' union, together with the minute books of many of other constituent unions that form today's GMB (Boilermakers', Tailor & Garment Workers, Brush Makers, FTAT etc.) have been located at the Working Class Movement Library, in Salford. The location of Will Thorne's grave has been rediscovered in East London cemetery; and the union's early newspaper — *The People's Press* from 1890-91 - and Eleanor Marx's papers have been consulted at the Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

The department has published a new edition of Will Thorne's book, *My Life's Battles*, in time for the union's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations; and has brought out a centenary edition of Keir Hardie's *From Serfdom to Socialism*, in association with the Keir Hardie Society, to mark the centenary of the founder of the Labour Party.

Wider political work has included talks at the Tolpuddle Festival and speaking tours of Ireland, including events co-ordinated by Queens University, Belfast, in order to promote the GMB book on James Connolly.

## APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

1 MAY 2014 – 30 APRIL 2015

### APPOINTMENT OF MANUFACTURING SECTION NATIONAL OFFICER

Stuart Fegan

### APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISER

Birmingham & West Midlands Region - Mohammed Khalik

### ELECTION OF ORGANISERS

Birmingham & West Midlands Region - Karen Leonard, Gill Whittaker

Midland & East Coast Region - Dave Oglesby

GMB Wales & South West Region - Greg Hughes

### APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISATION OFFICERS

London Region - Michael Lancaster, Steve Sweeney

Midland & East Coast Region - Natalie Grayson, Lesley Waudby

Southern Region - Ake Achi

GMB Wales & South West Region - Matthew Roberts

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region - Deanne Ferguson

## TUC CONGRESS AWARDS 2014

Cathy Murphy, GMB Scotland was nominated for the TUC Women's Gold Badge Award. Unfortunately the nomination was unsuccessful.

Shani Hocking, Midland & East Coast Region was nominated for the TUC Health & Safety Rep Award. Shani's nomination was successful and she received her award at TUC Congress 2014.

Olivia Blake, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region was nominated for the TUC Award for Youth. Unfortunately the nomination was unsuccessful.

## SECTION REPORTS

### COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

#### Introduction

The Commercial Services Section membership grew by 5.7% (up 10,677 members to 196,686) in the past year. The Union's fastest growing Section now represents 31% of GMB's membership, having recruited a total of 35,824 members during the year - 42.9% of the total of GMB members recruited. This success was achieved through a tremendous joint effort by lay activists and full-time GMB staff.

#### Campaigns

In the last year the Section has run campaigns on a wide variety of issues. Campaigns have included: Cash in Transit (CIT) Attacks; CIT Vehicle parking; Contract Hours in Wilkinson Distribution; Heathrow Airport expansion; Holiday Pay across a number of national companies; Law Commission proposals for the Taxi industry; Living Wage in Security; *SafeGuard* campaign in Security; Safety first in G4S Cash; Slips, trips and falls in G4S Guarding; Violence and bullying at work in Asda Retail; Zero Tolerance on abusive calls for Call Centre Workers.

#### ASDA Distribution ALS

At the time of writing, the 2015 pay negotiations were underway. Our successful organising drive continues, with senior national stewards completing their GMB@Work "training the trainer" course. In turn, these senior stewards will train local depot stewards on recruitment. Membership density has increased to 76%.

#### ASDA Retail

Our influence continues to grow in Asda Retail and its third party work. Our success is illustrated by a 25% growth in membership in the past year. A new recognition agreement is being negotiated; an enhanced access agreement is being negotiated, and all new stewards are being placed on a national GMB@Work course. Recruitment is becoming more consistent in the majority of regions. Recruitment for 2015 so far has increased by 97% compared to the same period in 2014. Complementary to recruitment of new members and rebuilding our workplace organisation is building the stewards network - over 200 new stewards have been recruited in just over 2 years.

### **Aviation**

At British Airways, we are currently in the second year of a two-year pay deal which is inflation proofed, with a bonus attached to financial performance of the business. In Servisair, a 2 year pay rise for 2013-15 benefitted the lower paid more in cash terms. Members on the lowest scale saw their pay increase by 10% over this period. Shift pay was increased by 3% before it was consolidated into the hourly rates of pay. The claim for 2015/6 was submitted in May, following workplace consultations at most airports which led to a sizeable increase in membership. We now have 25 Workplace Organisers within the business and a strong and vibrant NNC of 9. Following the acquisition of Servisair by Swissport, we have secured our members current terms and conditions going forward as the company brings in new starters. Pay negotiations are underway with the ground handling company Dnata.

### **British Gas**

We now have a number of different bargaining units across British Gas and our membership continues to grow from strength to strength. Building on the 8% membership increase since last year, the key to our continued growth will be the roll-out of the Smart Metering programme. By Congress 2015, we expect to have some 1500 GMB members in Smart Metering, backed up by a strong shop stewards' structure. We are now growing at every British Gas site, including in Residential Energy. One of the most significant developments since Congress 2014 has been the formation of the GMB British Gas Womens' Group. In accordance with GMB policy, the Group is designed to develop our women leaders of the future.

### **EDF**

For the first time, GMB Workplace Organisers conducted multiple workplace ballots during the 2014 pay negotiations across four Customer Call Centre sites. Exceptionally high turnouts helped secure an improved wage offer of 4.1% for 2014-15, which was supported by over 70% of members. This contributed to steady membership growth (8.6%) and improved recruitment throughout the past year. In 2015, we plan to launch a zero-tolerance campaign targeting abusive calls and excessive workloads. In Nuclear Generation, members accepted a 2.5% increase and workplace consultations have commenced on 2015 pay. Across the Company, the TUs are negotiating on proposed changes to pensions, with a real threat to the current final salary pension scheme.

### **Gentings Casino**

The organising of casino workers and industrial bargaining for Gentings Casino is now being coordinated nationally by the Commercial Services Section. Pay negotiations in Gentings concluding at the end of 2014, achieving a 2% award for members with effect from 1st January 2015. Work is underway to rebuild the membership density from its current base and, very importantly, rebuild the national shop stewards network with planned campaigns surrounding pay and other issues. This is the main priority for the coming year, to ensure the best representation can be made for members going into pay talks at the end of the year.

### **GeoAmey**

A two-year pay deal was secured of 1% in 2014, with a further 1.5 % in 2015, plus improvements to the Assault on Duty scheme and holiday arrangements. With a national network of GMB workplace organisers now in place, our successful organising strategy continues, with 52% membership growth over the last year and a 62% increase in new members recruited.

### **G4S**

In Cash Solutions, a 2% pay deal was secured in 2015, with further redundancies announced for 2015. The Criminal Attack Fund continues to operate and funds remain healthy. The continued reduction in violent attacks means we are seeking fewer referrals. A new GMB national campaign on health & safety has been launched, and a full-time convenor role and facilities agreement has been introduced. In Secure Solutions, GMB pressure forced the company to abandon its proposals to withdraw company funding of employees' SIA licenses. Bargaining structures continue to strengthen with a sharper focus on organising. Discussions are underway on the living wage. Pay settlements include: a four year deal in Telereal Trillium (2015:1%, 2016:1%, 2017:3% and 2018:3.5%) with additional underpinning to

deliver living wage rates; a two year pay and harmonisation package in Patrol & Response with additional underpinning to deliver living wage rates; a 1.8% increase for IBM security. There are ongoing negotiations with RBS security over living wage rates and pay negotiations for all other local contracts also remain ongoing. At HMP Altcourse we are in dispute on the 2015 pay offer. A framework agreement and access has been reached on security for two new 10-year construction projects (Hinkley Point nuclear power station and the Thames Tidal Tunnel). Work continues on the GMB *SafeGuard* campaign, with significant progress being made in the contracts with the highest density of attacks. Across all G4S divisions, agreement has been reached on holiday pay calculations going forward.

### **Loomis/Mitie/VSG**

Within Loomis, the 2015 negotiations on pay and holiday pay are ongoing. Within Mitie, a living wage campaign has been launched and pay negotiations are ongoing. For VSG, a range of recognition agreements have been secured at national contract level and negotiations are pending to explore a national recognition agreement.

### **National Grid**

*Industrials:* we have emerged from a difficult couple of years with the company. Our shop stewards have been clawing back improvements to terms, conditions and pay. For 40% of our members, this has included improvements over and above the annual pay rise in December 2014. We have been undertaking GMB@work training for our industrial shop stewards and the development of succession plans is underway in most of the networks. *Staff:* there has been a lot of work undertaken to reinvigorate our staff shop stewards' structure, which had been hit by retirements, restructuring and redundancies. We now have an excellent cadre of staff-side shop stewards who have continued to secure improvements in pay for our members.

### **Nuclear**

Early in 2015, Nuclear Management Partners had their contract to run Sellafield terminated. GMB had long argued that the contract should have been terminated. The future of the site does remain uncertain though, and nationally the Section has been supporting the good work of GMB Northern Region and our excellent GMB Shop Stewards in fighting for a future for Sellafield. Our Convenor and Shop Stewards on site, supported by their Senior Officer, have also been leading a major campaign over re-grading for our Health Physics Monitors membership. On the Magnox sites, and at Dounreay, we have serious concerns about the approach of Cavendish, the contractor that runs the sites. GMB is challenging the Cavendish culture and approach. The biggest issue we are set to confront, across the NDA nuclear estate, is potential cuts to budgets. If budget cuts of 25% are realised it will have a huge impact across the entire nuclear industry and our members it employs.

### **Professional Drivers**

Our priority this year was to rebuild the Professional Drivers National Organising Committee (NOC) and stabilise the membership. Both of these objectives have been achieved. The new NOC met in April and now represents 5 Regions. We hope to extend this further. Due to campaigns and the high profile of GMB within this industry we are regularly consulted by statutory bodies and quoted on behalf of the Taxi Trade in the media. In order to monitor, support, communicate with and map our membership amongst predominantly self-employed drivers, new codes have been set up on the GMB membership system which will help our organising campaigns.

### **Securitas**

GMB continues to strengthen its position in Securitas, as bargaining structures develop and more contract level pay talks come onstream. Pay settlements included a three year deal plus a new reward scheme in JLA Aviation (2014:2%, 2015:2%, 2016:2%) and a two year deal for the Astra Zeneca contract (2% each year for 2015 and 2016). CSC and BAE Systems are currently under dispute. Negotiations on zero hours contracts and SIA license arrangements are ongoing.

### **Thompsons**

For 2014, a 1.1% pay increase was reached via ACAS negotiations. The firm's response to the Jackson Report has continued to mean job losses and centralisation. 2015 will inevitably see further restructuring and redundancies.

### **TUPS**

TUPS is serviced by the London Region, but the Section has been heavily involved nationally in the TSSA, where members took strike action. We found a compromise position in the TSSA dispute after 11 hours of talks at ACAS.

### **Water**

Following a 2014 Congress motion, GMB Water Forum Reps met with Labour's Maria Eagle to raise members' concerns regarding Ofwat's failure to include the water workforce as stakeholders in its price determination deliberations. They also expressed concerns about increasing attacks on their terms and conditions of employment

and continued outsourcing. Maria Eagle pledged her support, and committed to raising their concerns with Ofwat and continuing an ongoing dialogue regarding employment standards across the industry. The Water Forum Reps also completed their GMB@Work Consolidation course, including organising plans for 2015 and beyond.

#### **Wilkinson**

It has been a difficult year, with a number of redundancies announced across the business. GMB began the staged introduction of workplace ballots on 2014 pay in Wilkinson stores across a number of regions, in line with GMB@Work policy. It is planned to increase that number in 2015, potentially including the Distribution Centres. GMB is presently negotiating on future holiday pay calculations and will seek to organise around a membership ballot on any final offer.

#### **Yodel**

We are in the second year of a three-year pay deal which also includes productivity payments. In the last 16 months, around 5% of pay awards have been negotiated, and new agreements secured on public holidays. In order to organise and build the stewards network, the agreement giving access to sites to recruit new members needs to be utilised more consistently. Achieving this will need to be the focus for the immediate future.

### **MANUFACTURING SECTION**

**Furniture** BFM negotiations achieved a 2.68% increase on the minimum earnings guarantee and 1.8% on journeymen/women. The industry is still struggling with the increasing raw material costs compounded by the expansion of bio mass energy production.

**Remploy** are now in partnership with Maximus the American based company who have also taken over from ATOS on the government's disability assessment contract. The release from government control has been accepted as a good move by the joint unions, the shackles of enforced austerity have been removed and negotiations going forward will break the 1% barrier that has been enforced under this government.

**Rempower** is doing extremely well and expanding in the automotive supply chain business, currently in pay negotiations that should be concluded before the end of May, we are confident that at least 2.5% will be achieved this year. Arlington industries the group that owns Rempower have some major expansion plans in the supply chain of automotive parts to the British car production industry.

**IBO** organ building achieved and settled for a 2.5% increase in pay effective from the anniversary date of 1st January.

**LAFD** have a 2.5% offer out for consultation with a recommendation to accept at the time of producing this report, we are confident the offer will be accepted as the best that could be achieved in this year's negotiations.

**Oil & Gas Offshore Contractors Agreement** there are several on-going issues related to the offshore industry. One of the main issues being that the clients are hell bent on changing rotas, moving our members from a 2 on to 2 off rota to a 3 on 3 off rota, also with holidays being taken at field break which means at the 3 week off period, they have also proposed changes to terms and conditions regarding pay.

We have run a consultative ballot around the rotas and terms and conditions and that resulted in a 93% return against any of these proposed changes. Talks are on-going for us to find a position where hopefully we can move things forward.

**TICA** have been in dispute with the Tica Association approximately 15 months due to their refusal to honour a final stage 3 legal and binding decision.

**Tata** has announced plans to close the final salary pension scheme on 1 April 2016.

The final salary scheme is available to over 16,000 Tata employees. About 400 employees are in a new defined contribution scheme, although the company previously agreed that these people would have been allowed to join the final salary scheme if the finances improved.

Unfortunately the company has decided to reject any changes to the final salary scheme and has opted instead to propose closing the scheme altogether.

They are consulting on the closure over a period of 60 days. GMB has expressed serious concerns with the proposal, and alongside other unions are balloting members on the possibility of industrial action to defend the final salary pension scheme.

**Shipyard Barrow** the GMB has been consistently lobbying the government over the successor programme. We must make sure there is no complacency because as we are all aware the main gate decision is in 2016.

The company have committed to a 300 million site improvement plan to cater for successor, this will involve over 1000 extra jobs in the Construction Industry.

The staff and manual employees in Barrow have accepted the company offer on their 2014-2015 pay talks. 8.05% for a 2 year deal this include a change in working practices.

#### **BAE Systems Maritime – Naval Ships, Glasgow (Scotstoun and Govan)**

**Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carriers** Ship 02 – HMS Prince of Wales: The remaining Blocks being constructed in Glasgow will be rolled out and transported to Rosyth during 2015 and this will conclude the construction phase of the programme for BAE Systems.

There are around 300 employees from Glasgow working as part of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance programme at Babcock, Rosyth.

**Offshore Patrol Vessels** on 12 August 2014 BAE Systems were awarded a contract to construct three new Offshore Patrol Vessels for the UK Royal Navy.

Ship 01 – HMS Forth: Production started with the cutting of steel on 10 October 2014.

Ship 02 – HMS Medway: Production started with the cutting of steel on 1 June 2015.

Ship 03 – HMS Trent: Production starts with the cutting of steel on 1 September 2015.

The first of class is scheduled to be delivered to the customer in 2017.

**Redundancy Programme: 31 December 2013 to 31 May 2016** from a proposed reduction of 645 production employees and 190 staff employees, a total of 835, due to voluntary redundancy and general mitigation and 75 production employees compulsory redundancies this programme should be concluded during 2015.

#### **BAE Systems Maritime – Maritime Services Portsmouth**

**PAY** a preliminary meeting has taken place. The company have asked us to think about different ways to approach the annual review. They have indicated that there is a potential for a multi-year deal.

**Naval Base Update** £100m is being spent on site infrastructure in preparation for the arrival of the QEC. The D Lock refit team have moved to the refurbished 15 Dock complex to commence the refit on HMS Westminster. Extensive work is being carried out on the caissons and penstocks in the area of B lock. The material state of the pumping and docking arrangements is dire; much of this is as a result of under spending on maintenance for many years.

**Early Careers** this year's intake is as follows, 24 Craft apprentices, 14 Engineering Technician apprentices, 16 graduates.

**Appledore Update February 2015** Le James Joyce has just successfully completed official Basin Trials and is currently preparing for Sea Trials and delivery to the Irish Naval Service.

Employment has remained steady at around 400 permanent and sub – contractor personnel.

Our latest intake of apprentices has settled in well and currently splitting their time between college and the shipyard.

**Yard Report from Devonport Royal Dockyard Workload** there are 4 Frigates, 1 Amphibious Assault Ship, 1 V Class Submarine, 2 T Class Submarines, and Various on-going Contracts.

**Total Industrial Workforce** Total 1919, Total Permanent 1678, Total Agency 288.

The 2014 pay deal has been rejected, this deal has been on-going from October 2014, and this was rejected on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Rejected: 85.6%, Accepted: 14.4%.

Pensions; there is a new Proposed DB Pension scheme to be introduced in April 2015.

#### **Cammell Lairds Yard Report**

**On-going Contracts** currently within the yard we have on-going work being carried out on the BAE Asute sub also Carrier Deck Modules which are due to end quarter 3 this year. They have also just been awarded another new build the Strangford Ferry which is at a cost of 5,7million and is due to be delivered in August 2016, there is also a tender gone in on another smaller ferry which we are hoping to win.

We also currently are about half way through our 5 year MOD Cluster contract which consists of approximately 9 vessels.

**United Biscuits (Jacobs)** almost 800 members employed by United Biscuits (Jacobs) at the Aintree site in Liverpool entered into a dispute with their employer in October 2014 which resulted in two days of Industrial Action. The dispute focused around the treatment of our membership by local and senior management and the imposition of changes to working practices, as well as, the site contractual Absence Policy. An agreement to suspend industrial action in December 2014 for 'Fresh Start' talks to commence was reached and I am pleased to report that Industrial Relations at the site have improved in the interim although the dispute has not been formally withdrawn by our membership as yet due to a number of outstanding issues.



Alongside this dispute a National Communication and Consultative body has been established with this employer including our Senior Reps from GMB organised sites at Aintree, Carlisle, and Toll Cross to engage and improve industrial relations across all the United Biscuits sites.

**Flat Glass Industry** following the first Pay Negotiation meeting in October 2014 our membership rejected the offer from the Employers side of the Flat Glass Council to increase the Appendix 1 rates contained in the National Industry Agreement by 17p an hour or 2.3%. After consultation with the stewards a further meeting of the Flat Glass Council was convened on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to seek an improvement in the offer however none was forthcoming from the employer side. However it has been decided after consultation with Regional Officers and stewards that with only 43% or our members supporting any action in relation to the position of the Flat Glass Council on this year's pay offer, it was felt there was not a sufficient mandate to seek authority to hold a formal ERS ballot. However as part of these negotiations a recent meeting had been undertaken with the Flat Glass Council to set out the scope of the review of the National Agreement (particularly the amount and calculation of holiday pay) which our stewards in the industry will be getting involved in.

**Astra Zeneca** I am pleased to report following Congress last year and the unsuccessful attempt by Pfizer to acquire Astra Zeneca in the UK. Following this the Macclesfield site of Astra Zeneca has recently secured the significant capital investment from the Astra Zeneca group to build a new packing hall for the site. This investment at Macclesfield is hoped by our stewards and members to secure the long term future of the site.

Since many of the products that are produced at Macclesfield are now 'off patent' and can be produced by other generic manufactures. The Astra Zeneca Macclesfield site has a crucial role within Macclesfield and the Sub Regional Economy of the North West employing some 2000 people on site of which GMB has a high density of membership amongst the Manufacturing workforce which has increase by 40 since the beginning of the year.

We have recently secured a 3.8% pay offer for the workforce over two years which is subject to consultation and ballot.

**British Oxygen Company (BOC)** alongside colleagues from Unite GMB stewards have recently concluded a pay settlement for our members in the PG&P Bargaining Group achieving 2.5% increase on basic pay.

**Air Products** our stewards representing our Bay Cylinder Operators with Air Products have secured a 3.75% uplift in pay backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 and a change in shift patterns more amenable to the workforce. GMB has also secured a 2.5% increase in pay for our members who are employed as Package Gas Drivers that come under our agreement with the company backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014.

**National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI)** the NAECI pay claim was submitted on 09-12-2014, for 2016 and beyond.

Currently there are 7 NAECI Category 1 sites, with another 3 coming on stream in 2015, there are also currently 10 NAECI in scope repair and maintenance sites. We are pursuing a further 20 for NAECI categorisation, these 20 projects are either going through or have just passed the planning stages.

**CIJC Working Rule Agreement** Construction Industry Joint Council (CIJC) working Rule National Agreement is in the process of being completely overhauled, talks with the employers and signatory unions GMB, Unite, and Ucatt are progressing very slowly, the employers are not freely open to radical changes needed in this very poor agreement.

**International Brotherhood of Boilermakers** the General Secretary met with Joe Maloney the International vice president of the International brotherhood of boilermakers in January 2015, this meeting between the two organisations was an opener for our members to gain work in Canada in the repair and maintenance seasons on their PowerStation's, the brotherhood have been utilising UK high integrity pressure welders in Canada at peak times on PowerStation turnaround projects, the brotherhood make sure all welders are paid the same as their Canadian counterparts and are tested in the UK and flown out and looked after.

**Teesside Construction Committee** around the UK, small Energy from Waste (EfW) power plants with relatively small megawatt capacity to conventional fossil fuel stations are being built by local authorities, this is to combat the landfill tax for waste disposal. These power plants are put out to tender by the local authorities and none UK companies are winning most of the bids, this is because UK companies cannot compete with the none UK companies who bring in migrant labour from lesser economies and invariably they exploit them in the name of profit, all this at the cost of UK and GMB members Jobs.

The local engineering construction workers have formed the "Teesside Construction Committee" and along with the local officer GMB are helping our members by offering as much organisational support they need, their agenda is to get every infrastructure project on Teesside built under collective agreements, such as the National Agreement for the engineering Construction Industry (NAECI), which will then put the tendering stage on a level playing field. So far I

have attended every protest on the gates of Wilton and a march in Redcar on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April to raise the GMB profile.

**Shetlands Gas Plant (SGP)** Petrofac last week put out a press release regarding the big losses they have made on the Shetland Islands Gas Plant (SGP), the company have very limited experience on such construction projects and also did not do their geographical research on the islands horrendous weather conditions, subsequently they have fallen way behind schedule, and have now attempted to blame our members productive performance and industrial action on some of the delays, which is not out of the norm by such an employer who is in dire straits.

**Building Products** the demand for building products from Bricks to Aggregates to Plaster board has increased very significantly with members reporting an increase in demand which means in turn an expectation from management for our members to produce more.

Two companies Hanson and Lafarge Tarmac have had parts of their business sold off and merged into different companies. It at this stage remains to be seen if the new employer for many of our members will honour present terms and conditions under their new structural arrangements going in to the future.

**Hanson Building Products** have been bought by Lone Star Funds.

**Lafarge Tarmac** was given permission by the competition commissioner in December 2014 to approve the merger of Lafarge and Holcim and gave the go ahead for the sale of Lafarge Tarmac with the exception of the Cauldron plant and recently the Cookstown plant in Northern Ireland. The company CRH will be the new employer for the rest of the plants involved and have bought the majority of the assets being sold by Lafarge and Holcim.

**Aggregate Industry** 2.85% wage increase for building products and 3.1% increase for quarry workers were negotiated and accepted by GMB members.

**Monier Redland** 3% wage increase was negotiated and accepted by GMB members.

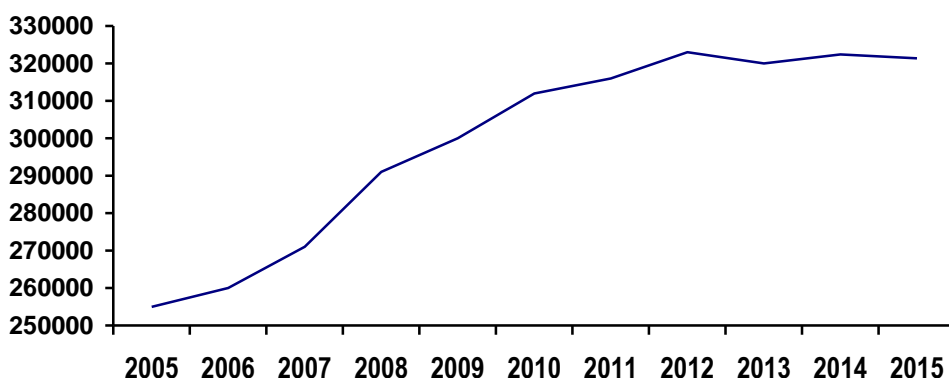
**British Gypsum** an increase of 2.5% for 2014, back-dated to February 2014, an increase from April 2015 of inflation (CPI) + 0.75% with a minimum pay-out of 2.6%, capped at 3%.

The section as a whole has been under a great deal of pressure during the current economic climate, but a massive amount of time and effort has been put into trying to offset the worst effects of employers rationalisation, downsizing, attacks on conditions and pensions. The dedication and commitment shown from all the National officers, Regional officers and activists has been second to none. As the acting National Secretary I can say that I am extremely lucky to have such a great multi-talented group of officers and staff looking after the sections membership, I am confident that with the continued hard work the section will go from strength to strength.

## PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

The 2010-15 Tory-LibDem government was the most aggressively anti-public sector on record. Over 700,000 job losses and unprecedented cuts to services and wholesale privatisation. Local government bore the brunt with 30% cuts to budgets and 450,000 job losses. In the face of all this GMB workplace activists, branches and Officers have done an outstanding job representing members in these very difficult circumstances. This hard work has meant that despite all the Tory-LibDem government cuts we have managed to maintain membership levels across the Public Services Section.

**GMB Public Services Membership 2005-2015**



Our work is overseen by committees of lay members, led by the National Committee which is chaired by Mary Turner. The ethnic composition of those committees that we are aware of is 32 White UK; 2 Black African; 1 Black Caribbean; 1 Black British and 1 Irish. The Section Officers and their responsibilities are Brian Strutton (National Secretary, Local Government and general public services); Rehana Azam (National Officer, NHS); Avril Chambers (National Officer, Schools policy and academies); Justin Bowden (National Officer, Contractors and Care); Sharon Holder (National Officer, HE/FE, Justice and Civil Service). Tom Hazeldine provides research and policy support.

### **Local Government**

Recent years have seen local government entirely dominated by budget cuts, job losses and pay restraint. Local government political leaders have accepted the need for the sector to adapt to lower funding levels by reducing services to statutory minimum levels and pulling out of many non-statutory services altogether. The knock on effect, for example on adult social care services, has been profound and councils are increasingly choosing to remove themselves from first line service delivery.

The pressure of a fragmenting local government sector combined with the proliferation of academy schools has meant a growing reliance on the NJC Green Book and the Local Government Pension Scheme as the two main building blocks of terms and conditions across a sector that now comprises nearly 10,000 employers. Both have been under pressure in the last year and GMB has taken a leading responsibility in successfully maintaining their integrity. But while the LGPS remains a strong and successful pension scheme with over 5m members and £200bn worth of assets, the NJC continues to struggle with abysmally low pay settlements. GMB has sought to maximise pay awards for the lowest earners and the latest 2014-16 deal included an increase of 9.6% for the lowest paid. Further successes have been seen in our Living Wage Campaign which has now converted more than half of local authorities to pay a Living Wage. However, these improvements have highlighted the pressure on the rest of the pay structure with differentials squeezed too much.

### **National Health Service**

The GMB has campaigned, organised, recruited and represented NHS staff against a bleak backdrop of attacks by a coalition government with some success in raising attention of the actual effect of cuts to the NHS by the coalition government.

At Congress 2014 it was reported that the Secretary of State for Health had refused to implement an independent recommendation by a Pay Review Body on pay and so the Secretary of State for Health embarked on a collision course with the GMB and other health unions. GMB mobilised the NHS membership over the Summer of 2014 and a ballot was served in September. The ballot returned overwhelming support for industrial action. 78% voted in favour of industrial action and 91% voted in favour of action short of a strike.

GMB members began with two episodes of four hours of strikes, and these took place on 13th October & 24th November, 2014.

Despite the disruption, the 4 hour strikes and the programme of action short of a strike combined together had little impact on an entrenched position by Mr Hunt and the Government. So GMB Ambulance Service members led the charge and agreed to take part in escalated industrial action in what would have been the biggest walkout the NHS has seen in decades scheduled for February 2015.

As a result of GMB members escalating strike action, a revised offer was secured from Government and put to the membership which was accepted by 4 to 1. Concessions secured for the Ambulance Service included the end to a previous 18 month suspended dispute which threatened to cut their sick pay by 25%. Whilst GMB NHS members continue their campaign for fair pay in the NHS, they can rightly take some comfort in changing a Tory led government's position on pay.

So whilst the GMB has continued to make steady progress in the NHS there is much more to be done. The NHS is featured as one of the biggest issues in the 2015 General Election. The GMB can rightly be proud of all the community campaigns organised across the country to bring the attention of service users and local communities to what has happened to the service as a result of government policy. The GMB proudly supported the People's March for the NHS.

The GMB campaign to strengthen workplace organisation and save our NHS continues.

### **Civil Service and Justice**

Civil Servants continued to be the focus of attention for Francis Maude, the Cabinet Office Minister. Primarily with the objective of reducing the number of civil service staff employed across all government departments, through

reorganisation, along with an ideological determination to out-source all key industrial type services and severely reducing all levels of financial commitment at the cost of trade union facility time. Consequently, a majority of GMB members employed in the Prison Service and MOD will transfer to the private sector in 2015. Representation to the government proved fruitless. Nonetheless, through extensive consultation, GMB maintained recognition and check-off facilities with the private sector in each of these former civil service sectors. For those civil servants that remain, GMB will continue to pursue its campaign to switch members to direct-debit.

### **Police Support Staff**

GMB Police Support Staff, following a trade dispute and being on the verge of industrial action across police forces in England and Wales, reached agreement to accept a 2.2% two-year pay deal covering the period 2014-2016.

### **Higher Education**

Higher Education Support Staff also reached an agreement above the government's public sector pay restraints and were awarded 2% uplift on all pay spine points, with an additional £30 for low paid staff on point 1 and a commitment to address practices of zero-hour contracts and gender discrimination in higher education institutions.

### **Social Care**

Turbulence continues in the fragile care sector where we are witnessing a slow motion collapse due to underfunding. All political parties made pre-election pledges to address the problems - we'll see. Life Style Care 2011, Avery and Four Seasons Health Care are all reminders over the past year that failures, sales and acquisitions will continue indefinitely, yet GMB is still to take on board sufficiently the lessons of Southern Cross and prioritise direct debit only recruitment and sustainable organisation built around lay activists and care branches.

### **Contractors**

Inflation may be hovering around zero but members on public sector contracts have had their fill of freezes and cuts and disputes are on the increase reflecting a growing appetite to challenge austerity and recoup recent living standards losses.

In the GMB-led campaign for justice for those blacklisted by Carillion and others, The Crocodile Tears Tour, to name and shame the so-called professionals who ran the blacklists for their companies, was a huge success. The full High Court hearing is scheduled for next Spring when the blacklisters will be forced to account in public for what they did to GMB members.

### **Environment Agency**

Membership has held up despite job reductions. GMB continues fighting to protect the Residential Lock and Weir Keepers on the River Thames.

Having doggedly led GMB's challenge against central government cuts to the Environment Agency, GMB National Rep, Tim Cheshire, retired at the end of 2014 after 9 years representing GMB locally, regionally and nationally. We wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

### **Schools and Academies**

At the time of writing, we still have Government policy that continues to push for total conversion of our schools to academies meaning that there are now over 3,300 Academies in England, 15 times as many as in May 2010, when there were just 203 academies and all of them sponsored. Since last Congress, we have obtained National recognition with more Multi Academy Trusts, this means we now have National Recognition Agreements with 28 Multi-Academy Trusts. GMB membership in Academies is now over 22,500 this added to our continuing growth in Maintained Schools membership we now have a total of over 116,000 members working in our schools and academies, the majority of whom are part time working women.

We were successful through our national campaign and hard work locally and regionally in beating AET (the largest Academy Trust) into retreat regarding the outsourcing of all staff who were not Principals or teachers. We are currently negotiating an in house solution where possible and ethical outsourcing where not.

### **Affiliations**

GMB is affiliated to Public Services International and the European Federation of Public Service Unions where we are represented by Gary Doolan.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Since May 2014 until the end of April 2015 I am pleased to report that we have seen continued growth within our regional membership whereby we have maintained a plus on the 12 month period 2014 to 2015. Our membership had grown during that 12 month period by 433 members.

We continue to ensure that the national targets are being dealt with by the Regional Officers. The first of the national targets is Asda where within the region we have seen significant success, GMB@Work being the guiding light. The new access stores are being targeted covering all shifts and we continue to recruit new representatives as well as new members. In the centre of the region throughout Birmingham we have been able to recruit one new representative in each of the stores covered. There is also success with the campaign to save the canteens using a petition and a survey that was produced by representatives within the region.

Local government and schools. The main focus has been to rebuild in Birmingham City Council with this being the biggest authority within the region with the most potential, having over 400 schools. We have managed to get the branch to support our targeting in line with the branch development plan and GMB@Work and they have been running separate forums for their representatives so the focus was on organising and workplace issues instead of normal branch business. This has proven very successful and has contributed to an improvement in the figures for Birmingham, albeit still fairly slow. This practise was then rolled out to the other areas within the region in respect of local government and schools and we saw throughout the year a modest improvement as a result of this stance.

Within the Care Sector a number of care week organising were planned into officer's diaries using the issue of CCTV cameras within care homes to engage and encourage the staff to see the benefits of joining the union. We now have a growing Care Branch within the region where all care homes and care workers are placed into and the Care Branch Secretary is very proactive in promoting GMB@Work philosophies and gets actively involved in all campaigning and organising within the sector and beyond. The branch now stands at 1,216 members which has grown throughout the year and continues to see significant growth. Other significant areas of potential and organising success are as follows:

- Blue Arrow JCB Recruitment Agency. We have gained full recognition with Blue Arrow and the membership within this recruitment agency within JCB continues to grow and currently stands at 350 members, specifically within Blue Arrow. This does have a tendency to fluctuate when Blue Arrow employees are given permanent JCB contracts throughout the year plus it continues to be a major source of new membership.
- There is also a company called Clipper Logistics which is based in Rugby. The majority of the workforce are Polish and we have arranged meetings with a Polish translator present whereby the potential members have stated that they would favour having the GMB represent them and we are currently building the membership before contacting the company about recognition.
- A company called Senoble, we have secured a learning agreement with Senoble and we now have access to all staff via a series of 2-hour assessments to sort out the learning requirements for the workforce however we will obviously be utilising this opportunity to build the membership within the company.

Companies where we have recognition or are attempting to gain recognition are as follows:

- Walsall Wheelbarrows. Now fully recognised and being organised and our representatives are due to start their training very shortly.
- Northampton Partnership Homes who took over the council housing for Northampton Borough Council. We are now discussing recognition with them and attempting to get the workforce into the union.
- AMG Alloys at Minworth. We have been targeting this company for some time and recognition now looks possible.

The other major important regional development is obviously the successful merger with Unity, the ceramics based union based in Stoke on Trent. The merger was official on 16 April 2015 and at the time of writing the 4,000+ members from Unity are being transferred into the region. This will give us a significant boost in regional membership

but more importantly we will have the expertise and knowledge of the Unity Activists along with the resources of the GMB to now target the potential members within the ceramics industry in the companies that we now have recognition in. We hopefully will see a marked improvement in the ceramic membership figures going forward. In conclusion of my report for 2014/2015, I again have to commend the officers, staff and activists within the region. They never shirk their responsibility and are always willing and able to go that extra mile to try to secure success for the region. As usual within the Birmingham & West Midlands Region, any challenges or threats that come our way, we do our utmost best to turn them into opportunities.

## **LONDON REGION**

This year's Regional report is in many ways a repeat and an extension of last years. But as with all other regions there is a much greater political emphasis, more on that later.

We continued to meet our financial targets throughout 2014 which we believe to be essential if we are to continue to grow and improve the service to members.

Yet again we have used the press both nationally and locally together with the media office in seeking to promote the region's policies and endeavours and in this regard there has been some fantastic work which has been carried out by both officers and branches, well done. Can I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our National Press Department whose efforts and support, are very much appreciated by myself and the region.

Despite the many difficulties we encounter we continue to build our membership. Aside to the Officers' Collective Organising Days and the Regional Project Board, we have now put in place a further Organising Plan for 2015, and it's an exciting one.

It revolves around TUPE Transfers where we have under the Freedom of Information Act sought from employers TUPE information, information that lets us know when and where transfers are taking place in the three industrial sections of the region.

The TUPE information we receive from employers not only provides us with the calendar dates but also gives us the financial cost and the numbers of people involved in each of the tender transfers.

Once in receipt of the above, it allows us to organise and target accordingly, it is early days, but so far the strategy is proving to be extremely successful. We have already achieved recruitment success in Medirest Ealing, BUPA Care Homes, being transferred to Bedford County Council and in the Imperial Trust covering St Mary's, Charing Cross and Hammersmith & Fulham Hospitals.

With the strength of membership recruited within BUPA Care Homes which was transferred to Bedfordshire County Council, we were able to negotiate an agreement with Bedfordshire County Council whereby our members are now receiving the Living Wage. A fantastic victory proving again the importance of strong workplace organisation.

Health & Safety is still a high regional profile not only in the workplaces for our members but also in our own offices for our own staff which our Health & Safety Officer continues to monitor.

The Regional geographical Health & Safety Forums that the region put in place in 2014 are progressing for sure.

The activity is growing which of course, is extremely encouraging.

We continue to see a development within our Equality and Diversity Forums in all of its various strands. Most pleasing is to see the continued involvement by the younger members, especially in the political arena.

Education and Training also continues to have a high profile within the region, continuing to raise the awareness and involvement of Lay Representatives which of course is the lifeblood of our Organisation. We have seen an increase in our Workplace Organisers attending GMB London Region Education Courses and I am proud to say that the delivery of Initial Support Training to our new Stewards has now hit near 100%, no doubt we have come a long way. Membership continues to grow although at a slower pace than we would hope for. Our current membership count is female 56,692, male 44,928, Grade 1 59,882, Grade 2 31,009, Retired etc. 10,389 giving a total of 101,620 which reflects the hard work and dedication of all concerned, Officers, Staff, Branches and Workplace Lay Activists, all of whom continue to promote the benefits and values of the GMB, sometimes in the face of determined opposition from employers and politicians.

One area where we will be concentrating our efforts is Local Authorities where Trade Union penetration is very low, despite recognition agreements. The pay freezes that our Public Services members have had to endure over the last five years have been immense, and there is a lot of ground to make up and for us to have any chance in doing that, we must make sure that our collective strength in Local Authorities becomes a voice that the employer respects, with this in mind we will be co-ordinating the efforts of the Local Authority officers, Lay Activists together with workplace and

branch officers incorporating Facility Time Agreements, with the intention of bringing local authority membership back to its historic levels, matching our success in schools.

Apart from our prime aim to grow the membership and improving the services we offer, we, in common with all other regions, have been constantly aware of the need to do everything possible to secure a Labour victory on May 7, just a couple of weeks away as I prepare this report. Whilst I accept that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we won't know that for a couple of weeks, I am very upbeat regarding the efforts the region has made in recent years mainly as a result of the formation of the Political Forum and an increase in the number of Branch Political Officers, together with our efforts to increase the number of branches affiliating to their Constituency Labour Parties and becoming involved in their local political activities, at all times promoting GMB values.

An activity of which I am particularly proud is the mass leafleting and canvassing that we have been involved in over several years, directing those efforts to key seats within the region. These events draw large numbers of both Lay members and Officers to and from all corners of the region. It's an organisational concept that works and will continue and further progress.

In itself, this also shows the growing political awareness across the region because until a few years ago most efforts were concentrated towards key seats in the central London area, which we still do. However, we are also much more involved in political/industrial activities across the region and the progression that we have seen in the Eastern Region has been tremendous with our members and officers becoming much more involved with their local Councils and CLPs. The political and industrial concept that the region put in place five years ago has, in a positive way, concentrated the minds of Activists to where many understand how essential it is for us to have political influence and for GMB Lay members to become more involved and active, influencing the political agenda. The region is no longer a hole in the wall for the Labour Party, we have replaced this with a political concept which is out there continually promoting the values of this great union and in that travel we are identifying more and more political activists, people that are doers, not armchair critics.

As of now despite not knowing the outcome of 7 May we are committed to continue to build on the accomplishments of recent years, regardless of which Party prevails. We regard the need for a strong political awareness to be as great as ever.

As of now however we do have a serious political trade dispute with a Labour Local Authority, Barking & Dagenham who have threatened to cut the wages of our Refuse Cleansing Grounds Maintenance and Housing Drivers pay by £1000 per annum, £20 per week, by cutting or abolishing pre-start which was part of their collective contractual agreement. Over 100 GMB members are involved in the trade dispute.

Our members stand to lose as I said £1000 a year and so far the Council has following three meetings with ACAS offered them a one-off £400 buy-out payment as a goodwill gesture. However, the ACAS meeting of the 30th April concluded where GMB advised the Council that there needed to be a fundamental change in their approach to these discussions, and recommend that ACAS talks between GMB and the Council should be reconvened with meaningful negotiations. This was agreed by all parties in the room.

Despite the above, this proposal was put by LBBDD management behind closed doors with UNISON and UNITE (who don't have any members involved in the strike). Brian Strutton, National Secretary for Public Services said "I have to say I just don't understand what those unions are doing colluding with a Council Leadership to undermine an official dispute, what makes it worse is that this agreement was promoted immediately within the Barking & Dagenham Post which suggests these actions were pre-determined". If any of them thinks for one second that this will weaken the GMB or our members' determination, they can think again. As I write this report the strike continues.

### **NHS**

In tandem with our political commitment we continue to build our NHS membership and involvement. Many of you may have read or seen on TV that having consistently campaigned against Circle Healthcare at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, they eventually relinquished their contract. Noticeably the right-wing press blamed it on the unions.

This was followed by a public meeting in Huntingdon to where the GMB London region stood centre stage and was attended by many residents. As a direct result of Circle leaving, the GMB were able to gain access to the hospital for the first time. Watch this space.

### **Legal Department**

Further to last year's report, we continue to be concerned in respect of the introduction of fees to go to Employment Tribunals and the massive drop-off of cases going forward as reported by Frances O'Grady, the TUC General

Secretary. Although I would, once again, report that no London Region member has been denied representation due to this pernicious measure.

There were, as was to be expected, some teething troubles with the introduction of UNIONLINE and the inevitable centralisation of the new legal provision, familiarising ourselves with this new and unique legal organisation. However, following the efforts of the National Legal Team and our Regional Legal Staff the system now in place, giving members direct access to UNIONLINE has proved to be overwhelmingly successful, especially where it eliminates the previous difficulties of waiting times, referrals and legal explanations. As anticipated we are experiencing increased volumes of legal referrals and involvement.

The system also encourages officers to form direct relationships with UNIONLINE staff on matters of extreme urgency or collective issues. Another benefit being their participation in officer training which we anticipate will further develop over the years.

### **Obituaries**

During the year we were advised of the deaths of two well like retired officers. John Tester who had risen through the ranks as a lay member. As a full-time Officer John was involved with many industries including engineering and Christian Salvesen.

John retired in the 1980s and together with his wife, enjoyed his retirement until just before Christmas 2014 when he suffered two heart attacks, from which he initially recovered but died just before Christmas 2014.

John is remembered as a good hard working no-nonsense officer.

The second death was that of Jeremy McMullen. Although Jeremy was a London Region officer in the 1970s and the very early 1980s, he had a very varied career.

Jeremy was a qualified Solicitor who for a while was the National Legal Officer. It was during this time that he produced what we believe to be the first Law at Work booklet.

During the 1970s he transferred to London Region as a Regional Organiser working very closely with Paul Kenny, before returning to Law as a Barrister, although he remained in contact with the region giving a great deal of advice and assistance.

Jeremy progressed, if that's the right word, through the legal profession eventually becoming a Judge at the EAT. In 2013 Jeremy had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But continued his empathy with working class issues and together with his wife set up a fund to assist working class students' progress in the legal profession.

Our thoughts are with both families.

## **MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION**

The Region's management structure is unchanged from last year with the Regional Secretary being supported by three Senior Organisers leading their teams. The Region's management is divided on a geographical basis with each Senior Organiser responsible for a team of 4/5 Organisers and relevant staff. Each Senior Organiser, supported by Lead Officers, also takes regional responsibility for one of the union's three sections. The Region also has a team of four Officers who are directed solely on recruitment activities known as the Action Team. This team is also managed on a day to day basis by one of the Region's Senior Organisers.

The Region has continued to grow through 2014/15 and has increased its overall membership. This growth is completely organic and is not the result of mergers or take overs. Midland and East Coast Region is proud of this achievement, considering the massive financial Government cut backs and economic uncertainty is having on the Public and Private Sectors. Our growth is in no small part down to the committed activists across our Region who work tirelessly on behalf of our membership and the GMB. This growth shows that people are in need of a trade union more than ever and appreciate the support and protection that we provide. Unfortunately we are not immune to closures and our manufacturing section has lost Joy Mining which shut its service centre in Pinxton in November 2014 with the loss of 51 jobs. Imperial Tobacco in Nottingham, which will shut at the end of the year with the direct loss of 450 jobs, as well as the support structure that supplies it. Seven Seas have 70+ years of history in Hull and has been a GMB organised site for many years. It is sad to see this industry move away from Hull, however, 150 new jobs will be created on the site, which would offer a potential recruitment campaign. We have provided representation to our members through these painful times and have been supported by *Uniec Prestige Ltd* Financial Services, whose pension advice has proved extremely advantageous to our members.



The increasing movement of schools into academies has presented the Region with challenges and opportunities. Organisers have been working hard to ensure members are represented through the TUPE process and feel supported during this time of change and uncertainty. The Action Team, along with Industrial Officers have been deployed to increase membership in these new academies and this has been largely successful. Recruitment in schools has also continued to contribute positively to our growth. Schools have been targeted across the Region by all Officers and are supported by many of our activists. Northampton Schools has been an on-going recruitment project for the last year for the Action Team and the Officer which was born on the back of an onslaught of TUPE transfers from Local Authority schools to Academies in 2013. We now have nearly 2000 members in Local Authority schools and Academies along with new shop stewards and contact points. Lincolnshire County Council academies have been written to confirming our continued recognition and national terms and conditions. Many ambitious local authorities have supported the GMB's living wage campaign and we are now attempting to ask authorities to adopt this so that this is extended to all outsourced contracts. In Leicester City Council where, as well as having 5 full time convenors, we are increasing the number of reps that we have. We are managing to get reps on board in areas where traditionally we may have struggled such as schools. Despite cut backs and reviews in all service areas our membership remains at a steady level with recruitment making up for those members that we have been unable to retain when they lose their jobs through redundancy. In fact this Local Authority has been one of the highest recruiting local authorities in terms of new members in the country which is a real credit to the effort that the Branch are putting into this. We have also achieved the Living Wage.

The established Wilkinsons, ASDA Shop Steward and Local Government meetings continue to meet. These take place at Regional Office in Nottingham. These meetings cover store reports, Health and Safety issues and GMB@Work. Stewards are asked to map the workplace with good results and recruitment opportunities identified. Over the previous 12 months we have made some considerable progress in ASDA stores. The access agreement is working well. We are recruiting steadily and consistently within most of the stores. New noticeboards for GMB are being put into place and we are also starting to slowly build the shop stewards network establishing GMB@Work and also a new way of working with ASDA moving forward. We will be visiting all ASDA stores between April and September as part of the phased access in 2015. Some of these are stores that have never previously been visited for the purposes of recruitment. The visits are co-ordinated by the industrial officer and a member of the Action Team, a joined up approach for the purposes of recruitment and retention of members.

There are 4 ASDA Distribution Centres across our Region. It has been interesting to see how the National Recognition Agreement signed with ASDA a couple of years ago has embedded at these sites. Some are working very much in partnership with management whilst others are finding it more of a struggle with Managers locally. Their relationships will be tested more going forward as ASDA continue to attempt to increase profit against difficult trading conditions. Recruitment has remained excellent, with some sites in particular really picking this up and making excellent use of the agreed organising days and access to new starters. Our Region continues to perform well against others despite the fact that some of our sites already have very high membership density.

The Region has been heavily involved in the apprentices, traineeships and young workers agenda over the past 12 months. As per Congress policy, we have been ensuring that Workplace Organisers are fully briefed on the importance of GMB involvement in the apprenticeship agenda, particularly in establishing quality schemes. All new representatives, as part of the induction process, receive awareness sessions and all Officers have received a briefing on the issue in the past 12 months. We have also met with Local Enterprise Partnerships to brief them on GMB's involvement with Traineeships and Apprentices. Over the past 18 months, the Education and Health & Safety Department has been singly involved in the submission of a Union Learning Fund (ULF) Round 16 bid to finance activities around setting up of apprenticeship/traineeship programmes.

The project will meet the criteria as set out in Motion 225 (C20) 2014. The project also intends to fulfil the overall requirements of Motion 12 Congress 2014.

The Education Officer has also been ensuring that Workplace Organisers are fully briefed on the importance of GMB involvement in the new Regional Project, particularly in establishing quality schemes.

Other areas to note that have been progressed are:

2-day courses run on 'Mental Health Awareness' and Tackling Workplace Stress' -

The delivery of this training to Workplace Organisers fulfils requirements outlined in Motions 43 & 44 Congress 2014.

Continuing to meet the requirements of the CEC Special Report: "GMB Branches – A Future That Works"

Medical Appeals Team update training - Continuing to offer the service to members.

The Region continues to engage closely with all our branches, which are now all under lay member officials. The branches all complied with the branch reviews and engage well with all the area forums which continue to meet to share best practice, socialise and support local campaigns and charities. Several new branches have been formed in the Region with some sending delegates to Congress this year.

The Action Team have been working hard to support Organisers on recruitment in both recognised workplaces and greenfield sites. They have recruited well in many greenfield Care Homes across the Region, which have been visited between other appointments on a cold-call basis. This is supported by several voluntary recognition agreements being negotiated. Each area team has scheduled and pre-planned recruitment weeks throughout the year, when a co-ordinated approach is taken to national, regional and local recruitment targets. Individual Officers' fortnightly organising/recruitment days continue to ensure GMB@Work is embedded into all workplaces.

ISS contracts across the RAF continue to be a challenge – the company are very poor at Industrial Relations which creates problems for all concerned at times. For instance local meetings being cancelled and recruitment access refused because pay talks have not been concluded. We continue to focus on recruitment on these contracts though accessing potential members can be challenging.

The Region has been reaccredited with the Investors in People award and this is demonstrated within the Region as for Officers and staff we have piloted the Trainee Officer Project as well as looking for other initiatives to engage with our staff and move more resources towards the front line. Indeed three secretaries have now made the transition to Officer and other staff are expanding their experience in particular around schools, academies and young members. Membership in the NHS and NHS Contractors continues to grow following recognition of GMB last year at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. We have built our membership and established a specific branch to support this membership. The Action Team and Organisers attend weekly inductions and this was reflected by the recruiting of 102 new members. Regionally our NHS membership increased by 119 members in 2014. This was down to the excellent work being done by the Organisers and Lay Representatives in the Region in Hull Royal Infirmary, Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust, United Lincolnshire hospital, Bassetlaw Hospital and Sherwood Forest Hospitals Trust which is still under the financial shackles of the Labour Government's PFI and is in special measures. In Scarborough Hospital we have continued to build a strong membership from a standing start of 12 members; we have taken it up to 70+. Carillion was also awarded a 5 year £200 million contract in June 2014 at the NUH Trust to provide facilities management and estate services. Excellent work by the Organiser and branch officials secured full recognition for GMB with Carillion on this contract. Although the GMB is not recognised within the Leicestershire NHS Trust the Interserve membership has increased by approximately 150 members through hard work servicing, campaigning and challenging the company on the changes to our members' terms and conditions after the Tupe transfer from Serco in March 2013. The campaign has led to much press coverage and GMB is now the biggest union with this contact. Our membership in EMAS continues to build under the stewardship of Simon Todd and Nigel Beasley ably supported by other stewards and key activists. The members and activists were very prominent and solid during the industrial action, however, exemptions were given for loss of life and limb.

We continue to work with our members who have migrated from Europe. It is a slow process but we have made some in-roads across food and manufacturing.

A successful claim was settled with Cranswick Country Foods, Hull with 25 Polish GMB members getting up to £1,150 back-pay due to a pay scheme that was challenged as discriminating.

We have secured a new workplace representative who is going through GMB training within Cranswick, and we continue to campaign for better terms and conditions for all members within Cranswick Foods, Hull.

## **NORTHERN REGION**

### **1. GMB@Work**

Workplace consolidation is fundamental to the Northern Region's approach to GMB@Work. Our strategy continues to be based on organisations where we have less than a 60% density. Full-Time Organisers continue developing membership with specific support from the Regional Organising Team (ROT) on National Targets in Team Areas. In addition as part of GMB@Work, greenfield recruitment leads and applications for recognition through the voluntary and CAC routes, are essential parts of our greenfield toolkit.

Supporting the Region's GMB@Work method is education and training of Shop Stewards as Workplace Organisers, as part of the GMB@Work National Training Programme.

The Region's Finance Department incorporating Membership and IT monitoring and support systems track recruitment by Team Area and workplace as part of resource allocation and the training record of Shop Stewards is an integral part of Regional ROT Reporting Systems. Management of these processes and functions are essential to our regional performance.

Recruitment and recognition opportunities and action form part of the Northern Region's approach to recruitment, workplace organising and retention. We have been successful in this approach and the Northern region was able to achieve recognition through the CAC and Voluntary Agreements in: Armour Plastics; Aviator Newcastle; Ghyllside Primary School; Responsive Engineering Ltd.; Thirteen; Three Rivers Learning Trust.

The Regional Organising Team is integral to the Region's GMB@Work process and embedding an on-going organising culture.

## **2. Recruitment Targets and Campaigns**

The Region is very much focused on the need to organise around the National Targets Strategy. Recruitment activity continues to be prioritised in Asda; School Support Staff in Team Areas; Security; Greenfield opportunities. Supporting Voluntary recognition and CAC applications has been embedded into our regional culture so that 10% membership density together with petitioners has led to better focused recruitment.

We have also continued to focus recruitment activity in Construction; Energy and Utilities; NHS; Private Contractors; Apprentices; ASDA; Schools; Academies; Local Authorities and Associated Contractors.

The Region has supported Young Members with a vibrant Young Members' Section in developing our network of Young Members within Branches and to help build into our GMB@Work and Regional Equality Agenda within the Young Members' network. We have an active Regional Equality Forum (REF) and we have been a key player in the development of the Sellafield Women's Network. In addition our Retired Members' Association (RMA) continues to provide vital work that helps the Northern Region's focus on industrial and political matters that support our regional and national objectives.

## **3. Overview of Regional Developments**

The Coalition Government's austerity programme since 2010 has decimated the Northern Region. Our members, their families and communities have suffered greatly from a range of policies enacted by the Tory/Lib Dem Coalition. The Northern Region economy is still to show signs of any kind of sustainable recovery, not helped by a Government continuing to attack the fabric of our Region, with no discernible regional economic policy or progress on Government procurement or infrastructure support.

The outlook is not good for the next few years, as our region lags behind any property based recovery. At the time of writing this report the General Election outcome is not known and it is uncertain if we will see the Region improve on that basis.

This Region desperately needs support in public and private investment. There is huge potential in the provision of energy and defence, infrastructure and in the manufacturing sector in the Northern Region.

Off shore wind, solar, wave, on shore hydro power, nuclear power and green coal, could all be part of a balanced energy policy. This Region could be a key hub for the development of the sector, bringing jobs and income and regional regeneration. It requires government action and support and the political will to encourage investment in a longer term strategy to get businesses interested in making the move. The free market on its own reacts too slowly. All evidence, experience and logic backs up that view.

Likewise, in the civil engineering sector, where areas of the north are crying out for council housing and schemes such as new road building and maintenance. Government support for these projects is essential and any delay will put back vital regeneration work.

Politically the Local Elections in 2014 consolidated Labour's gains of 2012 and 2013, as a reaction to Tory and Lib Dem austerity.

The Region has a good working relationship with some excellent Labour MPs and that support is essential as we seek to integrate our industrial and political wings of our Region.

The 2014 European Elections was extremely successful for the Northern Region with two additional Labour MEPs elected.

GMB Northern provided support to the Labour European Election Campaign, Local Election Campaigns across the Region and in the campaigning in Seats in the run up to the 2015 General Election.

Public Services are an essential in the life of the Northern Region. The cuts have had a devastating impact on our members, their families and communities. Similarly within Manufacturing and Commercial Services our GMB@Work, Industrial and Political Strategy is aimed at consolidating and trying to develop new organising potential. The General Election will be vital to the Northern Region. A continuum of Tory led ideological austerity or a better way under Labour is at stake. We need change to improve the lives for our members. Their families and across this Region the fabric of communities is at stake. Further Devolution and City Regions along with infrastructure development elsewhere in the UK will put pressure on the Northern Region's economy. We are determined that this Region has a seat at the National Table and that is an integral part of our industrial and political focus post May 2015.

## **NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

The Northwest and Irish Region has increased its membership this year, and has recruited in excess of 9,000 new members.

The Region is proud of this achievement when taken into consideration the ever increasing financial cut-backs imposed by the government which has had a negative impact upon economic growth in the Region.

Our growth and recruitment performance has only been achieved through the hard work and passion of our own staff and the committed activists who deserve a pat on the back for the work they have carried out in growing the Region. It is clear from our figures that people are in need of a trade union more than ever for the support and protection we provide, this is shown by the changing membership trends which indicates that more and more individual workers are choosing to seek GMB membership in addition to the traditional organisers' workplaces.

In accordance with GMB@Work Organisers have met with branches to complete branch development plans, which will be monitored and reviewed. As part of this exercise we have reviewed our current branches which has seen some close but more importantly a lay rep structure will be implemented and supported to enable branches to grow and play a role in the democracy of the GMB.

Education continues to be key and we have, as always, provided various courses for reps this year including branch development, pensions and confidence/organising for negotiation. It should be noted that this year there are twice as many new female reps than males have attended the induction courses.

Activists attended the 15<sup>th</sup> Women's Conference in the Region. This conference has gone from strength to strength and continues to cover a wide range of excellent speakers. 2014's speakers included Dr. Phoebe Abe (female genital mutilation); Jill Maslitt (Macmillan Centre for Information); Bryan Nott (Women for Peace and Justice in Columbia); Aileen Alexander (Barnardos Young Carers); Lisa Mullen (Reachout) and Maggie O'Carroll (Women's Organisation). GMB Campaigns for Justice – the Region held a conference over two days in September 2014. Speakers at the conference included Tom Watson MP, Andy Burnham MP, Neil Findlay MSP, Margaret Aspinall (Hillsborough Family Support Group), Ricky Tomlinson (Shrewsbury 24 Campaign), Dave Smith (Blacklisting Support Group), Davey Hopper (Durham Miners Association), Eddie Marnell (Cammell Lairds), Brian Davies (Remploy), Brian Reade (Mirror Newspaper), Alistair Morgan (Justice4Daniel), Geoff Shears (political campaigner) and Kathleen Walker Shaw (GMB Officer in Brussels) who chaired the event. This was extremely well attended and attracted widespread media attention.

The Region held a Fracking conference in January 2015. This event allowed for the first time both sides, anti- and pro-, to share the same platform. The speakers included Sean Sweeney (Harvard University), Ken Cronin (CEO of UK)G), Peter Styles (Professor at Keele University), Mike Hill (Regulator), Gary Smith (GMB National Officer), Tony Bosworth (Friends of the Earth), Barbara Keeley MP and Gordon Marsden MP, Geoff Shears (political campaigner). This event created media interest from all over the country as well as both BBC and ITV reporting live from the event throughout the day. The interest from members and the wider public ensured the venue was completely sold out.

The NW Equality Conference took place in November 2014 with speakers from Outreach Liverpool which is the only project in the country run by the Citizens' Advice Bureau and designed to give advice to members of the LGBT community. This conference also saw the launch of the Regional Equality Forum campaign on prostate cancer screening.

In accordance with GMB@Work effective communication is a priority across the Region – the use of social media is on the increase with many branches now on both Twitter and Facebook. We are constantly looking to improve direct communication with members to reflect the changes in membership trends.

The Region's public service membership continues to bear the brunt of the austerity cuts imposed by the government – in particular local government which has seen losses of thousands of jobs.

The key public service issue across the Region included:

Local government pay where members fully supported the one day inducement of industrial action;

NHS Pay dispute – it should be noted that the members in NI continue to be in dispute, as the settlement agreed has not been applied in NI;

NI Public Service dispute – members from across various parts of the public sector membership took part in a day of action. Further dates of action are planned.

The above and the living wage campaign are examples of how we followed GMB@Work to organise and promote and raise the profile of GMB.

Recruitment across the Region continues to be a mixture of regional and national targets.

The c9,100 members that we have recruited in the last 11.5 months have come at an average of 792 per month. This is an average monthly increase of 5% per month on the previous year.

Asda has proved to be the most successful recruitment activity in the Region. We have deployed and designated teams of Organisers to carry out the new store visits. Almost all other Organisers are involved in the store revisiting. This strategy has delivered almost 2,000 new members in less than 12 months. This figure is a significant portion of the national Asda recruitment figure.

Schools (including Academies) – the Region has dramatically improved its figures on the previous year and schools will remain a target across the Region.

Care Sector – recruitment in this area has declined based on previous years but is still at a respectable level, due to the increased level of activity in Asda – the number of visits have reduced.

Other notable areas of recruitment include:

Landir & Gyr Recognition achieved

Wincanton (Rochdale)

Noonans

British Gas

G4S

The GMB North West and Irish Region is determined to play a major role in the development and growth of the GMB and I have every reason to believe that with the strategies and structure we have in place together with the continuing support of staff and lay activists we are well positioned to deal with the challenges that face us and reach our goal.

## **GMB SCOTLAND**

### **GMB@Work – The Organising Agenda**

The introduction of the new Performance Appraisal and Management System across the Region will play a major part to the Region's Organising Agenda in setting the GMB's objectives for employees contributing to the aims of the organisation, bringing into line all employee roles with GMB@Work and Congress policy decisions.

The aim and purpose of this initiative is to support employees in achieving our strategic long-term goals and becoming integrated in linking all aspects of improving our performance and continuously developing our employees to:

- Know and understand what is expected of them
- Have the skills and ability to deliver these
- Are supported by the GMB to develop and meet expectations
- Are given regular feedback on their performance
- Have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to individual and team aims and objectives.

This will be the key driver throughout the rest of 2015 in improving the Region's performance. This will be challenging, however there is no doubt that it is achievable in creating a new dynamic.

GMB Scotland has been faced with many challenges throughout 2014 into 2015 both politically and industrially.

As previously reported GMB Scotland's Regional Council made the democratic decision to support a No Campaign in the 2014 Referendum and lead the way amongst our fellow Trade Unionists across Scotland in co-ordinating and leading the Unions Together Campaign which assisted in securing the No to Independence Vote.

This of course was the subject of much criticism from certain parts of the Scottish media and those members who belong to the Scottish National Party.

Against this backdrop a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety was being expressed as to the shape of Scotland's Public and Private Sector with security of employment having rapidly deteriorated throughout this last year with no visible signs of the structure of the economy rebalancing towards manufacturing and exports with the poorest, most vulnerable people across Scotland still bearing the hardship of austerity.

The austerity agenda has led to economic stagnation with GMB calling on the Scottish Government to bring about a more active Industrial Policy with a particular emphasis in the renaissance of the manufacturing industry within Scotland and that the new powers outlined by the Smith Commission and provided for within the Scotland 2012 are used to generate and create more employment and a more inclusive society.

The result of the General Election will also play a major role in determining our future within GMB Scotland as to the delivery of a Workplace Agenda supporting the Region's Organising Agenda and GMB@Work.

Across Manufacturing we are still experiencing concerns in particular across the North Sea Off-Shore situation which as a result of the collapse in the price had led to the employers attacking our members Terms and Conditions which is being resisted by our members and has the full involvement of both National and Regional Officials.

Friday 15 August 2015 was a date that will be etched in the memories of our members from Fergusons Shipyard in Port Glasgow.

The reason for this was that they arrived for work on that Friday to find their Yard closed and the gates locked.

Following the closure announcement our convener and the GMB swung into action as did colleagues from the CSEU with major meetings taking place between the then First Minister, Alex Salmond.

The eventual outcome of this approach was the Yard was successfully taken over and saved, the last commercial shipyard in Scotland who can now look forward to a brighter future and further investment with the ability to compete in the commercial market and maintain these highly skilled jobs in Port Glasgow for the future.

The decision by BAE Systems Maritime announced the outcome of their review in terms of their Shipbuilding Operations and the decision to consolidate complex warship manufacturing on the Clyde was welcomed by the workforce however this was also tinged with concerns as to their colleagues in Portsmouth.

Following a number of years of major investment in the Scotch Whisky Industry we are now experiencing a downturn in global demand at present which places significant impact on what was continual growth.

However this has not resulted, at the time of compiling this report, to ongoing discussions with the major companies as to how best we address these reductions on capacity without any job losses, which we believe to be achievable.

The recent announcement of the closure of Longannet Power Station in Fife following the decision by National Grid to award the bid to Peterhead Gas Fired Station to provide a back-up electricity supply has led to GMB playing a key role in discussions with the Scottish Government due to the multiplier impact on the area regarding jobs which will be severe.

Energy is a key Scottish Export and we believe this decision will impact not just on the Scottish Economy but also the National Economy.

Labour Market Statistics for Scotland published in March 2015 confirmed that employment rose by 6000, the rate increased from 5.6% to 5.9% and that employment flattened. Remarkably the shift in headline unemployment masks the diverging trends by gender.

The significance underlying this is that womens employment increased by 15000 while male employment fell by a similar figure. This seems to be a peculiarly Scottish phenomenon according to reports.

These figures do however mask what we already know in that these patterns of employment clearly suggest to GMB Scotland that significant numbers of these jobs are likely to be part-time, zero hours contracts and self-employed all of these being low paid.

GMB was also invited with other Unions and Employers to participate in an Oil and Gas Summit concerning the falling oil price, the economic and labour impact and consequences.

In general Manufacturing is not showing a renaissance across Scotland and is in need of major investment from the Scottish Government.

Recent announcements of November 2014 has placed McVities in Tollcross under the microscope by United Biscuits where we as the major Union are working to secure the future modernisation of Tollcross and continued investment in the future of the Plant. The changes proposed by the Company to date are radical however my personal thanks go to our Convener and Shop Stewards.

Commercial Services has continued to show growth with our particular focus on Asda by our Regional Recruitment Team who continue to grow our membership base in line with our National Strategy as a key campaign. This section continues to be a key area for focussing our strategy for growth within the Region and continues to show a continual growth at present.

Public Services continues to be a major section within the Region however has over recent years seen the reduction in membership as a result of continual redundancies coupled with the Scottish Government freeze on Council Tax which leads to authorities continually cutting back on the provision of services.

Scotland's 32 local authorities continue to be Living Wage Employers however GMB Scotland are campaigning for a higher wage at present in discussions with Local Government.

The provision of Home Care continues to be under severe pressure by, in particular Cordia in Glasgow whose budget has been cut by Glasgow City Council's Social Work impacting on the way these services are delivered to the client.

## **SOUTHERN REGION**

During 2014, the Region continued to examine our structures and organisation to ensure that the objectives of the Region are met. Over the year, to May 2015, the Region has grown by over 3,6000 members, netting a growth of 4.7%. This growth is secured by dedicated organising campaigns and doing what a union is meant to do and that is taking on the unscrupulous employers who have condemned our members to zero hours contracts and minimum wages.

We have had successful disputes with ISS; Keir; G4S Ambulance Staff; Contractors in Wandsworth Council. The GMB has fought a front line battle with Tempay, who supply labour to Marks and Spencer Distribution. These staff are also on zero hours contracts and low pay but with the efforts of our officers and activists we have now secured recognition following a successful CAC ballot.

The Region has continued its organising success within ASDA Stores and in Schools but our main organising efforts currently are within contractors in the NHS, where the contractors are being used as a transition from decent pay, terms and conditions, to poverty wages and poor terms and conditions. They are being used to undermine what trade unions have stood for over the last century.

It is notable that where the union is proactive in taking on unscrupulous employers, membership will grow and recognition for the GMB will be won.

We continuously review our Branch structures and activities and our policy is to create more dedicated and workplace branches to increase engagement of the democratic process of the union. Our membership growth comes from efforts that are streamlined throughout the organisation and our notable successes are in the Automobile Association, ASDA Stores, Warehouse and Distribution, NHS Contractors and Schools.

We have earned a reputation as a campaigning union and have led the way during 2014 in campaigns against:

- Employment Tribunal charges
- £4.5 billion debt on the AA
- Tax evasion by Amazon, Google and Starbucks
- Next Stores for poor employment terms, conditions and hours of work
- The Living Wage
- Zero Hours Contracts
- Cuts in Education
- Teaching Assistants
- Academy Status
- The demise of the NHS

We have now commenced a campaign for decent terms and conditions and pay within the Hospitality Sector.

In Social Care, where the private sector has won contracts from the NHS, there has been a trend for providers to reduce terms and conditions but again the GMB has won a successful Employment Tribunal that prevented the employer reducing salaries by over 30%.

In line with our National Education programme, we consistently review our Education delivery and needs and continue to provide briefings to officers and activists on a regular basis.

The GMB Southern Region is proud to play its part in developing and growing this great union, embracing GMB@Work and pursuing National and local targets.

## **WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION**

Once again, in the interim period since Congress 2014, the Region has achieved modest recruitment and membership growth. Much of our success has been attributable to the emphasis placed upon GMB@WORK principles and the organising strategy that underpins them.

The Region continues to campaign for rights at work and social justice for our members and their families, and, as this report is being written, is playing a proportionate part in facilitating the return of a Labour Government.

### **Public Services**

During the last 12 months the Public Services Section of the Wales and South West Region has continued to experience the impact of budget cuts and austerity measures as part of the continued attack by the Tory led coalition on the public sector institutions which include local government, schools, NHS, care sector, and further proposed cutbacks will, as a proportion of GDP, take us back to funding levels similar to those experienced in the 1930s. Notwithstanding the on-going attack on public services, public sector membership in the Wales and South West region has held up well in the face of significant challenges, and currently stands at 38,863. Organising principles of GMB@Work continue to be at the forefront of the Region's recruitment and organising activity and where implemented successfully we have seen consistent membership growth and an increase in the number of workplace activists and more effective Branch structures. The Region has taken a more vigilant approach on the Rule Book requirement for Branches to submit their annual branch development plans ensuring that branch plans are relevant, realistic and deliver strong workplace organisation and exploit recruitment and organising opportunities. In addition during the last year, the Region has introduced a procedure which requires Public Services Officers to identify workplace consolidation targets to assist in more effective workplace organisation and create more effective workplace structures. This is monitored on a quarterly basis and the initial results have been positive.

The Wales and South West Region is unique in that it comprises two countries, including a devolved Administration within Wales. This presents various challenges in terms of the organising and industrial agenda where we have experienced large scale outsourcing of services across the south west area of the region which is governed from Westminster, whereas the Labour led Administration within Wales has provided some protection from outsourcing. However, with a reduction of £1.5 billion in the recent financial settlement from the Welsh Assembly, this is putting enormous pressure particularly on local government to both reduce workforce numbers and the services provided to our local communities. The GMB, via the Wales TUC and the Partnership Council, has been working proactively with the Labour Administration to limit the damage caused by the reduction in funding. The Welsh Assembly is also in the process of setting up a Public Services Staff Commission to oversee the future shape, size and structure of public services delivery across Wales.

The Region continues to prioritise organising activity around the schools national organising agenda and again the Region has adopted two different strategies for schools given that in Wales schools still predominantly remain under local authority control and gaining access to existing members and potential members is relatively straightforward. The Region has adopted a schedule involving a rolling programme targeting a different authority on a monthly basis, whereas in the south west area of the Region we continue to see the on-going academisation and setting up of free schools which are de facto isolated single employers or trusts, some of which are covered by national negotiation whilst other negotiations carried out locally. The Region is currently reviewing its approach to organising academies in line with the national academies strategy and PSOs have been tasked to devise a programme of visits. Overall across all areas of the Region, the challenge still remains to recruit and organise classroom based staff where mapping exercises have identified significant potential for growth, and this will be the priority moving forward.

Consolidation activity is continuing within higher and further education in both England and Wales, which has resulted in some notable consolidation activity resulting in both the setting up of a new branch and an increase in membership. In line with the National Organising Agenda, the Region is organising campaigns around the re-launch of the Living Wage and the challenge is still to persuade many of the employers within the Region to increase minimum salary levels to the living wage.



An audit of facility time has been undertaken to ensure that for those activists who currently have full-time facilities their services are used effectively ensuring they deliver GMB@Work for both the benefit of membership growth and service delivery to our members.

The NHS across the Region and national union has experienced a significant amount of volatility during the last 12 months, with disputes both within the ambulance service and the wider NHS membership, resulting in industrial action. In line with the national organising strategy, the Region continues to target organising activity primarily around specific targets within the NHS which has resulted in a moderate increase in membership. However, it has become clear that we have to be more proactive and exploit organising opportunities as and when they arise outside of the agreed targets, and again we have seen an increase in membership by adopting this approach. The Region is currently engaged in a joint organising campaign with Southern Region targeting SWAS which is planned for the school summer break.

The Wales and South West region has also devised a regional organising strategy for the care sector covering care homes across both England and Wales with a rolling programme of visits organised to assist in membership consolidation. In conjunction with the national initiative, the Region is also targeting those employers in line with the national pay bargaining agenda. We are also seeking to increase our representative base and organise regional care sector reps training in line with the national initiative.

Consolidation campaigns also continue to target police support staff both within police authorities in South Wales and the south west, and the region is also pursuing recognition within Gwent police authority which, if achieved, should provide some organising and recruitment potential.

Organising opportunities have also arisen as a result of support services being outsourced from the prison services to Amey. Officers have been tasked to prioritise their organising activity around this issue.

The Region has also recently seen the outsourcing of services from DSG Ashchurch (MOD) to Babcock International. The TUPE consultations gave the Region the opportunity to carry out consolidation activity around the transfer. However the threat of the closure of the site is still not decided and the Region, in conjunction with our workplace organisers, has continued to lobby the Shadow Defence team on the government to reverse this decision.

### **Manufacturing**

Currently there are 117,314 members in the Manufacturing Sector nationally, out of that total 85% are male and 15% are female. The regional manufacturing membership total is 11,335. **The Region is pleased** to report that there appears to be a slight increase in manufacturing jobs being created within the region and we have recently secured a Recognition Agreement with a company in Caerphilly called Nuaire. This was achieved following fierce opposition from the company in trying to undermine a CAC application which we were successful in thanks to the sterling efforts of Regional Organisers, Jill Richards and Gareth Morgans. I believe it is the first time that any union has secured a Recognition Agreement via a workplace ballot conducted by the CAC which is a fantastic achievement on behalf of the GMB and I wish to pay full credit to the two Officers involved in securing this Agreement.

As reported in last years' regional report to Congress in relation to the Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station at Cannington in Somerset, we have recently become aware that the project has been deferred due to legal challenges from within the European Union. Tony Dowling, Regional Organiser, who has responsibility for our membership on this site is involved in redundancy consultation for those GMB members affected by this temporary closure.

On the matter of holiday pay calculations, **the Region is** pleased to report to Congress that following the recent test case on this subject, all Officers within the Manufacturing Section have made attempts to reach agreement with the appropriate companies. **We can** report that a number of companies have agreed to adjust the holiday pay calculation for future holidays and the issue of retrospective payments is still a difficult area in terms of reaching agreements with various companies.

### **Commercial Services**

Asda Officers continue to arrange store visits for 2015 in accordance with the national strategy. Over 300 visits have already been agreed and scheduled throughout the geographical area of the region. Three new stores have been scheduled to open during 2015 which will **provide** additional recruitment opportunities. In Caldicot, we have completed access at the Big Hello and initially where we recruited 70 new members out of a potential 100. We will continue to strive for 100% membership density within all stores.

We have had eight Workplace Organisers attend National Asda Stewards training and have scheduled a Regional Course for April with a current attendance figure of 18. The RSSG meetings have been well attended with over 30 attending each quarter. We requested that the National Organising Team visit the RSSG during fourth quarter 2014.

The recruitment figure year end for 2013-2014 stood at 1442. This is an increase of 457 in comparison to 2012-2013. The regional YTD figure currently stands at 517, which is 217 up from this time last year. Access continues to be challenging in conjunction with the company's organisational changes.

In utilities, 2015 has been, and will continue to be, a challenging year in light of OFWAT expectations and demands. Welsh Water have hit amp5 with changes to terms and conditions and pay. The region managed to recruit 50 new members during these challenging negotiations. Many thanks to our Officers and workplace organisers for their commitment and dedication during the communication road shows.

British Gas - We recruited over 150 new members in the Cardiff Call Centre in 2014. This campaign was led by a few young activists at the centre who implemented a strategy to target young workers and identify issues which was relevant to the younger employees. We have now created a new branch with all Branch Officials under the age of 29. This will become a benchmark strategy to follow and create more active young branches.

### **Equality**

Bristol Pride: 12 July 2014 – This event was a resounding success in every way. As sponsors of the event, the main stage was festooned with GMB flags, bunting, and banners which undoubtedly raised the GMB's profile as a community and fully inclusive union.

Pride Cymru: 16th August 2014 – The procession weaved through Cardiff city centre leaving a trail of glitter in its wake to the delight of crowds! Formerly known as Cardiff's Mardi Gras, it was a great day out. GMB Officers and activists joined the parade, meeting with Asda colleagues and enjoyed their part in raising awareness about equality and diversity. GMB kept the flag flying (literally) and featured prominently within the trade union delegation on parade.

Garley House once again hosted the Regional Equality Conference which took place on Saturday, 11th October 2014, where more than 60 delegates, officers and staff came together.

Guest speakers were Julie Cook, David Hamblin, Susan Carlick and a group of inspirational youngsters from OUT Youth, based in Plymouth, where individuals spoke on their personal experiences, both passionately and movingly.

Subjects covered within the conference were: the National Women's Project; Mental health awareness; Women in manufacturing; LGBT experiences; Domestic violence; Equal pay; Young member's network; Police training on domestic violence; Access to public transport. May I take this opportunity of thanking Sheila Bearcroft for chairing the Conference which was a huge success and I thank everyone involved for making it a successful, inspiring day.

Mental Health Training - The region has delivered four courses of Mental Health Awareness training throughout 2014/5 with over 60 individual's gaining the knowledge and expertise to compile and deliver a Mental Health policy within their workplace.

2015 Campaigns include: Mental Health Training; Domestic Violence; Human trafficking; LGBT Events; Regional Young members Network' Regional SHOUT network.

## **YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION**

The last 12 months has seen yet more success across our region thanks to the work, commitment and dedication of our fantastic reps, branch secretaries, officers and staff.

It is no coincidence that for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year our region has shown excellent membership growth, as we have a regional plan that is drawn up from suggestions and ideas raised by our activists right across the region. This not only ensures buy-in, but more importantly ensures we get it right, as it is our workplace activists that know the threats and challenges faced daily by our members.

Our brilliant officers and staff then support our activists only when they need it and this structure, **GMB@Work** in every sense, has seen our membership grow by nearly **10,000** (18%) in the last 7 years.

Once again our year started with our **Branch Activists' Weekend** which brought together 180 reps, a totally diverse mix of long standing and new, women, men, BME and learning reps which not only drew up our business plan for the coming year, but also the 5 year challenge ahead, given the forthcoming general election and internal GMB elections. **GMB@Work** is firmly embedded in our region. We have refocused on our retention strategy as our leavers – still the lowest monthly average across the union – began to creep up. One of the initiatives we responded with has been a bespoke 'retention' course which we have piloted for reps. Our Regional Organising Team continues to work hand in glove with our organising officers and branches, not only in the national target areas – Asda, schools, NHS but also in our regional target sectors.

After years of campaigning we have this year, February 2015, secured recognition back at Yorkshire Ambulance Service, eight years after the Trust de-recognised us following a dispute. Our loyal membership is to be congratulated for staying strong behind their union of choice – the GMB.

In the care sector we have established a care sector branch and a care sector forum which brings together reps and contacts from all care providers to ensure we have a sector wide campaigning profile. This mirrors our school support staff forum which has helped us achieve at 45%, the highest density of schools membership across the union and our local government forum – The Core Group – which has helped us mitigate the impact of the cuts in our membership in local authority, non-schools. We have managed to retain 50% more members in local government than the average across the union. Of our local councils, all but three - Bradford, Leeds and Chesterfield, have introduced the Living Wage – all will have done so by April 2016.

**Manufacturing** - the economic climate continues to impact on the sector, but through a strong activist base the sector continues to hold its own. Burberry is now paying the Living Wage and settlements have been agreed in respect to holiday pay claims in a number of large employers in the region inclusive of PPG and BASF.

The region is currently going through an exercise within all recognised manufacturing sites collating information on best practise in regards to working practises. This should allow the sharing of information to encourage a minimum standard on various issues such as shift pay, annualised hours, use of temporary contracts, Living Wage etc.

Additionally this should bring to the fore any issues that are standard and will allow us to look for regional campaigns across similar industry within the manufacturing sector.

We have seen bitter disputes with disgraceful employers at Green Co and with various private contractors in the public sector and have stood shoulder to shoulder with our members to ensure the victories they so richly deserve.

Our **Learning at Work** project has been an integral part of our regional growth strategy and there is nothing quite as rewarding as seeing our members trained and educated through their union and then moving up in life, whether that be promotion or to actually get a job when facing the darkness of unemployment.

Our **Communications** strategy is higher profile than ever and there's not a day goes by when you don't see the regional secretary or an officer or activist in the regional media, making local people aware of the great work we do daily for our members.

On the **Political** front, as I write this we have teams right across the region giving up their time to go out campaigning for the Labour government that working people and this country so desperately need. Our political officer is regional chair of TULO and Tim Roache was elected for the 5<sup>th</sup> year running as **chair of the Regional TUC** and **national president of CLASS** (Centre for Labour and Social Studies) the ever growing and influential left wing think tank.

A special mention must go to Eric Batty, our Rotherham branch secretary and representative on the **Branch Review Working Party**, who has told of the many excellent practices across our region and also brought to us the ideas of others so that we continue to do even better on behalf of our members.

On the **equality** agenda our Young Members' Section goes from strength to strength as does our regional equality forum with reps from every strand. Most pleasing of all is that the number of **women officers** we have is at its highest ever and is almost 50/50 with male officers and so is reflective of the gender balance of our regional membership.

Our **staff and officers** continue to do a fantastic job and remain highly committed and motivated to deliver on behalf of members. We repay this not just with words but have invested heavily to educate, train and develop our staff so that they can progress to become front line officers. **Sickness levels** remain at under 2% and once again we have not had a single grievance or disciplinary.

All in all another very satisfying year for Yorkshire & North Derbyshire region.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Mary. (*Applause*) Thank you, colleagues. I suppose the smart thing would be to say I just formally move the report, move off, and we all get 15 minutes extra for lunch. That would be handy, wouldn't it, Mary?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Unfortunately, I can't quite do that.

THE PRESIDENT: I am still in the chair.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Oh, yes, yes, yes. President, Congress, Paul Kenny, National Office, moving the General Secretary's Report, formally pages 5 to 55, and for those colleagues who think that references always go in a hole in the ground, the report contains what has happened to the referred motions from 2014.

In commending the report I wish to pick out a few points. The National Office in 2015 has or will see the retirement of several longstanding employees:

Mick Balfour, from the Commercial Services Section, has retired;

Mick Hubbard, from Productivity Services who has been based up in Yorkshire, is shortly to retire; and John McClean, who Mary spoke about, is due to retire before the end of the year from his role in the Health and Safety Department.

Touching on to the Health and Safety Report itself because I think it is a very significant document, the truth of the matter is the reason that report was so important is the fact that the budget cuts that have hit the HSE since 2010 have effectively meant that the service that we could rely on as working people has gone into decline. Whatever way round you look at it, and no matter how many arguments – because I do not sit there passing resolutions and attending meetings, I have an argument – the truth of the matter is that if you look at how much money has been cut and how much money is likely to be cut, there is only one end solution, and the end solution is what it has always been, you have to do it for yourself. That is why that report was so important and that is one of the reasons tomorrow in the Financial Report we will be having a discussion about where we need to organise and spend money in the future.

I also want to thank Phil McEvoy, who has left the GMB. He did a lot of work for us in the Pensions Department. Many of you will have come across him. He has gone off to take up another role in another union. I want to welcome Keir Greenaway, who is running the Pensions Department for us at the moment, single-handedly. Keir was one of the delegates here up to, I think, two years ago, a Southern Region member. If I remember rightly, he was one of those holding up a flag telling Vince Cable where he could go when he addressed Congress. It just shows you that you can get on in the GMB. In fact, during that incident I think he stood on a chair and held the flag up until one of the stewards asked him would he sit down because it was a health and safety hazard. *(Laughter)* I am not quite sure he ever thought he would actually be in the Health & Safety Department. Also, Alan Black, National Officer, has retired.

Look, the General Election has come and it has gone and with it, at least for now, are some of the policies this Congress and our members wanted so desperately. They knew what the country needed to revitalise, to bring about a fair economy that would benefit millions of working people and their families.

Frankly, I do not know about you but I have been absolutely sickened by the sights and sounds of old has-beens in the Labour Party lecturing the Labour Party, and us, about how the Labour Party Manifesto was too left, in political terms, and suggesting the election was lost because the British people wanted a return to New Labour. While you're at it, why not throw in a few attacks on trade unions just for good measure.

There we have the very essence of why millions of working people stopped voting Labour between 1997 and 2015. From their long gravel drives, from their big pay directorships, after being ministers in a Labour government, and from the funny smells that emanate along the corridors of the House of Lords, these people are so quick to attack as left-wing things like outlawing zero hours, protection against the exploitation of working people, protecting the NHS, tenants' rights, building homes,

making non-doms and corporate tax dodgers pay their whack; they show their real hand about who they want to lead the Labour Party. If that lot is left-wing, then we are in the left wing of the labour movement. *(Applause)*

This union, you, has worked tirelessly over recent years to try and gain back the trust of our members and our communities in the Labour Party after the wealth and inequality gap widened under New Labour. You haven't heard any of them say that, have you? It widened and we all know that.

Now we must put these broken, old, worn out lovers of privatisation, unregulated labour, and finance markets, back in the museums, frankly, that they have crawled out of in the last few weeks.

The General Election of 2015 may be lost but let me be dead clear, and I hope we will be dead clear this afternoon, the GMB has neither lost nor is repentant about standing up for our members' interests; that is our job and that is what we are going to do. *(Applause)*

The GMB, indeed all the affiliate unions, actually, through TULO, pulled their weight. In fact, it was one of the most historical periods in the union affiliates' history, working together, pooling information, and targeting seats. There can be no finger-pointing at the Trades Union Movement in this election. They worked their socks off.

As the chair of TULO, I am absolutely proud of the work that was done and I will make a special mention to Byron Taylor and Felicity Appleby, the officers of TULO who worked for us, for all the affiliate unions. They did a fantastic job. And our own Melanie Bartlett, who worked there during the election; thank you, Melanie. She is in the delegation. She is a London Region delegate. *(Applause)* And there is our own National Political staff, Cath Speight, Gary Doolan, Lisa Johnson, John Callow, Marion Healey, and the one and only Hilary Perrin, and all the regional political officers. They made a difference.

Don't let anyone ever tell you that we did not throw our weight into this. In fact, I will tell you this, if some of that so-called shadow front bench had half the courage and guts shown by our members knocking on doors, we would have won the bloody election. *(Applause)*

This Congress was always going to be about our union and our members and how best to serve them, and how to continue on with the changes we started in 2005, bringing a wider and more exclusive union back to its members. For those of us who have been privileged to have been on this decade-long journey, it is actually truly amazing what has been achieved and, more importantly, how those changes were achieved.

We are returning to our real purpose as a union, organising, campaigning, and winning for workers. We healed long-running wounds about national versus regional interest. It's cobblers. People who keep raising it have absolutely no understanding of where this union is going. We understand that actually whether it is a regional matter or a national matter, it is all about the members; it is all about the union and its members. *(Applause)* They are exactly the same thing.

If I had a list of changes we have made, you have made and supported since 2005, it would be just far too long to map out here but putting the union's finances right was really important and it must remain important, however difficult sometimes that is. As long as we are financially right, then we can pass resolutions that we can campaign on. There is no point in coming here once a year passing resolutions on what the union should and should not do when the truth is we don't have enough money to buy a bag of candles. So, the finances are important to the union.

We expanded Congress, pushing ourselves to rebuild our union and respect our branch officers and our activists. That is what has actually signposted the road to this Congress agenda. As our branch activity working party has shown, the branches are actually alive. Sure we have lots of things to do and we are going to modernise it, and sure we are going to make changes, we are going to listen, we are going to do things. As my very good friend, John McDonnell – and I mean the trade unionist not the bloody MP – my very good friend John McDonnell from North West & Irish Region, reminded us at Congress in 2005 that previous general secretaries wanted rid of branches, they wanted rid of annual Congress; you have no branches, you have no annual Congress, you have no democracy, and guess what, you have no union. Never let anybody ever come up with that crap that you cannot have an annual Congress and you cannot build and construct a union based on grass roots and branches. Don't every swallow that line again. (*Applause*)

When we sit up there, Mary and I, we are amazed because we can see it when people come to the rostrum, we can see the whole hall, the changes we made to Congress delegates make-up, to encourage the under-represented membership groups, more young people, ethnic minorities, and women. Look at the number of first-time delegates, look how we have challenged that. Doesn't it make you feel good? It makes me feel absolutely delighted. (*Applause*)

Now, this was the point where I was going to stand back and invite Penny Robinson from Barking to come up but I am short of time, unfortunately, so I am going to try and tell you a bit about it. There are lots of things that we are fighting on, every day in every region, but there is one dispute that has taken our attention at the moment, and it is the dispute in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

This is a situation where basically the council wants to inflict pay cuts of originally £2,000, now £1,000 a year on working men and women for basically doing safety checks that they have done for years, and that are part of their contractual rights, part of their pensionable pay, actually.

Our members said, "No, we're not taking it." So what do you think the union's position is when our members say, democratically, "No, we're not going to take a pay cut." Should we tell them they are wrong or should we stick in and support them? Sorry, I did not hear you. ("*Support*") That is half a row!

Look, there has been a very, very difficult bitter dispute. Intimidation: absolutely. Undermining the union: absolutely. It has split the Labour Group. Half the Labour Group or just under half are totally supportive of the union's position and the workers' position. The other half, or just above half, are not. We now have a divided local authority.

Now I have to say I am a bit restrained on this at the moment because after many weeks and some very, very serious issues, the council finally have agreed to some serious talks at ACAS, and Brian Strutton, National Officer, along with Penny and the stewards, will be conducting those talks. We all hope, do we not, that those talks are successful. We do, of course we do, but let us send a very clear message. The Executive on Saturday said, "Well, we hope that ACAS results in effective agreement for our members," but just in case it does not, the Executive authorised £100,000 to go into a dispute and hardship fund to ensure that those members in Barking and Dagenham could not be starved back to work. (*Applause*)

Now, I am glad you clapped. You thought that was good, didn't you? That is not where we are finishing. This is the GMB and an injury to one really is an injury to all. So, hopefully, we get settled but if we do not then I am telling you now, the GMB is going on the road. We will be going out to

every region and every branch to look to raise an awful lot more money, at least another £150,000 for starters, to make sure that people understand.

No, I am not saying we are trying to load the dice at ACAS but I think people need to know we are serious. Every region, every section, will be asked to support physically and financially because there comes a line, wherever the line happens to be, and we do not always pick our own battle line but this is a battle line for us, when employers say, “We are going to cut your pay,” and we say, “No.”

If we allow it in Barking, then it will happen in Bristol and if we allow it in Dagenham it will happen in Derby. So, here it is. It has come up to meet us and we can sidestep it or we can say the GMB is supporting our members in that dispute and we will prosecute that dispute until the local Labour Party, the right side of the Labour Party, which in this case is the left side – (*Laughter/Applause*) – gets enough votes to enter into a spirit of negotiation that satisfies us. The GMB is not going to be abused and certainly we are not going to have our members intimidated. So you will be hearing more of Barking.

I want to also ask you to fill in those forms. If you do not support another political party, fill in those forms and get a vote for who you want for the leadership of the Labour Party, and it will also affect the deputy leadership that you will have a vote for, and for those in London and Southern particularly, the Mayor, which is also pretty important.

I have had two or three people hand these to me which basically have written on them, “none of the above”. Now, if you get your vote you may want to write it on, but now it is very important. Application forms are on the desk. We need everybody, as many people as possible in the union to fill in those forms.

This is all about change in the union. We have had the courage to change lots of things. We have had to in the union. We have changed lots of things. We looked at ourselves: how can we develop it? One of the changes we made to Congress, you see it around you how inclusive it now is, and we now have to do that industrially. We have a sectional structure. We used to have eight sections, we have pruned it to three and, frankly, it is not engaging as many people in the industrial sector that it should be.

So, the Executive is going to launch a six-month consultation process to see how we may be able to engage more people in the industrial process. The truth is we have tons and tons and tons of really, really good workplace activists, good shop stewards, but actually when it comes to playing a role in how the union works, they do not do it.

So we have to reach out, we have to effectively make it far more important, far more available for people to be able to exercise influence over decisions that are made. We have to draw in those activists in order they can drive and effectively govern their own industrial activities across their own industries.

Tomorrow UNIONLINE, I think, is a year old. You will hear tomorrow a pretty good report about UNIONLINE but it would be remiss if I did not from the General Secretary’s Report actually say a big thank you to Maria Ludkin, who did a fantastic job in driving the UNIONLINE process. She will be reporting to you tomorrow. I wanted to go on record and say that it has been a fantastic process that we have been through and you will hear tomorrow how fantastic that has been.

Internally, well, we are going to have to continue to process. There are no more, by the way, officers and staff in the GMB. Under the new job evaluation scheme and the new process we now have one

grading system and everybody in the GMB is now staff. You may not think that means much but historically in the GMB the officers were almost exclusively men, and the staff were, who do you think, almost exclusively women, except the heads of departments who happened to be men. Now, we have come a long way but part of the process of taking that journey is we do not need any more of those mental divisive titles about officers or staff. We are just all staff.

We are going to have to continue to switch resources, find better ways of doing things, to move those resources into the front line. We are going to be faced over the next five or even ten years, make no mistake about it, there is no political help coming from Westminster, we are going to have to do it for ourselves. Do you know what, in some ways I feel a little better about that. You know why, because at least I can rely on you and you can rely on me. At least we can rely on each other. *(Applause)*

We have to develop the services and better organisation; there is no doubt about it. The Health & Safety Report points that out. We have to be ahead of the game. We have to be smart. In Ireland, both North and South, there are going to be new organising plans. We have opened the college, Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region, fantastic achievement. We were down there the other day doing the unveiling, the dedication to John Toomey. That college as it develops will do trade union education and will bring people in to get trade union education.

We intend to have a long-term presence in Ireland. We have had members here many, many years. We intend to grow that membership, be under no doubt whatsoever. Again, I want to thank Dave Kearney, in particular, and Paul McCarthy, for the work they did in establishing the union again in Southern Ireland. *(Applause)*

Our own union, well, I always think of it like we have rebuilt the union. Imagine it like a burnt out old building, which is what most of the SMT will remember if you go back 10 or 11 years. It resembled a burnt out old building; in fact, a burnt out old building we did not even own ourselves. We have now added a few extra floors and we have extra wings, and the union has grown every year.

What I find strange, I love the union movement, I love the GMB, I think it's great, I am sorry, I just do, and what I cannot understand or get my head round is why other people don't think the trade unions are fantastic things, because they are. Trade unionists are wonderful, great people. They do not go in it for themselves. You think of how many charities they help, how many causes they help, how many people's jobs they save, how to get counselling for people, get training, get pay rises; they are wonderful, decent, good people.

I will tell you something. I was at the Vatican two weeks ago to talk to a conference called by the Pope and we are the only union ever had an invite. I thought, yes, I am going to go because I think people need to understand what unions do. I cannot tell you exactly what the Pope said because he spoke in Italian – *(Laughter)* – and I do not even speak English! This is basically what the Pope's position is. I am amazed. He said that unions are fantastic organisations and that every working person should be in a trade union. Then I come here and the President of Ireland comes, a great honour for us and I think as you saw he was as chuffed as Harry – *(Applause)* – a great guy, he comes here and what does he say: he said unions are great things and everyone should join a union. Frankly, if you go to Wales, if you go Scotland, if you go into Europe, people say unions, yes, they are good things. We value them. We can discuss with them. They contribute. They are good. They are the only defence for working people against the excesses of capitalism.

Why is it when the Pope, who has a few more followers than David Cameron – *(Laughter)* – says working people should join a union, why does the Prime Minister of my own country, in England for



many of us, anyway, denigrate trade unions? Why does he denigrate trade unionists? Why does he seek to shackle people? Why do they seek to put obstacles in the way of people joining trade unions?

I will tell you why, because the Pope and the President of Ireland were right, we are good things, we do change things, we do stand up for people, and that is what the Tories don't like. (*Applause*)

I am getting towards the end because I am conscious of time, Mary. I am just going to touch on a few things in the international work we do. We do tons of it. You saw this morning Gilbert, who I have known for about 25 years, and he will tell you that this union kept his union afloat, kept it going in very difficult times; you did, the support you as the union gave.

Gilbert was able to build and organise and turn effectively a massive campaign in Costa Rica into a campaign across a number of Latin American countries. Joe, another new way of being smart doing business, why would we rely on agencies or gangmasters who offer jobs to our people, why wouldn't we tie up with the unions that control that part of the industry, make it stronger, so that when our members go somewhere or think they are going to go somewhere they get union representation, union rights, they do not undercut other workers and they do not interfere with the apprentice scheme. Isn't that just smart, decent, good business? Of course it is and we want more of it.

Look at that, banana workers and boilermakers, and what is in the middle, what joins them, it is the GMB. This lunchtime there is going to be a Fringe on freedom for a guy who has been locked up since 1999 and a fringe meeting about freedom for the Kurds, which Mary and I are going to.

This union, our union, the GMB, we believe in things. We actually believe in things. That is what is missing from half the people who come up and make out they are politicians. They don't actually believe in anything. We believe in things. We actually believe it is right, it is proper, to fight for social justice. We believe that. We are not mad. You may have thought occasionally, particularly new delegates, that you belong to some sort of weird race, that you were the only one in the world that actually cared about other people. Then you come to Congress and you realise we're all nutters! (*Cheers/Applause*)

I am proud, proud, to be part of that club, absolutely, brilliantly proud that we belong to a group of people who call themselves trade unionists, who care about other people, who care about whether people have homes, a decent health service, what sort of education there is, dignity at work, respect, right across the spectrum, and that the police and authorities, and government, are accountable for the way they treat people. That is what our role is. It has never been to prop up the status quo. It has always been about changing it, and that is the role for the union.

We are an incredibly proud family and we are also a very forward looking union. We have done a lot in the last 10 years – we have – but I will tell you this, there is a hell of a lot more to do. There is more to fight for, and there are still battles to have, and I will tell you this much, the GMB is always up for a battle against injustice, against wherever it comes, any part of the labour movement or any external organisation, employer or government. Not only is the GMB always up for it, I am always up for it, and I want you always to be up for it. Be proud of who we are. We are great, wonderful people. We care about our communities. We care about people. I would take one of you, one of you, over a thousand of those plastic politicians that come round smiling and then walk off and say, “Yes, what are we having for tea?”

If you believe in social justice, if you believe in the rights of working people, sorry, but you don't turn it off at 5 o'clock at night. It is 24/7. (*Applause*)

I will leave you with this. We have had a good year. I am really pleased that Congress is working out so far. We have only lost about nine votes so it is obviously going pretty well. (*Laughter*) I thank you very much for all the work that you do throughout the year. Trust me, the union belongs to the members. We have tried to make that the key word in everything we do and we also know that without the members at local, branch, and regional level there would be no union and millions of people, working people in the country would be worse off, whether they are in a union or not.

Thank you very much for what you do. Have a great time. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I say thank you to Paul and what I gave you was holy water! It wasn't for drinking. (*Laughter*) Anyway, thank you for that. It was inspiring. Are there any questions on any of the pages in the General Secretary's Report? If any delegates have any questions, could they please go along and send them to Unite! (*Laughter*) If delegates have any questions, could you please say which page you are referring to and Paul Kenny will respond. Who is standing up? I haven't closed Congress yet! Sit down!

No? Okay. We will move to the vote. You accept the General Secretary's Report? (*Agreed*) All those against? You wouldn't dare, would you, at this time of the day! (*Laughter*)

*The General Secretary's Report was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, back to work at 2.15. Have a good lunch.

*Congress adjourned.*

## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

*(Congress reassembled at 2.15 p.m.)*

## **LABOUR PARTY LEADERSHIP HUSTINGS**

THE PRESIDENT: Will colleagues please take their seats. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to welcome our guests from the Labour Party, the party that we support, man, boy and girl. I would like to introduce them to you. I will be leaving the platform. I will be leaving Kevin McGuire to do the work. He is only a temporary President for an extra 10 minutes. We have Mary Creagh, Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper, Liz Kendall, who is on my immediate right, and Jeremy Corbyn. (*Applause*) Colleagues, I am now going to vacate the Chair and I am going to hand over to Kevin McGuire. Kevin, welcome. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, very much. A security guard outside said that there are a couple of armed robbers on the run, so if London Region is missing two members, you can contact the Garda.

This is becoming a five-yearly event, really. There is a general election, Labour loses and then we have the Labour leadership hustings. Let's see if we can break the cycle. Just to let you know, the session will last for two hours. We will start with a three-minute statement from each of the candidates. We will end with a two-minute statement from each of the candidates and, in the middle, there will be questions from you representing working people across Britain. If the questioners could state what their job is, just so that those who are answering having some idea who you are, that will

assist. A lot of the questions, I know, contain “Yes” or “No” answers, so I would quite like the five candidates to address that and to give a “Yes” or a “No”, where it is applicable. I reserve the right to come in with the odd question of my own, but it will be very helpful if all answers could be kept to one minute so that we can get through as many questions as we can. Lots were drawn earlier for the order of speaking. We will start with the way it was drawn and we will ripple through as we go. The statements will be made from the podium, where the questions will be asked, and the first is Liz Kendall. You have three minutes.

**LIZ KENDALL MP:** Friends, it is a great pleasure to be addressing Congress today. As a GMB member, I am proud of the role that trade unions play in our party, but we are here at the moment when the Labour Party, the party formed to represent organised Labour, is under mortal threat. The scale of our defeat at the election and the threats we face in future leave me in no doubt that we must change or face irrelevance.

I have always believed our trade union link gives us roots in the world of work that are essential to ensuring that we are relevant to the world we live in, but we must both do more to broaden and deepen our roots into parts of the economy that we currently don’t reach. I also believe that a stronger role for trade unions in future is essential to addressing the biggest challenge we face as a country and as a Movement. Government, businesses and trade unions must work together to build a modern, competitive economy that works for all. The Tories will never understand this. Let me be clear, if I am elected the leader of our party, I will tolerate no weakening of the protections of working people or the basic rights of trade unions. If they are implemented by the Tories, the Labour Government that I lead will reverse them.

The truth is that you don’t know me from Adam or, should I say, Eve, but I know the power you have to fight injustice and transform the lives of people in this country. Before I became an MP I worked with the trade unions as director of the Maternity Alliance, to end pregnancy discrimination at work, to improve maternity pay and to champion flexible working for parents. As Labour’s Shadow Care Minister, I fought alongside you for new rights for people who were struggling to hold down a job and care for their elderly relatives, too, and to end the illegal wage scandal of thousands of care workers who don’t get the minimum wage, let alone the living wage, because they are not paid for travel time between appointments. These causes are our causes and our values are the same. I believe in the value and dignity of work, when you can earn a decent wage, take pride in what you do and take care of yourself and others. I also believe in solidarity, that through the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we do alone. I believe that your chance of fulfilling your potential and living your hopes and dreams should never depend on where you are born, what your parents did, your gender, sexuality or the colour of your skin. We need these values more than ever so that our economy works for all, for decent public services and for a fairer and more equal society. Under my leadership, with your help, that is what we will deliver. *(Applause)*

**KEVIN MAGUIRE:** Thank you, Liz. Jeremy.

**JEREMY CORBYN MP:** Thanks, Kevin, and thank you, Congress, for inviting me here today to speak. I don’t know if I should tell you this, but I was once a member of the GMB when APEX was part of the GMB, but later I then went on to work for the National Union of Public Employees. I thought I would get that one out early on so we are covered on that one.

This is a debate about policy as well as about the party leadership and the party direction in which we are going. My purpose is to try and raise the issue about how we face austerity, how we face the economic strategy that the Tories and, in the past, the Coalition Government were putting forward, and

the way in which they are going to be treating people over the next five years. The Queen's Speech has already indicated what they are going to do to trade union laws and trade union rights — reduce the ability to speak out, reduce the ability to organise, reduce the ability to have political influence and make it very difficult for anyone to take the ultimate step, which every trade unionist, in my view, has the right to do, and that is to take industrial action. Their whole purpose is to destroy the ability of the industrial working class to organise against what they are trying to do.

The consequences of the Tory election, therefore, are pretty devastating in trade union laws. They are also very devastating in terms of other areas of policy. Education is going to be parcelled up into academies and free schools, and the role of local authorities greatly reduced. The role of collective bargaining will be damaged as a result of it. There are to be sales of council housing with a heavy discount, sales of housing association properties with a heavy discount and forcing local authorities in high-cost areas to sell off valuable properties. In my own borough, we are going to end up with increasing the waiting time by about a third for everyone there.

We lost the election, yes. We lost it because we lost votes to UKIP in some parts of England, we lost some votes to the Greens, who were putting forward an anti-austerity package, and we also, obviously, lost votes in Scotland to the SNP. My view is that one of the problems in the election was that we were not offering a clear enough alternative. Ed Miliband did very well on zero-hours contracts and rights at work, but the problem was that overall we were offering to continue austerity for another five years in order to pay off the debt, albeit much lighter than that which the Tories are doing. I think we need to challenge the whole notion of austerity. It has led to greater inequalities in Britain, it has led to greater poverty in Britain, it has led to higher levels of subsidy of low wages — £11 billion are paid out in in-work benefits to those who are on low wages and, therefore, they are access those benefits — and it has led to a million people using food banks on a regular basis. Let's debate austerity and try and find a real labour/socialist alternative to it. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Jeremy. Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER MP: Thank you, Kevin. As a member of the GMB, it is great to be here, but the truth is that none of us wanted to be doing leadership hustings right now because we wanted to win. I was knocking up on polling day in Normanton, and a woman came to me to ask for help because she had over a thousand pounds in arrears on the bedroom tax. I said that, of course, I would help her but she ended up in tears talking to me. I said, "You must make sure you go and vote, because we are campaigning to get rid of the bedroom tax." She went out to vote — she voted for me. She voted Labour — but I feel now that we let her down. The point is that we won in Normanton, we won in Dewsbury down the road, too, but we lost in Elmet & Rothwell, in Sherwood, in Peterborough and in Aberdeen, places that the GMB and the Labour Party fought so hard together for our great candidates, but where too many people, including trade union members, did not want a Labour Government. Also we were too narrow. That means we need to reach out, not moving far to the right, not moving far to the left, but rebuilding and reaching out, because never again can we have a plan that just targets Liberal-Democrat voters. It was not enough. We have to make sure that we can win back votes from the SNP in Scotland, because we believe in that principle of solidarity, that we care as much about children growing up in poverty or exploitation in Lanarkshire as we do in Leeds. We have to take on UKIP and get rid of this myth that somehow they only took votes from the Tories. They didn't. They took Labour voters who felt left behind. We cannot run away from working people who say that they are worried about immigration, being exploited and having their pay undercut and jobs. That is not fair on anyone. We have to take it on. We also have to win back those who voted Tory because they thought we didn't care about their jobs or better prospects. We have to back the new hi-tech jobs of the future, the manufacturing and the business growth, because want to be able to abolish the bedroom tax, but we need to do so by building. That means changing ourselves so that we can

change the country but not swallowing the Tory manifesto. We must be true to our values, fighting for equality, standing up for social justice and reaching out. That means a leader who is strong enough to take on the Tories and strong enough to take on David Cameron, which is something that I would relish. It means, too, being able to be at home in any town, in any part of the country. As a granddaughter of a miner and the daughter of a trade unionist, I am proud of what the labour and trade union Movement have built together, from the National Health Service to equal pay. I will always believe in the voice of trade unions and trade union members being in our party, making sure that our party has its roots properly dug in, standing up for the care workers, the call centre workers, the engineers, the Remploy workers and for people in the future, taking on the Tories, fighting the damage they are doing, whether it is to the trade union legislation, whether it is a threat to our public services or to working people. Only if we rebuild, only if we stand together on Labour values, can we win in 2020. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Yvette. Andy.

ANDY BURNHAM MP: Thank you, Kevin. Good afternoon, friends. With respect to everybody here, I don't want to be back here in five years time at another hustings. That is why I am running a campaign not just to win the leadership of our party, but I am running a campaign to win for Labour in 2020. To do that will require big changes and true leadership. True leadership means going to those difficult issues, the uncomfortable truths that we have to address, and addressing them head on. One of those is this. Far too many GMB members at the last election either did not vote or voted UKIP. That is not your fault. It's our fault. We have got to do something about it.

I will not forget a conversation I had on the Westleigh Estate in my constituency with a trade unionist who I know who worked at the local food-processing factory. I asked him how he would be voting, and he told me that he would be voting UKIP. I said, "Why?" e said, "Because on my shift I sit on my own in a corner during a tea break because no one else speaks English. When I see people like you coming on my television telling me that immigration is only good thing, then I just think that people like you have no idea what my life is like. You don't understand it and you are not speaking for me any more." If we are honest, there are many more like him around the country.

The painful truth is that Labour has lost its emotional contact with millions of people, not just in Scotland but in the north, the Midlands, the south and in Wales, too. They look at us and they do not see people who they can relate to, who speak their language. They see a Westminster elite talking in a political code. Well, this is the big change that I am going to make as the leader of the Labour Party. I will take Labour out of the Westminster bubble. I will be a leader who people can relate to, whose voice will be able to carry into all the nations and regions of our country, who will fight for social justice and for working people, who will not hide away from the difficult issues like immigration, but who will work with you to develop Labour solutions, such as stopping the under-cutting of jobs and wages. More than that, I will speak for the aspirations, the simple hopes of everybody, to get on in life, to own their own home, to give their kids a good standard of living, to make sure that they have got prospects at the end of school, university or an apprentice, and to make sure that their mum and dad are properly cared for.

The truth is that for far too many people those dreams have died and Labour must be the party to revive them and, under my leadership, it will be. Labour will be the party that helps everybody get on in life. That is what I offer you, a leader who can speak to everybody in our country, who people can relate to, who will put the heart and soul back into our Labour Party. Thank you very much.

*(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Andy. Mary.

MARY CREAGH MP: Friends, it is great to stand here as a fellow GMB trade unionist, and I would like to start with a thank you to the late, great Eddie Warrilow, who allowed me to set up the first ever GMB APEX branch in Brussels 20 years ago, which is still going strong. I set it up because I discovered when I went abroad to work for five years that MEPs did not treat their staff all that well, and that was not the first experience I had of employers not treating their staff well.

Today I am standing in front of you asking you to give me the chance to lead our party. We lost the general election because, although people trust us to run their schools, councils and hospitals, they don't trust us to run the economy. We have to rebuild our party and our Movement if we are going to win the 2020 general election. There must be no "no go" areas for Labour and no safe Labour seats that we take for granted. We have to speak for every region and every nation of our country.

I have a vision for Britain in 2020. The world we live in is changing and the world of work is changing. The jobs that my children will do have not yet been invented. We need to invest in transport and housing infrastructure. We need the education, the skills and the digital infrastructure so that we have a country where everybody can get on, that people get along together no matter where they come from and where not one person is left behind. I want to build a country where hope, compassion and economic competence go hand in hand. They are not mutually exclusive.

I am pro business. I spent 10 years helping small businesses start up and grow at the London Enterprise Agency and Cranfield Business School. But we also have to work with businesses to deliver social justice in a new social partnership, pro business but not pro business as usual.

I am also bootstrap Labour. As well as setting up that GMB branch, I started as a ward secretary, I've been a Labour councillor and a group leader before I went into Parliament. Growing up in the unemployment and devastation of Mrs. Thatcher's Coventry in the 1980s, I never dreamt that I would be an MP. I believe that councils are key to helping people change their lives, and I want to give them more powers so that cities, towns and counties can help people make the changes they need to get on. I fought to keep my job when I lost my hearing in my 20s. I discovered that because I wore hearing aids people thought that I was a bit thick. So I fought that prejudice, too, until an NHS surgeon gave me my hearing back. Labour needs a fighter and I'm a fighter. I've fought in Shadow Cabinet on horsemeat, to stop them selling off the forests, and I am proud of our party, the people we have helped and the lives we have changed here and abroad. Today I am asking for your help and your vote, the chance to be your leader and to win in 2020. Thank you. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thanks, Mary. They are the opening statements. Now we get on to the questions from you representing working people all over the United Kingdom and Ireland. If you could say what you do when I call you and before you put your question, it helps as it gives some context. First up, please, is Duncan Walker from Scotland.

BRO. D. WALKER (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am retired. I am also a member of the Falkirk CLP Executive. In Scotland Labour has alienated most of its traditional working base. Voters were abstaining or voting for the SNP. How would you win those voters back, when all we are hearing about is Labour appealing to the aspirational middle England? Thank you.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Duncan. That's a nice easy question to begin with. If we could keep answers to a minute, please, which will enable us to go through a lot of questions. Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: Thank you very much for your question. Yes, we have lost a lot of support, more so in Scotland than elsewhere, and that is, obviously, partly complicated by the Referendum result last year, but only part. We lost support in some areas of England but not everywhere. Indeed, the Labour vote went up by a million across England, roughly speaking, between 2010 and 2015, but within that there were a very different and complicated set of results. We gained some constituencies, lost others, often very close to each other. For example, we gained a constituency in Wolverhampton and we lost in Telford, which is only 20 miles away. So there are issues.

When we talk about the loss of working-class support, I think that is very true. I agree with Andy on this. We do not often speak the language of the party, the language that people speak between themselves outside. We also talk in terms of striving and individual aspiration. Yes, individual aspiration is important but, surely, the Labour Movement and the trade unions and everything else came around for collective purposes, and that is where we should focus our energies, an aspiration for everyone to be decently housed, for example.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: Duncan, we have got to win back in central Scotland as well as in middle England. It is right across the country. It can't be an either/or. If we are just too narrow and we only talk to one bit of the country, we will lose as a party. We have got to be a party for the whole country. We, obviously, lost votes in Scotland in the shadow of a referendum, but we also lost Labour votes before that. We lost them at the Scottish Parliamentary election and in local government, too. We have to rebuild and it will take us time. We have got to do that through local government as well, from the grassroots up, right through the party and through the trade union Movement working together in Scotland. I come back to the strong principle of the solidarity that we should share as working people between Scotland, England and Wales. If you are thinking about pensioners in poverty or people who are being exploited, we should care just as much if they are in Perth or Peterborough. It is those principles of that common bond that we should be arguing for in order to rebuild.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy.

ANDY BURNHAM: Duncan, I think what is at play in Scotland is what I was talking about in my opening statement, and it is this sense of the party as a detached Westminster elite that does not speak for them, that they cannot relate to. That is the same feeling that is play in England with people going to UKIP, and in Wales as well. That is the thing that we have to change. In Scotland what cemented that feeling was seeing us lining up alongside the Tories as part of the independence referendum. *(Applause)* That is why I have said in this campaign that, under my leadership, Labour will not be making that mistake again. We will have a separate Labour "Yes" campaign in the European referendum.

However, answering the question about the Scotland, the one answer is that we cannot jump to any easy answer. We have to start at the beginning. We have to rebuild from first principles. We have to rebuild the party as a true grassroots community party, and we have to give more power to the Scottish party to make its own decisions, but I would prefer that to be within the context of a UK Labour Party.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Mary.

MARY CREAGH: Duncan, I want to earn back the trust that we lost in Scotland where people felt that the Labour Party had sold them out and that Westminster politics was not working for them. We have always been the party of devolution for the last hundred years, but we allowed ourselves to be

outflanked by the SNP. We think we are better when we are working together, where we pool resources and share risk. Nationalism is never the answer, whether it is the SNP's nationalism or UKIP's nationalism, because where working people are divided the Tories rule, and that is never going to be good for our Movement and for working people. We have a hollowed-out party in Scotland. We are going to have to rebuild from the grassroots up. I am not focused on the structures. I want to know what the content of what we are saying to people is. I believe that working people in Scotland want the same things as working people in Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: Duncan, I think that what happened in Scotland happened over a long period of time, and anyone who makes any kind of glib answers to how we are going to get it back, I think that would be far too simplistic. You can never take any votes or voters for granted, but you have also got to set up a really positive vision for the future. I think what happened in the Referendum campaign was that we were talking too much about the risk and not about the benefits as staying as part of the United Kingdom.

I wanted to come back to your point about aspiration, the desire to get on in life. I don't think that that is a middle England or a middle-class thing. It is as much about the kid who, if he gets all the help he can, is going to be able to get the grades to get a great apprenticeship and the vocational skills he needs, as it is about the person who could be an A-grade student, get on and go to university. We are Labour because we believe the way we help people fulfil their potential is by working together.

I agree with what the other candidates have said about not splitting up the country into too many different sectors. What most people want is something to do, somewhere to live, something to live for and someone to love. We can't do anything about the last one, but that message of hope for the future is what we should be doing in all parts of the country.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I call Hannah Roche from Birmingham & West Midlands.

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am a librarian on a zero-hours contract. TTIP will threaten our Health Service, wider public services and vital labour standards. Are you going to campaign against it? (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: There is a "Yes" or a "No" in that question, so I would like to hear a yes or a no as you answer. Yvette, please.

YVETTE COOPER: Hannah, I think we should campaign for reform to it, so we should be campaigning for reform. So that it does not threaten our public services, there has to be a special exemption for our public services. We cannot have our National Health Service threatened by the Transatlantic deal. We should also, though, support the trade that might help us export more at a time when our economy is not growing strongly enough and where we need the high-skilled manufacturing jobs of the future. So I think we have to be arguing very strongly, both in Britain and in Europe, for the reforms that we need so that we can protect our public services but also support the jobs for the future.

ANDY BURNHAM: I have already campaigned against it with respect to the National Health Service. I went to Brussels in the last Parliament. I called for a full exemption for the NHS from UKIP and that became our party policy. Beyond the NHS, I think the party needs to take a step back from saying that we embrace this whole thing because I am not sure, yet, that this is going to be in our



national interest. The worry is that it will entrench the ability of global multinationals to override the rights of working people. There has been a challenge to the minimum wage in Egypt under a similar trade treaty, and there is this prospect of an inter-state dispute resolution, where governments will be able to be by-passed by big companies. I am not saying that I am against it. For the reasons that Yvette gave, it could be in our interest. Nor do I say that we should, at this stage, say that we are going to embrace it come what may. We need to step back from it and take a view on the overall end result, and I give no guarantees that under my leadership Labour would support it.

MARY CREAGH: The EU has just negotiated free-trade deals with Canada and South Korea, and has managed not to have the huge controversies that TTIP has brought. It is an example of a classic mistake by the European Union, by people who are out of touch with people in our country and across Europe who want to see the European Union work for working people, not just the big corporations. So, yes, we should definitely take our public services and the Health Services out of TTIP. At the same time, free trade is good. It has lifted millions of people out of poverty all over the world. It has lifted hundreds of thousand people out of poverty in our country and we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater. We need our country to grow and there is nothing certain about growth over the next five years with the dangers with the Greek economy and the Tory Government.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: I think that trade agreements should be about bringing down barriers to trade so that they benefit ordinary working people because the interests of someone working in manufacturing in Birmingham, Barcelona, Burundi or wherever are the same. I know that lots of people are really concerned that TTIP is going to allow companies to sue governments if their policies reduce their profits. There is no way that global corporations should be able to wield overbearing power, but I do think that there is a role for free trade if it benefits ordinary people. I actually, personally, think that we should be pushing for proper deals in developing countries, too, because I have never believed that our values stop at our borders. So that is what we should be trying to do.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: I have been, am and will continue to campaign against the TTIP because it is a secretive (*Applause*) deal and the contents of the discussions are not shared with Parliamentarians on either side of the Atlantic. The parallel agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada — NAFTA — resulted in the loss of working conditions, particularly in the USA, exploitation of people in Mexico and was very damaging to both sides in that sense. What it does is empowers global corporations to take governments to court. If you think that can't happen, it does. Venezuela, Australia, Tanzania and other countries have been taken to court under trade agreements. I think that if there are trade agreements they should be based on human rights, they should be based on the notion of poverty, they should be based on equality of working conditions and they should be based on justice. (*Applause and cheers*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: We had a variety of answers there. There were not quite as many yes or no's as I would have hoped. Let me ask a question of my own, which will require only a yes or no. I do not want a qualification, just a yes or no. As you know, the benefits cap, announced in the Queen's Speech, will come down to £23,000. A leaked Whitehall report says that it will put 40,000 more kids into poverty. Do you back, in Britain, a £23,000 benefits cap? Yes or No. Andy.

ANDY BURNHAM: Well, we have — (*Inaudible shouting from the floor*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yes or no?

ANDY BURNHAM: No.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yes or no?

ANDY BURNHAM: Kevin, that is a little unfair because — *(Inaudible shouting from the floor)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: It is what people want to know. It is what people want to know.

ANDY BURNHAM: If you let me just explain why I think it is unfair. *(Calls of “No” and “Answer the question”)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Is that yes or no?

ANDY BURNHAM: There are other changes that they are going to produce along side — *(Massed inaudible shouting from the floor)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Do you think a benefits cap of £23,000 is fair or not? Yes or no.

ANDY BURNHAM: It depends what else they do. Let me answer your question. In principle, it is not right that people should get more in benefits than most people in my constituency get in wages. So I am not setting my face against changes to the benefits system, but it depends how they do it. I am not going to give you an answer to a question like that which is so complicated.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: You are not going to give me an answer that will be asked on the doorstep: Yes or no? All right. Mary? Yes or no.

MARY CREAGH: Yes. We are the Labour Party. The clue is in the name. We cannot defend to working people their neighbours who do not go to work receiving more in benefits than they get for a fair day's work.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I just need a yes or a no. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: Yes. I do, but I think it is going to have big implications especially in London that we are going to have to deal with. There is a serious problem there. I agree with what Mary said. That is much more than they would get on the average earnings in my area. However, the current welfare system is both failing people who could work to get the help they need, because the work programme is appalling, and it is not doing enough. You might not like the answer — I have to tell you my view — but it is not doing enough to help the people who can't work either. The system is failing it needs to change.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Jeremy, yes or no?

JEREMY CORBYN: No, I will not back it. *(Applause)* In the absence of a regulated rent in the private-rented sector, particularly in London, it means the social cleansing of all of central London because of the reductions in the benefit cap. That is the reason why I won't do it. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette, yes or no?

YVETTE COOPER: As it stands, I think it is unfair because it is going to cause big problems not just in London — (*From the floor, “Answer the question”*) — but also in other areas of high rents, where in fact this money is just going to be paid directly to landlords. I also think that it is going to have people particularly on sickness benefits who cannot simply go out and get 16 hours of work and get the benefit cap lifted. I think we need to be arguing for changes. I do think it is right to have a cap and to have limits on welfare. It is right that people should be better off in work. I understand that everybody wants a yes or no, but we need to reform the legislation. I am arguing for stronger reforms to it than other people, but I do think that we need to argue for those reforms.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yes or no?

YVETTE COOPER: As it stands, I think it is unfair. We have got to argue for reforms.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Can I put you down as a “No”, or would you prefer to be a “Yes”? (*Unclear shouting from the floor*)

YVETTE COOPER: In the end, it is our job in the Labour Party to try and argue for change, and to try and make changes, whether that is in Parliament or anywhere else, and that is what we are going to have to do.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: We will come back to some more “Yes” or “No”. I’ve got a few extras. North West & Irish Region’s Shereena Donley.

SIS. S. DONLEY (North West & Irish): I am a first-time delegate and a first time speaker. (*Applause and cheers*) I am a community psychiatric nurse in the NHS. Can the panel tell us what was wrong with the manifesto? Was it too left wing?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: There is a yes or no in that. Was it too left wing? Mary.

MARY CREAGH: No, I don’t think it was too left wing, but we had a series of micro policies that appealed to certain groups of people. The problem was that we had no vision of how people’s lives would be better with the Labour Party. We had no vision of what their future would be, what their children’s future would be, under a Labour Government. For many people, there were brilliant policies in our manifesto on scrapping the bedroom tax, which would have relieved poverty and hardship in my Wakefield constituency. There were brilliant policies on tackling the abuse of zero-hours contracts and the abuses of people bringing in people to undercut wages. But there was nothing that said how the country would be different in 2020 under a Labour Government. There was nothing that spoke to the general public and nothing that gave them confidence that the economy would be safe under a Labour Government. I think that was a problem that happened, Shereena, over the previous five years, where we failed to nail the Tory myth that Labour had somehow spent too much on schools and hospitals, when in fact there was a financial crisis that caused the deficit and that caused the debt.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Liz, was it too left wing?

LIZ KENDALL: I do not think that that was the problem with it. All of us here wanted to see the bedroom tax scrapped and a better minimum wage. I remember talking to some shop workers who said that an £8 minimum wage in 2019 would not be enough. It wouldn’t be enough now, left alone in 2019. Lots of people were saying, “I am not on the minimum wage, I don’t have a zero-hours contract and I own my own house”, and they did not feel that we had anything to say to them. I think we should have had more on skills and education, because getting a great education is your ticket to a better life

and we should have something much more positive and inspiring about that. The truth is that people did not trust us on the economy or with their taxes. We did not set out a positive enough vision for the future, but I think there is something far more fundamental, which is awful — I have to say this — for us as Labour. Too many people don't think that we share their values of hard work, responsibility, taking care of yourself, your family and others. That is a big problem that we have to face.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: No, I don't think it was particularly left wing, actually. I had some problem in finding that part of it. (*Applause*) There were some good points in it on zero-hours contracts, rights at work and on the bedroom tax, all of which I absolutely agreed with. I think an area where we should, could and must be much stronger on is that of housing. We have suggested a degree of regulation of the private-rented sector, but not including fundamental levels of rent control. Now, in my constituency, over a third of the people live in the private-rented sector. Across the country it is slightly less than that, but rising. We have to be quite clear that the way out of the housing crisis is to build a lot more council housing and to protect council housing — (*Applause*) — as a secure form of tenure, but we also have to regulate the private-rented sector. I agreed with what was in the manifesto but it should have gone further and included the issue of rent control, because if we don't do that what will happen is that many people will simply be exported out of the central areas of big cities or they simply will not be able to live there. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: I don't think it was too left wing. I don't think we should be rejecting it. I think we should be building out from it. For example, I spoke to a skilled engineer who was at the risk of being made redundant. We know in our area that there is a lot of agency work, a lot of zero-hours contracts and a lot of distribution work. I was talking to him about how Labour has got plans to stop the exploitative zero-hours contracts. He said that he agreed with me. He thought that that was great, but what else was I going to do to make sure that there were more high-skilled and hi-tech jobs coming to Yorkshire and to our part of Yorkshire. That is what I felt we also needed to add. That is not about changing our approach to exploitative zero-hours contracts — we have got to do that — but we have also got to say how are we going to get the hi-tech digital jobs into Yorkshire? How are we going to make sure that every part of the country can also benefit from the new jobs of the future and the high-skilled jobs so that we are not just an economy that is dependent on low productivity, cheap labour and exploitation.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy, yes or no, was it too left wing?

ANDY BURNHAM: No. I would say that it was the best manifesto that I have stood on in the four general elections in which I have stood for Parliament for Labour. I say that, and I pay tribute and give credit to Ed Miliband — (*Applause*) — because I believe that he did something important in re-focusing our party on inequality, on putting his finger on the growing casualisation of work and the damage that that does, the insecurity that comes from that, the damage to people's mental health and well being. I believe it could have been stronger, actually, on education. As somebody who believes passionately in comprehensive education. I would have liked to see a stronger stand against academies and free schools. I argued for a more bold policy on health and care, extending the NHS principle to social care. In the end, its problem was that it was too narrow. It did not have enough to say to people who want to get on in life. It could have said more about how we help people own their own home. This is, in the end, is what we have to do. We have got to speak to both of those groups to build a manifesto that wins in 2020.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: The next question will come from Nadia Iqbal, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, please.

SIS. N. IQBAL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): How will you significantly raise growth and productivity and, hence, living standards in the economy? Does the state have a role or is it best left to the free market?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Tricky in a minute, I know, but, Liz, give it a go.

LIZ KENDALL: The two biggest things we have to do is to raise productivity and skills. That can only be done, I believe, with a partnership between government, businesses and trade unions. The level of productivity in the economy is a real problem, and so, too, is the fact that we are still nowhere balanced enough in terms of where the jobs and growth are. We need that in all parts of the country and in different sectors, too. I do not think — in going back to the previous question — we nailed in the manifesto how on earth we are going to get those high-skilled, high-waged job in other parts of the country. I think that trade unions have a vital role to play in this, in partnership with businesses, to transform vocational education. Businesses need to have a much stronger role in shaping the kinds of skills and qualifications that young people are getting. I also want to see much more partnership with strong roles for workers in the boardroom. There is a huge number of things that we could be doing if we work in partnership. The major problem with this Government is that that is anathema to them. That is where, I think, they will get it wrong.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: I think there are a lot of ways it can be done. One is improving skill training, improving access to education, improving access to university and the affordability of university education. Secondly, supporting hi-tech businesses and the innovation surrounding them, particularly development of the green economy and green jobs. Thirdly, improving the transport infrastructure of the whole country. It is, clearly, necessary to have much better railways, particularly around the country where there is, therefore, better access to areas. Lastly, just recognising that for productive manufacturing industry to do well it also requires a very good level of public service also. If you provide good childcare education, parents can go to work. If you provide a good Health Service, then people are not off work ill for a long time. If you don't have long waiting lists, then they are not waiting when they could be working. It is all those kind of things. A productive economy requires a high level of public service as well as investment in skills to improve productivity as a whole.  
(Applause)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: There is definitely a role for government, and a really strong role, particularly around investing in infrastructure and skills. Childcare has got to be part of that infrastructure. It is not just about trains and transport networks. It has got to be about helping parents to work as well. As to the skills, I am so fed up of this British tradition of treating academic and vocational skills separately, seeing vocational skills as second class. That is not only unfair on people who have vocational skills and who need them, but it is also running down our economy because we need those vocational skills for the future. We must have a massive boost for high-quality apprenticeships and skills, and we have also got to make the most of the digital revolution. So many of the jobs of the future are going to involve the internet, yet 10 million people cannot do Google searches at the moment, and 95% of the coding is being done by men. Why aren't women part of those powerful jobs of the future as well?

We need to be aiming to support the jobs of the future but also make sure that every single person in this country gets the chance of those jobs rather than it being the same old thing, where you get widening equality and some people left behind.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy.

ANDY BURNHAM: Building on the good things in our manifesto, one of the best things I thought we had was the plan to give tax breaks to companies that pay the living wage. I think there was something really important there that we could build on as a Labour Party. That is one thing that I would do to raise living standards that you asked about.

Secondly, we need to do more to help companies when they are in their early days. We need to take taxes off companies in that stage so that they can build, grow and employ more people, but the bigger answer to your question is to have a proper industrial strategy for this country. When I knock on doors in Leigh and people often say to me, “Where are the jobs coming from? Where are my kids going to work?” Until we answer those questions, I don’t think we have a real answer to your question. We do need to invest in those green jobs. I made a decision that we needed a moratorium on fracking. Why did I say that? Because I believe we need to send the biggest signals that green energy, renewables, should be the future of our country, and I want to see energy, effort and resources going into that, because I believe that the jobs of the future will come from areas like that.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Mary.

MARY CREAGH: The country with the highest wages and the highest skills is the country that wins the global race. I want us to be that country. I am afraid that it is not the case for us at the moment. We are seeing rising inequality, and we have seen the OECD say that inequality is actually bad for growth. We know it is bad for people, we know it is bad for the economy, but they are saying it is bad for growth. I think that companies are waking up to that as well. So we have got to be pro business, but not pro business as usual. I can tell you that 1,500 companies have already signed up to the Living Wage employers, and we have got to build on that because we created the political space for that to happen, but we also need a vision, a plan, for transport infrastructure. We had a huge row about High Speed 2. I want High Speed 3, 4 and 5. I want Crossrail 2, 3 and 4, because physical mobility is key to social mobility, moving goods and people around so that they can access new markets and new opportunities. Andy is right about green energy, but with the oil price going down from \$100 a barrel to \$45 and now it is \$68, we need to make sure that we have a sustainable energy supply and a housing supply. We need to make sure that it is not just about university skills, but it is about the technical qualifications as well.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: The next question is from Charlene Sibley, from GMB Wales and South West.

SIS. C. SIBLEY (GMB Wales and South West): I am a cleaner working in the private sector within the National Health Service. In what circumstances would you advocate a “No” vote in the European Referendum?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Right. Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: I would advocate a “no” vote if we are going to get an imposition of free-market policies across Europe. I would be concerned at the growing military link between Europe, the European Union and NATO, which is not spoken of very much but has to be addressed, and I do think that any debate about the future of the European Union should have, from now on in, a very strong

trade union and labour input about harmonisation of working conditions across Europe and maintaining the right of the free movement of people all across Europe, because, surely, that is what is fundamental about it. I want to see a degree of solidarity growing up between trade unions and others across Europe, because the experience of those in the Eurozone of the way in which the European Central Bank operates, particularly in its treatment of Greece and its attempt at opposing austerity, is something that we have to challenge. The point is that if they can do that to Greece, they could try and do that to others. I realise that we are not in the Eurozone, but we must be quite clear about the need for labour solidarity across Europe rather than just allowing it to be a free-for-all for business across Europe.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: If I thought that Britain's membership of the EU was not in our interest, then I would argue for a "no" vote, but I do think it is in our interest to start as part of Europe. I think we should argue for reform, and including, I would argue, for reform to strengthen the Agency Workers' Directive, to strengthen the Posted Workers' Directive, so that we have more support for working people as being part of Europe. I would argue for those reforms before a referendum, during a referendum and after a referendum as well. In the end, Europe came together after the Second World War and the terrible things that happened, and we came together as part of establishing peace as well as having the jobs to support working people for the future. That is what we have to maintain.

Pontefract has a new factory being built, HARIBO Limited, where the management has said to me that the six hundred new jobs at that Haribo factory are because they are going to be exporting to France, Ireland and Spain, and they would be very worried about the future of that factory if we were outside the EU. So for me, standing up for Pontefract, it does also mean standing up for those jobs and saying that we should be part of Europe.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy.

ANDY BURNHAM: I cannot see any circumstances, because I believe in a Labour Party that is pro-European, internationalist and collectivist in its approach, and that means, to me, always being part of Europe, but that does not mean accepting everything that comes from Europe. As I said at the beginning, I support the free movement of people. My own dad used it when I was young, but I have never signed up, in my view, to the free movement of benefits, and I don't think the British people actually think that that is right. People to come and work, yes, but not to come, necessarily, just to claim. That is a change that we have to make, it seems to me, if we are to win people back. I also want to stop the undercutting of jobs where people are employed by agencies abroad, brought in to work and undercut the minimum wage and, indeed, the going rate of pay for the skilled workforce.

My final point is this. This could be a big opportunity for the Labour Party. After 20 years we have the first Tory Government. They have been in power a month and they are already tearing each other apart about Europe. If Labour stands proud and strong and makes the case for Europe, because it is good for British jobs, for British businesses and our living standards, then we will get respect from the public for making that argument and we will make the case to stay in against a divided and shambolic Tory Party. That will help us get on the road back to power in 2020.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Mary.

MARY CREAGH: My parents left this island to come and work in Coventry and Birmingham in the 1960s, and I have left Britain to go and work in Italy and Belgium. I will always stand up for the principle of the free movement of workers. I want my children to have that opportunity as well. I want them to live in a safe and secure continent, but it is an insecure world out *there*. We set up Europe after the bloodshed and the genocide of World War Two and World War One, and we decided that we were not going to go to war any more. We have seen how fragile that peace is with the wars in Yugoslavia and the difficulties now in north African and the Middle East. We have to make sure that we take the political opportunity that the Tories are giving us as they tear themselves apart over Europe. This is our big chance. We need two separate campaigns. We need the *Britain in Europe Campaign* and the *Labour in Europe Campaign*, and we need to point out the folly of what they are doing, and we need to show that it is going to cost British jobs, British growth and British investment if they pull us out of Europe.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Mary. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: There is no circumstance that I would argue for us to be out of Europe. I think it is vital for our economy, for inward investment, for jobs and trade, but it is much bigger than that. We believe that by working with others we are stronger. We believe in solidarity, and that is what we need to face up to the massive challenges in the world, like climate change. We can't do it on our own. Look at what is happening with organising crime and human trafficking. We can't deal with it on our own. Look at the huge problems around the Middle East and the rest of the world, in Syria and Iraq. Being part of Europe helps to give us a strong voice.

Let me say this. If we allow David Cameron to reduce this debate about something so important to our values as a question about whether or not Polish migrants get tax credits for two years, four years or whatever — I believe in the principle of contribution — we cannot allow such an important issue of our place in the world and our ability to build a better country to be reduced to that level. I want a strong Labour campaign, but we should not boycott a broader “Yes” campaign, because we would be boycotting working with you, with businesses and with climate-change organisations. That is part of how we renew our Movement.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I am going to ask for a “Yes” or a “No”, and I am not going to take a “Maybe”, an “If” or anything like that.

JEREMY CORBYN: Let's have another one.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I've got a few of these, mate. (*Cheers and applause*) If you were elected the leader of the Labour Party, in a referendum campaign would you be prepared, in principle, to share a platform with David Cameron? Yes or no. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: No. I don't want to share a platform with Cameron.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Is that a yes?

LIZ KENDALL: No. I said, “No, I don't want to share a platform with David Cameron.”

KEVIN MAGUIRE: No, you wouldn't share a platform with David Cameron. Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: No.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette?



YVETTE COOPER: No.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Andy?

ANDY BURNHAM: No.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Mary?

MARY CREAGH: Yes. It is in Britain's interest. We should do the right thing.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: David Cameron, you know. The next question is from Midland & East Coast Region. Zillah Warren.

SIS. Z. WARREN (Midland & East Coast): I work in the NHS. I am a qualified intensive-care nurse, currently doing my midwifery training. We heard a vision of a different world from the President of Ireland yesterday — and, boy, was it a speech! — but what is your vision? (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I think you could say it was a vision very heavy on social justice and pro trade unions. If he fancies a job in London, I am sure he is very welcome. (*Cheers, applause and foot stomping*) Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: My vision is of a fairer country, a stronger country and a less divided country where we don't have this widening gap between rich and poor, but also widening gaps within our communities, where people can feel optimistic for the future, that their kids can get on, whatever their background, whoever they are, whatever their circumstances, and get a much fairer chance in life where people are not feeling exploited or run down at work, but also where families can enjoy time together and we don't feel like families are always being stretched to fit work but instead change work to fit family life. Also it is about us being able to feel together, optimistic for our future, because what is happening at the moment, whether it is the Tories, UKIP or even the SNP, people are trying to divide us with fear, in looking backwards and making us an inward-looking country. I want us to be a confident, outward-looking country and a much fairer, much more equal and a much more socially just country as well. In the end, the trade unions are such a powerful force in that, and that can be seen if you look back over our history and all of the things that we have done together, but now we have to look forward to what we can do together for the future.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy?

ANDY BURNHAM: I think we still live in a country where the post code of the bed you're born in pretty much determines where you end up in life. The chances that some people have to get on, the connections they have and the doors that get opened for them, mean that some people have an easy passage, whereas for those who have the biggest challenges the odds are often completely stacked against them. I think that situation has got worse from when I grew up. I think it is worse now. We had university more accessible because I got a grant. Now when we look at young people there is no security for them. They can't get their first foot on the ladder because jobs are insecure and they can't get the money together to put a deposit down on their house. They cannot get on. People there are finding it even harder to make their way in the world. I would say that that means, more than ever, we need a strong Labour Party that helps everybody get on. That is my vision, I suppose. If I could summarise it, I would put it in these words: a Labour Party that helps everybody get on. That is the difference between us and them. They are always about a few just making a success. We have got to

be about everybody with a future, with prospects. That is my vision for the country and for the Labour Party.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Mary.

MARY CREAGH: The song of the Labour Party has always been “Give us bread but give us roses”. I want us to have bread but I also want us to have roses. I want everyone to have the good things in life. I want an education system that has children at its heart and a country where every child matters. I want every child to grow up, to realise their dreams and to fulfil their potential. I don’t want to see educational attainment be dependent on the post code in which you live. I want every child eventually to have a good job, and every worker to be able to access skills throughout their lives. I want everybody to live in a decent home, and I want everyone who is brave enough to be able to cycle to work, because we are all too fat and sitting our bottoms for too long. Actually, cycling is really good fun. I also want people to pull together. I want a country that is united around common goals and common decency. I want it not to matter what colour your skin is, who you choose to love and who you choose to marry. It doesn’t matter whether you are from Poland, Purley or Pakistan, if you come here to work and you have got your shoulder to the wheel, we will accept you and we will all get another together.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: Zillah, I think your question is about a better world, not just in this country but the two are linked. When you look around the world, you see some of the horrors that are going on in parts of the world, the lives that people are being forced to live, such as what is happening Syria and Iraq, with women being burned in cages for not performing sexual acts. That is what we have to care about, stop, and ultimately the way we do that is through politics and the power of politics, as well as by working with others. That is why we have our values. In this country — I am at risk of repeating myself — I do want to live in a country where your chance of fulfilling your potential is not determined by what your parents did, your gender, sexuality or the colour of your skin. That applies throughout all ages. One of the biggest scandals we have in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in one of the richest countries in the world is the way that our older people are treated, some of whom do not even know who is going to be at the bottom of their bed in the morning to get them up, washed, dressed, fed and taken to the toilet. It is a vision of a world from cradle to grave where you have the chance of living a better life.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: I did not have the pleasure of hearing Michael Higgins’ speech, but it is quite something when you come into a conference and the first thing that was said to me is what a great speech he made. So that says a lot about him, and I do know him very well. I take this as, essentially, a global question. I want to live in an open, free and democratic society with full employment, access to education, health care, full employment and housing. I want the same for the rest of the world. We have to face some problems here. One is that a quarter of the world’s population are routinely hungry. Another is that we have got involved in war after war after war, which has created war after war after war, which has created migration flows, which has created losses around the world. (*Applause*) I think we need, in the labour Movement, to discuss international issues far more and far more fundamentally than we do in many ways, because if we don’t, then what are we going to do? Are we going to create a fortress for ourselves to keep the poor, hungry and destitute out of Europe, or are we going to try and do something to improve the lot of people who are victims of wars, poverty and oppression? So we need international laws on human rights, international binding laws on environmental protection and

international laws on personal protection and workers' protection. That is, surely, where the labour Movement came in at the beginning of the last century. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: The next question is from Kevin Flanagan of North West & Irish.

BRO. KEVIN FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Yesterday we were deeply inspired by the President of Ireland who, unequivocally, stood up (*Applause and cheers*) for the rights of workers and the rights of trade unions, something we did not see reflected in the last manifesto. Colleagues, candidates, I ask you, were you in the toilet when the last manifesto was agreed? (*Cheers, applause, table banging and whistling*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: There is a yes or a no in that, isn't there? (*Laughter*) Andy. You know what he means.

ANDY BURNHAM: No, but I was not involved as I might have liked to have been. That is the honest answer to the question. To say a little more, there is a big attack coming here, is there not, in this Queen's Speech on trade unions? This Government want to say that elections that take place in trade unions should run according to different rules in any other elections in British public life. It is part of a campaign that they have been running for five years to demonise trade unions. If I am leader of the Labour Party, I will take that on. I have said in this campaign that I will not accept donations from trade unions, and let me tell you why I have said that. It is because I believe by not taking donations, I will be in a stronger position to defend the historic link between the Labour Party and the trade unions. I will take them on and I will celebrate the role of trade unions in encouraging participation in democracy and in civil society. It pleases me that shop assistants, school dinner ladies and care assistants will have as much say in this leadership election as Paul Kenny and any other general secretary. This is something great in our politics, that trade unions bring the voices of ordinary people into our politics. We need to start celebrating it and fighting for it. It is our history, it is our roots and it should be Labour's agenda going forward.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Mary.

MARY CREAGH: In sharp contrast to Andy, I would be happy, honoured and proud to accept any trade union donation to my campaign, whether from individuals, branches or regions. We did an amazing job when we were in government. We set up the National Minimum Wage, we brought in new rights, including the right not to be de-recognised, the right to strike and not be sacked, the right to be accompanied and the right to four weeks paid holiday, but we never stopped in our struggle for working people in our Movement. Our challenge is also, as Andy says, to fight the Tory changes to trade union ballots, but they have got it wrong, haven't they? The point is that we know the answer to higher productivity and higher wages is in social partnership, in sitting down and in negotiating with employers to get a better deal for working people and to get a better deal for the workplaces in which we are working. I know that trade unions play an incredibly important role. As I said, I said up APEX branch 20 years ago, which is still going strong. The unions have an incredibly important role. The role of organised labour will always be part of Labour's DNA. The challenge is how do we make unorganised labour — the small businesses and the self-employed people — part of Labour's DNA so we win in 2020 for all working people.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz?

LIZ KENDALL: I would like to have seen much stronger stuff for helping women who are caring for elderly parents and disabled relatives, because family life is changing. We did really important things

on childcare and flexible work for new parents, but lots of us are now working — we are trying to hold down a job and look after parents who are getting wobbly or in severe need — and we have got to change our family life as the world of work changes. All of the candidates here have talked about the nightmare of the Tories' proposals, how they don't make sense and we should oppose them, and I have been very clear about that from the start. But I think it is a much more profound change that we need, which is when I was trying to answer an earlier question. The truth is that the jobs of the future are going to come from us, from people, from our ideas. How are we really going to get businesses to work more closely to understand what vocational skills and qualifications are needed, and in partnership with trade unions? How are we going to get the longer-term investment in all parts of the country that we need instead of this short-term quick-fix approach? We must talk about all the individual rights at work, but if we are going to profoundly reshape our economy, we have got to think very differently about the role of government, businesses and trade unions. That is where we need to move as a Movement.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: There are some issues about democracy in the labour Movement and in the Labour Party. One of the retrograde steps made in the 1990s was to reduce the role of the party conference, to reduce the role of the National Executive and institute the idea of policy forums meeting by consensus rather than by more open debate. I would like us to have much greater democracy in the labour Movement so that policy ideas can come from all aspects rather than just being fed into a series of experts who come up with those policies. I agreed with quite a lot of what was in the last manifesto, some parts I did not, but the surprising thing was that it came out quite late. I got home from canvassing sessions and started reading the next chapter. I was saying, "Oh, that's good. I hadn't seen that bit before." I think we need to be rather better at communicating what we are trying to do. But, basically, they set out a vision. I'm a trade unionist, I'm a socialist and I joined the Labour Party for those two reasons. I want to see the Labour Party and the unions being able to deliver a fairer, better and more decent world as a result of it, and we should never be ashamed of the link between the party and the unions to bring that about. (*Cheers and applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: I first marched with the union banners when I was 12 or 13 with my dad at the People's March for Jobs. It has always seemed to me that the trade union Movement has been vital in standing up for social justice and jobs for people, not just in the '80s but ever since. There were things in our manifesto that were right, particularly action against zero-hours contracts, stopping the charges for tribunals, which are stopping pregnant women from getting protection against maternity discrimination, and we have to fight hard against these outrageous plans that the Tories have for the strike threshold of 50% and 40%, at a time when they have police and crime commissioners who have been elected on a turnout of around 10% with around only 5% support for the individual police and crime commissioners that have been elected. So what they are doing is a complete outrage. We have to campaign against it.

However, there are two further things that I would also do for the future. One is that we have got to make serious exploitation a crime, not just an employment offence but a crime and we should lay down amendments in Parliament to do it. The second is that we must have much stronger enforcement. All the rights in the world don't help you if they are not actually enforced. The Gangmasters Licensing Authority has become too narrow, HMRC does not do a proper job and we need much stronger enforcement of employment rights.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thanks, Yvette. I know my yes-or-no questions haven't always gone down as well up here on this table as they have in the hall, so I will not ask a yes-or-question this time. I will ask for a figure. We will call it "The Real-Life Round", shall we? I didn't know the order that people would be up *here*, so they just get them as they fall.

Liz, how much is a TV licence?

LIZ KENDALL: I pay £12.74 direct debit 10 times a year, I think.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yes; its £145.50. You are probably around there. You can have that. Jeremy, as you know, they don't pay for NHS prescriptions in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland but we do in England. How much is an NHS prescription?

JEREMY CORBYN: £7.60.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: You say it is £7.60. Actually, it is £8.20. Yvette, what is the apprentice rate of the National Minimum Wage? It applies to 16, 17 and 18-year olds, but it also applies to 19-year olds plus for the first year. It is used as a scam by some companies to get round paying the minimum wage for a year. How much is it? How much is it an hour?

YVETTE COOPER: We are conferring here. It is less than £3 an hour.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: It is £2.73 an hour. You can wash my car for that. (*Laughter*) Andy, what is the average price of a litre of petrol according to the AA?

ANDY BURNHAM: Oh, God! £1.60.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: £1.60! I am talking about unleaded petrol, per litre, an average price.

ANDY BURNHAM: Hold on, hold on.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: According to the AA's May figure. I know it is in my local Shell.

ANDY BURNHAM: I know how much it costs to fill the car, but I don't know about a litre.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: It is 116.4p per litre, according to the AA in May. Mary, what is the price of a loaf of bread at Tesco? Other supermarkets are available, but a family life of 800 grammes.

MARY CREAGH: It depends if you are doing partial or plain, but if it is a Hovis granary it is about £1.25. You can buy two for £2.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I will give you that. I was going for the 55p range. Maybe I need to trade up.

MARY CREAGH: Kevin, what is 7 x 8?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: 7 x 8 is the same as 8 x 7. It is 56, isn't it.

MARY CREAGH: And the price of a pint, Kevin?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: The average is just over £3 according to CAMERA. Wetherspoons are a bit cheaper, but other pubs are available. I don't want to be accused of pushing anybody. Lager always costs a bit more than bitter. The next question is from the London Region's Koulla Flaherty.

SIS. K. FLAHERTY (London): I am an ambulance care assistance, and I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The Pope says that trade unions are good and people should join them. The Irish President yesterday said that trade unions are good and people should join them. How would you promote trade union membership, including changes in legislation? *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you very much. Mary?

MARY CREAGH: I think that both the Labour Party and the trade union Movement have got a bit of a problem, that we are a bit passive. We need to be out actively recruiting. I know that you are doing that in the workplace but it is not enough to be an insurance policy. We need to be saying how are we going to give people power over their lives and in their lives, and power to get on in and outside of their workplaces as well. We need to reach out to build power. We have a real problem in our party, that we are an analogue party in a digital age. We have got 37 million people on Facebook, yet the way that we speak to people in a digital way is still by traditional methods. We still do door knocking, we still go out and about, when people are not in but are out having fun with their friends or time with their families. It is really important that we work together to develop new ways of reaching out to people and building people's power and empowerment in their communities so that they have the skills, ways and means that they need to progress in their jobs.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: It is a really good question, and one I have been thinking about specifically because of the work I have done on home care and home carers. I know you work hard, as do other unions, to get people to join, but it can be a very isolating experience at work. Similarly, in many of the small businesses, I understand that unions have only 14% of private-sector employees as members. We can all do more ourselves as individual members of the Labour Party and MPs. I try and do as much as I can locally. In terms of changing the legislation, the honest answer is that I don't know. What do you think? I would genuinely like to know.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: We need legislation that is more protective of unions and protective of union funds. We need to end the charging to go into employment tribunals. *(Applause)* We also need to promote the concept of union membership much earlier on, in schools and in education. It should be seen as part of life. We had agreements when I was a union organiser where, for example, on nursery-nurse training courses in colleges we could go in as part of the course to explain what trade unionism was about, and then the student on the course had a chance to join the union or not, but at least the student knew what it was about. I think that is important.

I also think we need to recognise that there are six million people who are trade unions across the whole of the UK. There is a disproportion amongst membership. The highest density in membership happens to be amongst older workers, not younger workers. I think we need to develop unionism, to some extent, on the Latin-American social model, where the union is not just a place to organise at the workplace, but it is part of the community and part of society. There the union gets involved in a whole lot of other campaigns and issues, not just workplace related. I think that is the way forward that would encourage young people to join the union. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette?

YVETTE COOPER: The GMB has increased its recruitment and done well at that. A lot of other trade unions have not managed to. Some of the big challenges are because workplaces are changing. People are only staying in jobs for short periods of time. There are a lot of people working through agencies, so I think we have got to work together to reach out to a lot of those workplaces where it is much harder to recruit and make our trade union membership and recruitment be around individuals, not just around workplaces. It is not simple, but if we do not we are going to have an awful lot of people who desperately need trade union support and trade union help, whether it is because of exploitation or discrimination, or whether it is just having better advice about the kind of insurance they need. We also know that where you have unionised workplaces they also have better health and safety records, and they tend to be stronger growing businesses as well. This is not just about protection for the individual but it is also about the role that trade unions play in a growing economy as well.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy?

ANDY BURNHAM: Given the nature of work today, trade unions are needed now more than ever, but what do people hear coming out of their TVs? They are hearing a constant barrage of negativity and criticism. They have a Prime Minister who stands at the Despatch Box every week and denigrates trade unions, a man whose party is funded by hedge funds and private health companies.

The decisions I have taken in this leadership campaign are precisely because I fully intend to take that campaign head on and fight that demonization of trade unions. It is the cleanest money in politics, to organise the donations of ordinary working people, to fund political parties and to give those people a voice in politics. (*Applause*) I am sorry to say that you have not had Labour politicians on the national stage saying that enough in recent years. My whole family, my whole background, is in the trade union Movement. As your leader, that is precisely what I will do, because trade unions boost participation in democracy, in politics, they support people at risk of exploitation and they help to build civil society. So the Pope is right on this, and many other things, but certainly on this point.

MARY CREAGH: But not contraception, though.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: The next question is from Northern Region's Michelle Chaffey.

SIS. M. CHAFFEY (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I work for Northern Utilities. I work as an adviser in the gas and electricity industry. My question is: What are your personal views on fracking?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Your personal views on fracking. I suppose there is a for or against in there.

LIZ KENDALL: Michelle, I think that if we have gas underground in this country that we can get out safely so that we do not have to import it from Russia or the Middle East, then we should do it. We need to make sure, though, that local communities have a real say over it, because I think it is really worrying for lots of people. If the fracking companies can't persuade people that they are not going to see a benefit in terms of local jobs but also some of the benefits from creating that energy going back into the community, then that is a problem. People in mining communities put up with living near slag heaps because they knew that they were going to get some good jobs that would pay a decent wage. I don't agree with a moratorium on fracking. I think it could create good jobs with high skills and high wages. I don't think it is going to solve all the problems. Cameron seems to think that it is going to

cause all of our energy problems — it is not — but if we can do it safely, we should. We need to really see some proper local-community benefits for it, because that is how, I think, we will make progress because people are worried.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thanks, Liz. Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: I have been against fracking because I am concerned about the pollution of the water courses as a result of it. A vast amount of water is involved in its production, and the promotion of low-level explosions under ground, of course, can have a very damaging effect elsewhere. The studies in Australia and parts of the United States indicate that there are quite serious problems about the pollution that is caused not just by the underground courses but also by surface water, with the vast amounts of water involved in this extraction, which when pumped out is very polluted. Therefore, I have not supported it and do not because I am worried about the environmental effects of it.  
(*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette?

YVETTE COOPER: I would rather have renewables, but we don't have them yet. We don't have them on the scale that is needed and we will not until we have a lot more research into things like energy storage, carbon capture and storage and other things, too. It has to meet strong environmental standards and strong safety standards. Again, I don't think we have yet got a strong enough regulatory regime in place. It has to make sure that those test are meant. Also it has to benefit local communities, but I don't think it is right to rule out new technology that could benefit us, that could bring us jobs or that could stop us being too dependent simply on energy sources from abroad, particularly from places like Russia. I think that we have to take a sensible, hard-headed approach to this, to make sure that the standards are met but do not rule out new technology that could support the jobs and the energy self-sufficiency for the future.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy?

ANDY BURNHAM: I have not taken a kneejerk position on this. I have had to look at fracking in detail because of the licences that have been applied for in my constituency, which have been handed out, in my view, far too easily. My constituency is a former miner area, so I have had to look at whether it is safe to smash the ground in a place that is riddled by mineshafts. I have not been able to conclude that it is right, safe or fair on my constituents for that to go ahead. That is why I believe that if it is not right for Leigh, then it is not right for anywhere right now. So I have called for a moratorium on fracking, because I do not believe that the evidence exists to show that it can be done safely. There are still many risks. The point I would make is that if you say that fossil fuels are not the future, of course, you then create a big incentive for renewables.

My final point — again, this goes something I said at the beginning — is that, for me, this feels like one of those issues that is driven in the Westminster bubble. You have got George Osborne surrounded by vested interested who are pushing this agenda very, very hard, and sometimes Westminster, kind of, goes along with it and leaves local communities behind. I think that this is a prime example of that problem. If it is ever to go ahead, those local communities must have the final say so. It cannot be right in this day and age that those communities can be smashed to pieces and not have the final say. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Mary.



MARY CREAGH: We've got seven billion people in the world and we have got to make sure that they have safe food, safe water, safe housing and safe, clean energy for everybody. The first duty of a government is to keep the lights on. We remember in 2009 when Russia turned off the gas interconnector and all our bills went up. We are massively dependent on gas. It is cleaner energy. It has 50% of the carbon emissions of coal. If we could reduce our carbon footprint by 50% overnight, we would do it. So security of supply and new technology should not be forgotten in this debate.

The reason issue is the price of oil. As long as oil is at \$68 a barrel, which is what it is at now, nobody will be coming here to invest in fracking. If oil goes back up to \$115 a barrel, like it was in June of last year, they might. We need to make sure that it is robustly monitored, properly regulated and goes below the water table, but we should not be making energy policy for 2020 in 2015, because it is an uncertain world out *there* and we have got to keep the lights on.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Mary. The next question is from Southern Region's Amiee Wittams-Smith. Thank you.

SIS. A. WITTAMS-SMITH (Southern): I am an eternal temporary agency worker for a local authority in south London. Do you think it is fair that a teaching assistant in one part of the country gets paid less than a teaching assisting working in another part of the UK for doing exactly the same job? (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: I think there is a yes or a no in this. Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: No. It is obviously not right, not fair and, indeed, I have discussed this with a number of teaching assistants. The issue has to be protecting national pay bargaining in all aspects of education and not handing it over to individual schools, academies or free schools. (*Applause and cheers*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette?

YVETTE COOPER: No, it is not fair, but I do support London weighting.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Andy?

ANDY BURNHAM: No, it is not fair, and it is the product of a fragmented education system, an academised education system. I don't believe in that. I believe in a comprehensive education system that is co-ordinated and collaborative across the whole country. It cannot be right and it cannot help raise standards if you have got schools involved in a race to the bottom, trying to poach staff from one to another, undercutting wages. You do not get a stable education system in those circumstances. I support national rates in education and I do in the National Health Service. My track record on that speaks for itself. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Mary?

MARY CREAGH: I support London weighting but I do not believe in regional pay, not just for teaching assistants but also for dinner ladies, school caretakers and all of the support staff who we rely on to keep our schools going. The Government were wrong to scrap the pay board for those workers. We had a policy that would put that national negotiation back into place. That is what we should be doing. If we want an education system where no child is left behind, we must have the very best for everybody, the best in every school, the best teachers and the best support staff as well.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz?

LIZ KENDALL: I agree with Jeremy.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Just on pay, will you take the MPs' 10%, just so we can clear this up and we know. It is a yes or a no. Mary?

MARY CREAGH: No.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Andy?

ANDY BURNHAM: No; and I was the first to say that I wouldn't.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette?

YVETTE COOPER: No; and I think the Prime Minister should stop anybody having it.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Jeremy?

JEREMY CORBYN: No. I think we should peg our wages to what happens to public sector pay in general. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Liz?

LIZ KENDALL: No. I have just had a little dispute with Andy. I said this in 2013. If it is forced on to MPs, we will have to figure out what we do then. What I am thinking about is voluntary organisations or carers groups. That is what I am thinking about in Leicester.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: You should form an amalgamated society of MPs to negotiate with. The next question is from Scotland's Lorraine Linnie.

SIS. L. LINNIE (GMB Scotland): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. *(Applause)* We hear a lot about small time business but in Scotland big business accounts for more than 50% of all private sector employment and 60% of all turnover. What should Labour strategies be for big business?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Yvette?

YVETTE COOPER: We need businesses to grow, those are the jobs of the future, but we also need them to play by the rules and we need to make sure that the jobs that they are creating are high quality jobs. Too many of the jobs that are being created in Britain now are low wage, low skilled jobs, very low paid jobs and that is not the kind of economy we should be trying to grow. So, they need to make sure that we are doing more to work with businesses to get high quality jobs and also to get businesses to see their role in providing training for the future, and continuing to change and to train the workforce for the jobs of the future as well, and to make sure that businesses are playing by the rule when it comes to consumers as well, so that consumers get a fair deal from businesses and that is partly about paying small businesses on time so that small businesses do not end up getting a bad deal from big business as well.

Part of it is that big businesses also need to pay their fair share in taxes. We know too many times there have been certain businesses that have not paid their dues in tax, their corporation tax in Britain,

but we have to make sure that we see businesses as part of a growing economy and not always as something that is distant and that is a bad thing. The trade unions have always done that. Trade unions have always worked with businesses to get good deals, to get the growth of the future, that is what the Labour Party has to do and I think we did not get that right in the last election.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Andy.

ANDY BURNHAM: We have to support big business when it does the right thing but be prepared to stand up to it when it does not. I will give you an example from my own policy area. In the last parliament I developed plans for regulation, for maximum levels of fat, salt, sugar, in children's food. I believed the time had come to take a tougher approach in relation to the food and drink industry. More broadly, I do not think we got our relationship right with business in the last parliament and going into the election. I do not believe any party wins a general election in Britain looking like we are anti-business. The reality is they employ the vast majority of our constituents, many of your members. We cannot have an approach where it looks like we are against those businesses and the language we used about predators I think turned a lot of the business community off. We have to be honest with ourselves, we need to be a pro-business party. We need to support businesses who do the right thing and encourage them to go further, such as the tax breaks for paying the living wage.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Mary.

MARY CREAGH: I think we were wrong to talk about producers versus predators at the last election. It sends all the wrong messages. What we have to do as government is to regulate businesses properly so that good businesses can get on and so that bad businesses pull their socks up or go to the wall. It is that simple. We failed in regulating the banking sector and we are all still paying the price. Sadly, those thousands of people at HSBC who learnt that they are going to lose their jobs today are paying the price for our failure to regulate the banking sector. We failed in horse meat where some of the big food businesses thought it was fine for poor people who were buying four burgers for two quid to be eating horses, and bits of rotting meat that had been put in fridges god knows where. We cannot allow that to happen. We will always stand up when they do the wrong thing but we have to make sure they pay their taxes, they pay their workers well, and that they invest to improve productivity. We have some of the worst productivity in Europe, people work harder, longer for less money. We also have to make sure they do not destroy the environment and make sure that they have a sustainable business going forward into the future.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: I think we have to be pro-business and pro-worker whether that is large or small businesses. Let me just talk about three areas where we need to do more to work with businesses. One is on the skills agenda. Technology is developing so fast that even if kids are getting vocational skills or graduates are getting computing skills, by the time they get out the world has moved on so they need a much stronger role in that. Secondly, I think we should look harder at the power of public procurement, actually, the contracts that government let in terms of both the living wage but also how big businesses can support small businesses further down the supply chain within local areas. We have tried to work quite hard at this in Leicester on our housing to make sure that the companies who get contracts have apprenticeships and jobs and skills for local people. Thirdly, we have to make sure that they pay their fair share and that there is responsibility from the top to the bottom of the system and too many companies are avoiding those taxes. We should be very strong on that.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you. Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: I agree with the last point about public procurement and using the power of public procurement to get a living wage and all those other issues about trade union rights and decent working conditions. Secondly, going back a long way, in the 1970s Tony Benn was very disturbed about the then power of global corporations and tried to bring in planning agreements with them in the way in which they invest in this country. I think we need to revisit that particular agenda. What we have is very big businesses playing ducks and drakes with national economies all over Europe where you get a company like Boots, for example, trading in Britain, transferring its headquarters to Switzerland, paying the Swiss rate of corporation tax, for an income largely derived from the UK, the same for Amazon, the same for Starbucks, and the same for so many others. There needs to be a closing down of tax loopholes. There needs to be a systemic approach for dealing with very big businesses who are largely unaccountable to any national government. They have become global corporations with global power and global clout far greater than that of any one national government. We have to be tough on this one.

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you very much. (*Applause*) That was the last question because flights have to be caught. I am now going to have the two-minute roundups from the podium. The first two minutes is Andy Burnham. Andy, thank you. (*Applause*)

ANDY BURNHAM: Thank you, Kevin. Thank you, everybody for your questions. You have heard a lot about policy this afternoon so I thought I would finish with something more personal. My own family roots lie here in Ireland in labourers who left this country to work on the docks in Liverpool. My granddad, a proud trade unionist, drove a lorry around those docks and my grandmother, Kitty, cleaned the offices around them. She was absolutely determined to get better for her family and she became the first to own her own home. Then after her my Mum was determined that me and my brothers would be the first to go to university, and we did. I went from a Merseyside comprehensive to Cambridge and then to the Cabinet. But I have never forgotten who I am or where I come from.

In 2009, I went to Anfield as a representative of the last Labour Government. For 20 years a whole city, our city, my city, had been crying injustice but Labour was not listening and, rightly, I felt the force of their anger that day. Moments like that make you who you are. I took that message back to the Cabinet table and I took on the establishment and I hope that will tell you everything you need to know about me. I know what is right and wrong. I know we still live in a country where power is unevenly distributed, where the odds are stacked against ordinary people. I know what working class representation is all about, solidarity, the values of where I came from, red and blue together, showing that if you stand together you can overcome the greatest adversity. I am somebody who is true to my roots, my values, the people who put me where I am today standing before you. If you choose me, I will not change. That will be the man that you are electing as the next leader of the Labour Party. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Andy. Mary.

MARY CREAGH: I think it came as a bit of a surprise to many people, not least Kevin Maguire, when I stood for the Labour leadership. Is that right, Kevin?

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Perhaps. No Yes or No from me. (*Applause*)

MARY CREAGH: I am going to tell you a secret, it was a bit of a surprise to me too. I have not been planning this campaign for five years, not even for five months. I wanted to be the International Development Secretary in a Labour government and when we woke up to that terrible defeat on May 8<sup>th</sup> I knew I had to do something different. I knew I had to step up to leadership. We all have a job now

to step up into leadership roles and that means each and every one of you here, all the people who came up and asked their first questions, I remember my first question at a GMB conference in 1994 in Blackpool. We have to tackle the challenge of change, change to our labour movement, change to us as trade unionists, change to the country, and the change in our party. We have to be the party of unorganised labour as much as we are the party of organised labour. We have to be pro business, pro rural affairs, pro environment, and we cannot be pro business as usual. The country has to face up to the challenge of change. We have to build a model of social partnership in the United Kingdom and show how we build a country where hope, compassion, and economic competence go hand-in-hand if we are going to tackle inequality and make sure that every child in our country has the chance to live a good life. We know that inequality is bad for society, it is bad for the economy, and it is really bad for people. Thank you for listening, thank you for the work that you have done in the past and you are going to do in the future. Let's work together to make power, wealth, and opportunity, exist for the many, not the few, and let's work for that Labour win in 2020. Thank you. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Mary. Liz.

LIZ KENDALL: Thank you. I really thank you for inviting me here today. I have really enjoyed the discussion. I am going to tell you why I am standing to be leader of the Labour Party. I believe we could have won in 2015 but my message to you is that we will only win in 2020 if we make the changes needed. The painful truth is that we lost the election because we lost touch with too much of the country. People did not trust us on the economy or with their taxes, and we did not have a compelling vision of a better life that everyone could feel part of. If we stick with the politics of the last election we will lose the next so we must confront the challenge head-on and make a fresh start. My politics are inseparable from the party and country I love. I champion wealth creation because without a dynamic economy in every part of the country we will not get the decent jobs and public services people need. I stand for responsibility from the top to the bottom because making a contribution and playing by the rules is the bedrock of a decent society. I believe in economic credibility. The less we balance our budget, we cannot make the changes we are passionate about, like confronting the profound inequalities that still scar our country and hold us all back, but we will not help the weak simply by railing against the strong or blaming someone else. We have to offer people a chance and not a grievance. We have to work together, schools, businesses, colleges, and unions, to create the opportunities of the future. We have to give power to cities, towns, and counties, who are going to lead our national renewal. We have not even really spoken about that today. We have to be an open, confident, outward looking country that engages with the rest of the world because our movement has always believed our values do not stop at the borders. We are members of this party because we are angry about injustice. We are not satisfied with the world as it is. We are hungry for change. I will not shirk from taking hard decisions. Together we can make the changes we need but we do not have a moment to lose. (*Applause*)

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Liz. Jeremy.

JEREMY CORBYN: Thanks, Kevin. Thank you very much, Congress, for giving us this opportunity today. I think it has been a brilliant afternoon, a fantastic range of questions, and a great range of debate. I wish this could happen all the time and I want to see that continuing. The issues raised have been largely about working conditions but they have also been about direction of the Labour Party and directions of the trade unions as a whole. We are into a period when this Tory Government is now going to push austerity heavy on everybody. I will be at the demonstration on June 20<sup>th</sup> to show my opposition to austerity. (*Applause*) I believe we have to be able to promote the alternative economic strategy which is about closing the inequality gap in this country. The hundred richest individuals in Britain today are the equivalent of a third of the value or a third of the collective wealth of the rest of

the population. There is nothing right about that. There is nothing right about the gross inequality that exists across the world. The labour movement was founded in order to protect workers at the place of work. The Labour Party was founded in order to give a political expression, a political representation to organised labour. We have to recognise that many of the things we have gained are under threat, the National Health Service, one of our greatest gains; the welfare state, another of our greatest gains. Those things are under threat at the present time, just as one of the greatest achievements the last Labour government, the Human Rights Act, is under attack at the present time. We have to defend the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, and our own Human Rights Act. If you take away the human rights of people in this country, we have no right to criticise governments anywhere else in the world that do exactly the same. *(Applause)* We also have a global responsibility. We are an important country. We are a very wealthy country. We are a very powerful country. I make no apology, no apology whatsoever, for being opposed to the wars that have taken place, to being opposed to nuclear weapons. I want to live in a world of peace, freedom, and justice. I do not believe it is achieved by spending more on weaponry. I believe it is achieved by spending more on people and development of human rights and the livings of ordinary people. Thank you. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Jeremy. Yvette.

YVETTE COOPER: In just nine weeks you get to cast your vote for the leader of our party, the person to lead us into the 2020 election that we so badly need to win, for the sake of everything we believe in, everyone we stand for because, frankly, opposition sucks. We have had 10 years of it now by the 2020 election. We cannot afford to let that be 15 years of opposition. If we want to get rid of the bedroom tax, if we want to support the apprenticeships and the jobs of the future, we cannot just rerun the 2015 election we lost. We cannot turn the clock back and try and run the 1997 election either because the world has moved on. We need to have a leader who is strong enough to take on the Tories, to take on David Cameron; yes, to change our party but also to stand up against the things that the Tories say about us that are rubbish. For example, it was not too many teachers, too many nurses, too many doctors, under a Labour government that caused Lehman Brothers Bank in New York to crash. *(Applause)* We need to make sure we have our vision for equality for the future. We talked a lot about hi-tech jobs, different things that we would campaign for, and one of the things we have not talked about is equality for women, the things the labour movement has campaigned so much for that I benefited from, to have so many more opportunities than my Mum or my grandma, but I worry about my daughters because David Cameron is turning the clock back on women's equality. He has hit women six times harder than men. We know David Cameron has a women problem. Maybe it is time to give him an even bigger one and smash that final Labour glass ceiling. Why not elect our first Labour woman leader and a Labour woman prime minister because that is what we need? Together we can win in 2020. Thank you. *(Applause)*

KEVIN MAGUIRE: Thank you, Yvette. That brings to a close these GMB hustings for the Labour leadership. I hope you found it interesting and informative, possibly even enjoyable at times, and it helps you make up your mind, helps the Labour Party make up its mind, and helps the country make up its mind. On behalf of Mary Turner and Paul Kenny, and all of you, I would just like to thank Liz, Jeremy, Yvette, Andy, and Mary. There will now be a short five-minute break while the stage is reconfigured. Thank you very much. Cheers. *(Applause)*

*Short break.*

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please. While you are coming to order, Birmingham & West Midlands Women's Group would like to remind you that England women are playing their first match tonight. Please all support.

Colleagues, please settle down. It has been a long day and I do not want it to be a long night. I call you to order and before we move to Congress business I will call on Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 5.

### **STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.5**

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, withdrawn motion and rule amendment. The SOC has been advised that the following motion and rule amendment has been withdrawn: Motion 161, Attack Campaign for Security Industry, standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region, and Rule Amendment 28, standing in the name of Midland & East Coast Region. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Does Congress agree the report? (*Agreed*) They will agree everything now to get home!

*Standing Orders Committee Report No.5 was Carried.*

### **POLITICAL: GENERAL**

THE PRESIDENT: I will be taking all the political motions, as if you have not had enough, and take the votes after Motion 254, which I believe – where is it? I now call the mover of Motion 235, London Region, GMB Members Standing for Public Office. Then I will call Composite 9, MPs' Pay Rises, London Region, and Birmingham to second; then Motion 239, MPs and Councillors' Behaviour. Will the movers and seconders come to the fore? If they are not in the room you know that it will fall. Vaughan?

### **GMB MEMBERS STANDING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE MOTION 235**

#### **235. GMB MEMBERS STANDING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

This Congress requests that when supporting any new member wishing to stand for public office, i.e. Councillor, MP, MEP etc, the GMB give priority according to the length of time the member has been affiliated to the local Labour Party with a minimum time period to be set. This is in order to further promote more working class candidates at every level.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): President, Congress, the GMB is already committed to increasing the number of working class MPs and this includes all forms of public office, of course. The GMB has upped its game and become much more focused in recognising the political and industrial agendas are in fact one and the same in protecting and promoting the interests of members. We thank the GMB political officers for helping to make this a reality. However, this is still a work in progress.

While we all agree with the equal treatment of members by members, we also recognise that the circumstances that members may find themselves in can be anything but equal, hence the political

agenda taking a higher profile and encouraging our own to stand for public office. This is where the “however” kicks in, though. Some of the circumstances some of our members find themselves in are also anything but equal but in another way.

Quite some time ago I worked as a labourer in a marquee hire industry working long hours, seven days a week, in all weathers, through all seasons, for quite some years. Unsurprisingly, during the summer months large numbers of students would join us and work alongside us. Unfortunately, due to the long hours, low pay, inclement weather, also unsurprisingly most all the students did not make it as permanent labourers. They dropped out and became something like solicitors, barristers, BBC producers. There is nothing wrong with this, of course; someone has to do those kinds of jobs. The circumstances of members who may be manual workers are nothing like those members who may also, for example, be lawyers or members of the chattering classes, even though they all may want to aspire to public office.

Whilst we recognise some members will need more encouragement and training in order to get them to stand for public office, conversely other members may have had wedges of training, propelling them into leading a privileged middle class life, providing them with abundant resources to stand for public office anywhere. More, and worse, the middle classes have always known how to work the system for their own benefit with the ability to parachute candidates into safe seats. Most local GMB members do not have the resources to do this and we need to ensure that it is a more level playing field by establishing a minimum time period for GMB members to be affiliated to local constituency Labour parties as a candidate before GMB support is given. I have nothing against parachutists personally but not in my back yard, and not in yours. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Vaughan. Secunder?

SIS. N. CLOUDEN (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) For too long now we have seen people elected into public office that have no understanding of working people, the struggles of everyday life, and the values of trade unions. I am proud that the GMB has recognised this and has set up political forums and in some regions political officer posts as part of the branch structure. We need to encourage our membership to join the Labour Party and get involved in their CLPs. This is the way to get working people involved in politics, to bring in core values for working people and to change the direction of our party. I believe that we have a wealth of politically minded members with the values that Paul Kenny spoke about in his address. We need to tap into this wealth of talent that I believe we have. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Composite 9, to be moved by London and seconded by Birmingham.

## **COMPOSITE 9**

### **MPs’ PAY RISES**

(*Covering Motions 237 and 238*)

237. MPs’ Pay Rises (London Region)

238. MPs’ Pay (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

### **MP’S PAY RISES**

This Congress asks the CEC to oppose MPs getting above inflation pay rises and be brought in line with any pay rise other public service employees get.

MPs should not get any higher pay rise above what other public servants get.



Paying MPs a higher % pay rise than any public employees irrespective of their job is totally unacceptable.

This Congress calls on the GMB and other unions to launch a campaign to lobby for equal pay on all sides and agrees that in the future, if public service workers get 1% then the members of parliament's (MP's) pay increases will fall in line also.

**London Region** **to Move**  
**Birmingham & West Midlands Region** **to Second**

*(Carried)*

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, before I move this motion, as our General Secretary said to us, he had a passion about our great union. I listened to the five Labour candidates and never saw any passion or fire in their bellies. What a crock of shit! *(Applause)* I think Paul or Mr. Maguire should stand. There is passion there. There was not any passion *there*.

Congress, Motion 237, MPs' Pay Rise. At present MPs get £67,600 a year, a lot more than me. By the time I read this MPs may have already had their pay rise as predetermined by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, IPSA. This will take them from £67,600 to £74,000. Most people vote for their MPs at the General Election. However, we do not vote for their pay rise. Most public sector workers, if lucky, may get a 1% pay rise. The unfair disparity between the haves and have nots is getting bigger and bigger by the year. Most MPs have second jobs. Surely, we must ask ourselves, why do they have second jobs? I can understand a working class person having a second job; it would be so they can survive. If an MP has a second job, surely they cannot have enough work. We must lobby the Labour MPs for a fairer way to get the MPs' pay rises and make sure that they work on the jobs they have been voted to do. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Doug. The naughty step for you! Secunder?

BRO. J. DAVIES (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, we all recognise the importance of the wages earned by our MPs. Unfortunately, we may not like or did not vote for all of them but as a matter of encouraging the right candidates they need to be paid correctly. It is only fair and right for these public servants to be able to support, represent, and serve their constituencies. However, I would like to think the £60,000 plus is an adequate wage for a level one MP, with cabinet ministers and committee chairs earning substantially more. On top of this handsome salary their expenses, even after passing all scrutiny, must assist each and every honest MP. Demands for substantial rises should, if nothing else, be capped to similar public service rises. We have an emergency system with scrutiny of benefits for the poor whilst proposals of over 10% for upper-tier MPs is quite the norm. Please do not think this motion is being too severe but the new government has quite clearly been seen to be feathering its own nest. Stories of Cameron capping MPs wages for five years do not ring true and you cannot really believe what he says with more than a pinch of salt. So, let's award pay rises to those who truly deserve them and MPs who on the whole serve the public be awarded rises as public servants. After all, Congress, I will have to drive my bin lorry for nearly three years to earn £67,000. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Motion 239, London Region to move and second.

## **MPs' AND COUNCILLORS' BEHAVIOUR MOTION 239**

### **239. MPS AND COUNCILLORS' BEHAVIOUR**

Congress agrees that MPs and Councillors should be held accountable for their behaviour by the electorate. An example of why happened in King's Lynn when Councillors rode roughshod over massive public opinion.

These Councillors and MPs who behave in this fashion should be subject to recall from their position of trust.

KING'S LYNN NO.1 BRANCH  
London Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. D. ANDERSON (London): President, Congress, we all agree our MPs and councillors should be held accountable for their behaviour. They are constantly in the public eye, either dealing with local issues or in the House of Commons, which we can all watch on TV. We expect them to conduct themselves in a dignified manner. Watching Prime Minister's Question Time can be a shambles, like badly behaved children fighting, name-calling, and bullying, with the Speaker trying to play referee. Could we get away with behaviour like that? No. Even the political figures we support as a union have had their moments and are not exempt from criticism regarding their behaviour. We have seen it up here. I could go on. We vote these people into their positions so we expect them to follow a code of conduct as we have to follow in our workplaces. Congress, let's get them to follow this code of conduct. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. S. FORREST (London): Dianne spoke about the behaviour of MPs and councillors in the public domain and what we see in some cases indeed unbecoming of the position they hold; they should be accountable for that behaviour to the electorate. If that is Labour MPs and councillors, we have the example of the MPs' expenses scandal, the councillors in Harrow, our very own Harrow, and councillors in Kings Lynn, and it would mean the loss of Labour MPs and councillors. We as Labour Party members must ensure that we do not allow us to lose Labour seats as a result of the behaviour of MPs or councillors that bring our party into disrepute. This means, comrades, brothers and sisters, as GMB members getting active in the Labour Party and ensuring de-selection of those MPs and councillors that bring our party into disrepute and replacing them with councillors and MPs, like Richard Burgon who spoke yesterday, that would hold the honour of our party high. We must go further than that on behaviour in the public domain. We as GMB Labour Party members, as has been promoted by our London Region and our General Secretary, we as GMB Labour Party members must deselect any councillor who carries out cuts on behalf of this Tory Government that damages the lives of the old, young, and vulnerable, in our society, and we should start with those councillors in Barking and Dagenham that think they can bring vicious pay cuts to our members. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. We now move over to Motion 240, Westminster Paedophile Group, London Region to move. Hello, Barbara.

SIS. B. BENHAM: Hello, love. Are you all right?

## **WESTMINSTER PAEDOPHILE GROUP MOTION 240**

### **240. WESTMINSTER PAEDOPHILE GROUP**

This Congress is deeply concerned in respect of the machinations surrounding the alleged Westminster Paedophile Group, apparently involving the great and the good of all political parties and others.

Although these allegations were first raised many years ago, the investigation process seems to have been delayed for a number of reasons, despite the fact that victims have come forward and the possible murders of at least three young persons have been reported.

Congress asks if this is another case of one law for the rich and powerful and the usual other for the victims.

Congress calls on GMB to do everything in its power to bring this investigation to a meaningful close, no matter which political party suffers.

HOME COUNTIES GENERAL BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. B. BENHAM: President, Congress, the abuse is an abhorrent crime. The destruction of innocence of children is worthy of the most severe punishment but, colleagues, if these crimes are abhorrent then surely the failure of proper investigation of child abuse allegations against prominent public figures is an even bigger crime. The press has been full of these allegations and recent revelations show a litany of lost files and changed stories, and suggestions of cover-ups which must be assumed to be to protect these prominent people. Congress, this started in November 1983 when the late Conservative MP, Geoffrey Dickens, sent a 40-page dossier to the then Home Secretary, Leon Brittan. It alleged widespread child abuse and contained the name of Cyril Smith and other politicians. In March 1984, Brittan told Dickens that the dossier had been sent to the police. However, it emerged in 2014 that the dossier had disappeared and there is no record of a police investigation despite what Brittan told Dickens; in fact, colleagues, it appears that the 114 files containing allegations of abuse have also disappeared. Congress, specific allegations have been made. There have been three disappearances with the suggestion of murder. It has also been suggested that Margaret Thatcher knew of the allegations and turned a blind eye.

Let us not forget, colleagues, the victims here are the children of working-class families. Little wonder then that Thatcher did not care. Allegations against other paedophiles and abusers are investigated and if tried and convicted are given appropriate prison sentences. This should happen in all cases, no matter how high an office an abuser holds. The Wanless Inquiry may have found the accusations of a Home Office cover-up to be not proven. That does not mean there was not one to prove. How can it not be proven when a 40-page dossier and another 114 files are lost? How can it not be proven when Brittan changed his story about the lost dossier at least twice?

Congress, these allegations must be fully investigated. Death, ill health, or position, should not prevent a full and fair investigation into these allegations, an investigation chaired by someone without a conflict of interest. Abusers of children must be brought to account. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Secunder?

SIS. M. MALONE (London): Colleagues, Congress, our children are the most important part of our lives. As the mover said, the abuse of children is a vile crime. The cover-up of abuse of children is a

horrific crime. The allegations surrounding the Westminster paedophiles group are many and so many well-known prominent politicians have been named; for example, Cyril Smith, Lord Boyson and Lord Jennings. In 2012, the CPS and Manchester Police said that Cyril Smith should have been prosecuted. Allegations about Elm Tree Guest House and Dolphin Square have been well documented in the press and several have brought allegations. The journalist, Don Hale, claimed that a file given to him by Barbara Castle that contained abuse allegations involving MPs was seized by Special Branch, despite the Home Office denial Special Branch or the police were investigating, despite the Home Office denial of a cover-up, and despite Leon Brittan changing his mind more often than he did his underwear.

Congress, the stench of this cover-up is overwhelming. The public deserve the truth. Criminals deserve punishment no matter who they are or how old or how frail they are, and they are hiding behind the pretence of having memory loss. Let's have an investigation, let's have it now, and let's not have a cover-up. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Maureen. Could the mover of Composite 11 and Motion 244 come forward? Composite 11?

## **COMPOSITE 11 REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

*(Covering Motion 243, 245 and 246)*

243. Constitutional Convention for Britain (Wales & South West Region)

245. Regional Government (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

246. Regional Government (Northern Region)

## **REGIONAL GOVERNMENT**

This Congress believes that the Scottish referendum revitalised politics north of the border and brought many people into political debate young and old who had previously been disengaged. We believe the devolution of decision making to the regions of England has the potential to do the same.

This Congress recognises that with the onset and aftermath of the Independence Referendum in Scotland and the Smith Commission on the devolution of further powers to the Scottish Government, there is now an urgent need for a new constitutional arrangement between each of the constituent Countries and Regions of the UK.

We believe that this Convention should look to redress the in-balance of power, both financial and political, that exists between Westminster and the South East and other parts of the country and notes that there is a desperate need to review Regional Devolution so that some areas do not face the prospect of being forgotten.

This Congress notes the debacle of the last Labour Government's approach to Regional Devolution in some of the English Regions and Congress calls on the CEC to actively engage in campaigning for the empowerment of English regions, giving greater economic, social and political power to the regions.

We therefore call upon the Central Executive Council to support the Labour Party's campaign for a new Constitutional Convention, that will cover the whole of the Country and allow for more power and financial resource to be devolved to the existing Devolved Administrations and for new Regional administrations to be set up in the English regions e.g. Cornwall.

We believe that this constitution will bring power closer to people, allowing decisions to be made closer to the communities where our members work and live, and thereby reduce the feeling of disconnection between the political elite in London and the rest of the country.

Congress calls on the Labour Party if it forms the next UK Government to commit to a Commission for Regional Governance for English Regions as part of a process leading to a Regional Devolution of powers in English Regions.

<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>to Move</b>
<b>Wales &amp; South West Region</b>	<b>to Second</b>
<b>Priority in debate:</b>	<b>Yorkshire &amp; North Derbyshire Region</b>

*(Carried)*

SIS. M. GILBRAITH (Northern): I am sure Billy will be listening right now! Madam President, Congress, in the North East part of the region we know what happened a decade ago when the last Labour government held the referendum on regional government, a campaign that failed to inspire the people in the region and capped by the John Prescott phone calls in the early hours of the morning waking people up to ask them to vote for a regional government. To be honest, it could not have been more designed to fail.

Congress, since then a number of things have happened. Devolution in Scotland and Wales has become established to the point where there is no going back. The Northern Ireland Assembly has continued to govern itself despite the obvious potential for it to break up. Since 2008, we have had the worst austerity for nearly a century that has decimated the region. The Scottish Independence referendum has led to the Smith Commission, which could well lead to more devolution to Scotland and the knock-on effect to Wales and Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, areas such as the Northern Region are falling behind as London, and now inner cities, have a competitive edge on resources and powers within England. Congress, it is essential for our people that regional government is back on the agenda. At the moment, it appears that some local politicians in the North East are playing politics around combined authorities when they should be demonstrating some vigour and passion for the area where they live.

Congress, we need to have a seat at the table of power. We need to be part of a developing UK constitution that is taking place as we speak. We must not be just a spectator. Congress, regional devolution for our region should be back on the agenda just as it was with Scottish devolution for many decades before. If it needs a commission to look closely at powers and responsibilities and how things will be put together, then so be it, especially if it is going to achieve something historic that failed a decade ago. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Well done. GMB Wales and South West Region to second.

SIS. L. MOORE (GMB Wales and South West): President, Congress, for many years people outside the South East of England and Westminster bubble have resented the failure of government to spread the economic benefits to all parts of the UK. This resentment came to the surface during the Scottish referendum and the SNP took full advantage of this to argue for the break-up of the United Kingdom. Thankfully, the people of Scotland chose not to separate from the rest of the country but the debate about regional autonomy and decisions taken closer to where people live was an issue that now could not be silenced.

It is clear that a centralised decision-making process underlined by a flawed Barnett Formula that determined what financial settlements are given to the devolved governments in the UK irrespective of the need could not now be allowed to continue. The full view has to be undertaken to reassess relationships of not just Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, but also the English regions, e.g.

Cornwall, which is one of the poorest counties in England. The people who live in Cornwall are very sure of their county identity and now Cameron is trying to lump some of Cornwall on to Devon citing, "The Tamar is only a river".

It is our view that a constitutional convention needs to be established that will look at the democratic deficit across the UK as well as seeking to resolve the longstanding inequality of finances that currently exist. We believe that the GMB and its membership are best placed to lead this debate. We therefore call on the CEC to lobby the Labour Party, NEC, and to campaign for this constitutional convention to be established as a matter of urgency. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Yorkshire Region. Yorkshire Region, do you wish to have priority in debate? No. There is confusion in the camp! You go on the naughty step when you get out there. Be there when I come back, tomorrow!

BRO. A. H. EQUIANO (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Speaking in support of Composite 11. Let us not kid ourselves, Congress, Scotland did their homework and got it right. They got the whole country behind them, young and old. The rest of us have a lot to make up. The Tories' policy of an English parliament or vote for English laws inside Westminster Parliament will give the Tories the upper hand. Stop divide and rule. This causes discrimination and inequality. Congress, we can't have that. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I forgive you this time! I now move on to Motion 244, GMB Scotland to move and second, Protect UK from Everendum.

## **PROTECT UK FROM EVERENDUM MOTION 244**

### **244. PROTECT UK FROM EVERENDUM**

This Congress, with all the uncertainty, infighting etc of the last few years, debating and finally settling the issue of the Scottish Referendum,

Beith Engineering, would like to put to Conference that never again should GMB become split over this issue.

Our T.U. and indeed the Trade Union Movement was formed on unity and strength. To this end GMB need to stand up to separatist, inward thinking and to preserve our unity with all our colleagues from within the UK.

We should be looking to bring down barriers and borders and to promote friendship and harmony the world over.

BEITH ENGINEERING BRANCH  
GMB Scotland

*(Carried)*

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Comrades, GMB declared its support for the No campaign in Scotland's referendum at last year's Congress. Well, just in case you missed it, we won, and we are very proud that Scotland chose to remain part of our United Kingdom. However, this success has been bitter sweet and having our voices heard has been short-lived and we have major divisions on every aspect of life not least within the GMB. The Yes campaign led by the SNP ran and continued to run a cover-up campaign where they promised to be everything to everyone and made false claims about the Scottish economy and the North Sea oil prices if Scotland became independent. The so-called Cybernats used and continue to use social media to intimidate, insult, and bully members of the No campaign and ordinary Scots into supporting their campaign. The politics of nationalism are toxic and anti-democratic as people here well understand. Never before in any campaign have I experienced

such intimidation and this has rolled over into the General Election, and beyond. During the General Election Labour members were assaulted in the streets, one councillor was threatened with a chainsaw, older people intimidated by neighbours, and our cars were vandalised; why, because I happened to still have a UK OK sticker in my car following on from the referendum.

The Nationalists have removed the right of its 120,000 members to exercise their full democratic right to question its leadership and their policies. Nationalist politicians, along with sympathising teachers, are holding rallies in schools and exposing young people to a narrow political vision. Parental complaints are virtually dismissed. The SNP pay lip service to being trade union friendly while blatantly ignoring trade union values. That has been clear every day of the SNP's almost decade in government. In February, SNP-controlled Dundee City Council awarded a lucrative contract for the V&A Museum to BAM Construction, a well-known blacklister.

Behind the scenes as we speak the SNP are clearly working with David Cameron and the Tories, as they did during the General Election campaign to negotiate holding another referendum and thus ensuring Scotland is held in a perpetual state of Everendum. This obsessive compulsive disorder that is permeating the corridors of power in Scotland does nothing to solve the issues our members and their families experience in everyday life. Our fight is not with our friends and neighbours, our fight is with those who seek to drain our most precious resources, our time, our energy, our knowledge, to satisfy the greed of capitalists, bankers, and the like, division on grounds of nation preoccupies every single waking minute of the Nationalist day, not the need to confront and deal with the money men and tax dodgers who are our true enemies.

Congress, we will always respect the will and the choice of the Scottish people. Scotland chose to remain part of our United Kingdom in 2014. We have wasted enough time on this road to nowhere. We have a major problem to deal with throughout the UK. There is so much healing to be done. Never again should we ever allow our union, our families, and our countries, to be divided again by the cause of nationalism. I move. Thank you. *(Applause/Cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Annie. David Cameron helped to fuel the fire. He should be ashamed of himself.

SIS. L. WALKER (GMB Scotland): Madam President, Congress, before I second this motion, I would like to say President, Mary Turner, it is a privilege to be standing here today with you as President of our great union, GMB, as a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you so much.

SIS. L. WALKER (GMB Scotland): Congress, we are in a time and an environment where we are facing not just UK disorder but global disorder. Whilst others are falling apart, we, GMB, need to be strong. We need unity to be strong and to give strength to others. Not being united signals a falling apart, a disintegration. This would be a disaster and an undoing for GMB. We have had a difficult relationship with Scotland, strong emotions pulling individuals in numerous directions. We need the relationship between Scotland, the rest of the UK and, most importantly, within the GMB union to be one of harmony breaking down barriers, promoting friendship, and preserving our unity. Whilst as individuals you may have your own personal view and as an organisation we should be united as one. GMB need to stand together and work for a fairer more egalitarian society. All people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities, with the unity and strength of the UK as one, standing together. GMB need to be together as one in this future vision. So I call on Congress today to ensure that the GMB never, ever, becomes split over this issue again. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Linda, I am proud to be your President. It is I who should feel humbled. Thank you. (*Applause*)

## **POLITICAL: THE LABOUR PARTY**

THE PRESIDENT: I call the movers of Motions 247, 248, 249, and 250, to the front please, movers and seconders. Midland Region, London Region, Midland Region, and Northern Region. Motion 247.

### **BRANCH AND LOCAL LABOUR PARTY MOTION 247**

#### **247. BRANCH AND LOCAL LABOUR PARTY**

This Congress calls on the CEC to set up a working party/review on how we can develop better working relationships between GMB Branches and local Labour Parties and the role of TULO.

We therefore look forward to reading the results and recommendations of this work at Congress 2016.

GMB MID Lincs BRANCH  
Midland & East Coast Region

(*Referred*)

BRO. B. COOK (Midland & East Coast): Good afternoon, Congress. This motion means a lot to me. I stood to be a councillor in Boston and Skegness and, for those who do not know, it is a rural constituency and a Tory safe seat. Last year at Congress I highlighted to Ed Miliband my constituency had the third lowest average wages in the UK and the highest rent in the East Midlands. We also have issues with the exploitation of migrant workers by the gangmasters, agencies, and farmers. I told him to come for himself and to have a look himself. He did not. I ask myself why. To be quite honest, I don't think he cared.

There were big opportunities to increase the Labour vote where these social injustices in my constituency were happening. My local Labour Party did, though, but because we had no support from the party we got shafted by UKIP and by the Tories. We might not have had a chance of winning the seat but the councils are what is important and with the issues that Boston and Skegness hold the opportunities are there to take enough council seats to at least get some power back and to fight back. We had £1,500 to campaign and organise a constituency of 90,000 people with 90 members of the local Labour Party.

How do we change it? It is simple, we have to organise from the bottom up. We had 6,000 votes. They voted for the Labour Party for a reason but we need to find out why more did not. We need to mobilise our members and change the views ourselves about these seats. I have a two-year old son, Zak. I do not want him to leave school and be in a world of casualised, insecure, and low paid work. I cannot let this happen and I am not going to let it happen. So, I am asking Congress to support these constituencies, myself, and other activists, and let's start to change it together. In the words of Billy Hughes, let's get some fire in our bellies. I am ready for the fight. I hope you are, too. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ben. Secunder?

BRO. K. DUDDING (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I am seconding this motion because I see a void opening up between the branches and the local Labour Party. My colleague just highlighted some of the things that happen in the rural areas and support from the main party. Mine is



a little different. I am the opposite. I have a local Labour Party that does not want to be in contact with the unions. The council I work for is a Labour-controlled council but most of the leading councillors are disconnected from the union, disconnected from the workforce, and disconnected from their own grassroots. By that I mean they all go on when we are in meetings that there used to be convenors, stewards, but suddenly they forget the principles they used to represent. With stronger links between the branches and the local party we might be able to remind them of some of those principles, fairness, equality, and transparency.

The last government and this present government have and will make it harder for public service workers but you would think, surely, a Labour council would work alongside the unions to make things better for the members. The answer in my city is no. They just totally ignore us. They say times are hard and we have to make difficult decisions, which is correct. I think it is £247 per person taken away by the central government. I know it is difficult times. My decision, though, would be to get rid of the fat cat officers who bleed the council dry because every time they try and make decisions on restructuring, who they are going to sack, etc., they bring in these consultants. This has the effect amongst members and unions, not just ours, of being disillusioned and they say we need to set up a new party to speak up for us in Parliament. Hang on a minute, though, we are supposed to have one already, it is called the Labour Party. I want Congress to back this motion so we can start claiming the party back where it actually began at the grassroots, and then work our way up. I second this motion.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. They have to remember they were born out of the Trades Union Movement.

## **LABOUR BEING OPEN AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR SUPPORT OF THE UNIONS MOTION 248**

### **248. LABOUR BEING OPEN AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR SUPPORT OF THE UNIONS**

Congress urges the CEC to use their considerable power to encourage Labour politicians to be open about their support of the Unions.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH  
*London Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Good afternoon, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. Was it a good afternoon?

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): It was a good afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that's all right, then. You're satisfied.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): All the better for seeing you, Mary.

THE PRESIDENT: Flattery will get you nowhere. Get on and move the resolution! *(Laughter)*

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): President, Congress, this subject has been talked about over the last two elections and the past Congresses as long as I remember, which is a long time. It is clear that Labour politicians in the past have told the unions that they are supporting our values while in the big house ignoring their promises and merrily going to the highest bidder. Our union, whilst supporting MPs in the Labour government when they were in power, our union along with other unions was

talking about the triple SMB, the way forward for school support staff to be treated as professionals, as a lot of my colleagues in this room have been struggling for, and you, Mary, as I know. Guess what, Labour dragged their heels so long, along came the election, and the Tories got in and it was shelved. Labour did promise to continue if they got into power but as we all know they did not, so this was an empty promise, as far as we feel. The Tories have no interest in looking after these important people. We urge the CEC to carry on closely monitoring any Labour MP who benefits from our hard-earned subscriptions, from our workers, many on low pay. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. W. OSWICK (London): President, Congress, far too often we hear our Labour Party politicians distance themselves from the trade unions that the party owes its birth to. There are many proud trade unionists within the party but, unfortunately, those in the public eye fail to express their support for the unions in fear of attack from the right-wing press, Murdoch.

Congress, this is no excuse. Our Movement needs fearless leaders who are prepared to take on the powers to be and lead with the same passion and determination as our forefathers. We need leaders who will promote our great Movement, the media platform that very few have access to and, most of all, we need leaders who have the ability to inspire the working classes to get involved in politics, something only possible when people believe the Labour Party truly represents their interest.

If the MPs are not prepared to stand up and shout about the good work the Trades Union Movement does and the benefit it provides to our society, they should never have stood for the Labour Party in the first place. The motion calls for the CEC to do everything they can to encourage Labour politicians to be open and transparent about their support for the unions. Hopefully, one day this motion will be redundant and all Labour Party representatives will come through the grassroots of our Movement and be a union and be proud, but for the time being I urge you to support this motion. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. I now ask for the mover of Motion 249, Minimum Wage Increase.

## **MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE MOTION 249**

### **249. MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE**

This Congress agrees to use its power and influence to urge the Labour Party to review its pledge to increase the minimum wage to £8 per hour by 2020 which, over a five year period is only a £1.50 increase, when a more reasonable increase would be at least £10 per hour.

GRIMSBY GENERAL BRANCH  
*Midland & East Coast Region*

(*Carried*)

SIS. S. ORTEGA (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, in the past the GMB were always in the forefront of leading the campaign for a decent minimum wage in order to prevent ruthless and Dickensian employers from paying their employees miserly wages. The argument from the Tories and those who support them was that by increasing wages this could lead to businesses going under, therefore resulting in mass unemployment. This did not occur and was a scaremongering tactic. When the last Labour government was elected they introduced the first minimum wage of £3.60 per hour for adults over the age of 20. This came into effect in 1999. The rate now for the minimum wage is £6.50

an hour, an increase of just £2.90 in 16 years, which is a disgrace. With more proposed cuts in the Tory pipeline, it will have a devastating effect on many people. Already, over a million people are relying on food banks. Last year the number of food banks rose from 66 to 421, a figure which David Cameron did not know when questioned on TV by Jeremy Paxman.

Over the last five years of the Coalition Government, another campaign was ongoing, which is the fight for a living wage. At present, this is £9.15 for people in the London area and £7.85 for people working elsewhere, which is only 15p less than the £8 an hour promised by the Labour Party. Look at the Labour Party manifesto, which proposed to raise the minimum wage to £8 an hour by 2019, that is just £1.50 and represents a £4.40 increase over 19 years since its introduction. This is an appalling decision from Labour, who is supposed to care for people struggling with poverty. Even the Green Party pledged to raise the minimum wage to £10 an hour, which many believe is a more accurate reflection to raise living standards of hardworking people struggling to make ends meet.

Now that the Tories have five more years to attack the rights of working people with more austerity cuts promised, we have to continue with our campaign to fight for a decent minimum wage. Labour should and can do better and are equal to the task of taking people out of financial hardship and this union must fight to ensure this happens. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. I. BURKETT (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, the minimum wage when it was first introduced was the very first step in stopping the exploitation of our fellow workers but, as so often happens, a good idea can quickly become abused so instead of being the minimum it becomes the norm for many workers. We must move away from the minimum wage to the living wage. £10 an hour is not an unreasonable request and would reduce government welfare. It cannot be right that we have a minimum wage and still have to rely on tax credits actually to get a living wage. We need to get to the £10 an hour and make the correct people pay and make them healthier as they won't be such a fat cat. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. The mover of Motion 250?

## **LABOUR PARTY POLICIES MOTION 250**

### **250. LABOUR PARTY POLICIES**

This Congress calls upon the Labour Party in order to enthuse our supporters in the run-up to the General Election in 2015, to unveil the following policies to impose fair taxation on the capitalist monopolies. Direct private capital into research and development, raise Public Sector pay and Welfare Benefits, legislate for a Living Wage and take key sectors of the economy into democratic public ownership.

Congress further notes Britain still has the sixth largest economy in the world and the third richest ruling class.

That's an ample economic and financial platform from which Labour could launch a programme of economic modernisation and social justice.

SUNDERLAND 1 ENG BRANCH  
*Northern Region*

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. CLEGG (Northern): Worthy President, Congress, the terms of this motion have been overtaken by recent events. Labour has suffered a major defeat which takes them back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. There is no doubt that Labour's defeat has taken place over a long period of time. Our members were looking for something special from the Labour Party. When Labour was in power for the 13 years they did bring in some good policies but there were also a number of blunders, and I am not just talking about the foreign policy.

So, Congress, this motion asks for taxation to be fair. Giving contracts to companies that use black lists and put their profits into offshore accounts is an absolute disgrace. Whoever leads the Labour Party in the future must continue to fight for tax justice and also start to deal with the years of low pay in the public sector. Had Labour remembered its roots of the trade unions, the working class, and all of the workers in our public sector, it could have helped win the recent election. Being timid about public sector pay was and always will be a failure at the ballot box. Reversing welfare cuts, public ownership of the railways, energy, and utility companies, killing bedroom tax, reversing anti-trade union policies and laws, and investment in key areas of the economy, like research and development, these are the things that will put a smile back onto the labour movement.

Congress, our members inform us they are disheartened by the Labour Party policies. Labour have been timid about the solution to these issues. It is solid solutions that our members want. They want to believe in the values that the Labour Party was established on. They want hope. That is what this motion speaks about. Labour needs to learn from its mistakes in government and remember where it came from, or they will spend years in opposition. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

SIS. E. STOBART (Northern): President, Congress, across our region members did vote for Labour. We even gained a seat in Redcar. However, UKIP are now second in many seats throughout our region. In the key marginal seats they were vital to Labour's winning power but voters stuck with Tories. Congress, it is absolutely pointless name-calling people who voted for UKIP or the Tories. That just makes those voters want to stay away from Labour even more.

We now have five marginal seats in our region. Those seats are either going to be Labour or Tory. However, there are enough UKIP voters to kill Labour. If Labour want to win it must have policies that keep the seats we already have but they must also win those marginal seats. To do that Labour policies must be ones that appeal across the areas in our region. Policies around social justice, as this motion states, are vital. Tackling poverty, protecting those who have been cast aside since 2010, capital investment in key projects, for now and the future, are essential in key sections throughout our region.

Congress, too many people in the heartland have lost hope. We see that every day. Aggressive tax evasion and avoidance, property tax, and companies that rip off taxpayers, all need to be tackled. Blue labour needs to go. We need to bring back the Labour Party that Billy Hughes loved so much. We need heart, head, and above all passion to win again. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Etain, hello! Can you let me have that list before we leave Congress? I will see that the Labour Party gets it. *(Applause)*

SIS. E. STOBART (Northern): Yes.

## **POLITICAL: LABOUR PARTY CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Motion 254, Labour Party Branch Structure, Birmingham to move. There's a nice smile!

### **LABOUR PARTY BRANCH STRUCTURE MOTION 254**

#### **254. LABOUR PARTY BRANCH STRUCTURE**

This Congress views with concern the recent changes to Labour Party constituency branch structures that now disenfranchise union delegates and ordinary members in playing a full part in the democracy of the branch. The Executive Committee of the constituency is now run by a small officer core group who often excludes trade union and general members from having a say. The constituency selection process that operated was that when there are not enough ordinary Ward members present to select candidates for local elections any member of the Executive committee could take part in the selection. This is now not allowed under the new rules as the decision is delegated to a very small select number of the Executive.

Congress instructs the CEC to work together with TULO to restore full and proper democracy into local constituency bodies.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH  
*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*

*(Carried)*

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, as my introduction before I move the motion I would first like to reflect the General Secretary's comments in his speech on the General Secretary's Report this morning, on the GMB as a union and how grassroots democracy is an important asset for all Labour Party branches. I feel that by raising this motion to Congress and the Central Executive Committee of the GMB, it is important to acknowledge how trade unionists and members are being excluded regarding Labour Party constituency restructures and from having their point of view on issues, creating a disparity between grassroots democracy and automatic candidate selection. This selectiveness shows how out of touch the Labour Party Executive Committee is with what affects constituents, instead choosing to represent its own interests. It is furthermore disallowed under the new rules of the constitution where ordinary members are not present to stand and there are only a select number of executive committees taking part in the selection.

My closing points are thus. As a young socialist who believes in democracy across the board, I believe personally that my Labour Party prospective candidate is representing all the principles of trade unionism in his profession as a doctor. The CEC needs to reflect this change by working together with TULO to restore such democracy to constituents and bodies, in this case public voters, trade unionists, and the lay members thereof. I also accept the qualification of the Central Executive Committee that this will be taken to the Labour Party Conference in Autumn 2015. Without further ado, Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: The seconder? Is it formally? Thank you.

*Motion 254 was formally seconded.*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, colleagues, that is all the resolutions and composites in the Political Section. I call Tim Roache to respond for the CEC.

BRO. T. ROACHE (Regional Secretary, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Thank you very much, President and Congress. I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on motions 235, 239, Composite 9, 244, and 254, so please bear with me. There is quite a lot of technical stuff. I will deal with each motion in turn.

First, Motion 235, whilst understanding the sentiment behind the motion, we have collaborated with local Labour Party members and other trade unions to try and ensure more working class people are selected. You heard from our General Secretary earlier today about the work that we have done both in GMB and with TULO, with great success, and we heard from one of those successful candidates yesterday, Richard Burgon, in East Leeds. The qualification is that putting timescales into the mix could be very restricting.

Motion 239, you will recall that we agreed that there should be a way of holding elected members to account and the qualification there is that any recall system would have to have strict parameters and mechanisms.

Composite 9, we have campaigned to seek full employment with the public sector pay review body and MPs' pay is also no longer decided by MPs themselves but by an independent body. Our qualification is that we do not want to go back to the days of only the rich being able to afford to become an MP but we still maintain that MPs should only have one job.

Motion 244, as we know, the issue of the Scottish referendum may not be settled as due to the SNP's victory in Scotland and Cameron's pursuit of English nationalism it may well be the case that there will be another referendum in Scotland. We went to great lengths to consult our members before the last one on what position to take. Our qualification is that we are a democratic organisation and our members will decide our position on every issue, recognising of course that not everyone will agree with the position decided by the majority.

Motion 247 is in line with the work we have been doing in encouraging GMB activists to become politically active. We will continue this work through the Political Department. However, we are asking Congress to refer this motion to the Branch Review Working Party.

Motion 254 on Labour Party Branch Structures follows on from 247. Our qualification is that the motion is specifically about Labour Party structure and Labour Party rules so it will best to submit a motion to the party conference or the CLP, and it was very helpful to hear the mover accept that.

Colleagues, after the Labour Party's crushing defeat, our Movement is at a crossroads. Yesterday we heard from the brilliant Michael Higgins, an inspirational speech, heavy on social justice and the crucial role of trade unions and then, frankly, this afternoon the hustings with candidate after candidate ducking the crucial questions on fairness and justice for working people. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, the GMB will not accept compromise by our own party. The right of our members to a decent secure job, paid holidays, to be treated with dignity and respect, to have a roof over their head, that is not an unpleasant, unreasonable agenda, it is an absolute right that we will never compromise on. Our women members deserve equality of opportunity and pay; our young members, the chance of a decent start in life; our BME, disabled, LGBT members the right to equal treatment, fairness, and dignity. We expect and demand that the next leader of the Labour Party, the next leader of the labour Movement stands loud and proud and in front and square behind that agenda.

If I may say, we have some work to do with the candidates we saw up there in the next nine weeks and for me one who should certainly be on the paper is Jeremy Corbyn. (*Applause*) He was the only one who answered the direct question from Kevin Maguire about, is 23 grand unreasonable. He was the only one who said that it was unreasonable to cap it at 23 grand. Well done, Jeremy.

So, earlier colleagues we kept hearing the word “aspiration”. Well, for me I am looking for inspiration. I got inspiration from the President yesterday, I get it from our activists, and we need to get it from our Labour leadership. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Tim, you will get inspiration from me in a minute! Thanks, Tim. Well done. I now ask London Region, do they accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Composite 9? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification on Composite 9? Yes, Mary. (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 239? Yes. (*Agreed*) Does GMB Scotland accept the qualification on Motion 244? (*Agreed*) Does Midland Region accept reference? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification, and I know the mover said so, on Motion 254? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Does Congress accept all the qualifications? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept the reference? (*Agreed*)

Okay, I am now going to put them all to the vote. Motions 235, Composite 9, Motion 239, Motion 244, Motion 247 with reference, Motion 254, Motion 240, Composite 11 -- Motion 244, Motion 247, Motion 248, Motion 249, Motion 250, and Motion 254. Bingo. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 235 was Carried.*

*Comp 9 was Carried.*

*Motion 239 was Carried.*

*Motion 244 was Carried.*

*Motion 247 was Referred.*

*Motion 254 was Carried.*

*Motion 240 was Carried.*

*Composite 11 was Carried..*

*Motion 248 was Carried..*

*Motion 249 was Carried.*

*Motion 250 was Carried.*

*Motion 254 was Carried.*

## **SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL**

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 5, Motion 279, to be moved by London, BBC Bias.

### **BBC BIAS**

#### **MOTION 279**

##### **279. BBC BIAS**

Congress asks the CEC to work with the TUC and fellow Trade Unions to ensure that the Trade Union and working class viewpoint is heard across the BBC. Too often, programmes give out the employer’s viewpoint never the view of the unions or the workers.

We need to remind ourselves that we all pay the licence fee, the BBC is ours, but we have no say in the content of programmes put out by the BBC. A campaign must be mounted with all unions in the TUC, this to include a mass lobby of the BBC HQ.

Let's keep up the pressure until the BBC reflects the full true voice of multicultural Britain.

EDMONTON/ENFIELD BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. FREETH (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) When this motion was proposed it was in the hope that we would have a change of government in May. Unfortunately, as we are fully aware, our hopes and dreams have crashed and burned but to quote Nye Bevan, "The Tory vermin are back in full control." Congress, now the fight starts here but that should not detract us from the intention of this motion. The motion calls for more air time TV programmes that do not just speak for the trade unions but more air time programmes that represent the world from our point, the working people's point, the GMB point of view.

I have a few examples. How often do we hear about the complete lack of low cost housing, council housing in Britain: No. What do we get: middle-class couples talking about a place in the country or second homes in France and Spain, not the day-to-day struggles of living on the minimum wage and trying to find this month's rent. These are issues the BBC does not reflect.

The latest gem from the BBC is a programme called Britain's Hardest Grafters, which pits the benefit claimants against one another for a prize of £15,000. The programme is described in the *Morning Star* as "poverty porn". So far 22,000 people have signed the online petition against the broadcast of the programme. Please, add your name to this list. Just how many trade unions or workers do we see or hear about on our TV screens: very, very few. They only seem to interview us when there is a strike or a threat of one, and then they usually talk about the hardship that they inflict on the public or the customer.

We need to step up our game, work with the TUC and other interested parties, but not just write to the BBC, we also need to think of new ways to campaign and use direct action. Like most things in life you have to fight for them, demand what should be our right of expression. We all pay our licence fee but do we have a say in the content that is put out by the rich powerful bosses at the BBC: No. I say we pay, we want a say.

This Government thinks the BBC is too left-wing. Well, let's look at some of the faces on our TV screens. A lot have Tory involvement, some are even failed MPs, Tory MPs that have lost their seats, still I suppose nobody else will employ them. Congress, I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): Congress, I think we can all relate to this motion. Many of us have sat on our sofas watching a programme on the BBC, whether it be the news or a current affairs programme, thinking, how one-sided and unbalanced the reporting seems to be. Our own anecdotal evidence is backed up by research so I do not think it is just us lefties viewing the world through our own red-tinted glasses. This research suggests that the BBC is biased towards the establishment and right-wing sources. A study by Cardiff University academics found that while there is always a bias towards the party in power, the ratio in favour of Conservative politicians appearing on BBC news is far greater than it was in favour of Labour figures when Labour was in power. Business representatives appear much more than they do on commercial news and appear 19 times more frequently than trade



union voices on the BBC 6 o'clock news. When the financial system went into meltdown BBC interviews were dominated by city voices, like stockbrokers and hedge fund managers, rather than critics of a sector that had plunged the country into disaster. Take the privatisation of the NHS, it is barely given any coverage by the BBC and when it is, it is repeatedly presented on the Government's terms. Until we start complaining and very loudly, the BBC's agenda will be shaped by supporters of government, big business, the free market, and Western foreign policy. That does not just subvert honest journalism, it undermines our democracy. Congress, I urge you to support this motion calling for a concerted TUC campaign to restore balance to our BBC. Congress, support the motion, support balance, support fairness. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder? Was it? Yes, of course it was! You see, I nearly gave you a bit longer! Motion 281, Chewing Gum Tax. 281, Southern Region? Tut-tut-tut-tut!

## **CHEWING GUM TAX MOTION 281**

### **281. CHEWING GUM TAX**

This Conference agrees,

Chewing gum is not biodegradable and spent chewing gum is not only a health hazard, but has become a major problem for local authorities that have to clean it from the streets and public buildings. It also causes damage to seats and clothing on public transport when users deposit it either on the seat or on the floor. Last year in the UK, local authorities spent over £60million cleaning up spent chewing gum from streets and public buildings.

This Congress believes that the time has come to introduce a tax on chewing gum and this tax should be passed directly onto local authorities that have to clean up the spent chewing gum. Last year in the UK, over £281million was spent on chewing gum. A tax of 20% would raise enough money to reimburse local authorities for the cost of cleaning up spent gum.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH,  
Southern Region

*(Carried)*

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern): Congress, last year alone in the UK local authorities spent over £60m cleaning up spent chewing gum from streets and public buildings. The Local Government Association representing 400 councils in England and Wales has called for chewing gum manufacturers to pay for the £60m per year to remove gum from streets. The environmental spokesman, Peter Box, has said the UK gum industry is a multimillion pound business and we believe in the principle of the polluters paying. Councils have no legal obligation to clean ugly gum from streets but they do it anyway. This costs council taxpayers £1.50 per piece of gum, gum that costs only 3p. Chewing gum left on seats, people sit on it and it is very difficult and costly to remove, meaning dry cleaning costs. The manufacturers should pay for this by tax at a time when council budgets are threatened, to raise enough money to reimburse local authorities for the cost of cleaning up spent gum and to educate the public on the harm it is doing on the environment. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. S. RAZA (Southern): Congress, chewing gum is not only a health hazard, but it has become a major problem for local authorities that have to clean it from the streets and public buildings. It also causes damage to the streets and clothing on public transport when users deposit it either on the seat or on the floor. Congress, I believe that the time has come to introduce a tax on chewing gum and this tax

should be passed directly on to the local authorities that have to clean up the spent chewing gum. Congress, please support. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Short and sharp. Colleagues, I now call Ken Daniels to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. K. DANIELS (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 279 and 281 which the CEC is supporting with qualifications. First, on Motion 279, BBC Bias, Parliament passed legislation for press regulation and balanced reporting but the press and media have yet to adhere to this. To update Congress, we are working on action following Motion 183, 'Regulating the Press for Balanced Reporting', referred by last year's Congress. This motion is in line with the GMB support for an independent publicly-funded BBC with a remit for quality public service broadcasting and it identifies the need for a working class voice to be heard, and we fully support. The BBC Charter provided for all BBC news items to be balanced and free of bias and GMB support the Charter and we are asking for this Charter to be followed. The qualification is that where programmes fall short of these standards, GMB urge people to complain to the proper authorities to seek redress.

Now something completely different, Motion 281, the introduction of a chewing gum tax. There is evidence that discarded chewing gum causes problems for local authorities in the resources and costs for cleaning and the problems continue to exist due to local authority cuts in street cleansing budgets and enforcement officers needed to fine people for discarding gum. Furthermore, the Chewing Gum Action Group have been campaigning to try and change people's behaviour but with very limited success. The proposal in the motion for a tax on the manufacturers, i.e. the polluter pays, is a possible solution to the problem but the qualification is that this may be unworkable and we came up with more questions than answers. How will a tax be redistributed? Will it be ring-fenced for cleaning or should food manufacturers fund cleaning-up costs. Congress, we support the intentions of Motions 279 and 281 but ask you to consider the qualifications I have outlined. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ken. Does London Region support the qualification? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put to Congress Motions 279 and 281. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 279 was Carried.*

*Motion 281 was Carried.*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you have an extra item on your agenda and that is the reason I am going to blame him now. Tim, that is the reason I had to hurry people up because the next person I am going to call is a very important speaker that the General Secretary would like you to hear before he leaves Dublin. So, I am delighted to introduce to you Ibrahim Dogus, Director of the Centre for Kurdish Progress. Please address Congress. (*Applause*)

### **IBRAHIM DOGUS, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR TURKEY STUDIES ADDRESSED CONGRESS**

IBRAHIM DOGUS: President, Congress, thank you for inviting me to address this magnificent Congress. I want to thank in particular the General Secretary for his warmth and personal commitment to the cause of freedom for the Kurdish people. Comrade General Secretary, you are a freedom fighter just as surely as those people now serving on the front line against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

GMB and the British Trades Union Movement is famous wherever workers struggle for their rights, famous wherever oppressed people cry out for their freedom. You in GMB embody the slogan, *An injury to one is an injury to all*. You enact the idea of solidarity in all that you do. I am proud to be here and a proud member of GMB in London. Solidarity is what I want to talk about today.

I am here with the simple request of this great union. We, the Kurdish people, need your solidarity. We need your solidarity in deeds as well as words. We need the practical support that this mighty union has shown in support of the Palestinians in their struggle for statehood and in support of workers across the world from Cuba to Caracas. (*Applause*) The Kurdish people are a nation without land. There are 40 million Kurds living in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. A further two million live in other countries, including Ireland and the UK. We have our own language, culture, and political movement. We have long argued for a national homeland alongside the other peoples of the world.

One of the Kurdish national leaders, Abdullah Ocalan, has been in a Turkish prison since 1999. Like Nelson Mandela, he has been incarcerated because he represents a threat to the status quo. Like Mandela, he is behind bars because of what he thinks, what he represents. Like Mandela, Ocalan is integral to a peaceful creation of a Kurdish nation, and just like Mandela, Ocalan must be freed.

We work with the forces of progress in politics and the Trades Union Movement across the world in our desire to be a self-governing people living in peace with our neighbours, democratic and free. Is that such an unreasonable desire?

Here in Dublin the Central Post Office today still bears the bullet holes and shot craters from the British soldiers on Easter 1916. Nations are born from struggle, sometimes bloody, sometimes peaceful. Here in Ireland the pain and the struggle for liberation led to the joy of nationhood and a peaceful, successful, self-governing country. Here in Dublin in the words of William Butler Yeats, a terrible beauty is born.

We Kurds only know pain and struggle. The joy of nationhood remains to be fulfilled. Our terrible beauty is yet to be born which is why we need your solidarity. Today our struggle is for survival in the fight against a great evil in the shape of ISIS. You have seen the horrific stories of beheadings, rapes, torture. You have seen ISIS murdering man and woman for being gay, throwing people off buildings and down lift shafts. You have seen young girls sold into sexual slavery.

It is the Kurdish people who have taken up arms against the evil. Kurds are the main force fighting ISIS. Men and women serve as comrades in arms, as equals. Grandparents take up arms alongside their grandchildren. They fight for their people and in the knowledge that if they fail they will be destroyed utterly. There is no Geneva Convention, no international law, no rule of war, it is a fight for survival against a death cult which subjugates woman and murders anyone in the way.

The Kurds of Kobani, Rojava, and Kurdistan regions, including Yazidis and Christian minorities, are on the front line of a fight against the vilest fascism and Nazism of our age. Let me be clear, no Kurd wants to take up arms. We want to bring up our families, have a decent job, study at universities, serve our communities, and watch our children grow. We want the same as you, security, fulfilment, and love. But what would you do faced with ISIS?

Like the working classes in Ireland and in South Africa, you have to fight for your rights, for your life, and so we are reaching out to the British Trades Union Movement, to GMB, for solidarity. We want the message to fall from this Congress that GMB supports Kurds. We want this meeting to be the launch of a campaign for freedom for Ocalan. This must not just be a meeting with a launch pad for

action. This union is a mighty force for decency and civilisation. You can be so proud of your role in fighting fascism and Nazism, in helping to bring down apartheid and free Nelson Mandela, in fighting for rights for women and LGBT people here and around the world. In the future I want you to be proud of the role you played in supporting the Kurds.

Trade unionism is about pay and conditions but it would never survive if that is all it is about. It is also about fighting for a better world where people live freely in peace, where treasures of earth are shared fairly and where our children grow tall. Thank you, Congress. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Ibrahim, this union, as you just said, has always fought against injustice and by the response you have I do not think the GMB will let you down. Good luck and we will be meeting soon.

IBRAHIM DOGUS: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: We are glad to give you the opportunity. (*Applause*) Colleagues, wasn't that worth waiting for?

### **CONGRESS LOCAL GIFT: JIM CONNELL SOCIETY**

THE PRESIDENT: I have the pleasure of awarding to Congress a local gift to the Jim Connell Society here in Kells. We would like to donate 2,000 euros to the Society and we will make arrangements for payment to be made. I have great pleasure in welcoming Tommy Grimes, Tommy the Commie Grimes and his wife Ann. Tommy, would you like to come down and say a few words to Congress? Tommy, here is the cheque. It will bounce! You see, we could not afford to bring you a real one so I just drew it. We will make sure that you get the cheque and I think you can trust us. Okay. All yours. (*Applause*)

### **TOMMY GRIMES FROM THE JIM CONNELL SOCIETY ADDRESSED CONGRESS**

TOMMY GRIMES: Sister Chairperson, fellow delegates, many, many years ago a civil rights leader told us, "I have a dream." Well, I am not that leader. I am just an ordinary person but I have had a dream since 1972 to ensure that a man called Jim Connell would be respected in his own country. He was respected in the UK but never in our own country. Thanks to two people on my right, Paul Kenny and Mary Turner, and at some place in the hall, Steve Pryle, from the Battersea and Wandsworth Trade Union Council, they ensured that on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1998 a monument was erected in Jim Connell's birthplace. Now, I would have to say without them we would not have it and without you people out there, you delegates, we would not have this beautiful memory of a great socialist. I can assure you now that we are the largest trade union festival in Ireland today, thanks to the GMB. (*Applause*)

On Friday last I got a text at 20 past 7, "Get the *Irish Times*." I got the *Irish Times* and Paul Kenny was there and he was talking about the stone that he has in his office that a local artist, a comrade of my own, Jim O'Brien, had done. He went on to say that the words of the song, *The Red Flag*, mean everything. It means everything to me and I would have to say and it would be remiss of me not to say that without the support of Ann I would not be here today telling you this story. Thank you, Ann. (*Applause*)

I am going to conclude by saying that last September in Liverpool we had made Mary Turner a lifelong honorary member of the Jim Connell Association and today we would like to make Paul Kenny a lifelong member. (*Applause*) Jim O'Brien, the local artist, did something else for us and I

would ask Paul Kenny, please, to come down and accept what we are about to offer him. You will definitely know this person!

*(Presentation of gift amid applause)*

TOMMY GRIMES: Comrades, thank you very much for everything and if you are ever in Ireland and you know the words of *The Red Flag* I will certainly buy you a pint. Cheerio. Thanks very much.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, Tommy Grimes is no ordinary man. His life, soul, and heart is in the Trades Union Movement and the Labour Party. I nicknamed him “Tommy the Commie” when we spent some time in Kells. His wife Ann has always supported him and he has built a team around him, and they do all things voluntarily. Tommy, I am proud to know you and Ann and that we have been friends now for so long but just to let you know, Tommy, I have another friend in here called Brenda, and when the Labour Party decided it was going to take away *The Red Flag* from the end of conference we made sure that it was back and back louder than ever. We were called, “Who’s them two elderly women going across there giving out the song, *The Red Flag*,” when Blair was speaking. It is back and it is going to stay back because that is where it belongs. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, thank you all for stopping on and I now conclude Congress until 9.30 in the morning. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned.*