

FIFTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY 9TH JUNE 2005

(Congress assembled at 9.30 am)

THE PRESIDENT: Will the Congress come to order? I believe the last bus has arrived. Colleagues, we are now going to hear the safety announcement. I want you all to do it every day for the next 12 months!

(Public safety announcement)

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NUMBER 4

(Adopted)

BRO. G. FERGUSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): I am Chairman of Standing Orders Committee and I am formally moving SOC Report and an emergency motion. The SOC has accepted a further motion, Emergency Motion 4, entitled: "A & P Appledore Southampton", submitted by the Southern Region. The SOC recommend that this motion should be taken on Thursday morning.

Withdrawal of motions:

The SOC would like to remind the delegates of the correct procedure to withdraw a motion.

1. The delegates should inform their Regional Secretary of the withdrawal.

2. The Region should then inform Standing Orders Committee.

3. The Standing Orders Committee will report the withdrawal of the motion to Congress. In this way, delegates may be able to follow the Congress programme.

Regional leaflets: The SOC would also like to remind delegates of the correct procedure before distributing leaflets to delegates in Congress. This is set out in Congress Business on page 24 of your Final Agenda. The delegates should inform their regional secretary of the leaflet. The region should then submit the leaflet to the Standing Orders Committee. Any request for organisation outside of the GMB also is subject to this procedure. President, colleagues, I formally move SOC Report Number 4.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much, Gerry. Before I put it to the floor, I think it is right and proper that this Congress acknowledges and thanks Standing Orders for allowing Congress to suspend proceedings until ten o'clock so that we could go and demonstrate at the AA. Gerry, on behalf of the Congress and ourselves, thank you and your colleagues. I hope you will pass that on. *(Applause)*

Does Conference agree to accept Standing Orders Number 4? Is that agreed? *(Agreed)*

(Standing Orders Committee Report Number 4 was

agreed)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I will be taking Emergency Motion 1, Migrant Workers, from Liverpool Region this morning as item 4 after the political fund ballot debate, followed by Emergency Motion 4, Appledore. This morning you saw the Appledore film and the tower that they built. Wasn't it wonderful?

Congress, we dealt with Composite 25, racism and Fascism, and the housing debate earlier in the week. I am going to ask delegates whether they wish to press on, if necessary, into the lunch break in order to complete business. *(Mobile phone rings)*
(Laughter)

BRO. W. WHITFIELD (CEC, Energy & Utilities): Colleagues, as you have just heard, I believe that was the President's phone that went off. *(Laughter)* She ran a tight ship on Sunday, a tight ship on Monday, a tight ship on Tuesday and a tight ship on Wednesday, but, lo and behold, her phone went off this morning. She has attempted to put the Acting General Secretary in jail and she has attempted to put regional secretaries in jail. She has not chastised many on the floor, but I think it would be totally unfair, comrades, to expect that the President only puts £10 in the kitty. I mean to say, the kitty has been building up all week because she has been very, very strict. I think the fine should be at least £100 or more! *(Laughter amidst applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Is this Northern Region sabotage!

BRO. W. HUGHES (Northern): First of all, Brother Whitfield does not have the support of his region! *(Laughter)* I half expected this because I have been hearing whispers. I think there is a bit of conspiracy and skulduggery going on. Had I a white horse, I would have galloped to defend my worthy President. *(Laughter)* I have been in touch with Standing Orders and I have been getting permission to move emergency motion 4 and-a-half. The emergency motion reads: "The case against the Rt. Hon. worthy President is frivolous and vexatious."

Now I am going to name and shame people. It has to be done. There is no hiding behind legislation with this lad. I think, on good authority, the regional secretaries have been in cahoots because all week they have been embarrassed, so it is their way of getting their own back. But, mind, I do not step there. The Deputy General Secretary and the Acting General Secretary are involved. This has to come from high authority. So, the emergency motion reads that: "Being of a frivolous and vexatious nature and time wasting of this valuable piece of Congress material, regional secretaries, the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary", not the Regional President nor the National President because she is way above suspicion, "be fined £10

each to go into the charity.” *(Applause)*

Just before I put this motion to the floor, it is my job to guide you. We are a democratic organisation, but I have to tell you how to vote! Earlier this week, we put our worthy President in the Chair because of her integrity and honesty. We do not want to have egg on our faces, do we? So all those in favour, please show your hands. The pockets of the Regional Secretaries, Deputy General Secretary and our General Secretary, who spoke so well this morning, are £10 pounds lighter now having made their respective contributions to the pot. Thank you. *(Applause) (Donations were made by the said Officers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I ask Lesley to come and take the proceeds.

(Presentation made to Sis. Lesley Lothian amidst applause)

THE PRESIDENT: One has gone in my bag -- hang on! It came out of the brown envelope. That is all right. You can count it and let me know how much it is. Lesley, we wish you well.

(There are no more points of order)

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to the Regional Secretary's Report, Lancashire Region, pages 78 to 84. Paul Hoggarth will move the Report because Gary Jones is ill. Congress wishes Gary well. Paul, will you move the report?

LANCASHIRE REGION - REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

1. Membership and Recruitment

Total membership	61,954
Women membership	19,129
Section membership (by each Section):	
Clothing & Textile	3,302
Commercial Services	6,380
CFTA	5,987
Energy & Utilities	2,967
Engineering	6,708
Food & Leisure	9,644
Process	9,272
Public Services	17,694
Grade 1 members	44,080
Grade 2 members	8,699
Sick, retired & unemployed members	3,517
Total number recruited 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	13,064
Gross increase/decrease 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	-6,940
Net increase/decrease 1.1.2003 - 31.12.2004	-7,682
Membership on Check-off	39,059
Membership on Direct Debit	11,615
Financial membership	57,369

RESPONSE TO THE CULTURE CHANGE

Our work in Lancashire continues to flow out of an appreciation of our present levels of organisation, the developments within the regional economy, our internal resources and our ability to utilise resources external to the Union.

Since last Congress we have developed our recruitment work within the commercial, care and leisure sectors. We have developed our work within the privatised utilities sector and defended our membership within local government services. The Region has grown in the waste recycling industry and has successfully campaigned to defend public service provision in this core membership area. The Region continued to develop its work amongst young people and this has borne fruits within the retail and nursery education sectors.

The Region engaged a "Community Development Officer" as part of a national project and our experience has been wholly positive in developing our ability to establish the GMB as a vital force against racism, social exclusion and economic regeneration in East Lancashire. Naeem Al Hassan and Karen Lewis, Regional Equality Officer, reported to the CEC sub committee during 2004 and our efforts have been recognised in various ways in our Region.

The early retirements in January 2004 disrupted our efforts to develop a specific recruitment team operating alongside servicing officers but the model previously developed allowed the Region the opportunity to implement for all new Recruitment Officers a work programme that gave them the opportunity to concentrate on developing membership, submitting Recognition applications and get involved with CAC applications. The CEC specifically recognised the Region's efforts in regard to Ultraframe Ltd but numerous successes were notched up.

Our strategic response to the Culture Change can be summed up as comprising the following:

- 1) Developing a recognition competence at all levels within the Region.
- 2) Working jointly with other Regions
- 3) Focussing on the needs of Young workers.
- 4) An education and training provision integrated to recruitment and organisation needs.
- 5) Developing our equal opportunities strategies amongst women and ethnic minorities.

RECRUITMENT TARGETS AND CAMPAIGNS

The Region's efforts in the security and logistics sectors were rewarded with significant membership growth in the Region and opportunities to develop recognition agreements within other Regions. If we define the security sector as the guarding of people and property then our membership is increasing three fold. If we include logistics then our membership has doubled. Our recent priorities have been the introduction of the SIA and the changes to the Working Time Directive.

Manchester International Airport is the Region's biggest and most stable employer when supermarkets are excluded and as such the Airport is critical to membership growth.

The co-ordination between Regions has also been demonstrated with the Leisure sector, specifically with Stanley Casinos where a Recruitment Officer working with the national recruitment team has helped to produce significant membership growth and the development of a representative structure. From only one member we now have over 100 and this places the Union in an excellent position to provide an organisational opportunity for workers in this increasingly important sector to consolidate their bargaining agenda.

The closure of the National College, unfortunate as it was, has encouraged the Region to integrate the learning agenda into our work in a way that did not exist previously. This is addressed elsewhere within the report but it is important to register within this section that this integration is critical to our ability to respond to the economic change issues that confront our membership and our need to recruit and organise in new workplaces, with a training programme to develop organising as well as servicing competence amongst our members.

In Public Services the Region has been confronted by the continuation of the Public Finance Initiative, the introduction of Single Status and its partner, job evaluation. Generally membership has remained static but significant increases have been achieved in some cases. In Cumbria joint working with the Northern Region has been particularly successful at the County and District levels. The GMB has been extremely effective in providing leadership to women employed across the County in campaigning for equal pay. The growth in the recycling sector has re-iterated the leading role that our Union plays in the Waste industry and the Union has been campaigning vigorously to retain Public Sector employment and create publicly owned organisations that can provide an effective defence against privatisation. The strategy favoured being based upon the creation of cross border service delivery for domestic and commercial waste collection, recycling and disposal.

We have witnessed an increased dependence upon migrant workers to provide Public Services and are presently witnessing proposed changes to the Public Service pension provision. Increasingly the talk within Public Services is market rates and this can be understood as part of the process of globalisation.

The exploitation of migrant labour was the focus of much media attention following the industrial murder of the Chinese cockle pickers. The Region has been attempting to provide support and advice to migrant workers employed primarily within the agricultural sector. Massive, our young members' Branch, supported the efforts of one of our Recruitment Officers and arranged for a colleague from Latvia to meet with young student workers from all across Eastern Europe. Our Latvian comrade was able to discourse with these workers in Russian and several meetings were held. This work has

provided the basis for an international initiative that is referred to under the Youth section of this report. However this one example in agriculture, where agricultural colleges from Poland to the Steppes send over their students as part of their course to provide virtual slave labour to the benefit of the major supermarkets, was just one example of this shameful practise. The Region has experience of similar trends within the Care and Private Health sectors.

More traditional recruitment activity has been focussed on developing a competence in utilising CAC procedures within our recruitment activities. The Region has produced a working model of moving through positions of individual dissent, revolutionary cell, insurgence and political revolution. This sounds rather grand but we have found that it does provide an effective strategy for developing organisation within those workplaces where employer opposition to workers' independent self-organisation is total. This strategy is focussed on the development of workplace organisation and skills and allows for movement between statutory and voluntary process. Education and training courses specific to the needs of the workplace leaders are integrated into this strategy and delivered at the relevant position in the campaign to focus on propaganda skills, representative skills and CAC process skills.

Not every campaign is successful but this has allowed us to achieve an effective Union organisation built around workplace leaders to ensure a permanent presence to enable a second assault on recognition. One example of the latter is our "Ultraframe" campaign, where even after an unsuccessful ballot arising out of a poor postal system, activists have continued their struggle, even challenging the employer successfully at a CAC appeal. The Union defended our members' position following an application to judicial review at the High Court where the decision went against both the Union and the CAC. There is an obvious need to improve upon the existing legislation.

OVERVIEW OF THE REGION'S ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

The general economic and social environment within the Region is extremely diverse. In Manchester we continue to experience a boom in the construction and leisure service sectors. The city economy is extremely buoyant. The growth is in those sectors in which the GMB has been traditionally poorly organised.

The continued boom at the Region's capital city sits alongside the continued decline in the Region's hinterlands. We are experiencing an economic transformation that arises out of globalisation. This is starkly represented by the industrial murder of Chinese cockle pickers near Blackpool whilst the Chief Executive of Manchester City Council has just received a £30,000 pay hike. Even within Manchester, where the transformation to the post industrial is most complete, nestling alongside the £1.4 million "B of the Bang" sculpture is Europe's biggest Wal-Mart employing almost 1000 local workers. Wal-Mart is the biggest employer in East Manchester, the recipient of Britain's biggest economic regeneration project in recorded history. There is only one other employer in East Manchester of this magnitude and that is Manchester College of Arts and Technology.

The merger of Manchester and UMIST universities is producing one of the worlds greatest university cities. It is already Europe's most densely populated student city. The development of a services or knowledge economy does not make the concept of a General Trade Union obsolete, rather it makes it more vital than ever. Some friends can remodel themselves as a post-industrial gathering but the need for General Unionism is more important than ever as Globalisation increases social stratification universally.

Communities, not individuals, are stratified. Our Union is a community Trade Union. Traditionally our membership lives and works together. The changes occurring within the Regional economy clearly demonstrate this. Whilst Wal-Mart may employ many students the majority of its employees in East Manchester were recruited locally and remain within the local community. A job at Wal-Mart has not been an escape route from East Manchester rather it has redefined the local community as a provider of food and clothes for the city rather than building railway engines for the empire, which was its previous role. This general trend can be seen across the Region. In West Lancashire, communities in Skelmersdale and Wigan, with good motorway communications, house distribution warehouses for the supermarket supply industries. Communities in East Lancashire, more remote from major population centres, have the most disadvantages and as a result suffer most and are most segregated. Time Computers near Burnley, which is financed by Arab capital, is probably the biggest employer of Asian workers. ASDA in Burnley and Blackburn may employ more in total.

Both the Blackpool and Manchester economies are seeking to develop the leisure tourism sectors as economic drivers for future economic growth. The proposed casino developments are the globalised expression of a thriving leisure sector in the UK and are seen as critical to the future success of both areas. We have supported both areas in this regard. However, the difference between the economic circumstances of both is stark. Blackpool has historically focussed on the domestic market whilst Manchester has the clear advantage as it is already an international city with its own international airport, Britain's third biggest, and has a distinctive international brand, Manchester United.

The prognosis for the Regional economy is therefore clear and has revolutionary implications. The economic and social stratification will continue across the Region with Manchester increasing its importance as a client city state in regards to both its regional hinterland and within the city itself. If we accept the Pareto dictum then 80% of the Region's working population will be supplying services to this City whilst 20% of those working with their base in the city will find themselves as the privileged beneficiaries of the post industrial economy.

2. General Organisation

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	0
Regional Organisers	15
Recruitment and Organisation Officers	4
Regional Recruitment Officers	1
No. of Branches	122
BAOs	0
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	38

3. Benefits

Dispute	£441.00
Total Disablement	£4,000.00
Working Accident	£21,913.45
Occupational Fatal Accident	£7,870.00
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	£1,100.00
Funeral	£46,873.00

4. Journals & publicity

Since the last report to congress we have had several successes to celebrate in the region. These are:

- 6 Union Learning Fund Projects
- 5 workplace learning centres opened
- Press Coverage in many local newspapers
- Case study made in TUC publications
- Innovative work with the Ethnic and Asian Communities
- Winning an award for our approach to learning within communities
- Working with TUC and RDA in the Rugby League Sector
- Massive's involvement in international conferences in Germany
- Two conferences at Warrington Collegiate with 300 young people
- Workplace representatives seconded to TUC Learning Services

5. Legal Services

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

Applications for Legal Assistance	2,853
Legal Assistance Granted	2,853
Cases in which Outcome became known	
Total	2,853
Withdrawn	1,129
Lost in Court	-

Settled	2,329 (£15,808,675.97)
Won in Court	-
Total Compensation	£15,808,675.97
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2004	2,330

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union 358

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	358
Withdrawn	412
Lost in Tribunal	-
Settled	144 (£319,620.73)
Won in Court	-
Total Compensation	£319,620.73
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2004	157

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	6
Unsuccessful	2
Damages/Compensation	-
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2004	4

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	65
Successful	-
Cases outstanding at 31.12.2004	29

The Lancashire Region legal work is financially sound even though we have now stopped all admin charges: our members no longer have to pay. PI cases have dropped dramatically in the years 2003 to 2004. From our position, that could be good news for our members in the fact that injuries have fallen. That may be true in some cases as we find heavy manufacturing declining where a high percentage of injuries occurred. The main concern is that our members have been lured into "No Win No Fee" arrangements with legal firms not in partnership with the Union. In this regard we, with our Solicitor partners, have highlighted the risks involved if our members go to law firms outside of the Union control. We have also entered into partnership with Premex, medical referrals specialists and Complete Claims, who insure the Union against any costs liability. This has assisted in reducing legal costs, therefore more resources can now be used for other services for our members.

6. Equal Rights

The breakdown of our Region's Race and Equal Rights Conferences are as follows:

Delegates attending	RRAC Conference: 2003	4 White
	RRAC Conference: 2004	6 White, 1 Pakistani
Delegates attending	RERAC Conference: 2003	8 White
	RERAC Conference: 2004	7 White, 1 White Irish

2003/4 CONFERENCE

In order to identify the success of recruitment activities membership forms used at all events organised from the MELA, Platt Fields Respect Festival to "Europride" in the Gay Village were specifically identified.

2003 saw the introduction of a segment within the training of new shop stewards to enable them be given an insight into the equality structure. Handouts and an overview of Equal Rights and Race are provided to enable discussions; this information is then posted up on notice boards and encourages a wider spectrum of prospective members to become familiar with other areas that we, as a Trade Union, care about, get involved with and for which we campaign.

Naeem ul Hassan was seconded from BICC Cables as a Community Liaison Officer. His work, commitment and enthusiasm has been unparalleled and it is believed that the campaigning held in Burnley put the GMB Union at the top of the league in Community Partnership, Cultural Cohesion and Awareness.

The Lancashire Region's delegation was invited to an event in Manchester to celebrate Cultural Diversity in the company of the High Commissioner of Pakistan, Dr Miliha Lohdi during her tour of the North West.

The efforts put into the Burnley campaign ensured that no more BNP candidates were elected and this was due to the efforts and strife of members, Branches, Officers and other activists, through strength of unity. The Lancashire Region is proud of its heritage and cultural diversity.

Robert McBride's took the lead in Burnley as the company to introduce and utilise the Cultural Diversity Awareness training offered and delivered by the GMB.

The Equal Rights Officer has received a diploma in "The Dynamics of Life Coaching". Life Coaching is a new, vivacious and innovative service to inspire and lead GMB members to a more fulfilling life where they themselves feel 'stuck'; this may be in financial matters, social skills/confidence or they may just require help in reaching their goals.

A Conference for Women took place in Manchester which specialised in assertiveness skills for women, conflict management and learning to lead. This has assisted the Equal Rights Officer in recruiting women into the GMB and has been particularly apparent through the CWS and Co-op Group in Manchester in "Request for Flexibility" cases.

This Union believes that every individual should be encouraged to expect and demand equal pay, gay and lesbian acknowledgement and tolerance, with acceptance of change being the norm.

The Race Task Group was formed with a remit of actions to be undertaken, i.e. Branch Structures, Cultural Awareness training and a National Race magazine. At the latter end of 2004 Naeem ul Hassan, Community Liaison Officer took on the role of Regional Race Officer.

The future is about embracing change, moving forward with the benefits that both openness and understanding can bring to this Union.

7. Youth

The Region understands the importance of focussing attention on the specific developments within the labour market in relation to young workers. We understand that the transformation that is occurring within the UK economy has its most insidious impact on the young as they have the least experience of alternative social realities. Increasingly it is accepted by young workers that attending college full time whilst working in excess of twenty hours a week is natural. Increasingly for young people working in non-unionised work places is the norm.

With Massive, the Region has attempted to project to young people who experience this reality that another, where Trade Unions are present, has a longer existence. We re-branded our youth organisation at the suggestion of our young members so that it would be perceived as more relevant to their working reality and we have established partnerships with many FE colleges where our accredited employment rights course "Massive Respect" is delivered.

Over the last two years our Massive members have attended, at the invitation of the DGB Jugend, an international summer school in the Rhineland that examines themes of international experience and opportunities for international collaboration. Past themes have examined resistance and equality. In 2004 young members and officers shared workshop leader roles on disability and sexual orientation and were pleased to have involved members from amongst the staff and students from Warrington Collegiate in these workshops. We have been asked to host the summer school in 2005 and it is envisaged that there will be ten participating countries from Portugal in the West to Poland and Latvia in the East, ourselves in the north and Greece and Malta in the south. Other participants will include Hungary, Romania Germany, etc. The theme is Economic and Social Development and Labour mobility. If the bid is successful the conference will be held at Manchester College of Art and Technology during August and it is hoped that we will produce an international agreement to recruit and service migrant workers from the signatory participants. This project has been assisted by the work that the Region has done with the European TUC but the themes for the conference were chosen independently by the last summer school following work undertaken with migrant agricultural labourers in Lancashire. Our young members, in their capacity as hosts, are undertaking the preparation and

organisation work for the event with the assistance of relevant Regional Officers.

8. Training

	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
Introduction to GMB (2 days)	8	75	20	95	190 (2003)
	8	88	13	101	202 (2004)
GMB/TUC Induction (5 days)	-	-	-	-	-
Branch Officers	-	-	-	-	-
(b) On Site Courses					
2003 Farley's Heinz Health/Safety	1	6	2	8	16
2004 McBrides Partnership Training	1	18	-	18	36
(c) Health & Safety Courses					
2003 Induction	8	77	23	100	200
2004 Induction	8	79	13	92	184
(d) Other Courses					
2003/4 Right to Accompany	2	16	-	16	16
2003 Belden (MASSIVE)	1	20	-	20	40
2004 McBrides	1	6	-	6	12
(e) GMB National College Courses					
Health & Safety Basic	5	8	3	11	55
Health & Safety	4	5	1	6	30
Follow on	4	9	1	10	50
Industrial Relation	3	12	2	14	42
Partnership	3	4	2	6	30
Risk Assessment	2	3	0	3	15
Employment Law	1	3	0	3	12
Training for trainers	1	1	0	1	5
Stress & Trauma	-	-	-	-	239 total

Since the closure of the National College, health and safety training has somewhat diminished. The Region has sought to address this by incorporating some of the previous college courses in our Regional programme of courses which are also delivered by the RHSO and are set to run throughout 2005 ensuring our safety reps are given the necessary skills and knowledge to function more effectively in supporting and representing our members. Also through the Health & Safety induction programme, Union solicitors are involved in giving presentations on personal injury claims, giving new safety reps a better understanding on how things progress after the compensation claim forms are submitted to the Legal Department, highlighting the importance of accident investigation and recording the facts.

Health & Safety materials and publications are circulated through the branch network to all safety reps on the ground.

9. Health & Safety

The Region has continued to carry out the union policy with regard to health and safety and has continued to offer advice and assistance to workplace safety representatives/branch officials and also assisting full time officers when required.

During the past two years the RHSO has continued to conduct workplace visits on request from local representatives and Regional Organisers thus raising the profile of GMB in the workplace.

ASBESTOS

It is estimated that past exposures are responsible for at least 3,500 deaths a year. This figure is set to rise. Academic research estimates that it could rise to 10,000 a year by 2015: a deadly legacy.

During 2004 the Region mounted a campaign in and around the Barrow in Furness area. This was partly in a response to "claims farmers" approaching our members and plying the trade purely for PROFIT and basically selling our members short. They commissioned a C.T. scanner in Barrow in Furness and began to instigate claims on behalf of members and non members of the Trade Unions.

The campaign has been conducted with the collaboration of regional I-Legal administration and our Union Solicitors and we have circulated information regarding unscrupulous claims farmers along with the Union's asbestos exposure questionnaire. To date this has proven very successful in stemming the flow of members contacting claims farmers.

The questionnaire has also been added to the GMB Lancashire Region's website and is providing the Region with data which will form the basis for a Regional register.

Through partnership with legal and medical expertise we have agreed to run a scanning unit in Barrow in Furness throughout 2005.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

The Region has worked alongside the Manchester Hazard Centre in promoting Workers' Memorial Day and this has proven to be a very successful partnership.

In 2004 the Lancashire Region of the GMB, along with other Unions gathered in Albert Square, Manchester to remember the dead and to fight for the living. The GMB Mobile Recruitment Unit along with Recruitment Officers and Organisers were very active in promoting Workers Memorial Day thus raising the profile of GMB.

The Region has continued to promote health and safety through partnership with employers and have given joint briefings to managers and safety representatives across the Region. The Health and Safety Department has also been involved in recruitment initiatives within the Region and has played a part in supporting Officers in organising new workplaces, being active in both public and private sectors.

Improvements on the design of recycling vehicles within local authorities has also been a good example of safety reps in action and we have sought to disseminate this good practice through other authorities within the Region.

(Adopted)

BRO. P. HOGGARTH (Lancashire): I confirm to Congress that, as a result of the last motion that was passed, I will not be volunteering next time to stand in for Gary Jones! *(Laughter)* I thank you, President, for those best wishes for Gary. I think it is only right and proper that I formally offer Gary's apologies for absence due to his health.

In formally moving the Report on behalf of the Lancashire Region, I inform delegates that we have received this morning a request from our 400 members at ASDA Ince for a strike action ballot following the suspension of our shop steward on site over the tagging incident that obviously delegates will be aware of which has been rumbling on all week. I am quite sure that Congress will wish to its full support to those 400 members and, indeed, our shop steward, Gary Belshaw. Thanks very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Pages 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83 and 84. Are there any questions? *(No response)*

(The Report was adopted)

POLITICAL - LABOUR PARTY

LABOUR PARTY POLICY

MOTION 257

This Congress notes with deep concern the continuing pro business drift prevalent among senior individuals in the Labour Party.

Successive so called New Labour Governments

have actively encouraged facilitated and promoted a pro privatisation agenda, failed to repeal the most significant parts of the Tories anti union legislation and pursued murderous imperial adventures abroad, slavishly following the dictates of the US government and their corporate military paymasters.

The GMB therefore resolves to launch a political campaign among the membership with a view to encouraging the take up of individual Labour Party membership at the first stage of a campaign to draw the party closer to pro working class policies.

The campaign should be linked to a political education campaign aimed at raising understanding in relation to GMB policies on issues like privatisation, employment law, pensions and foreign policy.

The aim of the campaign would be to encourage both GMB branch affiliations to local Labour Parties with delegates from the GMB being sent to the appropriate meetings, linking up with GMB and other trade union members who are also individual members of the Labour Party with a view to halting the right wing drift and returning the party to true Labour policies that benefit ordinary working people.

PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Comrades, no one in their right mind can deny the fact that the whole philosophy of the current new Labour leadership of our Labour Party is committed lock, stock and barrel to the pro-market, big business philosophy of economic liberalisation based on privatisation, which means driving down wages and conditions to the lowest bidder to increase the profitability for big business and the capitalist owners of the means of production in Britain and abroad.

Despite what the Prime Minister in-waiting said to us on Monday, how else do you explain headlines in the bosses' paper, the Financial Times, like "Public services - outsourcing to grow by more than 50 per cent in the next three years"; "State set to outsource 20 per cent of services" with a guide in the centre of the paper on how firms can learn from their past mistakes and take full opportunity of the coming sell-offs? How else do you explain support for George Bush's illegal war for oil, markets and economic and political domination in the Gulf region?

The FT again wrote: "Iraqi oil output can help meet rise in demand." Never mind the tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians who have been murdered, almost 2000 American soldiers killed, almost 100 British soldiers killed and 10 times that

amount, if not more, physically and psychologically scarred for life. As long as BP and Shell get their slice of the action, that is what really matters to this lot.

How do we reverse this situation? How do we ensure that these things never happen again? There is only one way. That is to take our Party back. Ultimately, we need to see a mass influx of trade unionists coming back into the Party. This is not going to happen overnight. It will take a campaign of political education throughout the Union, promoting our policies on issues like privatisation, employment law, pensions and foreign policy.

The aim would be to inspire members to join the Party and get active, to get GMB branch affiliations to local constituencies with maximum delegations going along to the appropriate meetings to link up with other trade unionists with a view to halting the right-wing drift and returning our Party to its roots; a Party that will be a political weapon, capable of transforming society; a Party capable of bringing about the socialism that we all believe in.

BRO. D. BERRY (London): I am seconding Motion 257. I came to the rostrum yesterday and said that this week had seen a good Congress. I think up to this morning it has been an even better Congress. *(Applause)* When we leave Congress, we must learn lessons from it. I think this week we have seen new confidence in the GMB. We have seen new comradeship.

What I have learned from the week is where we operate best. We operate best in the workplace, but also in the community. I think the fringe meetings and the contributions I have heard from the platform this week have all confirmed that. I am referring to the film we saw yesterday of union members working against domestic violence. At the fringe meetings we have heard about community action against the BNP in keeping them out. This morning we saw the GMB on the streets supporting our AA members in the community.

However, we do not need a new Party to carry that community action into our political arena. We have a vehicle. We have the Labour Party. We have heard that they have done some good stuff, but we believe they can do more. However, to achieve that, we need more GMB members in the community.

Another lesson we should take away from this week is seeing Dawn Butler at the rostrum. I have known Dawn for many years. To see her in Parliament now representing working people is really tremendous. It is a lesson for all of us. We need to be in the Labour Party. It is our Party and our Party needs to represent our policies.

When our members join and our branches affiliate, we need to support them. We need the education. We need them to be able to put arguments forward. We need to be able to show them that we are the union that can tell the Labour Party

that we put public provision before private profit. We should tell them about the economic arguments; the economic competition among working people that causes racism, and all the things that we need for workplace rights; how we need the freedom to support workers like we saw this morning without being told it is secondary picketing and the right to support our people. We need a voice in Parliament, in our councils and in our local Labour Party, because that new confidence and new comradeship will take us forward. I think it has been a good week and a good Congress. Support this motion.

LABOUR PARTY

MOTION 258

Congress is disillusioned with this Labour Government because they have not carried out the resolutions and mandates from the previous Labour Party Conferences.

Congress instructs the CEC to ensure that the Labour Government honour party policy and ensure Labour Party rules are applied.

**MANSFIELD CENTRAL BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region**

(Carried)

BRO. W. HELEY (Midlands & East Coast): President, Congress, in moving this motion, I would like to set out the rationale behind it. I come from Mansfield Central branch. Ours is a very active branch within the GMB. We are very lucky in respect that we have regular well-attended branch meetings. The branch itself not only supports Labour principles, but plays an active part in supporting the Labour Party at local, regional and national level.

At the local level, we have a full, active delegation to our Constituency Labour Party. We not only have elected councillors, from both the district and county councils, we also have the local Member of Parliament as branch members. We assist these members in any and every way possible, be it moral, physical or giving the financial support that is required. We are an active campaigning branch that has fought long and hard for our Labour Government.

As I have already stated, our branch meetings are always well-attended, and the expression of discontent has come from some very heated debates within the branch. Luckily, we have a very strong president presiding over the meetings. If we had not, I think we may have given our members at the local hospital A&E department some extra work. I do not think they would appreciate that.

The members are disillusioned with PFI; disillusioned that this Labour Government continues to privatise local housing; disillusioned that they have not adopted the fourth option and disillusioned that privatisation of our railways is still on the agenda.

Their disillusionment is understandable, given that these motions were lost by the Party at the last Labour Conference. I would be horrified if our committed members became so disillusioned by the time of the next election that they did not bother to vote or support. We never want to hear the poor excuse that the Opposition got in by the back door!

Congress, therefore, instructs the CEC and our NEC members to ensure that the Labour Government honours Party policy and ensures Labour Party rules are applied. Our Prime Minister claims to listen to what is being said. Well, Tony, pin your ears back and listen.

BRO. P. DAVIES (Midlands & East Coast): President, Congress, we are the foot soldiers in most, if not all, elections. We have seen this morning that we are a campaigning union. I would hope that most of the people in here are active within the Labour Party and at the frontline when it comes to the General Election.

I am sure that most of you, like me, came across disillusionment when you were campaigning during the last election. I came across lots of disillusionment and disappointment amongst the working classes and middle classes where we campaigned. I did not come across anybody who was particularly worried or concerned that the Labour Government -- God forbid! -- might implement the Working Time Directive. I did not come across anybody who was worried about a fairer deal for young workers or stronger employment rights, stronger consumer rights, stronger welfare rights, a tougher time for bullying management and especially management where they kill our members due to a lack of health and safety legislation.

The worry time and time again was that Labour did not have this on the national agenda and we were not addressing these issues. Congress, give the frontline and the foot soldiers in this Party some ammunition to fight for a fourth term. Midland & East Coast Region second. Please support.

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

MOTION 259

This Congress notes that on the agenda of this years Labour Party Annual Conference there is a rule change proposal from the CWU and ten CLP's. This proposes an improvement to the Party's Partnership in Power arrangements. Such that every four years, when the Party Conference is considering the final stage policy documents, each affiliated trade union and every CLP will be permitted to submit one amendment to the documents directly to Conference.

These amendments would then be composited

and the major ones would be timetabled for debate.

Congress believes this is in the interests of restoring internal Party democracy and that our GMB delegation to this year's Labour Party Conference should support the CWU proposal.

LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HALL (London): President, on the agenda of this year's Labour Party Annual Conference is a rule change proposal from the Communication Workers Union and 10 Constituency Labour Parties. The rule change proposes an improvement to the Party's Partnership in Power arrangements, such that every four years, when the Party Conference is considering the final stage policy documents, each affiliated trade union and every CLP will be permitted to submit one amendment to the documents directly to Conference. These amendments would then be composited and the major ones would be timetabled for debate. We ask Congress to agree that this is in the interests of helping to restore internal Party democracy and that our GMB delegation to this year's Labour Party Conference should support the CWU proposal. Please support. I move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

LABOUR MPs

MOTION 260

This Congress requests that the CEC contacts all Labour MP's reminding them of where the Labour Party came from. MP's in support of the Trade Union Values to be star rated on a clear transparent list to be published in the union's publications.

BARKING AND DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. VINCENT (London): Brothers and sisters, I am going to tell you a story. I work in a local authority and alongside the branch, and during the past couple of years I have become involved with local MPs through stewarding duties. The difference in attitude between Labour MPs is quite amazing from some being respectful, courteous and listening to the voice of their local trade union to being disrespectful, rude and, quite frankly, not appearing to care less about the voice of the local trade union and its members, at the other end of the scale.

I will give you an example. When public services had a low pay issue and it raised its ugly head, the two branches in Barking & Dagenham, alongside other public services, but Barking & Dagenham in

particular, had their members send each MP involved Christmas postcards to the House of Commons. One MP sent us a letter back confirming receipt, asked us to thank our members and said that he would look into the concerns raised by the membership. We heard nothing from the other MP until recently when I spoke with her. She said: "I never received your postcard", singular, "it must have got lost in the post." You can imagine the surprise when I explained to her that actually 2,000 had been posted to her individually.

As a branch, we now inform our members of such escapades. Members are phoning and starting to ask political questions and the branch, alongside its membership, is quick to understand the political agenda. We are going to ensure that our voice is heard.

Our GMB members have been best valued, restructured, PFI'd and outsourced, to name but a few. Let us, the GMB, do the same for our Labour MPs. Let them be best valued and held accountable in their commitment to our membership -- and lists published accordingly -- and the CEC to contact and remind Labour MPs of where the Labour Party comes from. Congress, I move.

BRO. C. ROFFEY (London): Good morning, Madam President, Congress. I am speaking in support of this motion. It calls upon the CEC to contact all Labour MPs to remind them that the Labour Party came about as a result of union organisation. The Labour Party is expected to represent, support and uphold trade union values, and its individual MPs are at the sharp end of this process.

It is incumbent upon those MPs to demonstrate that they accept their special relationship with and responsibilities to the trade union Movement. Therefore, they should be prepared to be answerable to the trade union Movement, which, in turn, means that they should expect to be monitored and, indeed, rated on a transparent list that we expect to be published in our Union's publications. Let us praise the good MPs and shame those bad ones, and if they do not like it, that is tough.

Congress, I call upon you today to be strong in your resolve constantly to remind the Labour Party and its MPs that they are only in office because of the support of the trade union Movement and the many union activists who canvassed energetically to get them re-elected. I second and urge you to support. Thank you.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE BNP

MOTION 261

This Congress believes that the CEC must remind the National Labour Party that the trade unions can deliver eg Village Ward, Dagenham

by election, but only where the party nationally and locally remembers where it came from.

BARKING AND DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. VINCENT (London): Congress, in the past months the GMB has worked tirelessly with the aim of eradicating BNP Fascists from Dagenham, Village Ward. What did that mean for our GMB activists? It meant many of you coming in from outside of the Borough in order to assist us so that we could eradicate BNP Fascists. May I say thank you personally to everybody who came? It meant a giving up of free time, energy, arranging times and family life around the commitment to ensure that the BNP did not enter the Dagenham community.

I have already explained to you in a previous motion that our branch and many branches are becoming more politically active. Although we have a lot to learn and a long way to go, out of the 25 shop stewards within our branch, all bar one gave up their time and assisted. In conjunction with Searchlight and other anti-Fascist groups, we, the GMB, delivered. We won that election.

With the resignation of BNP Kelly in Goresbrook Ward in recent times, we now face another by-election. It saddens me to report to you, Congress, that it has been mooted locally that some in the Borough are "sick and tired" of seeing the GMB and their involvement. This is a disgrace. We, the GMB, are bigger than that. We will continue to campaign. Please support this motion, that the CEC must remind the National Labour Party that we can and will deliver where the Party nationally and locally remembers where it came from.

I have asked the President if I could raise this point. This is an appeal. They are "sick to death", so it has been mooted, of seeing the GMB. That is just a disgrace. We can withdraw, but we are not going to do that. We are bigger than that. The appeal is that on Thursday, 16th June, commencing at three o'clock, there is a shop stewards' meeting at Barking and Dagenham in the Civic Centre, and you are all welcome to attend.

Let's not withdraw. Let's not retract. Colleagues, if you would like to come on that day, our branch, which has become more motivated politically, will give you a slap up dinner of fish and chips. If you can come on the 16th, do!

Mick Rix will address the meeting. On Saturday, 18th June, we will be meeting at the Labour Party at ten o'clock -- Billy Bragg will be there -- and on Tuesday, 21st at the Labour Hall. We can promise you a good meal if you can attend. It would be much appreciated. Thank you very much.

BRO. T. BAILLIE (London): I second Motion 261. Congress, it is not very often that I am stuck for

words, but that is exactly what did happen to me when one day I woke up to find that we, in Barking and Dagenham, had elected ourselves a BNP councillor in Goresbrook Ward.

We are not a load of racists, neo-Fascists or Nazi supporters. No, not us in dear old Barking and Dagenham, surely not. We soon got the opportunity to put this to the test again in Village and Valence Wards.

With a lot of hard work from the trade unions, we in the GMB took the lead with some help from our comrades in Searchlight, and even some help from our local Labour Party workers. No, no! In reality, we all worked hand in glove, we all worked together, under the able guidance of our local election agent, Councillor Liam, whose coordination skills were put fully to the test.

We all worked our little socks off. Yes, we did get a Labour councillor elected in Village Ward, but only by 100 votes. So don't let's get complacent for the BNP brought their supporters in from near and far for this little election.

At every election we see the need for trade unions to be knocking on the door, alongside our comrades from the Labour Party, Searchlight and from wherever else Socialists would like to come and make themselves available.

Make no mistake. We need everybody working as one unit, for the BNP are like opportunist thieves, hiding in dark alleyways, just skulking around waiting to steal something that is not theirs. So let me leave you all with this warning. Unite now and work together, for that is the only way to beat the BNP.

SPONSORED LABOUR MPS AND COUNCILLORS

MOTION 262

Congress notes that some GMB sponsored Labour Party MPs and councillors do not through their actions act in accordance with this Union's aims and principles.

This Congress therefore resolves to withdraw sponsorship of those Labour Party MPs and councillors who do not through their actions support the GMB's aims and principles.

VORIDIAN BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. YOUNG (Northern): Congress, this motion is short and to the point. Frankly, it could not be any clearer. Our hard working members joined the GMB for one simple reason. They joined to ensure that they are provided with protection and support at work. They support the political work of this Union to ensure that legislation is enacted which improves

their quality of life and the quality of life of their families and communities.

Our members want legislation that protects workers' health and safety in the workplace; they want legislation that protects their pension rights; they want public services delivered by public workers and an end to private companies that drive down standards and reward shareholders while sacking and cutting the wages of workers, as we saw this morning at AA. Our members want decent public transport, affordable housing and a decent education for their children.

President, none of our members' expectations are excessive. All they want is a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. That is what we have every right to expect from those who say they are GMB MPs and councillors. Colleagues, the old saying is: he who pays the piper calls the tune. Well, the GMB's tune is, and always will be, the interests and aspirations of our members. If Labour MPs and councillors share those interests and aspirations, fine. If they don't, stop taking our members' hard-earned money. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 262.

(Motion 262 was formally seconded)

SELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

MOTION 263

This Congress notes the practice of political parties parachuting their favourite sons and daughters into "safe" constituency seats at the expense of local candidates. Congress agrees that this is an undesirable practice that should cease. Congress instructs the CEC and the GMB representatives on the Labour Party NEC to campaign for changes in the Labour Party rules and constitution to prevent the Labour Party NEC from overriding the wishes of local parties and imposing shortlists and candidates on them.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, to be honest, I don't care how the Tories or the Liberal Democrats select their candidates, but I do care what the Labour Party does. Let's look at what happens when Labour Party head office overrides the wishes of local Labour Party members in the selection of its candidates. In Blanau, Gwent, we saw a rock solid Labour seat go to an Independent less than a month ago. In the 2001 election, we saw a millionaire ex-Tory MP parachuted into St. Helens at the expense of local party candidates.

Many of us supported the introduction of all-

women shortlists because we recognised that was the only way we were going to see a significant increase in the number of women MPs in Parliament. However, the rules about all-women shortlists and the late resignation of MPs are being manipulated by Labour Party head office and regional officials. These rules are being applied when it suits and ignored when it does not. In fact, because it did not suit, if you look at it, fewer vacancies were filled by all-women shortlists in the recent election after the deadline that was given to MPs to give notice of resignation than after the deadline when MPs resigned late.

If you read last Friday's Tribune, rumours are circulating that Margaret Hodge is already looking at ways in which the rules can be manipulated next time round to ensure that she resigns at the right time so that Stephen Twigg can find a way back into Parliament. If this is true, we all know that Margaret will be rewarded, along with Jack Cunningham, Tony Banks and others, with a seat in the House of Lords.

However, there can be another way. We now have four years before the next election. It is time for GMB representatives on the Labour Party NEC and GMB representatives at constituency level to lobby for changes in the rules and the procedures for selecting Parliamentary candidates to ensure that the wishes of local parties are not ignored or consigned to the dustbin at Old Queen Street.

Now is the time to end the cosy agreement where MPs are encouraged to resign at a time that is convenient in exchange for ermine and a seat in the House of Lords. Now is the time for us to say to the Labour Party that there will be more Blanau Gwents if they continue to manipulate the rule book and ignore the wishes of local Party members.

I am proud to be a Party member. I am proud that the GMB worked for an historic third time, but sometimes I am not proud of my Party ignoring the wishes of local Party activists. It is not just the war that is turning people away from Party membership and Party activity, but the way that in which their wishes are being ridden roughshod over by head office and local Party volunteers are being ignored. I move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

BRO. R. ASCOUGH (Regional Secretary, Southern): Actually, Mary, I would like you to indulge me for a third day running, if that is OK? I would like to go off-piste just very quickly.

THE PRESIDENT: You will be off-piste when I finish this Congress! *(Laughter)*

BRO. R. ASCOUGH: I am aware of a small number of people in the hall who were not present this morning. We had a most magnificent demonstration. The AA will not forget us fast. It perfectly demonstrates that

we are now a campaigning union again and within the Southern Region we are again a campaigning region. I would like to thank everybody who attended. It was a magnificent demonstration.

I would like to say to my comrades in the Northern Region that Adele Drain was in the window videoing us all. She is an AADU active member; yet I am told that she is very involved in the local Labour Party. I do not know whether that is true, but I am wondering whether comrades in the Northern Region can look into that. I have a message for Adele. If, by any chance, she was expelled from the Labour Party, I have just been elected to the National Constitutional Committee. Of course, I will give her a very fair hearing if she was expelled. The message to Adele is: You can run but you cannot hide from the GMB.

Returning to my brief, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 257 and Motion 262 with the following qualification, but seeking withdrawal of Motion 260. The instructions requested in Motion 257 are GMB policy. We encourage GMB members to get involved in the Labour Party by joining and participating in its internal democracy. We encourage GMB branches to affiliate to their constituency Labour Party.

The qualification to the motion is the tone and content of paragraph 2. I know many will agree with it. However, many will disagree with the tone and the sentiment, that Labour has followed “murderous and imperial adventures abroad”.

Turning to Motion 262, again the CEC call for support with a qualification. The current system of election funding passed by the CEC allows for GMB members and branches to identify to the Region who is and who is not in touch with GMB aims and principles. We do have to be aware of collective responsibility. A Government minister may be very supportive of us in private, but may not break the whip. Would we, therefore, want to remove funding from them?

This motion does not identify who has the power to remove sponsorship. The CEC is determined that this matter falls within the context of our current policy, which leaves it in the hands of the Regions.

With regard to Motion 260, the CEC is seeking withdrawal. Star rating individuals may tend to increase, even further, the current unfortunate emphasis on personality politics and media profile when what is needed is solid service to constituents and support for union values often behind the scenes. It is not for the GMB nationally to define all politicians’ political stances. If a branch or a member has a specific issue, they should raise it directly with the politician. If they do not get the response they like, they can raise their concerns within the region.

If a region wishes to publicise how the MPs in their region have voted, that is their decision. The CEC do not believe that this is a system that can be run across the whole Union, partly due to the fact

that we no longer have national publications. I should say that this speech, actually, was written before you passed the motion on public services, but there you are.

In conclusion, the CEC supports Motion 257 and Motion 262 with the qualification and seeks withdrawal of Motion 260.

I would just like to make one last point from the region in terms of the Labour Party. Some 10 years ago, we had one MP in the Southern Region. You know, soft Southern bastards, and all that. We are not tended to be regarded as the heartland of the proletariat at times! *(Laughter)* During the past eight years, we had 16 supporter GMB MPs. At the last election it went to 14. That includes keeping the most marginal seat of Dorset South, which I think was a magnificent testimony to the work the GMB have put in in the Region to support GMB members who support our line. Thank you, conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move to the vote, does London Region withdraw? *(Bro. R. Badlan’s mobile phone rang)* No.

SIS. S. VINCENT (London): President, Congress, I want to exercise my right to reply. As I have already said, we are no different from any branch that is becoming involved politically. At a very low political level, we need to understand, as activists, who is for us and who is against us. I fail to understand why we protect those who do not support us. We have many conversations in corridors and cafes and we become involved and talk with local MPs, but those who are disrespectful to us and do not acknowledge us, surely, you, my colleagues in other areas, should know that that happens.

At the moment there is an understanding at a very local level, and a very vague and basic level with Barking and Dagenham, as to where we are going and what we understand. It is growing very slowly, but let’s not say, on the one hand, let’s get people involved in politics, and then not explain it to them, on the other hand.

It is unfair if, as lay activists, we do not understand the clear politics of our Labour MPs who are meant to support us. I have given an illustration this morning of one MP who has been totally disrespectful to the local trade union and its members. We are a large public authority. We have many, many members in it. If there had been a letter of respect to say, “I have listened to you”, it would have been appreciated, but we did not even get that.

I fail to understand, President, with respect, why the CEC would want this motion withdrawn. I do not understand. I do not think it is fair. I think we should be letting our other branches know what we suffer. If we do not do this, are we going to stay the hidden force for ever? That is my response.

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC is supporting Motions 257, 258, 259, 261, 262 and 263

(Motion 257 was carried)

(Motion 258 was carried)

(Motion 259 was carried)

(Motion 261 was carried)

(Motion 262 was carried)

(Motion 263 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: The CEC was seeking withdrawal of Motion 260. The movers are not going to withdraw Motion 260.

(Motion 260 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before we move on, I have a couple of announcements. One is from Lesley. Lesley tells me there was £190 in the kitty. Robert Badlan has made it a clear £200. She says thank you. I knew you would come to our aid, Robert!

POLITICAL - LABOUR PARTY FUNDING

MOTION 264

We call upon Congress to withdraw funding from the Labour Party unless it repeals all of the Tory legislation on Industrial Action.

5 BRANCH

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

(Lost)

BRO. I. LOWES (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): President, Labour has been in government since 1997, yet no changes of any significance have been made to the anti-union laws implemented by previous Tory Governments. This is in spite of the fact that every trade union affiliated to the Labour Party has consistently called for anti-union laws to be repealed.

The Labour Party is quite happy to take millions of pounds from the trade unions; quite happy for trade union officers, members and activists to spend time getting Labour MPs elected, yet when in government they conveniently forget who put them there in the first place.

The time is rapidly approaching when the trade unions have to say to New Labour: "We will not continue to give you a blank cheque. Our support is not unconditional." Big business supports the Tories because they know that when in government the Tories reward that support. We expect something in return from a Labour Government for the support and the finance that we have given them for many years. We should no longer be prepared to settle for

the few crumbs they throw us. We must demand the repeal of the anti-union laws, otherwise we should withdraw from them.

That does not mean that we should disaffiliate from the Labour Party. We accept that you cannot change something by walking away from it. You can only change it by staying in there and arguing your case. However, what we are talking about is the money, the hundreds of thousands of pounds, that we give sponsored MPs and the money we spend advertising whilst campaigning for the Labour Party. Money is the only language they understand. We have to say to them: "Unless you are going to act in our interests, then the money is going to dry up."

(The motion was formally seconded)

GMB & "NEW LABOUR" PARTY POLITICAL FUNDING

MOTION 265

This Congress is totally dismayed by the apathetic, sometimes downright hostile attitude, and total disregard, this New Labour Government has shown towards the Trade Union movement. But mainly the treatment it has shown towards the Public Service Unions and to their members also the Public Sector as a whole.

Congress reminds New Labour that the GMB is no longer prepared to give them, our unconditional support and money. Congress further instructs the CEC and General Secretary, to do everything in their power to re-establishing the OLD LABOUR principles and the re-introduction of Clause 4.

BARKING BRANCH

London Region

(Lost)

BRO. T. BAILLIE (London): President, Congress, I move this motion without the support of my Region only because I feel so strongly about these attacks on the public sector.

This Labour Government have made a number of significant changes to the benefit of our members. I can name 50 of them. I have actually a list of 50 good things that the Labour Government have actually done: Changes to the hospitals, more doctors, more nurses; schools, additional funding; police, additional numbers, community policing and bringing in the minimum wage. They are all good things. Not all good things actually, but all great things. We would never have got these from the Tories.

It is not enough and, even then, the little sods in the back rooms of No. 10 are still there with their poison quills, still making mischief against our

members, and then mainly aimed at the public sector, always pushing it towards the private sector. Why? Money.

We talk about the two-tier workforce. I only wish we were so lucky. Within the public service sector, we have so many I can only guess at, what with PPP, PFI, foundation hospitals, arm's length partners and not for profit partners, ALMOs and God knows what next, perhaps a configuration of all of them put together. All this is at the insistence of No. 10, or so we are told.

We have seen cuts to local government pension schemes; relieving the Civil Service of 6,000 jobs, closing fire stations, the railways and the Underground in private hands and the road network is heading in the same direction. We see all the tolls to open up the toll bridges. So it looks like planes, boats and trains. What next?

The fact is we have to depend on Europe to provide legislation to protect the trade union Movement. Yet in Europe, we see, in that bastion of fair play, that they wish to put all public services out to private tender, putting all the public service jobs at risk of outsourcing. Whatever next, Tony? Where is it going to stop?

Then, come election time, only last month, there they were again, promising us the earth. Shame on us for getting caught time after time. But, hopefully, this time it is going to be different. We keep saying that, don't we? Or could it be that I am missing the big picture? Apparently, it's more important to get the historic third term -- we have that -- than to stand by our comrades-in-arms.

I am a member of the Labour Party. I am proud to say that. I am also ashamed at times at the way our Government have failed the public sector and others since coming to power. However, like others, I will remain within the Party, being a constant "prick" to their conscience, continually trying to get our Government to support the removal of all anti-trade union legislation and to return the Labour Party to those who gave birth to it in the first place - the trade union Movement. I ask you all to support this motion. I implore you to support this motion.

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Guys, I think we all know who the really pricks are in the Labour Party! *(Laughter)* I think the example that the Barking branch has given us is second to none. I will certainly go over there to give them a hand with their fight against the BNP, like I did before the election.

I do not think the motion that I am seconding without the support of the London Region is overly radical, is extreme left-wing, or anything like that. All it is asking is that we return to our roots. And what are our roots? When I was listening to the last debate, all of a sudden it hit me. Why don't you read out clause 4? I thought, "Oh, Christ! I cannot remember it." So I ran out to Bookmarks in the

exhibition area. It is pretty good. I would advise everyone to go and have a look at what they have on sale.

I managed to get a book, "The Labour Party, a Marxist History". I went through it and eventually found clause 4. It says: "To secure for the producers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service."

What is wrong with that? Please support, conference.

LABOUR PARTY FUNDING

MOTION 266

This Congress instructs the CEC to continually review the GMB's financial contributions to the Labour Party.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, let me start by putting my cards on the table, a GMB card and a Labour Party card. I am proud to carry both. I am proud that I joined the Party and the trade union Movement at about the same time - 25 years ago. I am proud that I am in a union that is affiliated to the Labour Party. I am proud that I represent that Union on the Labour East Regional Board. I am also proud that Mary was Chair of the Party last year.

However, I am also a realist. I am a realist because, as a GMB branch secretary, I am finding it increasingly difficult to find GMB members willing to join the Party and even more difficult to find members willing to become delegates to constituency Labour Parties.

I am a realist because many of our members are questioning the link between the Union and the Party, be it because of the war or be it because that at times the Party leadership appears to listen to the CBI at the cost of our members on issues such as the Working Time Directive, agency workers or corporate manslaughter.

Let's be clear. I am not urging the route taken by Brian Sedgemore or Helen Brittan, both of whom were happy to have careers as Labour MPs, but, as soon as those careers ended, turned traitor and joined the Lib Dems or the Tories.

However, I am urging that support for the Party is not an open chequebook with no strings attached. We have every right to expect Labour MPs who we support financially to listen to what our members are saying. We have every right to expect the Warwick Agreement to be honoured. We have every right to

say that our financial support to the Party will be on our terms, and that we will have every right to direct our funding to those MPs who we can trust and who support our campaigns, our members and our Union. Let's remain affiliated to the Party. Let's be clear, it is on the GMB's terms and nobody else's. I move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

LABOUR PARTY AFFILIATION

MOTION 267

Congress is concerned that present policies of this present Government are designed to hand over more and more of Public Service provision to the private sector. This trend undermines the public services ethos and is detrimental to service users and providers.

In view of the above, Congress instructs the CEC to consult with Branches with a view that the GMB withdraw nationally our affiliation to the (New) Labour Party.

16 BLACKBURN BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Lost)

BRO. T. FALLOWS (Lancashire): President, conference, when trade unions were being formed, the choice was either the Tories or the Liberals, hardly friends to the trade Union Movement. Nevertheless, legislation was passed that helped working people and their families in a small way.

It was decided that the only way to make fundamental changes in favour of working people would be to form a party to represent us. Thus, the Labour Party was formed. The Party of labour. The idea of the Labour Party was to bring about a fundamental and irreversible change in the balance of power to working people and their families. We have made some headway with the NHS, education and the Welfare State. These marvellous institutions were created over 50 years ago.

We had just survived a world war. We owed untold amounts of money to America; yet, from the ashes of the bombing raids, the deaths of our soldiers and the sweat of our women in the munition factories, we gave birth to these wonderful institutions. Through almost impossible odds, our parents and grandparents handed to us the fruit of their labour.

And what do we have at the moment? We have a Labour Government hell bent on pulling down stone by stone the NHS, the education system and the Welfare State. They do not stop there. The Royal Mail is to be torn into shreds and handed over to the private sector. The railway industry, I recall -- *(Mobile phone sounded)* Oh, yes. This is sabotage! I want some more time, Mary!

THE PRESIDENT: It was not me!

BRO. T. FALLOWS (Lancashire): I recall John Prescott back in 1996 saying: "The next Government will take into public ownership the railways." We have had now three Labour Governments and yet no publicly owned railway system. In the NHS, 15 per cent of the work is done by the private sector, which is privatisation by the back door. Foundation hospitals, privatisation by the back door; city academies, privatisation by the back door; PFIs, privatisation by the back door; public/private partnerships, privatisation by the back door; the prison service, privatisation by the back door; the EU Constitution, privatisation by the back door; pension provision, privatisation by the back door, and you know there are more.

The CEC will tell you that we have to be in the Labour Party to change it. We have been in the Labour Party for 100 years, and we are no nearer now to reaching our goals than we were 100 years ago.

Let's face up to reality. The Labour Party has been stolen from under our noses. It is now the Party of big business. Do you want proof? This Government is to reduce the Health & Safety Executive visits to workplaces by 1 million, so we are going to have self-regulation and trust for big business. Gordon Brown says that this is an attack on red tape. What about an attack on company directors who escape prison because there is no corporate manslaughter legislation?

We have the most restricted trade unions in Western Europe. Whilst we are on Europe, our rights of consultation are a joke. The working people in Europe laugh at us and they won't put up with it, so why the hell should we?

It must be heaven to be a Tory. If they do not get elected, we have got a mark II Tory. Tony Blair will go down in history ----

THE PRESIDENT: Would you wind up, please?

BRO. T. FALLOWS (Lancashire): ---- as one of the finest Prime Ministers they ever had. It is a wind-up. But there is more and you know it.

(The motion was formally seconded)

POLITICAL - LABOUR PARTY

MOTION 268

Due to the events surrounding the expulsion of the RMT from labour party affiliation, and the ground breaking decision of the Central Executive Council re labour party funding, it is now more important than ever GMB members have a choice.

Therefore, Congress calls upon the GMB

representatives on the labour party N.E.C. to move the following motion at the next meeting of the L.P.N.E.C.

“This Labour Party amends its rules to allow affiliated unions to affiliate to more than one socialist party without putting themselves outside of Labour Party affiliation”.

182 BRANCH

Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region

(Lost)

BRO. I. LOWES (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): President, Congress, at the recent General Election, more than 1 million Labour voters deserted the Party. Why? Because they were disillusioned with the policies being pursued by the Labour Government. They were disillusioned by a Prime Minister who took us into an illegal war, which saw 100,000 innocent Iraqis die. Many of us who voted Labour did not do so out of any enthusiasm for (New) Labour. We did it simply because the alternative, the Tories, was too horrendous to think of.

We should have a Labour Party that we can be proud of, that we can go out and support enthusiastically and a Party with a programme and policies which are in the interest of the people who we represent. But, sadly, New Labour's agenda is far-removed from many of the policies advocated by this Union.

The time has come when serious consideration has to be given to affiliation to Socialist Parties whose aims and policies are more in tune with GMB policies than those of New Labour.

Take out your rule book. Rule 2, clause 10 says: “To secure the return to Parliament and public authorities members who will support the policies of the Union, providing the candidates are pledged to collective ownership under democratic control the means of production, distribution and exchange with the old clause 4 of the Labour Party.”

How many Labour MPs who have pledged the collective ownership do you know? How many of the sponsored MPs have pledged to the collective ownership? Very few, if any. This motion is not calling for us to break the Labour Party rules. What it is seeking to do is open up a debate within the NEC and the Labour Party. The NEC and Labour Party can submit motions to Party conference in the same way that our CEC can submit motions to our conference; so what we are seeking to do is open up the debate, because it needs to send a clear message to the Labour leadership, that the trade unions are fed up being ignored and, unless Labour gets back to following the traditional policies, it will lose trade union support which has been so long taken for granted.

(The motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, as regards Motion 264, Ian, is your Region willing to withdraw?

BRO. I. LOWES (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): No.

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 265, London Region?

BRO. V. WEST: No.

THE PRESIDENT: Tom? Motion 267, Lancashire Region?

BRO. T. FALLOWS: No.

THE PRESIDENT: That was a positive. Motion 268, Ian?

BRO. I. LOWES: No.

BRO. T. BRENNAN (Regional Secretary, Northern): I am extremely proud and privileged to address this Congress as Northern Regional Secretary and to support, for the very first time, a Congress demonstration on the bank of the Tyne in the Northern Region. The GMB, like Van Morrison, is back on top again under this regime. *(Applause)*

Congress, the CEC is seeking withdrawal of Motions 264, 265, 267 and 268. We are making this request in the light of your CEC's decision to alter the way we financially support the Labour Party; that is by only supporting those candidates who share the aims, values and aspirations of the GMB Union in the best interests of GMB members and vote against the whip, where necessary, on our behalf. This principal change in our funding arrangements worked, I have to say, particularly well in the last General Election campaign, sending a strong message to the Party that this Union is no longer prepared to provide an allotment for distribution at their discretion and without any accountability or determination in the use of our financial contribution. In future, there will be no investment without dividend in our dealings with the Labour Party. That is your CEC's position which we invite you to endorse. However, neither should we, under the circumstances throw out the BBL with the proverbial bath water, lest we forget that it was a Labour Government which introduced the National Minimum Wage, the Working Time Directive, the Equal Pay Act, new maternity and paternity rights, equal treatment for part-time workers and the Disability Discrimination Act, and I could go on and on.

Of course, the new Recognition Regulations, with thousands of new members in new workplaces who have a trade union notice board in their canteens, and more is in the pipeline, apart from the considerable investment in public services. The actions of your CEC, in conjunction with other trade unions, led to the revolt at the Policy Forum at

Warwick and delivered more than a hundred further commitments that we, as an organisation, can be proud of, that we negotiated and in that process laid down a new foundation in our relationship with the Labour Party; that is, we will, as an organisation no longer be taken for granted. We helped shape the manifesto for the third term. It is now our collective responsibility to ensure delivery of policies which favour our people in this Government's third term. We cannot do this from the back seat or, indeed, from outside of the tent. We have to be in the front seat driving the top table's negotiations. Colleagues, it is a negotiation. We know all that. We know that we will not in this process get what we want, but we never did and, indeed, we never will. However, we can, coming from our very strong position, get the best possible deal in our campaign for the social and economic advance of our people.

However, we can only achieve our political goals in conjunction with the political arm of the trade union, the Labour Party. Whose Party is it, anyway? *(From the floor: "Our Party")* It is our Party and we will cry "Foul" if we want to.

We should all reflect on the wilderness years under Tory rule. We got neither tea nor sympathy, let alone beer and sandwiches. We could not even get an audience in most cases. What we did get was the most vicious and sustained attack, without precedent, on any legitimate organisation. Our extinction was the Tory's objective, but we are alive and kicking, and the ball is now in the GMB court. Let's keep it there.

Motions 264, 265, 267 and 268, if adopted, will compel us to withdraw funding from the Labour Party which would undo all the good work and positive progress, made, I have to say, under this new regime.

Motion 268 seeks to amend Labour Party rules which can only be done at the Labour Party's Annual Congress.

The CEC request that Motions 264, 265, 267 and 268 are withdrawn. If they are not, we urge you to vote against.

I also add that, without reference to southern softies or the chattering classes, the Northern Region has a full deck but, unfortunately, with two jokers. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Liverpool Region has the right of reply on Motion 264. *(The right of reply was waived)* In relation to Motion 265, does the London Region speaker wish to exercise his right of reply?

BRO. T. BAILLIE (London): Tom Baillie is not speaking on behalf of the London Region. Tom Baillie is speaking on behalf of Tom Baillie. I have to be quite honest. Motion 265 does not ask for a funding change. Motion 265 is GMB policy. What I am looking for is our Labour Government to assist us, the labour Movement. It has done many things. I have a list of

more than 50 good and great things that they have actually done for our people, but when they do one thing wrong we must use our voice and have the right to do so. It is not easy. I do not believe I can withdraw this motion. I believe Motion 265 is fair and acceptable. I believe it says that the Labour Party is a good Party and a good Government but, unfortunately, like the rest of us, if they make mistakes they need to have their arses kicked for it. We must have the right. Support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of Motion 267 wish to exercise the right of reply?

BRO .T. FALLOWS (Lancashire): There are enough loopholes in this motion for our Union to be affiliated to the Labour Party, even if it is passed. This motion is a final warning. It is a final warning to the Labour Party and the Labour Government, and the final warning is "Deliver or you are sacked"! Support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Does the mover of Motion 268 wish to exercise the right of reply?

BRO. I. LOWES (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): Motion 268 is seeking to open up a debate within the Labour Party NEC. It is asking that our members on the NEC move a motion about affiliation to other socialist Parties. The CEC speaker said that only the Party Conference could change the rules, and that is correct, but so can the NEC. The NEC can bring rule changes before the Labour Party Conference, just like the CEC in our Union can bring rule changes before this Congress. So it is not impractical for us to do that. We want an open debate and people to realise that we are not going to be taken for granted any longer.

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Motion 264 to the vote. The region will not withdraw. The CEC is asking you to vote against.

(Motion 264 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Motion 265 to the vote. The region will not withdraw. The CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Motion 265 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Motion 266 - Labour Party funding. The CEC is supporting

(Motion 266 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Motion 267 - Labour Party Affiliation. The region will not accept withdrawal. The CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Motion 267 was lost)

THE PRESIDENT: I now put Motion 268. The Liverpool, North Wales & Irish Region will not withdraw. The CEC is asking you to oppose.

(Motion 268 was lost)

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: The Trade Union Friends of Searchlight raffle raised £142 for community campaigns. Fascism is the worst enemy of trade unionism. Well done. Many thanks to all of you.

BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast): Colleagues, the Remploy stewards have raised £174 which will be given to Trade Union Friends of Palestine. I would like to thank everybody who donated.

POLITICAL FUND BALLOT

POLITICAL FUND BALLOTS

COMPOSITE MOTION 23

(Covering Motions 270, 271, 272, 273 and 274)

270 - Political Fund Ballots (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

271 - Political Fund (GMB Scotland)

272 - Political Fund Ballot (Lancashire Region)

273 - Political Fund (London Region)

274 - Political Fund (Midland & East Coast Region)

Congress notes the resounding 'Yes' vote in the 2004 Ballot on the continuance of the Political Fund. It is pleasing to note that our members have once again voted overwhelmingly to retain our Political Fund. Congress welcomes the result of the recent ballot to maintain our Political Fund, but notices, with regret, that after two terms of a Labour Government, this is still a requirement, under Law.

Congress further notes that the cost of balloting our members is an enormous expense that the GMB could well do without. However, Congress believes this unnecessarily uses up members' resources and is a hangover from previous anti-trade union governments.

Therefore, Congress calls on the Government to:

- Repeal the law for trade unions on Political Fund Ballots, the Thatcher Government legislation that demands Trade Unions ballot

their members on the issue of holding a political fund

This anti Trade Union, Thatcherite legislation, should be abolished without delay. This legislation was brought about for the sole purpose of restricting the rights of trade unionists to participate in the political process. Trade Unionists can have the right to withdraw from the political fund if they so wish, but trade unions should not be by law forced at their own expense to hold a ballot on the wishes of a past Tory administration.

Congress calls on the CEC to keep up the pressure to ensure that this provision is removed from the statute book at the earliest opportunity. Congress therefore instructs the CEC to actively campaign within the TUC and Labour Party to get the Government to repeal the law on Political Fund Ballots.

(Carried)

BRO. J. HIOM (London): I move Composite Motion 23. President and Congress, in 1984, more than 20 years ago, the Thatcher Government introduced this legislation for unions to ballot their members, to set up a political fund and to vote every ten years to keep the political fund, a situation which has not been changed by the Blair Government.

Our members can chose to pay or not to pay to the political fund. Unions must have a separate political fund to spend on political campaigning. Does the Tory or Labour Parties ask their members how they spend their contributions? I don't think so.

The GMB campaigns and lobbies for better legal rights. We heard what was said this morning. It was brilliant; excellent. We heard about the GMB's campaign to improve health and safety protections, plus many more. This is what the GMB and other unions spend some of their funds on. We do not need to waste our time and funds on ballots every ten years. Just think why the Thatcher Government and now the Blair Government want to stop the GMB and other unions from having a voice to campaign against some of their bad policies?

BRO. B. WHILDING (Lancashire): I second Composite Motion 23. President and Congress, how many times must we keep going back to our members and asking them the same old questions: "Do you wish the GMB to keep a political fund?" How many times do our members have to say "Yes"? The law on the ballot for the political fund was designed to break political links with the trade unions. It was designed to gag our political voice. It was designed to starve the Labour Party of its funding.

I am pleased to say that that piece of legislation has failed. It has missed its target. Our members

don't want it; our Union doesn't want it and I am sure the Labour Party does not want it. Colleagues, the fact is that after eight years of a Labour Government, we are still lumbered with this legislation. Mr. Blair, please listen. It wastes our time, efforts and money, money which could be spent elsewhere.

Congress, if the Labour Party does not wake up, maybe one day they will regret it. They may chance their arm once too often. Our members may do the unthinkable in frustration. They may say "no". Where would that leave the Labour Party.

On Monday Gordon Brown drew our attention to the very successful campaigns that we have organised and run. Let's now run a campaign to get rid of this nasty piece of Tory legislation once and for all.

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): I speak in support of Composite Motion 23. As colleagues have already stated, our Union voted resoundingly in favour of the continuance of the political fund. In May we returned a Labour Government for an historic third term, and as a CLP sentry I am proud that it was through the efforts, support and finance of our Union and of the wider trade union Movement that that was achieved.

The Labour Party is committed to a radical third term and a workplace agenda. It is now time for this anti-trade union legislation to be removed from the statute book as soon as possible, and certainly in the early years of this third term of Government.

This spiteful legislation is a throw back to the Thatcher years, so let us get rid of it now. Support this motion.

SIS. D. MILLS (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress welcomes the result of the recent ballot to maintain our political fund but note with regret that after two terms of the Labour Government this is still a requirement under law. This anti-trade union legislation introduced by the Thatcher Government should be abolished without delay. This would save the trade union money by not having the ballot and that money could be put to better use.

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I speak in support of the composite motion.

Before I start, let me give a "thank you" to all of the tutors at the College - Sheila, Harry, Judy and the late Mark Smith - for giving people like me the confidence to come to the rostrum and speak to you. *(Applause)*

The Birmingham & West Midlands Region firmly supports this composite motion asking for the repeal of this piece of anti-trade union legislation. Eight years on, we still have the most appalling and undemocratic piece of legislation on the statute book, never mind the fact that it costs us thousand to operate.

What would the Warwick Agreement have been like if trade unions did not have the input and tenacity to mould their requirements into a document that addressed the Union's concerns for its members? Our members have shown, unanimously, during the past two ballots that they want a voice in the political arena. Congress, we urge the CEC without delay to lobby the TUC and the Labour Party to repeal this legislation at the earliest opportunity. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak in this debate? *(No response)*

Let me tell you that at the first NEC meeting of the Labour Party after the election, I can assure you that the trade union Movement had this subject firmly on the agenda. So we were ahead of the game, as we were last time but we will not let this matter go.

(Composite Motion 23 was carried)

MIGRANT WORKERS

EMERGENCY MOTION 1

This Conference deplores the bombing on 1st June 2005 of migrant workers' homes in Co. Armagh.

After the Good Friday Agreement, sectarian violence has been reduced but racial violence is now increasing at an alarming rate in Northern Ireland.

We therefore call on the CEC in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) to seek meetings with Government to institute a programme of education and understanding of multi-racial issues in a multi-racial society.

(Carried)

SIS. M. GREGG (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): President and delegates, Northern Ireland has, as everyone knows, come through a long period of terror, intimidation, violence and bombing. Throughout that period the one consistency was the work of the trade unions in maintaining industrial relations and keeping sectarian bigotry out of the workplace. Now, hopefully, we are in a more peaceful era. The bigots and thugs are looking for a new target. Unfortunately, they have found it amongst the people who are least able to defend themselves - migrant workers. Although we have come through a violent and bloody period, Northern Irish citizens were still shocked when a Chinese woman was found dead in the boot of a car belonging to one of her countrymen. She was brought across the world and

forced into prostitution. We have seen the exploitation and trafficking of women - the big earner for criminal groups.

At Christmas a young Russian woman was found destitute on the streets of the north-west, suffering so badly from frostbite that she had to have her foot amputated. She had been made redundant. Not only had she lost her job but also her lodgings, which was tied to her job. Not wanting to go home, she lost contact with her friends and because of language difficulties she did not know from where to seek help. There was genuine shock and horror that, at a time of peace and good will, this could happen.

Polish workers have been harassed at work. On 2nd June 2005, we saw newspaper headlines saying: "Bombers target migrant workers". In Amagh we deplore these bombings. The migrant workers are mainly employed in rural areas in agriculture and food processing; for example, mushroom pickers, chicken processors, and they are on low wages. Ironically, the first week in June was the same time that Israeli and Arab women were meeting community leaders in Belfast to learn about conflict resolution ahead of Israel's up-coming pull-out from the Gaza Strip.

As we have heard mentioned earlier this week, Northern Ireland has a relatively small percentage of ethnic minority workers, but the numbers are increasing as a result of the widening of the European Communion. The ICTU has, over the years, successfully promoted the campaign: "The Right to Live and Work in Peace". Migrant workers should be entitled to the same rights.

We have an Equality Commission in Northern Ireland. We urge them to highlight such issues. The ICTU and the Government must introduce a programme of education and understanding of multi-racial issues in a multi-racial society. Such a meeting with Government could also highlight the delay in appointing a human rights commissioner in Northern Ireland. Help us to show the world that, after more than 30 years, we are not going to replace sectarian violence with racial violence. This programme will help us to embrace our differences. Please support.

(The motion was formally seconded)

(Emergency Motion 1 was carried)

EMERGENCY MOTION 4

A & P APPLIEDORE SOUTHAMPTON

Colleagues, Congress agrees that the announcement on Wednesday 8th June 2005 made by A & P Appledore Southampton that they have made all production workers redundant is a massive infringement of workers' rights. Firstly, they wanted all production staff to agree new terms and conditions and when that

was not forthcoming, they announced on Wednesday 8th June 2005 those appalling redundancies. Congress, please commit our Union to urgent action against this company and this type of anti-union behaviour.

(Carried)

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): I move Emergency Motion 4.

Congress, I received a call yesterday morning from Bob Stokes, the senior organiser at Southern Region. He informed me that A & P in Southampton - by the way, I have to mention that this is absolutely nothing to do with DML - had announced redundancies for the entire production workforce. The company, which is notorious for bad employment practices and poor health and safety, had originally told him that there was a surplus of 26 men. It came to light during the consultation that A & P wanted to impose cuts in terms and conditions. Any man who did not accept these cuts would be sacked! Keith Hazlewood, the National Secretary for Engineering, has contacted Alan Robson, the General Secretary of Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to put the wheels in motion to set up a meeting.

I hope colleagues will join me in deploring the actions of A & P. I move.

BRO. T. TELFORD (Northern): I second Emergency Motion 4. President and Congress, this is nothing less than a full-scale attack on everything we value and have fought for. The production staff have been made redundant at Appledore for two reasons. The first is an attack on the Union and, secondly, the redundant staff will be replaced by agency labour, probably consisting of unorganised forced foreign labour. Urgent and forceful and direct action must be taken against A & P now. As other colleagues have said at the rostrum this week, it is time to get up off our knees.

BRO. M. BLENCH (Northern): I said when I spoke at the rostrum yesterday that my name was Michael but all my friends call me Micky. Believe me, you don't want to be my enemy, which A & P are. I am supporting Emergency Motion 4. We have had a good week and it has restored my pride and faith in our trade union by our actions today and by the speakers who have come to this rostrum, who are sitting to my right. I repeat, they have restored my faith in our trade union.

A & P is one of the worst employers in the UK. They are shitbags and scum. That is what they are. I will tell you why I say that. They had a facility on Tyneside. They assisted my company, who I was proud to work for, Swan Hunters in building the two ships that we now have on the Tyne. It is the members of

the GMB who did that, not A & P. The members, my brothers, built those ships, not A & P. We gave them part of our job to keep them employed.

You heard me yesterday speak on ship recycling. The owners of Swan Hunter organised for a Dutch company to visit Tyneside to look at a facility next door to Swan Hunter, which was once owned by A & P. This company is willing to invest millions in ship recycling. What are we going to see? We see smashed pumps, the dock gates knobbled and they have toppled the cranes. This is the company we helped! They have shit on us as far as I am concerned and our brothers.

We gave them some of our work and that is what they repaid us with - devastation. Not only that, brothers and sisters, whilst we on Tyneside have high unemployment, they employed Polish workers, who are lower paid and lower skilled. I don't want parity for the Polish workers. I will tell you that now. I want my brothers working on my river, on our river. I don't want them coming over here when my brothers are on the dole.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to support this motion. We have shown that we will stand up for our colleagues in other workplaces. Now we must show that we will stand up and support these lads at A & P in Southampton. By the way, I have worked at both facilities, and they are crap.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you wind up, brother?

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

CLOTHING & TEXTILE SECTION

The previous National Secretary established over many years, contact with the international trade union community.

A number of initiatives have taken place, one being the support for the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF) in Pakistan. A large amount of finance was raised which has been put to very good use by freeing children from harsh labour conditions.

Our international links have been maintained despite our non attendance at the 2004 World Congress of the International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers Federation. Because we were not present, GMB lost its seat on the Executive Committee. If we, as a union are to influence how other countries treat their workers, the international trade union movement is essential.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

In the wake of our difficult financial problems last year, all of the GMB's international affiliations were cut by around 80% as part of the necessary cost cutting exercise. One consequence of this was a dramatic reduction in our affiliation to UNi - the International Trade Union Federation for the Private Services Sector, and to UNi Europa, its counterpart for Europe. As a result we lost our seat on the UNi Executive Council. Virtually no overseas meetings have been attended by the GMB in the Sector since last Congress, save where we could obtain funding from a third party - eg the European Commission. However, by utilising the resources of the Policy Department and our European Officer, Kathleen Walker-Shaw, we have managed to retain some influence in both UNi and UNi Europa.

In this we have been helped by the efforts of our sister Union from the United States, the Service

BRO. BLENCH: I will bring it to an end. I am getting a bit emotional here.

I ask you, my brothers and sisters, to support Emergency Motion 4. We must show that we will stand up for all of our members' rights. We are getting victimised and bullied by these bastards. The fight starts now, brothers and sisters. Let us give these people a dose of their own medicine. We must stick it up. Support Emergency Motion 4.

BRO. J. DOLAN (GMB Scotland): I pledge my support for the people in Southampton, and from the Shipbuilding & Engineering Section in Scotland. Thank you.

(Emergency Motion 4 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I hope the officer will send the support of Congress to our members in Appledore.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: I now want to make a couple of announcements. I have been made aware that Jim McFall is in the hall. Welcome. It is good to see you. *(Applause)*

I want to refer to the raffle organised by the Race Equality Stall. £517 was raised. Well done.

Employees International Union (SEIU) and in particular their interest in campaigning with us jointly in Group 4 Securicor to address our respective problems. The thanks of the GMB are owed to Andy Stern and his colleagues for their help in this matter. We also owe a debt to Philip Jennings of UNi and to his colleague Bob Ramsey for maintaining a flow of useful information and support covering employers where we have had issues.

CFTA SECTION

In view of other priorities the work has been concentrated on what can be done by phone or letter. We have kept involved in the many international campaigns affecting sister trade unions throughout the world.

We have campaigned against the anti trade union laws that have been introduced against the Australian building workers and we have involved members of the Section Committee in other international campaigns.

The two internationals that the Section is involved in are the IFBWW and the EFBWW, both organisations are important to the members working within the CFTA Section of the GMB.

The IFBWW is concerned on many issues not least the forestry resources, without this vital material houses, schools and hospitals could not be built or furnished. The worlds forests are being destroyed, not only is the deforestation of our plant affecting the future use of timber but the effects of cutting down trees without replanting will eventually lead to a world with a climate no-one can live in. The multinational timber companies care more for high profits than they do for the welfare and survival of our mother earth.

We stand with the IFBWW and the EFBWW and demand an end to this destruction. 33% of our rainforests have disappeared and we wonder why we have floods and earthquakes. The fact that the rainforests provide the atmosphere with oxygen is never considered. When the capitalists clear out an area the size of Wales or when trees are cut down to pride lands for unnecessary mass agriculture, without our involvement with the IFBWW and the EFBWW the fight against globalisation by the employers will be lost.

Our international trade union links are best strengthened by our involvement with international organisations that represent workers. The move towards a global economy is best dealt with through international trade union solidarity not by breaking international links.

FOOD & LEISURE SECTION

The Union still remains affiliated to both IUF and EFFAT, although on a much reduced basis. 2004 affiliations were reduced by 80% which equates to affiliating on 4,000 members. Despite the reduction, GMB have retained an Executive Council seat following representation to IUF and EFFAT. Although, at the time of writing this report, no such meetings had been attended due to cost implications.

The work of IUF and EFFAT remains focused on combating the negative impacts of the continuing trend of consolidating business via acquisitions across food and drink productions, together with the aggressive price competitiveness amongst the retail section particular with players such as "Wal Mart" constantly driving costs down and pushing the agenda to more manufacturing to new "cheaper" markets within the new enlarged EU.

The IUF are currently reviewing the work of the Secretariat with a view to working in a more proactive way, to establish a concept of global organising across transnational companies. At the time of writing this report, a three year proposal, which included working with the American unions, Unite and SEIU were being discussed within the Food Service industry. This represents a challenging and interesting concept of how affiliates may work with the international federations in the future.

We should ensure GMB are at the forefront of shaping this new agenda.

PROCESS SECTION

European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation (EMCEF) and International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers' Unions (ICEM).

The GMB remains affiliated to both bodies on a much reduced affiliation due to financial constraints. The affiliations were cut by 80% in 2004. However, GMB has managed to retain an Executive Set but attended no meetings during 2004.

Major pieces of work within both these bodies, continues to be focussed on discussions on REACH which will have a dramatic impact on the Chemical Industry as a whole. GMB continues to be at the forefront of arguments to ensure that within the UK, regulations do not become over bureaucratic. We need to ensure that the regulations protect workers on health and environmental issues, whilst not creating wholesale job losses.

The LIFT Project which GMB undertook along with AstraZeneca and EMCEF has now been completed. This project looked at training for European Works Councils and a booklet on training was produced at the end of 2004 and has been circulated to all regions and the TUC as a model for good practice.

(Adopted)

(There were no questions on this section of the General Secretary's Report)

(The report was adopted)

INTERNATIONAL

LABOUR STANDARDS IN THE LATIN AMERICAN BANANA INDUSTRY

MOTION 331

This Congress is seriously concerned about the impact on labour standards of the "Race to the Bottom" currently being pursued in the banana industry and calls on the GMB and our affiliated bodies to continue to support the banana workers' unions of Latin America.

Companies chasing ever cheaper supplies of bananas are lowering wage levels, reducing working conditions and threatening independent trade union organisation throughout Latin America. The major British supermarkets have an increasingly powerful role in the international banana supply chain and through membership of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) have signed a Base Code of Conduct accepting responsibility for upholding certain minimum labour standards. These include the freedom to organise independent trade unions, the right to collective bargaining (as recognised in International Labour Organisation standards) and the right to earn a living wage. However two recent trade union delegations to Costa Rica, which supplies one in four bananas sold in Britain, found systematic trade union repression and a failure to pay a living wage on many banana plantations.

To this end, Congress recommends that the GMB

a) send a message of solidarity to the Latin American Coordination of Banana Worker's Unions (COLSIBA) in support of the struggle to organise in Costa Rica and throughout the Latin American banana producing regions.

b) lobby the Government, welcoming their recognition that the enforcement of labour standards is essential to international efforts to reduce poverty, but expressing serious concern about the violation of workers' rights in the Latin American banana industry.

c) work with Banana Link to encourage British supermarkets to ensure that labour standards, as detailed in the ETI Base Code of Conduct, are respected all along the international banana supply chain.

LONDON REGIONAL COMMITTEE
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. TAYLOR-CRISP (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 331 - Labour Standards in the Latin American Banana Industry.

All Windward Islands banana growers, like their counterparts around the globe, work to a common specification for bananas, drawn up to reflect the supermarkets' idea of that perfect banana, a flawless, under-ripe fruit of uniform length and breadth. Can you believe that there is a Banana Defects Manual, in which see that most of the requirements of the perfect banana are mostly concerned with appearance. Neither taste nor nutrient levels are included in the manual.

On a cluster of 67 bananas, growers are allowed one shirt-button size blemish and no more than two blemish bunches per box. More than that and the whole lot is rejected.

Supermarkets demand that all bananas must be dipped in a fungicide and Government tests show that 59% of the bananas we eat have fungicidal

residues. The Environmental Protection Agency classes it as likely to be cancerous in humans.

Costa Rica supplies nearly one in four bananas consumed in Britain and Ireland. Bananas are the single most profitable item sold in British supermarkets. They are known as the "green gold", but they have become the subject of a price war which has seen prices reduced from £1.08 to 74p per kilo. To achieve such price levels, suppliers are being squeezed to the point where these cuts are being pushed back along the supply chain, thereby making it impossible for plantation workers to be paid a living wage. Plantation workers in Costa Rica currently earn as little as £4 a day, as well as being exposed to large quantities of toxic chemicals, causing respiratory problems, cancers, abortions and, in some cases, death. Some 20% of male banana workers in Costa Rica are sterile, and the women in the packing plants suffer double the national rate of leukaemia. There are many birth defects, nervous system disorders, leukaemia and immune system abnormalities.

The time has come for the supermarkets to acknowledge that they have taken the lion's share of the profits along the chain and driving a race to the bottom.

GMB represent plantation workers who are desperately trying to organise against the anti-union stance of the company which tried to reduce the size of the Union. Members are given the worst jobs and even given money to leave the Union.

Under Costa Rican labour law membership needs to reach 50% before collective bargaining can take place. It is a fact that where union organisation exists, there is improvement in treatment and conditions for the workers.

Banana Link is working on a union-to-union project with seven banana workers and trade unions in five Latin American countries, with the aim of improving conditions for hundreds of thousands of workers who produce the bananas sold in our supermarkets today.

At a recent ETI conference held in London, case studies showed that where workers were given training in a number of aspects, such as health and safety and labour rights, they felt empowered and able to stand up for themselves. We must see management and trade union involvement as the trade unions are the vital link between the trade unions and the workforce. Companies need to build ethical trading considerations into their purchasing practices, but any code or standard should not be used alone to solve the problems. What is needed is worker organisation, worker participation, labour laws and, above all, communication.

To this end, I ask you all to send a message of solidarity to the Latin American Co-ordination of Banana Workers' Unions in support of the struggle to organise in Costa Rica and throughout the Latin

American banana producing regions. We must lobby the Government, welcoming their recognition that the enforcement of labour standards is essential to international efforts to reduce poverty by expressing serious concern about the violation of workers' rights in the Latin American banana industry. We must work with Banana Link to encourage British supermarkets to ensure that labour standards, as detailed in the ETI Base Code of Conduct, are respected throughout the international banana supply chain. I urge delegates to read the motion and support.

(The motion was formally seconded)

SOLIDARITY WITH THE I.F.T.U.

MOTION 332

Congress salutes the courageous struggle of the Iraq Federation of Trade Unions who are rebuilding trade unionism in Iraq against a bitter legacy of dictatorship and war.

The IFTU are continuing to oppose both long-term military occupation and also to safeguard their country's economic sovereignty from US privatisation.

Despite this, trade union activists and leaders have suffered murderous assaults and executions at the hands of hard line activists, so called 'insurgents'.

The GMB must continue to publicise the struggle of the IFTU to establish democratic rights and pledge that Iraq's trade unionists get full practical support and solidarity from all sections of the Labour Movement in Britain.

113 MANCHESTER BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. T. FALLOWS (Lancashire): I move Motion 332 - Solidarity with the Iraq Federation of Trade Unions.

Conference, Iraq today is occupied by foreign troops. Cruise missiles and cluster bombs rained down on them after ten years of sanctions. Half-a-million children died of starvation. After their liberation, you would expect things to look a little better, such as basic food on the table, electricity, running water, an operational sewage system and a job. I am talking about basics. Sadly, for the vast majority of Iraqis these things are not available, but they are not wallowing in despair. They are organising. They know that collectively they can achieve far more than they can individually. They have free and independent trade unions. We all know that life as a trade unionist is no picnic. Life is very difficult for us with the anti-union legislation tied

around our necks, balloting to go to the toilet and contractual changes that we are powerless to resist.

Yet we have it easy. Our forefathers really had to struggle. Conspiracy legislation ended up with the Tolpuddle Martyrs being transported to Australia, and there was no British Airways then. Imprisonment and exile was the norm for any budding Arthur Scargills. They had it rough. If they had it rough, what the hell are the Iraqi trade unionists going through? Intimidation, suffering and murder are daily events in liberated Iraq. Years of repression, rockets and bombs that turned night into day, a hundred thousand people killed since their liberation and they are still forming trade unions. What sort of people are these who are fighting against unbelievable odds on a daily basis? Iraq now has an engineering union, a railway union, a mechanics union, a teachers union and even an oil refining union. More unions are being added every month.

What do they need to make progress? They need offices, forms, faxes, computers, desks and chairs. They need help to train their activists on labour law and recruitment. In return, they will give their blood, sweat and, sometimes, their lives. Please support.

BRO. T. BARKER (Lancashire): I second Motion 332. In February 2004 the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions visited Iraq and met trade unionists from a wide sector of disciplines; i.e., factory workers, teachers, hotel workers, doctors, journalists and I could go on. Even there a split exists between the blue and white collars.

If I go back to 1950, at that time the unions were reasonably strong, and by 1980, when Saddam Hussein had come in, union leaders were either executed or had gone underground. They are now starting to reform and at the moment they are in need of being organised and to communicate. There is a lack of organisation, collective bargaining and recruitment, but no lack of enthusiasm. Furthermore, many women have joined the movement. Much unemployment exists as does a poor infrastructure, so a good trade union Movement, if properly organised, would be invaluable for the future.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN IRAQ

MOTION 333

This Congress agrees that child and sweatshop labour is a scandal and although virtually eradicated in this country through a century of union struggle it is still a blight on our international movement.

Some of the high street's most famous names, including Nike, Gap, Adidas and Reebok, have been exposed by the newspapers, and TV programmes such as Panorama, as sweatshop

employers.

Children as young as 11 have been found working in scandalous conditions in factories commissioned by these companies to produce their goods.

A single top or pair of trainers can cost more to buy in the UK than the worker who produced them receives in a month. The average wage for a Nike worker in Vietnam is under £30 a month.

Forced overtime, sexual abuse, poor health and safety conditions and violence and harassment, especially against trade unionists, have been uncovered by reporters and trade union and government investigators.

The No Sweat organisation campaigns in the UK, with other campaigning groups such as Labour Behind the Label and trade unions including the GMB, to end child and sweatshop labour and for workers' rights at home and abroad.

Workers in sweatshops must be free to organise their own, independent trade unions. Codes of conduct and "multi-stakeholder initiatives" mean nothing unless the workers themselves can enforce standards such as a limit to the working week, no forced overtime, decent health and safety.

Furthermore this Congress notes that:

In Iraq, despite the twin pressures from the occupying forces and the often reactionary, religious, so called "resistance", workers are organising trade unions and other independent, secular struggle organisations.

Prominent among these are the Federation of Workers Councils & Unions of Iraq, the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, the Union of the Unemployed in Iraq and the Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq.

These developing unions - of workers, women and the unemployed - are the best hope for a secular, democratic and socialist Iraq, free of both imperialist aggression and religious reaction, and deserve the full support of the GMB and the Trade Union Movement.

This Congress agrees to:

Campaign against sweatshop labour and exploitation, in solidarity with our sisters and brothers all over the world and publicise the work of No Sweat and others campaigning against child and sweated labour.

To affiliate "No Sweat".

To make sure that our purchases and investments are "sweat-free" and "union-made".

To campaign to force employers to buy their work wear and supplies "sweat-free" and "union-made".

To restate our opposition to the war on Iraq and to the continued occupation, whilst condemning outright atrocities committed against workers in Iraq by religious armed forces.

And to make a donation of £1000 to the Iraqi trade union movement, to be split equally between the IFTU and the FWCUI.

LONDON HOTELS & CATERING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): I move Motion 333 - International Solidarity in Iraq.

Congress, the GMB is and was very critical with Britain's involvement in the war in Iraq. Thousands of innocent men, women and children have been killed and are still being killed in this illegal war.

One of the best ways in which we can help the people of Iraq is to support genuine trade unions in that country. We need to extend the hand of friendship to the people of Iraq to its trade union Movement because Iraqi workers are facing an onslaught from large American companies. Those American companies, with the support of George Bush, have moved into that war torn state. They will attempt to get the maximum amount of work for the lowest level of pay, including sweated labour by children. We can help their trade unions by publishing their campaign throughout the British trade union Movement and respond to them when they request our help.

Furthermore, we can also help by making financial donations. We must help them to build a new Iraq in which children, the same as our children, can play without fear and be educated in schools which are as good as in any other first world country. We want to see a new Iraq in which women walk the streets without fear of attack or abuse; a new Iraq which works towards a secular, democratic, free and open society which respects all its citizens.

Congress, by voting for this motion today you will ensure that the GMB will affiliate to "No Sweat", an organisation which campaigns to end child and sweatshop labour, which we would not allow in this country, so why should it happen in that country?

It further campaigns for workers' rights at home and abroad. It also campaigns to ensure that the clothes we wear and the goods that we buy are sweat-free and union-made.

Finally, colleagues, I ask you to visit the No Sweat

stall. If you have not, you will find some very informative leaflets and also a post card which you can send to Disneyland, where they have poor old Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse sweating their guts out. Please support the motion and collect these leaflets.

I ask that you support this motion today by passing it. We will make a donation of £1,000 to be split between the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions and the Federation of Workers, Councils & Unions of Iraq. Please support this important motion.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move on to Composite 31, the RMA raffle proceeds were £941.10p raised. Well done, Betty and Tommy.

IRAQ

COMPOSITE MOTION 31

(Covering Motions 334, 336 and 337)

334 - Withdraw Troops from Iraq (London Region)

336 - Motion On the War (Southern Region)

337 - Troops Out of Iraq (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

This Congress congratulates the 2004 TUC conference on unanimously adopting a resolution calling for an early withdrawal of US and British troops from Iraq.

We note that this resolution is in line with opinion polls showing that most people in this country want an early date set for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

We call upon the GMB to exert maximum pressure on the TUC to implement the policy of calling on the Government for withdrawal.

We re affirm our support for the national organisation Stop the War Coalition and resolve to promote and support activities called by them and give them financial support.

We mandate the GMB to pay the £5000, agreed at Congress 2003, to the Stop the War Coalition and a further £2000.

(Carried)

BRO. D. FAITH (London): I move Composite Motion 31 on Iraq.

This is a fairly straightforward composite comprising of two elements, the first of which calls for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, which is not only the TUC position but withdrawal of troops is

supported by the majority of people in this country and, by all accounts, the people of Iraq as well.

Some people will say that if the troops pull out the result will be chaos, and I think that approach is, frankly, ridiculous. The western governments, particularly Britain and America, armed Saddam in the first place, they encouraged him to go to war against Iran where millions of Iraqis died, they then bombed them in 1991, starved them through the next ten years, bombed them again, invaded them, took over their industries, privatised them and banned the right to strike! Nobody can tell me that that is not chaos. I think it is, frankly, ridiculous to assume that a country which has outside military powers within its borders can ever be talked of as a democracy. If they are serious about democracy, they need to get the troops out now.

The second point is about support for the Stop the War Coalition, and two points need to be raised here. The first is that I think it is in the long-term interests of our Union to be supporting things like anti-war campaigns and Make Poverty History. It is much more difficult than it was 30 years ago in terms of finding young people to organise and produce the next generation of activists from within the union Movement. Nobody should say that today young people are not interested in politics. They are. Those young people who will be in Edinburgh, out on the streets time after time campaigning against the war, I believe, sincerely, if we put sufficient work in, if we build bridges to them and if we stick out our hands out to them, these are the people to whom we can say, "You are fighting against things in Iraq. Now look for a union which is going to help you fight for your rights in the workplace". I firmly believe that if we put our hands out to those young people, that is what is going to guarantee them becoming future activists of this Union in years to come.

The second reason why I think we should give financial support to Stop the War Coalition is, frankly, because we voted for this to happen two years ago. There is absolutely no point in our raising our hands and saying that we agree with something and just letting it go by if that doesn't happen. This is asking for £7,000. Since we voted to donate money last time, we have donated £2.5 million to the TUC. Now, the TUC was supposed to put on a demonstration against pensions. Five thousand people turned up. In that time, the Stop the War Coalition has produced demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people. If we expect value for money, I think we get it better from the Stop the War Coalition than we get from the TUC

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): I second Composite Motion 31.

President and Congress, I have not written a speech in seconding this composite, so I am going to speak from the heart. The point is that my son is

currently serving in Iraq with the British Army. He is on his second tour of that country. He came back last May after his first six months and he went back again this May for another six months. He did not want to go back, not because he is scared, and none of his comrades wanted to go back, not because they are scared. They did not want to go back because they know they are not helping the Iraqi workers in that country.

The British Army employed some local Iraqi women to work at the Army camp as tea ladies and cleaners. He said that the insurgents got hold of these women, beheaded them, threw their heads over the fence into the army camp and then they went round to their houses and killed their families - the children, the grandparents, the whole lot. They know they are not helping these people by being there.

Two years ago at Blackpool, our then regional secretary told us that he did not know what all the fuss was about. He said that it was going to be in today's papers and tomorrow's chip wrappers. Let me tell you this: they have not even started growing the trees to make the newspapers from yet. The light is on. I will have to end now.

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am speaking in support of the composite. We have had quite a few moving contributions from people this week and some really interesting things have been said. The most moving contribution that I have heard was at the Stop the War fringe meeting when Rose Gentle was speaking, who lost her son in Iraq. He was hit by a roadside bomb which killed him. She talked about him and she made him a real person to us. She told us that they lived in Glasgow and how he was helping a young ten year old lad with difficulties to read and spending time with him in the evenings. He had been through the alphabet and all that. She talked of how others liked and admired him. When he died everyone who knew him was devastated. The point is that she made him a real person. The point is that real people are dying in Iraq. One hundred thousand Iraqis have died since the war ended. Many British troops have died but 2,000 American troops have been killed as well in Iraq. That fringe meeting was organised by the Stop the War Coalition, which organisation we formally support. Now that we are on the road to recovery, our finances our health, I think we should be giving the money that we promised to give them two years ago and we should join the Stop the War Coalition ourselves. It is a grassroots organisation. Anyone can join and participate in their activities.

THE PRESIDENT: Now is the opportunity if anyone else wants to speak.

BRO. D. POLE (London): I speak in support of Composite Motion 31. Stop the War, was born out of

nothing a few years ago, has organised the biggest, second biggest and third biggest demonstrations that this country has ever seen in recent times. They organised the biggest midweek demonstration when 150,000 people took to the streets against George Bush when he visited this country some time ago. They have groups throughout the country campaigning against the war, organising, agitating and leafleting against the war and the illegal occupation. Political groups, trade unions, CND, school students and religious groups all support Stop the War. However, money is needed if this activity is to continue. We must support this resolution. We must continue to support the Stop the War Coalition. That needs money. We urge support.

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that one of the colleagues wishes to speak against one of the motions before I call the CEC member.

BRO. H. RAJCH (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I want to oppose Motion 332 - the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions. When you read the motion what it says is absolutely fine. Of course we want to support trade unions who are building trade unionism in Iraq in a very difficult period. However, that particular group is just one of several federations in Iraq which is trying to organise amongst Iraqi workers. We must be careful about why the US occupying forces are supporting that Federation and not the others. We heard from an Iraqi trade unionist this week who told us that that group is recognised because they are going along with what America is demanding, whereas other trade unionists who have been on strike - I am talking about oil workers and transport workers - the American Government wants nothing to do with them. They are keeping them down as much as possible and they are recognising those trade unions which are co-operating with the occupation. I am talking about the IFTU. That is why, I think, we need to oppose this Federation and not support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to give Lancashire the right to reply.

(The right of reply was waived)

THE PRESIDENT: I call on Yvonne Ritchie to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. Y. RITCHIE (CEC, Commercial Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. I am asking Congress to support Composite Motion 31 but with some qualifications, which I will explain.

Two years ago this Congress supported a CEC statement expressing grave misgivings that the UK might have been led into war by either faulty intelligence or by a wilful misrepresentation of that

intelligence. That CEC statement also emphasised our concern to maintain the authority of the United Nations. Today British troops in Iraq are operating under a UN mandate. As soon as they are asked to leave by the democratically elected government of Iraq, they should be withdrawn.

The CEC is looking forward to that day, both to bring our troops home but, equally important, the hope that Iraq will have become a more stable country, with unity between the various tribes and factions.

We have to recognise that Iraq today is one of the most dangerous places on Earth. Pulling troops out of such a difficult situation is never going to be easy. Doing so, surrounded by suicide bomb threats and whilst still within firing range of rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire, presents major problems all of their own.

When departure day comes, the CEC favours an organised withdrawal in the interests of safety of both British troops and the Iraqi people. That may mean avoiding an abrupt exit in favour of a phased pull out. No one wants confusion to become the cause of further unnecessary bloodshed.

Secondly, President, the composite calls on the GMB to pay £7,000 to the Stop the War Coalition. The Finance Committee has looked at this call but, sadly, I have to report to you that it has found that the Stop the War Coalition issued leaflets during the General Election urging people to vote for Tory candidates. This CEC cannot and never has been prepared to fund organisations which drum up support for the Tories at election time. We cannot set a precedent. I would, however, President and Congress, ask for patience whilst the CEC fully investigates this claim.

With those qualifications, President, the CEC asks Congress to support Composite Motion 31.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the vote.

(Motion 331 was carried)

(Motion 332 was carried)

(Motion 333 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I now come to Composite Motion 31. The CEC is support this composite with a qualification.

(Composite Motion 31 was carried)

FUTURE NON SUPPORT FOR U.S.

MOTION 338

This Congress impresses upon this Labour Government that the nation no longer supports any incursions by the US into any further

countries (ie Iran or North Korea) under the guise of trumped up evidence. The war in Iraq has cost British lives and this nation will no longer tolerate further support for the US in any future action they decide to take unilaterally.

SOUTHEND BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. T. WALL (London): I move Motion 338 - Future Non Support for U.S.)

Congress and President, like many of you, my region and branch was appalled at Tony Blair's blind faith in supporting the warmonger, Bush and the US. 9/11 was, truly, an appalling act against the US. However, the US cannot blame the whole world for the way America is viewed. Just because another nation's way of life is different, it does not mean that they are wrong. The GMB must ensure that the Prime Minister does not support the madman, Bush, in their attacks on any other sovereign nation; i.e., Iran and North Korea.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, at this stage in our proceedings, if you do not feel compelled to move the seconding speech, I would be extremely grateful.

INTERNATIONAL GLOBALISATION

MOTION 342

Congress recognises that global capitalism is not the saviour of global poverty.

Congress believes that global capitalism enslaves global poverty. It is the poor in developing countries who pay a deadly price for the excesses of the west.

Conference expects the GMB to play a leading part in spreading the message of International Socialism through global solidarity and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

It is incumbent on us to give true freedom and democracy to the poor nations of the world. Through international socialism it will bring about democratically elected governments and in turn replace the many dictators the people of the third world have to suffer. It is time for the workers of the west to pay back what has been taken from the workers of the poor nations.

Conference urges the GMB to speak up. Stop global capitalism pitting worker against worker. We must set aside our differences. The GMB should promote the benefits of international co-operation and stop the cut-throat competition.

Conference want to see once again "the workers of the world to unite".

Conference wants the peoples of the world to know that American imperialism is not the only show in town!

SOUTHAMPTON S61 (CFTA) BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. NEWMAN (Southern): I move Motion 342 with the full support of the Southern Region.

Traditionally, this type of motion is normally reserved for the end of Congress. In actual fact, all week, in every single sector of Congress, we have been discussing the implications of global capitalism. This free market neo-liberalism, as it is called now, is actually old fashioned Victorian laissez faire capitalism and it affects our policies in public services, health, education, transport, housing - everything - that we have been discussing this week where the aim is to destroy the advances made on behalf of working people, made by their union organisations over a period of 150 years.

When a Labour Chancellor makes PFI and PPP, which is privatisation as far as I know by any other name, the core of his policies, despite his denials on this platform on Monday, we should know that we are facing trouble. It also affects our relations with Europe, where both the French and the Dutch have rejected the European Constitution because it is a charter for global capitalism. We heard from Angel Salas from the Colombian Health Workers' Union this week how the Colombian Government seek privatisation on behalf of global capitalism and crushes workers' opposition.

In order for the globalisation project to succeed, it will be necessary for other governments to deal with the trade unions in some way. We will require strong unions, both nationally and internationally, and we will require solidarity of the like we have never seen before. I am talking about the type of solidarity we experienced this morning at the AA demo. From that demo, I think we might have a name for the possible new union which the Southern Regional Council believes should only come about if it is in the interests of the rank and file membership. The name of that union could be The Workers' United. What we told the AA today and what we should tell venture capitalists, privatisers and privateers everywhere is that The Workers' United will never be defeated. Thank you.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

MIDDLE EAST

MOTION 343

This Congress calls on the British Government

to support international pressure on the Israeli Government to demolish its illegal "separation wall". Specifically, we call on the British Government to support such UN and EU measures designed to encourage the Israeli Government to do so. Congress believes that a meaningful and lasting political solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict will not be found whilst Palestinian territory is under occupation.

NORWICH GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. ROWLEY (London): I move Motion 343. President and Comrades, the State of Israel and I were both born in 1948. In fact, I was born two days after the NHS opened its doors. I was four days overdue. I like to think that my mother, who still knows the value of a penny, kept her legs crossed so that I did not cost much.

All of our folk in Small Heath in Birmingham had welcomed the Labour landslide three years before and, like all working class families, looked to the Welfare State to give them a helping hand out of the miseries of unemployment, war, poor health, housing and barely adequate schooling. In those years after the war the labour Movement took a sledgehammer to the war which separated us from our birthright. I have been lucky enough to enjoy the advantages of the breach.

Conversely, let us think about a Palestinian boy child born at the same time. What does he have left of his birthright. He and his fellow Palestinians are squeezed into only 21 per cent of the territory of the British Mandate, and the wall rising about them affronts what is left of his dignity and self-respect. It is a daily humiliation, a symbol of his degradation and abandonment. His own children have been suckled on bitterness. Sometimes that bitterness becomes so great they strap explosives to their bodies and annihilate themselves and innocent Israeli citizens on some bus or in some café beyond the wall. His grandchildren may have been shot dead or maimed for throwing stones at a tank which has flattened their home, or where a bulldozer has uprooted the family's ancient olive grove. One of the women folk may have given birth by the side of the road, having waited for hours at a checkpoint in a bid to get to a hospital. The wall is nothing to do with security. Indeed, it cannot stop the determined suicide bomber with a Hamas rocket. It does not even follow the 1967 Green Line. It chews into the West Bank, taking water resources and land coveted by the illegal Israeli settlers. It is Sharon's statement of intent. Only when the remnants of Palestinian East Jerusalem are sealed off and every illegal settlement in the West Bank secure will Sharon make any significant move to negotiate. By then a viable Palestinian State will be impossible.

Israel is a formidable and uninspected nuclear power. It has all the sophisticated weapons it wants. Its goods find their way into our markets and when pressures exist within the EU to end these preferential trade agreements or the UN gets uppity, the veto of her friend can be relied on.

What efforts have been made in the labour Movement to help? The AUT tried recently. It voted to boycott academic contracts with Israeli universities with campuses in the Occupied Territories, but the decision was overturned last week in a welter of pressure. This Union, which is affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign was holding a fringe meeting on Sunday, which was going to be addressed by a Palestinian student at Durham University called Lubna Farhat. That morning she received an anonymous and untraceable telephone call from a woman saying, "I know about the talk and I advise you not to do it". With her family still in occupied Palestine and only having UN issued documents, she could not take the risk of talking to us.

Justice encourages peace and democracy. Apache helicopters, tanks and concrete walls do not.

Just before I wind-up, I would like to read a very short statement from an interview in a newspaper on Monday morning from a Palestinian man. He says at the end: "It's better to be patient. I had this question from one of my grandchildren: 'Do you think that you will see the end of the occupation?' she said. I replied, 'If I die or become unable to lead, you will continue'. She is only nine years old but on a demonstration she asked me to give her the microphone. She sang We Shall Overcome."

Justice for Palestine remains the key to peace and stability in the Middle East. The wall must fall. Free Palestine.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

PRIVATISATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

MOTION 344

Congress agrees that Privatisation of public services has led to increased poverty in many developing countries and there is increasing evidence of damage caused by such privatisation.

However, developing country governments are left with little choice; they are trapped between the wishes of their electorate on one side, and the threat of withdrawn loans, debt relief and aid on the other. Therefore the GMB demand that DFID removes privatisation as a condition of its development assistance.

LONDON STORES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. PARMENTER (London): I move Motion 344 - Privatisation in Developing Countries.

Across the world the sale of public services has created a storm of protest. Basic services, such as water, healthcare, electricity and education are essential. They are a core element of the Millennium Development Goals and as such received considerable attention from institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Department of International Development and the United Nations.

The privatisation of public services has led to an increase in poverty in many developing countries and increasing evidence exists of damage caused by such privatisations. However, developing country governments are left with little choice as they are trapped between the wishes of their electorate, on the one hand, and the threat of withdrawn loans, debt relief and aid on the other.

This Congress notes with concern that the UK Government have positioned themselves as a champion of privatisation in developing countries.

Therefore, the GMB demands that the Department of International Development removes privatisation as a condition of its development assistance.

BRO. G. WARD (London): I second Motion 344. I promise Congress that I will be quick. I will try my best.

President and Congress, I hope that we, in the GMB, can be inspired by our Colombian friends who visited us this week and their courage. It is frightening what the greed of governments and public led companies can result in. It is unfortunate, also, that products are still bought and sold which are from companies whose contractors, in countries like Colombia, are implicated in intimidation and hurt done to trade unionists and workers. Some of those companies products are in fact on sale in this venue today.

We have debated purchasing power this week and it is good to see the GMB starting again to build effectiveness in this country and links with the international unions and labour groups who we can support to fight the same aims.

The Government would argue that developing countries, such as Colombia and Argentina are backward and need developing to rescue them from poverty. The facts just do not bear that argument out. The facts show that many of these countries are far in advance of us in terms of privatisation. What that privatisation has led to is no employment rights, worker debts and poverty pay, theft of national resources, theft of services, theft of national income, social exclusion and poverty on a huge scale. I am sure I could go on and most of you know what would be on the list as well. This is the legacy of privatisation, and our Government are liable. Privatisation should not be a condition of assistance

and it should not be a condition of aid. Instead, it should be international high standards of employment rights and human rights. Please support our international colleagues and this motion.

STAR WARS

MOTION 345

Congress is opposed to George W Bush's Ballistic Missile Defence (Star Wars) programme.

We oppose in particular the Government's decision to allow the use of RAF Fylingdales and RAF Menwith Hill as part of the programme.

The programme is draining capital out of the British economy as UK defence companies acquire US based companies rather than invest in defence diversification here.

Congress therefore supports the campaign led by CND and the American Peace movement to stop the programme.

PERTH 1 BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

BRO. S. GLEN (GMB Scotland): I move Motion 345. In 1980 Ronald Regan was elected President of the USA. In 1983, after he had a falling out with the USSR, he announced an Anti-Ballistic Missile Defence System against nuclear attack. This Strategic Defence Initiative coined the nickname "Star Wars". Due to the billions of dollars that were ploughed into the programme, economic turmoil ensued. The spiralling costs and aggressive anti-Star Wars campaigning marked the death knell of the Regan Administration.

Then came George Bush Sr. and Star Wars was put on the back-burner because he had a bit more on his plate to worry about. His worry was Saddam Hussein. We all need no reminding of what happened there. We also saw the sad crash of the Challenger Space Shuttle, but surprising we heard very little about Star Wars.

After George Bush Sr. we got Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, but we won't even go there. By now Star Wars had become Luke Skywalker, Princess Leah and Darth Vader.

Next to enter the White House came George W. Bush Jr. and with him the National Missile Defence System - the Son of Star Wars. It is a similar programme to SDI - the Strategic Defence Initiative - but different. So what is the difference? The difference, really, is irrelevant. What is relevant is the fact that for the past 22 years, since 1983, the US Government has been and still is spending countless billions of dollars on a missile defence system.

Defence against who? There is no Iron Curtain. There is no USSR and now Iraq is supposed to be peaceful. Right!

GMB Scotland urges Congress and all GMB members to highlight and campaign against this Government's decision to allow the use of RAF Fylingdales and RAF Menwith Hill as communication centres for this programme and the waste of countless billions of US dollars which could be put to better use; i.e., the signing-up to and implementation of the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, about which George W. Bush stated that the US would not implement. That is coming from the world's greatest producer of greenhouse gases. Equally, important, let us not forget the world debt, which could be wiped out by saving countless billions of dollars. I ask Congress to support this motion.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Christine Howell to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. C. HOWELL (CEC, Clothing & Textiles): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. President and Congress, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motions 338 and 343 but with a qualification in each case.

Turning, first, to Motion 338, the CEC is adamant that the UK Government will no longer sign blank cheques guaranteeing British support for unilateral action by the USA at any time, any place, like we were misled into the war on Iraq.

Iran and North Korea look as if they are top of George Bush's and Donald Rumsfeld's hit list today. Maybe tomorrow they will have other targets in their sights. Military action should always be the action of last resort and it should be judged on a case by case basis. We should tell the White House: "If you act unilaterally without UN backing, you cannot take the UK's support for granted."

Turning to Motion 343, the illegal wall that the Israeli Government are building has been condemned across the world. The CEC backs the motion's call for Britain to support international pressure for that wall to be destroyed in the same way as the Berlin Wall was destroyed. Although we want the GMB to stick to its even-handed stance in the Arab-Israeli conflict, that does not stop us calling a spade a spade. The Israeli war is wrong. It does not help the peace process. It hinders it.

Our aim is a lasting peace that allows Israel to live in security alongside a viable Palestinian State. British trade unions can help by working with both Israeli and Palestinian trade unions. Where we see either side in the conflict demanding rights but committing wrongs we must feel free to say so. It does not mean to say that we have stopped being even-handed. With these qualifications, the CEC asks

Congress to support Motions 338 and 343.

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Congress to vote on Motion 338, which the CEC is supporting with a qualification. The CEC is supporting Motion 342 - International Globalisation. The CEC is supporting Motion 343 with a qualification. The CEC is supporting Motion 344. The CEC is supporting Motion 345.

(Motion 338 was carried)

(Motion 342 was carried)

(Motion 344 was carried)

(Motion 345 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I have an announcement to make. The London Region's raffle for breast cancer research raised £380. Well done.

We now come to Criminal Justice.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DATE RAPE

MOTION 289

Congress is concerned with the alarming increase in date rape, men as well as women. This Congress calls on the government to have specially trained officers to deal with this shocking and cowardly crime.

177 TYLDESLEY BRANCH
Lancashire Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HOPE (Lancashire): Congress, President, before I start, I made a speech earlier on in the week. I want to thank all the people who came and had a word with me afterwards. To me, that proves what a trade union is and it proves what the GMB is. *(Applause)* Thank you very much.

I also want to say that I heard some other comments. Let me point out to these people from whom I heard these comments, you are in a trade union! *(Applause)*

I do not want to alarm you, but somebody spiked my drink a couple of years ago. It was in Blackpool. It is a big problem. One in 10 people in this country will get "spiked" at some time in their drinking life. It does not always result in a sexual assault. Sometimes it is a "bit of fun", as they call it. Be careful when you are in the pubs and the clubs and look after your drink.

It does not just happen to women. It happens to men as well. So what should you do if it happens to you? I went to a pub in Blackpool and somebody

spiked my drink. The next thing I knew, I was actually in a toilet -- this is some five or six hours later -- with my pants around my ankles. I thought nothing of it. I just thought I was drunk. I went back to my accommodation and over the next few days things started coming back to me.

I have to say when I tried to report this incident to the police, they put me through to an answer machine or a voicemail three times. I then insisted that I spoke to an officer. This officer, basically, did not seem interested and said, "Well, the next time you are in Blackpool, come and make a statement." That was some four weeks later because I had been more concerned with other things, like going to the sex clinic for HIV, and things like that, plus other things were going around in my mind.

When I went to the police station, I was kept waiting for over two hours. I asked for a lady officer because I thought she might be a little bit more considerate. When she arrived after two hours, she just did not seem interested at all. She tried to find an interview room. When she could not find one, she put me back in the waiting room. She then said to me, "The only room we have is the back office." So I went into the back office with her and made a statement. There were people coming in and out of that office all the time I was making the statement.

She then went to the CID, came back and said, "Well, there is not much we can do. It is four weeks ago." I said, "Well, that is when I was told to come back", because I was a bit confused, you know what I mean, with what had gone on. So she said, "Will you sign my notebook?" So I signed the notebook and I left.

Some months later, I asked for the crime number and was told there was no crime because no crime was reported. I then had a paddy and kicked up a fuss and I saw two CID officers to whom I made a nine-page statement. If we had a dedicated number and a named officer that you could phone, vital evidence would not have been lost. Do you know, there are hardly any convictions for date rape in this country?

Basically, beware when you go out and look after your drinks. I read in a paper today, basically, things have gone one step further now. They are actually putting drugs into a perfume spray and when you spray it, you actually collapse. I am used to coming up here and being silly and daft. To me, this is a serious thing, but, like they say on Crime Watch: Sleep tight, don't have nightmares. Cheers.

BRO. J. ROBERTS (Lancashire): I am seconding the motion. Date rape has become part of our society now and is on the increase. It is not just the spiking of drinks. It is the passing of drugs. We all know what happens. We go for a quiet evening out. We are enjoying ourselves, but we are not so sure about the friends we are with. We get separated from our

friends in a nightclub, in a pub, but we think we are OK.

When it happens to a family member or a friend, it is a traumatic experience. But where do these people go for help? I am the independent Chairman of the Police Advisory Authority in Wigan. Should you need to go to the police, we then find the police are stretched and they do not have the officers and what-have-you.

What we are asking in this motion is that the Government put forward specially trained officers, so people who are isolated and on their own can ring someone up or go and see them independently and in confidence. I urge you to support this motion. It is a very important motion. It could happen to anybody, any one of our families. If we have a young daughter/son who goes out, comes home, supposing they had a decent night out, but finds out that she/he is in a room and she/he does not know how she/he has got there. She/he knows something has happened. What do we do? We need someone out there who they can really talk to and get to grips with this situation.

BRO. A. SPINKS (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): Congress, when I first saw this item on the preliminary agenda, I thought, "That is an unusual one for a trade union conference", but then I started thinking that it is not. It is a really, really nasty thing that is happening in the world we are now living in. I thought that if it was my brother, sister, mother or father, it would be as traumatic for me in a different sense as it is, God forbid, for the victim.

What I would like to say and what I like to see, because we have some feedback now with MPs, is a new crime. We are often told that you can only give somebody 18 months for a certain offence. As far as I know, this sort of crime is new at the moment. It is a new crime - the same as those who are robbing you at banks. We have no laws yet that are made specifically to deal with these types of offences. I urge Congress and the CEC to say to the Government, "Right, let's start giving out serious sentences." These things have to be stopped before they get totally out of hand. What that poor lad went through must be absolutely horrendous. I am not just instancing that poor lad, but anybody who is a victim of such crime. I would like to see a penalty of 15 years. End of story. Thank you very much.

BUILDING A SAFER SOCIETY

MOTION 292

This Congress condemns the cowardly and despicable acts of violence against members of our retired communities. Anti social behaviour and violence in our society is a scourge. The beating up, raping and robbing of the elderly in

their own homes or, when going about their own business must be tackled.

Therefore this Congress demands that mandatory minimum ten year sentences are handed out to anyone convicted of violence against our Senior Citizens.

Congress further agrees that it is time for the woolly minded politicians to stand up for the victims of violence rather than spend time apologising for the actions of the low life perpetrators.

This Congress instructs the General Secretary to write to all MP's advising them of GMB policy and seeking cross party support in order to protect the vulnerable members of our society.

HOUNSLOW BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. LINDSAY (London): President, Congress, I work for a large company that supplies products to the elderly. I regularly visit the most vulnerable people in society in London and the Home Counties as a contractor directly controlled by Social Services. On visits to elderly people in the more deprived areas, they often have to live behind reinforced and/or armoured doors, which presents a serious problem to the emergency services. In these cases, the only way to enter is to demolish the wall adjacent to the door. Sometimes there is an addition of a security gate attached to the front door, so the elderly can see through the gate before they allow individuals to enter.

However, criminals still gain entry under false pretences. The elderly are a target for drugs-related violence, which shocks us all, and in many cases the elderly person never recovers from it. Outside the home, anti-social behaviour directed towards the elderly makes them feel extremely threatened. The police are relatively powerless to act upon young troublemakers due to their age. Usually, police simply reassure the elderly victim and are legally unable to press charges. However, when the police do feel they have grounds to intervene, they face hostile parents who fail to control, discipline or even care about their children. Poor parenting leaves these teenagers free to roam the streets without boundaries and proper control.

I found the best situation for elderly people, and I have visited very many in this situation, is usually low rise, warden-controlled housing. The most elderly and vulnerable people should be given the opportunity to move to more appropriate properties whilst still living in that same familiar area. As you will appreciate, old people do like to live in a really good area with which they are familiar.

Councils should encourage more social responsibility and mixed housing developments with specific accommodation for the elderly with good access to medical services. I would like to say that most carers, caretakers and wardens who I meet in the course of my job do a lot more work and give a lot more time which they do not get paid for. They do this because they care about the old people for whom they work. I have heard from a few in this hall today.

It is time to encourage parents and developers to be more socially responsible and help society protect the individuals who have contributed so much in their lifetime. They deserve an environment sensitive to their needs. Please support this motion. Thank you for allowing me to speak on it.

(The motion was formally seconded)

BRO. J. ROBERTS (Lancashire): I belong to this great Union. I am a postman. Sometimes the only person an old person or an aged person sees is me on my rounds. How many times do we see incidents where people say, "It is not my grandma, that is not my auntie, I am not going to bother about that." If I or most of my colleagues see an incident, we will report it. The only people who are going to make this a better society and a better community are ourselves. We are the community. We are the society.

I urge everybody, whatever happens, whatever is out there, to 'phone the police. If you do not want to 'phone the police, there is "Crime Stoppers". I urge everybody at the meetings I chair for the public advice on policing to report any incidents they see. As a postman, I go around and if I see an incident, I will report it. Don't forget, it may not be my grandmother, it may not be my grandfather, but it may be yours. It may be that first port of call is me and I will answer it.

SIS. L. CLARKE (CEC, Public Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are recommending that you support Motion 292 with a qualification. We have a fundamental right to feel safe in the place we live and, most of all, in our own homes. However, the picture painted by this motion describes a very different society, where violence and the job culture seems to be the norm. Every day we see anti-social behaviour in our streets, schools, roads and shopping centres. We read about shop keepers being assaulted and the elderly being targeted and terrorised in their homes.

What is happening to us? This behaviour has to be stopped. Targeting pensioners and those who live alone is cowardly and despicable. What can be done to address this situation? We have heard Tony Blair promising to deliver safer communities in the third term. We look forward to seeing 20,000 new Community Support Officers patrolling our streets by 2008 and, hopefully, they will all be GMB members.

We need better support for these victims of crime and violence and criminal justice policies need to support the victim, not the offender. Punishment should reflect the seriousness of the crime and lenient sentences have little comfort for bruised and battered victims of crime and their families. The qualification is that the motion calls for a mandatory minimum 10-year sentence. But, in reality, this would constrain any flexibility that courts may wish to exercise and would result in the same sentence being imposed for offences of a very different magnitude. Congress, with this qualification, I call upon you to support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. I am putting Motion 289 to Congress. The CEC are supporting it.

(Motion 289 was carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Motion 292, Building a safer society, the CEC are accepting it with a qualification.

(Motion 292 was carried)

SOCIAL POLICY - GENERAL

ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL TELEVISION

MOTION 298

Congress calls for retired members, pensioners and low paid workers beware - your right to watch television is under threat.

This Congress calls upon the Government to fund the cost of the changeover from analogue to digital TV for those in society who cannot afford it.

**Y24 - COVENTRY 552 BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region**

(Carried)

BRO. R. EDMUNDS (Birmingham & West Midlands): The Government plan to switch off analogue television signals between 2007 and 2012. Many pensioners, low paid workers and those on Social Security, single parents, have analogue television. So who is going to fund the change-over to digital? ITV reckons they could save £200 million a year if they do not have to broadcast both analogue and digital whilst the Government hope to make £2 billion from the sale of analogue TV signals.

Conference calls for the GMB to instigate a campaign to press the Government and television companies to bear the cost of the change-over for the benefit of such groups. Please support. I move.

(The motion was formally seconded)

BRO. B. JACKSON (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, I am responding to Motion 298, analogue and digital TV, on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is recommending that Motion 298 is supported with a qualification. The Government are in the process of changing UK TV from analogue to digital. The intention is to phase the complete withdrawal of analogue TV between 2008 and 2012.

The motion calls for the Government to fund the cost of the change-over from analogue to digital TV for those who cannot afford it, specifically retired members, pensioners and low-paid workers. The qualification is that though the sentiments of the motion are worthy of support, it is very unlikely to be successful due to cost implications.

Although there are many people who will find it difficult to meet the costs of the change-over, including people on low pay or benefits, the Government would be unlikely to extend any scheme further than to cover pensioners. A staged approach starting with citizens over 70 and extending the scheme to all pensioners might be more successful. Therefore, with that qualification, the CEC is recommending support.

(Motion 298 was carried)

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE

MOTION 299

Congress protests with all its might against the new building that is being built in Oxford for animal experimental science.

**242 SALFORD NO 1 BRANCH
Lancashire Region**

(Carried)

BRO. J. TOOMEY (Lancashire): You do not usually see me reading any material, but on this one you have to be on the ball to tell what the truth is and not exaggerate, because the vivisectionists are the ones who would claim to you animal experiments save human lives. Right?

A monkey is not comparable to a human being, and I will tell you why. Hormone replacement therapy works on an animal; in women, it kills and it causes breast cancer, heart disease and stroke. Aspirin given to a primate causes birth defects. To a human, it is a wonder drug.

Let us go on to Viagra. You will like this one! *(Laughter)* It was first used for heart patients. I suppose a lot of them died happy! *(Laughter)* But it was found out that, instead of going to the heart, it was going to somewhere else! *(Laughter)* And the pharmaceutical industry knew they were on to a winner. They built a £10 million expansion plant in County Cork and four armed men raided it one night and got away with a half million Viagra tablets. The

police are looking for four hardened criminals!
(Laughter)

Now, let's get serious. Let's really get serious on this. I wish they could put it on there for you to see. It is called Huntingdon Life Science. It should have been called Belsen or Auschwitz. That would have been a better name. It is a £16 million state of the art building. You paid for it and I paid for it in taxes. At the behest of Lord Sainsbury, he gave £11 million to the Labour Party, he received a peerage and they made him Minister of Science and Technology. He has thousands of pounds invested in this laboratory, biochemicals and pharmaceuticals. Labour did promise when they came to power to reduce experiments and eventually stop them.

However, we have (New) Labour now and more than three million animals a year are killed. The horrendous experiments carried out here are unbelievable. Brain damage in monkeys means they suffer seizures, convulsions, vomiting and uncontrollable shaking of their bodies. Then they are eventually killed. In the case of beagles, Channel 4 filmed workers there punching the Beagles and pretending to have sex with them. These are the types of people who work in these laboratories.

Please support the motion and maybe this Union will give a few grand to the anti-vivisection people and show our support. Thank you.

(The motion was formally seconded)

THE DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, and not a happy bunny having to defy Toomey! The CEC is seeking to refer Motion 299. There are powerful arguments on both sides of the debate on animal experimental science. Many of these arguments are convincing. For example, the stress that animals endure in laboratories can be substantial. The way an animal reacts to a drug is often different to a human response. This can detract from the validity of the outcome of an experiment.

Many argue that animals experience pain during experimentation and the deaths that result from research are unnecessary. Successful alternatives to animal testing have been developed, including test tube studies on human tissue. However, there may be significant benefits from animal testing. Results of tests on animals have been instrumental in medical advances. For example, it is informing programmes aimed at developing a vaccine for HIV and it has also driven medical advances to combat neurological diseases, such as Parkinson's disease.

It must be remembered, Congress, that some GMB members and their families have benefited from treatments that have come about as a result of animal research.

Clearly, there are practical and heartfelt views on both sides of the debate. There is also a wide range

of positions between these two ends of the spectrum and people differ in their views on the use of animals in different areas, such as basic or medical research or toxicity testing.

The CEC must have an opportunity to consider fully how to achieve a balanced policy in addressing such complex ethical matters. Last month, the Nuffield Council published a report on the ethics of research involving animals, which seeks to clarify the debate and aims to help people think through the ethical issues that are raised. This should assist us in our deliberations. Congress, please refer Motion 299.

THE PRESIDENT: Right to reply?

BRO. J. TOOMEY (Lancashire): Now, then, human tissues, you said, and human cells? That is the way to go about experimenting to find cures for diseases, not using animals. You are right, there is a debate between people that animals do help us, according to the medical society. That is a load of rubbish! Not one iota does it.

If you want to experiment on anyone, get that woman in the AA down the road and then test her! *(Laughter amidst applause)* And what happens if I refer it? Monday morning, it has gone over your head and you couldn't give two monkeys! *(Laughter)* I have been coming to Congress for too long to know the tricks here! I say put it to a vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, dear! This would be a boring Congress without you, Toomey! Motion 299, the CEC is asking for reference. Mr. Toomey and the Region have refused. I put it to the vote. We are asking you to oppose.

(Motion 299 was carried) (Applause)

ASYLUM SEEKERS

MOTION 300

Congress notes the appalling suggestion that quotas should be implemented on the numbers of asylum seekers able to claim asylum in the UK. Congress recognises that asylum seekers should be welcomed and supported through the ordeal of having to flee their homeland often in fear of their lives.

MIDDLESBROUGH 5 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. YOUNGER (Northern): President, Congress, as a trade unionist, I genuinely thought I fully understood the depths to which the Tory Party could sink. During their 18 years in power, I thought I had seen it all, but, Congress, the racist campaign that the Tories ran during the recent General Election reached new depths even for them.

Across the world there are too many countries that oppress their people, where freedom is restricted and where those who dare to speak out are tortured, imprisoned and killed. For generations, our country has had a proud record for providing sanctuary for those who flee such oppression in their own countries.

Michael Howard claims that the Tories' policy on asylum seekers is not racist, that to refuse support to those who are fleeing oppression is not unfair. Such views bring shame on our nation; that a British political Party, the official opposition, could seriously propose sending victims of oppression back into the hands of torturers and murderers is a disgrace that shames us all.

President, I urge every delegate here today to demonstrate clearly that the GMB is firmly opposed to such a shameful and outrageous policy. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 300.

BRO. K. BUCK (Northern): I am seconding Motion 300. Congress, during the years of the Second World War, 1939 to 1945, more than 6 million Jews were killed, murdered in death camps and occupied Europe, including one and-a-half million children. For those among us who might be led to believe that stories of genocide are history, I urge delegates to read the newspapers, read about Rwanda, read about Sierra Leone, read about Saddam and many more. But today's genocide is a reality.

A recent election campaign ran by the Tories pandered to the worse elements of the press and pandered to racist muck spread by the BNP and the National Front.

The GMB and our members have a proud record of supporting oppressed workers across the world. Congress, I urge you to support Motion 300.

IDENTITY CARDS

COMPOSITE MOTION 27

(Covering Motions 301 and 302)

301 - Identity Cards Not in My Name (London Region)

302 - Oppose ID Cards (London Region)

This congress insists the General Secretary informs Government of the disappointment of GMB Members on the introduction of identity cards in Britain. The GMB believes that the introduction of identity cards is a serious threat to civil liberties and our fear is that this will open the door for other civil liberties to be compromised if we accept the introduction of Identity cards.

There is also the issue of each person having to pay for their own card even though they may not want one. This Congress opposes Government

plans to introduce compulsory ID Cards. We do not believe they will increase security, but rather that the evidence shows they offer a false sense of security. Furthermore, we do believe they will be used in a discriminatory manner to further stigmatise minority communities.

Congress therefore instructs the General Secretary to start a campaign and insist that issuing of identity cards should stop immediately, and any that have already been issued are destroyed, and money reimbursed.

(Carried)

BRO. D. POLE (London): I am moving Composite Motion 27 and I am wearing my identity card, the GMB card. Congress, the wording of this motion is self-explanatory. It recognises that the proposals for compulsory identity cards (along with a number of other proposals currently being spoken about) represent a serious threat to civil liberties in this country.

This view is supported by Liberty which states that "Such a scheme will fail to tackle terrorism, identify fraud or any of the high profile problems it is allegedly designed to address". In fact, on the contrary, it is possible that the exact opposite will happen.

Many of you will remember the infamous "sus" laws used widely in the 1970s when people could be stopped and searched on the suspicion of being a vagrant. Ninety-nine times out of 100 this was used to stop and harass young black people. There is absolutely no doubt that bearing the brunt of ID cards will again be black and Asian people. Stop and search for Asian men has soared since the so-called war on terrorism was introduced. This is bound to impinge negatively if continued and more people will be disenfranchised. It seems that (New) Labour is happy to appeal to the racism and ignorance around asylum seekers to win the day for ID cards.

Also, the Identity Card Bill will rely on biometrics to identify people, facial features, fingerprints and iris prints. According to the National Physical Laboratory, after only two months your facial geography could change so that the machine may not be able to recognise you. The prospects of fraud will actually be increased.

Then we come to the question of cost. I drafted this speech a couple of weeks ago and costs have rocketed since then. The latest Government estimate for introducing this is £5.5 billion. People who forget to renew their cards or update details when they move could be fined up to £1,000. The current plan, and I stress two weeks ago, is to charge at 2004 prices £85 for the first combined ID/passport in 2008. That figure was updated recently by the Observer who put it at a ridiculous £300 per person.

Congress, the planned card and database will be the most intrusive in Europe with information accessible by a whole number of agencies, including all the addresses you have lived at. The database will have the capacity to expand both amounts and types of information, including National Insurance and National Health numbers, medical and criminal histories, with no guarantees on who will have access to this information.

Therefore, Congress, I ask for your overwhelming support on this motion and ask the GMB to campaign vigorously against the compulsory introduction of such cards. I move.

SIS. C. TAYLOR-CRISP (London): ID cards will do nothing to prevent terrorism, illegal immigration, identity fraud or whatever pathetic reason is scraped from the bottom of the barrel next. However, they will be very useful for inciting civil unrest, persecution, rioting and, possibly, civil war. I wonder what documents will have to be provided in order to obtain an identity card. If these documents are easily forged, then the criminals will not need to forge an identity card because they could just collect them like stamps. I am happy to sign a document now promising not to become a terrorist or knowingly become involved in any terrorist activity, especially those wearing hoodies.

This is my country, not the Government's. The Government are in place on lease. I am here for a lifetime. Why should I have to prove to them who I am? I pay taxes. Surely, the Government work for me, don't they? I refuse to subscribe to a system that requires me to carry my papers around whenever I go out just in case big brother wants to check up on me. I believe it will make very little difference to identity theft, and even if we do trust the current Government to treat the data with care, how can we possibly know what a future government might do with it? Once they have the data, they will use it.

If you still think identity cards are a good idea, read George Orwell's 1984. That is why I am happy to second Composite Motion 27.

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any other speakers on this composite?

BRO. D. FAITH (London): President and Congress, I speak in support of Composite Motion 27. I have one point to add. It seems likely that ID cards will make it harder for people to access services. As you have probably seen in the press, this subject is well supported. They want to restrict people or groups of people and make it much easier for people to be charged based on their individual circumstances. Even if services are free at the point of need, the ID system will make it more easier to assess need based on the Government's conditions and perhaps even

means test instantly without civil servants assessing forms and making human and humane decisions. My branch thinks that public sector job losses are on their way.

People will also be criminalised or heavily penalised for not keeping their data up-to-date. We have already seen this with the IT system for tax credits recently and the Government has said that up to £2,000 - £3,000 will be charged to those people who do not keep their address up-to-date. Thank you.

(Motion 300 was carried)

(Composite Motion 27 was carried)

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: I want to invite everyone who is remaining in Newcastle this evening, and their visitors, to attend the bash tonight which is at the Labour Club. You need no invitation, just your ID or, if you do not have that, just ask for Mary.

Motion 303 has been withdrawn.

MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

MOTION 304

This Congress notes with deep concern the ridiculous expenditure of public funds of Prince Andrew on hiring aircraft and helicopters last year of £325,000 including £3000 for a 50 mile trip for a lunch in Oxford as against £97 for the Rail Fare.

This Congress calls upon the Government to take immediate action to recover the monies and prevent any further occurrences.

PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. MCKENZIE (London): Comrades, we have heard this week a number of horror stories brought about by the poverty and deprivation cause by capitalism. I thought there was nothing else that could make my blood run cold, but when our Irish sister told us this morning about the migrant worker who had lost her job, was homeless, suffered from frost bite and had to have her feet amputated, it made my blood run cold.

At the same time as such things are going on, we had the Royal Family, yet again, showing its profligate expenditure of taxpayers' money. Let me read this motion for those who do not have their books in front of them.

"This Conference notes with deep concern the ridiculous expenditure of public funds of Prince

Andrew on hiring aircraft and helicopters last year of £325,000 including £3,000 for a 50 mile trip for a lunch in Oxford as against £97 for the rail fare.

“This Congress calls on the Government to take immediate action to recover the monies and prevent any further occurrences.”

Comrades, we get accused sometimes of being over-emotional about the Royal Family, calling them parasites and all the rest of it, so I decided to be scientific this time. I looked in the English Oxford Dictionary what “parasite” means. It says: “An organism that grows, feeds and is sheltered on or in a different organism while contributing nothing to the survival of its host; one who habitually takes advantage of the generosity of others without making any useful return”. I do not think that any of us can have any arguments against this motion after hearing that.

I ask Conference for its unanimous support for its resolution. Before I finish, I want to make one point. Prince Andrew’s obvious obsession with his chopper has proved what the Professional Drivers branch has been saying about the Royal Family all along.

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): President, on Tuesday, much to my surprise, Congress passed Motion 280 which included the following statement: “Congress agrees to campaign for the establishment of a democratic republic to rule this country.” Once such a situation has been achieved, we will no longer need to pass motions deploring the appalling waste of public funds by these non-elected representatives of an out-moded feudal institution.

When we join together shortly to sing The Red Flag, I would like you to consider how much more meaningful it would sound if we were singing as citizens of a democratically elected republic. I second.

BRO. A. SPINKS (Liverpool, North Wales & Irish): I will support Motion 304 without a shadow of a doubt. I have no problem with it whatsoever. I am proud to be British, I am proud of the Royal Family and I will support them all the way. I should imagine that there are many people in this room who have the same feelings. People have been slagging off George Bush. The last statement will say it all. Thank you.

(Motion 304 was carried)

CLOSING PROCEDURES OF CONGRESS

OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the closing procedure. I call on Sandra Allen, a CEC member from Midland & East Coast Region, to move the vote of thanks.

SIS. S. ALLEN (CEC, Food & Leisure): I move the vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC.

President and Congress, when I was invited to give the vote of thanks I was both privileged and delighted to accept, as this will be my last Congress as a CEC member before I move over to the “dark side” where the “dark forces” operate.

After all the issues that have blighted our Union during the past eighteen months, I never thought we would see the light, but they are past and here we are, and what a great Congress it has been.

What an impact the stage effects had as you entered the arena - absolutely wonderful. This is all thanks to the hard work of Neil Harrison and his crew, and Clause IV and their crew. I would liken to a phoenix rising from the ashes. Six weeks ago we had nothing and I believe that this rising is the start of the GMB moving on to bigger and better things, and maintaining our place as a strong independent union.

Colleagues, this week I believe we have seen a landmark decision taken for our Union. The fact that the Framework document was unanimously carried gives us the opportunity now to get to work and move this Union on in great strides. As one of our delegates said, “We want to leave a legacy for our children and for our children’s children”, and I am sure that is what all of us in the GMB want and are working towards.

I think the biggest surprise of the Congress was to find that Dawn Butler was Mary Turner’s and Paul Kenny’s love child. *(Laughter)* You will know what they say, Mary, “Be sure your sins will find you out”.

Once again, our President, Mary Turner, has chaired Congress in her own inimitable style; directness, fairness and humour, always allowing debate and always giving support to new delegates. Speaking of first timers, I must congratulate Malcolm Sage, even though he is absent at the moment, on his taking charge of the chair during the debate on public services. It seemed quite a baptism of fire, but he handled it with his usual charm and wisdom.

It was such a pleasure to see the number of new delegates come to the rostrum. They all equipped themselves so well, and one of the stars was James Stribley who moved the Remploi motions with such passion and character. Well done, James. *(Applause)* The other star was the recipient of the Youth Award, Leanne Vincent. *(Applause)* When you see the young people like Leanne battling on and achieving such great results, it gives us confidence that our Union is doing right by its members, and it stands us in good stead for the future. But, then all again, all our first time speakers deserve an extra pat on the back. *(Applause)*

I believe that if there was one disappointment, and it was only a small one, it was for the number of motions which were formally moved and seconded with no debate to listen to, but I think that this may have been due to the hospitality shown to all

delegates at the regional functions, for which I am sure we are all grateful.

We were pleased to hear from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, when he guaranteed to deliver the content of the Warwick Agreement. Thanks, Gordon, I'm sure that Mary, Paul and others will keep you to that. Gordon Brown went to great length to tell us the Government's views on the issues of poverty in the Third World countries and how they hope to implement a new deal between the richest and poorest countries. I think they have got a job on their hands. This is easier said than done.

The response to Gordon's speech from Kevin Flanagan (Lancashire Region) said everything that needed to be said, and the ovation he received was well deserved. It left Gordon knowing in no uncertain terms the thoughts and feelings of all those at Congress.

D. Taylor gave us an insight into what we can expect from some of the major players in the casino and gaming industry. Hopefully, this will give us the edge when it comes to negotiating with these employers, and we thank him for that.

The A.A. Colleagues, what can I say? What a turnout. Like all big companies, they don't like adverse publicity. I think we certainly gave the AA something to think about. A comment from one of the workers was: "Morale is really bad in here, but this has really made us feel better." It just shows that collectively we can make a difference.

It is now my pleasure to thank all those people who have worked so hard to make this Congress a success. My first thanks go to the stewards - the people who have greeted us with a friendly smile each morning. Led by Derek Cattell, they are Michael Avery and Rachel McNicholas, and also the Remploy stewards Tom Burton, Bob Patterson, Brian Davies and Ken Stubbs. *(Applause)*

I would now like to thank all the staff from head office, especially Rachel Marshall, who has been holding the fort while the General Secretary has been on his perceived jolly.

Thanks also to Robert Badlan, Barbara Casher, John Cope and Francis Dymock, who have been looking after the London Region delegation, as their regional secretary seems to have been absent. *(Laughter and applause)* Thanks go also to all the regional staff who have done a tremendous job in writing and re-writing speeches. What would we do without you - always so patient and obliging. *(Applause)*

Standing Orders, led by Gerry Ferguson, have done a sterling job this week and guided us through the programme without a hitch. Well done to you all and thanks. *(Applause)*

Thanks also go to the General Member Auditors, David Boyle, Ed Hamilton and Les White, and also sitting next to them performing one of the most arduous tasks at Congress, the shorthand writers,

Michael Thear and Karen Jobson. *(Applause)*

Next thanks go to the group of people who work so hard but never utter a word - the signers; Nigel Cleaver, Jo Ross, Tony Beckett and Caroline Ryan. What a wonderful service you give. *(Applause)*

Many thanks go to the exhibitors who have kept us supplied with pens, sweets and information, especially our retired members, Betty Warden and Tommy Nimmo, who I'm sure could sell fridges to Eskimos. *(Applause)*

The hard work that has been done by the national secretaries and officers in all areas is very much appreciated, as we have seen with the issues such as Wembley and Rover. So thanks, people, and keep up the good work. *(Applause)*

I think special thanks go to three people who have stepped into the breach, and we are most grateful to them - Philip Wyatt, Joe O'Hara and Steve Pryle. Without these three people, believe me, colleagues, we would not have had a Congress to come to. Once again, thanks very much. *(Applause)*

On a personal note I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ian McNichol and Rose Conroy for all their support and help during the campaign to try and save the Birds Eye victory in Grimsby. Sadly, we lost the factory and 620 jobs, but their efforts were brilliant and much appreciated, as we all stood in the rain outside the Tate Gallery where Unilever were spending £8 million to support the arts. I must also say thank you to my region for its support and to my Regional Secretary, Andy Worth, who on occasions made Unilever managers wonder if life was really worth living.

Last, but not least, it's thanks to all of you out there. Without your participation and enthusiasm it would not work. Added to this, is the support that is given to all delegates and officials from their families. We offer them our heartfelt thanks.

This Conference is and always will be a lay delegates' conference, and you are the stars. Long may it continue.

If I have missed anyone out, I apologise and I wish you all a safe journey home. I move the Vote of Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sandra. I call Paul Kenny.

THE ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY: I will be very brief - about half-an-hour, I reckon. *(Laughter)* I would like to add a few extra thanks. Thanks to the stewards and thanks to Sandra. This is going to be, if I have got it right, Sandra's last Congress as a lay member. I think we have gained a very valuable asset into the ranks of the full-time people employed by the Union. Welcome, Sandra. You have been brilliant. You have been a fantastic servant to the CEC and to the Union. *(Applause)*

We have had an interesting week, one way and the other. In a sense, people now begin to

understand why I have always had a passion about having an annual Congress. I have never seen Congress as boring or something that is an intrusion into the rest of the trade union world. I have always seen it as a place where you engage and enthuse people. This is a place where you meet friends. It is pretty hard being a shop steward in a workplace. Sometimes, just occasionally, the members do not always appreciate everything you do for them. Occasionally, you think you are mad and now you know there are hundreds of other mad people as well around the rest of the country. It is meant to enthuse. We are meant to feel good about ourselves. We have recharged our batteries. It is a good feeling. We do good things. That is what Congress is about. It is not just about passing motions. It is about making good friendships, building strengths and rebuilding our efforts and energies as the army that we are.

Yes, we did demonstrate quite a few things this week to quite a few people. First, we will not be pushed off course by snipers and snides. I repeat, we will not be pushed off course by those people. Secondly, we send very strong messages to bad employers that we are going to start doing something about them in a real, positive and campaigning way. I said we will start with the AA's, Mary, and we will go right through to the Zoological Society. We will get round to Rover in between, because I agree with the delegate who said that the safest place for some of those people is slopping out in the morning. *(Applause)*

We have taken many great, fantastic and positive decisions. We have a lot of work to do. I do not think that we could manage to complete all the work that we have passed, but some will go into that black hole anyway, even I wanted to do some of it. I just think that some of it would come out. There is so much stuff we now have to do, that you have given us to do and the opportunity to do, the honour to do and we will do it. What we don't do we will come back and report honestly about.

I think we have regained our reputation. You may not have seen it, but we have been in every national newspaper this week. We have been on every TV station and I, actually, do not believe that the communications department of the Union should exist for the benefit of putting the General Secretary's ugly mug in the press. As somebody said, I've got a perfect face for radio. That is how I'm going to keep it. *(Laughter and Applause)* We have had officers and lay members in local papers, national papers, on TV and radio this week. The nation has been reading about the GMB standing up for workers' rights and those are the type of headlines that we want to see now and on into the future.

We are a campaigning union. I think we are a healed union, actually. We are confident, proud, energized, mature and on course. We are not embarrassed about our passions. I think we are a

union which cares. If you look at all the fundraising done this week, £7,000 has been raised by the Northern Region for those hospices. That is because we care. That shows our passion. We are not in this work for ourselves but we are in it for others. There are not many people in this country who can say that. Trade unionists can say that every day of the week.

Unusually, we broke a few traditions this week. I want to break another one. I would like to thank the people who you do not always see. You may see them moving around but I am talking about the people who actually keep the Congress running. We have a fantastic and brilliant set. If you went round the back, it wouldn't look quite so good. I would like to ask to come on stage the unsung staff, the staff who keep this Congress going in the weeks before it and during the week of Congress.

(The following members of staff appeared on stage amidst applause and a standing ovation: Amy Beresiner, Jane Cameron, Emma Cole, Charlotte Gregory, Helen Heath, Dolores O'Donoghue, Helga Pile, Steve Short, Barry Smith, Marilene Smith, Kevin Sweeney and Kevin Panton) I am now going to embarrass Kevin. Kevin has worked for this Union for 39 years. *(Applause)* I want to make a presentation to him in front of Congress. *(Presentation made to Kevin Panton)* He is terrified that I was going to ask him to say something. The staff members do a fantastic job. I pay tribute to them. What they have done in the past six weeks is beyond belief.

I also want to thank you, the delegates, because people do not thank you enough for the work that you do. People tend to forget that what makes us a union is the members, the active members and the shop stewards. It is the things that people do every day. That is what makes the Union. When I say "Thank you" to you, I mean "Thank you", because without your efforts, caring and passion it would not be a union. You don't have a union because you have a head office or a building. You have it because you have people who care. So I say to you, thank you.

I want to thank the Northern Region, Billy and Tom. I want to thank the fantastic people from the north-east. They are unbelievable. The comradeship, the welcome that you, as delegates, must have felt in being in the north-east, has been fantastic. It is a tribute to the north-east. *(Applause)* Let me tell you this, Tommy. If you were living in a cave, it would still be a 10 star hotel. Wherever you are, it is 5 star. Do not worry about that.

I would like to thank the families, visitors and all of our partners, because the amount of time that we put into this organisation is only possible because of the help and support that we get from our partners. I want to thank them on their behalf.

Mary mentioned Jim McFall, who is at the back of the hall. Jim is an ex-general secretary - he has retired - of the Boilermakers. He was a sectional secretary when the Boilermakers joined the GMB. He

is a man of incredible integrity. A man of thought and vision and if people stopped and listened to him long enough you would hear words of wisdom that would carry you through your life. I pay great tribute to him. I am really proud to say that I listened to Jim. He has honesty and great integrity. On many occasions I have reflected before making decisions thinking what Jim would have done. I pay tribute to him. *(Applause)*

I pay tribute to Debbie, who has been fantastic. Things have not been easy, and we all know they have not been easy. The credibility that Debbie gained in going through the difficulties that that this Union faced in 2003, and continuing into 2004, is something that I say thank you for. The spirit of working together - I pay my own personal tribute to Debbie - is something that I want to make a personal "thank you" to. You have been fantastic. *(Applause)*

As to Mary, what can one say about the President? Not very much! Otherwise she will get back at you and fine you a tenner. *(Laughter)* I once went to Mary's branch as an officer way back. I was assigned by John Cope to be the officer for Mary's branch. When I visited the branch, it was chaos. Believe me, it was pure chaos. We started off with the final bits of correspondence. Then we went through the minutes and somewhere in all of it we had the apologies. There were bits of paper here, there and everywhere. I was like this. *(The Acting General Secretary put his hand over his face indicating horror)* I said to Mary after the meeting, "Mary, it was dreadful. You just did not run through the agenda correctly. It just wasn't handled very well". She said, "Yes, you're right, Paul, but when was the last time that you went to a branch meeting in November with 45 members in attendance?" That was the point. She ensured that every single member who attended that meeting had their say, their problems were dealt with and the branch grew. She took the branch from something like 400 when she originally began as branch secretary to something over 3,000 members. She did not do that, brothers and sisters, by always sticking exactly to the agenda. Thank you, Mary. You are a brilliant, brilliant President. *(Applause and cheers)*

I have been talking about dedication. We have a delegate in the hall, Akbar Mohammed, who was taken very ill this week. In fact, he was taken to hospital. I am very grateful to our colleagues in Southern Region, who are paramedics, who recognised the situation, called the ambulance which took him to hospital. At the end of Tuesday's Congress, I visited him in hospital to make sure that he was okay. I found the hospital to be told that he had been moved to another hospital. We found the right hospital and eventually we found the ward. Unfortunately, we couldn't find him and he heard me asking questions. He shouted out from behind the screens and we saw him. They were just unplugging the ECG machine

from him. He looked pretty grim. I looked down and said, "Are you okay?", and he handed me this bit of paper. He said, "Please, Paul, ring her". I opened the paper and a woman's name was written on it with a 'phone number. I said, "Is it your partner? Do you want me to ring your partner to say that you are all right?" He said, "No. It is a member of UNISON who brought me here in the ambulance. She is not very happy with them and she will join us if you get hold of her." *(Applause)* Is that a true story? Absolutely. I have 'phoned her, by the way. That is dedication.

I want to wind up by making a special thanks to my wife, Pat, who unfortunately is not here today. She has given me so much support over the years. She took a disproportionate amount of responsibility bringing up our kids when I was active in the Union. When she was able to get active in the Union, she was a domestic working in the Health Service. She became a shop steward, a regional council member and a branch secretary. She came to Congress on two or three occasions. She has been a regional auditor. I am very proud of what she has done. As far as I am concerned, she has done a lot more for this Movement than I will ever do. I want to pay tribute to her as not just my partner and wife but my very best friend. I love her dearly. *(Applause)*

Finally, I think we have had a fantastic and energizing Congress. If anybody tries to bust into the GMB family, they will have to come through me first. *(A standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I want to add my vote of thanks to Paul Kenny. It is true what he said about all the people who have helped. We would not have been here but for their support. Paul, you have been at the helm. I understand you want to say something else.

THE ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY: Mention was made earlier about the work that people have done for us. I want to name two specific people - Phil and Steve. I can tell you that we would not have had a Congress without them. Phil, we are going off the programme. You are dead right. *(Laughter)* Phil, please come up on the stage. We have had a new award made. It shows someone with a flag in the wind with the GMB on, showing that sometimes we have to push into the wind with what we do. It simply says: "To Phil. Thanks from your GMB family". I do not want to say anything more than that. Thank you. *(Presentation amidst applause)*

BRO. P. WYATT: This is totally out of order. There is nothing on the running order about this. Thank you very much, Congress. It has been a privilege to serve you in years past. I am grateful to the President and to colleagues on the platform. I am especially grateful to one or two colleagues, a couple of whom you have just seen, namely, Dolores O'Donoghue and,

if I may say so, Steve Short, who has been superb in organising things behind the scenes.

I would like to say one more thing, President, given the chance. I did not hear the Acting General Secretary use one word from the speech I drafted for him. He did not, for example, quote Samuel Gompers, the American trade union leader in the 1890s, who was asked, "Well, what do you trade unionists want?", and his reply was very simple. He said, "More! We want more!"

Paul also did not quote from a female American militant trade union activist, who said how to get more. I am talking about Sarah Ogan-Gunning. I was wondering when D. Taylor, the American trade unionist, who was talking to us earlier in the week whether he might have remembered Sarah Ogan-Gunning wrote poetry. She said: "Really, friends, it doesn't matter whether you are black or white. The only way you'll ever change things is to fight and fight and fight." Thank you, Congress. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY: The next person I want to thank is Stevie Pryle. I want to tell you something about Phil and Stevie. Both of these colleagues have worked flat out for the past couple of months in putting this Congress together for us on no pay. They have not received any pay. They have worked as volunteers. They are doing it because of their commitment and dedication. Stevie is a fantastic person. He is a great bloke. The previous general secretary thought on occasions that he was a bit mad but if they had listened to him we would probably be in a lot better shape than we are now. Stevie, I want to give you an award from myself and Congress. It simply says: "To Steve. Thanks from your GMB family". *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

BRO. S. PRYLE: I thank the GMB. Let me tell you a story. I was working for the RMT for Bob Crow. I was organising a march from Glasgow to London to argue for railway nationalisation. I was working with the press and the job was very busy. I received a 'phone call from Paul. He asked if I would come and put the measuring rod over the people who were organising the Congress. I did that and I was not very satisfied, to be perfectly frank to you. I reported back to Paul. We then assembled the team to put the Congress together. So I have had a really stressful period. I had to work for the RMT, because I could not short change them, and I also had to do all of this, and it is quite a lot. In between times, I am involved with Battersea & Wandsworth TUC. We run a trading organisation called The Workers' Beer Company which retails beer at Glastonbury and all the big pop festivals. In point of fact, my next big show after this is at REM at Loch Lomond on Saturday week and then we go to Glastonbury the following week. I thought I

had left the GMB. I thought I was gone and it was history. Unfortunately or fortunately, as it turned out, I am back and I am thoroughly enjoying the job that you have asked me to do.

I always tell people that we bring with us to Glastonbury to sell our beer 1,100 volunteers from the labour Movement. They come from all over the labour Movement. They are young people. Those people who say that young people are not interested in the labour Movement need to get out more often. We were in the left field at Glastonbury. There was Bill Bailey and other international stars contributing in the left field. In the left field we would have a whole range of debates, music and you name it. It is just wonderful. We had 1,100 young people with us. We normally address them at the end. When we said to them, "What is it we are about?" and I always go back to James Connelly. James Connelly put it simply. He said, "We only want the earth". Thank you very much, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I want to thank Phil and Stevie. What great talent we lost in this Union. I mean that sincerely. Paul Kenny has done a lot of thanking, and I think it is only right that I, on your behalf, thank Paul Kenny because he has led this week's Congress, which was not easy, believe you me, until after Sunday. Paul, I believe you have brought back to the GMB this week warmth, confidence and faith. I do not think I can say any more. Paul Kenny, thank you. *(A standing ovation)*

Congress, I want to thank you for my election as President, and I know that Malcolm wants to thank you for electing him Vice President. I was anxious until Sunday, but when we all met I felt confidence, love and comradeship. I thank you for electing me as your President again to take the helm with Paul, Debbie and Malcolm to return this Union to its people, you, the Congress. Thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)*

Another thing that Paul Kenny forgot to say was to remind you about the President's social and that refreshments are free. Bring your own crisps. You have all got plenty in your bags.

We now come to the Closing Ceremony, which is in two parts. Susanna Clark will lead us in the singing of the "Red Flag". I hope you will all stand and sing. Let me say a little bit about Susanna Clark, the singer. Susanna was born in Middlesborough. Last year she sang the "Red Flag" at the Labour Party Conference after many of us having fought for years for its return. She sung with eight steel workers from Corus. She has joined the GMB. Her father is an honorary member of the GMB. He has been associated with the GMB for 47 years. He was a trade union rep.

I will now ask the closing ceremony to begin. We will start with a slide show. The music this year is "Waiting for the Great Leap Forward" by Billy Bragg.

(The slide show was shown, accompanied by "The Great Leap Forward")

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I give you Susanna Clark.

Congress stood and sang the "Red Flag", led by Susanna Clark.

Susanna, thank you, on behalf of Congress, very much. Susanna has been sitting in her seat in the hall throughout the entire week. Well done. *(Presentation made amidst applause)* I thank you on behalf of the GMB and Congress. Welcome to the Union.

All that is left to say is have a safe and pleasant journey home. We will see you all next year. *(Cheers and applause)*

(Congress concluded)