

**THE 151<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,  
Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
and  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

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**Congress President:**

**MARK SERWOTKA**

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**PROCEEDINGS — DAY ONE  
(Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019)**

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## **FIRST DAY: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**

*(Congress assembled at 4.00 p.m.)*

**The President** (*Mark Serwotka*): Will delegates please take their seats and would Congress come to order? (*Video shown*) That should remind you of Friday night in Aberdare, if anything did.

Congress, I have great pleasure in opening this, the TUC's 151<sup>st</sup> Congress, and I warmly welcome all delegates to the Brighton Conference Centre. Can I ask you to join with me in thanking the Hampshire County Youth String Quartet who have been playing for us this afternoon. (*Applause*)

### **Appointment of Tellers and Scrutineers**

**The President:** Congress, the first formal item of business is to ask Congress to approve the tellers and scrutineers as set out on page 10 of the General Purposes Committee Report booklet. Is Congress happy to agree that? (*Agreed*) If any teller has not yet met Matilda Quiney of the TUC staff, would they please come to the tellers' table located on the floor to my right. If there is an emergency, you will receive instructions on what to do either from me or over the tannoy. Details of evacuation procedures are posted upon the doors of the halls. There are no fire-alarm tests scheduled. If you hear the alarm, it is for real. If any delegates require first aid, requests should be made, in the first instance, to any member of the Brighton Centre staff.

## **Welcome to Sororal and Fraternal Delegates and visitors**

**The President:** Congress, I would now like to welcome sororal and fraternal delegates and visitors to Congress, who are seated at the front of the hall on the right.

Colleagues, we are always pleased to welcome guests from other trade union movements around the world to Congress, so I hope you will welcome them as I ask them to stand in turn.

First, from the Americas, we are delighted to have with us Johannes Orweiler from CUT Colombia and Damon Silvers from the AFL-CIO. *(Applause)* Later this afternoon we will also be hearing from the General Secretary of the CTC Cuba, Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento. *(Applause)* Ulises will be here with Ismail Drula Perez, International Secretary. *(Applause)*

From Europe, we greet ETUC Deputy General Secretary, Esther Lynch. We also have Andrea Mone, European Policies Co-ordinator at CISL, the Confederation of Trade Unions in Italy. Can I also ask you to welcome Giovanni Caselli, representing UIL, the Italian Union of Labour. *(Applause)* I ask you to welcome Amparo Guigliano, Confederal Secretary, and Valerie Pallar, representing UGT, the Spanish General Workers Union. *(Applause)*

At the global level, we have Christy Hoffmann, General Secretary of UNI Global Union. Can we also welcome back our old comrade, Owen Tudor, now Deputy General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. *(Applause)* I

will never forget Owen's face when he tried to get me on my first international visit, and I told him that I didn't have a passport. Apparently, I was the first general secretary of any union never to have a passport but I have one now.

There will be a number of other foreign visitors here this week and they will all be most welcome.

Can I ask Congress also to welcome this year's Fraternal Delegate from the Trades Councils Conference, namely, Dave Chapple, who is sitting with his delegation from the CWU? Can I welcome you, Dave, and thank you for all the work that you do with our colleagues in the trades council movement. During the course of the week, Congress, I am happy to say that I am happy to be joined on the platform by our Vice President, Mary Bousted, and other members of the General Council. Give Mary a round of applause. (*Applause*) Unfortunately, some of our General Council members have not read their brief because they are supposed to be sitting *here*, but we will have a word with them later on.

## **Obituary**

**The President:** Congress, we now come to the Obituary section of the Report, from page 78, when we remember our trade union colleagues who have died in the past year. You can read more about the contribution that many of these colleagues have made to the trade union Movement in the General Council Report, and there are large print and Braille versions of the Report for those who have requested them. Since the Report was published, we have also learnt about the sad death of Dave Gover, a

former TUC Regional Education Officer for the South West. Congress, in asking you to remember all our former colleagues, I ask you also to remember other trade union colleagues who have died in the past year. I am sure our thoughts are also with all those who have suffered loss through war, acts of terrorism and natural disasters, particular those affected by the natural disaster in the Bahamas during the last few days.

Congress, at this time we usually recommit ourselves to world peace and justice. There has never been amore important time for unions to stand up for working people, for peace and for justice all over the globe.

Congress, can those who are able, please, now stand for a few minutes' quiet reflection. *(Video played) (Congress stood in silent tribute)* Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

### **Report of the General Purposes Committee**

**The President:** Congress, I now call upon Linda McCulloch, the Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to report to us on the progress of business and other Congress arrangements. Linda.

**Linda McCulloch** *(Chair, General Purposes Committee):* Good afternoon, Congress. The General Purposes Committee has approved 17 composite motions. Composite motions 1 – 16 are included in section 3 of the GPC Report and in the Composite Motions booklet that you have all received.

Composite 17 on Pupil Behaviour and Mental Health will be distributed to delegates in due course.

On behalf of the GPC, I would like to thank all of those unions which have co-operated and worked together to reach agreement on composite motions.

Congress, the General Council has agreed a Statement on Brexit and the President will advise when this Statement will be taken.

The General Purposes Committee has approved a collection in support of workers currently on strike at Arrowmark and ISS. The President will advise when this collection will be taken.

I would like to draw the attention of Congress to a change in procedure for the distribution of emergency motions. Emergency motions accepted on to the Congress agenda will now be e-mailed to all delegates. A small number of printed copies will be made available on the TUC information stand. The text of any emergency motions will also be shown on the screens on either side of the stage. Can I remind Congress that only materials approved by the GPC may be distributed within the hall and the venue. Can I also remind delegates that the mover of each motion may speak for up to five minutes and all other speakers for up to three minutes. Thank you for your co-operation. I will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decision when necessary throughout Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you, Linda. Can I thank, on everyone's behalf, the GPC for the really important work that they do on our behalf. Congress, I now invite you formally to receive the GPC's Report. Is that agreed? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

As Linda reported, the General Council has agreed a Statement on Brexit, which will be taken this afternoon, and it will be moved by Steve Turner, the General Council lead on Europe. The Statement has been printed and distributed.

Linda also reported that the GPC approved a bucket collection for the striking PCS members at Arrowmark and ISS in BAES, and I will advise Congress later when that bucket collection will take place. I am also please to tell Congress that a number of those strikers will join us later in the week.

As Linda reported, it is very important to respect speaking times. Five minutes for moving a motion, three minutes for seconding a motion and all other speakers. As I have in previous years, it is not compulsory to take your full time. *(Chuckling)*

Colleagues, I have one further item of business. I have been notified that BALPA will not be with us this week to move Motion 36, which has been withdrawn from the agenda. Congress will be aware that BALPA are taking industrial action in British Airways this week for the first time in its history. I am sure, Congress, that you want to join me in sending solidarity and full support from this Congress to BALPA. *(Applause)*

Delegates, before we start the formal business, can I just remind you that each delegate credential has a bar code on it. When you are waiting to speak in the front row of seats, a steward will scan the bar code and this will allow us to see your name and union on the main screen during your speech. So it is very important that everyone does that.

Finally, Congress, can I remind you of our statement of conduct, which was circulated to all delegates as part of the registration process. As you would expect, all delegates, visitors, staff and facilitators are expected to behave in a courteous manner. Aggressive, offensive, intimidatory, disrespectful or unacceptable behaviour of any kind has no place here and will not be tolerated, and I am sure that every delegate will respect that statement of conduct. *(Applause)*

### **The Economy**

**The President:** Congress, we now start with Section 1 of the General Council Report — The Economy, and the section Transport from page 51. I call Composite Motion 3, Buses and a green transport system. The General Council supports the motion, which will be moved by ASLEF, seconded by TSSA and Unite have also indicated that they wish to speak.

### **Buses and a green transport system**

**Mick Wheelan** *(Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)* moved Composite Motion 3: Buses and a green transport system.



*He said:* Thank you, President and thank you, Congress. I am proud on behalf of ASLEF to move this composite. Comrades, for many years climate change for too many has been seen as a peripheral issue and calling for a certain type of activist. For too long many, including our own movement, have thought it is a niche area of policy that comes secondary to the big problems that face working people. Well, Congress, no longer! Climate change has to be a priority for us all because it is now affecting us all. Like so many crises, it will be working people, the poorly paid and the most vulnerable who suffer first.

Just last week, the Bahamas saw the strongest hurricane ever to hit the islands. It was the second-most powerful Atlantic storm on record. This summer globally we have seen weather patterns which demonstrate that our climate is changing — record-high temperatures and record rainfall.

Earlier this year, a report from the *New England Journal of Medicine* explained that due to climate change the world could see a net increase of 529,000 adult deaths by 2050. One hundred million people could be forced into extreme poverty by 2030. As human beings and being internationalists, we must look at these effects globally, but these problems won't just stop at the English Channel. In Norfolk people's homes are sliding into the sea due to waves attacking the cliffs. A heatwave in 2018 led to moors, like Saddleworth, burning for days on end. 2015 saw Leeds, York and many towns devastated by floods. According to a report by Friends of the Earth, climate change made flooding 40% more likely.

It is not just the plains of Africa or the rain forests that now have endangered species. In the Shetlands in a little under 20 years the puffin population has plummeted from 33,000 to just 570.

Strangely, I agree with the sceptics and the deniers that now is not the time for the UK Government to start prioritising cuts to carbon emissions. That time was decades ago. But now is the time to start playing catch up. I note that there are difficulties for many trade unionists in dealing with this issue as some of our members have jobs relying on fossil fuels, and nobody wants any workers sold down the river. But that is what we need — an industrial strategy that focuses on green infrastructure.

With all crises come opportunities; new jobs, skilled jobs and unionised jobs, a just transition. Transport is a large polluter in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. The latest figures show that 33% of carbon dioxide emissions are from the transport sector. Fortunately for me, rail accounts for only 2% of this figure.

There have been huge developments in electric vehicle technology as one of the roles in tackling climate change. But all transport has a carbon footprint. If we are serious about dealing with this issue, we need to create a fully-integrated transport network, powered by renewable energy. This means better, greener and cleaner public transport. This means more freight on our rail and waterways and better regulation of buses. We need a system that recognises that transport modes should not compete with each other but complement each other. It is not just good enough to get more people and goods on our railway. The railway must be electrified. So we must reverse the Tories' broken promise on electrification and call for an even bolder

programme. We must recognise that our railways are at capacity, we must reopen and build new lines and, yes, that must include HS2; in fact, a better HS2.

Congress, the challenge of climate change requires big and bold answers. We must meet the challenge to create a green, modern and high-quality infrastructure and, at the same time green, modern and high-quality jobs. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Keeley Lipscombe** *(Transport Salaried Staffs' Association)* seconded Composite Motion 3. *She said:* Congress, bus services continue to be the most popular form of public transport despite falls in recent years. In 2016 and 2017 nearly 4.5 billion journeys were made by bus. That's 4.5 billion journeys no longer taken by car and taken from the roads.

A constant undermining of bus services continues to threaten. Deregulation was a disaster with the unedifying sight of bus drivers fighting in the streets as companies tried to undercut each other. Rural services have been cut back and some cut out. Bus services are often the way for our children to get to school and our elderly to no longer be isolated, to allow them to do their day-to-day routines. Good bus services create good communities.

Buses also have the potential to be the greenest form of transportation, too. More electric buses are slowly being introduced across the fleet. This should be both welcome and sped up by all companies. But roads are congested and journeys become slower. The answer to this problem is to take freight off the road and put it back onto the rails. We want more reliable buses, not less, and bus journeys need to

be used by publicly-owned and publicly-accountable bus operators. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

**James Mitchell** (*Unite the Union*) said: Congress, I am a proud bus worker. As the largest trade union for bus workers, Unite supports this important motion, which recognises that public transport is not some added luxury but an essential right. Bus services and public transport are all about making connections. We connect people, we connect communities and in the case of this composite, we make sure our policies and ideas are also properly connected up. This means that both rail and road are not only an integral part of our ambitious public transport strategy, but they are connecting to our industrial strategy for rebuilding the economy and our environmental strategy for safeguarding this planet.

You could not find a better example of this bus service than by looking outside of this conference centre. Unite members manufacture and drive electric and hydrogen hybrid buses, which are the cleanest in the world. That will include the new fleet of hybrid double-deck buses which will be servicing this very seafront.

If we succeed in repealing section 21 of the Bus Services Act and free every council to run their own services, it would mean our public money could be spent on services which meet our community and environmental needs. Lower priced, union organised and accessible transport, built on low-carbon green and union organised manufacturing, is working-class communities supporting each other. This is what our Movement exists for and that is why I can call on you all to support this composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** There has been no opposition to ASLEF, so I intend to move straight to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Composite 3? All those against? That motion is carried.

\* *Composite Motion 3 was CARRIED.*

**The President:** I now call paragraph 4.10 and Motion 11: UK Ship Register. The General Council supports the motion. It will be moved by Nautilus International and seconded by EIS.

### **UK Ship Register**

**Ronnie Cunningham** (*Nautilus International*) moved Motion 11.

*He said:* Congress, I have lost count of the number of times that this Government and Government ministers have promised us that we will trade our way out of the downturn or that trade deals will be our salvation in a post-Brexit economy. But none of these promises about the way that the trade will be moved aptly talks about how we are going to move it. Ministers seem, conveniently, to have forgotten that 95% of everything that comes into this country comes by ship. It is a sad and hard state of affairs that the proportion of trade being carried on ships flying the UK flag or crewed by UK seafarers is also declining.

The Government that loves to talk about target and delivery are dismally failing to deliver on their policy objectives set down only two years ago not only to arrest the

decline of British shipping but to double the amount of tonnage on the UK Ship Register. The shocking truth today is that tonnage under the Red Ensign has actually fallen by more than a third since the start of this year, and it doesn't stop there. Government and shipowner pledges to increase Merchant Navy cadet numbers by 400 a year have fallen woefully short. Just 50 have been taken on in the past 12 months. The Government's own statistics show that UK seafarer numbers have fallen by more than 8% during the past 15 years. On current trends, the number of UK deck and engineering officers will decline by a further third during the next 10 years.

It's little wonder, then, that the once-Transport Minister, Chris Grayling — does anyone remember him? — had to award a Brexit-ferry charter to a shipping company which didn't have any ships. Even he, however, seemed to recognise the threat on the way that we were going. We would have to have ships on the Register but, obviously, the Government do not seem to be taking that into account. The cunning plan to combat this situation was to move to more relaxed rules governing the eligibility to fly the Red Ensign and, therefore, make it a British ship. However, they have opened the flag up to owners and operators from countries such as China, the United States, Japan, Brazil and Bahrain. Rather than trying to encourage inward investment and build a new generation of British shipping companies, our Government seem more intent on putting the Red Ensign out to sale in a business model, followed by flags of convenience by Liberia, Panama and the Marshall Islands.

There is a real risk that the Red Ensign will be dragged down into the gutter. Instead of trying to scrape a rusty old barrel, the Government should be working to rebuild the industry that remains essential to this, the UK, an island nation. They should take a

leaf from countries like Denmark and The Netherlands which are managing to grow their merchant fleets with a commitment to quality and innovation. Let's put an end to the scandal that continues to see employment rights stopping at our shoreline. The seafarers who work on ships that operate within our waters and on the UK Continental shelf should be treated the same as workers on the UK mainland. We just don't want to see the national minimum wage extended to UK waters. We want it to be properly enforced with a proper enforcement regime. We also want to end the repeated exemptions for work-permit rules, given out to operators, enabling them to bring in crews from outside the European Union and, in some cases, pay them a couple of pounds an hour.

Colleagues, there is a condition called "sea blindness". It affects this country badly. Even though just about everything we use, as I have already said, much of what we wear and much of what we eat every day comes into this country by ship from workers who are out of sight and out of mind. We desperately need to replace sea blindness with a vision for our vital industry. Help us to make a start with this, Congress, and I ask for your support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**David Belsey** *(Educational Institute of Scotland)* said: I formally second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thanks very much, colleague. There are no other indicated speakers, so I am going to move straight to the vote. Just so there is no confusion, as I saw last time there are some delegates *here*. If people want to speak, the delegation leader needs to go to the GPC in advance to submit a request to speak so that we know who

is being called into a debate. I will take you, colleague, because you sat *there*, but it is the only way that we can ensure we know who wants to speak to time business. Anyone who is new, if you have seen a motion that your delegation wants you to speak on, you need to get the delegation leader to go to the GPC so we can get everybody on the list. As you look keen and you were not, obviously, aware of that situation, I will bring you to speak, but from now on everybody needs to submit a request. Thank you.

**Karlson Lingwood** (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke in support of Motion 11. *He said:* I am a proud British seafarer and wholeheartedly agree with the sentiments expressed by the mover.

This Government's 'open seas' policy has, basically, left us open to exploitation from flags of convenience. These ships don't have to pay the national minimum wage. Although the Government recently have confirmed or gave a commitment to extend the national minimum wage to the domestic routes and also to the UK Continental shelf, the situation is disgraceful.

As you have heard from the mover, we have seafarers operating in UK waters who are paid as little as £2 an hour. That is unacceptable. What we need are proper protections and a proper link. It is not just about increasing the UK Register or having a direct link to employment opportunities and rights for seafarers, particularly UK seafarers. Cabotage is a situation or an opportunity where protections can be delivered for the crew and the flag. This is nothing new. Next year will be a hundred years since the USA introduced something called The Jones Act, which gave



protections that within domestic routes, for ships built in the US, that they are crewed by the US and flagged by the US. So you can see the direct link. So we need to be moving towards greater protections because, as you have heard from the mover, there are officers and ratings on ships. Every seafarer is safety critical. Although you may be working in hospitality, first and foremost, you are there to operate that vessel safely, to protect the environment, to protect the cargo and to protect the passengers who might be sailing on those ferries from the UK across to other countries.

By 2026 we will need 21,000 additional crew members in the hospitality sector. These are opportunities for young workers. In the last 18 years international shipping companies have been delivered with £2 billion — I repeat, £2 billion — under a UK scheme with no links to training or employment opportunities for UK seafarers. We want to create a level playing field. We don't want to see the discrimination of seafarers based on their nationality where they can be paid an absolute pittance. Once we have obtained a level playing field, we want opportunities.

In respect of the strategic importance of the British Merchant Navy, I want to pay respects to the crews of the RFA Mount Bay — we have talked about climate change — currently deployed to deal with the terrible outcome of Hurricane Dorian, and they are working up to 18 hours a day to deliver humanitarian aid. The RFA Wave Night and the RFA Cardigan Bay, deployed to the Gulf for three to four months are supporting our Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Both economically and strategically, the Merchant Navy is critical to this island nation. So support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Can I urge people, if you want to speak, to make sure that your delegation leader goes to the GPC. As there has been no opposition, I am going to move to the vote on Motion 11. Can I see all those in favour of Motion 11? Thank you. All those against? Thank you. I declare that motion carried.

\* *Motion 11 was CARRIED.*

### **Artists' studios and the community**

**The President:** I now call paragraph 1.9 and Motion 12: Artists' studios and the Community. The General Council supports the motion. It is to be moved by the Artists' Union England and to be seconded by Equity.

**Lorraine Monk** (*Artists' Union England*) moved Motion 12. *She said:* Comrades, across the country we need local, regional and national government to intervene to provide and actively support affordable studio spaces for artists, but we know that local and regional governments have been starved of money by a succession of right-wing governments which have used austerity as an excuse to destroy public services while giving tax breaks to their wealthy friends.

Artists' Union England believes that affordability is key to providing studios in which creative artists can work. Figures from the Mayor's Office in London show that 67% of studios that were identified as at risk of closure in 2014 had closed by 2017, and this figure is getting worse. Yet London's creative sector contributes £47 billion to the UK economy every year and accounts for one in six jobs in the capital.

Artists' Union England is getting more and more complaints that artists are being forced out of studios by rising rents in London areas. In May we were contacted by a group of artists in one studio in London who were facing an overnight 40% rent rise. The landlord said they needed to charge what they called "local market prices". If this philosophy was applied across the country, then only artists earning above £30,000 a year would be able to rent them. Too many landlords, many of them set up as charities, are more interested in collecting high rents in what they call, in management speak, "a blended income model" than they are in supporting arts in the community.

The phrase "A blended income model" is a sort of candy-crush capitalism, so tasty, so appealing, the words making it more acceptable for charities which don't pay tax to rent out artists' spaces to people who aren't artists, but who can pay market prices for those studios. We believe that rents cannot be set using a market model, assuming that artists have large incomes supporting their practices. Being a wealthy artist is the exception in our field, not the norm. Artists are amongst the poorest workers in the UK, with the majority earning less, according to a report in 2018 by the Arts Council England, than £10,000 per annum. In my experience it is often a great deal less, and that money is often from a second job offering zero hours work rather than in selling your art.

In the face of an economic crisis, it is more important than ever that the creative industries are supported, helping to provide jobs, developing talent of the future and contributing to local communities.

We are asking Congress to support our call for investment to create jobs and support the development of all the creative arts, including the provision of affordable working spaces for artists in all our localities. We envisage community hubs where musicians, actors and writers can work together. We believe there should be provisions in schools, colleges, libraries and other community spaces for artists to work in and work with local communities.

In order to promote equality of opportunity, we must ensure that no one is discriminated against because of financial barriers. We believe there is a disproportionate impact, particularly on black and women artists, because of the national shortage of affordable studio spaces.

We call for your support for this motion because we stand together to resist the gentrification of our major cities that force ordinary people, who have lived for generations in one locality, to move. We want to see established cultural and local communities supported, not destroyed. We need a government that are pledged to develop and encourage creativity for everyone, rather than profit for the privileged. We need art that represents all communities, not just your Eton toffs and your Bullingdon boys. We need policies that support workers in the creative industries and art that is not an entitlement for the rich but a celebration of all of our lives, not just made and enjoyed by the wealthy but created by and for the many. Please support.  
*(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Loraine. Equity to second.

**Maureen Beattie** (*Equity*) seconded the motion. *She said:* I am the President of Equity. The crisis in affordable studio space for artists affects all of us in the creative industries. The availability of rehearsal and workshop spaces and studios, where musicians, choreographers, dancers, directors and performers of all kinds can hone their craft and develop work, be it a script, play or a piece of music, is essential to the health of our industry.

The sometimes shocking rises in rent, of course, affect the young in particular and those from lower-income backgrounds. The recent statistics regarding the class ceiling in our industry are utterly shocking! Professor Sam Freedman's research has found that even when those from working-class backgrounds were similar to their advantaged colleagues in every measurable way, they still earn significantly less. On average, £7,000 a year less. For working-class women, the gap is even wider. For black and minority ethnic women, they earn an astonishing £19,000 a year less on average! If these rent hikes are allowed to go on that will be yet another barrier for those from lower-income backgrounds wishing to pursue a career in the arts sector.

The shame of this situation is twofold because, at the very same time as the people who are making their own profit and the profit of their shareholders, their number one priority and driving out their lower-income tenants, they are sending their children to schools where the arts remain a recognised and vital part of the curriculum. Reap the benefits but play no part in supporting the future existence of those benefits.

Congress, please take this opportunity to support the artist members of our community and support this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Maureen. As there has been no opposition and no other indicated speakers, I am going to move to the vote on Motion 12. Can I see all those in favour of Motion 12? Thank you. All those against? That is carried. Thank you, Congress.

\* *Motion 12 was CARRIED.*

### **President's Address**

**The Vice President:** Congress, I now call upon you to welcome our President, Mark Serwotka, as he gives his Congress Address. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Vice President and Congress, I have great pleasure to move the President's Address at Congress 2019, particularly at such an incredibly pivotal moment for our movement and for our country. But before I start, let me say that two weeks ago I passed a personal milestone. One thousand days after my heart transplant, my fourth life-saving operation, I am now 1,010 days into my new life! *(Applause and cheers)* Congress, I am only *here* because of the greatest creation of the British labour Movement, our creation, our National Health Service. *(Applause)*

Our National Health Service, our doctors, our nurses, our surgeons, our radiographers, our physiotherapists, our cleaners, our caterers, our porters, our admin staff, our

paramedics, our community nurses and so many more, all of them a team, who recognise what public service is all about. Let's give them a fantastic ovation for our NHS. *(Applause)*

Congress, I want to make another point. The staff who treated me at Papworth, like the staff who treat all of our friends, families and the citizens of this country, came from all parts of Britain but they came from all parts of the world. They came from Africa, from Asia, from eastern Europe, from all parts of this globe. When people tell us "We don't want any more migrants. Our country is full up", I say "Thank God that migrants came to this country", and we should carry on welcoming them in the best spirit of our movement. *(Applause)*

We don't just thank them for coming here because of the fabulous role that they play in our public services, but because it is only as a result of centuries of immigration that our society has been culturally enriched because of the contribution that people made from all over the world. Congress, let us say loud and proud that it is not migrants who are to blame for homelessness, for low pay or for terrible working conditions. It is the Tories, it is the austerity measures and it is greedy politicians! So migrants must always be welcomed here. *(Applause)*

I want to pay a few tributes before I get to the crux of my address. Firstly, can I pay tribute to my mother and father, neither of whom are with us, but both of whom not only adopted me and my sister at a very young age from a Catholic orphanage but gave us the best growing-up anyone could want. I also want to thank my family, who are sitting in the gallery; my daughter, Imogen and my son Reese, who have been

through so much and put up with such a lot, as many of our families do when we are active in the labour Movement. Conference, I also want to thank my wife, Ruth, who has given me the most fantastic support, but I also want to thank her publicly for all her formidable campaigning on behalf of women's rights. I salute you and all those women who campaign with you. *(Applause)*

I also want to thank my union, PCS. In my view it has some of the best activists and best staff in the trade union Movement. It is a brilliant union, one that I am proud to have been general secretary of for now 20 years. Whilst there are too many people to name, I want to pay particular tribute to our former President, sadly not with us here to hear this speech, Janice Godrich, who has suffered ill health during the past 12 months because of her commitment to this movement. Janice, along with the rest of our delegation, I want to pay tribute to you for everything that you have done over many decades in this movement. *(Applause)*

I also want to thank Frances and Paul as well as all the TUC staff. People are often criticised, but Frances, Paul and all the staff have done an absolutely fantastic job. All of this Congress and everything that happens this week is because of people behind the scenes who work so hard for all of the movement. I thank you and the TUC for the work that you have done.

Finally, I want to thank someone who also is not with us. I want to thank my organ donor and his family, without whose gift I would not be here today. I want to remind this Congress that three people die every day in this country because of a lack of organ donors. I want to urge anyone who has not considered or spoken about



agreeing to be an organ donor to do so, and I want to pay public tribute to the Welsh Labour Government, the first in the UK, to move the law to presumed consent, which has already saved dozens of lives. Thank you everyone. (*Applause*)

Before I get into my speech, I want to pay tribute to Sally Hunt, who I thought last year gave, probably, the best President's Address that I have ever heard in all the time that I have been coming to this Congress. Sally has now retired and is suffering ill health. I am sure that Congress will want to pay tribute to Sally for her fantastic contribution. (*Applause*) I, unlike Sally, won't be lighting a match at the rostrum, but I want to remind anyone who was here last year that she spoke movingly of our history and explained how we are powering agents for change. She ended by telling us that we don't just observe history but we make it.

So today, Congress, in that spirit, I want, in celebrating our past, to talk about what we are going to do to be ready to stand up for the unprecedented threats that we face, and to ask ourselves as a movement what more are we going to do not just to fight this Government and all that they represent but the austerity measures that they have brought in and how we can rise to the challenges ahead.

Congress, my starting point is this. When I was younger, I could not believe that there could ever be a worse duo than Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. They stood against everything that our movement was built on and everything that we stood for; right-wing ideologues trying to smash the unions, dismantle the welfare state and privatise everything that moved. I want to make this observation. I believe that the threat posed by Donald Trump and Boris Johnson is even greater and even worse than

the threat posed to us by Thatcher and Reagan. I say that not just because they share the same right-wing ideology, because they share the same free-market obsession that doesn't care about real people in their communities but because they are different in this extent. They don't abide by the normal rules, they pretend not to be ordinary politicians and they pretend to be the friends of the working woman and the working man, whereas in fact Boris Johnson is no cuddly person who gets lines mixed up and is a creature of fun. He is a vicious, nasty, right-wing bigot who we have to challenge with everything that we can muster. *(Applause)* Congress, let anyone who thinks that is over the top think about this. Whoever before has seen an American President addressing a rally of 8,000 people who disgracefully changed "Send her back" at Illa Omar, a muslim-Somali Congress woman, and he stood there and did nothing? Congress, Trump may not be a fascist but that to me was reminiscent of a fascist rally. It encourages the fascists and it encourages those people to be emboldened to take to the streets and to do everything that we must fight against.

Congress, I ask you to join me now in sending a message of solidarity to the four black Congress women and say we are with you and against everything that Donald Trump stands for. *(Applause)*

In that vein, I want to say that the TUC has done a fantastic job this year standing up against all the international areas that we are worried about, particular for standing up against far-right movements and governments in Brazil, Colombia, Turkey and Palestine. I want to say in my speech that whatever else we do, let none of us rest until we have seen the achievement of a free, independent Palestinian state. We will

not be silenced and we stand with you in your rights to a sovereign nation, sitting alongside the state of Israel. *(Applause)*

This week, that man of the people, Alexander Boris Deffle Johnson, sounds probably like one of the most poshest Prime Ministers we have ever had, but our task is not to worry about him being the poshest but to make him the shortest serving Prime Minister in British history. *(Applause)* Congress, let us have no doubt, this man and his right-wing Government, along with Donald Trump will wreak havoc against everything we stand for. This is a Prime Minister who has in his Cabinet a Home Secretary who supports returning to the death penalty, and another Cabinet member who believes that women should be denied the right to an abortion even in cases of rape. These people are not one-nation moderate Conservatives — those are bad enough! — but these are right-wing fanatics. While we are at it, they are fanatics backed by that person behind the scenes, Dominic Cummings, who also opposes everything that we stand for. These people would cause us real problems in normal but, Congress, these are not normal times. We stand on the verge of a no-deal Brexit, which I hope we can all agree, whether people voted leave or remain, whether your union campaigned leave or remain, everyone in this hall must recognise that our duty should be to say and do everything in our power to fight to stop a no-deal Brexit with Boris Johnson as Prime Minister. We should be clear that those who argue to leave the European Union from a left perspective, they are arguments that we should respect whether we agree with them or not. But it is impossible, even for those who believe it, to have a progressive or left-wing Brexit that is run by fundamental, right-wing fanatics, so all of us must fight to stop this country crashing out without a deal on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Conference, in agreeing that, I hope we can also agree that cancelling Parliament was an outrageous, anti-democratic act by the Government and we should applaud the hundreds of thousands of people who have demonstrated in towns and cities from Aberystwyth to Cambridge, from Glasgow to Plymouth, from London and every city and town in between. We welcome what you have done. We urge there to be more protests and demonstrations. Congress, if we don't get an election on our terms and Boris Johnson seeks to cling on, I hope we can agree that we will mobilise the biggest, massive national demonstration to force Johnson out of office and pave the way for a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour government. (*Applause*)

Congress, I make this appeal to all those who have been lukewarm, cold or even freezing in their attitude to Jeremy Corbyn. Can we all agree this? Jeremy Corbyn, in my view, is one of the most principled, brave, conviction politicians that I have seen in this country (*Applause*) and everyone now has a task to stop the sniping, to stop the briefing behind the scenes and, yes — this includes Tom Watson — all of us have to agree to unite behind John McDonnell, Jeremy Corbyn and the Shadow Cabinet, because through unity and appealing to our people we can ensure that we can drive Johnson out of office.

Anyone who has any doubts, remember how high the stakes are. Our members live in universal credit Britain. We have disabled people committing suicide. We have people sanctioned when they visit the Job Centre for being a few minutes late for their appointment. We have 300,000 people officially homeless and 4,000 sleeping rough on the streets. Who cannot have seen them on the streets of Brighton this week?

The average life expectancy of a person sleeping on the streets is 45. This is a country where women today have a lower life expectancy than their mothers. It is a country where the filthy rich put their money in the Cayman Islands instead of paying their way to fund our NHS, our hospitals and our public services. So, Conference, there has never been more at stake. That means we need a radical Labour government, but we also need radical unions prepared to stand up in the workplace to ensure that whatever happens in an election we are well prepared to stand up for our members and to ensure that we can win in the workplace.

That means, Congress, that we should learn lessons ourselves. We are half the size we were in 1979. We welcome the fact that this year there has been a growth in trade union membership of 100,000. It's a step in the right direction but still far too modest. We need to be better at working together. We need to avoid squabbling amongst ourselves in recognition arguments when, actually, the real issue is the millions of people who are not in any union. Congress, yes, we need to see more joint union action. I stand *here* today proud of the fact that in 2011 my union, along with many others in the public sector, had what I think was one of our finest moments: the 2011 public sector pension strike of 29 unions and two million people on strike! If we could do it then in 2011, if the Tories continue to rob us of our pensions like they are currently doing, we should do that again to defend public sector pensions and all of our members at risk. (*Applause*)

Congress, there are other things we need to do: digital technology to assist in organising. I have seen the difference that that can make and I am proud that my own union is leading the way. I think it is ready to assist any other union to give any help

we can in ensuring we use digital technology to enhance our activists' work in the workplace. We need a vibrant union presence in every workplace and we need to stop being worried about being seen as fighting for what we believe in.

Congress, I want to give you a story of one dispute involving my own union that tells us everything we need to know about austerity Britain. Tomorrow we will be joined with what I think are currently some of the bravest women and men in the UK. They are low-paid workers, mainly black women, many of them migrant workers who are on strike at BAES headquarters in London, now entering their ninth week of indefinite strike action, fighting for the London Living Wage, the right to get sick pay and the right to be brought back in house, into the public sector, where they belong. These workers are not just on strike, but they put food on the plates for some of the richest people in the globe who come to BAES to meet Tory ministers. So imagine the scene, that when they are at work they put food on the plates of the rich and famous, and on their way home they go to the union room where we have had to set up a food bank in order that they could take food home to feed their families because the private contractor did not pay them on time, it did not pay them correctly and it looked on indifferent, while workers in the public sector could not afford to put food on their tables. I hope you can agree with me that that is a story about austerity Britain, about how the Tories do not care about our people and about our workers in BAES. Those members of staff who sat on the sidelines have now joined the union, union membership has quadrupled and when they are here tomorrow I want you to give them the most fantastic welcome because they stand in the best traditions of everything that we believe in.

In saying that, Congress, I want us also to give a shout out for the many fantastic and inspiring disputes that we have seen this year, whether it is the women in the Glasgow equal pay strike, whether it is the mainly women healthcare workers in Birmingham, the bin collectors in Birmingham, the RMT staff fighting in some cases for many months against driver-operated only trains, the workers occupying the shipyards at Harland & Woolf, the workers in McDonald's, Deliveroo and TGI Fridays, showing young people joining unions and take action when we encourage them to do so.

Let me also from this rostrum give our comrades in the CWU my and I hope all of your solidarity with their *We Rise Again* campaign for you to smash the ballot turnouts and show the CWU, your members and the management that you are determined to fight for justice in the postal industry. Let's give all of those workers the ovation they deserve. *(Applause)*

Congress, as I draw to a close, I want to say this. A new emerging youth movement is currently taking place in this country around the question of the climate emergency. I remember, back in 2010, when many of us thought that the unions were not acting quickly enough in response to austerity, that it was the student movement that led the touch paper to people fighting back against the then betrayal of the Lib-Dems. Let's not forget, but Jo Swinson can say what she wants, but she is an Orange-vote Liberal who supported all the austerity measures and they offer our people no hope in this country and we should not be taken in by the Liberal Democrats. *(Applause)*

Conference, then it was students who helped create the conditions for all of us to go on and take action on pensions. So I hope we can agree this week and also hope to see the maximum union participation in the climate strike on September 20<sup>th</sup> because this planet is facing a crisis and our movement has to stand up and say to young people, “We are with you and we will fight against this climate problem and for the changes that are required”.

I finish by saying this. We need strong unions and a radical Labour government. John McDonnell came to my conference earlier in the year and he said, and I quote: “When Labour get into office they will bring the trade unions with them into government”. I thought that was a metaphorical bit of rhetoric, and after we did our research there is indeed historical precedent. In the 1960s the Harold Wilson did indeed bring the general secretary of the Transport & General Workers’ Union into the Cabinet. So, Congress, I hope you join me in urging Frances to clear her diary because she may well have a more important job to do in the weeks ahead. I hope we can all agree that in that election, if we get a Labour government, which we are going to fight for tooth and nail, we want them — this is their pledge — to return to public ownership our railways, our utilities, to bring back into our ownership all those important utilities, to end the two-tier workforce in the public sector, to give us a fair tax system, a fair benefit system and to restore and give proper funding to our workers in the Health Service, the education service and let us remember our amazing council workers who work for councils who have had 40% budget cuts. Our councils need funding. We need more council workers and we salute those of you who work for councils in the frontline for all the hard work you do in impossible circumstances.

*(Applause)*



Congress, we know there is going to be an election. The one thing unique about our movement is that we have the ability to unite everyone. We have to ensure, whether our members voted leave or remain, that they look to us and they look to a radical Labour government to unite everyone to abolish austerity and not to allow Brexit to be the faultline that the Tories want it to be.

Boris Johnson will pretend that he is on the side of the 52%. Congress, is not with the 52%. He is with the 1% of the richest people in this country and we have to ensure that every worker is not taken in and recognises what is at stake.

To win we want Labour to champion the struggles of its friends in the trade union Movement, to advocate an alternative to austerity in all our communities, to fight against discrimination and to build confidence of workers and young people in this country that there can and will be a better future. It is only a Labour government that will unite all of our members, whether they voted leave or remain.

In finishing, I want to say how proud I am to serve as a TUC President, how proud I am of everything that we have done in the past year and the years before it and how proud I am of our movement and of its history. Congress, I want us all to be proud not of what we have done in the past but to be proud of what we are going to do today, tomorrow, next week and in the months ahead. Let us not observe but step up. Let us struggle in the workplace, take action when we need to and fight for justice for all our members in the public and private sector. Let us unite to get a radical government that is truly for the many and not the few. Let us unite to defeat the

Tories and to get rid of this rotten Government. In the year that marks 200 years since the Peterloo Massacre, I leave you with these thoughts. They are the words of Shelley: “Yea are many; they are few”. Let’s bring down the Government and get a fair society. Congress, have a great week. *(A standing ovation)*

**The Vice President (Mary Boustead):** Congress, I call upon Len McCluskey to move the vote of thanks for the President’s fantastic speech.

### **Vote of Thanks to the President**

**Len McCluskey** *(Unite the Union):* Thank you, Mary. Congress, I am delighted to move this vote of thanks to our presiding President. He spent a year campaigning up and down the country against austerity, in favour of a general election, for a Jeremy Corbyn-led government and, above all, for stronger trade unions.

I was not able to be at the latest of those rallies, the People’s Assembly to stop Boris, which took place in Parliament Square last week but I am told that Mark swore more in his speech than I have ever done. *(Laughter)* What a remarkable trade unionist and trade union leader with a proven track record Mark is, not least because for a time as PCS General Secretary he literally had no pulse. Now, colleagues, I have known a few politicians and trade union leaders who I have suspected did not but I have never known one who really did not. *(Laughter)* Thankfully for all of us, as Mark has said, he was in the capable hands of our National Health Service.

So, how did Mark get here? For one of the least bureaucratic trade union bureaucrats it is an unlikely story. Joining the Civil Service as a benefits clerk in Aberdare Job Centre, straight after leaving school when he was 16, he also joined the CPSA and wasted no time in getting active, quickly becoming a branch secretary. He soon showed his firebrand credentials leading a series of strikes in Aberdare and across the south Wales valleys, including a six-month strike at Caerphilly. One of his colleagues from those days told me that even in those early days Mark was an inspirational leader: “He only had to stand up and we would all walk out,” he told me.

Born and bred in the valleys, Mark often, as he has done in his address, cites his adoptive parents as having been hugely inspirational to him, perhaps that is why he took a more cautious approach to his domestic arrangements back then than he did to his early trade union activities. In his 20s he came under pressure to move out of his parents’ house and see the world. So he did by moving a few doors down the road, from 59 to 44 Glan Road. That was some big Wales you have seen, Mark; all the freedoms of his own space but the home comforts of dinners and washing at his parents’ place a few doors up the road. Little wonder, then, that at a tender age attending his first group executive in London, in a London hotel for the first time, Mark asked one of his new comrades whether it was okay to have a bath. “Of course,” was the reply but Mark was not convinced, “If everyone has a bath surely the hot water will run out. (*Laughter*) You have come a long way since then, Mark.

As an activist Mark was involved with left politics in the CPSA. On the day of the Poll Tax demo in March 1990 Mark joined hundreds of thousands of others marching through Central London but sloped off at 3 p.m. with a group of like-minded lefties

for a rank-and-file meeting plotting his latest campaign on how to take on both the Thatcher Government and the CPSA leadership. Why overthrow one when you can do both? There they were plotting a revolution in a pub by Trafalgar Square. Of course, colleagues, this being the days without mobile phones or the internet, they were completely oblivious to the events unfolding outside. Two hours later they emerged blinking into the daylight to the sight of a fire raging at South Africa House and mounted riot police charging up and down. Sorry, Mark, the revolution started without you.

Being part of attempts to defeat successive CPSA leaders in the 1980s and 1990s did not exactly endear Mark to the bureaucracy but they were helpless when it came to his popularity with the rank-and-file. He always did have the ability to turn a conference debate with a single speech. His passion, commitment, and that beautiful Welsh lilt did the trick.

Perhaps it was that power of persuasion or merely coincidence that Mark's stay in Papworth Hospital coincided with the junior doctors' strike and much to the delight of the junior doctors Mark was able to join them on the picket line on strike days at Papworth. Unfortunately, while in Papworth Mark did not have the same experience as one of my old general secretaries. He was lying in a hospital bed when he saw the president of the union coming in with a bunch of grapes. After a bit of small talk the president reported that the executive had passed the motion wishing the general secretary a full and speedy recovery. After munching a few of the grapes, he continued, "The vote was 12 for, 8 against, and 3 abstentions." (*Laughter*)

Colleagues, it struck me, while talking to people about Mark, how even those who have not shared his politics like him as a person. This popularity led to a campaign to encourage him to stand for the union president and eventually to stand to become the first sole general secretary for PCS. In a two-horse race this social security worker now based in an office in Sheffield, and working part-time to look after his kids, captured the mood of a membership eager for some radical ideas to shake the union up a bit.

Well, the rest is history, as they say. Mark's membership covers a wide range of civil servants, including those working in jobs centres, as he himself did once, and it reminds me of a mate of mine in Liverpool who told me that working in a job centre was very, very tense indeed because if you got the sack you still had to come back to work the following day.

There have been some tough battles along the way for Mark but the stoicism and the indefatigable optimism of the long-suffering football fan has stood Mark in good stead during these battles against austerity. As a lifelong Cardiff City fan, Mark honed his math skills working out the number of points needed to avoid relegation.

The history of the Blue Birds is of course glorious, at least that is what Mark tells us, the plucky underdog fighting against the riches of the top elite. The unfortunate Blue Birds had to suffer the indignity of having their blue kit that gives them their name briefly changed to red by their owners. The protests that followed must surely be the only anti-red campaign that Mark has ever been associated with in his life, but he won.

Mark, I am proud to call you a friend and a comrade. I wish you all the luck in the coming days as you chair our Congress and, Congress, I move a vote of thanks with pleasure. (*Applause*)

**The Vice President:** Congress, I call on Fran Heathcote to second the vote of thanks.

Thank you, Fran.

**Fran Heathcote** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*): President, Congress, I am proud to be up here paying tribute to Mark, who is totally unselfish and a great leader but like all great leaders Mark is a team player and his success comes from working with activists and members and leading from the front.

When I first got involved Mark was a low paid benefits office worker, as Len has said, known as a great personal case rep and a powerful orator. The leadership of our union at that time did us very few favours, in fact I think at that time we were known as the Beirut of the trades union Movement but one favour they did do us was to create a generation of class fighters of which Mark and my predecessor, Janice Godrich, are just two.

At present we are discussing the attempted coup by Johnson but our union, PCS, just over 20 years ago also saw an attempted coup. When Mark was elected general secretary the outgoing general secretary decided he did not like that result and his supporters tried to overturn it, which led to a massive campaign to defend our members' decision. I will not go on about it other than to say that it revealed Mark's

determination, principles, and courage. When it went to the High Court both he and the then president, Janice, took a huge financial risk by putting their houses on the line; they would have lost them if it had gone against us but, very thankfully, it did not.

Too often it is easy to talk about defending democracy but very few of us are called on to take a risk of that kind, which is why to this day Mark is regarded as a leader who does not just talk the talk but one who is prepared to put the financial future of his then young family on the line in order to defend the rights of our members to elect who they wanted to lead PCS.

Real leadership is about defending and advancing members' interests but we all know it is about much more than that. It is a case of trade unions and socialist principles at the centre of public debate. Under Mark's leadership we have seen the complete transformation of a union run by the right-wing into one of the most democratic lay-led amazing trade unions in Britain today, but he has not had it easy. I think everybody knows the story of Mark's heart transplant, seeing firsthand the brilliance of our National Health Service which is why he is still sitting here today, but with his usual resilience and good humour there was never a thought of taking a back seat and for anybody at the demonstration in London last week it was clear that Mark has lost none of his drive, determination, or passion for the job.

Chairing the TUC is not something Mark expected to deal with or ever expected to do. He came back to our delegation meeting last night full of tales about flashing lights and sound checks but he will, I am sure, approach it in the way that he

approaches everything, with enthusiasm, with humour, and with a determination to get the job done well for the benefit of all trade union members.

Mark, with all your support for me in recent times, I consider you to be a good friend. I wish you well in chairing and I am proud and delighted to second Len's vote of thanks. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thanks very much to both Len and Fran. I am not sure I admitted to everybody about putting the house on the line at the time. I will have some explaining later on, anyway. Can I thank both of you for those very heartfelt votes of thanks and, Congress, for that fantastic reception. Now we are going to move to Brexit.

## **BREXIT**

### ***Section 2 Brexit***

**The President:** Delegates, we now turn to section 2 of the General Council Report, Brexit, from page 24. I will now explain how I intend to take the Brexit debate this afternoon. I will take the General Council's Statement on Brexit, Composite Motion 4, Brexit, and paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7 of the General Council's Report. I will also take Motion 15, the NHS and future trade deals as one debate.

First of all, I will call Steve Turner to move the General Council's Statement on Brexit. I will then call paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7, the mover, seconder, and supporters of Composite Motion 4, and the mover and seconder of Motion 15. I will then open up



the debate to other speakers. After that, the mover of Composite 4, the mover of Motion 15, and Steve Turner on behalf of the General Council will have the right of reply in that order. We will then vote on the General Council Statement, Composite Motion 4, and Motion 15, in that order. Is that clear, Congress? (*Agreed*) I do not believe any of you are clear but I am sure it will be fine when we start.

I am now going to call on Steve Turner to move the General Council Statement on Brexit and paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7, and could I also invite the Musicians' Union, TSSA, and the RCM on Composite 4 to take a seat at the front.

**TUC General Council Statement on Brexit: No to no-deal, for a future fit for working people**

**Steve Turner** (*Unite the Union*) and General Council spokesperson on Europe moved the General Council Statement on Brexit.

*He said:* Brexit in five minutes? Where do you start? Five minutes, they always say, is a long time and it is certainly a long time in politics and who knows what the position will be at the end of this speech let alone what it might be tomorrow morning. I know that you'll all cover the detail and, indeed, the statement speaks for itself, so I will start by thanking all of those across our Movement and those in the broader alliance in Parliament standing up right now to that pathological liar, sexist and racist, currently squatting in Downing Street, a man hell bent on ditching convention and rewriting the rules, even destroying his own party in pursuit of his highly illogical drive to take us out of the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> October without a deal!

We know why Johnson, and the rest of his Eton mess wants to leave the EU, to slash workers' rights, to undermine environmental standards and remove consumer protections, to open up our NHS to big US corporations and to transform the UK into an even lower tax free market economy, a Singapore off the shores of the European Union. We also know that their gateway to this destructive fantasy is a no-deal Brexit.

So, in the face of this our statement is very clear. It does not matter how you voted in 2016, leave or remain, nobody voted for a no-deal Brexit that will be a catastrophic disaster for working people. I want to challenge Johnson to come with me any time he likes to Vauxhall at Ellesmere Port, to Toyota or the Port of Dover, to any hospital or care home reliant on doctors and nurses, porters and cleaners, from across the globe and tell them it will be all right on the night. He won't because it won't and he knows it.

Comrades, three years on from the referendum we continue to live in a divided Britain and it is our job, it is our duty to set up and to organise the change and to deliver a Labour government in the coming election with the programme necessary to heal the wounds that currently divide us. The TUC set out three tests for any Brexit deal. These tests were endorsed by Congress in 2017 and 2018 and they still guide our policy today. They were to secure and maintain workers' rights, to preserve tariff-free frictionless trade in goods and services to protect our jobs, and to ensure that trade and livelihoods in Gibraltar and Ireland were protected with no hard border or no new restrictions between Gibraltar and Spain.

Our statement reconfirms these principles and demands that we rise like lions to the challenges for our class, to fight for the new deal working people desperately need, and to defeat the threat of an ongoing hard right attack on working class people, to defeat the vile narrative of hate and division being spewed by racists at our migrant communities, and any threats from bosses who think they can use Brexit to shed jobs, to relocate or offshore our work, or to put a match to hard won terms and conditions, rights and protections.

Congress, last year I raised eyebrows in this hall by quoting Johnson for his willingness to fuck business in his drive for power. This year I have a message for Johnson: fuck you, fuck your claims that austerity is over, your racist, bullying, sexist attacks on our communities, your proroguing Parliament and, yes, fuck your no-deal Brexit too. (*Cheers*)

Comrades, we will not win the coming election in the letters page of *The Guardian* or an *FT* editorial. We need to get down and dirty, talking honestly to our people in their voices and with a passion that we have not shown for far too long. We need to inspire and motivate, we need to give our reps, our members and friends, the arguments and the confidence to take our message of hope and opportunity of a new politics, of a new fairer economy, into every workplace, onto every bus, down the pub, in our homes, and across our communities.

Comrades, we are entering into the fight of our lives and there are few niceties and even fewer rules. The team sheets have been published and it is game on.

*(Applause)*

**The President:** Thanks very much, Steve. I think we all learnt some new language there! We are going to move now to Composite 4 to be moved by the Musicians' Union, seconded by the TSSA, and supported by the RCM.

## **Brexit**

**Isabelle Gutierrez** (*Musicians' Union*) moved Composite Motion 4. *She said:* Good afternoon, Congress. Thank you for allowing me to move Composite 4. At a time when it is difficult to keep up with Brexit hour to hour, let alone day to day, writing a Brexit motion months in advance was always going to be a challenge. In a way it is depressing that most of this motion is still relevant. However, what is clear is that after years of government faffing this is crunch time and it is a terrifying time for musicians and for others.

At the Musicians' Union earlier this year we commissioned some independent research which found that over 3,000 musicians stand to lose their jobs over the next 10 years if freedom of movement ends. That is not if there is a no-deal Brexit, by the way, that is just if we have a Brexit deal which ends freedom of movement. A no-deal would be much worse and the research itself stated that this was a conservative estimate.

This is a completely unnecessary loss of jobs for our workers. It is deliberate and it is of our own making. I know other sectors have the same issues but here is the key point. Freedom of movement is essential for musicians. At a time when other revenue streams are drying up for our members touring is the absolute essential income that musicians cannot do without, and visas and red tape, all of this would make touring in the EU costly and clunky and not worth the while. It is also interesting to note that already for most musicians who are doing a European tour, leaving out Switzerland, it is not cost effective. That is going to be us in the future and it is our performers who are going to suffer in reverse.

We had a meeting a few months ago with some civil servants who were working on the impact of Brexit on the creative industries and I would like to take a moment here to thank our civil servants, many of whom are being treated abominably by this Government and who are working extremely hard in really difficult circumstances. Despite their best efforts and our best efforts, however, none of their fixes worked for our members.

Perhaps the best way of explaining is to take the example of just one of our 30,000 members. She is a freelance orchestral musician based in the UK, who plays in dozens of European orchestras across several EU countries. That is hundreds of gigs in the course of a year and some at fairly late notice. So, a six-month visa with a six-month cooling off period is never going to work for her; neither will any system where she has to apply for a work permit and wait days or weeks for it to come through. She is supposed to do this for every country she is working in over the

course of a year or a month? That is just one example of how none of this works for our members.

The ability to go and work anywhere in the EU at the drop of a hat is essential to musicians and here is why it matters to all of us. I could speak for hours, frankly, about the contribution that the music industry makes to the economy, the £4.4 billion and the fact that it is nearly 150,000 jobs, but I do not want to because beyond our economy something else is at play. Music represents the exact opposite of what this Prime Minister stands for. He wants to divide this country, exploit the split we already have thanks to Brexit. Music is what brings people together across divides and across borders, including on the island of Ireland. Music is needed more than ever to break down barriers, to build friendships through collaboration, for cultural exchange. That is why this matters far beyond thousands of musicians losing their jobs.

So, yes, we are up for a general election but not on this Prime Minister's terms, and not while they can use it as a smokescreen for a no-deal Brexit. Yes, we are very pleased that Parliament passed a motion to avoid no-deal on 31<sup>st</sup> October but Amber Rudd is not the only one who does not trust this Prime Minister. If Boris Johnson tries to ignore the law then we must be ready for action and that should include a people's vote or repealing Article 50, if the only other option is to leave with no deal.

*(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Isabelle. I am sure all the civil service unions appreciate your comment about the civil servants in the front line. I have TSSA to second.

**Al Stoten** (*Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) seconded Composite Motion 4.

*He said:* I am proud and honoured to second this motion. Congress, whatever you voted for, no one voted for this. Over three years on and still we are no clearer as to where we will stand after Brexit, three years of politicians arguing, debating, lying, scaremongering, and generally doing nothing. They have sat on their hands for three years prevaricating. Politicians fiddle whilst industry burns. Companies are pulling out of the UK on a weekly basis. Market uncertainty directly affects working people and business is free to go and find a new home and take our jobs with it. Working people are the ones left to suffer. No one voted for this, and still we are no clearer as to how it will affect our members. European rail freight is no clearer on what the delays will be at borders that do not currently exist. No one is any clearer on what the delays will be with Eurostar terminals. It is the small things that affect our day-to-day lives. No one voted for this. Ireland threatened with the introduction of a hard border, food spoiling as it waits to cross an artificial line, and no answers as to what impact this will have on people either side of the border. Underlying all of this is the threat of a return to the violence of yesteryear as Britain — not Ireland, Britain — breaks the Good Friday Agreement. No one voted for this.

Comrades, we have given the politicians three years, three years to come up with answers to a question that should never have been asked! If they cannot give us certainty on our jobs, on our food, and on our medicine, then they have to admit this is a conundrum too far. The no-deal Brexit that Boris, Reece-Mogg and Trump want is a price not worth paying and we must remain. That is what the TUC must campaign

for, it is what the Labour Party must campaign for, and that is what we should all support. You cannot reform from outside the tent. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thanks very much, Al. I call the Royal College of Midwives, and if the BDA and SOR can come to the front, you are next, and just to give people some early notice I am then taking the GMB, FBU, PCS, Unite, NEU, Unison, and the COP, in that order. Thanks, Jon.

**Jon Skewes** (*Royal College of Midwives*) supported Composite Motion 4. *He said:* I am supporting Composite Motion 4 as well as the General Council Statement. At the last Congress I warned against complacency. I warned that if things got too tough for Theresa May the Tories would change the guard at the top and so it came to pass. We got Johnson, finger-puppet Cummings, the head-bangers, the right deviationists, the populists have taken over, and they have done so well, haven't they? I am being ironic here. There have been no wins in Parliament, a coup against democracy that did not work, and threats to ignore the rule of law. Oh, and they also lost 22 former Tories along the way – I do not know if it has gone up since I started speaking – and united the opposition all because Johnson and Cummings are focused on no deal. Actually, what they are focused on is far beyond the promises made in the referendum and they are now focused on ending post-Second World War institutions and the rights, especially trade union rights, we developed.

It looks like their plan is to create chaos and do a deal with the Brexit Party. Nigel Farage is reported as saying that his price for that is to be made ambassador to the United States. That would be like sending Oswald Mosley to the US in 1939. On top



of beggaring our economy, ignoring the rule of law, the Good Friday Agreement, insulting our members from other EU countries who do so much to deliver our public services, what else does no deal threaten?

In the NHS it threatens the supply of medicines, radiotherapy isotopes, and the necessary staff to care for us and our families. Fundamentally, it threatens our NHS. I do not believe Boris Johnson when he says the NHS is not for sale in any trade deal with Donald Trump. He lies as the mothers of his children will attest.

No to no-deal, no to the lies to the British people, yes to building a Europe for the many, yes to a people's vote and, finally, let's support all those who oppose no deal. Johnson is hanging in the wind with no way forward. Let's enjoy that for a bit and then let's see less "Cummings" and more goings. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you, Jon. Now I call on the BDA to move Motion 15 and to be seconded by the SOR.

### **The NHS and future trade deals**

**Annette Mansell-Green** (*British Dietetic Association*) moved Motion 15. *She said:* Comrades, we are in a mess, aren't we? The Government are in meltdown, the public is fast losing faith with our democracy, and we have a narcissist Bullingdon boy as Prime Minister. Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, the clown prince of politics, a tin-pot despot, arch capitalist, smirking and lying his way into power but make no mistake, his objective is free trade, no protections, no regulations, no rights, a free-

for-all and a survival of the fittest hell hole. He is doing the will of his puppet masters and I am sure he is willing to sacrifice our NHS as we know it. Even Dominique Cummings declared that the Tories do not care about poor people or the NHS.

The current political situation is bringing the possibility of a bilateral trade deal with the US even closer or as that other narcissist, the so-called leader of the free world, put it, “We are going to do a very big deal, bigger than we have ever had with the UK.” Tremendous! These two men have much more in common than ridiculous hair, comrades. Before meeting with Trump Johnson said that the NHS was not up for discussion but why should we believe him, the man who when caught lying about an affair said it was acceptable or even desirable to lie and, of course, there is that old saying, “A rumour is true until it is officially denied.”

In July a Parliamentary petition, *Don't put up our NHS for negotiation* was debated in the House of Commons and the then International Trade Minister gave a guarantee to protect the NHS and said, “I cannot imagine a government that would not want to protect our NHS.” Well, I can and I am sure you can, too. I am far from convinced.

In the face of predicted fall in total trade after Brexit, the Government will be looking for a quick fix to gain through free trade agreements with countries like the US and will be under pressure to include the NHS, make no mistake. Among the consequences would be the use of investor protection measures that would allow the British Government to be sued by corporations for simply introducing policies for the public good on grounds that these would interfere with investors' profits. That, in my view, is immoral, Congress.

Of course, we know the NHS is already under threat and has been open to private companies to bid for contracts from anywhere, including the US. Since 2000, when it was opened up to the competitive market by the New Labour government, it was made even more vulnerable by the 2012 Payoff and Social Care Act. The main threat is pharmaceuticals. Trump would ensure that existing regulations and NICE guidelines were stripped away, forcing British prices up. The *Wall Street Journal* said, and I quote: “Americans have long wanted Britain to liberalise how the NHS decides which drugs to offer British patients.” The only way to protect our NHS is to remove legislation that allows private contracts for NHS services and the NHS has to return to a government-run public service, not structured for the purposes of commercial profit, through legislation along the lines of the NHS Reinstatement Bill. We need laws to safeguard our NHS from both existing privatisation and free trade agreements now and in the future.

Signing a deal with the US means that the current levels of privatisation will be locked in and very difficult to reverse. As things stand Parliament has no power to veto a trade agreement, even if the majority of MPs knew that deal would destroy the NHS.

Comrades, we love and value our NHS. It is the jewel in our crown and we need it. We marched last year to celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. We have to fight for its survival, and we will. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you, Annette. SOR to second?

**Richard Evans** (*Society of Radiographers*) seconded Motion 15. *He said:* Thank you very much, Mark. Good afternoon, Congress. I am very happy to stand up and second Motion 15. It says Congress is deeply concerned that our NHS is under threat from commercial interests on both sides of the Atlantic. How is it that there has been so little deep concern about the NHS. As the resolution states and as Annette has just told us successive governments have tinkered, meddled and interfered over involvement of the independent sector in service provision and in the way that competition rules are applied.

Despite international comparisons that show clearly that the NHS is by far the most efficient healthcare system there is, politicians supported very largely by the press seem convinced that the system is broken and can only be fixed by commercial interests.

In this Congress we can proudly say that the dangers of erosion of the principles of the NHS have been repeatedly highlighted and opposed and we should be proud of our opposition but in wider society our views are viewed as paranoia and those are the people who can actually be bothered to think about it at all. Everyone loves the NHS but no one seems to value it enough until Donald Trump opened his mouth and suddenly everyone knows that the NHS is a target for big business. The NHS is in danger from unrestricted price hikes, competition for service provision, and ultimately a deconstruction of the fundamental values that ensure free access for all.

So, thank you, Mr President, and I do not mean Mark on this occasion. This Congress will never be silent whilst the NHS is under threat but what Donald Trump has achieved is to get everyone talking about protecting healthcare, and about time. Of course, his very quick retraction of his comments only served to convince everyone that the threat is real. He is a liar and we all know it. Donald Trump is not trustworthy. We know that the fight is on. We need to protect the NHS. He might tell us to build a wall but we say we must stand together to recommit to ensure that our NHS remains for what remains of our society in the future. Support this motion.  
*(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Richard. I now call on the GMB.

**Dave Clements** (*GMB*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 4. *He said:* Chaos caused by Tory governments is nothing new but the mess they have made of Brexit has reached extraordinary levels. It was not long ago that Boris Johnson said the chances of cracking out of the EU were a million to one. Now Amber Rudd has confirmed what we know and feared: the Government are not attempting to get a deal. Employers are stockpiling for disaster, yet we are told by ministers that it would be irresponsible if consumers did the same. Apparently, a no-deal Brexit will be fine for the UK yet it is apparently a disaster for the Europeans.

I have worked for more than 35 years in the Port of Dover in P&O, shipping ports, logistics, and international trade. I can tell you categorically that the UK is not ready to leave with a no-deal on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The port handles 120 billion of imports and exports annually. 10,000 freight vehicles pass through the docks daily. I remember

in the summer of 2015 when there were strikes in France which led to gridlock across Kent, 4,600 lorries stretched 30 miles. It is no exaggeration that it becomes a humanitarian crisis with truckers and families living in cars on a motorway. Afterwards, it was estimated that it cost the UK economy £1bn from just four days of disruption and that is why a bad Tory Brexit will make it harder, not easier, to fund and rebuild our public services. That is not what the people were told in 2016. Three years on we now know what Brexit under the Tories means, food prices going up, manufacturing jobs going down, inward investment shrinking, the value of our currency is in real decline, and the pound falls every time Boris opens his mouth.

Congress, we must never ever accept that the vital Good Friday Peace Agreement can be collateral damage from Brexit. The GMB has worked hard since 2016 to get the Tories to understand the consequences that Brexit plans for our members' jobs. Tragically the Tories have cared for one thing, the Tory Party. The public, not the Tories, need the final say on the terms of Brexit just as we readily give our members a say on any deal we negotiate. Crucially, we have to kick the Tories and get a Labour government in Downing Street with practical socialist policies to tackle the root causes of why many voted to leave in the first place and then to unite the country once again. The stakes have never been higher. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you, Dave. It is great to hear the effects on a frontline worker at Dover. I call on the FBU, and then PCS and Unite.

**Matt Wrack** (*Fire Brigades Union*): Congress, we are facing, as has been set out, an immense political crisis and coming together across the trades union Movement here

in Brighton we have to think what is our task in those circumstances. Our task, in my view, is to create unity among working people. We represent six million people. We have to speak for those six million but also the millions of others who are not currently part of the trades union Movement formally. We have to cut across those whether they voted leave or remain, and we have to examine why people voted leave in the EU referendum. We face a government, a Johnson government, a hard right anti-worker, anti-trade union and anti-working class government.

I want to take up particularly the question of the suspension of Parliament. I have heard some people on the left saying that this is simply about giving MPs a few extra days leave. This is not a joking matter. It is an extremely serious attack on our democracy for all its failings. It allows the executive, it allows the Prime Minister to get away with even less scrutiny than he is normally subject to. We need to warn of the dangerous precedent that has been set by Johnson's manoeuvrings in Parliament.

Johnson claimed in announcing this, smirking about it because he knew that he did not believe it and neither did anyone with any sense listening to him believe it, "I need to do this because we need a new Queen's Speech to set out my programme for government." These people have been in power for nine years and during those nine years they have frozen our wages, they have slashed our public services, they have stolen our pensions, every step of the way Johnson has been behind and all the people in his Cabinet have been behind all of those moves.

I want to touch briefly on the so-called Tory rebels and their allies in the Liberal Democrats. I have to say those people are not my friends. Brothers and sisters, they

are not your friends either. (*Applause*) They have played that role exactly the same as Johnson and the others. They have cut our services, destroyed our communities. Our task is to build unity among working people. We currently have a government of the ultra rich, by the ultra rich, for the ultra rich. It is simply a different faction of the ultra rich that is now holding the reins of government. They represent the robber barons who have destroyed our communities and helped create the leave vote in the first place. Our task is to bring them down. That is the task of this Congress this week. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thanks, Mark. PCS?

**Kevin McHugh** (*Professional and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 4. *He said:* Congress, whether I keep on voting to leave or remain, it is vital that the trades union Movement unites against the disaster of a Tory no-deal Brexit. The prospect of a hard right Tory Brexit should be enough to focus the minds of everybody in this conference hall. We will see the sale of workers' rights the likes of which we have never seen before. We already know that the UK has the most restrictive trade union laws in Western Europe and the decimation of our movement all together is firmly in the Tories' sight. Our NHS, the envy of the world, will be carved up and added on a plate for the vultures of the American healthcare system.

PCS has made it clear that EU nationals who have made their lives here should not pay the price of the Tories' shambolic handling of Brexit negotiations, which has brought us to the brink of a no-deal. PCS members work across a wide range of civil



service departments handling many aspects of Brexit. The uncertainty of the past three years and the threat of a no-deal has put the staff under unnecessary levels of pressure. Just last Thursday with very little notice over 300 staff of the DWP in Stratford, East London, who work on delivering benefits, were told to stop delivering benefits, “We need you actually to work on a Brexit telephone helpline.”

We need a general election. The issue of Brexit has paralysed British politics for over three years now. The intricacies of the Brexit development means next to nothing to the millions of people outside of the Westminster bubble. People are still suffering the consequences of an austerity agenda that has ravaged this country for nearly a decade. We need to start talking about the devastating impact this has had on people and communities up and down the country. We need to start talking about the record 1.6 million food bank parcels handed out in the past year, what a disgrace is the need for that. We need to talk about the rapid rise in rent arrears and the victims of the areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out. We need to talk about the children who are so malnourished that they are stealing food from their school canteens.

The time for tinkering around the edges is over. We need a transformative Corbyn-led Labour government that can revamp the economy, invest in public services, and restore rights of trade unions. With the full weight of our Movement alongside opposition in Parliament we can put a stop to the catastrophe of a no-deal Brexit. Our vote should then lead to securing an election on our terms as soon as possible. The trades union Movement needs to prepare itself for a contest that will define our country for generations to come. Bring it on, I say. Bring it on. Support the motion.  
*(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Kevin. Unite?

**Howard Beckett** (*Unite the Union*): I am speaking in support of the General Council Statement, speaking in support of the two motions, and asking and pleading MPs to speak as one in regard to Brexit, and speak with passion. Congress, division is the poison of the Tories, whether it is xenophobia, whether it is racism, whether it is migration, division is what they survive on. Dividing our class, and Brexit is now a new vessel for that division.

Comrades, I grew up in a society defined by division, defined by a border and people's obsession with that border. I refused to allow my life to be defined by that division, by that sectarianism. My life is defined by socialism, a drive for equality, and trade unionism. That is what our response to the Tories' division over Brexit must be. We must say to our people and we must say it very clearly that they are not defined by Brexit. Whether they voted for remain or whether they voted for leave, it does not matter because they are about much more than that.

Congress, there is one politician trying to speak for the entire nation, one politician who is trying to bring cohesion where others bring division, one politician who says that the 2016 referendum has a legitimacy but we are three years on and those who voted for remain should have a right to say whether they want the deal or whether they want to remain.

Congress, Labour politicians must now speak as one to back Jeremy Corbyn because he is the only politician who is talking of cohesion instead of division. Congress, I am sick to the back teeth of hearing from Labour politicians who do not know how to answer the question as to whether or not Labour will campaign for a deal or campaign for remain. I am sick to the back teeth with some politicians who should know better, who already say that they will campaign for remain against whatever deal is negotiated.

As trade unionists, Congress, we know that that is senseless. We know that the terms of the deal dictate our response and indeed our recommendation but here, Congress, is the most important thing, it does not matter whether Labour is remain, whether Labour backs its own deal, or whether Labour is neutral. This is a policy to heal a divided country. This is a policy to allow us to get back into Number 10 and they know it. This is the trap of the right-wing media right now to divide our class over remain or stay, and divide us now over what we would say at some future confirmatory vote.

Congress, we are about changing society. It was Tony Benn who said our existence, the reason why we are here is to effect change. We touched the door of Number 10 in 2017 and now, Congress, it is time for us to open that door. We will do so by exposing the Tories as being a party of racists, a party to drive homelessness, a party that does not understand jobs for generations, and a party that will saddle kids with debts for their lifetime. We are about much more than that.

Congress, let us unite behind Jeremy Corbyn's Brexit position, let us tell the world that we will bring to the British people cohesion where there is division, and jobs where there is poverty. Congress, please back the General Council's Statement.  
*(Applause)*

**Mary Bousted** (*National Education Union*) spoke in support of the motion. *She said:* Congress, I first met Dominic Cummings in 2009. It was a hot summer's day, the sun was beating down through the glass of Portcullis House and it was absolutely stifling. I could tell immediately that Dominic Cummings was not very happy about meeting me. Perhaps he was feeling that he had a cold. Clutched around him was a parka which was so greasy you could fry chips in it and he spent the whole of our conversation with his back to me, refusing to look at me. He went on in the next year to become Michael Gove's special adviser and was renowned in the Department for Education for bullying, swearing, shouting and intimidating civil servants and for leaking like a sieve.

Now, Dominic Cummings believes in creative destruction. The world as we know it has to be destroyed to be rebuilt in Dominic Cummings' image and likeness, and he does not care about the consequences. It does not matter to him if manufacturing is decimated. It does not matter to him if the GDP is cut by 5.5% and the country goes into recession. It does not matter to Dominic Cummings if the agricultural, fishing industries and financial services are destroyed. It does not matter to Dominic Cummings if the NHS is destroyed. All these are casualties in the war to create Dominic Cummings' new world, a new world of low tax, low wages and a low-skill economy, an economy tied to, and mirroring, the US, with its appalling work

practices, even worse anti-trade union laws and its soaring rates of inequality.

Now, Dominic Cummings is Boris Johnson's Svengali. Boris Johnson was sacked as a *Times* columnist for making up stories. He was a leading figure in the Vote Leave campaign, where he emblazoned the big lie on the side of a bus. Boris Johnson voted for every austerity measure that has made poor people poorer and deprived our hospitals of funding. Congress, can this be the same Boris Johnson who now wants us to believe that he is going to end austerity?

Congress, do not believe a word of it. Boris Johnson knows that if his no-deal Brexit and the economy contracts, we will go into recession, the debt will balloon and then he will say that he is terribly sorry, but there is none of that money that he promised for the schools and hospitals. He did not mean for this to happen, but the deficit is now out of control and all that money pledged to councils, schools and hospitals now has to go to pay off the deficit and austerity will go on and on and on.

Congress, believe me, this is just how Boris and Dom want things to be. They are cheats, they are liars and they are scoundrels. Do not believe them. Act now and strain every sinew to see them and their lying colleagues ejected from government and a Labour government elected. (*Applause*)

**Davena Rankin** (*UNISON*) supported the motion. *She said:* Just as it is clear that there is no such thing as a good no-deal Brexit, it is equally clear that if we crash out without a deal, the public services and all the workers we represent will be the ones hardest hit. We have witnessed how far Johnson and others will go to get their no-deal Brexit at any cost. They have shown that they are willing to put over 20 years

of peace in Northern Ireland at risk by effectively ripping up the Good Friday Agreement regardless of the devastating consequences to those communities involved so we must campaign against a no-deal Brexit.

Johnson is presenting a no-deal scenario as a simple opportunity for public closure like ripping off a plaster but, Congress, that is totally misleading and it is totally dangerous. No deal is not an easy way to resolve what is a very complex set of issues and we have a duty to our members and to the wider public to set out what the costs and risks will be.

The impact of a no-deal Brexit is less money for public services and fewer staff as migrant workers opt to stay away from a hostile UK. Social care providers, for example, will face increased costs with Government leaks suggesting that small providers could fail within three months of a no-deal Brexit and larger providers could fail within six months. This will cause a devastating impact on those vulnerable people and their families dependent on those providers and the staff delivering those services.

In the longer term, we face even more uncertainty about human rights, health and safety protection and, of course, employment rights. However, what we do know is that this Tory Government would happily sacrifice each and every part of our public services to place the hard right in their own party in a position to sign a trade deal with the current occupant in the White House.

Congress, the risks of a no-deal Brexit are far too great. We must come together as a trade union Movement to fight to stop the no-deal Brexit. Please support the

composite. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you, Davena. I call on the COP and finally the CWU.

**Katie Collins** (*The College of Podiatry*) supported Composite Motion 4. *She said:* We welcome the Royal College of Midwives' amendment to the original motion highlighting the devastating impact a no-deal Brexit is likely to have on the NHS. I have been a podiatrist for nearly 20 years and have both trained and worked with colleagues from all over the world. The College has 197 members who are from the EU, some of whom trained here and then moved abroad as well as those who have come here after training in their own countries. Furthermore, there are 153,000 NHS employees who are foreign nationals and of those 62,000 come from EU countries.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism has revealed that senior figures in the NHS have reported that recruitment from the EU has already dried up with potential knock-on effects on waiting times, operating theatre capacities and beds. Those in social care may be at even more risk where over 100,000 staff are from the EU. Many podiatry patients are in residential and nursing homes or have some sort of home assistance. Therefore, it is deeply concerning for podiatrists to think that this sector may be decimated if a no-deal Brexit goes ahead and our patients are left vulnerable and alone.

The Resolution Foundation says that the only way to fill this gap is have a 20% pay rise in the sector which at this time of austerity and economic stagnation is extremely unlikely. As if this is not bad enough, the threat of further privatisation on the NHS following Brexit could be the final nail in the NHS coffin. During the past decade,

the NHS has been forced to outsource to private companies, which now has £9.2 billion going to profit-making companies. As we know, many of these companies have caused massive problems with many of them subsequently pulling out of their contracts, putting patient care and jobs at risk, but this also means that they are potentially prime targets in a US/UK trade deal.

While some people may think that privatisation and therefore competition may increase choice for patients, what many patients find in the US is a lack of continuity as providers drop unprofitable services and thus patients are finding themselves being moved from pillar to post, which undermines trust and confidence and ultimately patient outcomes. There is also an issue with big pharma infiltrating the system, which inevitably results in prices being pushed up.

We therefore join in the call for a vote on the final deal due to the potential impact on patient care. I support. (*Applause*)

**Tony Kearns** (*Communication Workers Union*) spoke in support of the General Council Statement. *He said:* What we welcome about the General Council statement is its wider reach beyond the issue of Brexit because what we think we have become mired in, led by the Conservative Government and the right-wing press, is this debate that if you are pro Brexit, you go to the right and if you support Remain, somehow you are a traitor to the country. So Brexit is important and no deal (and opposing it) is absolutely crucial.

Where the Statement talks about solidarity amongst working people, it is more crucial than ever because as Mark said in his address to this Congress, we face a pivotal



point. Brexit is not the only issue and it is time we stepped outside of the Westminster bubble. With Amber Rudd resigning last night, the problem we have is that the Tory Party is in crisis. Here is the irony: the more the Tory Party is in crisis and the more Boris Johnson turns to populist narratives, the more the opinion polls show a surge in support for the Conservative Party. In our view, they will seal off the light blue Tories and do an electoral pact with the Brexit Party in those seats where they think they can do most damage to the Labour Party. Likewise, the Lib Dems will do the same with the Tory Party in the Remain seats. That is the real issue that we face.

What the Statement talks about, quite rightly, is a transformative agenda and a solidarity that we have to show amongst workers. We think we have to break out of the Brexit-only mindset that is currently dominating British politics. Stopping a no-deal Brexit is one of our priorities. The trades union Movement, as far as we are concerned, is here to bring people together. It is to unite workers across this country around a new deal for workers.

So, a General Election should not just be seen as a tactic for a no-deal Brexit. We need a Prime Minister who will unashamedly stand with all workers and a party which promises the biggest positive changes in both collective and individual rights for workers that we have ever seen. That Prime Minister, as Steve said, is not the racist currently squatting in No. 10. Here is my question to Boris Johnson: if your brother does not trust you, then why should we? That party is also not the one led by the austerity-delivering, neoliberalist Liberal Democrats and it is also not whatever party Chuka Umunna happens to be in this afternoon. *(Laughter)*

I think another colleague mentioned this earlier, but whatever your views of Jeremy Corbyn, you are going to have to put them aside because a fight is coming and a fight is coming very soon. We have to make a decision, as workers and as the leaders of workers, which side of that debate we are going to be on. We need to change the world of work. We need a new deal for workers and we need a leader of the Labour Party in government who is going to do that. He is the one who stands unashamedly on the side of workers and always has done. We support. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you, Tony. There has been no opposition in the debate so I am not intending to move to the right of reply. I will just move straight to the vote. As I said at the beginning, we are going to take the votes in the order in which everything was moved so I am going to start with the General Council Statement. Will all those in favour of the General Council Statement please show? All those against? That is overwhelmingly carried.

\* *General Council Statement was CARRIED*

**The President:** I now move on to Composite Motion 4. Will all those in favour of Composite Motion 4 please show? All those against? That is overwhelmingly carried.

\* *Composite Motion 4 was CARRIED.*

**The President:** Finally, can all those in favour of Motion 15 please show? All those against? That is even more overwhelmingly carried.

\* *Motion 15 was CARRIED*

**The President:** Thank you very much, Congress. I think that for the media who are here, we have sent an incredibly united message that we are going to oppose a no-deal Brexit and we want a general election so thank you to everybody in that debate. *(Applause)* Can I also say that we have had lots of speakers and there have only been two so far gone who have gone over the red light so well done to everybody who has spoken. If everyone can keep to the times, we will manage to get everyone in to speak.

#### **Section 4 Good services**

**The President:** Congress we are now going to move on to Section 4 of the General Council Report, Good services, and the section on pensions from page 19. I call paragraph 1.10 and Composite Motion 14, Public service pensions and amendments. The General Council supports the composite motion. It will be moved by PCS, seconded by the FBU and supported by the SOR. I am intending to then take Unite, the NEU, the UCU, UNISON, the POA and the COP, who have all indicated they wish to speak. Thank you very much. Fran, would you move the motion?

#### **Public service pensions**

**Fran Heathcote** *(Public and Commercial Services Union)* moved Composition Motion 14. *She said:* Decent occupational pensions are an essential bulwark against pensioner poverty. The comparatively low levels of the UK state pension, which has

not been boosted to any appreciable extent by the much-hyped reforms, courtesy of Lib Dem Steve Webb, means that the defence of defined benefit pension provisions must remain an important objective for the trades union Movement.

For 20 years or more, free market ideologues, cheered on by the more disreputable elements of the financial services industry, have denigrated pension provision in the public sector by making the claim that pensions were gold-plated and unaffordable. The real story of the Tory/Lib Dem solution, euphemistically labelled "costs sharing", shows up these unaffordability claims as pro-austerity propaganda pure and simple.

In 2015, the loose schemes promoted by the Government were promised to stay in place for 25 years, but they have not even survived the first round of scheme valuations because the scale of future liabilities has been subject to such gross exaggeration. We must eliminate discrimination in pensions as in all our economic and social relationships and the court judgment secured by the FBU against age discrimination in the transitional protection arrangements is a brilliant victory, so much so that the Government have not so far sought to dispute the read-across to every affected scheme. It is essential that we build on the initiative of the General Council to ensure that the remedies are subject to negotiation and agreement to protect the position of all active, retired and deferred members in these schemes.

The Government strategy may be under a lot of pressure, but the challenge remains a big one. The obduracy of the Treasury in propping it up can be seen in the speed with which the 2018 valuations resulted in the goalposts being moved. First, the discount rate used in valuation was arbitrarily charged without explanation, the employee costs could not be loaded without giving the game away and so, despite falling projection

costs, the employer cost was hiked immediately.

Inflated employer cost is not a matter to which we can be indifferent. For a start, it increases the price tag for increasing resources in our public services, it creates pressure on budgets and wipes out most, if not all, of the claimed increases in the Government's one-year pre-election spending round. We can already see the result in arm's length public bodies such as the Royal Botanical Gardens, where it has just been announced that new employees will no longer be allowed into the civil service pension scheme. Then, using the pretext of the Court of Appeal judgment in December in the *Sergeant* and *McCloud* cases, the cost-sharing talks were suspended by the Government. These talks should have produced scheme improvements and reduction in the employee costs, which were inflated in 2015 and threatened to become a pension scheme disincentive for low-paid workers.

This is also a brilliant opportunity to reform scheme benefits, which also discriminate and remove archaic rules such as the removal of widows' and partners' pensions on remarriage or cohabitation. The Government's response to the 2018 valuations is a monumental act of bad faith to cover up the basic fallacy of the Hutton review, with its obsessive belief that the future Government financial stability is in hoc to uncontrolled public sector pension liabilities.

The scheme specifics may be different, but the issue is still the same and as in so much else, our strength lies in maximum unity. Together, we can roll back the attacks on occupational pensions and get a better deal for future generations in retirement. We can unite the fight to increase state pension provision with restoring access to decent occupational pensions, where scheme members are not fleeced by the hidden

costs of financial products.

This rotten Government are robbing public sector members, who massively overpaid into their pensions, and now ministers are refusing to pay us back. We have seen a magnificent victory by the FBU. Unions must stand together and fight to resurrect the spirit of 2011. So I urge you, Congress, to help us get the decent pension that we all deserve and to support this composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Ian Murray** (*Fire Brigades Union*) seconded Composite Motion 14. *He said:* The FBU are pleased to second this composite motion and fully support the call for the Treasury to lift the suspension on rectifying the downward breach of the cost cap in public sector pensions.

Congress, I want to give you a quick update on the FBU's recent pension victory on the transitional protection that was imposed on fire fighters when the pension scheme was introduced in 2015. We also want to be clear that the Treasury was wrong to use that legal outcome as one of the reasons to halt the improvements to the pension schemes of thousands of public sector workers required by the cost control mechanisms.

Congress, in December 2018, the FBU won a Court of Appeal judgment which found that the transitional protection imposed by the Government as part of the 2015 fire fighters' pension scheme was discriminatory. The Government subsequently applied for permission to appeal against this decision at the Supreme Court. In July, the Supreme Court refused the Government's application for permission to appeal the Court of Appeal ruling that it had lost in December. The Supreme Court refused the

application because it found that the Government's case did not raise an arguable point of law. In addition, the Government were ordered to pay costs. This is the last legal hurdle in the dispute, leaving the Government with no further avenues to exhaust. The issue will now be remitted back to the Employment Tribunal for remedy and the FBU are already taking steps to prepare for that remedy process.

Congress, this was a hard-fought victory, the result of us never giving up the fight to get a workable and sustainable occupational pension scheme for firefighters. We are delighted that our perseverance paid off. The FBU wants an occupational pension scheme that does what it says on the tin, a pension scheme that reflects the occupation that our members undertake in the real world, not a pension scheme where many firefighters may not actually get to the normal pension age.

As far as the FBU is concerned, this judgment is still not the end of the matter. Many FBU members still do not have pension arrangements that reflect the physical nature of the job that they carry out daily. Congress, our campaign against the unworkable pension age in some of the pension schemes within the fire service will continue, but we also see this fight as part of a wider struggle, including immediately lifting the suspension on rectifying the downward breach of the cost cap so that thousands of workers can benefit from their overpayments being conveyed to improve pension benefits and a much needed reduction in their pension contributions.

Congress, it was a landmark legal case and it will impact on all public sector workers affected in a similar way in other pension schemes. The message to the Government should be quite clear from the FBU and from our Movement. The fight for decent pensions for workers will continue and never cease. Congress, support the motion. I

second. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you very much, Ian. Again, congratulations to the FBU on the fabulous court victory. I call on the SOR and I remind the speakers who I have previously called to be down at the front. I omitted the NASUWT, who are also on my list, so if they are not there, can they come down as well. Thank you.

**Paul Maloney** (*Society of Radiographers*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 14. *He said:* Congress, we have to face the possibility that this Government may once again have in its sights defined benefit pension provision in public services. Let us face it, any Government that can prorogue Parliament and lie about why they are doing it can rip up the 25-year guarantee given at the time of the reforms to public service schemes and lie about why they are doing it. A Government that can end the funding of the TV licence for those over 75, but blame the BBC for that is not beyond attacking public service pensions and blaming us, the unions.

Congress, while we congratulate the FBU on their victory in the courts, proving that, in their scheme, the transitional arrangements were discriminatory, we do have to be vigilant and question why the Government are so enthusiastic in claiming that this means all public service schemes are guilty of the same discrimination. That is why the scheme-specific talks called for in this motion are essential. When we read the statement issued by Liz Truss, when she was Chief Secretary of the Treasury, referring to the £4 billion cost of applying the ruling across all schemes in the public sector and the need to ensure that public service schemes deliver value for money, we saw no mention whatsoever of delivering pensions for public servants and alarm bells started ringing loudly.



Congress, the hard right coup at the heart of Government means that those alarm bells are ringing even more loudly today. There is no reason why the Government needs to adopt this approach. The original ET ruling did make it clear that the decision related only to the firefighters' and High Court judges' schemes with the employment judge emphasising that no evidence had been presented relating to the transitional arrangements of any other scheme. So I say again it is essential that we have the scheme-specific talks so that we can have solutions that fit the different schemes. In the NHS, for example, the arrangements were subject to an equality impact assessment and were supported by the NHS unions.

Congress, this decision by Government is not based in law. It is not a technical point for the actuaries and lawyers to debate. It is a political decision which should cause all of us to ask why and to question exactly what are the Government's motives in adopting a position that they say could cost billions of pounds when they exaggerate the cost.

Congress, we do need to be vigilant. We need to be prepared for further battles to defend our members' pensions and to defend the principle that all public service workers must have good-quality defined benefit pension provision. In the NHS, that means workers young and old, well paid and not so well paid, frontline healthcare workers or support staff, all having the opportunity to have a pension based on their earnings and not on the vagaries of the market.

Congress, please support the motion. Let us support the FBU victory but, at the same time, send a very clear message to Government that we will not sit back if they

attempt to use this situation to attack our pension schemes and to blame the trade unions for it. Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

**Bridie McCreesh** (*Unite the Union*) spoke in support of the motion. *She said:* Congress, this motion rightly condemns the unjust and unfair decision of this Government to deny public sector workers the reduction in contributions in pension benefit improvements that they have rightly earned. Pensions are not just some added luxury or some added bonus. They are deferred pay. We expect not one penny more or one penny less than we have worked for.

Congress, this latest attack is nothing less than a new front on the Tories' decade-long austerity offensive against public sector workers. That offensive has already cost 760,000 of our friends and colleagues their jobs and livelihoods. Now the Tories have come for the pay and pensions of those who have escaped their acts. It makes Savage Javed's (and I mean Savage) talk of turning the page on austerity ring all the more hollow and false.

Congress, in Northern Ireland, the situation is even more acute. It has now been two years and eight months since Northern Ireland had a functioning executive. Throughout that time, it has only been the sacrifice and hard work and goodwill of the civil servants and public sector workers in local authorities which have kept the Government going. That goodwill is fast evaporating now and we know that our pensions will not be worth anything until a full 40 years have been paid in.

Congress, I want to thank the General Secretary and President of this Congress for the strong intervention on our behalf against this attack, but if lobbying and legal action

are not enough then it is right that we step up the fight. Congress, support this motion and let us commit ourselves to the coordinated industrial action not only to overturn the valuation suspension, but until the entire austerity offensive is defeated and reversed. Please support. (*Applause*)

**Karen Williams** (*National Education Union*) supported the motion. *She said:* I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) The NEU fully supports this motion. Thousands of teachers and other public sector workers covered by the Hutton pension reforms are affected by Liz Truss's decision in January. From last week, they should have been benefiting from a significant increase in benefit value from their contributions for the next four years and indeed for the last four years, where valuations have shown that contributions paid in were higher than necessary. It is particularly galling using the McCloud case as an excuse to defer contribution reductions or benefit improvements in the light of increased employer contributions which are going ahead in any case.

Gavin Williamson, the current Secretary of State for Education (in case you have not been keeping up with who is in charge there) has announced extra funding for state-funded schools to subsidise the higher employer contribution. If the DfE is just giving money to schools to pay for these, why put them up in the first place?

The situation is less clear regarding teachers employed in further education, higher education and those centrally employed. Furthermore, in independent schools, where the employer contribution is not being funded, we have had to support teacher members to resist employer attempts to pull out of the teacher pension scheme altogether, including by taking strike action. These schools are trying to offer inferior private pension schemes, putting teachers at risk of a poorly-funded retirement. Many

teachers employed by state schools are supply teachers who are unable to contribute at all to the TPS and teachers move around in all these sectors so it is likely to lead to administrative chaos.

Congress, teachers and other public sector workers are being denied what was promised to them. The NEU fully supports the call for the current suspension to be reversed immediately. *(Applause)*

**Jo McNeill** (*University and College Union*) supported the motion. *She said:* I am also a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am speaking on behalf of the UCU delegation and UCU members to stand in solidarity with all of those fighting to protect their public service pensions.

This motion calls on the TUC to organise a trades union campaign and to build action. This is absolutely vital. Last year, my union led the biggest strike action the higher education sector has ever seen in defence of our Universities Superannuation Scheme pensions. They wanted to scrap our defined benefits completely and move us entirely into defined contributions.

It was not an easy campaign. It took dedication and commitment from long-serving activists to get that strike off the ground, but as our organising grew for the 14 days of strike action so did our membership. Our numbers exploded with over 15,000 new members joining UCU so that they could take to the streets with us.

We stood together for our pensions and we transformed our union for the better. We made major gains, but that fight is not over and tomorrow our ballot opens again. Our

activists will be working hard across the country to get the vote out to beat the Tory turnout hurdle so that we can take to the streets again to finish what we started. We all need to remember that our pensions are not a benefit; they are our hard-earned deferred pay. So we stand with PCS, the FBU, the radiographers and all workers fighting to defend their pensions. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thanks very much, Jo. I am sure Congress wants to wish the best to the UCU in your ballot. We hope you smash the threshold and win your dispute. *(Applause)*

**Linda Hobson** (*UNISON*) supported Composite Motion 14. *She said:* The attacks on public service pensions have been all too frequent under the Tory Government over the past decade. My first experience of taking industrial action was as a nurse within the NHS forced by a Tory Government to not just strike to defend my pension, but also to defend the pensions of those public sector workers who will come after us.

Recently, universities, along with further education and sixth form colleges in England, have been allowed to opt out of offering access to a local government pension scheme to new support staff. It is a shameful act, ideologically driven, as we know it will not just stop at education. Others will be asking the Government for similar opt-outs, too. This puts the very survival of these pension schemes at risk. Those of us currently employed in public services must be assured of a level of dignity when we eventually retire.

Motion 64 rightly draws attention to the Government's decision to press ahead with reducing the SCAPE discount rate costing public sector employers an extra £6 billion

over five years, money that we would rather see used to improve our services and the terms and conditions of our members. Congress, it is vital that the Government does not reduce this rate again, especially as we see long-term growth rates decline, a scenario made even more likely with the prospect of a no-deal Boris Brexit and with Trump's trade wars causing further chaos with a real risk of a global recession. Do these far-right racist misogynists have to worry about their pensions? Of course not. They are looking at further ways of attacking ours cynically using the FBU's legal success as an excuse to halt the scheme benefit improvements.

Through no fault of the FBU, there is a potential knock-on threat that the remedy process could have a negative impact for some members in other public sector schemes. The NHS, in particular, is likely to be a complicated and more costly one, whilst the proposed changes to the law of a Government pension scheme that would benefit our lowest-paid members are now put on hold, further evidence of how the many are yet again paying the price to line the pockets of the few, driven by this Tory Government.

Congress, we know how low this Government will sink. We must work together to defend public service pensions whenever and wherever they come under attack. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Joe Simpson** *(The professional trade union for prison, correctional and secure psychiatric workers)* supported the motion. *He said:* The POA would like to congratulate the FBU on a stunning victory in the High Court. We are just the same as well because we have

4,500 stayed applications at the Employment Tribunal on the same argument.

Congress, I have been attending all of the talks on pensions since 2010, along with our President, Mark Serwotka. I would like to thank him for the support that he has given me personally all the way through that. Mark, thank you very much.

Congress, the POA's position is quite simple. We do not want to work past 60. We cannot work past 60 in the environment that we have in our prisons. You have all seen it and I am not going to rehearse it. You have seen our campaigns on it. But not only that, they have turned around and told us that they could not afford our pensions, that we would have to pay for them and it was going to be 5.4%. Fast forward four years: we did not need to pay that at all and now, when the FBU have won their victory, the rogue dogs have turned around and said that we cannot have our money back. Congress, I have locked people up for stealing less than they have from us!  
*(Applause)*

The TUC have quite rightly called on the Government to pay that money back to our members. Our younger members cannot afford to join a pension scheme, especially those with young families because they want to put a roof over their heads and food in their bellies. With our pensions, it is deferred pay for our service to the public. When we look back at 2011 and the two million workers that were on strike, our members were there as well and you know that our members can take industrial action.

Will we be there again? I cannot say that from this rostrum because my General Secretary will strangle me when I go back because we are up in court for contempt of court, but I will say this. Congress, if we are going to do it, let us do it and we will fight to the end. Please support. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thanks very much, Joe. I would not want to be locked up by you so I hope they are listening! I will take the COP now.

**Martin Furlong** (*The College of Podiatry*) supported Composite Motion 14. He said: Like everybody else, I would like to start off by congratulating the FBU for having the guts to take their court case forward and win a great case on behalf of their members.

Public sector workers have long worried that this Government want to destroy their pensions and I think their actions on this issue are adding to the evidence piling up against them. The *Daily Mail*-led mantra against public sector workers enjoying gold-plated pensions is miles from the truth. The average pension which is actually received is less than £7,000, meaning that many recipients of a pension in the first place from the public sector are living in poverty and you cannot gold-plate much for that.

Like other unions, the College of Podiatry sit on our scheme-specific advisory board and we discuss what to do with the cost cap breach. Just to be clear, as other speakers have been, that cost cap breach is that our members paid more into the pension scheme than was needed; it is their money.

We reached an agreed position, as did other negotiations, which replicated the costs to public sectors. They would have resulted in real benefits for our members who had overpaid their contributions. Instead, the Government came up with a clever, Eton-inspired wheeze to say that because one union had rightfully won a case of age



discrimination, the whole public sector would not benefit from this windfall and there was no connection between the legal case and the cost cap so it was not a windfall.

Let us be very clear. The Government lost the legal case here because they got it wrong in the first place. The cost cap should not have been passed on to other workers in the public sectors and the Government now need to pay up. We have to congratulate the FBU for having the guts to stand up to this Government and winning this case. We need to say "Shame on you" to the Government for taking our members' money away from them and we have to say to them, "Give our members back what is their money." Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

**John McGill** (*NASUWT*) supported Composite Motion 14. He said: The NASUWT strongly supports and welcomes this motion from PCS. The NASUWT opposed the reform of public sector pensions by the Coalition Government in 2015 and remains in dispute with the Government over the reforms. The reforms meant that teachers, alongside other public sector workers, had to work longer and pay more for their pensions. The pretext for this increase in retirement ages across all public sector pensions was that life expectancy was increasing.

However, we now have lower forecasts of life expectancy from the ONS, a damning indictment of Tory austerity. This means that teachers' pensions did not reach the value of benefits which teachers were due. Public sector austerity and the fact that teachers' pay did not match inflation from 2012 onwards also had a detrimental effect on the value of teachers' pensions.

The Government's pretext for the public sector pension reform was exposed as hollow

and yet the Government continued to attack our teachers' pensions. If the Government had followed the regulations which it put in place in 2015, all teachers in the career-average pension scheme would now have seen a significant improvement in their pensions from April 1st of this year. Via the Teachers' Pension Scheme Advisory Boards across the UK, the NASUWT negotiated an improved accrual, securing agreements in accrual of between 147th and 149th across the UK pension schemes. This would have given a real improvement in pension benefits for hundreds of thousands of teachers because the current accrual rate is 157th.

However, in January of this year, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced that all improvements to all public sector pension schemes would not take place. The Government's actions to prevent improvements in public sector pension scheme benefits amount to a betrayal of the promises that were made to public sector workers when their pension schemes were reformed in 2015.

The NASUWT robustly condemns the Government's actions which demonstrate yet again that public sector workers' pensions, including teachers' pensions, are not safe in this Government's hands. The NASUWT strongly supports the motion to call for the TUC to organise coordinated union campaigning to defend all public sector workers' pensions. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President:** Thank you very much, John. There has been no opposition so I am going to move straight to the vote. Congress, can I ask all in favour of Composite Motion 14 to show? Thank you. Any against? That is carried unanimously. Thank you, Congress.

\* *Composite Motion 14 was CARRIED*

**Address by Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento, General Secretary,  
CTC Cuba**

**The President:** Congress, it is now my great pleasure to introduce our international speaker. You will see that we have been joined by Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento, General Secretary of the CTC in Cuba. Ulises has been a leader of the Cuban trade union Movement since 2014, a trained engineer and a union leader in the construction sector. Since last year, he has also been an MP in Cuba's National Assembly and a member of the Council of State.

This year, the CTC celebrates its 80th anniversary and the TUC wishes to congratulate you and all of your members. We are proud to be supporting the Unions for Cuba Conference in November of this year, organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, which will mark the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. We look forward to strengthening our historic friendship between the British and Cuban trade unions. Ulises, you are very welcome and I invite you to address our Congress.  
*(Applause)*

**(Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento addressed Congress in  
Spanish to a standing ovation)**

**The President:** Can I thank Ulises, before he runs off, for what I am sure you will agree was an incredibly stirring speech and particularly to pick up on the reference to solidarity to Talulah in Brazil and against the dreadful things that are happening there.

Ulises, can I speak for all our members when I say that the TUC is committed to supporting the Cuban people and once again we congratulate you and all our Cuban sisters and brothers on the CTC's 80th anniversary. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

### **Freedom for Ocalan photo opportunity**

**The President:** Congress, there are just one or two things before we close. Two years ago, our Congress agreed to support the campaign to free the leader of the Kurdish Peace Movement, Abdullah Ocalan. This campaign is now backed by many of our unions, including my own, I am proud to say, at our conference this year, but the situation in Turkey continues to deteriorate. I am going to ask everyone in a minute to show our solidarity with the Kurdish people and Abdullah Ocalan himself in demanding his freedom. We often hear people say a lot in terms of the fight against Isis, but I am sure we will all agree that it was the Kurdish people who so bravely led the fight against Isis on the ground and suffered so many casualties. *(Applause)*

Congress, to show our solidarity with Ocalan and the Kurdish people and our support for a renewed peace process, I am going to ask everyone now to hold up the campaign placards that are on your seats and keep them raised while we take some pictures to demonstrate our support for the campaign.

### **(Photographs taken as Congress displayed campaign placards)**

**The President:** Thank you very much, Congress. From where I was sitting, it looked like 500 young Len McCluskeys out there! *(Laughter)*

Congress, that completes our business for this afternoon. Can I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this evening including the welcome reception immediately after Congress in the main entrance on the ground floor of the Conference Centre. Details of all meetings are displayed on the screens. They can also be found on page 10 of the Congress guide or in the leaflet included in your Congress wallet.

Congress, this has been a fantastic day with real unity in the debate and I hope everyone has a really pleasant evening. For those who are concerned, England lost the Ashes -- shame! Please note that when they lose the Ashes, it is England, but when they win, of course it is the England and Wales Cricket Board. I hope everyone has a really good night and I will see you all at 9.30. Congress stands adjourned.

*Congress adjourned at 7.00 p.m.*