

## **APPENDIX A: PROPOSITIONS CARRIED AND REMITTED AT THE 2005 CONFERENCE**

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### **RULE CHANGES**

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As announced in Branch Circular 690, printed copies of the rule book as amended on 4 June 2005 were issued to all new members, and to other members on request, from mid-June 2005. An insert to bring up-to-date existing copies of the 2004 edition was circulated with the July-August 2005 issue of *Stage Screen & Radio*.

New rule 18(c) gave the NEC discretion to form a pensioners' forum. A meeting of the General Officers and the BECTU's representatives on the Executive Committee and National Council of the National Pensioners Convention took place on 2 October 2005. This proposed a two-phase programme to build, first, a BECTU Pensioners Forum within existing union resources, which, if judged successful, could be followed by a semi-autonomous BECTU pensioners' association set up under rule amendments proposed to the 2008 rules revision conference. The NEC referred the proposal to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for detailed examination. This recommended that a questionnaire be sent to the union's 3,000 retired members to establish at what level of involvement they wished to be engaged.

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### **CARRIED PROPOSITIONS**

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#### **Proposition 2/05      Venue of conference**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC to continue to cost conference venues outside England and, if they prove comparable, should make them the first choice for the next venue ahead of any in England.

It became necessary to make a firm booking for the 2006 annual conference shortly after the 2005 conference as options were rapidly running out. The 2006 conference was confirmed for The Floral Hall, Devonshire Park Centre, Eastbourne on Sunday 21 May 2006, with divisional conferences taking place on the preceding Saturday.

Further venues outside England were extensively researched for 2007. However, at its meeting on 29 January 2006 the National Executive Committee concluded that cost would still be the over-riding consideration for the 2007 conference. It therefore agreed that the 2007 conference should be held at the new conference facility at Butlins in Bognor Regis, West Sussex.

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#### **Proposition 13/05      Protection of conditions and pensions**

That this annual conference asks the NEC to lobby for legislation to ensure that all cases, regardless of whether they are company sales, outsources, joint ventures or TUPEs, provide full recognition and transfer of all terms and conditions of service and provision of fully funded matching pension schemes, and furthermore an absolute restriction of compulsory redundancies for a period of not less than five years from the date of sale or transfer. The legislation should also permit trade unions to ballot and implement industrial action to register protest against all such sales and transfers.

AGS Gerry Morrissey wrote on 24 June 2005 to the DTI Secretary of State Alan Johnson highlighting the issues raised in this proposition. A reply was received on 30 August 2005 from Gerry Sutcliffe, Minister responsible for employment relations. This referred to the government's intention to revise the TUPE regulations with effect from 6 April 2006; to new provisions protecting pensions which took effect on 1 April 2005; to the government's belief that the regulations should not place an absolute bar on redundancies following a transfer as this would confer a higher level of protection for transferred employees than for any other category of worker; and to clarifications made to the law on industrial action which the government believed made it easier for unions to comply, but further changes to the definition of a trade dispute were not contemplated. This response was reported to the NEC at its meeting on 2 October 2005. The NEC resolved to continue to press for improvements in statutory protection.

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#### **Proposition 14/05      Rights of asylum seekers**

That this annual conference asks the NEC to monitor any future government's proposals on immigration and asylum to ensure that any legislation does not adversely affect the cases of asylum seekers specifically those involving media workers and trade union activists.

This proposition was referred by the NEC to the union's research officer with a request that any future government proposals on immigration and asylum be drawn to their attention of the NEC. The research officer submitted two reports in July 2005 in connection with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill published by the government on 22 June 2005. The NEC considered this matter at its meeting on 2 October 2005, and resolved to continue to monitor legislative developments.

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#### **Proposition 16/05      BECTU website**

That this annual conference believes that there should be an option of an online version of *Stage Screen & Radio*, furthermore that the website should be updated and redesigned and made more relevant and user-friendly and conform with recent DDA legislation.

This proposition was referred to the union's Communications Committee which considered the advantages and disadvantages of unrestricted public access to the journal on the website. The NEC, at its meeting on 2 October 2005, decided that when practical an accessible on-line version of the journal should be made available on the union's website a week after publication of the printed version. The Communications Committee is continuing to examine this in relation to the possible appointment of an Information Officer.

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#### **Proposition 18/05      Cuts in public broadcasting**

That this annual conference deplores the cuts and privatisations announced for the BBC by Director-General Mark Thompson which seriously threaten public broadcasting in the UK. All divisions represented at this conference support the efforts of BECTU as well as the other BBC unions' officials in the fight against the cuts which, if allowed to go ahead unchallenged, would have a serious impact on the whole broadcasting industry.

This proposition was referred to the BBC divisional committee, which welcomed the cross-divisional support and has continued to deal with the issue as a matter of priority.

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**Proposition 19/05      Film distribution**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC through its Film Policy Committee to approach the government (DCMS and DTI), UK Film Council, independent cinema and commercial multiplex operators and associations to investigate and promote the case for a clearing-house to help smaller budget hits in independent cinemas cross over to audiences in bigger chains.

This proposition was referred to the union's Film Policy Committee and the London Production divisional committee. The Film Policy Committee meeting on 8 June 2005 asked AGS Martin Spence to approach the UK Film Council for relevant statistics. This was done, and it was reported that the clearing-house mechanism suggested in the proposition did not address the problem of low-budget film distribution. It was agreed that no further action could usefully be taken.

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**Proposition 22/05      Learning reps (AP18)**

That this annual conference reaffirms the importance of the learning agenda to the future of the union, and instructs every branch of the union to nominate a branch representative for learning by December 2005.

The terms of this proposition were referred to all branch secretaries in Branch Circular 695 dated 20 July 2005.

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**Proposition 27/05      DTI employment agency standards**

That this annual conference deplores the practice of employment agencies being allowed to charge up-front fees to work-seekers and to charge excessive commission rates, despite attempts to regulate their conduct.

Conference therefore calls on the NEC, with the assistance if possible of the TUC, to lobby the Department of Trade and Industry to:

- (a) abolish all up-front fees;
- (b) reintroduce the licencing of agencies;
- (c) set a statutory cap on agency commission rates.

At its meeting on 17 July 2005 the NEC considered this proposition, together with subsequent correspondence from the Scottish Freelance branch criticising the proposition, and a report from NO Spencer MacDonald. It took the view that there was a misunderstanding on the part of the branch in their interpretation of what was expected under the proposition. The NEC requested that Spencer MacDonald liaise as appropriate with the Scottish Freelance branch.

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### **Emergency Proposition 1/05 Working time**

That this annual conference is appalled and dismayed by the UK Government's continuing opt out of crucial parts of the Working Time Directive. We call upon the NEC to continue the fight for decent working practices by raising the issue at the annual Labour Party conferences in England, Scotland and Wales.

At its meeting on 17 July 2005 the NEC resolved that the union would support any compatible proposition on this subject which made it on to the order paper of the Labour Party Conference and the Party conferences in Scotland and Wales. The proposition and NEC decision were drawn to the attention of Paul McManus and David Donovan. The NEC also made it clear that BECTU delegates would also be willing to attend and argue for the principles of this proposition at any relevant fringe meetings at these conferences or at the TUC.

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### **Emergency Proposition 2/05 Luis Posada Carriles**

Conference condemns the hypocrisy of the US government in refusing to extradite Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela to face charges of terrorism. Posada escaped custody in 1985 while awaiting trial for the bombing of a Cuban civilian airline in 1976 which resulted in the death of 73 passengers. He also admitted to the New York Times that he directed the bombing of hotels in Havana which caused the death of an Italian tourist in 1998. In April this year he was taken in to custody in Miami but the US Government has refused to honour its extradition agreement with Venezuela.

Conference instructs the NEC to write letters of protest to the Foreign Secretary and the US Government.

AGS Gerry Morrissey wrote in the terms of this proposition to the Foreign Secretary and to the US Secretary of State on 22 June 2005. A reply was received on 21 July 2005 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, stating that the UK was not a party to the case and had no further comment to make other than that the UK was firmly committed to countering the threat from international terrorism. No reply was received on behalf of Condoleezza Rice. This exchange of correspondence coincided with the terrorist bombing incidents in London.

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### **Emergency Proposition 5/05 Bingo members**

Conference resolves that, in the light of the intervention by the members of the Glasgow Bingo branch, the NEC work with the Arts & Entertainment division in supporting our members within the bingo industry, who with their support might be able to stabilise or slow down the high staff turnover within their industry, thereby building a solid foundation for their future as members and BECTU as a whole.

At its meeting on 17 July 2005 the NEC asked Willy Donaghy to prepare a paper on this proposition on behalf of the Arts & Entertainment divisional committee. The report noted that the divisional policy on recruitment and retention, which had been ratified at the divisional conference the day before the emergency proposition was debated at the annual conference, concentrated limited resources where membership and income targets could most realistically be achieved. It noted the low level and high turnover of membership in the bingo sector, and that a call to all bingo members inviting them to become more active in the union had produced only one positive response. The A&E division has clearly stated, however, that it will support bingo members collectively where agreements exist, will represent bingo members individually, and will encourage locally initiated campaigns. At its meeting on 2 October 2005, the NEC endorsed the A&E paper.

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## REMITTED PROPOSITIONS

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### **Proposition 6/05      Local offices**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC to set up localised small offices in major film and television studios, London Weekend, Elstree, Pinewood, Shepperton and Leavesden, and also to rent an office in Wardour Street in order to have a presence right in the workplace, where members can access union reps and officials. Also to set up a mobile office (or a number of mobile offices) that can service members on location.

At its meeting on 17 July 2005 the NEC requested AGS Martin Spence to investigate the possibility of acquiring union office space at Pinewood, Shepperton, Elstree and Leavesden, and the possibility of a mobile office. It noted that there is already a BECTU office at London Weekend Television/London Studios. At its meeting on 3 September 2005 the London Production divisional committee felt that the idea of local offices was a good one, but that the issues of financing and staffing were fundamental.

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### **Proposition 11/05      Electronic communication**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC to actively increase the use of electronic systems to regularly communicate with and between members, branches and divisions, and weekly e-mail bulletins and mass electronic mail-outs, advertising events, news, achievements, etc.

This remitted proposition was referred to the union's Communications Committee, which drew up a draft communications policy for the union. The policy, as endorsed by the NEC on 2 October 2005, is given in **Appendix B1** following. The Communications Committee established that e-mail addresses were held for approximately 50% of BECTU's members. Following this, bulk e-mail handling software was acquired to enable bulk distribution of e-mails to e-mail addresses held on the union's membership database, subject to members' ability to unsubscribe and to data protection safeguards in general. Bulk e-mailing was used for the first time to advertise the Women's Event in November 2005. A meeting on 4 November 2005 of BECTU officials with Eric Lee of the LabourStart website stimulated further ideas for developing this form of communication with members.

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### **Proposition 15/05      Tsunami aid (AP26)**

That this annual conference notes that the G8 summit is being held at Gleneagles, Scotland, from 8 July.

This conference demands the UK government:

- Step up aid and divert war spending to save lives in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and other tsunami-affected countries;
- Cancel all debts owed by the 11 affected countries now and urge the IMF and the banks to do the same;
- Ensure aid is given 'without strings' such as 'economic restructuring' which would allow the multinationals to profit from the destruction.

This conference mandates the NEC to:

- Send a copy of this motion to the government and to campaign to ensure that all aid that has been pledged is honoured;

- Place this issue high on the list of possible motions to take to the next TUC conference;
- Join the protests at the G8 summit this July.

Branch Circular 693 and the union's website carried information about the Make Poverty History campaign. AGS Gerry Morrissey wrote to the Prime Minister in the terms of this remitted proposition on 21 July 2005. No reply has been received at the time of writing. The letter, however, was sent only a few hours before the further terrorist attempts in London.

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#### **Proposition 17/05     BECTU website and improved communication**

That this annual conference consider ways to improve the BECTU website to expand the services and information available on the website. Improved communication on the web may be an answer to falling attendances at branch meetings and may attract more interest in union activities.

This remitted proposition was referred to the union's Communications Committee. The earlier-than-expected closing date (3 October 2005) for bids to the first round of the Union Modernisation Fund led to an intense debate on whether such a bid should be made in connection with the development of the union's communications strategy and the appointment of an Information Officer. The possibility was raised of approaching the DTI over whether UMF support might be forthcoming for a feasibility study based on the draft communications policy adopted on 6 September 2005 by the Communications Committee. At its meeting on 2 October 2005 the NEC endorsed the draft strategy, but decided an ill-prepared bid to the UMF at that time was inadvisable. A bid to the second UMF round is under active consideration, without prejudice to the development in the meantime of a communications strategy for the union.

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#### **Proposition 20/05     Low budget production agreement**

That this annual conference instruct the NEC to investigate a strategy to cover low budget productions, so as to seek to introduce a union agreement tailored to this type of production which could be realistically used by the production companies. This agreement would ensure the provision of at least some safeguards and standards to freelance workers, many of whom will just be starting out in the industry and seeking a foothold on the ladder by means of gaining experience, and so are vulnerable to exploitation.

This remitted proposition was referred to the London Production and Regional Production divisional committees and the Training Committee for consideration. At its meeting on 1 October 2005 the Training Committee was unable to comment, finding the proposition too imprecise. At its meeting on 3 September 2005 the LPD committee recognised the need to regulate this area since low budget productions are open to abuse. At its meeting on 10 September 2005 the RPD committee expressed the need for a better definition of low budget productions and their intended end-use, before the proposition could be acted on. The NEC considered both responses at its meeting on 13 November 2005, and AGS Martin Spence undertook to prepare a discussion paper for both committees. This is attached as **Appendix B2** following.

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#### **Proposition 21/05     Education branch**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC to explore methods whereby the many members teaching in colleges and similar institutions have some form of representation analogous to the former ACTT branch.

This remitted proposition was referred to the Training Committee for consideration. At its meeting on 1 October 2005 the Training Committee expressed itself broadly in favour of the proposition, and looked forward to maintaining an active interest in it. At its meeting on 3 September 2005 the London Production divisional committee noted that an education and training subdivision existed within LPD and could be used to facilitate meetings of members in this area. On 10 September 2005 the Regional Production divisional committee expressed concern that the terms of the remitted proposition might cut across the organisation of such members in existing RPD branches, and suggested they could be consulted on whether they saw any specialist advantages for them in the proposal. At its meeting on 13 November 2005 the NEC noted these responses, and the fact that the two unions representing members involved in teaching, the AUT and NATFHE, were balloting on a merger. BECTU has a dual membership agreement with the Association of University Teachers. The merged AUT and NATFHE (to be known as the University and College Union) is due to become effective on 1 June 2006.

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**Proposition 24/05    New digital revolution**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC to promote an industry-wide strategy for retraining of industry workers to accommodate the new digital revolution, specifically including postproduction, distribution and projection and securing a commitment and funding from employers and training bodies.

This remitted proposition was referred to the Training Committee for consideration. At its meeting on 1 October 2005 the Training Committee was unable to comment, finding the proposition too imprecise.

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**Proposition 25/05    Feedback to members**

That this annual conference is alarmed at the widespread apathy of members' participation in union business and believes that this is at least partly due to lack of feedback to individual members about what the union is doing.

Conference therefore instructs the NEC to arrange for all members to receive individually, either in or with *Stage Screen & Radio*, at least a précis of the proceedings of the NEC meetings. Similar arrangements are to be made for reports back to all relevant\* members in the divisions of their respective divisional conferences and divisional committee meetings.

[\*relevant – means that divisional conference and divisional committee matters need only be reported individually to members in that particular division.]

This remitted proposition was referred to the union's Communications Committee in the light of related propositions on placing an on-line version of *Stage Screen & Radio* on the union's website and the bulk e-mailing of information to members. The issue is still under consideration.

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