

# NEC report to BECTU Annual Conference 2005

## APPENDIX A: PROPOSITIONS CARRIED AND REMITTED AT THE 2004 CONFERENCE

### Propositions carried at the 2004 conference

#### Proposition 2/04 stated:

That this annual conference, in a special rules session, approves the following alteration to rule under rule 45(b):

*In Appendix C insert new standing order 27 as follows:*

27 All members of the NEC are bound by collective responsibility for decisions taken by the NEC

This rule change has been incorporated into the union's rule book and is part of the rules under which the NEC must operate.

#### Proposition 4/04 stated:

That this annual conference considers the present BECTU badge too small to show clearly. Conference believes that the badge should be enlarged so that others can see more clearly that we as members are proud to show the badge.

The NEC considers that the subsequent order placed by the union for badges enlarged in size by 25% satisfied the intention of this proposition

#### Proposition 5/04 stated:

That this annual conference, in a special rules session, approves the following alteration to rule under rule 9(e):

*In rule 9(b)(i) delete the line "over £30,000    £25.00    £300.00"*

*and insert new lines as follows:*

£30,001-£32,500	£25.00	£300.00
£32,501-£35,000	£27.08	£325.00
£35,001-£37,500	£29.17	£350.00
£37,501-£40,000	£31.25	£375.00
£40,001 and over	£33.33	£400.00

These subscription rates have been incorporated into the union's rule book and are being applied.

#### Proposition 8/04 stated:

That this annual conference notes with concern the rise in popularity of the BNP and their increasing electoral success in the past few years. It therefore welcomes the coming together of anti-racist organisations, activists and trade unions to form Unite Against Fascism (UAF). This conference believes that BECTU should continue to be at the heart of the struggle against racism and fascism and therefore instructs the NEC to affiliate BECTU to UAF.

The NEC considers that its decision prior to annual conference 2004 to affiliate to UAF pre-empted conference's request and that this has satisfied the intention of this

proposition.

**Proposition 11/04 stated:**

That this annual conference deplores the decision by the BBC to sell off BBC Technology Ltd. Conference pledges its full support to the campaign to persuade the government to stick to the policy of no privatisation adopted in 2000 during the public debate on the future of the BBC licence fee.

The NEC considered that this proposition was a matter that could only be dealt with by the BBC divisional committee and that the NEC would give support to any reasonable request made by the BBC divisional committee in pursuit of the objective of this proposition.

**Proposition 12/04 stated:**

That this annual conference believes we must do all we can to retain members. Conference therefore instructs the General Secretary to send a yearly round-up of BECTU's achievements to each member, with a personal message thanking them for their support.

A letter to all members from the General Secretary was issued in the March 2005 issue of the journal, and the NEC considers this satisfies the intention of this proposition.

**Proposition 13/04 stated:**

That this annual conference notes the demise of BBC's *Picture This* and *10x10*, Carlton's *Metroland* and Channel 4's *Short Stories*, as properly funded new directors' slots. It further notes the closure of BBC's Community programmes and Disability programmes units. It instructs the NEC to make representations to all public service broadcasters seeking the preservation of diversity and access for new talent and different voices on television

The General Secretary wrote to the BBC, Carlton and Granada groups and Channel 4 on this matter and received a response from Charles Allen. The NEC considers that this proposition is being dealt with as ongoing business.

**Proposition RP6 (reinstated) stated:**

The Hair and Make-up Branch requests that this annual conference notes the practice used by employers in incorporating holiday pay into weekly rates, but holding this element back for payment at the end of the contract. This effectively avoids real holiday pay obligations being met by employers. The Hair and Make-Up branch call upon this conference to highlight this issue and pressurise Government to amend the Working Time Regulations to make this practice unlawful.

The NEC considered that this proposition set out what was existing practice, that the union regularly takes employers to employment tribunals where they seek to avoid their obligations under the Working Time Regulations in respect of holiday pay, and that the union consistently tries to persuade government to tighten up the legislation and close the loop-holes that make some of these abuses possible. The NEC considers that this proposition is being dealt with as ongoing business

**Proposition 16/04 stated:**

That this annual conference request of the Scottish Parliament that it investigate and report on the contribution of the broadcasting industry to Scottish culture in the last five years, with a view to making its views on the influence of broadcasting on Scottish culture known and available to decision-makers, particularly at the UK Parliament, and that it repeat this survey at regular intervals.

The General Secretary wrote to the First Minister about this matter and his letter was acknowledged on 16 June 2004. To date there has been no further response. The NEC

considers that strictly speaking this proposition has been dealt with, though the outcome will be disappointing to the movers.

**Proposition 19/04 stated:**

That this annual conference notes with pleasure that investment in feature films made in the UK has reached record levels. The number of British films made has however decreased and conference requests the NEC to formulate detailed proposals whereby some of the vast profits made are allocated to the development, production, distribution, exhibition, promotion and marketing of indigenous films reflecting British culture, probably by way of a box-office levy.

The views of the London and Regional Production divisions and of the Film Policy Committee were sought on this proposition. Through our affiliation to EURO-MEI we have sought information on box-office and ticket-price levies elsewhere in Europe. However, for much of the past year we have been forced to focus our efforts on defending a viable tax regime which is the primary support mechanism now available for UK film production. Our aim has not simply been to maximise investment in the short term, but to create an environment where members can count on a sustained level of UK film production offering decent pay and working conditions.

**Proposition RP7 (reinstated) stated:**

The Hair and Make-up branch requests that this annual conference notes that production companies are drafting working schedules on the basis of shooting hours i.e. 12hrs. These schedules do not take into consideration grades such as Hair and Make-up and Costume and Wardrobe and production staff, who are required to work extra hours either side of the shooting schedule, breaking not only the 11hr break, but also well in excess of the working time regulations of a maximum 48hr working week. The Hair and Make-up branch call upon this conference to instruct our representatives to lobby employers and government in order to campaign for an end to this practice.

The views of the London and Regional Production divisions were sought on this proposition. Both divisions noted the union's record of active campaigning on working hours, the long term impact of excessive hours on members' health and work-life balance. They agreed that the issue must constantly be brought to the attention of employers and employers' bodies including PACT.

There was an added dimension to this proposition in terms of the consultation going on at European and UK level on the 48-hour opt-out. BECTU has continued to campaign to bring to an end the 48-hour opt-out. The NEC therefore considers that appropriate action is being taken in respect of this proposition

**Proposition 20/04 stated:**

That this annual conference instructs the National Executive Committee to re-examine the current Health and Safety at Work legislation, especially the role of safety officers with particular emphasis on the problems of freelance workers in the broadcasting and entertainment industry, and to provide branches with a clear summary of the most salient points so that members can use them in dealing with recalcitrant employers.

This proposition was referred to the National Health and Safety Committee. The NHSC recommended to the NEC

- that given BECTU's existing health and safety publications, it would not be justified or practical to produce a further and separate publication as requested by the proposition to cover a range of working situations and likely hazards;
- that the union should investigate the possibility of reprinting the health and safety craft cards;

- that we should consider specific training courses for freelancers and health and safety;
- that we should encourage LPD and RPD divisional committees to build their network of members interested in health and safety;
- that any longer term initiatives should be subject to consideration of whether the union was able to move to the appointment of a Health and Safety official.

The NEC accepted this recommendation and, subject to the question of a Health and Safety official (see below) considers it has taken and is continuing to take appropriate action on this proposition.

## **Propositions remitted from the 2004 conference**

The NEC considers that it has taken appropriate action on the following remitted propositions.

### **Remitted Propositions 6/04 and 7/04 stated respectively:**

That this annual conference instructs the National Executive Committee to investigate the possibility of forming a retirement branch or branches. This is on the understanding that this branch or these branches would not be a drain on union resources.

That this annual conference recognises that rapid advances have been made in the fields of medical-human and technological resources resulting in extended life expectancy. Conference is further aware that there are no facilities available within BECTU for the increase in retired members of the union. Conference urges the NEC to explore the possibility of creating a retired members' forum solely for persons who have reached retirement whilst being a member of the union. Retired members can be invited to attend their respective divisional committees, to observe and advise. This would also be an influence on the induction of the new members to the union.

The NEC considered a report on the practices are adopted by other comparable unions in relation to retired members. It subsequently agreed

- that BECTU should not formally seek to incorporate retired members into its structures;
- that retired members should be encouraged to play an active part in the National Pensioners' Convention; and
- that BECTU should, if conference agrees this way forward, make an annual contribution of £1,000 to the National Pensioners' Convention.

### **Remitted Proposition 9/04 stated:**

That this annual conference is concerned at the large numbers of civilians and troops from all sides who have lost their lives as a result of the war and ongoing occupation of Iraq.

Conference also notes the historic demonstrations organised by the Stop the War Coalition against the war itself and the visit of George W Bush to Britain. Stop the War is continuing to campaign against the occupation of Iraq, and to prevent wars in Iran, Syria and North Korea. Conference believes it is not in this country's interest to pursue such wars, and therefore instructs BECTU to affiliate to the Stop the War Coalition.

The union has continued to support the activities of the Stop the War Coalition so long as the NEC believes those activities to be consistent with the views of BECTU's members. The NEC has not ruled out the possibility of making financial donations to particular causes or one we may sympathise with. The NEC considers that appropriate action has continued to be taken on this proposition

### **Remitted Proposition 14/04 stated:**

That this annual conference notes that in England and Wales only eight bank and public holidays are generally given per year, fewer than any other EU member state and three days fewer than the EU average.

Conference calls upon the government to increase the number of public holidays by two per year and that the new public holidays reflect our multicultural society.

Conference resolves that BECTU shall put forward resolutions to this effect at the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

This proposition was remitted because the NEC was concerned that we would have to utilise one of our two motions to the TUC in order to satisfy its aims. The TUC has already launched a campaign to increase the number of public holidays in the UK, and BECTU has continued to support that campaign. The NEC considers that appropriate action is being taken on this proposition.

### **Remitted Proposition 15/04 stated:**

That this annual conference instructs the NEC to establish a proper and effective channel for long-term unemployed members to be heard as a body and to be supported in exploring possibilities for re-employment. Currently these members are finding that existing occupational branches are unable to serve them adequately as unemployed persons.

The views of the London and Regional Production divisions were sought on this proposition. Both divisions considered that while the union should be striving to help its unemployed members find work, it would be unhelpful to remove them from their current branches.

### **Remitted Proposition 17/04 stated:**

That this annual conference, recognising that Scotland, while remaining within the UK, has its own distinctive cultural and political climate, instructs the NEC to campaign for broadcasting regulation in Scotland to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

It was noted that the terms of this proposition did not reflect the established cross-divisional position of the union and, considering the lack of response to the letter sent in relation to Proposition 16/04, a change of policy did not seem advisable at this time.

### **Remitted Propositions 23/04 and 24/04**

These propositions concerning the journal were not reached at the 2004 conference, but were eventually considered by the NEC's Finance & General Purposes Committee. The F&GPC recommended that the terms of Proposition 23/04, calling for an editorial board, be rejected as it was the NEC's established policy to oppose the creation of such a board in favour of editorial freedom. It also recommended that no action be taken on remitted Proposition 24/04, which as it stood sought to assert the right of all members to have their letters published in the journal. The NEC accepted these recommendations on 13 March 2005.

### **Remitted Propositions 3/04, RP5 (reinstated), 21/04, 22/04 and 6/03 (reintroduced)**

The National Executive Committee has sought to give careful consideration to remitted propositions 3/04, RP5, 21/04, 22/04 and 6/03. These propositions dealt with the venue

of conference, the appointment of a health and safety officer and an information officer, and a proposal to hold an annual event at head office.

The NEC was very much aware that the aims of these propositions had to be considered within the context of the union's financial position. With regard to the proposed annual event at head office, the NEC noted that at present the head office facilities are insufficiently accessible to cater safely and without potential discrimination with the number of attendees implied in the proposal. The matter can be reviewed after the anticipated property development has been completed at Clapham Road.

The propositions were the subject of a paper from the General Secretary which the NEC considered on 4 July 2004. The main suggestions of the paper were as follows:

- 1 that a biennial conference be held outside London along with biennial divisional conferences;
- 2 that in the year in which we do not have a biennial conference the union should, subject to the facilities being satisfactory, organise a head office event for representatives from each division of the union to discuss the key issues facing the union at that time;
- 3 that following the successful women's conference in November 2003, a women's conference should be held biennially in the year when we do not hold a biennial conference;
- 4 that conditionally upon the recommendation on these matters to the 2005 conference, the NEC agrees to appoint a health and safety officer at the national official grade;
- 5 that in relation to an information officer, this should become integrally linked to the Union Modernisation Fund bid for e-membership (it is possible that the appointment of an information officer would be accepted as our part of the matched funding to the project).

The National Executive Committee decided to seek the views of the different divisional committees of the union on these suggestions. All of the divisional committees of the union were in favour of a rule change on a biennial conference being put to the union's 2005 rules revision conference along the lines suggested above.

The National Executive Committee have agreed that if the rules revision conference accepts this proposal, then the National Executive Committee will employ, before the end of 2005, a health and safety officer and will incorporate into its bid under the Union Modernisation Fund an information officer as part of our matched funding for that bid.