



So What Happened to Our Conference Motion 16 The “Lucas Plan”, Arms Conversion and Socially Useful Production?

1st TUCJCC renamed it Defence, Jobs and Diversification then sent it to TUC Congress

2nd It was accepted onto agenda and heard on Tuesday 12th September PM

To remind you of what your motion said

Congress Motion 17 Defence, jobs and diversification

Congress welcomes the 'Lucas Plan' 40th Anniversary Conference held in Birmingham in

November 2016 and agrees that the Plan was an idea from which we can learn much today. The Plan was a pioneering effort by workers at arms company Lucas Aerospace to retain jobs by proposing alternative, socially useful applications of the company's technology and their own skills. Forty years afterwards, we are facing a convergence of crises — militarism and nuclear weapons, climate chaos, and the destruction of jobs by automation — which mean that we have to start thinking about technology as political, as the Lucas Aerospace workers did. However, in the four decades since the Plan was drawn up Britain's manufacturing industry has shrunk from 25 per cent to 14 per cent of GDP, with the 'defence' industry now representing 10 per cent of all manufacturing. Britain cannot afford to lose any more manufacturing skills and capacity, and 'defence' workers are rightly concerned about the potential loss of jobs, for example if Trident replacement is cancelled. In line with the outcomes of the Lucas Plan Conference, Congress therefore calls on trade unions and the TUC to lobby the Labour Party to establish before the next general election a 'shadow' Defence Diversification Agency, to work closely with the Shadow Department for Industry in developing an overall national industrial strategy including the possibility of conversion of 'defence' capacity. The first task of this Agency would be to engage with plant representatives, trades unions representing workers in the 'defence' industry, and local authorities, to discuss their needs and capacities, and to listen to their ideas, so that practical plans can be drawn up for arms conversion while protecting skilled employment and pay levels. A key means for developing the national industrial strategy would be the National Investment Bank proposed by the Shadow Chancellor. Congress also urges trades union councils, trade unions and the General Council of the TUC to assist the work of such a 'shadow' Agency if set up?.

What Happened?

The General Council took no position on the motion and left the decision to Congress.

This was the proposing speech-

Comrades, I'm very honoured to be the first delegate of the Trades Unions Councils conference to move our motion at Congress. Trades Councils, our unions developing solidarity in the community, do an essential job – particularly in these times of rapid political change.

We're proposing that we need to seize the moment to tackle the big Union and community issues of industry, jobs and skills.

British industry has been long neglected and abandoned, as capital has been “freely moved” abroad for higher profit. In the last four decades it has shrunk from 25% to 14% of GDP.

10% of all industry is in defence, high skill and high value jobs – subjected to cuts and tens of thousands of redundancies with much more to come.... except of course currently in the increasingly questioned £200bn Trident program.

As well as coordinated industrial struggle for jobs, there is a clear economic and political need for a national Industrial Strategy in which Defence Diversification, the planned move from the production of armaments to socially useful products, plays a major part.

There is growing opposition to British military involvement in apparently perpetual wars. The British arms trade with despotic regimes is under pressure. And of course the future of Trident is nowhere near as certain as the Parliamentary process of approval would like us to think. Congress has shared these concerns and positions over the years. But of course, without Defence Diversification, all of these have further implications for existing defence jobs.

Diversification is more achievable now than it has been for decades.

Firstly, leaving the EU means that the next Labour Government will be free to establish a state interventionist Industrial Strategy to rebuild manufacturing industry to meet the needs of our people. Jeremy Corbyn's commitment to this is well known - backed up by the establishment of a National Investment Bank.

Secondly, workers involved in Diversification need to be given the assurance and confidence that not only would there be no loss of jobs or skill, but these would be enhanced as part of the process. It will take time, investment and sustained political will by government.

It needs a Government prepared to make these guarantees – and for once we are able to point to a Labour leadership with our values.

Jeremy Corbyn has promised, and I quote *“A just transition for communities whose livelihoods are based in those defence sectors, so that engineering and scientific skills are not lost, but are transferred into more socially productive industries... in transitioning away from nuclear weapons we'd do so in such a way that protects the jobs and skills of those who currently work on Trident, and in the defence sector more widely”*

Thirdly, our Trade Union movement's role is central. It's not a matter of just leaving it to government. They'd need our active support to make it happen. We need to step up and to coordinate our industrial struggles for jobs while at the same time being central in constructing the Industrial Strategy agenda for a new Britain, with new working-class priorities – “for the many not the few.” It would rely on the active participation of our Trade Unions, plant representatives and local communities, together with government.

Our times are full of change. But they are also full of danger. We are deep in what Francis has described as class war, and this struggle is part of it.

There will be profit led forces who would want to kill a Labour led interventionist Industrial Strategy - and particularly one which features Defence Diversification – just as they killed earlier diversification plans - for example the inspirational Lucas Plan of 1976 and the much less inspirational model of the Blair Government Diversification Agency in 1999 – which ended up privatised with a hefty slice for US private equity company Carlyle Group!

If we seize the time, we can defeat such forces and help build the political and economic structures and mechanisms. Alongside our industrial fight for jobs, we need the Labour Party to set up a shadow Defence Diversification Agency as soon as possible, as part of the

development of an overall Industrial Strategy, with jobs and skills guarantees, for inclusion in the next Labour Party General Election Manifesto.

Comrades, we have the opportunity to force the direction and pace of change. The whole movement must use all our power to ensure it is not frustrated as it has been before. END

The Motion was Seconded by Unite and supported by CWU. The motion was also opposed, the main speech against was this -

The consequences of this motion would be to take away from thousands of workers the certainty of good, unionised jobs that give them and their communities prosperity and economic security. The motion fails to address the issue of appropriate defence strategies to protect the security and safety of a nation of more than 65 million people in a very uncertain world. Britain is an island nation, nowhere near self-sufficient in either food or energy. The security of the nation, and the wellbeing of its citizens, requires strong armed forces equipped with the latest weapons, to keep the sea lanes open and deter threats. Parliament has already voted to renew Trident; 14 months ago it was passed by a majority of 355. Labour's superb manifesto at the general election was explicit, 'Labour supports the renewal of the Trident nuclear deterrent'; and the Party kept hold of seats on the back of that commitment. This motion undermines Trident and the conventional defence industry through the back door - an industry employing over 250,000 workers and 4,300 apprentices - where average pay is some 44% above the national average. Exactly the sort of well-paid, highly skilled jobs everyone of us in this hall works to achieve and protect. The motion calls for the TUC, and Unions like GMB with thousands of members employed in the defence sector, to campaign for an Agency whose key aim would be to ask Trade Unionists to come up with ideas for replacing their own jobs - akin to asking them to become the proverbial turkeys voting for Christmas. GMB already listens to our members in the defence industries. We know GMB members take pride in their work and their skills, we know they are proud of the contribution they make to their industries, the economy and yes - the defence of their country. Congress, The Lucas Plan was about saving jobs in the face of company redundancies, this motion risks encouraging redundancies. The logical conclusion would be to actually fuel the decline in manufacturing jobs the motion is supposed to prevent. Our members in defence would vote with their feet. GMB cannot support a motion replacing real, well-paid, Unionised jobs with uncertainty, insecurity and decline. members in the shipbuilding industry and the defence sector are as vital to our security as the RAF's pilots or the Navy's sailors. Congress, posturing on unilateral disarmament and neutrality undermines the security of our fellow citizens as well as undermining the jobs and communities of our members. GMB will never support such proposals. Please oppose motion 17. Thank you.

This was my Right of Reply to the opposition

Comrades, this motion is not about a defence strategy. This motion is about addressing the job losses that have already occurred and those we know are planned in the defence industry.

This motion is not about scrapping Trident, because a 2013 Congress Composite included

“Public finances can be improved by tackling tax avoidance and scrapping the replacement of Trident. Money saved by ending our nuclear weapons system could be used to sustain the process of defence diversification vital to our manufacturing future. Such a policy would need to ensure that the jobs and skills of thousands of workers in the sector were preserved”.

This motion is about strategy to maintain skilled employment and protect pay levels, of using not losing technical knowledge. Of job preservation-not job loss that effects GMB members as well as others. It seeks to establish a shadow Defence Diversification Agency to work closely with the shadow Department of Industry in developing an overall national industrial strategy. To stem job loss where it hasn't been stemmed before. To offer hope to workers threatened with redundancy. I remain honoured to move this in what I consider to be our Workers Parliament-Support for the many not the few, thank you comrades.

The motion was overwhelmingly carried

So what now?

The motion is now the property of the General Council and has been referred to the TUC Economic and Social Department for Action.

Their first action will be to consult with those Unions directly affected-we'll keep you updated with any progression.

In the Meantime?

TUCJCC wanted you to know what had happened with your motion, particularly with the announcement of further job losses in BAE and the potential for further announcements of job losses from supply industries across the UK. They would specifically like you too

1. Those Trades Union councils covering the area of the BAE job losses already announced to contact the Unions involved and ask how they (and we) could help (if not already involved).
2. The TUCJCC regional representatives will raise within their own Regional Executives the wider issue of potential job loss within the wider supply chain industries.
3. Discuss the motion within your own Trades Union Councils and consider how your affiliate could encourage both the TUC and Labour Party to act on it.

Congratulations to all those involved in identifying and progressing the motion you chose to send to TUC congress.

Moz Greenshields delegate to TUC congress 2017

Addendum

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted me in compiling my speech. I found the Unite Pamphlet Defence Diversification Revisited 2016 especially useful so here is the link to it <http://www.unitetheunion.org/uploaded/documents/0041-Defence%20Diversification%20Revisited%20Brochure11-26072.pdf> or you can go onto the Unite website and search 0041-Defence Diversification Revisited Brochure 11-26072.pdf.

I also quoted from Jeremy Corbyn's Defence Diversification Labour Leadership Candidate statement August 2015.