

## POST-16 AT A CROSSROADS

**Last year's congress met following a General election. The Tories assault on living standards, jobs and the welfare state has intensified since then.**

Education, health and public services are at the forefront of their privatisation agenda.

Post-16 education is at a crossroads. The White paper and Area Reviews threaten to deepen the marketisation of the sector.

Yet the Conservatives are divided. They are split over EU, and are lurching from one scandal or crisis to another.

The Trade Union Bill has passed legislation designed to stop resistance to more austerity. The strikes and protests in France show how to defend workers' rights. We should support any union that stands up to the anti-trade union laws.



### Jeremy Corbyn

Since we met last year, Jeremy Corbyn won a landslide victory on the back of a new mass movement opposed to austerity and racism. This has given us the opportunity to make new political allies.

The industrial scene is also changing. Junior doctors have won widespread popular support in their dispute against contract imposition by showing that they were defending the NHS, while DPAC landed a victory with the resignation of IDS. We need

to learn from these successes and make clear that the idea of a public university is what is at stake in the HE dispute.



*Defend Jobs at London MET defend Mark Campbell & David Hardman*

### Refugee Crisis & Islamophobia

Austerity in Europe is creating conditions for more racism and Islamophobia. We are witnessing a huge refugee crisis, which has been worsened by government agreements to limit numbers. Last week 700 people drowned in the Mediterranean fleeing war and poverty.

Education unions should be central to demanding that refugees are welcomed. We support the UCU's work with refugees in Calais and the introduction by some universities of bursaries for refugees. We need to ramp up opposition to Prevent and oppose attacks on civil liberties and Muslims.

### Fighting back

UCU has retreated from effective national and political campaigning in recent years. There is a new context now with a popular movement opposed to austerity. The Scottish independence movement and the election of Jeremy Corbyn are signs of a shift.

The HE dispute has caught members' imagination. The UCU has brought questions of casualisation and the gender pay gap to national prominence. In HE sector there will be important strategic questions about how to win. We have identified equality as central to the dispute. If we can locate this argument



within the wider defence of education and resistance to the White Paper we can gain allies from within and beyond our sector.

We have an opportunity to unite education from the 'cradle to the grave'. The NUS has called a mass demonstration to 'Save our futures' for the autumn. The NUT is balloting to oppose academisation. FE sector will debate a motion on a national ballot. We need to develop actions that unite this burgeoning movement for public education.

In Further Education, campaigns to defend adult education initiated by branches and regions have given FE its highest profile for years. Alongside groups like Action for Esol and by working with the new labour frontbench we were able to mobilise large lobbies of Parliament.

FE received funding protection in the last spending review as a result of campaigning. We need to use the raised political profile of FE to oppose the restructuring of FE contained in the area reviews, and rebuild national bargaining. EIS laid out a serious strategy of escalation in Scotland. They won a national pay rise that saw some lecturers pay go up by 33%.

## Join UCU Left

We face huge challenges in post-16 education. It has never been more important to build regional and national networks of activists. We can put you in touch with UCU Left members in your area. If you are not a member of UCU Left please join us. We want you to be an active member of our organisation. We make a difference to the union and the movement. We are for a democratic member-led fighting union. Please come to our fringe meeting to find out more.

UCU Left will hold an open national meeting in the autumn. Details will go up on the UCU Left website: [uculeft.org](http://uculeft.org).

## Congress motions to watch out for

Key motions to support include:

- \* The motion on the Trade Union Act - SUPPORT SFC 1, 2, 3 AND 21
- \* International – SUPPORT MOTIONS 4-8, 10, 11 including COMPOSITE 8 calling for a full investigation into the murder of Cambridge academic Giulio Regeni.
- \* Solidarity with Refugees – MOTIONS 12-15 including the NEC amendment challenging the deal between Turkey and EU to return refugees to Turkey.

- \* Climate change – SUPPORT MOTIONS 16-19
- \* Equality (MOTIONS 22-35)
- \* There are other important motions on the gender pay gap, LGBT rights, opposing racism and Islamophobia, in defence of Malia Bouattia, support for equality reps, and equality aspects of the refugee situation. MOTION 33 calls for a gender perspective on UCU's work, which would strengthen the union's commitment to gender equality.
- \* We should **oppose** MOTION 28. It calls for opening up the equality conferences to union equality officers who do not self-identify as a member of an oppressed group.
- \* Education (MOTIONS 36-48)
- \* **Support** COMPOSITE 36: The Counter-Extremism Strategy, Prevent and Islamophobia addresses an important issue for UCU members.

**Film** showing daily in 11A 'Witness' – the experience of black and ethnic minority staff in further and higher education

**Official Fringes** - Lunch: Ending the gender pay gap 11B, Anti-casualisation 11b

★★★ UCU Left fringe meeting ★★★

# Post-16 education at the crossroads: time to act

Speakers:

**Louise Regan** NUT senior VP

**Megan Parsons**  
BMA junior doctor

**Angela McCormack** EIS

**Ifhat Shaheen Smith**  
Campaigner whose son was branded an eco-terrorist

**Liz Lawrence** UCU president

**Sean Vernell**  
FE national negotiator

**Truth For Giulio** campaign

**Chaired by Jo McNeil**  
UCU NEC NW Region

**Wednesday**  
**1 June, 7.30pm**

**Pullman Hotel,**  
**Kings Dock,**  
**Liverpool L3 4FP**



All welcome! There will be plenty of time for contributions from the floor