

SOCIALIST APPEAL



UCU BULLETIN

ISSUE 3

FREE/DONATION

FIGHT DEDUCTIONS!

COORDINATE FOR VICTORY!

UCU Marxists

Editorial

With significant movement on the pensions dispute, won through strike action, 145 branches are now waging a historic national marking and assessment boycott (MAB) over pay and conditions – which have been degraded by over a decade of ever-increasing marketisation.

In response, and clearly afraid of this unity, the bosses are lashing out. With one hand they have unleashed a vindictive wave of pay deductions. With the other they grasp the megaphone of the media, using it to slander our action with a campaign of crocodile tears.

In the face of all this, members are showing they have the mettle and the will to fight on for the betterment of our sector. This is not insignificant given the pressures and challenges that members have faced over the last year.

Indeed, if these members were properly led and provided with a coordinated and unifying national strategy, we have the

potential to win both an inflation-busting pay rise and a true commitment to reversing casualisation.

Pay deductions

The employers themselves have put together a nationally coordinated attack, which only underlines the urgency for launching one of our own.

Over 70 institutions, encouraged by the chief of the bosses union UCEA, are targeting members with pay deductions for participation in the MAB. At least 27 institutions are making threats of 100% deductions.

This is effectively a lock-out, designed to play on the MAB's weakness - the immense pressure put on individual members who refuse to mark. The bosses are placing their weight on these members, hoping to break them, and with them, our action.

The chief of UCEA and their cheerleaders in the press cloak these attacks in the morality of defending the interests of students who have had to pay extortionate sums for their education. This is entirely cynical given these are the same bosses who lobbied, and continue to lobby, for increased tuition fees!

On top of these threats we have seen the escalation of local attacks such as at the University of Brighton, where 140 redundancies have just been announced to save £17m; or UEA, where senior management is looking to cut courses and force compulsory redundancies to save £45m.

There has been a public outcry over the deduction threats and these attacks, with students declaring support for their staff on social media and at spontaneous rallies. We have even had a supportive cross-party joint letter against the deductions signed by 50 MPs and peers.

This solidarity throws a spotlight on the weak public support held by the bosses. However, what these campaigns currently focus on, to quote the joint letter, is the idea there is 'no ethical justification for making such punitive deductions'. This misses the point: yes, breaking a union to force through wage deductions and redundancies is terrible... terribly profitable!

The bosses operate primarily from an economic standpoint. Their goal is to keep wages down to ensure profitability, which

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CONGRESS 2023: KICK CAPITALISM OUT OF HE!

Beyond the question of leadership, the second crossroads our union stands at is the question of marketisation.

Attacks on higher education have not happened in isolation. They are part of the special crisis of British capitalism, which has seen a decades-long de-industrialisation of Britain, and a transformation of the UK into a low-wage rentier economy, dependent on financial services and speculation.

This process has been accelerated since 2008. The bailing out of the banks and the attempts to kick start the economy came at the expense of creating huge debts on the government balance sheet.

This led in turn to outright attacks on all forms of government spending, alongside the suppression of wages to squeeze out any amount of profitability.

For education, this has marked a turbo-drive to marketisation. Government funding was pulled from under our feet in 2012, pushing finances onto student fees. This turned universities into competitors, fighting to build the shiniest campus to attract new students.

Universities are now dependent on private loans, investments, and spin-offs to keep up with this arms race. The last decade has seen a steady and explicit march by the bosses towards more marketisation and more private interests. It is this, along with

the capitalist system behind it, that must be overturned to secure the future of HE.

A motion from Sheffield, drafted by supporters of Socialist Appeal and UCU Marxists, will be heard at the HE conference during Congress on this very question.

The motion, tabled as HE32, "Kick Capitalism Out Of HE!", calls for our union to launch a campaign with the explicit goal to reverse funding cuts, abolish tuition fees, kick out private interests, and replace university bureaucracies with democratic bodies consisting of staff and students.

Importantly, we are calling for students and our sister education unions to join us in this fight. ■

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gives access to private loans, which in turn gives access to investing in spin-offs and real estate to maintain competitiveness on the national and global market.

With four out of ten UK universities in the QS World University Rankings, the bosses are of course doing very well in this regard. UCU's analysis of the 2021/22 financial year found institutions achieved an eye-watering income of £44.6bn and a total profit of £2.6bn.

Leadership

Amidst all of this, in interviews with the press and through union communications, General Secretary Jo Grady is speaking militantly. While we welcome this, the timing of her change of tone has left some questioning how authentic this is.

After all, it has of course come in the weeks leading up to the UCU Congress where she is set to face votes of no confidence. As such, members would be forgiven for doubting how genuine this is.

Indeed, this doubt is only reinforced by the lack of a unifying national strategy. The bosses are clearly terrified of the MAB. Their deductions are a sign of weakness, not strength. They should therefore be met with a decisive charge forward.

However, instead of a clear and bold campaign of nationally coordinated action, our leadership is raising what should be supplementary action - letter writing, social media posts, and a donation drive - as our primary strategy.

A fighting fund drive and media campaign are always welcome, but they do not address the core issue of the isolation of individual members and branches being left alone to fight deductions.

Instead, we are told strike action is to be

kept local and only used "where required". This position of our leadership should come as no surprise for most members. We know in reality the MAB is being driven forward by the rank-and-file, who are dragging behind them the same leadership who were hoping it would all be called off in favour of do-nothing discussions.

We should not forget this is the same leadership who attempted to wind up the disputes earlier this year by sending out misleading e-ballots that asked members to support an "offer" which contained nothing but a real-terms pay cut and the promise for more talks on working conditions.

This situation must be addressed - there is simply too much at stake to put aside the question of transforming our union. Members should challenge the current strategy being put forward by our leadership, and being championed by both UCU Commons and UCU Left, especially at this year's Congress.

Now more than ever we need a fighting leadership that backs militant, coordinated strike action at a national level. We need a leadership that is not afraid of empowering the rank-and-file to take on the bosses using every means at our disposal. This is how we can win.

Fightback

The lessons of Queen Margaret University point the way forward. Here the branch responded with bold and militant strike action which led to an immediate calling off of deductions.

Local students and fellow trade unionists rallied around this clear call to arms. We see in this branch's response a strategy that combines multiple methods - but, most importantly, strike action - to fight the employer's attacks.

Indeed, at the Special Higher Education Conference in April, where the rank-and-file finally got to have their say on the direction of our disputes, it was agreed local strike action

and rank-and-file strike committees should be set up to fight back against deductions.

We have already seen a major win at Queen Margaret where such strike action was taken. The question now is to coordinate this action at a national level through strike committees, with members leading our dispute.

In this way, we could turn a defensive manoeuvre against deductions, into an offensive struggle for a win on pay and working conditions.

Forwards

We have seen the continued determination of our members to fight back against marketisation in the past 5 years of strike action. Through ebbs and flows, our union's members have shown consistently they are prepared to fight for their livelihoods and the very future of the sector.

We have seen the emergence of similar determination emerge in the past year's strike wave, as more and more sections of the working class enter into a struggle against pay cuts and the continued driving down of working conditions.

It's safe to say we are at the beginning of what will be an extended process of intensifying class struggle. What is needed next, however, is a unifying call of action and for a political struggle across the whole movement - not just against the Tories, but explicitly against capitalism itself: the system behind the ills we face.

The need for unions to stand on their own two feet and fight for the transformation of society is needed now more than ever. If we don't make a stand now, we will be reduced to making the best of the managed decline, not just of HE sector but also of our entire society.

UCU members should therefore join us in fighting for a systemic change that puts workers and students in charge of running education and the whole of society for need rather than profit. ■



What we say...

NO CONFIDENCE IN GRADY!

The last weekend of May will be the UCU's national congress - the highest decision-making body in our union. This is the first time congress has been held in person in four years and is set to be a battleground over the question of the future direction of our union.

There have been multiple motions of no confidence and motions of censure sent in by branches. These will be heard as two separate composite

motions, 28 and 29. For both of these motions, UCU Marxists recommend a vote FOR.

Since December, Grady has run a one-sided fear campaign against indefinite strike action, disorientated lay members with a treadmill of e-ballots, and unilaterally paused strike action without any concrete promises. In doing all of this we ended up putting off planning our strategy for the MAB until after it had begun!

It is clear that the current leadership is terrified of a direct confrontation with the bosses, and so is only able to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Given this, yes, we have no confidence in Jo Grady's ability to lead. She has displayed a clear lack of faith in our members' ability to fight and win. We need a leadership that trusts members and is capable of leading a bold and militant campaign to transform our sector. ■

QUEEN MARGARET STRIKE

Shows the way forward

Ross Walker

QMU UCU co-president

(personal capacity)

A recent struggle at Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh has ended with a win for the local UCU branch.

In May, following the launch of the union's national marking and assessment boycott (MAB), the university's bosses threatened 100% pay deduction for those QMU staff participating, as they have done at at least 27 other institutions.

In response, the QMU UCU branch mobilised its forces and threatened 18 days of strike action. After just one day out, the bosses were forced to back down.

This provides an important lesson for the whole union in the struggle it is currently waging on campuses across the country.

Bitterness

The struggle at QMU is particularly bitter. As with all universities, it has been suffering from reduced government funding.

On top of this already dire situation, however, QMU is in debt to Barclays Bank by around £24 million. Repayments on these loans come to £1.5m a year, plus an extra £1m in interest.

Staff at QMU, as everywhere, are putting in extra hours and effort for less money. As with the rest of the sector, inequalities and discrimination are worsening; casualisation is rampant; and education as a whole is suffering.

These are the issues behind the UCU's 'Four Fights' campaign against underpay, overwork, casualisation, and inequalities.

Boycott

As part of this dispute, the union has now embarked on a national MAB.

Marking is an essential part of a lecturer's work. At this time of year, universities rely on academic staff to work evenings and weekends, in order to mark exams and coursework.

This boycott is therefore a serious threat to the functioning, reputation, and income of all universities. As a result, the bosses have come particularly down hard on it – or have tried too, at least.

We were told that management would deduct 100% of pay for anyone participating in the MAB, despite the fact that marking responsibilities constitute far less



than 100% of UCU members' work. This attack essentially means that lecturers would be working for free.

In the past, the bosses have often used a softer approach, so as not to provoke union members. But in the last year, unions everywhere have become more powerful and confident.

And in the case of our union, UCU, workers are determined to continue fighting, even in the case of long disputes such as the 'Four Fights'.

As a result, the bosses have become worried. And this is why they are taking this tougher, more belligerent stance.

Response

Our UCU branch responded by launching an intense campaign, beginning by organising 18 days of strike action: hard-hitting, extended action – not just a few days here and there.

We also made media appearances; ran a social media campaign; raised over £2k in fighting funds; had a demonstration when the Holyrood higher education secretary was visiting; and had members writing to politicians and alumni, and tweeting at them.

Behind us we also had the support of a newly-established Staff Student Solidarity Network, who ran their own social media campaign, supported our demos and pickets, and set up a petition.

Before the strike had even begun, we were offered 0% deductions but with strings attached.

This included having to sign a public statement gushing with praise for local advances on working conditions; agreeing to proposals that would undermine our action; and adding a clause that management could reverse their decision.

Regardless, we pressed ahead with the strike. And after just one day of action

we entered back into negotiations. These resulted in members being offered most of what we wanted.

Now, if they do reverse the decision, management has to give 15 days notice – i.e. enough time to legally call another strike.

Militancy

This marks an important victory. While we won this battle, however, it was a defensive struggle: one to prevent the bosses from attacking us in a far more brutal manner than usual.

Nationally, we're still yet to win the 'Four Fights' campaign. In the process of winning the dispute locally, however, the branch has been strengthened. Activists have been emboldened; members have seen what we can do; and the branch will likely grow as a result.

But there is nothing particularly special about QMU. Such a win could be achieved at universities everywhere, if a united lead was actually given by our union's leadership.

This would mean, for one, not just resting on the MAB, as disruptive as it is, but to combine different methods of struggle – including hard-hitting, indefinite strike action.

Above all, this episode should be a reminder that the greatest strength we have as workers is our unity, and the fact that we are the ones who keep society and services running. When we withdraw our labour, everything grinds to a halt.

Strike action will always remain one of our strongest weapons, and should therefore be the backbone to any boycott or other similar campaign.

We have many big battles ahead of us, and we're now that bit more prepared. The experience at QMU will hopefully inspire UCU branches everywhere to consider what kind of militancy and bold leadership we need to win. ■

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USA CAMPUS STRIKES

ACADEMIC WORKERS ARE FIGHTING BACK!

This is an abridged article originally written in November 2022 by Socialist Revolution - the US section of the International Marxist Tendency (which Socialist Appeal is the British section of). While these campus strikes have continued into this year, the analysis and strategy in this article retains its relevance today, and for education workers everywhere.

On Monday, November 14, nearly 48,000 academic workers walked off the job across all ten campuses of the University of California (UC) system, beginning one of the largest US strikes in recent years.

The striking teaching assistants, academic researchers, and other university employees – most of whom are graduate students or postdoctoral fellows – are all members of the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Despite being the largest higher-education strike in US history, this is no isolated event. Adjunct faculty are on strike at the New School in New York City, while earlier this month, New York University reached a tentative agreement with its faculty after the threat of a strike. Both groups of workers are also organized in the UAW.

At Temple University in Philadelphia, the TUGSA graduate student union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, has authorized a strike. 99% of the student workers voted in favor of

striking after 11 months of stalled negotiations with the administration led nowhere. In response, university officials immediately raised their wage offer... by a mere 1%!

This comes after graduate student workers at Columbia University won a new contract at the start of this year after striking at the end of 2021, and the unsuccessful UC Santa Cruz wildcat strike of 2020, which was cut across by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearly, academic workers are fighting back like never before.

Aren't students "privileged"? Why are they striking?

These expressions of the class struggle may come as a shock to many. The capitalist media usually stereotypes college and graduate students as separate from or above the rest of society. Students are certainly not "working class," after all.

In reality, graduate students (and undergraduates, too) suffer from all of the problems that workers face: inadequate healthcare, high rent, harassment and abuse, and little to no parental leave. Above all, they suffer from low wages—at a time when the highest inflation in 40 years is eroding living standards across the board.

Key in the UC struggle is the lack of affordable housing. Living in one of the most expensive rental markets in the world, academic workers find

themselves unable to afford housing on their meager stipends. The vast majority of graduate students in the UC system report spending as much as a third of their paycheck on rent, with 40% spending as much as half.

Graduate students fund their education by working "part time" as teaching or research assistants. However, their relationship to university administrations is increasingly more exploitative.

Across the country, universities are consistently extending the working hours of student workers, who must grade, conduct research, and set up lesson plans, sometimes for multiple class sections. In cases where there is a shortage of professors, graduate student workers sometimes teach an entire course – despite being contractually obligated to only work 20 hours per week.

With little to no time left over to devote to their own studies, let alone enjoy life, and with inflation cutting into their paltry earnings, striking academic workers have been forced to fight for their livelihoods.

"Non-profit"

Despite being "non-profits," universities function in much the same way as other for-profit, capitalist institutions. Board members of many universities are multi-millionaire capitalists,

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landlords, and even billionaires. Many university chancellors and presidents make six figures per year, some make even seven.

Instead of improving the safety, security, and educational opportunities for their students, universities “invest” to accumulate larger endowments, get even more funding from various sources, attract greater enrollment, and raise their tuition. They are also often big players in local real estate, cornering the market for housing and commercial space in the neighborhoods surrounding their campuses.

This is also why universities often have bloated sports budgets, building new and bigger stadiums while gentrifying nearby neighborhoods.

It's also why many universities heavily subsidize fraternities and sororities, and then protect, defend, and cover up the disgusting culture of sexual assault, drug abuse, and binge drinking that results. And that's not to mention the huge ongoing student debt crisis!

The way forward

It is imperative that the academic workers spread the strikes to other sections of the labor movement. The key to this equation is the labor leadership. The UC system contracts with 15 different labor unions. At Temple University, the administration contracts with 11!

Doing this benefits the employer greatly. Being divided into so many different organizations cuts across worker solidarity. The administrations are careful to ensure that the dozens of campus collective bargaining agreements all end at different times—so the workers are never coordinated in action.

The union leaders must fight against this atomization by spreading and synchronizing the strike to all workers in a given university system! In addition to demands specific to academic workers, they should put forward a broader program that would apply to all campus workers.

The union leaders must fight against this atomization by spreading and synchronizing the strike to all workers in a given university system! In addition to demands specific to academic workers, they should put forward a broader program that would apply to all campus workers.

This should be coupled with mass meetings of all the workers on the campus, emphasizing the interest that they have in common and their need to unify against the administration. This would draw other unions on campus into the struggle.

The leadership can also spread this movement into the broader community. Through concerted outreach and patient explanation of the issues at stake, strikers can win sympathy in the working-class neighborhoods where many campuses are located.

And they can appeal to the rest of the labor movement for sympathy strikes! Such strikes are currently illegal under US labor law – but eventually, the labor movement will have to tackle such anti-worker legislation head on.

Undergraduates can play a big role by supporting the striking workers. Indeed, solidarity from the broader student

body will go a long way for the workers. The part-time faculty at the New School prepared for their strike by having “strike schools” for sympathetic workers and students. The results have been visible in the form of massive picket lines!

And socialists, whether workers, students, on campus or off, also have a role to play. Marxist student clubs and societies must mobilize to support the workers while bringing a class-independent program to the picket lines. They can also offer a platform for striking workers to speak and spread news of their struggle.

Socialists and communists in education unions should build rank-and-file caucuses to fight for even more militancy and bold demands. And of course, students and workers must unite in campaigns against crossing the picket lines. Above all they must all understand the deep meaning of labor's defining slogan: An injury to one is an injury to all!

The only thing university administrators will understand is hard-line class militancy. Campus workers know a thing or two about class. But instead of teaching class, now is the time to fight as a class. Not class-action lawsuits, but class action—militant working-class action. That is the way forward! ■

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What could education look like... **UNDER SOCIALISM?**

Alberto Pezzotta

UCL UCU branch

(personal capacity)

A recent article in *Nature* reveals how “disruptive” science, i.e. science leading to impactful results in technology and in our understanding of nature, has been in constant decline since at least the 1950s. This is directly linked to the quality of education in our universities.

Rather than being places of learning, where anyone can develop themselves – whether inclined towards science or some other subject – universities are fast becoming another venue for private profit.

This naturally affects what is produced by these institutions. To take one example: because of the competition in higher education, measured in publications, researchers have less time to spend on their work as they scramble to publish and apply for the next job.

The fierce competition between them to acquire funding for their work, 68% of which is carried out on fixed-term contracts, means that marketised universities have become a hotbed of casualisation, rather than innovation. No wonder discoveries have declined, given this.

Fostering Inequality

In fact, the state of university education in Britain is truly shocking. Accompanying the rising cost of tuition fees which leave students with a mountain of debt, the enormous costs of student accommodation mean an insurmountable difficulty for students from working-class families to access higher education.

In turn, the profit made from student accommodation is driving up the cost of living in cities. Despite universities trying to offset this with “civic engagement projects,” profitability again influences what can be done. These projects, therefore, are often short-term, unambitious and unpaid as a result.

The marketisation of higher education affects teaching and learning for students as well. Metric-compatible learning outcomes and examinations, understaffing, and overwork mean that rather than skills and creativity, students are largely taught how to do well in exams.

From all this it is clear, therefore, that the market-driven approach to higher education carries a terrible cost. You can have profits, or you can have proper education – but you cannot have both.

Planned economy

But what would an alternative look like? To get an idea, we can look at one of the most wide-ranging attempts to change education in history - that of the Russian Revolution.

In the early Soviet Union, education was considered the key to the kind of workers’ democracy the Bolsheviks wanted to build.

Access to education was considered a fundamental right, rather than a privilege, starting with the ability to read and write. As such, the Soviet government worked to produce a drastic improvement in the literacy rate.

Free accommodation in the main cities like Moscow and Leningrad was granted to talented students from around the country. They could relocate for free together with their families, who would also be offered a job.

The results of this were staggering. To just use one example, we can look at the effect on the arts.

Students flooded in, bringing all manner of fresh ideas and creative experiments with them. Until Stalinist repression strangled it, this resulted in one of the richest flourishings of art yet seen.

All of this was, ultimately, due to the shift from seeing education as a source of profit, to seeing it as a way to better humanity as a whole.

Socialism

This is therefore the key to unlocking the potential of education in the future, too.

Under socialism, learning would be seen not in terms of revenue generation but in terms of social value for all. And with that, access to learning must be opened up to people of all ages and social backgrounds.

For one a nationalised, planned economy producing for need not profit would immediately improve the standard of living for all.

Predominantly, this would be through reducing the working week to 20 or 30 hours through extending automation and other time-saving technologies, with no loss of pay or employment.

This would immediately free up time for workers of all kinds to study things alongside their work and develop in ways that interested them.

In addition, free education – from cradle to grave, and encompassing both traditionally academic and practical/vocational subjects alike – must be established as part of any socialist programme.

Through this, we could not only produce the scientists and doctors we need; we could produce designers, artists, architects, writers, philosophers and so much more.

After all, the Bible famously stated, ‘(mankind) cannot live by bread alone.’ A socialist society would be rich with all kinds of creative and intellectual paths for workers to pursue!

Whilst we have only barely touched on the scope of such improvements, these examples should highlight not only how capitalism impedes on aspects of everyday life but also the ways in which socialism could help change them for the better.

That is why we fight for it – and why we invite you to join us in this task. ■



Letters

Socialist Appeal
International Marxist
Tendency

THE STRUGGLE IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Phil Baker

Loughborough College UCU

(personal capacity)

Working conditions in Further Education (FE), like so many other sectors, have been hit by a decade of decreasing pay and increasing workloads. So it's not surprising workers in this sector are beginning to flex their collective muscle.

Last year 33 branches beat the Tory anti-trade union barriers, withdrawing their labour and clawing back concessions. This year that number looks set to triple as a huge wave of new branches join the fightback.

In the recent national indicative ballot, over one hundred branches beat the 50% turnout threshold and will now be formally balloted for strike action in the next term. This presents an historic opportunity to turn the tables, win nationally binding pay scales and secure pay parity with mainstream schools.

Although it is disappointing that there will be no aggregated national strike, with so many colleges striking together on an individual basis, the impact could be just as big. Some colleges saw turnouts of over 80%, all for striking.

Breaking point

The results should not be surprising when you look into it. Over the last decade, pay is down 35% in real terms, even before the recent run-away inflation that is causing a cost of living crisis for the many.

Conditions have also declined. For example, layers of bureaucracy have been created in the sector to ensure lecturers are carrying out pointless box-ticking administrative tasks that simply waste valuable time.

Then there are the "student interventions", not classed as teaching hours, which have become a sudden requirement. In many cases, the students and parents are informed about these before the lecturer, raising their expectations – and thus compounding the pressure and guilt on individual workers to comply.

All of this and more has led to chronic recruitment and retention problems. Many workers now see FE as a stepping stone towards different careers, leading to further disruption for students and staff.

And it's not just FE workers that are feeling these effects of the crisis of capitalism. More and more students are experiencing mental health problems as they face the pressure of exams alongside the growing need to work 16-18 hour shifts at the weekend to support themselves or their families.

With a future of nothing but uncertainty and pressure, it's no wonder mental health problems are an epidemic in colleges.

Bosses' mentality

If we do not take a stand now, these trends will only continue. The underlining mentality of college bosses is to maximise class sizes with fee earners and minimise pay. And as a reward, CEO's and senior management are given six figure salaries.

There should be no illusion that they will give up this model easily. While a short strike to make them aware of discontent may bring a few concessions, these will be purely on the basis of trying to stem the movement.

There have already been signs of this, with one-off payments being found from down the back of the proverbial sofa after the indicative ballot results were announced. The bosses are clearly scared stiff of losing control of their staff.

Fightback

What is necessary is a sector-wide hard hitting campaign. There needs to be clear demands for a nationwide binding pay scale and above-inflation pay rises to achieve parity with mainstream schools.

But we need to go further. The bosses are preparing and organising for battle. This must be matched with organisation and preparation ourselves.

It is therefore good to see some positive congress motions on this, such as how indefinite strike escalation is the way to beat the bosses, which we support.

Further, we should also organise strike committees with regular meetings to get mass involvement in the dispute, formulating demands and how we can win them.

This should involve cross-union coordination and even discuss joint action. Key departments like supply, premises and maintenance and IT coming out for example could really bring colleges to a standstill.

On this basis a swift win is potentially in reach. Such a victory could start to turn the tables, giving FE workers more power to dictate pay and conditions, rather than accept decreases.

But ultimately, the need to kick capitalism out of HE applies just as equally to FE.

Our colleges should not be run by careerist CEO's, but ordinary staff who know what is best for students and college communities. That is the goal our union should be fighting for. ■



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WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Tories are the political representatives of big business. As defenders of capitalism, they are the sworn enemies of the working class.

Neither do we have trust in Keir Starmer and the right-wing Labour leadership, who are taking the party back to Blairism.

The capitalist system is in a complete impasse. It cannot be reformed. It must be overthrown.

We are fighting for bold socialist policies to defend workers and challenge the capitalist system.

- Answer the cost-of-living crisis with a £15 per hour minimum wage. For a sliding (rising) scale of wages, with increases in pay, pensions, and benefits automatically linked to prices.

- If the bosses say they can't afford this, we say: Open up the books! Let the working class and the labour movement see the accounts! If firms plead bankruptcy, they should not be bailed out, but nationalised under workers' control.

- For a fully publicly-owned and free health service, under workers' control and management. Reverse all privatisation and outsourcing. All private health and care services must be nationalised without compensation, and integrated into the NHS.

- Fight the climate catastrophe and inflation with expropriation and socialist planning. Nationalise the energy monopolies, big supermarket chains, and distributors, without compensation.

- Ban evictions and cancel housing debts. Give local authorities the power to cap rents at affordable levels. And bring empty properties and the assets of the big landlords and management companies under public control.

- For a mass programme to build a million council houses a year. Nationalise the land, construction companies, and banks to provide the resources to accomplish this.

- To fight job cuts and unemployment, work should be shared out without any loss of pay, in order to lower the hours of the working week.

- Repeal the anti-trade union laws. No to class compromise. All union officials to be regularly elected, with the right of immediate recall by the membership. Officials to receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.

- Fight for the real emancipation of women. Remove all barriers to women working: provide free nurseries, after-school childcare, and care for the elderly. End all forms of discrimination. Equal pay for work of equal value.

- Abolish the relics of privilege and feudalism: the monarchy and the House of Lords. The assets of the parasitic landlord class and aristocracy should be expropriated for the public good.

- Scrap tuition fees and student rents. Free education and full maintenance grants for all. End marketisation – kick the profiteers out of education. Put staff in control in schools and universities.

- Many small businesses are faced with bankruptcy – squeezed not only by the banks, but by the big monopolies. By nationalising the banks we can supply these small businesses with the lifeline of guaranteed low-interest credit.

- The financial resources required to fight the crisis must not come from increased taxes or more austerity, but through the nationalisation of the banks and finance houses. Rather than a 'wealth tax', we call for the expropriation of the monopolies.

- Instead of building up the national debt through government borrowing, the money needed should be obtained entirely from expropriating the accumulated profits of big business and the billionaires.

- No to austerity! Reverse the cuts! The working class must not pay for this crisis!

- For a mass campaign to bring down this criminal Tory government and do away with this rotten system!

This crisis does not just exist in Britain alone, but is felt internationally. A Socialist Federation of Britain should be linked to a World Socialist Federation, in order to plan resources internationally for the benefit of all. This would put an end to the brutality of capitalism and allow humanity to begin solving the urgent issues of climate change, disease, and poverty that face our planet.

If you agree with our programme here, get involved with Socialist Appeal in UCU and help us fight for a better, socialist world! ■

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN US

Marxists are class conscious fighters for socialism. As Marx explained, we should be regarded as the most resolute section of the working class.

Marxism arms us with a conscious understanding of society and the class struggle. Only by absorbing this outlook can we lay the foundation for the overthrow of capitalism.

For us, Marxism is the science of social revolution and therefore needs to be studied.

Our tendency therefore stresses the need to educate and train our members in Marxist theory and the struggles of the working class. This gives us considerable advantages. First and foremost, Marxist theory is a guide to action, a guide to the class struggle.

As isolated individuals we can do very little. However, organised together

we can achieve a considerable amount. Organisation allows us to concentrate our forces to much greater effect. Based on correct policies and perspectives, we can intervene effectively in the class struggle.

The present reformist leadership of the labour movement has led to one retreat after another. In practice they accept capitalism and its limits.

The leadership of the Labour Party is now in the grip of the right wing, who serve the interests of capitalism. This revival is due to the weakness of the left to act decisively, which in turn is a reflection of the weakness of reformism.

Likewise, the reformist trade union leadership has failed to meet the challenges we face. They are lagging completely behind the objective situation. For them, it is simply 'business as usual.'

But the crisis of capitalism is posing massive challenges in front of the working

class. We will fight shoulder to shoulder with those prepared to fight. In doing so, we will point to the future needs of the movement.

Our task is to provide the necessary clarity for the struggle. Capitalism cannot be reformed; it needs to be consciously overthrown by the working class in Britain and internationally. That is why we are internationalists and proud to be part of the International Marxist Tendency. ■

