

# Ten reasons why I am a 'thug'

Joyce Canaan

*(Written in response to Sir Paul Stephenson, Metropolitan Police Superintendent, who, on the Today show on Radio 4 on 10/12/10 stated that those people throwing paint and breaking a window of the royal car, carrying Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall on the evening of 9/12/10, during a demonstration against tuition fees rises, were not 'demonstrators' but 'thugs', as were, by implication, all demonstrators.)*

1. I decided to go on the demonstration on 9 December 2010 to join the estimated 30,000 people protesting against the now passed (323 to 302) but still contestable university fees rise. If this is realised, most of the first generation minority ethnic and white working-class students now in universities like the one I teach in (designated as facing a 'high to medium level of impact' to proposed cuts in a recent UCU report) could in future find that the universities they planned to attend have either been completely closed or had current offerings drastically reduced. The fees rise will double or treble current tuition fees of £3225, effectively privatising university education, forcing students to pay fully for most courses from 2012. Business and corporate interests will now increasingly determine university courses: Bradford University recently announced their partnership with Morrisons to offer degrees in business management and Manchester Metropolitan University already offers a McDonalds management programme that McDonalds

plans to expand across the country (Tesco already has a bespoke programme with MMU.). The idea of a liberal education producing informed, responsible citizens, present (albeit never fully realised) since at least von Humboldt, is now vanishing. Higher Education is being reduced to the narrow end of serving economic interests. Call me a thug, then, for wanting to fight for a much wider brief for higher education.

2. I wanted to stand with students, other lecturers and members of other unions to express my anger about how parliamentary democracy really works - with electoral candidates promising not to raise fees, thereby gaining votes, whilst knowing that they would do so if elected - as, indeed, they did. Is this expression of my democratic rights thuggish?

3. I also sought to express my outrage at the potential closure of innumerable arts, humanities and social sciences departments (the latter being the area in which I teach and research) given the Government's intent on cutting

teaching grants to universities in these areas by 100 per cent. Funding would still be provided to teaching STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering and maths, plus programmes in a few languages) based on the erroneous assumption that national economic growth, now the seemingly only relevant rationale for a university education, requires fuller funding of these areas alone. In fact, critical thinking skills developed in arts, humanities and social science subjects are needed now more than ever in a world where climate change is reaching breaking point and the wealthiest are hijacking national economies and governments and dodging tax payment, disregarding the growing proportion of national populations suffering as jobs and social services are cut and privatised to ensure their growing profiteering. Is it thuggish to cut back on courses teaching critical and analytical skills or to protect and further develop these courses?

4 Having gone to this demonstration, my assumption was that

we could follow the route the NUS had agreed with police. My colleagues and I found, however, that the police blocked our entry to Parliament Square. Knowing that we had the right to get to the Square, we walked into St James Park. We then heard police megaphones announcing that they could stop and search anyone not on the agreed demonstration route. Why was it okay for them to stop and search us but not for us to get to the Square . . . which they shortly thereafter let us do? Who's the thug there?

5. In Parliament Square we found police in rows with visors down on their helmets, riot shields up, blocking Parliament and the agreed route to the platform where speeches were given. Why such a high level of aggression? Why prevent us from reaching the platform? I submit that this was police thuggish provocation, adding to the provocation they caused by temporarily preventing our passage to the Square. I viewed (and view) these acts as purposeful, aiming to discredit demonstrators by bringing us to the boiling point and, for some, beyond.

6. I stayed in Parliament Square nearly up to the time of the vote that, as expected, the Government won (323 to 302) because the NUS/police agreement was for a candlelit vigil to be held at 4.30 pm. My colleagues and I thought it best to leave Parliament Square shortly before the 5.30 vote as the police were coming closer into the Square and seemed to be blocking all exits. Would a thug seek to leave a potentially volatile situation, given continuing police provocation?

7. A British Transport Police officer informed me, when I asked, that we could leave the Square via a nearby narrow passageway. As we walked down

this passageway, with tens of others, we suddenly heard people shouting that mounted police were charging. They came down this passageway, forcing us into a wall and then barricading us in. Walking out, I saw a young woman huddled in a ball, on the ground, unable to move, and a young man holding his head. Clearly the horses had been used as weapon and barricade. I heard later that a young man standing elsewhere had been hit so hard with a truncheon on his head that he suffered a stroke and had to have brain surgery. Can someone please tell me who the thugs are here?

8. My colleagues and I were kettled in Parliament Square for hours. I confess to standing around a fire lit by demonstrators to keep warm. I further confess to adding a thick cardboard placard to the fire. Thuggish behaviour perhaps?

9. Given the absence of toilet facilities, I confess to urinating in a corner of what I later learnt was the Treasury Department. A thuggish act?

10. My colleagues and I heard that it was possible to leave by a nearby police blockade. We queued for hours and were only allowed to leave after the police forced each of us to have our pictures taken - an illegal request given that none of us were in custody. I confess to sticking out my tongue when my photo was taken, a small gesture of defiance. I was lucky enough to be let out by 9pm. Colleagues were kept there, and on Westminster Bridge, until at least 11pm. Why were photos taken of each of us and what will happen to these photos? Why were people kept from going home for so long in such cold weather? I ask one final time, who were the thugs in this situation? And, equally importantly, what did these thugs really hope to accomplish by acting in this way?

## Where we stand:

*Post-16 Educator seeks to defend and extend good practice in post compulsory education and training. Good practice includes teachers working with students to increase their power to look critically at the world around them and act effectively within it. This entails challenging racism, sexism, heterosexism, inequality based on disability and other discriminatory beliefs and practices.*

*For the mass of people, access to valid post compulsory education and training is more necessary now than ever. It should be theirs by right! All provision should be organised and taught by staff who are trained for and committed to it. Publicly funded provision of valid post compulsory education and training for all who require it should be a fundamental demand of the trade union movement.*

*Post-16 Educator seeks to persuade the labour movement as a whole of the importance of this demand. In mobilising to do so it bases itself first and foremost upon practitioners - those who are in direct, daily contact with students. It seeks the support of every practitioner, in any area of post-16 education and training, and in particular that of women, of part timers and of people outside London and the Southeast.*

*Post-16 Educator works to organise readers/contributors into a national network that is democratic, that is politically and financially independent of all other organisations, that develops their practice and their thinking, and that equips them to take action over issues rather than always having to react to changes imposed from above.*

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# Creative militancy, militant creativity and the new student movement

Sarah Amsler

**U**nder what might now need to be termed comparatively normal circumstances, I have often agonised over helping my students understand the practical significance of critical theory. They ask, but what can one actually do with Herbert Marcuse today? In a scheduled class, it all feels so remote.

Now I can say, look: his work is a defence against injustice. Or in the more eloquent words of the London Book Bloc, inspired by its Italian counterpart, 'books are tools - we teach with them, we learn with them, we play with them, we create with them, we make love with them and, sometimes, we must fight with them.' In today's fourth, most passionate and most ungoverned national demonstration against the British government's wholesale privatisation of higher education, books-as-shields replaced pens-as-swords. Creative militancy meets militant creativity, and this may be one of the most defining characteristics of the emerging student movement. It distinguishes it not only from the Chartist and 68er forebears to whom students increasingly refer, but also from many of the more traditionally rationalist responses of the most committed, but still institutionally invested, professional academics.

The photograph of students marching down the streets of London behind body-sized book shields entitled 'One-Dimensional Man, Negative Dialectics, Catch-22 and Deschooling Society' is worth more than a thousand words; the image of

a police officer pushing back an oversized edition of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is simply too ironic to be called so. The accomplishments of the performance are breathtaking. Wrenched from the abstractions of formalised education, with all but the barest of text abolished from view, social theory is materialised not only in practice, but as practice. By visualising immaterial value, students restore to the figure of the book a gravitas that years of digitisation and commodification have depleted. They do not shield themselves behind knowledge, but hold before them the symbolic promise of all the radical traditions of oppositional knowledge and politics signified through these works. The resulting spectacle of oppression is profound: students communicate symbolically the intellectual and cultural violence of the state's abdication of education, and the authorities, ridiculously, actually interpellate themselves.

The material-symbolic warfare of the book blocs is only one example of the new type of creative militancy, or militant creativity, now developing apace amongst British students, particularly in England where the attack on universities has been most severe. It has been marked even by the mainstream media, which published photo galleries of students' handmade placards displayed at 'Day X', the first national anti-cuts and fees demonstration. The surprise was indicative: it seemed that no grown-ups thought students had much creative energy at all.

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So, when they showed up covered in Monopoly money carrying a sign saying 'do I look like I'm made of money?', or dressed in Bowler hats and bow ties carrying photos of David Cameron that read 'this man has Eton my future', or even simple sideways-held notebooks scribbled with 'I can't even afford a sign' and 'where are your humanities?', people took note. These kids know language. They say: we are not post-ideological. Even more importantly, though, their word games do not have quite the same fully carnivalesque spirit of some of the recent alter-globalisation and Reclaim the Streets protests, although the anti-privatisation demonstrations often do involve singing, dancing, and hastily organised brass bands. There is rather a different kind of urgency about them: the performances are intended to entertain and educate, but also to defend and offend. The tradition of reclaiming space and time, of displacing the seriousness of the political, is growing well here, but in new conditions where cultural production must serve the needs of physical struggle as well as symbolic rupture.

### Insight

But the students are clearly reading their shield-books as well, and insight into other practices of creative militancy leaks out daily from occupied lecture halls and buildings through frenetic drips on twitter, blogs and online publications. Theories of how to reclaim and transform the university, or the idea of it. Theories of how to transcend it. Theories of how to begin to imagine something that is both radically alternative, and radically inclusive. And then there is practice. Practices, yes, of occupation and autonomous movement; of learning to radicalise the colonial gaze by exploiting its knowledge of oneself to anticipate, and thwart, one's own confinement; of deploying critical research and argumentation to sway deeply held convictions, or deeply rooted attachments to power. But there is also practice, in the sense of an art and craft of resistance, of not being governed thus, by them, in this way, and etc. At the School of Oriental and African Studies, this week's teach-in was followed by a day-long teach-out; as an attempt to 'break out of the university bubble' the organisers offered a 'massive symbolic lecture' at the Euston train station, distributing their own, utopian, Evening Substandard. People stopped to listen, both to the lectures and to the drums. All this with the

intention, in the words of the already intrepid public-pedagogical University for Strategic Optimism, which stages five-minute occupation lectures in banks and shopping malls, to 'educate your markets if you marketise our education'. It's only been a few weeks, and already they are succeeding.

Tonight, the UK news media were for the first time in my memory dominated by the serious voices of students, on the streets, in debates with government ministers, performing their new possibilities. In England they now talk openly about bringing down much more than university tuition fees. They can sing, dance, speak - and they understand critical theory, as well as know how to shelter behind it. Perhaps there is a hope for a new education and a new politics after all.

## CAFAS Council for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards

- ◆ campaigns against the decline in standards
- ◆ defends individuals against victimisation
- ◆ gives moral support and legal advice
- ◆ investigates malpractice and publishes findings
- ◆ seeks to develop a support network with unions and other organisations.

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**CAFAS website: [www.cafas.org.uk](http://www.cafas.org.uk)**

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# Education is never neutral

**Philippe Harari** *discusses an issue made more urgent than ever by the struggle over EMAs, cuts and fees*

'Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.'

Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1972)

**T**rainee teachers are often told that they should remain politically neutral in the classroom and this means that they should not express their own views to students.

The first question this raises is whether it is possible to remain politically neutral in the classroom, or indeed in any other context. We all hold political beliefs, even those who claim to be non-ideological and base their views on 'common sense'. Everyone has a belief system that affects how they perceive the world and the ways in which they choose to act. It is not possible to be politically neutral but is it even possible to appear politically neutral?

A teacher's personal belief system will inevitably be communicated to students in a hundred subtle ways, however hard the teacher tries to hide it. For a start, every college has a set of

values that are enshrined in a written ethos or mission statement or in a code of conduct or contract for students. These generally include such values as respect for others, equal opportunities, meeting responsibilities such as attending lessons etc. The fact that these values may be consensual (if not unanimous) does not mean they are neutral; this is teachers imposing a dominant ideology on students and there is nothing unbiased about that.

Secondly, individual teachers will express their views unwittingly, through facial expressions, body language, jokes, throw-away comments etc. Inevitably their world view will come across to students in some way or another. In fact, if teachers really wish to remain neutral, they must tell students their political views so that students can interpret what they say in the light of where they stand. So, for example, if a teacher in a history lesson is describing events in Russia in the early 20th century, it is helpful for students to know whether the teacher is a conservative or a socialist.

But if teachers do tell students what they believe, aren't they running the risk of exerting undue influence on them - ie could they be accused of indoctrination? There is a world of difference between a teacher telling a student what they believe, and trying to convert the

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student to that belief. Teachers should express their own views without implying to students that if they disagree with those views they are stupid, morally questionable or just plain wrong. Even if the teacher holds the firm belief that they are right and others are plain wrong, they have a professional duty towards students to adopt a pluralistic attitude, ie to express their own views as one of a number of different possibilities. A teacher who tries to convert students to a particular way of thinking, or who presents their own political views as if they are facts, could legitimately be accused of attempting to indoctrinate students.

Many teachers do hold very strong political beliefs and are politically active outside of their work. There is a power imbalance between student and teacher and some might argue that this relationship exists both inside and outside the classroom; so just as it is not legitimate for teachers to have interpersonal relationships with students, even if they meet them in a club at the weekend, it is not legitimate for teachers to try to persuade students of a political belief, even if this is outside of the classroom. This would impose similar rules of political neutrality on teachers that apply to senior civil servants.

Teachers must not use their authority over students to seek to convert them to a particular ideological viewpoint but on the other hand a teacher who stands on a political platform should not have to tone down their rhetoric because some of their students happen to be in the audience. If teachers wish to maintain their position of power outside of the classroom with regard to students, then perhaps they should refrain from making political speeches when students are present, but it is perfectly possible to have one relationship towards students in a college and another outside of it. In the classroom, the teacher is an expert on the subject they are teaching, outside they are just someone else with a point of view. This does not apply when it comes to interpersonal relationships as the two roles would be impossible to separate and the power imbalance between student and teacher would render the relationship unacceptable and even abusive.

Not only should teachers feel free to express strong political opinions outside of the classroom even though students may be present, they should also be able to work alongside students in political activity and student unions should be able to work with teacher unions. Of course, this

might happen within a college and involve a teacher and their own students; recently NUT and NUS reps in colleges have worked together organising joint protests against the scrapping of EMA. Teachers do have to be careful in these situations. They must not use their authority as teachers to exert undue influence on the students they are collaborating with. It is difficult to switch roles back and forth from teacher to comrade, but it is possible, particularly for less authoritarian teachers.

NUT advice to members during the spate of student protests and occupations last November and December has been that teachers should not actively encourage students to leave lessons in order to attend protests. It was ironic that many students around the country did not attend protests aimed at saving the EMA because they did not want to lose their payment for that week by missing lessons. In such cases, should teachers 'allow' students to attend protests by marking the register with a legitimate absence so that they do not lose EMA? Some college principals have refused to let teachers do this, whilst others have organised joint staff/student protests and issued press releases condemning the scrapping of EMA. An argument that could be deployed to defend the first of these two positions is that colleges must stay politically neutral and must be consistent. We would not mark students down as a legitimate absence when they miss a class for 'no good reason', so we do need to justify why these protests are different from, say, going shopping. I would argue these protests are a special case on the grounds that students are protesting about issues of direct relevance to them and to teachers and furthermore there is a consensus amongst staff and students about the dangers of scrapping EMA.

It is possible for teachers to take part in political campaigns alongside students without taking advantage of the power imbalance that exists between teachers and students in the classroom. It is possible for teachers to express their own political views in the classroom without indoctrinating their students. But it is not possible for colleges and teachers to remain politically neutral. To quote Paulo Freire again: 'Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.'

# News update: November - December 2010

## Week beginning 1/11/10

[Previous week] During a state visit by the emir of Qatar, tie-ups are announced between Qatar and several prestigious UK universities, including Imperial College and University College London (UCL). Michael Worton, vice-provost (academic and international) at the latter offers his opinion that '... UCL doesn't do failure'.

[Previous week] In a speech at private degree awarding body BPP, Lord Browne says that '... if prices [ie fees for doing degrees at specific universities] rise too high, there is room for new providers to enter the market and deliver higher education more efficiently'.

Browne review panel member David Eastwood, formerly chief executive officer (CEO) of the HE Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and now vice chancellor of Birmingham University, tells Guardian readers that: 'There will be a soft cap [ie on HE fees] around £9,000 or £10,000'.

A report drawn up by London Economics for the publishing company Pearson, owner of the Edexcel exam board, which in turn includes BTEC, estimates at between £59,000 and £92,000 the lifetime earnings gain for somebody who achieves a BTEC level 3 qualification. Those who combine a BTEC level 2 qualification with GCSEs are also said to gain relative to those who do GCSEs only. (The report is to be submitted to the review of 14-19 vocational

education being produced for the Government by the academic Alison Wolf.)

New Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) CEO (and former Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency CEO) Andrew Hall attacks the review to be conducted by Ofqual of the relative value of A-levels as compared to qualifications like the International Baccalureate (IB), Cambridge Pre-U etc, on the grounds that: 'We have seen Ofqual's methodology ... and we think it is flawed. It is a comparison of looking at scripts. That is full of flaws. It doesn't work'.

Commenting on the Browne review's proposals for part-time HE students (by which fee loans would become available when a student's 'learning intensity' reaches 33 per cent of a full time course'), Birkbeck College master David Latchman reiterates his proposal that this should be 25 per cent (as more in line with the reality of part-time study), the alternative in his view being that institutions like Birkbeck and the OU will have to restructure their courses.

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) issues a statement threatening to ban some colleges and learning providers from access to public funds for training if they are found to have manipulated success rates. (This follows a Learning and Skills Council - LSC - report in 2009 which found that 42 colleges had changed their enrolment numbers by more than 10 per cent

between their first and last data reports to the LSC.)

The Government accepts the broad thrust of the Browne review's proposals, including the £21,000 earnings threshold for the start of loan repayments. However, instead of Browne's plan to do away altogether with a cap on fees, it proposes a cap at £9,000 and another at £6,000, with an obligation on institutions charging above £6,000 that they support students from low-income backgrounds.

*Private Providers in Higher Education*, a report by the Policy Exchange thinktank, welcomes as 'long overdue' Browne's proposal that access to public loans be extended to undergraduates on all courses (ie including those at for-profit institutions).

Association of Colleges (AOC) CEO Martin Doel welcomes as 'a logical step' a move by Edexcel to discuss with principals attending the AOC conference later in November its plans for validating degrees run in colleges. The AOC is also in talks with BPP about such validation. Doel presents this as a 'peasants revolt' by FE colleges against the universities who have up to now franchised degree level teaching to them. The AOC claims colleges could charge as little as £5,000 in fees. (Edexcel is expectedly shortly to seek degree-awarding powers from the Government.)

Despite continuing UCU opposition, Manchester University is to

repeat for a second year its 'research profiling exercise', in which faculty-based panels award every lecturer a score representing his/her level of research activity.

Following the revelation that between 2005 and 2008 at least 400 patients at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust hospitals in Stafford and Cannock Chase may have died unnecessarily or prematurely from neglect, the Nursing and Midwifery Council issues *Raising and Escalating Concerns*, a 24-page booklet by Caroline Williams offering guidance to nursing, midwifery and other medical degree students on placements in hospitals. (Staff at Staffordshire University, which has 750 such students, reject allegations that the need to safeguard placements may have led to students failing to report problems at these hospitals.)

Former LSC official, and current Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) strategy and implementation director Rob Wye is named as successor to David Collins as CEO of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), the annual salary for which is £142,000.

The international fundraising drive launched by Oxford University in 2008 has now amassed over £1bn towards its £1.25bn target.

Labour nominees to the Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, include Sheffield Central MP - and former witch-hunting student and local government politician - Paul Blomfield.

Lancaster University loses its appeal against a tribunal ruling, made in April 2010, that it pay 60-days' salary to a group of fixed-term employees dismissed without proper consultation.

### Week beginning 8/11/10

The Government has 'asked' the British Council not to open recruit-

ment for its English language assistants placements scheme in 2011-12. The scheme, set up in 1905, costs about £750,000 a year and places assistants abroad. Its closure would jeopardise the future of the 2,500 undergraduates on modern language courses, most of which include a year abroad. (The deadline for applications was due to have been 1/12/10.)

Figures produced by House of Commons library researchers at the request of shadow skills minister - and former part-time OU lecturer - Gordon Marsden indicate that, when the impact of the withdrawal of funding for level 3 courses for people over 25 is taken into account, a typical FE college with 20,000 full time equivalent students will now face a cut of about £2.5m on an £8m budget. Other figures from this source suggest colleges that invested heavily in Train to Gain face 30 per cent cuts. Commenting on this, Lynne Sedgmore, CEO of the 157 Group (of large colleges with 'good' inspection results) says: 'You are better off never having done Train to Gain'.

*Research Excellence Framework Impact Pilot Exercise: Findings of the Expert Panels*, report of a HEFCE study based on returns from 29 universities, claims that the methodology proposed by HEFCE for the assessment of the 'impact' (ie relatively short-term practical utility) of academic research is broadly on the right lines. (The proposal to include impact as a criterion in how research funding shall be allocated has given rise to opposition amongst academics.) A final decision is due in January.

In a *Guardian* feature on the diminishing number of people willing to apply for jobs as FE college principals, former principal Gary Williams, now employed by the recruitment arm of Tribal, the outsourcing contractor that specialises in rubbishing the work of lecturers in order to soften

colleges up for merger, says: 'Some applicants in the sector frighten me - I don't think they're up to it'.

A *Times Higher Education (THE)* survey of vice-chancellors in England, to which about 1 in 5, none from the Russell Group (of 20 or so large, posh universities) responded, reveals that all intend to set fees above £6,000.

In its submission to the Wolf review, the AOC emphasises what it sees as the need for the Government to support 14-16 provision by colleges, pointing out that the number of people under 16 attending FE has fallen from over 100,000 in 2005 to 73,000 now. The submission by the Institute for Learning (IFL) - the body FE teachers are compelled to join on pain of being disbarred from employment - continues this organisation's campaign for parity between its Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and the QTS arrangement that applies in schools.

In *The Government's proposals for Higher Education Funding and Student Finance - an Analysis*, the HE Policy Institute argues that government modelling has over-estimated the financial gains to individuals (especially women) from having a degree and thereby underestimated the extent to which tax-payers generally will have to support the HE system in the period to at least 2046.

Points in TES coverage of the pay offer to teachers by the Sixth Form Colleges Forum (SFCF) include: the offer was put back from the summer pending the outcome of the comprehensive spending review; the rise offered is 0.75 per cent, backdated to September 2010; this equates to an extra £255 on a £30,000 salary; there are about 8,500 full-time equivalent teaching posts in these colleges; this is the first offer in nearly 20 years that has not been pegged to that made to school



teachers; it compares with the 0.2 per cent offered to FE lecturers; the workers concerned will be subject to the 2-year public sector pay freeze due to start in September 2011.

On the eve of the 10/11/10 NUS/UCU march, NUS president Aaron Porter claims the NUS (leadership) is 'working with students to take direct action and take to the streets where necessary'.

FE and Skills minister John Hayes announces that the all-ages careers set-up that will result from merging the Connexions service, the 14-19 careers service and Next Step (the latter's adult counterpart) will begin working in September 2011 with people in their teens, becoming fully operational by April 2012. Institute of Career Guidance head Deirdre Hughes says her organisation 'is delighted to see that high-quality, independent careers advice is at the centre of the Government's social and economic agenda'.

NUS vice president FE Shane Chowen maintains that the amount spent by the Government on support for low-income students in FE is to be cut by 90 per cent. This estimate presumes that when EMAs stop the amount by which the learner support fund will be enhanced will be £40m, rather than the £150m claimed by the Government. This will lift the total LSF spend to £66m per year, as against the £560m spent on EMAs. The NUS believes that 60 per cent of those who would have been on EMAs will be unable to study without them.

Carshalton College (in Surrey) is to merge with Kingston upon Thames College, which has a deficit of over £2m. (Kingston currently has about 11,000 students, and Carshalton 7,000.)

National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) director/CEO Alan Tuckett is to retire in August 2011.

NUS president Aaron Porter tells a conference of [HE] 'sector leaders' [THE], held in London, about his plans for bringing about 'a consumer revolution in higher education', advocating an independent watchdog equivalent to Ofcom, Ofwat and similar bodies.

Over 50,000 people take part in a demonstration in London on HE funding called by NUS and UCU, while students in a number of universities across England start occupations.

### Week beginning 15/11/10

End of year results filed during October with the US Securities and Exchange Commission by the Apollo Group, which owns Phoenix University, the largest for-profit HE institution in the US, show that £106m was written off because of unexpectedly low enrolments at Apollo's UK subsidiary, BPP University College, which provides degree level legal and business qualifications in London and was planning to open centres in Cambridge, Liverpool and Newcastle.

At the AOC conference, business secretary Vince Cable announces that: 'We will ensure those who have left school without basic literacy and numeracy skills have access to free training, and we will make that training more effective'. FE minister John Hayes announces that all funding for FE colleges to do both 16-19 work and adult education will in future be channelled via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), thus removing LEA control from these sectors. Hayes also announces the Government's 'skills investment strategy', features of which include: only £100m of the former Train to Gain's £1bn budget will remain for a work-based training scheme aimed at small businesses; the entitlement of claimants to free training is to be restricted to job-seekers, thereby in the AOC's view, excluding from

training about 48,000 other people on benefits. Hayes also maintains that: 'The further education movement has a great history and a glorious future'. Asked if he can guarantee that abolishing EMAs will not make students drop out of FE, Hayes says the Government cannot 'guarantee Nirvana', while Business secretary Vince Cable says: 'We can't make a guarantee for every single instance'.

Also at the AOC conference, New College Durham principal and spokesperson for HE providers within FE John Widowson says, regarding the Browne review: 'If the argument for higher education as a public good has been set back for a while, the role that further education colleges can play is to fill some of those gaps'.

Commenting on rumours about education secretary Michael Gove's plans to remove school teacher training from HE, University Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) head James Noble-Rogers says that: '. . . I think it's fair to say we are extremely apprehensive at the moment'.

In a speech to the Girls' Schools Association's annual conference, Vince Cable says: '. . . we are not going to take an axe to FE'.

London Metropolitan University management announces plans to 'delete' 44 posts. Nine are those of senior lecturers in the Learning Development Unit, which provides students with support in study skills, academic literacy, maths and basic IT. Now called 'student learning development', the intention is that these activities 'should primarily be embedded within faculties'. (London Met. has more black and minority ethnic students than all the Russell Group universities put together.)

Bristol University vice-chancellor Eric Thomas is elected unopposed as president of the vice chancellors' organisation Universities UK.

The HE Academy (HEA) is to close its 24 regional subject centres, abolishing 130 posts. The 100 full-time equivalent posts at its York HQ will be increased to 120.

The small print of the Government's HE funding proposals, which it has passed to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), reveals that: students face the possibility of being charged the maximum interest rate of 3 per cent on their loans while still at university; the £21,000 threshold for repayments will only come into effect in 2016, when it will be worth about £19,000 at 2012 prices. IFS researchers estimate at 80 per cent the cut to the teaching grant.

Scottish cabinet finance secretary John Swinney unveils a one-year budget which would cut the Scottish Funding Council for HE's total income from £1.79bn to £1.57bn, and within that, the block grant for universities from £989m to £926m.

The Welsh Assembly publishes a draft budget which would entail a cut of £51m to university funding over the next three years.

Shadow business secretary John Denham writes to Vince Cable urging that the Government postpone the vote on the Browne Review, tuition fees etc until its HE White Paper, due in the new year, has gone through parliament.

### Week beginning 22/11/10

Announcing changes proposed by the Government to the system of entry visas for skilled workers from outside the EU, home secretary Teresa May tells the Commons that as many as two thirds of non-EU migrants to the UK are students, and that 'nearly half of all students coming from abroad are coming to study courses at below degree level, where abuse is particularly common . . . Too many students at this level have been coming here with a view to living

and working, not studying, and we need to reduce this abuse'.

Points in *TES* coverage of Ofsted's annual report for 2009-10 include: 79 FE colleges were inspected; six were rated outstanding, as against 18 the year before; 38 were rated good, 31 satisfactory and four inadequate; two sixth form colleges were judged inadequate, and the proportion of such colleges inspected and rated good or better fell to 50 per cent from 78 per cent the year before; 28 out of 34 work-based training providers were judged to have achieved 'inadequate outcomes'; in general FE colleges, the overall level of work with students classed as 'disadvantaged' is said to have improved, while teaching in science and in maths is singled out for criticism.

Among those criticising the HEA's decision to close all its subject centres, Warwick University economics assistant professor Michael McMahon says: 'It is a sad decision and I think it will spell the end for the HEA - just at the time when the good work of the subject centres had started to break through the resistance put up by most academics to enhancing their teaching and learning', while Durham University theology and religion lecturer Matthew Guest asks: 'Given the priorities stated in the Browne Review . . . on which planet does it make sense to cut the very staff who have done most to realise such significant progress in teaching and learning over the past decade?'

Manchester Metropolitan University is accrediting 'degrees' awarded by Hamburger 'University', which is located in London (East Finchley), belongs to McDonald's, and draws all its students and lecturers from McDonald's staff. The first ten people to 'graduate' from this qualification did so in July, and a further 53 began 'studying' for it during November.

The Government announces its support for Blairite plan to force people to stay in education to 18. (The aim now is to impose this in two stages, such that in 2013 the leaving age will rise to 17, and in 2015 to 18.)

Gove's *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper declares his intention to phase in from 2011 a £280 per 'pupil' cut in the funding for school 6th forms, which educate about 430,000 people.

Commenting on the White Paper, Sixth Form Colleges Forum CEO David Igoe says: ' . . . this could be an opportunity for schools', while AOC assistant CEO Julian Gravatt maintains that: ' . . . we're now moving in the right direction to ensure equity between colleges and school sixth forms'.

Academics at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, with the backing of the UCU branch at each, are using their respective traditional systems of governance (in Cambridge the university's council, in Oxford its parliament) to challenge the attempt by the Employers Pension Forum to replace the existing Universities Superannuation [final salaries] scheme, which applies to most academic staff in pre-1992 universities, by a career average scheme. Cambridge professor (and Oxford resident) Gill Evans describes this as 'the only known time when the academic democracies of both Oxford and Cambridge have acted simultaneously to force the hand of the administration and take control'.

Following the assurances about basic skills and related provision in FE issued by Vince Cable at the AOC conference, it emerges that, when combined with the overall 4.3 per cent cut to adult education, the Government's decision to remove the 'programme weighting' from such provision will mean a £1,300 per student cut to ESOL and a £660 per student cut to literacy and numeracy provision.

Points in *THE* coverage of the situation at Gloucestershire University include: the institution has cut its long-term debt from £31m to £26m; it has submitted a revised business plan to HEFCE; a management spokesperson believes that 'This is not a university under threat of failing'; an employment tribunal last month awarded lecturer Jan Merrigan £6,000, and accepts that Kevin Richardson, now dean of the Business School and formerly head of education in the Faculty of Education, Humanities and Science did tell Merrigan and a colleague who attempted to raise concerns with him to 'fuck off', on the grounds that he didn't 'do budgets'.

All three main unions organising lecturers in sixth form colleges - the NUT, NASUWT and ATL - are balloting members on action over the employers' 0.75 pay offer. NUT general secretary Christine Blower has written to members urging them to reject the offer and support action.

In a speech to staff in which he urges them to 'put institutional interest first', London Met. University vice-chancellor Malcolm Gillies points out that 80 per cent of students are on 80 courses, with the remaining 20 per cent on 200 courses, and floats a scheme to cut staff costs from 60 to 55 per cent of overall outgoings.

Posts for senior staff at BIS have been restructured. The post of director general for universities and skills, occupied by former Train to Gain architect Stephen Marston, has been axed.

A UCU special HE sector conference held in Manchester on 25/11/10 votes to adopt proposals for action over pay and over pensions, including assessment boycotts and strikes for a week in each month, coordinated with action by other unions 'for maximum disruption of university business'.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request to BIS by the THE reveals that the 11 months of work leading up to the Browne Review cost £120,000, the main element of which was the secondment to it of seven full-time civil servants.

Speaking at a joint UCU/NUS event in London, London School of Economics (LSE) professor Nicholas Barr, one of the originators of top-up fees as introduced by Blair, maintains that the Coalition is wrong to reject Browne's idea of a levy on universities charging over £6,000, because the effect will be shift some of the burden of repayments (ie from people who incur fees above this level but then do not reach the earnings threshold for repayment) to 'the taxpayer', which in turn must lead the Government to control entry numbers. (Barr also condemns the Government's plan to axe the entire teaching grant for non-STEM degree subjects, on the grounds that this must lead either to institutions raising fees to compensate for falling numbers and/or to them lowering 'standards' in order to charge lower fees.)

In a Commons Science and Technology Committee hearing, David Willetts confirms that the capital budget for research controlled by BIS is to be cut by 44 per cent.

In a UUK debate, Lord Browne denies intending to recommend that funding for the teaching of non-STEM subjects be abolished.

### Week beginning 29/11/10

Leaked to the *THE*, a memo sent earlier in the year by CEO Carl Lygo to the staff of private HE provider BPP reveals that in 2009-10 the company's revenues fell for the first time, staff pay was frozen and 90 were made redundant.

In evidence to the Commons education select committee

investigation of Ofsted, the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum, the AOC and Staffordshire County Council all claim that Ofsted uses more lenient criteria for judging school 6th forms than for colleges.

London University Institute of Education (IOE) director-designate, Chris Husbands, while expressing himself 'incredibly enthusiastic' about some of the plans for school teacher training put forward in Michael Gove's White Paper, nevertheless questions whether schools will themselves be able to recruit the annual 35,000 trainee teachers required to sustain staffing levels, and suggests that the situation likely to result from Gove's plan to spread teacher training funding across 22,000 schools, as opposed to 100 universities as now, would be 'rather chaotic'.

Commenting on claims by SFA CEO Geoff Russell that private sector organisations would 'bite my arm off' for the chance to take over a failing FE college, and that in colleges where control was passed to a John Lewis-style 'cooperative', staff would benefit financially from more efficient working, Association of Managers in Education (AMIE, formerly ACM) general secretary Peter Pendle says: 'I think this is another of Geoff Russell's ideas which is doomed to abject failure'.

Figures in the HM Inspectorate of Prisons report Children and Young People in Custody 2009/10 reveal that, of 1,162 15-18 year olds interviewed, only 23 per cent had taken part in vocational skills training while in prison, although about 75 per cent of males and 86 per cent of females had done some form of education there.

David Willetts announces that all funding for the Aimhigher scheme is to be abolished and the scheme wound up in summer 2011. (Set up to encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider going into HE, the

scheme will between 2008 and 2011 have received £250m funding, enabling it to run 42 partnerships involving 2,700 schools across England. )

A survey by legal advice firm Eversheds, aimed at assessing how new immigration restrictions will affect FE, finds that 7 in every 8 colleges plan to carry out international work (eg partnerships with institutions in China, India etc) to compensate for lost revenue. Colleges recruit about 30,000 non-EU students per year.

In conjunction with UUK and the GuildHE organisation (of universities that were formerly teacher training colleges), HEFCE issues *Public Information about Higher Education: Consultation on Changes to Information Published by Institutions*. This puts out for consultation (till 7/3/11) the 'Key Information Set' of details universities will have to make available, under Quality Assurance Agency scrutiny, from autumn 2012 to potential applicants for entry to undergraduate courses.

The 157 Group publishes data on student recruitment, retention etc aimed at encouraging the Government to drop its plan to abolish EMAs.

Supported by the National Skills Academy for Financial Services, London mayor Boris Johnson 'pledges' to 'create' more than 20,000 new apprenticeships, mainly with City firms, during the current academic year.

The Government drops its plan to stop funding the British Council's language assistants programme.

Simon Lebus, CEO of Cambridge Assessment, parent company of the OCR exam board, tells the Westminster Education Forum that it would be better if universities used the A-level uniform mark scheme (UMS) alongside grades when considering applicants for undergraduate programmes. (The

UMS includes actual marks, grade boundaries and information about where a candidate's marks lie in the overall distribution of marks awarded.) At the same conference UCAS CEO Mary Curnock Cook announces her intention to revive moves towards a post-qualification HE entry system, arguing that a 'post-Browne world' will make this more achievable, while Ofqual CEO Isabel Nisbet claims that changes already made to A-levels have superseded the information on the effects of resits cited by ministers in the November schools White Paper.

Figures quoted in the interim report on fair pay in the public sector prepared for the Government by Work Foundation executive vice-chairperson Will Hutton reveal that: in 2008 the median salary for a university vice-chancellor was 15.35 times the bottom of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) pay spine; in Russell Group institutions this ratio was 19:1; the average annual salary for a vice-chancellor was £200,800; between 2001 and 2008 vice-chancellors' pay rose by an annual average of 5.2 per cent whereas that of cleaners and porters on the bottom the scale rose by 4.9 per cent.

At a conference on research excellence organised by HEPI, Wellcome Trust director Sir Mark Walport, BIS director for knowledge and innovation Adrian Smith and HEFCE CEO Sir Alan Langlands all assert that 'impact' will remain a central factor in the allocation of research funding. Walport describes as 'a rather extreme defence of a collegiate, bottom-up, highly disorganised university that I would argue is punching under its weight' a speech by Oxford vice-chancellor Andrew Hamilton advocating light-touch' central direction of research.

At the British Council's Education UK Partnership conference, held in

Edinburgh, Phil Taylor, UK Border Agency regional director for Scotland and Northern Ireland, explains the Government's impending restrictions on non-EU student visas as follows: 'The point I have to emphasise is that the Government's policy is if you come here to study, you come here to study. You do not come here to work. The principle is study, and the emphasis is: you come here to study and you go home'.

### Week beginning 6/12/10

Several hundred anti-tuition fee demonstrators invade Tate Britain during the Turner Prize awards ceremony.

Figures on grants for research made to universities in 2009-10 by the research councils reveal that, of the total £1,048,816,000 disbursed, the largest single recipient was Imperial College, with £96,291,000, followed by UCL on £75,722,000, Oxford on £71,337,000 and Cambridge on £64,671,000. At the bottom of the table was Coventry, with nothing, followed by Glamorgan, on £40,000. A THE calculation, from which Science and Technology Facilities Council funding was excluded, indicates that the top six institutions in terms of overall research funding (Imperial, UCL, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and Edinburgh) received 39.6 per cent of research council funding in 2009-10, as against 34.5 per cent in 2008-09.

Points in a *TES* article on the government's clampdown on visas for non-EU students include: immigration minister Damien Green this week launches for public consultation proposals which include tougher English language requirements for student visas, a ban on students taking part time jobs during the week, an end to students being able to seek employment in the UK after completing courses, and the

restriction of visas 'largely' to university and school-based qualifications; of 273,402 student visas issued in 2009, about 112,000 (41 per cent) were for sub-degree-level qualifications; according to British Council figures, FE colleges in England had 66,500 international students during 2008-09, from which they took £42m in tuition fees; according to AOC international director John Mountford, about 140 FE colleges have not applied for the requisite 'highly trusted sponsor' status, and hence will be barred from accepting non-EU students.

It emerges that at a HEFCE Council meeting held in London in late November, UCL council chairperson Sir Stephen Wall stated that, in view of cuts in research funding, UCL would 'obviously' have to consider diverting income obtained via student tuition fees to subsidise research. a practice described by HEFCE director of research, innovation and skills David Sweeney as 'shoddy'.

Following the claim in the BIS skills White Paper that outcome incentive payments would 'provide a simple, transparent means of incentivising colleges and training organisations to deliver wider economic outcomes', the SFA announces that it has set aside £80m (2.3 per cent of its £3.4bn annual budget) to be shared between colleges which can show that they have helped into employment a set percentage of students who were previously on either jobseeker's allowance or employment and support allowance. This money will be used for a pilot of the scheme during 2011-12, with the intention that it be extended from 2012-13, probably in combination with an arrangement by which a proportion of a college's funding would be linked to whether it meets a target for the number of apprentices who complete their programmes.

In the lead-up to the Commons vote on tuition fees, student occupations are underway at Brighton, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Plymouth, Sheffield and York Universities, as well as at UCL, the University of East London (UEL), University College Falmouth, King's College London (KCL), London Met. and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

A number of vice-chancellors have refused to sign a UUK open letter supporting the proposal to raise tuition fees.

A BIS assessment of the likely impact of HE tuition fee and funding changes over the next three years indicates that the Government's policy will cost the country as a whole more than £2bn over that period, because, although £2.5bn will be 'saved' by cutting teaching grants to universities, graduates will face an extra £4.5bn in loan repayments. Research by Birkbeck College and IoE professor Claire Callender and David Wilkinson of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) suggests that part-time HE students will be disproportionately hit by HE fee increases, (given that the Blairites' policy of attacking those who wish to do equivalent or lower qualifications will also continue). The BIS assessment also includes figures showing that the teaching grant for part-time students will fall from £410m now to £85m by 2014-15.

A Knowledge Partnership survey of university marketing and communications directors finds that more than half of the 42 respondents agree that subjects such as English and History could become the preserve of the 'very well off', and virtually all think some universities will close within ten years.

Official figures about Oxford and Cambridge obtained via an FOI request by former Labour minister David Lammy reveal that: 89 per

cent of undergraduates at Oxford and 87.6 per cent at Cambridge are drawn from the top three socioeconomic categories, as against 64.5 per cent for all universities as reported by UCAS; none of the 1,500 academic and lab staff at Cambridge are defined as 'black' (34 are of British Asian origin); only one black British citizen from an Afro-Caribbean background was accepted at Oxford in 2009-10 (out of 35 who applied), while at Cambridge six were accepted; Oxford accepted 77 students of Indian descent, out of 466 who applied; eleven Oxford Colleges and ten Cambridge ones did not make a single offer to a black candidate in that year; one Oxford College (Merton) has admitted not a single black candidate in the last five years, and only three in the last ten; the total number of black students achieving three A grades at A-level in 2009 was 292, and 475 black students applied to either Oxford, Cambridge or both; over the last four years, eight times as many offers have been made by Oxbridge colleges to applicants living in the London borough of Richmond-upon-Thames than to applicants from Barnsley, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Rochdale and Stoke-upon-Trent combined; over the same period, applicants from Richmond obtained only 18 fewer Oxbridge offers than the whole of Scotland.

In a *THE* interview, Birmingham University vice-chancellor, Browne panel member and former Arts and Humanities Research Board head David Eastwood maintains that: 'When people say that Browne is in some sense targeting the humanities . . . it could not be further from the truth', while the idea that the review was biased towards STEM subjects 'is frankly one of the crassest forms of reductionism I have come across'.

As Sheffield University, the vice-chancellor of which, Keith Burnett, is also chairperson of the UCEA, moves to begin consultation on a

scheme to close its final salaries pension scheme to new entrants and end future accruals for current members, with the intention of forcing them all onto a 'cash balance' scheme of the type banned by the US government, a meeting of about 500 workers there, called jointly by Unison, Unite and UCU, decides 'unofficially' (*THE*) to ballot for industrial action on the issue, which affects only those staff, overwhelmingly female, on £23,000 a year or less.

As occupations and other actions by students against the Government's plans for fees spread across the country, the executive of the NUS votes by a large majority not to support the national demonstration called for 9th December by the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts and the Education Activist Network, but instead to hold, in conjunction with UCU a candlelit vigil on the Victoria Embankment.

Following the weekend release by ministers of a scheme by which low-income students attending universities which charge £9,000 a year in fees would be eligible for a year of free tuition paid for by the university, Vince Cable and David Willetts table draft widening participation criteria with which universities charging over £6,000 would have to comply or face penalties.

The national press publishes two letters from groups of vice-chancellors, one group urging MPs to support and the other to vote against the Government's proposals for HE funding.

The Government's plan to treble university fees and cut 80 per cent of the funding for undergraduate teaching - and within this, all the funding for non-STEM subjects - passes through the Commons on 9/12/10 with a majority of 21, with 21 Lib Dem MPs voting against. In the debate, BIS secretary of state Vince Cable claims to be 'proud' of these 'reforms'.

Police in riot gear are used to disrupt, assault and 'kettle' a march to parliament by students, lecturers and others opposed to the Government's planned HE measures, with several thousand people held for more than 6 hours (till after 11pm) in freezing conditions on Westminster Bridge and illegally photographed before being allowed to leave.

The Government publishes the draft of its letter to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) about the change to fees, which basically explains that OFFA will in theory have the power to impose a fine of up to £500,000 on a university which fails to take agreed measures to encourage applications from less well-off students, and refuse to renew its access agreement. Commenting on this, however, West, Central and North London Aimhigher executive director Graeme Atherton says: 'Why is there no minimum requirement for investment in outreach?'

An Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) analysis of the new HE fee system reveals that, although it appears that the lowest-earning 20-25 per cent of graduates would be better off than now, the reality, when parental incomes are taken into account, is that the poorest 30 per cent will be paying 'significantly more'. The same briefing argues that the Government's proposed national scholarship fund - ie the arrangement by which universities charging fees above £6,000 would have to contribute to a fund that would pay the costs of second year tuition for students who had previously qualified for free school meals - would give elite universities an incentive not to accept such students in the first place.

### Week beginning 13/12/10

Interviewed by the *THE* following the 9/12/10 Commons vote and the letters to the press by vice chancellors that preceded it, UUK

president and Exeter University vice-chancellor Steve Smith denies that UUK 'took its eye off the ball', maintaining rather that the cut to funding would have been greater without UUK's representations to ministers.

Following the allegations made in November by the SFA that a 'small number of providers' had submitted statistical returns in such a way as to have 'achieved financial gain at the expense of both learners and the public purse, whether through ignorance or design', a 'management group' chaired by Information Authority chairperson Graham Jones and including reps from the AOC, Ofsted and funding bodies, issues draft guidelines on how such returns should be made. These guidelines would outlaw the practice of having students do two qualifications in the same class (eg Functional Skills in a vocational unit).

Spokespersons for HEPI and the Million+ group of universities jointly argue that the cost to taxpayers of the Government's HE measures will be higher than it has claimed, because many more universities than anticipated will charge fees of £9,000, rendering unrealistic the £7,500 average on which government calculations have been based.

Commenting on Michael Gove's scheme to level down the funding available to school sixth forms towards the level in colleges, Sixth Form Colleges Forum executive chairperson David Igoe says: 'We hope our time has come. As a Forum we're looking at ways to promote colleges; and we think now is an opportunity'.

As the 'ballot' on USS pensions continues, an unpublished Employers Pensions Forum (EPF) document, originally drawn up earlier in 2010 but now leaked to the *THE*, reveals that the USS aims to use the proposed changes to make short term cuts. Meanwhile, staff at two further universi-

ties, Essex and Warwick, start internal procedures aimed at blocking moves to scrap the final salary scheme.

FE students supported by UCU members take part in a day of action, including a demonstration to Westminster, protesting against the abolition of EMAs.

Imperial College is to make 14 staff in its life sciences department compulsorily redundant with effect from July 2011, and require three others to take early retirement, because the head of this department, Ian Owens, has identified them as failing to bring in enough research income and/or to publish articles which are cited often enough by other authors.

157 Group executive director Lynne Sedgmore claims that the Government's £26m learner support fund (ie the money to be given to colleges to make targeted provision superseding the £560m available via EMAs) constitutes only 12 per cent of what the Group regards as the absolute minimum required. Even when by 2014 this amount has been raised to £78m, it will still amount to only 35 per cent of the requirement.

UCAS releases figures showing that applications for undergraduate places in universities for autumn 2011 are up nearly 12 per cent on the same time last year, with the rise for those aged 30-39 being 18.9 per cent.

A government letter details future HE funding cuts as follows: money for teaching to be cut in 2011 from £4.9bn to £4.6bn; research funding to be cut by £100m; the teaching grant to be cut to £3.8bn by 2012; teaching and research together to fall from £9.2bn now to £9.1bn by 2012; a 10,000 cut in the number of undergraduate places by 2012.

Edexcel owners Pearson announce the availability from 2012 of BTEC higher level qualifications in business, engineering, ICT and

health/social care, to be run in FE colleges - by that time possibly as degrees.

### Week beginning 20/12/10

The HEA puts out for consultation (to 17/1/11) its *Review of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education*. Proposals in the Review, produced in the wake of the Browne review of HE funding, include: that completion of an HEA-accredited [teacher] training course should be mandatory for all probationary academic staff and postgraduates who teach (the former would have to do a Postgraduate Certificate in HE or similar); and that all new academic staff should be observed teaching more than once. (The framework itself was published in 2006).

Points in the Government's annual grant letter to HEFCE include: overall support to HE in 2011 will fall by just under £700m, and by a further £820m in 2012-13; a strict cap on overall student numbers is to be retained, and the 10,000 extra places added in 2010-11 will be withdrawn when higher fees start in 2012-13.

David Willetts announces large cuts, spread over the four years from 2011-12, in the capital funding for research conducted in HE which the Government allocates via the research councils (ie as distinct from the 'quality-related' funding processed through HEFCE and allocated via the Research Excellence Framework).

In *Higher Education in the Age of Austerity: Shared Services, Outsourcing and Entrepreneurship*, the rightwing Policy Exchange thinktank maintains that by forming partnerships and outsourcing the university sector as a whole could reduce by up to 30 per cent the amount it spends on goods and services (currently about £9bn per year).

Points revealed by publication of Gloucestershire University's annual accounts for 2009-10 include: for more than two months the institution was reliant on a £2.5m overdraft facility; its long-term debts have been reduced from £31.6m to £26.8m, such that the debt to income ratio is now just under 40 per cent; it incurred a £6.2m 'impairment charge' after reassessment of the market value of its mothballed site at Pittville in Cheltenham; in 2009-10, the then vice-chancellor, Patricia Broadfoot, was paid just under £500,000, £265,000 of which she received between announcing her resignation on 25/3/10 and actually retiring on 31/7/10.

A poll of its 2,000 full time students conducted by Middlesbrough College, to which 781 responded, reveals that 61 per cent think they would have difficulty continuing without EMAs.

Swansea Metropolitan University and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David have agreed in principle to merge, and to involve local FE colleges in a 'regional educational group'.

### Week beginning 27/12/10

A statistical analysis issued by the Labour Party, and based on figures obtained by the National Pupil Database and the HE Statistics Agency (HESA), shows that between 2005 and 2007 the number of school students who, having been eligible for free school meals, obtained a university place rose from 10,060 to 11,9005 (up 18 per cent) whereas the figures for those not thus eligible rose from 148,670 to 162,445 (up 9 per cent).

A Freedom of Information (FOI) Act request by the *Guardian* reveals that in 2009-10 60 universities paid a total of £346,505 in compensation to students who complained about provision.

# 'Of our elaborate plans, the end'

Patrick Ainley and Martin Allen

The Coalition's reaction to the Browne Review of student fees complements their slashing of 40 per cent of higher education funding. Their new hard cap of £9,000 a year on fees leaves unfunded arts and humanities to be paid for only by those who can afford such frivolous pursuits at elite and surviving campus universities - mainly overseas students and others who are seriously rich. For the rest, a market dedicated - like surviving HE research - to the interests of the private sector will offer vocational courses in the STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine as the remaining universities and colleges collapse and merge into a range of local e-learning hubs offering part-time and distance provision.

This marks the end, not only of higher education as it has developed since the war, but - more broadly - of the whole effort to reform society through education. If carried into legislation, it will close a phase of progressive reform that began with the official introduction of comprehensive schools from 1965. These freed primary schools for child-centred education and prepared the way for expansion of further and higher education, including the polytechnic experiment.

Unlike 11+ selection, which became a thing of the past in 80 per cent of English secondary schools and more in Scotland and Wales, reforming education at all levels no longer aimed to reinforce existing social hierarchies but sought to break down class divisions by opening equal opportunities to careers for all. The logic of comprehensive reform carried forward to inclusion of children with special needs, a common exam at 16 and a National Curriculum sold to teachers as an entitlement for all, as well as more recent widening participation in HE to nearly half of 18-30 year olds.

Battling on the uneven playing field of examinations in traditional academic subjects with the surviving private and grammar schools linked to the antique universities in a polarising labour market, it is remarkable that these successive reforming efforts were as successful as they were, especially for young women. Now perhaps the only good to come from their abandonment is to recognise how impossible it was for education to change society by attempting to educate the working class out of existence and so solve what were basically economic problems.

Along with the rest of what remains of public sector welfare-state services, including the health ser-

vice, the Coalition intends to contract education out to the private sector. This will create their 'private sector-led recovery' and 'free schools' are just the start. Expect the return of the voucher as a way to get more parents paying for the legal compulsion to send their children to school. Similarly, young people are expected to mortgage their futures for vocational courses and apprenticeships without jobs in the competing and variously specialised HE institutions now presented as a model for schools and FE to follow.

Residual notions of the right to education in a good local school with progression to further and higher education are being snuffed out by competitive academic selection at all levels. As has been pointed out by all save the Russell Group universities and other vice chancellors deluded enough to believe their universities can also eventually privatise themselves out of the system, differentiated fees will heighten the existing social hierarchy in which, as a general rule, the older the university, the younger, whiter and posher its students.

What has not been so widely noted is that the workings of the market in education leave the elite and their feeder private and selective state schools severely exposed. Because, unlike the selection by intelligence that the post-war 11+ pretended to, there is at present no accepted ideology to justify the academic cramming for tests of largely literary ability. The 'brightest and best' who win through this relentless competition are increasingly transparently revealed as the richest and most privileged. No matter how many - or in all likelihood, how few - bursaries the Russell Group provide for poor scholars. Such selection demands a justification and may find it in spurious genetic theories based on 'the latest discoveries'.

Meanwhile the FE colleges will be swallowed up by this vocational HE become FE. The only role remaining for them is to deliver the Apprenticeships Without Jobs that will replay 1970s and '80s YOP and YTS. FE still has the majority of NUS's membership and, together with their teachers, F&HE students are well aware that reduced funding and raised fees are an attack upon the entire so-called 'Lost Generation', as the Wednesday 10th November demo showed.

In fact the strongest argument against raising fees and fully funding HE is what else are school and college leavers supposed to do?



# Critical education

Colin Waugh

Paula Allman, *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism: Karl Marx and Revolutionary Critical Education* (Volume 3 in International Issues in Adult Education series, Sense Publishers, 2010)

This excellent book is an extensively updated re-publication of a 2001 study.

In the late 1980s, Paula Allman, then a lecturer in adult education at Nottingham University, was a central figure in the education sub group of the Socialist Movement, which for a time allowed a wide range of leftwing groups and individuals to work together. Paula, now retired for health reasons, is still actively thinking about what would constitute a valid approach to adult education.

The present book is valuable for a number of reasons. First, in Chapter 6 - titled 'Freirean critical education in an unlikely context' - it provides a detailed, concrete account of the practice developed at Nottingham by Paula and her colleague John Wallis, where their students were mainly para-professionals on a teacher training course for people in adult education. She explains how her interest in Freire's approach was reawakened by a student who had previously been a literacy worker with Freire, and then how she and John re-organised their work along Freirean lines and sustained this for several years.

Chapters 2 and 3 are arguably the most important parts of the book, since here Paula sets out what she considers to be the elements in Marx's thought which are crucial now. Her approach is centred on the three volumes of *Capital*, along with the *Grundrisse*, showing how these works are simultaneously philosophical and economic, and how they offer by far the best way of making sense of the capitalist social order. These chapters would provide a good basis for running *Capital* reading groups amongst the wide range of people currently looking to Marx for ways of explaining what has happened in the last few years.

These sections of the book are framed by five chapters (1, 4, 5 and 7) and an afterword, all of which are thought-provoking, disciplined essays on, in effect, the need for socialist adult education, which in practice means independent working-class education, now. What Paula does in these sections is in effect to spell out how, in her view, Gramsci and Freire were the crucial continuators of Marx, the people above all others whose ideas - and, in Freire's case at least, practice - point the way for people now, ie her actual

and potential readers, to take effective action in the spirit of Marx. The afterword, in particular, contains an analysis of the current recession which would in itself be useful for people running 'understanding the crisis' sessions with rank and file union members.

Paula also proposes the formation of an international 'seed' alliance of people who would 'pool their resources to inspire and then support the efforts of others who wanted to engage in or who were already engaged in critical education for revolutionary social transformation', thereby 'kick-starting' a 'much larger movement which would then grow 'primarily from local or grass-root organizations or groups'. This proposal should be followed up.

The book's last few sentences sum up Paula's overall standpoint: 'I personally cannot see how we can understand the present crisis without Marx, especially his theory of value. I lament the wasted critical education opportunities that have been thrown up by this crisis, but how critical educators could fully problematize something like a derivative, for example, in the absence of Marx is beyond my comprehension. All activists need to be critical educators, and as such, they need to start demanding the theory they need to effectively challenge capitalism; they need to demand that Marxism brings back Marx and his comprehensive explanation of capitalism - what I have previously called his comprehensive 'outing' of capitalism. Finally, activists and theorists, alike, need to think deeply and creatively about how they might begin to 'walk the talk' of Marx.'

There are one or two respects in which Paula's approach arguably needs to be supplemented. First, she appears to be less interested in the political than in the economic and philosophical dimensions of Marx's work. Secondly, perhaps for reasons of space, she tends here rather to present Marx as primarily an individual genius, thereby underplaying, first, his struggles against - and hence influence by - pre-existing and contemporary schools of socialist and communist thought, and, second, what he and Engels learnt from working-class activists. In other words, she seems not to perceive 'Marxism' as itself a product of dialogue. Thirdly, she shows eloquently how Freirean dialogue enables people collectively to develop one another's consciousness, but has less to say explicitly about how it enables them to intervene in and change the world around them.

# Tressell's vision lives on

***As the centenary of Robert Tressell's death approaches, Dave Harker, author of Tressell: the real story of the Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (Zed Books, 2003) explains some of the background to this influential novel***

## Robert Croker, aka Noonan, aka Tressell

**T**he author of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* was born in Dublin on 17 April 1870. He was the son of Samuel Croker, a wealthy retired senior policeman and magistrate, and Mary Ann Noonan, who had him christened Robert Croker in a Catholic church. His father, who was not a Catholic, had a wife and another family; but when he died in 1875 he provided for Mary and their children. Robert had a 'very good education', but in 1886 he left home, reportedly because he 'would not live on the family income derived largely from absentee landlordism in Ireland'; and at some point began calling himself Robert Noonan.

Around 1888 he went to Cape Town and in 1891 Robert Phillippe Noonan, 'Decorator', married eighteen-year-old Elizabeth Hartel, and they lived in a middle-class suburb. Kathleen was born in 1892; but in 1894 Elizabeth probably had an affair and Noonan went to work in Johannesburg. In 1895 she definitely had an affair and bore a child in 1896. After a failed attempt at reconciliation, Noonan began divorce proceedings, and in 1897 he got his decree, all their property and the custody of Kathleen.

He worked for a large Johannesburg firm and could afford to rent an apartment, send Kathleen as a boarder to an expensive convent, speculate in mining ventures, lease a plot of building land in an all-white enclave and hire a black servant, 'Six-pence'. As Secretary of the Transvaal Federated Building Trades Council, he led a successful 'protest against the employment of black skilled labour', and in 1898 he became a junior foreman; but he also joined the Transvaal Executive Committee of the Centennial of 1798 Association, which commemorated the revolutionary nationalist United Irishmen. In 1899, as Trades Council Secretary, he attended the launch of the International Independent Labour Party. Later that year he helped form

the Irish Brigades to fight the British, and was 'very much opposed' to imperialism; yet he left for Cape Town just before war began. He and Kathleen lived with his widowed sister, Adelaide, and her son, in a well-to-do suburb, but late in 1901 they set sail for England.

Before the Boer War ended in 1902 they were in St Leonards, Sussex, living with Noonan's sister, Mary Jane. A recession was underway, but Noonan's skills helped him to find work, though on much lower rates and under far worse conditions than in Johannesburg. Kathleen went to private schools; but in 1904 she transferred to a state school, and Noonan began doing part-time jobs at nights. He seems not to have joined a union, and, probably in 1905, he offered an airship design to the War Office; but it was not accepted. In 1907 he rowed with his employer about taking too much time over a job and walked out. His skills were in demand, but his standard of living was deteriorating. During 1908-09 he was politically active in the Social Democratic Federation (1); but his health got worse, so he lost time at work. He stopped going to SDF meetings and spent his spare time writing.

*The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* was completed by 1910, and he signed it 'Robert Tressell' to cover his tracks. He failed to find a publisher, and in August he went to Liverpool to make arrangements for himself and Kathleen to emigrate to Canada. In November, after he was admitted to the Royal Liverpool Infirmary, Mary Jane refused to pay Kathleen's fare so she could visit him. On 3 February 1911 a telegram informed her that her father had died of 'phthisis pulmonalis' - wasting of the lungs associated with tuberculosis - and 'cardiac failure'. Mary Jane, Adelaide, and another sister, Ellen, who lived in Liverpool, did not make any funeral arrangements or offer any money, but left it to the hospital; so Noonan was buried in Walton Park Cemetery, opposite Walton Gaol, in a 'public grave', along with twelve other paupers.

### ***The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists***

*The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* that Robert Noonan wrote was not the version that was published in April 1914. Jessie Pope (2) had cut out much of its socialist politics, and the publisher, Grant Richards, aimed his expensive edition at the liberal middle class. It sold quite well until August, when sales 'died', as reformist socialist leaders forgot their internationalist rhetoric and got behind their 'own' ruling classes in the Great War.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 and end of the imperialist slaughter, socialists cottoned on to *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, and in 1918 Richards published an even shorter, but cheaper version aimed at a working-class market. It sold well, especially when the General Strike was betrayed by union leaders in 1926, and then the first Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, helped the Tories make workers pay for capitalism's crisis after 1931.

After Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, many British socialists joined the Communist Party. In 1935, as Stalin was moving right towards a Popular Front perspective, Richards reissued the 1914 *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. In 1940, during World War 2, Penguin published a sixpenny paperback of the 1918 edition; and from 1941, after Hitler broke his pact with Stalin and Russia joined the Allies, CPers pushed the Penguin edition in the armed forces and trade unions. It reportedly contributed to Labour's landslide victory in 1945, but that led to the 1947-48 alliance with US imperialism.

In 1955, just before Stalin's crimes were made public, and thanks to Fred and Jacquie Ball, the CP publisher, Lawrence & Wishart, produced a 'complete' edition of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. A capitalist paperback edition followed in 1965. Since then *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* has had over one hundred and fifty printings and has appeared in at least nine languages. Its total sales are unknown, but must be in the millions.

*The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* was the first English novel to describe how capitalism operates at the point of production. It rarely lets the bosses off the hook; but while some workers get 'some of their own back', some of the time, they are generally powerless. The 'Great Money Trick' illustrates why they need to 'Blame the System'; yet the nearest thing to a hero, Frank Owen, shows little faith in winning economic reforms through collective action and does not organise a union. He is clear that the problem is politically rooted in 'competition - capitalism'; and rejects reformism:

'it's no good tinkering at it. Everything about it is wrong and there's nothing about it that's right. There's only one thing to be done with it and that is to smash it up and have a different system altogether'. But his socialist speeches are abstract propaganda, and contain no political strategy, or even a set of tactics.

Towards the end of the book he hands over responsibility to the middle-class socialist, George Barrington, who has a plan: 'you must fill the House of Commons with Revolutionary socialists'. Yet he assumes that the state is a neutral machine whose powers will be allowed to steer society towards socialism, unmolested by capitalists, the state and rival imperial powers. So while *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* was close to the cutting edge of British socialist thought in 1910, its politics wobble between reform and revolution.

Today some socialists argue that *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is full of 'pessimism' and 'elitism'; and, indeed, it is very hard on workers: 'They were the enemy . . . They were the real oppressors . . . They were the people who were really responsible for the continuation of the present system . . . No wonder the rich despised them and looked upon them as dirt. They were despicable. They were dirt. They admitted it and gloried in it.' Yet most such outbursts do not come from Owen and Barrington. Instead, and especially after they win the argument but lose the vote, the narrative voice 'reports' their thoughts as they deal with their frustrations. In the 1920s Valentin Volosinov argued that this kind of inner dialogue represented 'class struggle in the head', and in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* the narrative voice also addresses us, the readers; so we are encouraged to think what we would do in similar circumstances today.

We live in a capitalist world and imperialism remains red in tooth and claw; but we face the same basic choices as in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Do we give in to sophisticated despair, blame other workers, claim that they can't or won't change, and settle for a few crumbs? Or do we carry on patiently explaining how the 'Great Money Trick' works, organise fighting unions and a party, rooted in the working class, to overthrow capitalism irreversibly?

1. The Social Democratic Federation (SDF), founded and dominated by the businessman H.M. Hyndman, was the largest group claiming to be Marxist in England at the time.

2. Following a chance encounter with Kathleen Noonan, Jessie Pope, author of patriotic verses, drew Tressell's novel to the attention of her own publisher, Grant Richards, who then twice gave her the job of editing it for publication.

# IWCE: how can we rebuild the tradition?

*This article is based on a talk given by Colin Waugh at a meeting with the same title held in Sheffield on 13/11/10*

I will be speaking about Independent Working-Class Education (IWCE). I will say why I think this is important now, and suggest a course of action that people who agree might take.

(I wrote and brought out the pamphlet *'Plebs': The Lost Legacy of Independent Working-Class Education* for January 2009, to mark the centenary of the 'strike' by students at Ruskin College in March and April 1909. I have been surprised by the level of interest there has been in this pamphlet.) I think this interest is right, for the following reasons.

First, there is literally nothing more important now than working-class education. Some things are as important, but none more so, because it is only working-class people who can - if they decide to do so - act collectively to solve the big problems in the world now. For example, only the working-class has the potential to create a lasting solution to the problem of climate change. However, for sections of working-class people to do this would require the right sort and level of consciousness amongst them, and hence, would also require, among other things, a valid form of education.

Secondly, IWCE is primarily about the future, not the past. I hope people will agree that we investigate the past (for example the 1909 'strike') so as to be able to act in the present, in such a way as to open up the possibility of a decent future.

Thirdly, so far as I have been able to find out up to now, what the Ruskin strikers did was unique. Therefore I view their activity, not as a footnote to history, but as a key event

So what did the Ruskin strikers do? Basically, these were core industrial workers - mineworkers, railway workers, textile workers - who took on what was then arguably the world's poshest university - Oxford. The 'strike' was a collision between, on the one hand, a ruling class project of using adult education to create a compliant layer within the working class, and, on the other, a from-below drive for working-class collective self-education. In this struggle, the strikers and their successors created the IWCE movement, which included the following elements: a network of local classes in many of the working-class heartlands; the Central Labour

College (in effect a teacher training institution to prepare tutors for these classes); a correspondence structure (ie what would now be called a distance learning set-up); a publishing house which produced textbooks and teaching/learning materials; a periodical (*The 'Plebs' Magazine*); and a democratic organisational structure linked to a number of unions. Many aspects of this movement survived till 1964. I believe that we need to build a modern-day equivalent embracing as many of these functions as we can.

It can also be argued that the Browne Review of higher education funding makes it even more urgent that we should try to do this. Just as the ruling class in 1870 took on part of the Chartists' education programme - in particular William Lovett's concept of directly elected school boards - as part of its response to rising militancy, so the expansion of HE from the early 1960s can be seen, amongst other things, as the ruling class, in a period where there was a tight labour market, again taking on part of the working class's educational programme - that is, the Plebs League's demand for higher education. And in turn, then, the Browne review means that those in power now are dropping this 1960s strategy, and expelling working-class people from non-STEM [science, technology, maths and engineering-related] higher education.

So what, then, can and should a revived IWCE be like now and in the foreseeable future? I feel that in order to answer this question we need to think about two others: first, what did the Ruskin strikers mean by 'independent', by 'working-class', and by 'education'?, and secondly, what should we mean now by these same words?

By 'working-class' they meant people like themselves (ie mineworkers, railway workers, textile workers, engineering workers and so on). 'Independent' they explained by saying: you don't willingly join a company union or send a member of the ruling class to represent you in parliament, and therefore you should not entrust your education to them. (This is something like what Bob Marley said in his Redemption Song, in the line 'None but ourselves can free our minds'.) However, by

'independent' the Ruskin strikers also meant independent of state and charitable funding - in other words, they believed that the education they had in mind should be paid for by unions, especially union branches. (None of this, though, means that they thought they could educate themselves without any input from those who had undergone formal education.) And by 'education', they meant adult education other than scientific and technical, and other than that which is purely to do with the enjoyment of leisure. Positively, they focused on what they saw as the three key working-class educational needs: economics; 'industrial history'; and 'philosophy' (which they understood as the capacity to reason for oneself, represented for them by the writings of Josef Dietzgen).

In addition to these conceptions, they had a distinctive teaching and learning method derived from the practice of the Socialist Labour Party group in Scotland, and a critique of mainstream higher education as enslaving.

Moving on, then, to the question of what IWCE can and should mean for us now, I would say, first, that 'education' should mean same for us as for them, a point I would spell out in this way. Class (ie and not just capitalist) society rests on a 'division of labour' between those who decide and those who only execute. The former monopolise access to knowledge. Hence education is the process that tries to undo that division. As such, it includes (but is distinct from) training, and is opposed to mis-education (because, unlike this, it involves the whole truth and nothing but the truth).

As regards what we should mean now by 'working-class', I think we should mean everyone who

depends on a wage or salary, including a deferred wage (ie retired people), plus those on benefits, plus children and other dependents - in short, everyone who does not own the means of production. We cannot mean just manual, let alone just unskilled, and not even just routine workers. We must include basic grade professionals and para-professionals. We must also have a definition that takes account of globalisation, ie that includes the global working-class now being constructed here and elsewhere. At the same time, however, we must be aiming to fuse the insights of the working class as it has existed hitherto (for example, say, in Sheffield in 1980) with the needs of the restructured working class now emerging (for example in an area like Brent today).

Lastly, as regards what we ought to mean now by 'independent', I think we should mean: financed only from the pockets of rank and file workers. That is, the education to be developed needs to be independent of state funding, of charity, of commercial funding (eg advertising), of left groups and of any money, including from labour movement sources, which is not under our direct, democratic control.

To underline this last point, non governmental agencies (including NIACE, the WEA, NATECLA, and the TUC - as in unionlearn) have come to play an extremely problematic role in providing adult ed, and getting state funding to do it. It is one thing for would-be IWCE to accept union funding that is agreed democratically in a branch or conference, and quite another to accept state funding, even if this is channelled via the TUC. So we need to have a clear distinction between mainstream state-funded education, as in schools, colleges, universities etc, and IWCE.

Nevertheless, mainstream education, including post-compulsory education, has grown enormously since 1909. So IWCE strategy now must, even more than in 1909, seek support from education workers like university lecturers (because they monopolise knowledge eg in history, economics etc) - but it must also work out ways of making sure that their contributions remain under rank and file control.

On this basis, I feel it may be possible to outline a broad strategy for now: First, we need to involve everyone who can go along with what I've just outlined, and wants to work on this. Hence we should put together, starting now, a link-up between people that is as loose and informal, as minimally bureaucratised, as possible, subject to being democratic. So long as we can agree on broad aims directly relevant to rebuilding IWCE, and on democracy, we don't have to agree on anything else, for example we don't need some set of

## Appeal:

An attempt is being made to reconstruct the 1938 Follonsby Miners Lodge banner, which famously included the portraits of A.J. Cook, James Keir Hardy, Lenin and George Harvey, one of the leaders of the 1909 Ruskin College 'strike'. Union branches are asked to consider donating towards this. Please make cheques payable to 'Follonsby Lodge Banner, Community and Heritage Society' and send to: D. Douglass, 193 Osborne Avenue, SOUTH SHIELDS, Tyne & Wear NE33 3BY. Or for details email [djdouglass@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:djdouglass@hotmail.co.uk)

shibboleths governing who is and who is not allowed to participate.

Next, there are several broad areas we can work in. These include: existing working-class history organisations, including local ones; discussion groups linked to political organisations, including the Labour Party, and other organisations (for example, the Alliance for Green Socialism); community organisations including those seeking to defend /organise amongst migrant workers etc; informal groups in unions (for example, the National Shop Stewards Network); formal trades union education in cases where tutors are sympathetic and have some choice about what they do; those areas of formal, mainstream, publicly provided education where teachers/lecturers have some discretion ( including some areas of work in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, FE colleges, higher education, adult education and offender education). Taken together, these areas arguably constitute the broad field across which we can try to organise a revived IWCE.

Lastly, there are some specific steps that can be taken in the near future.

First, we could circulate to the people who were notified of this meeting a version of this talk, plus a draft 'Where We Stand' statement for comment. People who support this could go round and speak about the idea to individuals and groups with a potential interest. Secondly, we could then circulate a firmed-up version of the 'Where We Stand' statement and invite people who agree with it to become involved. (It would be important to do this in a secure fashion.) Thirdly, we should try to dig out and put in circulation further information about the history of IWCE, including of comparable initiatives outside the UK. Fourthly, we could try to set up interest groups that think up teaching and learning strategies, and devise specimen materials in specific areas (for example, economics, history, democracy and philosophy/reasoning). Fifth, we could disseminate these ideas and materials using email, electronic discussion forums and the like. Sixth, we could, while avoiding too much fanfare, agree on sensible mechanisms for enlarging the circle of people involved. And lastly, we could try to have a few months from now a larger get-together to review progress.



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