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### **1. Challenging and confronting workplace racism**

Figures released by the National Police Chiefs' Council show that in the week following the vote to leave the EU the number of racist and xenophobic incidents rose by 58 per cent. The rise in post-Brexit hate crime reports peaked at nearly 60 per cent and is still 14 per cent higher than at the same point last year.

The negative narrative of division and hate pursued by certain sections of the Leave campaign has led to more openly, unabashed instances of racism and xenophobia. The Government's anti-migrant, anti-immigration trajectory since 2010, fuelled and supported by an ongoing media campaign of disinformation/propaganda sowed the seeds for the current climate of fear which people from ethnic minorities now have to face.

UCU's data on workplace racism [https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7861/The-experiences-of-black-and-minority-ethnic-staff-in-further-and-higher-education-Feb-16/pdf/BME\\_survey\\_report\\_Feb161.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7861/The-experiences-of-black-and-minority-ethnic-staff-in-further-and-higher-education-Feb-16/pdf/BME_survey_report_Feb161.pdf) showed that for many, racism is very much real and has moved away from the overt name calling to more subtle nuance ways that makes it difficult for members to confront and challenge without it adversely affecting their careers. **The challenge facing UCU in confronting racist attitudes and behaviours is clear**

### **2. Action against hatred and division in the wake of the EU referendum vote**

The following guidance was issued to branches in July and serves as a reminder of action to take in relation to reporting of incidents.

UCU is calling for universities, colleges and work-based learning providers to ensure the safety of all communities who may be targeted in the wake of the UK voted to leave the European Union.

The fivefold increase in racist incidents since the referendum is a cause for concern for us all and we are looking for all institutions to fully meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The general equality duty is set out in section 149 of the Equality Act. In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- Foster good relations between different groups

Branches are encouraged to engage with the employer to ensure workplaces are safe spaces for all staff, students and the wider community. Further information on general equality duty can be found here [https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/4883/UCU-Equality-Duty-Toolkit/pdf/ucu\\_equalitydutytoolkit\\_update\\_sep15.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/4883/UCU-Equality-Duty-Toolkit/pdf/ucu_equalitydutytoolkit_update_sep15.pdf)

The union will be redoubling its efforts in workplaces and communities to challenge those seeking to spread fear and hate today after the numerous incidents of hate crime and racial abuse which have been widely reported.

Branches are also encouraged to:

1. Refer to the following organisations to which UCU is affiliated: <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/> and <http://uaf.org.uk/>
2. Report any incidences to the institution as it is important that this is monitored. If you have any concerns about the monitoring procedures at your institutions please contact Chris Nicholas ([cnicholas@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cnicholas@ucu.org.uk))
3. Contact Chris Nicholas to discuss and also tell us of any positive initiatives that your branch and /or employer are doing.

Challenging racism is a key priority for UCU and with the work of UCU's Black Members' Standing Committee a range of resources have been developed to help change this narrative by raising issues of racism at work by using the following resources to:

- Raise awareness of everyday racism
- Watch our film 'witness'
- Develop a branch mentoring programme  
[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7864/witness-film-what-next/doc/ucu\\_witness\\_whatnext.doc](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7864/witness-film-what-next/doc/ucu_witness_whatnext.doc)

Further activities are available at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/action-against-workplace-racism>

UCU's annual day of action against workplace racism will be held **8<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

Contact [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk) for further details

Racism affects all of us regardless of disability, sexual orientation, gender or age. It is deeply distressing to be faced with racism and its effects last for a long time. We spoke with Dave Muritu, UCU's NEC and Chair of UCU's Equality Committee on challenging and confronting racism at work and wider society.

***1. As an anti-racist campaigner, activist, and branch officer can you tell us why you believe it is incumbent for us all to confront and challenge racism and racist behaviours?***

We must always be vigilant and pro-active in seeking to ensure our workplaces are free from discrimination. As workers we are entitled to operate without being harassed or picked on because of our ethnicity or the colour of our skin.

We know that UCU's black members often feel marginalised in matters of promotion and progression as well as not feeling able to express concerns with regard to race discrimination (<https://www.ucu.org.uk/action-against-workplace-racism>).

Institutions have an obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation', 'advance equality of opportunity' and 'foster good relations'. At this time of heightened tension it is incumbent on all UCU members to press management to be pro-active in supporting staff and students who may be feeling vulnerable and ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in this area.

**2. *You have been a key player in organising support for refugees at the Jungle migrant camp in Calais. Tell us about your experience and participation in this activity and why you think there is a role for trade unions.***

On seeing the plight of refugees fleeing persecution and the lack of assistance offered, myself and other members' felt that as an education union, we should try to provide some kind of support – one of these being a summer school for those at the refugee camp in Calais. In squalid conditions, we have been able to give your generous donations to those who literally have very little or in some cases, nothing but the clothes on their backs.

The situation these refugees find themselves in will not be changing overnight. Dismissive attitudes from governments (domestic and international) have done very little to provide support or solution. Refugees are seen as 'them' as 'different' not as educated, professional humans with a vibrant history seeking a positive future but instead seen as the enemy, giving way to the racist rhetoric seen by the likes of UKIP and mainstream political parties.

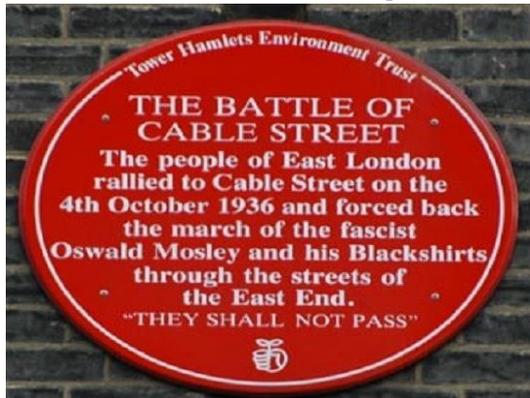
As the recently elected chair of the Equality Committee, I would like to extend my thanks to branches and individual members who have supported organising donations of food, clothing, equipment and time to give to the refugees who have very little. This very proactive response provides some hope in what is certainly desperate circumstances and shows that there is far more in common that divides. It also sends the message that **Refugees ARE Welcome**.

**3. *How can UCU members' work effectively to oppose and expose racist behaviours and attitudes?***

Members must raise the issue with their branch ensuring colleagues are involved in the discussion and action required to assist the institution in developing a workplace that is free from all forms of racial or xenophobic harassment.

Branches may wish to offer a supportive statement of intent to members via email as well as posting anti-racist information on union display boards and may also wish to raise the issue using the usual channels (negotiating committees/equality committees) if the institution has not yet taken action. It is also important to engage with students to challenge some of the myths peddled thus far which have given rise to the current climate of hate.

### 3. 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street



The Battle of Cable Street took place on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October 1936 in Cable Street, East London when anti-fascists, Jews, Irish, Communist Party and trade unionist amongst others came together to prevent the Blackshirts led by fascist leader, Oswald Mosely march through the East End of London.

The following article by Professor Mary Davis first appeared in UC Magazine in 2010.

#### **Jewish Resistance to Anti-Semitism The Battle of Cable Street, 4 October 1936**

The British Union of Fascists (BUF) was formed in 1934. From the outset it affected a paramilitary style.

Mosley, the BUF leader, tried first to tap what he thought were the latent fascist prejudices of the Tory-voting middle and upper classes. There were good grounds for this given the fairly widespread admiration for Mussolini and Hitler in such circles.

From 1935 onwards Moseley's overtly anti-Semitic propaganda was directed more specifically to the working class in an effort to encourage them to blame the Jews for their all too obvious economic hardship. This approach led the BUF to concentrate its activity in working-class areas and especially the East End of London, an area which accommodated 90 per cent of Britain's 330,000 Jewish population, a minuscule 0.8 per cent of the total population. The BUF attempted to stage a number of marches and rallies, the most provocative and infamous being the attempt to march through the East End on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1936.

Anti-fascist groups led by the Communist Party prevented or stopped many of these marches. The Jewish Peoples Council against Fascism and Anti-Semitism was formed to offer determined resistance to the BUF. It worked closely with other organisations, especially the Communist Party, which counted many Jews among its London membership and reflected the progressive wing of Anglo-Jewry which had deep links with the labour movement.

The tactics of the Communist Party, agreed after much internal debate, were twofold: first, to expose the fascist danger by mobilising entire communities to fight it on the streets. This meant also fighting the police, who saw their role as protectors of the Fascists' right to conduct their propaganda openly. Second, the aim was, '*to cut the ground from under the fascists' feet*' (Piratin, *Our Flag Stays Red*, 1978). He and others argued that a distinction had to be made between the hard core of the BUF and the ordinary working-class people who were attracted to it.

This meant meticulous, slogging attention to local issues, especially the grievances of tenants. The Stepney Tenants' Defence League actually employed three full-time paid organisers. The prestige of the Communist Party was greatly enhanced as a result.

By 1945 there were twelve Communist councillors in Stepney and Piratin was elected the MP for Mile End.

Cable Street wasn't a battle; the mobilisation of anti-fascists was so immense that the BUF couldn't get down it – there were barricades everywhere. The march was called off by the police.

Professor Mary Davis is the former Head of Centre for Trade Union Studies and Deputy Director Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan

#### 4. Reports

UCU report: The experiences of black and minority ethnic staff in further and higher education

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7861/The-experiences-of-black-and-minority-ethnic-staff-in-further-and-higher-education-Feb-16/pdf/BME\\_survey\\_report\\_Feb161.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7861/The-experiences-of-black-and-minority-ethnic-staff-in-further-and-higher-education-Feb-16/pdf/BME_survey_report_Feb161.pdf)

UCU film: 'witness'

<https://youtu.be/SGOMEXQe63E>

Post-referendum racism and xenophobia: the role of social media activism in challenging the normalisation of xeno-racist narratives

<http://www.irr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/PRRX-Report-Final.pdf>

#### 5. Events

**Unite against Fascism & Love Music Hate Racism educational trip to Krakow and Auschwitz**

**Thursday 3 – Monday 7 November 2016**

Unite against Fascism (UAF) and Love Music Hate Racism (LMHR) are organising a trip to the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland.

Given the alarming rise of openly anti-Semitic fascist groups and parties in much of Europe such as in Poland and Greece, UAF feels it essential to reaffirm and emphasise the need to expose today's fascists.

The purpose of the trip is to better understand the Holocaust and the Nazis and to look at the fascist threat today in Europe, such as Jobbik in Hungary, Golden Dawn in Greece, and others like the Front National in France. Contact the UAF office on **020 8971 7426** for further information.

**Holocaust Memorial Day workshops 2017 is 'How can life go on?'**

In preparation to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2017, the Holocaust Memorial Day

Trust [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk) are running free workshops for anyone wishing to plan an event.

To sign up and receive a free resource pack, visit <http://hmd.org.uk/news/book-your-place-our-hmd-2017-workshops>

#### 6. Affiliates

UCU affiliates to the following anti-racist campaigning organisations

Hope not Hate

<http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/>

Unite against Fascism

<http://uaf.org.uk/>

**Next issue.....** Countering racism and xenophobia arising from Brexit