

UUK is on the ropes...

# THIS STRIKE HAS THE MOMENTUM TO WIN

**T**HE UNIVERSITY STRIKES HAVE been brilliant and show the potential for us to win this fight. More universities are set to join those already striking against the attack on the USS pensions scheme.

This week is crucial for the outcome of our dispute. We have the momentum to win. Last week saw growing picket lines despite the winter weather. Students occupied at several universities. Teach-outs involved hundreds of staff and students.

After years of marketisation and casualisation it's a reminder that the university is not simply a factory to regurgitate stale ideas and make profits.

In London last Wednesday, 5,000 lecturers and students marched (in a blizzard). The rally was addressed by shadow chancellor John McDonnell, the TUC's Francis O'Grady, NEU general secretary Kevin Courtney and our own Sally Hunt. There were big protests in other towns and cities.

## Strength to strength

The dispute is going from strength to strength. Thousands of new members have joined the union and the employers' case for attacking USS has collapsed. Many vice chancellors have criticised Universities UK (UUK). The UCU is right to say it's prepared to talk but not prepared to call off action.

Despite talks UCU needs to announce further strikes before and after Easter. It's important UCU prepares now to ballot for assessment, marking and exams boycott and refusal to attend exam board meetings. UUK knows it will face more action if it refuses to back off.

The bosses are under pressure. Sheffield University retreated from 100 percent pay deductions for refusal to reschedule lecturers in the face of resistance.

This shows the threats and bullying that worked in the past won't work now.

We should continue refusal to



reschedule—and respond to any pay docking with escalation. UCU has won the argument over USS. Members understand the scheme is not in crisis.

## The deficit is fake

That raises a question. Why is UCU offering to raise members' contributions and cut benefits?

Why should we accept a worse accrual rate, where pensions build up more slowly and are smaller at the end?

Why not argue employers halt the attack and go back to the status quo? This might have seemed unattainable a few weeks ago. But the strength of our action makes a complete victory possible.

UCU has argued the “gilts-based” valuation method was wrong.

So why not get a proper valuation of the assets and secure the scheme for the future? Imperial College management have called for this.

If a few parameters change at negotiations the deficit disappears. UUK and UCU can also call on the government to act as lender of last resort.

UCU's campaign shows what a union can do. Members know the strategy and that we are fighting to win. New activists are

coming forward on every campus.

Nobody feels this is token action.

The London Region of UCU has called another “March for Education” to Parliament on Wednesday 14 March.

This is a great initiative. It's a chance for every UCU branch to join together in the biggest show of strength yet.

## Hold firm and mobilise

We also need to mobilise this week—examples like the lobby of ACAS talks on Monday and the demo at the Office for Students in London on Wednesday show how to keep up the momentum.

If UCU holds firm and wins this fight, we can transform the future of the union and the sector. We need to call on the labour movement to mobilise solidarity for us. It's great to have support from Labour and Jeremy Corbyn. But we can't afford to wait until the next election.

That means more hard-hitting action like the UCU strikes across the board.

It means making sure that a future government really does rip up the market model of education—that is one of the causes of this mess in the first place.

## MOTION PASSED BY UCL UCU

UCL UCU congratulates UCU national officers, staff and the thousands of reps and members who made our first five days of strikes such a success. UCL UCU believes the union's campaign has fundamentally undermined the employers arguments for the attack on USS.

UCL UCU therefore resolves to continue the present strike programme and believe that we need to announce plans to escalate our industrial action if no settlement is reached.

UCL UCU confirms that there is no deficit.

With the employers' arguments collapsing, our negotiators must demand that the status quo prevails.

