



Statement on Motion 25

Over the past months, the UCU has been under the threat of legal action from 12 anonymous members of the union. These members sought, by bringing the threat of legal action, to persuade the National Executive Committee to repudiate motion 25 on education in Palestine and on the role of Israeli universities and colleges in the Occupation. They sought this outcome on the basis that, in their view, solidarity boycotts of institutions are unlawful, and that targeting Israeli institutions specifically would be discriminatory.

Contrary to the widespread misreporting, the UCU has neither abandoned nor repudiated motion 25 as a result of legal threats and challenges. Together with all other policy positions adopted at the 2008 Congress, national, professional and international, motion 25 will be pursued vigorously and rigorously. This motion was carried overwhelmingly at Congress, and, amongst other things, called for an investigation and report into the conditions of education in the Occupied Territories, and specifically for an investigation of the role of one college preparatory to any request of 'greylisting' being received .

At its recent meeting, the National Executive confirmed, again by an overwhelming vote, that this investigation would be pursued as part of our wider concern with the condition of academic freedom in a number of areas across the world. The outcome will be reported to our next Congress.

It is to be deeply regretted that an attempt should have been made to subvert the democratic procedures of the union by resort to a tendentious interpretation of the law. Even many of those who had opposed motion 25 were determined that this should not succeed. If members of the union wish to change policy, there are established democratic mechanisms for that to be done, without recourse to the courts.

The union has met the counsel for the litigants in the motion 25 threat, and has politely explained this position to them. It has explained that motion 25 will be pursued in a manner determined by its executive bodies, and within the law, and that the union will not be deterred by legal threats or by intimidation. No discussion of amendments to this position was possible outside the formal democratic processes of the union, and no 'concessions' or 'compromises' on this position would be negotiated formally or informally.

12 December 2008