

## Congress Special

1. Election round up
2. Congress 2011
3. Wearing of the veil or burqha
4. News and events
5. Get involved

### 1. Election round up

The local elections in England held May 11 saw a **humiliating defeat** in key areas for the British National Party. Key wards where the BNP were crushed are shown below:

BNP FREE ZONES!		
Region	Wards	Local Authority
East Midlands	South Normanton East Hugglescote Whitwick	Bolsover North West Leicestershire North West Leicestershire
West Midlands	Meir South Meir North Bentilee & Ubberlee Abbey Hulton Barpool Princes End	Stoke-on-Trent Stoke-on-Trent Stoke-on-Trent Stoke-on-Trent Nuneaton & Bedworth Sandwell
East of England	Belhus Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Pk West Thurrock & South Stifford Chadwell St. Mary Southfield	Thurrock Thurrock Thurrock Thurrock Luton
North West	Higher Croft Gannow Rosegrove with Lowerhouse Hapton with Park Southfield	Blackburn Burnley Burnley Burnley Pendle
Yorkshire & Humberside	Darton West Morley South Brinsworth & Catcliffe Illingworth & Mixenden	Barnsley Leeds Rotherham Calderdale

The results shown above are a testament to all anti-fascist campaigners striving for a fair and just society for all. Hot on the heels of success in **Barking** last year follows the fantastic result in **Stoke-on-Trent!** But whilst we celebrate these successes, we must not lose sight of the increase in 'popularity' of the English Defence League and their attacks on our communities. These elections have shown that a total of **33** former BNP candidates switched to stand for other parties but their message of hate still remains **regardless** of which organisation/group they now align themselves to.

Where there is a threat of our colleges, universities and our communities being used as a recruiting ground or platform to espouse hatred and fear, we must **all** work together to challenge the BNP and other racist and fascist organisations that their message of hate is not wanted nor is it needed.

**Well done** to all of you who have continued to campaign to fight against fascism in our schools, colleges, universities and communities. We must forever be on our guard and continue to campaign as **the price of freedom is eternal vigilance!**

UCU is represented on the Steering Committee of Unite Against Fascism as well as working closely with other unions, continuing to challenge fascism wherever it raises its head. The following resolution was passed at UCU Congress 2010.

### **Resolution 62: Stop the Nazis – combating racism and fascism**

Congress notes with grave concern:

1. the growth of support for the British National Party (BNP);
2. the election of two BNP MEPs in the Euro elections;
3. the opportunities for growth of racist/fascist ideologies afforded by the economic crisis;
4. the aggressive islamophobic and racist mobilisations by the English Defence League (EDL) and its Welsh and Scottish derivatives in a number of cities and the broad counter protests organised by Unite Against Fascism and local anti-fascist organisations;
5. that schools and colleges are obvious targets for the BNP and EDL
6. that Weyman Bennett, long-time anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigner and Joint National Secretary of Unite Against Fascism, was arrested on charges of 'conspiracy to cause public disorder', which can carry a 5 year jail sentence, at the Bolton anti-EDL protest on March 20th
7. the government's decision not to prohibit BNP members from teaching in schools.

Congress recognises that;

1. Our members can play a prominent role in encouraging rounded knowledge, critical awareness and hope among young people who might otherwise be vulnerable to fascist ideology and in combating institutional racism and other forms of discrimination and oppression
2. BNP growth can be prevented through well-resourced, well-organised, sustained campaigning.

Congress resolves that UCU should;

1. continue to play a prominent role in the struggle against the BNP and its attempts to undermine independent trade unionism for example by circulating the Unite Against Fascism petition Keep Our Schools Nazi Free
2. encourage our branches to work closely with other unions, the NUS, TU councils and anti-fascist organisations such as Unite Against Fascism and Love Music Hate Racism in colleges, universities and local communities
3. encourage the growth of a united anti-fascist movement throughout Britain
4. support the Weyman Bennett Defence Campaign and to support calls for a public inquiry into the violent behaviour of the police towards anti-EDL protestors in Bolton.

The following letter has been sent to all General Secretaries of TUC affiliated unions from former NATFHE/UCU General Secretary, Paul Mackney who is the Treasurer of the **Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign (AFDC)**. Further information about the campaign and how to make a donation can be found here at [www.justice4bolton.org](http://www.justice4bolton.org).

Dear Comrade General Secretaries of TUC affiliated unions

**PLEASE DO NOT DESERT THOSE WHO STOOD AGAINST FASCISM – WE STILL NEED YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

I remember how all of you signed your unions up to support Unite Against Fascism when it was founded. There was a clear threat from Griffin's grotesque BNP. We needed an organisation which could organise against it.

That threat from the BNP may seem to have receded a bit now but 'our side' has suffered some casualties as a result of some extremely creative use of public order law by the police in Bolton following a demonstration organised by UAF against the EDL on 20 March 2010.

*The Bolton demonstration organisers endured eight months of investigation under allegations that they had conspired to incite violent disorder before all threats of charges were dropped. Only 5 of the 55 arrested on the day were actually charged. One has been acquitted, two cases withdrawn, with one at appeal and one to be heard. The video evidence which has emerged makes a compelling case for the police to face charges instead.*

With this in mind we intend to bring the police to account for themselves that day through civil actions, public events that draw out the lessons from Bolton (and its parallels with the policing of other protests), and having a People's Enquiry into the policing of that day.

This has been an expensive process. Legal action, even when you're winning all the way, does not come cheap. We need to raise a further £20,000 in donations to pay off our legal debts so far and to complete our work.

**I KNOW HOW STRAPPED FOR CASH EVERYONE IS WITH THE FIGHT OVER CUTS REDUNDANCIES AND PENSIONS, BUT I CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH THAT WE REALLY, REALLY NEED YOUR HELP.**

During ten years living hand to mouth as NATFHE general secretary, the budgets were always squeezed. But a donation will actually be an investment. It has never been more important to defend the right to protest without fear of criminalisation by those prepared to stand up and be counted against injustice.

Thank you to those of you who have sent in donations so far. But please be generous, according to your means, in supporting this additional appeal by sending sizeable donations to the Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign, **cheques, payable to AFDC (Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign) to: AFDC, PO Box 56959, London N10 9AZ**. If an address is given the donor will receive a receipt. Or, if you prefer, pay your donation into our bank account at **Lloyds TSB Bank, Sort code 30-94-74; Account name: AFDC; Account no. 16666368** and/or send the appeal to component parts of your union - branches, regions, committees etc - or any other holders of funds with a recommendation to consider donating.

Yours in solidarity

Paul Mackney

## 2. UCU Congress 2011



The annual UCU Congress will be held at the Harrogate International Centre, from **Saturday 28 May** to Monday **30 May 2011**. Motions will be debated covering a wide spectrum including two covering **multiculturalism**, **Islamophobia** and the **English Defence League**.

### Equality Fringe Meetings at Congress 2011

**Saturday 28 May 2011**

**Women Member's Standing Committee**

**Theme: Work-life balance**

**Sunday 29 May 2011**

**Disabled Member's Standing Committee**

**Theme: The struggle for equal rights for disabled people**

**Black Member's Standing Committee and the Education Committee**

**Theme: Education and multiculturalism**

**Monday 30 May 2011**

**Equality Committee**

**Theme: Equality under attack**

If you are attending Congress, please visit our stall and meet the team! To find out more about UCU Congress, visit

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5221#timetable>

## 3. Wearing of the veil or burqha

This following was originally sent out as a circular to branches in December. It is being reissued as the Equality Committee want to encourage more responses to the request.

Dear Colleague

UCU's Equality Committee condemns France's National Assembly and Senate for voting overwhelmingly in favour of a ban on face coverings in public spaces. The Government has made no secret that this measure is designed to target the full face Islamic veils such as the burqa or the niqab. In October the Conseil Constitutionnel, the guardian of the country's constitution, ruled that the law banning the wearing of the face-covering veil in public places does not impinge on civil liberties. The council had widely been expected to overturn the law. However, it passed it almost in its entirety, stipulating only that the law should not apply to public places of worship, where it may violate religious freedom.

President Sarkozy has described the veil as 'a sign of enslavement and debasement' and claims it is the ultimate symbol of Islam's oppression of women.

Senator Francois-Noel Buffett said 'to see without being seen undeniably constitutes a break in equality and at the same time an offence against human dignity, especially against women's dignity'.

The vote comes when some of France's other policies such as expelling Roma Gypsies have led to accusations of racism. Only about 2,000 women amongst a Muslim population of five million in France wear the full veil so can be seen as a political move to pander to anti-Muslim sentiment and prejudice.

Belgium is also expected to ban the veil and the Swiss have voted against minarets. Calls to outlaw the veil have been gaining ground across Europe. Opinion polls in Italy, Spain, Germany and Britain have indicated widespread public support.

The ban will come into force next spring and will be preceded by a period of 'education' to explain to women already wearing a face veil that they face arrest and a fine if they continue to do so in any public place.

A woman who chooses to defy the ban will face a fine of 150 Euros or a course of citizenry lessons. A man who forces a woman to wear a veil could be fined 30,000 Euros and serve a prison sentence.

UCU's Equality Committee has condemned this move by the French Government and supports an environment where cultural, religious and non religious beliefs are respected. Focusing on personal attire serves to legitimise a wider attack on Muslim communities. UCU will continue to campaign against anti-Muslim racism and will be hosting a national seminar next year to provide a focus for our policy and activity.

UCU's Equality Committee is aware that the wearing of head coverings is under discussion in some HE and FE colleges with security and safety reasons being cited as the main drivers. The Committee believes that institutions can easily put in place respectful and appropriate measures which will not necessitate a ban.

The Equality Committee would like branches to submit any information concerning good and bad practice on their institution's approach to head coverings. The Committee wants to develop a model policy on this issue.

Please send this information to the Equality Unit, Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH or email Chris Nicholas at [cnicholas@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cnicholas@ucu.org.uk)

## 4. News and events

UCU affiliates to both Unite Against Fascism and Hope Not Hate. Below are details of events being organised by these two organisations.



### **Saturday 18 June 2011 Main Stage Harbour Parade, Ramsgate, Kent**

Get down to Ramsgate, Kent for the Love Music Hate Racism festival. A **FREE** event, the day will feature various stalls, face painting, and speakers from the trade union movement plus much more.

To find out more about this event, please contact [info@kentlovemusichateracism.com](mailto:info@kentlovemusichateracism.com)



## HOPE not Hate



Over 1,000 people have sent messages for Hope not Hate's HOPE wall. You can add to this by posting a message via the following link

<https://donate.hopenothate.org.uk/page/signup/wall-of-hope>

## 5. Get involved

### Sign up to be an Equality Officer!

Active members are the heart of any union. The more people we can count on to do something, however small, for the union, the more powerful we are. This power will ensure that management will have to listen to what we say.

UCU are looking to recruit members to become branch Equality Officers. Branch Equality Officers play an important role to promote equality in the workplace, give support to members (either individually or collectively) as well as supporting the branch in negotiations with employers to improve working conditions for all UCU members.

Changes to equality legislation means that we have to be ever more vigilant to ensure that the principles of equality that UCU and the wider trade union movement holds dear are maintained to ensure all UCU members are treated fairly and that our work environments are free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

If you are interested in becoming a branch equality officer, read our factsheet on 'Organising for Equality' at:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2131#org> or alternatively, email [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk)

## 5 things you can do:

1. Leaflet your workplace, train/underground stations
2. Hold a lunch time meeting at your college or university – involve student groups such as the NUS
3. Attend anti-fascist conferences or events
4. Affiliate to Unite Against Fascism and/or HOPE not Hate
5. Sign up to receive regular anti-fascist updates from UCU (email [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk))

**Get in touch!** We know that UCU members are doing fantastic work in the fields of anti-fascism and anti-racism and want you to continue. If you are organising or supporting local events, please let us know. If you would like to be part of an email network group where we will specifically send you information and updates, please send an email to [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk) with 'join AF Network' in the subject header.