

BLM Solidarity motion

Brunel UCU raises our voices with Black Lives Matter protesters across the world in solidarity with and memory of George Floyd and Rayshard Brook, and everyone who has experienced state brutality, systemic and institutional racism, and discrimination, all of which stem from capitalist exploitation. We condemn unequivocally white supremacy and global anti-Blackness and call on the University, staff, and students to take action in order to address the structures that perpetuate them in our institution. To this end:

I. We express our solidarity to the protesters in the USA. Police murders continue and prisons are modern day labour houses, where a disproportionate population of black men provide their unfree labour. The huge poverty divide and 'attainment gap' reflect the horrendous realities of the systemic and ongoing racism and exploitation of Black African Americans, as well as across multi-ethnic working class communities. Covid-19 has further exacerbated the existing inequalities - with disproportionate death rates among poor African-Americans as a result of private healthcare - and has increased homelessness and unemployment. We note the systematic exploitation and racism in the land of 'freedom' and 'democracy'. We note the historical continuities between the institution of the police as 'slave-captors' and the current continuity of the US military, who, along with the British military and NATO, act as the global police. Human life, for both the US police and military, has a different value depending on colour, class, and geography.

II. We unite our voices with protesters in Britain fighting against racism and police brutality. We demand justice for Simeon Francis, Shekou Bayou, Sarah Reed, Sean Riggs, Mark Duggan, Charles de Menezes, and many others who have died in the hands of the state and the police. In Britain, racism and exploitation take many forms, including the disproportionate incarceration of BAME people, stop-and-search tactics, and the Prevent Programme. This is a country whose own history is drenched in the blood of millions of colonised — including internally— enslaved and brutalised in the making of the Empire. The biggest recent example of state racism is the Windrush scandal and Grenfell. Moreover, capitalism sustains and feeds racism not only in terms of exploitation, but also through 'divide and rule' such as the increasing racism and xenophobia in recent years. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that systemic racism is among the key factors of BAME deaths, particularly relating to social and economic inequalities. BAME and working class people are due to be hit the hardest in terms of unemployment and homelessness in the developing economic recession. As Angela Davis states, "racism is integrally linked to capitalism".

III. As Brunel UCU members we want to fight anti-black racism and exploitation in our workplace. The Equality in HE report (2017)¹ and the UCU casualisation report (2020)² highlight

¹ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2017>

²

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10681/second_class_academic_citizens/pdf/secondclassacademiccitizens

the direct and undeniable effects of racism and inequality on the academic workforce. Indeed, precarious labour disproportionately affects the ethnicity and gender pay gap. In the midst of the pandemic, not only are BAME people disproportionately affected directly by Covid-19, but also they are indirectly affected by losing their employment. In this direction, and while we welcome the University's statement on Black Lives Matter, we call on the University to implement the following in our fight against racism and exploitation:

1. To renew fixed-term and casual contracts, and to secure permanent employment for all casualised university and college workers.
2. To ensure the safety of staff members and students who are able to return to campus by following the Health and Safety guidance and working with all the trade unions on campus to establish safe working conditions AND ensure that staff members who are vulnerable (or live with or are responsible for vulnerable people) face no attrition for teaching only online.
3. To openly speak up against the Prevent programme, which disproportionately targets BAME students and colleagues, and turns all of us into spies, gravely injuring our duty of care, academic freedom and freedom of speech.
4. To end the partnership with Metropolitan Police. At a time when police brutality is disproportionately affecting black people, it is extremely worrying that Brunel university is part of a consortium, which has been awarded the contract to deliver degree apprenticeships and the degree holder programmes for the Metropolitan Police.³
5. To create a concrete action plan for the decolonisation of the curriculum across the campus.
6. To openly speak up against the hostile environment policies that criminalise international students, who are regularly asked to prove their status as students.
7. To address the disproportionality of the number of BAME academics compared to those of white backgrounds, and serious disproportionality of those holding senior positions, or promoted fairly.

IV. We call on all colleagues, students and workers in higher education to organise the struggle around the aforementioned demands AND also to:

- 1) Support BAME colleagues and students in rooting out racism in the workplace, and the institutional racism and inequality that exacerbates these.
- 2) Raise their voices against:
 - the reduction in staff numbers -- fight to renew fixed-term and casual contracts, and to make permanent all members of staff on these contracts
 - the worsening working conditions and increased workload using the pandemic as an excuse.
 - the expectation to work in unsafe working conditions resulting from COVID-19 and against the insufficient measures to protect staff and students.

³ <https://careers.brunel.ac.uk/vacancy/senior-lecturer-in-police-practice-professional-practice-13401-419869.html> and <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/articles/Brunel-partnering-with-Babcock-to-provide-services-to-Londons-Met-Police>

3) Demand:

- Tuition fees freeze for the current academic year.
- Funded extensions for all doctoral and postdoctoral research
- Free accommodation to university and privately-ran student residence halls.
- Funding support for the protection of unemployed students.