

# No vote for the governance review!

# Why we are breaking our mandate!

By **Chris Strafford**, delegate from Manchester Metropolitan Union and a candidate for the NUS Block of 12 and **Laurie McCauley**, delegate from Sheffield University

When it comes to the vote on the governance review, we won't be sneaking off to vote in the 'safe room' or hide in the toilets, as some members of the Stalinoid 'Student Broad Left' are planning to do.

The governance review goes to the heart of democracy in the student movement – or rather, the lack of it. It is an attempt by the right-wing NUS bureaucracy, dominated by Labour careerists, to make this organisation into an even less transparent and accountable body than it already is. It will lead to more control by consultants, the abolition of conference and the Block of 12, the further depoliticisation of the NUS, and will allow national conference delegates to be appointed by student union executives, rather than bothering with tiresome and unpredictable elections. Rather than involving more students, the review will have the opposite effect and further alienate people.

This is an extremely important issue that must be discussed openly and honestly. That is why we reject the attempt by some right wing student unions to impose 'binding mandates' on conference delegates. For example, both of us have been threatened with the "removal of voting cards, accommodation, expenses, and transport back" if we vote against the review.

But that is precisely what we plan to do. These are the reasons why we have decided to break these crassly undemocratic mandates:

- 1) We have been elected as delegates precisely on the basis of our *opposition* to the review. Attempting to force us to vote in favour of it is to demand we participate in a fraud against our electors – they vote for one policy and we deliver the exact opposite!
- 2) What is the point of having a conference at all if delegates have been instructed beforehand how to vote? Following this logic, we could just count up the delegates each union has, cancel the conference and save us all a lot of time and money. A Stalinist method that could come straight out of George Orwell's *1984*.
- 3) Communist Students has openly and democratically discussed the pros and cons of the review and has come to the informed decision to reject it. This democratic mandate (plus that of the students who voted for us) far outweighs any mandate that a small, unaccountable body like a local student council could slap on us.
- 4) This kind of undemocratic manoeuvring is unfortunately a real 'taste of the future' if the governance review goes through: the review envisages delegates simply being appointed

  
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rather than elected. And it doesn't take a genius to work out what kind of delegates might be chosen: yes-men and women who agree with the politics of the right-wing bureaucracy and don't rock the boat.

We applaud students in Leeds who on March 22 overturned a decision by their small union council to support the governance review. 1,436 students backed a motion opposing the review (with 920 voting against).

**We call on all students still 'bound' by such undemocratic mandates to break them – and do it proudly and openly! The more we are, the more difficult the bureaucracy will find it to take action against us!**

Vote no to the review! Fight for the NUS to become the kind of democratic campaigning body students and young people in Britain need! For a NUS that fights fearlessly for:

- The direct democratic participation of students and staff in the affairs of the university
- The abolition of fees and the introduction of a living grant, at a level based on the actual needs of students to educate themselves and live fulfilling lives: in present conditions, at least £300 per week
- An end to the subordination of education to the needs of capitalism. As they are currently taught, many subjects take capitalism as a system for granted, and rarely allow for the suggestion that another form of society is possible.
- An immediate end to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. No war or sanctions on Iran. Solidarity with Iranian workers, students and democrats in struggle with the reactionary regime.

## Join Communist Students!

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**'Mehdi Kazemi must stay! No to war, no to the theocratic regime!'**  
Chris addresses a protest in support of the gay Iranian asylum seeker on March 22 in London