

## European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy

A pluralist forum since 1988



May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**RE:** Collective redundancies and attack to academic freedom

Dear Colleagues,

We understand that during a process of compulsory redundancy, colleagues at Leicester University have been targeted for their specific research interests and intellectual work.

It has been brought to the attention of the EAEPE Council that the academic disciplines of political economy and critical management studies have been explicitly mentioned as a liability for the business school. Colleagues have been brought to a redundancy procedure for allegedly working on themes not included in the school's academic strategy and for publishing in non-mainstream journals.

Even top scholars such as Prof. Gibson Burrell have been threatened for reasons that appear incoherent, offensive, intellectually poor, if not illiberal. We understand that publishing in top journals such as *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* or *Organization* has been considered as evidence of poor performance and hence reason for dismissal.

The Council of the European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy, representing 500 plus scholars in Europe and beyond, stands in solidarity with those colleagues whose academic freedom is under threat. We are astonished that such an incident is happening in Britain.

We take this occasion to reiterate the message that is innate in our mission and constitution. Pluralism in economics and the social sciences is crucial in both teaching and research. Its absence is a threat to our ability to understand socioeconomic phenomena.

Pluralism is also essential to offer students a liberal, creative and critical environment in which to flourish during their studies. Dismissing Political Economy and Critical Management Studies as irrelevant is such an intellectual affront that we struggle to believe it is happening at the centre of the European academic scene.

Teaching and research work in CMS and Political Economy should be welcome and considered essential in any business school. These pernicious developments that we are following with such dismay are also a sign of the poor state of the employment relations in the British HE sector.

The fact that this is happening during the Covid-19 pandemic is no justification. On the contrary, it is cause of further outrage.

In solidarity,

The Council of the European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy