



We Support the NPC Pensioners Manifesto

- * A basic state pension for all, set above the poverty level of £175 a week
- * Increases in pensions to be linked to the best of RPI,CPI, earnings or 2.5%
- * Universal pensioner benefits (bus pass, winter fuel allowance, free TV licences for the over75s and free prescriptions) to be maintained without means testing
- * A National Health and Care Service which is free at the point of use and funded through taxation
- * A legally binding Dignity Code to improve the quality and standards of care for older people

Ask your MP if they do?

Despite what some may claim, Britain's older generation are not to blame for the economic crisis.

Neither does it help when the media suggests that there is a conflict between young and old, especially when the age groups share the same concerns over affordable housing, the National health Service, public transport, low incomes and retirement ages.

But growing older can be a real challenge. Britain's state pension is amongst the least adequate in the developed world, some of the stories surrounding the care of older people are absolutely shocking and

last winter over 30,000 pensioners died from the cold.

A country can be said to be judged by the way it treats its young and older members. That is why we need a series of policies that improve the lives of Britain's 11m pensioners, as well as protecting future generations of older people.

At the General Election the National Pensioners Convention will call on candidates to support the Pensioners' Manifesto that will put the concerns of older people at the heart of the political process.

An Initiative from Waltham Forest

The Waltham Forest Trades Council and the Waltham Forest Pensioners Convention are writing to the MPs in the borough asking them to support the National Pensioners Convention "Manifesto 2015":

Dear Member of Parliament

I am writing to ask your views on the "Pensioners Manifesto 2015", which has been published by the National Pensioners Convention.

The Waltham Forest Pensioners Convention is compiling a list of the views of all candidates in the election to help pensioners in the borough decide how to vote in the forthcoming election. In order that there can be no confusion, we are asking that you give a specific "yes" or "no" answer to the request for a commitment to argue in Parliament for the implementation of all the 5 points in the Manifesto. If you only feel able to support some of the Manifesto, we would be interested to know which you can support and which one you cannot.

The Waltham Forest Pensioners Convention will publish the replies of all the parliamentary candidates on their website.

If you want to write to your MP and to any future candidates in the forthcoming General Election, you can download a model letter from the London Retired Members website (www.ucu-retired-london.org.uk). You can then adapt this as you wish. The website also has a link to the parliament website where you can find the contact details for your MP. When you get a reply, we would be most interested to hear from you. Write to the branch secretary at s.cushion23@gmail.com.

International

The UCU London Retired Members Branch has been involved in two campaigns recently: defending our colleagues in the Bahrain Teachers Association and protesting at the decision of the Dominican Republic to revoke the citizenship of tens of thousands of its citizens of African-Caribbean heritage.

Dominican Republic

The Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic made a ruling in September 2013, which retroactively stripped the birthright citizenship from tens of thousands of children, women and men, many of whose parents and grandparents were brought to work in the Dominican Republic's sugar industry. The ruling covers citizens resident in the Republic since 1929 and their descendants.

The Dominican Republic has now informed the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of its intention to withdraw its membership in reaction to the international criticism it received following the 2013 Constitutional Court ruling and subsequent acts of discrimination against Dominicans of Haitian descent in the country.

There is a long history of racism, xenophobia and violence directed against Haitians and persons of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, which cannot be disassociated from this latest injustice. It would do us well to recall that the last time there was a major governmental crack-down against people of Haitian heritage in the Dominican Republic, during the 1937 "Parsley Massacre" by the forces of Dominican President Rafael Trujillo, over 20,000 men, women and children were rounded up, then beaten or hacked to death for just being Haitian or simply looking as if they were because they were black.

It is scandalous that the Dominican court has chosen to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the 1937 massacre by stripping Dominican-born men, women, and children of Haitian descent of their citizenship, rendering them not only stateless but unable to attend school or make a living while becoming even more vulnerable to all kinds of hostilities including, increasingly, physical violence.

Boycott the Dominican Republic

No holidays in a country that strips its citizens of their rights

How can Dominican Republic bananas be considered "Fairtrade" when the government treats its African-Dominican citizens so unfairly?

Bahrain

The London Retired Members are sending a motion to the UCU Annual Congress which will call upon the NEC to:

** Oppose present plans for the opening of a permanent British military base in Bahrain, where the social and political character of the regime precludes any possibility of meaningful public mandate;*

** Oppose ongoing arming of the regime by the UK arms industry, notably BAe Systems;*

** Contact both Education International and the TUC to coordinate practical opposition to the ongoing incarceration of Bahrain Teachers Association Chair, Mahdi Abu Deeb, sentenced in the aftermath of the Spring 2011 Bahraini reform protests, and to the continuing state ban on that democratic trade union body as a whole;*

** Initiate organisation of an international trade union led enquiry into suppression of human and civil rights, including right of trade union membership and activity, in Bahrain. This would include reviewing involvement of foreign powers, with particular reference to the historic and present role of the British state.*

However, we do welcome the release from prison of Bahrain Center for Human Rights activist, Maryam Al-Khawaja. Originally arrested in August last year while entering Bahrain to visit her imprisoned father, Maryam was released and left the country after three weeks in detention - only to be sentenced in absentia to a year in prison on 1st December 2014



Disputes

Lambeth College

After 42 days of strike action Lambeth College UCU have voted to go back to work after management finally made them an offer that was acceptable. They took strike action to stop a new, draconian contract being imposed on existing members of staff and new starters.

Thanks to the determination of the branch, 430 staff can now go into work knowing that their terms and conditions are fully protected. The new contract will not be imposed on existing staff. This deal is for all permanent, hourly-paid and fixed-term staff, even if they change their working patterns in the future.

This is a magnificent achievement. They did not stop management introducing these new contracts for new staff but they have won a significant concession for them on sick pay in the first year of employment and also won back a week of additional teaching they were being asked to take on.

Victory at CONEL

The College of North East London (CONEL) voted to ballot for strike action over the proposed recruitment of 'trainers' to teach on terms and conditions inferior to the lecturers' contract. The college has now backed down. In their own words:

"The College have reflected on the issue and it's the college intention to withdraw the current advertisement and not make any appointments to the ESOL department on Trainer contracts

recognising that this may well cause conflict with established lecturer contracts who are essentially delivering the same curriculum."

Doubtless management also felt the shadow of Lambeth on their backs.

College of North West London

UCU members at the College of North West London (CNWL) are taking strike action against College's policy of achieving greater Casualization through compulsory redundancies. Currently as a result of this educationally damaging policy, union rep Michael Starrs, a

leading figure in stopping the merger between the CNWL and City of Westminster, has been made compulsorily redundant when there are sufficient hours for him to have a full timetable. All his plumbing students have also signed a petition supporting his reinstatement. So this strike is also about getting his job back.

Barnsley College

Staff at Barnsley College have begun a series of strikes over new contracts which will downgrade jobs, slash holidays and bring in performance-related pay. Around 30 people picketed at the college, despite severe snow which caused travel chaos. Lee Short, branch secretary of Barnsley College UCU, said: *"We covered four of the main town centre sites, which we haven't done before. It had a big impact. Students told us they'd been sent home as there were no classes."*

No Privatisation at the National Gallery 2nd Five Day Strike

The National Gallery has told 400 of its 600 staff they are to be taken over by a private company. They are responsible for the security of the paintings and the public and look after the millions of visitors. The National Gallery is the only major museum that does not pay the London Living Wage.

The Gallery has brought in a private company CIS to "temporarily" take over services in a third of the gallery at the additional cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money.

Candy Udwin, a senior PCS rep, was suspended for drafting a question for the PCS Negotiation Officer about the cost of CIS. So this is another strike against victimisation of a union official.

Firefighters strike in defence of pensions

The walkout was the latest in a dispute that has lasted over 18 months. Thousands of firefighters joined a strike rally in Methodist Central Hall to hear FBU general secretary Matt Wrack say: *"We are not going away, we are not giving up."*

and do not forget that the Mayor still wants to axe 900 jobs on the Underground.



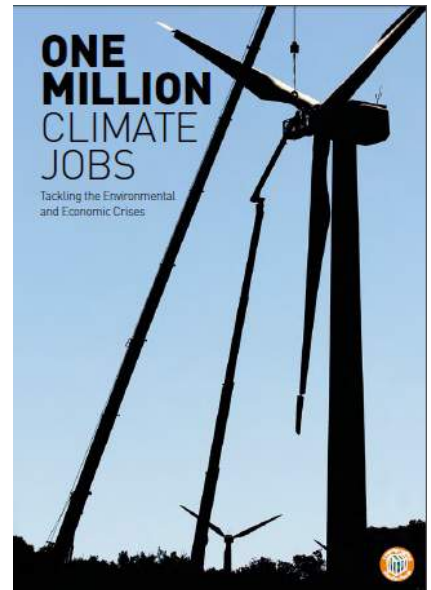
London Retired Members on the Lambeth Picket

Climate Change

Jonathan Neale of the *Campaign Against Climate Change* spoke at the February meeting of the UCU London Retired Members. He gave an inspiring talk about the "One Million Climate Jobs", report backed by 8 national unions including our own, which offers fresh solutions for both the climate crisis and the crisis of pay and employment for millions of working people. It provides a road-map for transition and the creation of one million new jobs. It shows that a new story is possible beyond these times of austerity and climate catastrophe.

Download the report from the *One Million Climate Jobs* website www.campaigncc.org - it is well worth reading

TIME TO ACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE
No to Austerity, Yes to a Million Climate Jobs
Saturday, March 7th 12:30pm
Lincoln Inns Fields -for March and Rally



DEFEND LONDON'S NHS

SAVE OUR HEALTH SERVICE
VOTE FOR THE NHS

LONDON RALLY
TUESDAY 10 MARCH 7.30PM
 Hammersmith Town Hall
 King Street W6 9JU (Hammersmith tube)

TIME TO ACT! #TIMETOACT2015
NATIONAL CLIMATE MARCH

7/3/15 - 12.30PM
LINCOLN INN FIELDS - LONDON
WWW.TIMETOACT2015.ORG

Stand Up to Racism and Fascism

National Demonstration
Saturday 21 March
 Assemble 12pm BBC Portland Place London W1A 1AA
 (nearest tube Oxford Circus)
 Rally Trafalgar Square

No to Islamophobia
#MuslimLivesMatter

From Ferguson to London
#BlackLivesMatter

Stamp out anti-Semitism
 immigrants are welcome here!

#standuporacism #m21
standuporacism.org.uk

Myth Busting

UCU and the South East Region of the TUC (SERTUC) have produced two pamphlets that explode the myths about migrant workers.

They are
"Why Immigration is Good for All of Us"
 and
"Truth, lies and migrants"

You can download both from the branch website:

www.ucu-retired-london.org.uk

Book Launch

'Breaking the Silence. Voices of the British Children of Refugees from Nazism'
 by Meryl Moos

on Thursday, April 23rd, at 5.30
 6pm-8pm
 In the Henry Thomas Room,
 in the Tower Building of
 London Metropolitan University,
 166-220 Holloway Road, N7 8DB.

Free, but registration required on
 line at Eventbrite.co.uk -
 search for the event:
 "Breaking the Silence"



LONDON RETIRED MEMBERS BRANCH

More details and updates on all the stories in this newsletter can be found on our website :

www.ucu-retired-london.org.uk

Next branch meeting
 30th April at 2pm in the union office in Carlow Street NW1 7LH, nearest tube Mornington Crescent.
 All retired academic staff are welcome (as well as those about to retire).

Contact us via the secretary:
s.cushion23@gmail.com