

The Labour Leadership Election and the NPC Pensioners Manifesto

Following a discussion at the last UCU London Retired Members meeting, the branch secretary has written to all the candidates in the Labour Leadership election asking them whether they support the National Pensioners Convention's *Pensioners Manifesto*. Each candidate has been sent an email to their campaign address, an email to the House of Commons and a written letter in the post to the House of Commons.

After 3 weeks, only one has replied. Jeremy Corbyn's campaign team have said: "Yes, Jeremy does indeed support the National Pensioners Charter".

The secretary has received numerous emails from the other candidates on a range of different topics but, alas, nothing that relates to the question actually asked.

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

If you're a member of the Labour Party you can sign up to vote in the leadership election for free. Otherwise, you can become a registered Labour supporter for £3 to vote in the leadership election.

More details from the website:

<http://support.labour.org.uk/>

Stop this college closure: support the occupation



Lewisham Southwark college plan to close their Camberwell site and sell it for £5 million. Police have threatened to evict occupiers trying to save the site.

Ian Crosson, of Defend Lewisham Southwark College, said: "We want college governors to meet with us and look at alternatives ways out of this crisis than simply sacking key staff."

UCU believe strongly that the proposed cuts will have a devastating effect and that the notion these cuts will "save" the college is farcical. Furthermore, the proposal to close Camberwell campus and its provision will further deprive the community of vital educational opportunities.

Statement on the situation in the Dominican Republic

The Society for Caribbean Studies issued the following statement at their annual conference. It was moved and seconded by UCU retired members:

The Society for Caribbean Studies condemns the threat by the Dominican Republic to expel thousands of its citizens of Haitian heritage.

The Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic made a ruling in September 2013, which retroactively stripped the birthright citizenship from tens of thousands of people whose families have lived in the country for generations. The ruling covers Dominican citizens resident in the Republic since 1929 and their descendants, rendering them not only stateless but unable to attend school or make a living while becoming even more vulnerable to all kinds of hostilities.

Researchers have already noted the impact of the ruling. A recent report by US trade unions concluded that "the deliberate creation of a stateless underclass increases the already formidable risks of exploitation". It warned that the ruling could worsen poverty among those affected, because without an identity card people are relegated to informal jobs and have little bargaining power in relations with employers.

The last time there was a major governmental crackdown against people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, during the 1937 "Parsley Massacre" by the forces of Dominican state, over 20,000 men, women and children were rounded up, then beaten or hacked to death for just being considered to be Haitian or simply looking as if they were because they were of African heritage.

The Society for Caribbean Studies therefore calls upon governments, international and regional organisations, as well as human rights, and trade union organisations to put all available pressure on the government of the Dominican Republic to reverse this injustice.

No ethnic cleansing in the Caribbean.

Bahrain

Prize

In a recent statement, Education International reports that Jalila al-Salman and Mahdi Abu Dheeb, leaders of the suppressed *Bahrain Teachers Association* (BTA), have been awarded this year's *Arthur Svensson International Prize for Trade Union Rights*.

For more than two years the UCU London Retired Member branch has publicly opposed the atrocious treatment of the BTA and other Bahraini opponents of the absolute monarchy.

Prisoner of Conscience

The ongoing nature of the attack on the BTA is emphasised in Education International's report on the Svensson Prize:

"Mahdi Abu Dheeb, currently incarcerated, was sentenced to five years in prison. His health condition worsens steadily due to a lack of essential and critical medical aid. He is recognised as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

Jalila al-Salman was released after nearly six months in prison, but suffers still from a job ban and restrictions to her right to free speech."

British Base

In May of this year our branch's motion on Bahrain was carried at UCU Congress. In particular, the branch has been concerned about British government complicity in human rights abuses in Bahrain and support for the repressive regime which hosts a large British base in the country and we are calling for an international trade union led inquiry into British support for the regime.

Read more about Bahrain on the branch website:
www.ucu-retired-london.org.uk/bahrain3.html



Demonstration in support of Mahdi Abu Dheeb

Disputes

Ongoing Dispute at the National gallery

Previous issues of this newsletter have raised the question of the National Gallery's plans to privatise 400 of their 600 staff. These are the staff who are responsible for the security of the paintings and the public, looking after millions of visitors every year.

50 days on the picket line

The next strikes in the campaign to oppose mass privatisation within the National Gallery and to demand the reinstatement of unjustly sacked PCS rep Candy Udwin, take place on 20-22 July 2015. The action on 20 July also marks 50 days of strike action taken by the PCS members working in the Gallery and the strikers are planning to make the day a real celebration of the tremendous solidarity and support that the long-running action has attracted.

PCS members at National Gallery will be striking every week through July and in August will be voting on escalating their action still further, if the gallery has not agreed to halt their privatisation plans and to reinstate Candy Udwin.

Judge's summing-up at Candy Udwin's successful Interim Relief Employment Tribunal Hearing

"it actually says no more than that the claimant did what any employee, but perhaps more particularly one in the trade union looking for relevant material, could have done. That is, she accessed the respondent's internet legitimately and found a document that was marked private and confidential. Having found the document she used it to do a calculation. That cannot be wrong or improper.

"....the claimant could have shared this with any other employee entirely legitimately. Instead, she told Mr Bemrose, her trade union national negotiator. I consider it highly likely that it will be accepted, as the claimant urges, that an internal trade union representative (here, the claimant) is at liberty to consult a senior national (i.e. external) trade union negotiator freely and openly with relevant concerns.....I do not consider it likely that the claimant informing Mr Bemrose will be found to be culpable of blameworthy conduct, let alone gross misconduct..... It actually was permissible trade union activities is what I consider an employment tribunal is likely to find."

More details from the PCS website:

www.pcs.org.uk/en/national-gallery/national-gallery.cfm

Further developments at London

Metropolitan University

Unison branch secretary at London Metropolitan University, Max Watson, has been targeted for compulsory redundancy. Both UNISON and UCU believe that this is politically motivated - it is the second time that they have tried to get rid of Max. Management are using this as a diversion from the fight to oppose 165 redundancies across the univeristy. The trade unions at Lonon Met are determined to fight the cuts and protect their union organisation. They deserve everyone's support.

REDBRIDGE TRADES COUNCIL PASSES MOTION IN SOLIDARITY WITH LONDON MET:

This Redbridge Trades Council condemns the compulsory redundancy notice issued to London Metropolitan University UNISON Branch Secretary, Max Watson.

We believe that the LMU management have taken this action because of Max Watson's Trade Union activities and his active support for anti-cuts campaigns, both within the university and the wider community; we note his role in the successful campaign to re-instate Charlotte Monroe at our local, Whipps Cross hospital.

- 1) We call for the withdrawal of this notice*
- 2) Offer unconditional support to UNISON in this action*
- 3) Express solidarity with all those fighting for higher education and against the cuts at London Metropolitan University*

London Metropolitan staff will be on strike on 24th July:

Strike Rally: 12.00-2pm

Tower Building,

166-220 Holloway Rd, London N7 8DB



**JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO KEEP
OUR NATIONAL GALLERY NATIONAL**

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-privatisation-at-national-gallery>

TUC to organise national demonstration during Conservative Party Conference

The TUC will organise a national demonstration in Manchester this autumn against the government's austerity agenda and attacks on trade unions. It will take place on Sunday 4 October and will begin with a march through central Manchester, culminating in a rally close to the Conservative Party Conference. Workers and community organisations from across the country will join the demonstration, which will be the first the TUC has organised since the Conservative government came to power.

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said:

"This October's march and rally will allow thousands of ordinary people to show the government exactly what they think of their policies.

"The Conservatives' planned attack on trade unions and extreme cuts are an assault on working people at a time when they should be focused on securing the UK's fragile recovery and creating better jobs to boost productivity."

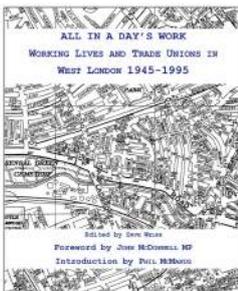
Defend the Right to Strike

We propose an energetic campaign across the trade union movement to safeguard our rights. We intend to make the case that trade union rights are democratic rights. No other voluntary organisation in society faces as much legal interference in their internal affairs as we do in the trade unions. The right to withdraw one's labour is a hallmark of a free society.



We believe this law can be defeated if the movement acts quickly and decisively. Defeating it would be the first step in recovering the trade union rights which have been taken from us in recent decades.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK: Working Lives and Trade Unions in West London 1945-1995



"This book helps us to learn from past lives and past struggles. For that, we owe it and all its participants a debt of thanks."
John McDonnell MP

All in a Day's Work is a 250-page book featuring over 100 oral history interviews carried out by the Britain at Work London Group. It chronicles the working lives and trade union activities of people who worked in West London during the years 1945-1995. A unique snapshot of many types of work and workplaces in both the private sector and public services, covering an area stretching from Hayes in the west to Paddington and from Harrow in the north to the River Thames.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK is available now.
Price £10 + £2.80 p&p.

You can purchase the book by PayPal using dave@britainatworklondon.com or send a cheque (payable to Britain At Work London Project) to the address below.

For more information or to contact the Britain at Work London Project, contact rma@britainatworklondon.com, phone 020 7272 7649 or write to Britain at Work, 15 Wellington Road, Norwich, NR2 3HT.

Britain at Work
London project



Branch Banner on the demonstration in support of the Greek people on July 15th.

UCU
University and College Union

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

Contact us via the secretary:
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