



## The TUC, Airport Expansion and Climate Change

The London Retired Members' branch passed the following resolution:

*We call upon UCU to move the following motion at next year's TUC congress:*

*To halt climate change we need drastic cuts in the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases put into the air. That means leaving most of the existing reserves of high carbon fuels in the ground. We need workers to insulate and retrofit homes and buildings to conserve energy. Workers to build enough renewable power to meet all our energy needs. And workers to maintain the new systems the future of humanity depends on.*

*Congress commits the TUC to develop an active energy and climate change strategy, and to work with other organisations to campaign for:*

- \* Energy democracy and a rapid transition from fossil fuels, including a ban on all fracking.*
- \* A stop to airport expansion*
- \* Promotion of alternatives to short-haul flights, including publicly owned rail in UK and Europe*
- \* A genuine commitment to reducing lethal air pollutants*
- \* A just transition employment strategy to climate jobs and well-paid, skilled, sustainable employment*
- \* Improved links between anti-war, refugee and climate campaign movements.*
- \* Action against TTIP, CETA and other trade treaties threatening climate justice*

The campaign proposals were debated at last year's TUC congress as part of a motion from the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA), but were defeated, mainly because of fears that such a strategy would result in job losses. This motion therefore stresses the potential for increased employment in a low carbon economy. Our union was one of the sponsors of the pamphlet entitled "*One Million Climate Jobs: Tackling the Environmental and Economic Crises*", which may be downloaded from this website: [www.climate-change-jobs.org](http://www.climate-change-jobs.org). Convincing the TUC of the necessity of adopting the policies in this booklet will be difficult, but we have to keep reminding them that there are **No Jobs on a Dead Planet**.

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## THE RIGHTS OF EU NATIONALS IN THE UK

In the wake of the referendum on EU membership, many UCU members have been dealing with the insecurity and stress caused by the uncertain political situation. UCU NEC on 25th November voted overwhelmingly to support the maintenance of existing rights to free movement of labour of EU residents in the UK and EU member states.

UCU has also altered its legal support scheme to include supporting the provision of immigration advice to members. If you are concerned about your right to live and work in the UK, or know a fellow member who is, make sure they know that union support is available. UCU has partnered with Bindmans LLP, immigration law experts, to provide immigration advice for both EEA and non-EEA nationals. More details from <http://bit.ly/2kWgvyZ>.

The Green Party has also produced a factsheet on the legal rights of EU nationals currently living in the UK. Written by Colin Yeo, barrister at Garden Court Chambers, it answers several of the most commonly-asked questions following the vote to leave the European Union.

This factsheet can be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/2fVfpzw>

# Ten Minute Briefing



## **These new, ten minute briefings from the NPC aim to give you a quick analysis of the current debates surrounding older people in the UK.**

The latest attack on the triple lock and universal pensioner benefits has come in a new report from the right-wing think tank, the Resolution Foundation (RF), entitled *As Time Goes By*. It is chaired by Lord David Willetts, former Conservative minister who in 2010 wrote a book entitled *The Pinch: How the baby boomers took their children's future*. What is interesting is that the media coverage, particularly by the BBC, failed to accurately report the Foundation's research findings. Similarly, Lord Willetts used the opportunity to call for an end to the triple lock on state pensions, simply on the basis that older households supposedly had £20 a week more than working households. The aim of this briefing is to dig a little deeper into the Resolution Foundation's research – and to show how those who wish to roll back the welfare state and universalism are selectively using the data to make their case

### **Have pensioner incomes grown?**

The simple answer is it depends on the pensioner. The possible reasons for some pensioners having higher incomes include the following:

Many (younger) older people are in a household where at least one person is still working. For example, 20% of 70-year-olds are still in employment. It seems that the main argument being used by the RF rests on the claim that pensioners who have paid off their mortgage and are still working, having higher incomes after housing costs than younger people who are still paying off their mortgage. Rather than a revelation, this feels like an obvious and understandable situation.

A particular generation of older people are more likely to have benefitted from final salary, defined benefit occupational pension schemes, which were not available to older generations and are unlikely to be available to younger generations.

Increases in pensioner benefits prior to the triple lock being introduced were higher than inflation, not as a result of the triple lock (as Lord Willetts suggested).

Comparing typical pensioner incomes in 2014 with typical incomes in 2001, to a large extent means comparing two different populations of pensioners, as one poorer group dies and is replaced by younger and generally better off generations. However, if you measure the income of the same individual over that period, the figures show that the growth in their income is considerably lower than that for the group as a whole. For example, those born in 1935 (now aged 81-years-old) have not seen their incomes grow as much as younger pensioners.

### **Is it a case of young against old?**

The RF's research actually shows that those in their 20s have an income more in line with their grandparents in their 80s, than with their parents who may be in their late 40s upwards.

Another interesting finding is that income level differences within each generation are often larger than differences between generations. The idea that the inequality is therefore greatest between the generations is simply not borne out by the research. Suggesting that the problem is due to richer pensioners taking from poorer twenty somethings is factually incorrect.

Even the RF accept that there are still 2 million pensioners below the before housing costs relative poverty line in 2014-15 (16%) and 1.6 million below (14%) once housing costs are taken into account.

### **Conclusion**

There seems little real evidence from the report to back up the claim from Lord Willetts and others that the triple lock must be scrapped alongside universal pensioner benefits, such as the bus pass and winter fuel allowance, in order to improve the life chances and incomes of younger generations. In fact, nowhere does the report call for any kind of redistribution of wealth between the generations; merely an argument is being used to make cuts to the welfare state that future generations of pensioners are going to need even more than their parents and grandparents.

For those wishing to find out more about the key issues raised in this briefing, follow the links below:

The facts about the triple lock are available here: <http://bit.ly/2kmAw1q>  
The facts about universal benefits are available here: <http://bit.ly/2kzfkXx>  
The case for intergenerational solidarity is available here: <http://bit.ly/2lXvV4t>



This is drawn from a speech given by our branch Vice Chair, Marilyn Moos, at a Holocaust Memorial Day event.

## May's government are not Nazis but...

Although we are all horrified by what Trump is (predictably) doing and comparisons with Nazism abound, I want here to concentrate on the xenophobia and racism of the British government because we need to organise here. This article is based on a short talk I recently gave to the Islington Holocaust memorial meeting.

I first want to compare the present government with the British state's attitudes towards refugees from Nazism in the 1930s. The Government did not welcome refugees from Nazism (especially if Communists), yet they admitted 10,000 children from the Kindertransport over a few months in late 1938, early 1939 and somewhere between 50-70,000 refugees altogether, many of whom arrived in the 12 months before the outbreak of war. The Home Secretary, Hoare, actually agreed to provide group, not individual, visas for the Kindertransports, which one can only wish had also been Government policy for the children from the Jungle. There was even an appeal on the BBC, initiated by Parliament, for foster homes for these children.

But the National Government was certainly not generous towards refugees: it only admitted about 1:10 of the people attempting to escape the Nazis to Britain. One can only imagine what happened to the rest.

In fact, the Kindertransport provides today's Government with ideological cover: while it only admits a few hundred children from the Jungle, it exhorts us about how the Kindertransport reveals how generous Britain has been towards refugees. Moreover, the extolling of the Kindertransport suggests a -false- distinction between the 'innocence' of the child and the less deserving adult.

It is impossible to know exactly how many refugees would like to come to Britain today. A few figures: last year, 2016, only about 41,000 people, 3% of asylum claims in Europe, applied for asylum in Britain. Of all the countries in Europe, Britain took in the lowest number by head of population: less than 0.1% compared to, for example, Sweden with almost 2% and Austria with 1%. Last year, Britain was refusing asylum to 71% of applicants.

Out of the 4.8 m Syrian refugees, less than 4000 adults have so far been accepted out of the meagre 20,000 promised by the government over 5 years. There are 2000 refugees stuck in camps in Serbia. Only about 140 adults have been accepted from the Greek camps, although there are about 25,000 child refugees there, and about 65,000 adults. This barbarism is a product of the European agreement in March, nominally to stop drownings at sea, but which now means refugees

have to go through an endless and deadly bureaucratic nightmare. In fact in 2016 more people have in fact drowned: about 4700.

But to continue the comparison with the Kindertransport, contrast with how the Government has responded to the children who were in the Jungle. Children in need tug at the heart-strings and their proximity and desperation gave the Government grounds to present them as 'exceptional cases', as was the case with the Kindertransport. Yet of the approx. 1500 unaccompanied children left stranded after the Jungle was demolished, only about 150 children, both Dublin agreement children i.e. with family in Britain and a few Dubs children i.e. in exceptional need, have been accepted over the last 5 months. Remember the media storm about whether they were children or not, with David Davies wanting their teeth checked. Only a handful have been let in since October. About 1:3 of the children who were in the jungle have gone missing.

This government actively tries to stop any refugee from coming here: Dubs, who got out of Czechoslovakia on the Kindertransport, and was to become a Labour MP, before accepting a seat in the Lords, put a motion to the Lords to allow in up to 3000 unaccompanied children, but was persuaded to remove the number of 3000 on the illusory assurance that desperate children would be accepted.

The Government is tightening up on all the criteria. Even for the few who get here, only a tiny percentage of refugees are given the right to work. 'Illegal' refugees are regularly threatened with expulsion, In 2016, about 4,000 'illegals' were expelled or 'encouraged' to leave. About 3000 asylum seekers were in detention in the 3rd quarter of 2016. In October, the government talked of sending home foreign doctors once enough 'British' doctors were available. Just last week, it emerged that that the Home office has made 8127 requests to the NHS for patient details in the first 11 months of 2016, leading to 5854 people being traced by immigration enforcement. It must make UKIP proud.



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And while I am not equating the May government with the Nazis, Amber Rudd, the present Home Secretary's, suggestion at the 2016 Tory Conference that firms should declare the percentage of foreign workers and that the State draw a line between people born here or who come here to work is reminiscent of the Nazis constant and deadly talk of 'Undesirables'. This government are not Nazis but there are dangerous similarities: the growing legitimisation of the refugee as the outsider and as a non-person. As in Nazi Germany, they become 'the other' or, to use Trump's resonant phrase, 'undesirables'. As in the 1930s, the hysteria of the Daily Mail and other media outlets and the UKIP- lite talk of the Government about an immigration crisis overwhelming Britain is legitimating the promotion of xenophobia, and a fear and hostility towards refugees.

Let us also remember that Nazism blended together an extreme racialised form of nationalism with an apparent appeal to the working man: an attack on big business (yes, coinciding with Jews but this attack was not exclusive) and an assurance that the state would see to the creation of jobs. Women of course were consigned to motherhood and church. (Trump's attacks on abortion rights resonates with just such an ideology).

And while, May has not – yet - constructed the 'Muslim' as equivalent to the terrorist, what this - previous - Governments have done is turn being Muslim - a religion - into the person's major qualifying characteristic. In the past, migrants and refugees were thought of in terms of their previous nationality. This represents a major ideological shift. Even the construction in Britain of refugees as 'Jews' in the 1930s (and indeed 1940s) was as much to do with cultural as religious identification.

Because history is taught in terms of great men (sic), the level of tyranny by SA and other Nazi thugs in the early 1930s (and earlier) of left wing activists, community centres and other organisations of the working class is often not properly recognised. This time round we must not be divided. We need to resist together all forms of racism whenever and however possible and to state loud and clear that refugees are welcome here.

#### **Stop Press**

*The Government has just closed down the Dubs scheme to admit unaccompanied vulnerable child refugees (8.2 17). Only approx 350 children out of the original 3000 mooted have been accepted under this scheme. There is also talk that no more refugee children will be accepted under the Dublin agreement (joining relatives in the UK). How to explain such barbarity except in terms of Islamophobia and 'Britain first'?*

## **Report on a Talk by Kim Sharif**

at the UCU Retired members January 2017 branch meeting  
by David Binns

Lawyer and director of the Yemen Human Rights campaign, Kim Sharif, spoke to UCU London Retired Members at a branch meeting held on 24th January.

A central theme of the talk was the overwhelmingly civilian targetting of the bombing raids being unleashed on Yemen by the forces of the Saudi-led coalition. Health facilities, schools, universities and transport hubs have all been hit in acts which Kim terms "war crimes". These, it should be stressed, are by no means isolated assertions. Human Rights Watch, for example, speaks of "apparently unlawful airstrikes" causing large scale civilian deaths.

In addition to the bombing, Kim described Saudi-enforced import restrictions which are seriously affecting essential medicine and food supplies. She characterised these steps as "genocide by blockade".

### **Arab Bombing Coalition**

The immediate political context is the support being given by the Arab Bombing Coalition to Saudi favoured former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. Previously deputy to president Ali Abdallah Saleh, who was overthrown by mass opposition in the ferment of 2011, Hadi, as sole candidate, was elected Saleh's temporary successor the following year.

Hadi's rise to power, in a period of regional turmoil, was the outcome of coordinated international intervention. His presidency was achieved through the National Dialogue Conference initiative. Support for this Gulf Cooperation Council managed step came from the United Nations as well as several Western states.

### **New Rulers**

The terms of Hadi's transitional presidency included holding of elections within two years and the ensuing transfer of power to a new government. But by September 2014, with no elections held and a deteriorating economic situation, a counter-movement arose, largely comprising groups associated with the movement of 2011. Allied with tribal chiefs and what remains of Saleh's General People's Congress support base, these forces include Ansar Allah (or the "Houthis"), the Communist Party and the (now) separatist Southern Movement. They seized the Yemeni capital Sanaa in September 2014, then moved to form a unity government. Hadi fled to the south of the country. There he began to build a resistance force with which to oppose the new rulers and restore himself to power.

Specifically regarding workers in Yemen, Kim described near total absence of rights. Not

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Kim Sharif continued..

only is labour displaced on a massive scale by collapse of economic life. Compounding that, appalling conditions are daily reality for many still in work. Abusive treatment by employers includes physical brutality and non-payment, especially of vulnerable migrants.

Little in Kim's account could reasonably inspire confidence in either of the key rivals for top political office. Hadi is allied with the Saudi-led forces behind the devastation presently raining down on Yemeni population centres. But as Kim pointed out, and notwithstanding his involvement with the present Sanaa government, prior to 2011 Saleh, as president, was complicit in the largely covert Saudi influence over Yemen. Ansar Allah, moreover, repeatedly was at war with the regime of Saleh during the decade beginning 2004, suggesting an opportunist character to their current convergence in Sanaa. Neither Saleh nor Hadi offer anything of substance to the impoverished workers and poor of Yemen.

### Power Blocs

Regarding future prospects, Vincent Durac, of University College Dublin's School of Politics and International Relations, describes two volatile power blocs, each at odds with itself as well as with the other:

*"As things stand, no political solution seems forthcoming...The conflict has brought together a set of unstable alliances on both sides. The Houthis are allied with remnants of the Saleh regime, while the anti-Houthi alliance comprises Sunni Islamists, including al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the so-called Islamic State, a diverse mix of southern separatists, and the remnants of the internationally-recognised government."*

SOAS academic Gilbert Achcar goes further, seeing the Saudi intervention as support for one side of a war between "two reactionary camps"; or more specifically, "two camps anti-thetic to the fundamental aspirations for which Yemen's youth rose up in 2011."

### Poverty and Malnutrition

There is no appearance of a progressive logic within the politics of either alliance. Such is the present manifestation of a fractured recent history incorporating parliamentary as well as archaic dimensions of organisation. The legacy is one of diverse social and political forms including tribal, ethnic-religious and internal regionalist dimensions. Further, its determinants include broader social forms and political forces. Thus Nasserite nationalist and pre-1990 Moscow-oriented "socialist" involvement, alongside that of British colonialism, have all left their mark, or at least smudge. Some credible observers, including Robert Fisk, point to Iranian arms in Houthi hands

notwithstanding the denials of others. Entrenched and worsening poverty and malnutrition only compound the pressures toward splintering of social and political relationships at national level.

Fracturing has been a persistent and recurrent feature of opposition over decades, with successive oppositional (as well as ruling) coalitions proving unstable and tension-ridden. This appears to be true of the Joint Meeting Parties, an alliance of Yemeni opposition groupings formed in 2002. Seen by some as marking the "re-emergence of the Yemeni left", the JMP includes both the Saudi associated tribal-Islamist Yemeni Congregation for Reform (or al-Islah) and the Yemeni Socialist Party. Optimism should be tempered by awareness of still recent ferocious fighting between those two component forces.

### Solidarity

Kim's appeal for opposition to the British contribution, alongside that of the US, to Saudi "colonialism" through arms provision, as well as supply of intelligence and logistics support, was well received. Yet to what extent the "support for the people of Yemen" for which she is calling is immediately feasible beyond such elementary steps, within the mounting Yemeni and regional mayhem, is debatable.

That, however, should not stop us making the case within the labour movement against the deep collusion of the diminished but still sporadically virulent imperial British state with the Saudi delivered onslaught on Yemen, so redolent of the Russian-led civilian massacres in Syria. Simultaneously we should seek ways to support whatever remnants of the Yemeni labour movement may survive within the present devastation and try to assist, where and however possible, labour movement renewal.



Human Rights Watch article on Yemen:  
<http://bit.ly/2hnJPv>

# The Lucas Plan - An Idea Whose Time has Come?

## A Conference celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Lucas Plan

a report by *Greg Peakin*

The Conference that took place on Saturday 26th November in Birmingham was organised to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Plan. A few of the original plotters were present and the Conference acknowledged their achievement with a small presentation and much acclamation! The main thrust of the meeting was to consider ways in which the Lucas Plan was still relevant and could be adapted to meet some of the pressing needs that are evident today. The flier advertising the meeting was headed **Climate Jobs not Bombs** which set the tone and stimulated much interest. Upwards of 200 delegates attended for a day of plenary lectures and three sets of workshops on a variety of topics.

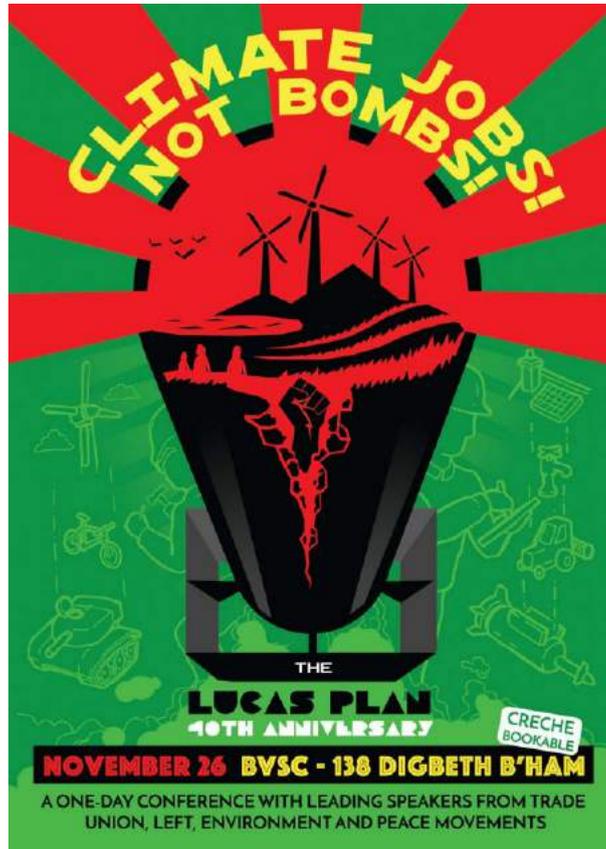
The morning began with a screening of "The Plan" a film in the making directed by Steve Sprung telling the story of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Alternative Corporate Plan. Phil Asquith (a member of the Combine), Hilary Wainwright (Editor, Red Pepper) and Tony Kearns (CWU) discussed the plan and its relevance now and noted, particularly, the reactionary views of Union bureaucracy which resists the ideas of transition. The Conference then broke up into four workshops: Arms Conversion, Lucas Plan History, Just Transition and Community and Alternative Plans.

*Arms Conversion* discussed arms conversion initiatives over the past 40 years. The discussion was led by Hilary Wainwright who, as Deputy Chief Economic Advisor to The GLC took forward ideas from the Lucas Plan and Professor John Middleton, of the UK Faculty of Health, who has researched military industry in Coventry and advocated alternative applications for the technologies.

### Lucas Plan History

*Lucas Plan History* dealt with the creation of the Plan and the industrial struggle associated with it. Mick Cooney and John Routley of the Shop Stewards Combine Committee reminisced. *Just Transition* had Natalie Bennett of the Green Party, and Philip Pearson of the Green Jobs Alliance arguing for justice for workers displaced from, say, the fossil fuel industry by the transition to a zero carbon economy so that the skills used in their former work are applied beneficially to the new technologies required by a zero carbon economy.

The final workshop, *Community and Alternative*



*Plans - Climate and Green Jobs* considered the creation of the 'green jobs strategies' that are needed for the transition to sustainability. It was led by Jonathan Essex (Green House Think Tank) and Richard Lee (Just Space). After lunch another four workshops on Gender and Technology, What is Appropriate/Alternative Technology?, What is Socially Useful Production? and Reading Mike Cooley's 'Architect or Bee'.

In the first, *Gender and Technology*, Gail Chester (Feminist Library) and Marisol Sandoval (City University) examined how increasing rates of technological change impacted differentially on men and

women to the detriment of all.

The second workshop, *What is Appropriate/Alternative Technology*, pondered on the creation of 'alternative' and 'appropriate' jobs in a world that is not hell bent on corporate and military technologies that are designed solely in the interests of those who own them. It was led by Dave Elliott (Open University) and Liz Corbin (Institute of Making. UCL).

### Socially Useful Production?

*What is Socially Useful Production?* was considered by Dave King (Breaking the Frame) and Tony Simpson (Bertrand Russell Foundation).

Finally, Reading *Architect or Bee?*, the book by Mike Cooley, who was a key theorist behind the Lucas Plan, was looked at by Thomas Unterrainer (Bertrand Russell Foundation) and Adrian Smith (Sussex University) with particular reference the political implications of new technologies.

The next part of the afternoon was devoted to a third session of workshops, sum following up three of the morning sessions. Thus *Arms Conver-*

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*Lucas Plan continued*

sion 2 looked at arms to renewables jobs. Molly Scott (Green Party) considered alternatives to Trident, Stuart Parkinson (Scientists for Global Responsibility) addressed the universities' role in arms conversion initiatives and David Cullen (Nuclear Information Service) spoke on alternatives to Trident at the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

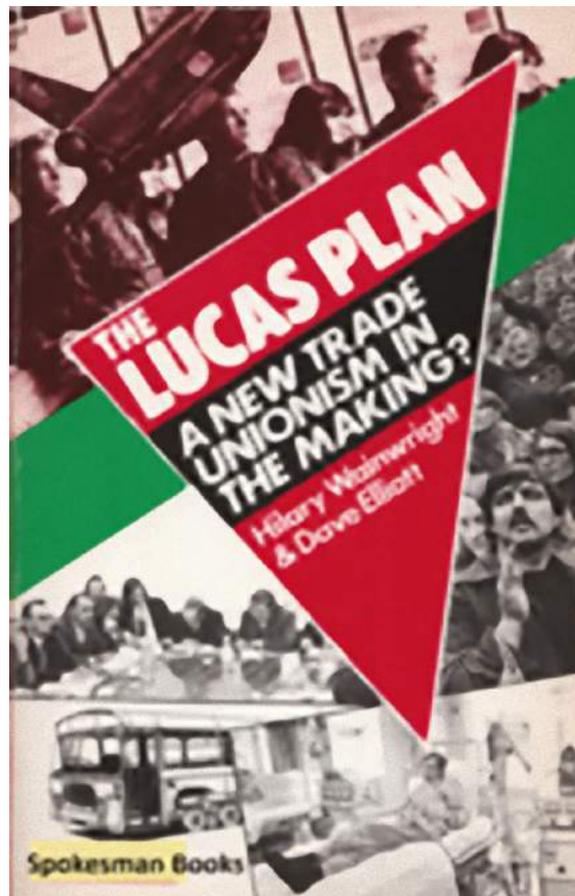
### **What Future for Jobs?**

*Robotics and Automation - What Future for Jobs?* Since the Lucas Plan, automation has accelerated and, together with digital technologies, destroys jobs. Current struggles and union resistance were outlined by Simon Fairlie (The Land magazine) and Philippa Hands (Unison).

*Just Transition 2 - Transition in Practice - One Million Climate Jobs*, an example of how practical proposals can make transition a reality, where building wind turbines, insulating home, investing in public transport and retraining/reskilling workers would keep people in work and reduce CO2. Suzanne Jeffery (Campaign Against Climate Change - Million Climate Jobs Campaign) and Mika Minio-Paluella (Global Justice Now) enlarged on this theme.

*Community and Alternative Plans 2 - Initiatives for Progressive Economics* was a discussion on how communities, workers, businesses and councils can work together; how economic power and ownership can be decentralised and how work that meets society's needs can be created. The session was facilitated by Karen Leach (Localise West Midlands).

The final plenary session, chaired by Romaine Phoenix (People's Assembly Against Austerity) had Chris Baugh (PCS), Molly Scott Cato (Green Party) and Julie Ward (Labour Party) considered the way forward and stimulated the final discussion that wound up a very busy day.



### **Stand up for Sen College of North West London dispute**

UCU members at the College of North West London are standing up for their rep Indro Sen who they believe is facing dismissal because of his trade union activities. Our colleagues at CNWL recently took strike action over a planned merger with the City of Westminster College and over the suspension of, Indro Sen.

#### **Opposition to Merger**

The plans to merge CNWL with City of Westminster College were first announced back in 2013. Despite CNWL saying it was consulting staff over the merger, several staff have been made redundant since, with no guarantees over current staff jobs and no guarantees that both current campuses will stay open. Indro Sen, Branch Secretary of UCU at CNWL and a vocal critic of the merger plans, was suspended back in October 2016 whilst representing a former CNWL employee at a tribunal.

**A meeting to express solidarity will be held at Willesden Library at 6pm on February 24th.**



*UCU London Region Committee stands in solidarity with Sen and our branch at CNWL. Indro Sen himself is at the centre of the photo.*