

## Report for October 2017 - May 2018

### Elections

At our AGM, Jan Pollock, founding chair of the branch stood down and we elected Merilyn Moos as new chair. Jan was thanked for her previous work and we made a presentation. Branch rule that there shall be a gender balance when electing officers has been extended to include congress delegates.

### Demonstrations and Campaigns

- 16 days in 16 ways - 16 days of activism against gender based violence
- USS Pension Dispute - Attended both London Region demonstrations and supported picket lines.
- *NHS In Crisis – Fix It Now* - March and Demonstration - 12pm, Saturday 3 February
- HAITI : Caribbean Dignity Unbowed. Circulated repost from Professor Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, to President Trump's offensive remarks about Haiti.
- *Sentences handed down to relatives of human rights defender Mr Alwadaei and situation in Bahrain* - wrote to our MPs in support of this Early Day Motion 509
- Supported the petition "Do Not Let Afrin Become Another Kobane"
- Sent delegates to *Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group* conference "Jobs & Climate: Planning for a Future that Doesn't Cost the Earth"
- Continued to oppose the Haringey Development Vehicle
- Delegates to "Stand Up to Racism Trade Union conference 2018 "
- Supported strikes and demonstration by University of London outsourced workers
- Deportations campaign - worked with Caribbean Labour Solidarity (CLS) on the campaign against deportations of people from the Caribbean. Sent resolutions to UCU Black Members Group and London Region, both of which agreed support. Attended demonstrations demanding Amnesty and in the process of supporting a public meeting with CLS, UNITE and Global Women's Strike. Sent late motion to Congress.
- Joined protest at the Israeli massacres in Gaza outside Downing Street
- Supported the campaign to Save Kensington and Chelsea College
- Supported Campaign to oppose Thames bridges at Gallions Reach and Belvedere – we may just have a victory!
- Supporting the campaign against the exclusion of African and Native-American people from the *Mayflower 400* commemoration
- Resolution on USS investment in 3rd London Airport at Heathrow - *This branch calls upon the UCU NEC to insist that USS disinvests from any company investing in*



*USS pensions strike - braving the snow*

*or in any way involved in the Heathrow 3rd runway as a matter of urgency. We believe that such investment is not a safe place to invest our members money and call upon the UCU Action Committee to formulate a long term campaign to secure such disinvestment.*

## **UCU Consultation of Retired Members**

We responded as follows:

1. "Should the current option for retired members of either membership of a retired members' branch or retention of local branch membership be retained?" - Having compared the UCU arrangement to those in other trade unions, particularly UNISON and the NEU, we feel that our current system provides the best arrangement for both retired and working members.

2. "Would you support the creation of a single UCU retired members' group or association (similar to the Unison model)?" The chances for active involvement in the retired section of UNISON are considerably less than in UCU.

UCU retired members branches are largely self-organising and do not require the involvement of full-time officials who quite rightly can then concentrate on representing working members.

We are therefore not in favour of single UCU retired members' group.

3. "Should retired members retain their current rights to vote in all UCU elections and to stand for local and regional office?" We should be full members of the union with full rights to vote for national officers, but that we should not be able to stand for any office where decisions are taken on trade matters. Given that we no longer work in Higher, Further or Adult education, these trade specific members of the NEC are not our concern. Equally, who we select as chair of the retired members section is no concern of working members. However, as full members of the union, we should be entitled to vote for national officers such as General Secretary as well as the various equality committees as we can suffer discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, orientation, age etc. in the same way as working members.

## **Speakers at Branch Meetings**

Bernard Regan [National Education Union] who introduced his new book *The Balfour Declaration: Empire, the Mandate and Resistance in Palestine*

## **National Pensioners Convention**

We are affiliated to both the NPC London Region and the national organisation. Our delegate is a member of the London Region Executive, she stood at the AGM for the post of vice-chair and, while receiving a respectable vote, was not elected. We shall be sending delegates to the Pensioners' Parliament

We sent sent 2 motions to the NPC London Region AGM 2018:

## **Climate Change, Airport Expansion and Fracking**

*We recognise that the motion on Climate Change passed at this year's TUC makes*

*progress towards the resolution on Climate Change passed at last year's London region NPC. However, we regret that there is no mention of opposition to fracking or airport expansion. We therefore call upon the NPC to continue to campaign within the trade union movement in support of all the demands raised previously.*

### **ESOL and the older migrant**

*Given the rise of Islamophobia and other forms of racism, this branch calls for the Government to immediately fund free ESOL classes in FE colleges and elsewhere within the public sector. While the facilities to learn to speak English should be the right of all migrants, we are especially concerned with the older non-English speaker who is likely to be especially isolated and disadvantaged.*

both were passed

### **Trades Councils**

We are affiliated to 7 London Trades Councils

### **Members publications and presentations**

We now have a "Reviews" page on the branch website. This is for either reviews that members have written or reviews in other publications of members' publications.

<http://ucu-retired-london.org.uk/category/reviews/>

*"By Our Own Hands" - A People's History of the Grenadian Revolution* by Steve Cushion and Dennis Bartholomew launched 22nd January 2018, at London Socialist Historians Group

<http://cls-uk.org.uk/?p=279>

Three of our members are speaking at London Socialist Historians' Workshop on *"Internationalist Renegades and Traitors"*. This will be the basis of a Socialist History Society booklet in the Spring of 2019.

<http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?p=564>

### **Walks**

The branch has only organised 1 walk, a *Walk through Brixton*, over the winter, but we intend to recommence the programme now that the better weather has arrived

### **Membership**

We have maintained the branch website - <http://ucu-retired-london.org.uk/>

We have continued to use the "Mailchimp" email system for branch circulars.

We now have a Facebook page -

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/UCULondonRetired/posts/>

but Twitter is a step to far

We have held 2 meetings so far in 2018.

We have 573 members.