

Lancaster UCU e-Bulletin (September 2015)

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No to Austerity, Yes to Workers' Rights!

*A warm welcome back! Unfortunately, it is not such a warm welcome back for us from the government. They are still going full steam ahead with the Trade Union Bill, which we alerted you to in June's e-Bulletin. The bill will have its second reading (its first vote) in the Commons **today**. Over 100 academics have signed a letter expressing deep concern over the bill's contents. The letter describes the bill as 'the most sustained attack on trade union and workers' rights since the Combination Laws of the early 19th Century'. The letter states;*

'Trade unions in Britain are not too strong, but too weak. They provide an important voice for the expression and protection of workers' terms and conditions of employment and are a countervailing force against the excesses of employer power'.

<http://www.ier.org.uk/news/academics-come-out-against-trade-union-bill>

Last week Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights issued the following statement.

'The government's plans to significantly restrict trade union rights – set out in the Trade Union Bill – represent a major attack on civil liberties in the UK... Taken together the unprecedented measures in the Bill would hamper people's basic rights to protest and shift even more power from the employee to the employer'.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/union-issues/trade-union-bill/trade-union-bill-%E2%80%9Cmajor-attack-civil-liberties%E2%80%9D-human-rights-groups>

*In response, the TUC have organised a national, mass demonstration in Manchester outside the Conservative Party conference on **SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER at noon**. The event is also supported by the People's Assembly, which organised the End Austerity Now march in London in June, just after the elections, attracting some quarter of a million marchers. The good news is that it is in Manchester! That means that it will be much easier for many of us to get to. This is the day and the place where we can, as a society, defend the right of trade unions to protect their members as well as other employees in the workplace. Assemble at noon in Oxford Road from All Saints Park southwards, 12:30 music and opening rally, 13:30 march through the city.*

What you can do:

1. Put the date in your diary – **SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 12:00**
2. Talk to your colleagues about the Trades Union Bill and why we, especially in the North-West, need to be at the event in Manchester
3. Organise a departmental contingent, book the number of seats you need on the coach leaving **Dalton Square at 10am** by emailing j.hearn@lancaster.ac.uk or meet us there under the Lancaster UCU banner.

For details of the event:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/no-austerity-yes-workers-rights-national-demonstration-conservative-party-conference-0>

<http://www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/demonstrate-at-tory-party-conference>

For information about the bill:

<http://www.ier.org.uk/blog/pre-strike-ballots-and-trade-union-bill-2015-denying-workers-right-strike>

http://www.ier.org.uk/sites/ier.org.uk/files/IER%20The%20Trade%20Unions%20Bill%20July%202015_0.pdf

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/tradeunion.html>

<http://uniteresist.org/2015/07/no-to-austerity-no-to-tory-anti-union-laws/>

CAMPUS NEWS: Meetings and Visits

Trade Union Bill Public Meeting, Lancaster

A number of our members attended a public meeting in August in Lancaster organised by the RMT union to discuss the impact of the bill and how local unions can work together to oppose it.

Ongoing Union Recognition Agreement Negotiations

A trade union recognition agreement provides the framework in which an employer and unions negotiate on pay, terms and conditions under collective bargaining. Lancaster University's one dated back to the 1970s so over the

summer all three campus unions, including their regional officers, have had several meetings with human resources to draft a new agreement. Negotiations are proceeding with a further schedule of meetings planned.

Branch Strategy Afternoon 23 September 2015

The exec and dept reps will be coming together for an afternoon to review the year and plan ahead for the next. Please feed your comments to your [dept rep](#) and they will bring it to the meeting. If your department doesn't have a UCU rep, please forward your comments to the Lancaster UCU Branch Administrator (lbanton@ucu.org.uk) and consider becoming the departmental rep yourself (or sharing the role with a colleague). We will report back in the next e-bulletin.

Autumn Visits to Lancaster from UCU General Secretary and President

Yes to Workers' Rights

No to Casual Contracts

Two important national speakers will be visiting Lancaster UCU in September and October. First of all, UCU's general secretary, **Sally Hunt**, will visit Lancaster University on **24 September** and will speak at a meeting in **Bowland LT** from **1pm to 2pm**. In addition to the threat to workers' rights posed by the Trade Union Bill, the meeting will also discuss the exploitation of graduate students employed on casual contracts.

Following that, the union's national president, **Liz Lawrence**, will speak at the branch's general meeting on **30 October** in Marcus Merriman LT. Details to follow.

'End Austerity Now!' Lancaster Town Hall Public Meeting 7pm 24 September 2015

Speakers: Cat Smith Labour MP; Rebecca Novell Green Councillor; Audrey Glover NUT; Julie Hearn UCU and speakers from UNISON, FBU and RMT invited. Hosted by Lancaster and Morecambe Trades Council. All Welcome!

Checkoff payers

Deduction via payroll (checkoff) has long been, for a union such as ourselves, a means of collecting membership subs. Recent announcements by government threatening the cessation of collection of union subscriptions by checkoff in the public sector make it absolutely essential that members currently paying by checkoff are encouraged to move to direct debit as soon as possible. Members can do this online via [Member eServices](#). Once logged in, you will need to go to 'My Subscription Details' and follow the link to 'change to direct debit'. Once you have set up your direct debit payments, please don't forget to cancel your checkoff payments by notifying University Payroll. National UCU will be writing to all members paying subscriptions by checkoff in due course but it would be very much appreciated if Lancaster UCU members paying by checkoff could please prepare themselves accordingly and respond positively to the request to change their method of payment to direct debit. Please direct any queries to the National membership office (membership@ucu.org.uk) or the Lancaster UCU Branch Administrator (lbanton@ucu.org.uk)

REGIONAL SOLIDARITY

Manchester Sunday 4 October 2015 TUC demonstration

The focus of all UCU and other trade union branches in the North-west for the next few weeks will be building for the demonstration.

NATIONAL NEWS: Pay; Pensions

Pay

54% of those of us, who took part in the consultative ballot in July 2015, voted against accepting the employers' derisory 1% pay offer. On 2 October two branch reps will be attending a UCU meeting to discuss the next steps in the pay campaign. Please email us your thoughts.

Pensions

USS a law unto itself?

<https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/uss-bonuses-went-up-four-million-pounds-as-final-salary-pension-scheme-axed>

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY:

Refugees Welcome!

A petition, initiated by UCU members and circulated by UCU nationally, calling on the government to respond to the refugee crisis, received over 400,000 signatures and helped shift the national debate.

Best wishes from your editorial team here at Lancaster UCU.