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By Carolyn Jones
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FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOM RECLAIM OUR RIGHTS! UNITED CAMPAIGN

United Campaign UPDATE

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FREE



More than 150,000 people made their voices heard in London by calling for more jobs not more cuts.

The TUC's noisy, colourful march saw squeezed families, public sector workers, the jobless, disabled people and anti-war activists among other campaigners unite behind the slogan A Future That Works.

The march, snaked through central London before a rally at Hyde Park heard calls from unions for a general strike.



Bob Crow, leader of the RMT rail union was loudly cheered when he called for a 24-hour general strike.



He told Hyde Park "there are one million builders on the dole who should be put to work building social housing before raising the possibility of a general strike. It's about time that we look at the practicalities of having a 24 hour general strike".

TUC general secretary designate Frances O'Grady tells the crowd: "Thank you for marching today in your tens of thousands. Thank you for standing up against the tax

dodgers, the greedy bankers and this government. Join me in sending them this message: 'End this austerity'. At the Conservative conference, Cameron said he wanted to spread privilege. We know what he is spreading - and it doesn't smell good!"

"If George Osborne won't sit in a rail carriage with us, let us tell him: 'Get on your bike!'"



She added that when she becomes TUC general secretary next year: "I will fight as hard for our people as that lot fight for theirs".

"Stay strong: united we stand."

Text FUTURE to 85515 to keep up to date with further details on the campaign



THE RELENTLESS ATTACK ON EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

BY CAROLYN JONES, DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

We all know that Britain has the most restrictive trade union legislation in western Europe. We also know that under the Tory-led government, with Wonga King, Adrian Beercroft advising the government on employment rights, the onslaught continues.

So what do the “arrogant posh boys” have in mind for trade unions and their members and what should the trade union response be?

In recent months the government has mounted a relentless attack on employment rights, including making it easier and cheaper for employers to dismiss workers (See box 1), while making it harder and more expensive for individuals to take their complaints to Tribunals.

More recently, the Chancellor announced controversial plans to allow businesses to ‘trade basic employment rights for shares’. Having floated the idea in a ridiculously short consultation process, the government have shown their complete arrogance towards democracy by including the proposals in legislation via the so-called Growth and Infrastructure Bill (See box 2), pre-empting responses to the consultation process.

Other proposals in the pipeline include reducing the consultation period in redundancies affecting more than 10 employees from 45 to 30 days and changes to TUPE expected before the end of 2012, including removing the ‘servicing’ provisions.

Of course none of this will do anything to help the economy grow. Nor will the proposals promote job creation or increase the power of the working class. It is a programme doomed to disaster. It amounts to rich kids risking the rights, the jobs and the lives of the working class and putting at risk the economic stability and social cohesion of our society.

At TUC Congress in September, a number of excellent motions were passed rejecting this arrogant austerity accompanying attack on workplace justice. Of course, this Tory-led government is incapable of turning from its neoliberalism is part of its DNA. But we can and must continue to argue the case for fair rights and free unions. We must demand a government led by politicians who understand that the collective interest always trumps individual greed, and lead from the front.

Trade unions are the organised working class and remain the best champions of hard working families across the economy. It is our role to highlight the weaknesses in government policy and support those members preparing for the future.

BOX 2: GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

By introducing a new employment status of ‘employee owners’, employers will be able to contract out of the following basic workplace rights:

- Unfair dismissal protection, except for dismissals relating to automatically unfair reasons or dismissals which are discriminatory
- The right to statutory redundancy pay
- The right to request time to train
- The right to request flexible working, unless the employee is returning from parental leave
- A requirement that employee owners give 16 weeks’ notice of intention to return early from maternity or adoption leave, rather than the current 8 weeks.

BOX 1: ENTERPRISE BILL

- Introduces provisions for individual settlements with employers to avoid individual a settlement as to as “Beercroft looks remarkably proposals for dismissal, which overwhelming”
- Introduces a compensation for the current s
- Reduced protection for “blowers”
- The removal of safety protection “technical” of removing the failures to comply with laws.

In that battle, two issues are on our agenda. First, support for bargaining as the best way to close the economic rights of workers, reduce the inequality gap and improve living standards. A win-win situation.

Second, we have to be prepared to hear no economic hardship but a fairer, more equal world. We need innovative strategies and a determined coalition of action and civil disobedience.

Arrogant posh boys be v

ISE AND REGULATORY REFORM

provisions on negotiated which will make it easier for to sack staff by offering an sum of money in return for a agreement. Otherwise referred off-life", so named because it ably like a previous Beecroft r compensated no fault hich was dropped due to g opposition.

reduction in the cap for on in unfair dismissal cases , from £72,300 to as low as £25,882.

rotections for workplace "whistle-

of a 114-year old health and ction via a last-minute, amendment to the Bill, e strict liability on employers for mply with health and safety

han 100 employees from 90 ice provision change'.

tion or improve purchasing elihoods of hard working

y programme and the om its current ideological path – ons. And while we wait for a trade unions must continue to

oss the public and private d to resist the onslaught.

should remain at the forefront of rting and promoting collective ay of protecting the legal and ers. Unions at work reduce the ove innovation and productivity on for the 21st century.

brave enough to listen to ot just their fears of dismissal and also their desire for a better, . To respond to both will mean d coordinated action led by a resistance. If that leads to direct lience – so be it.

warned!

FEATURE: CAROLYN JONES ON THE ATTACK ON EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

UNISON TAKES FAIRNESS FIGHT TO EUROPEAN COURT

UNISON, the UK's leading public sector trade union, today (20 September) took its fight for fairness in the long-running *Alemo-Herron & Ors v Parkwood Leisure Ltd* case, to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

UNISON is arguing that 24 members transferred from the London Borough of Lewisham to Parkwood Leisure have the right to continue to benefit from nationally agreed pay and terms set by the local government pay negotiations.

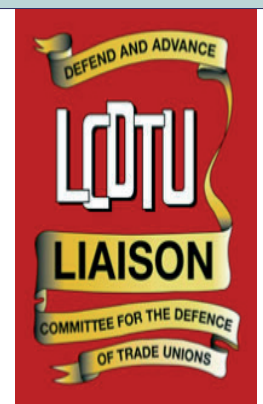
The Advocate-General's opinion in this 7-year long case is expected on 31 January 2013.

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis, said:



"We are taking our fight for fairness all the way to Luxembourg because we believe that we have a strong case. Under TUPE regulations, Parkwood employees transferred from the London Borough of Lewisham should be entitled to nationally agreed pay rises.

"This is an important case that will have implications for the thousands of workers that have been transferred out of the public sector or are set to be transferred. This is especially important in the current climate."



Tony Benn joins Officers at United Campaign's AGM, this year

The Officers of the United Campaign to Repeal the Ant-Trade Union Laws have met with the Officers of the LCDTU to discuss the merger of our two organisations. Affiliates have been invited to attend an **Extraordinary General Meeting** being held on **Monday, 3rd December 2012, at 6pm-8pm, Room 3, Ground Floor, UNITE the union, UNITE House, 128 Theobald's Road, London, WC1X 8TN.**

Supporters will be kept up to date as discussions progress.

ATTACK ON TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

BY MARK SERWOTKA
GENERAL SECRETARY, PCS

PCS believes that this latest move against support for union members is political.

Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office, chose to use his speech at the Conservative party conference to announce changes to facility time arrangements in the civil service. The national civil service trade unions were not given prior notice of this, and officials were not allowed to complete their talks with the unions as part of a proper consultation.

In his speech the Minister described his office as 'the taxpayer's champion' and attacked 'euphemistically called' facility time which he claimed cost £30 million a year. But he failed to mention the massive

benefits of facility time to organisations and the wider economy, which TUC research, 'The facts about facility time for union reps 2011', shows using the government's own figures are between £3 and £9 for every £1 spent.

The value added to workplaces through trade union representatives carrying out their duties and associated activities in both paid time and their own time has been shown to be significant by numerous studies, including the NatCen Social Research report outlined in summer 2012 edition of United Campaign newsletter, and those conducted by the government itself (Workplace Representatives: A review of their facilities and facility time, BERR 2007).

Support for democratic trade unions as the best vehicle for representing the employee voice brings benefits not just costs to all these stakeholders and the financial cost of facilities allowances is just part of the equation.

The costs figures claimed do not consider benefits nor look at opportunity costs associated with not supporting trade union representatives. Good employee relations are crucial to the effective delivery of services, particularly during periods of change.

It should also be recognised that unions can assist employers in adopting appropriate processes for change and play an essential role in communicating and explaining proposals, as well as

supporting employees through the processes.

Our analysis is that the government's proposals would breach the ACAS code on time for trade union duties and activities, but we also argue that the government should be an exemplary employer, not try to lead a race to the bottom.

The announcement comes as civil service managers are being told to 'review' all terms and conditions, including working hours, annual leave and many other contractual issues, with the aim of 'offering terms and conditions comparable with, but not beyond, what a good, modern employer would provide'. These latest attacks on civil servants are part of a sustained and calculated plan to shift the balance of power even further away from employees to employers, and we will be resisting them robustly.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOM



The United Campaign is financed solely by supporters fees from trade union bodies and individuals. By becoming a supporter you or your organisation show your agreement with the call to repeal the anti-trade union laws, and aid the Campaign's fight. Please make cheques payable to United Campaign, and send to the **United Campaign Secretary, 39 Chalton Street, London, NW1 1JD**. Donations are gratefully received.

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We may contact you with information about the United Campaign