



The

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Open Book

A bulletin by and for University of London workers
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Balfour Beatty involved in blacklisting

A 2009 raid on the office of the “Consulting Association” revealed it had been compiling information on thousands of workers to help construction industry bosses keep their sites free of potential trade union organisers.

As the scale of the blacklisting operation has become clearer, other sordid facts have emerged. The type of information contained in CA files is so detailed that it could only have come from state sources, suggesting state collusion in the blacklist.



Giving evidence to the Scottish Affairs select in March, Balfour Beatty UK Construction Services chief executive Mike Peasland acknowledged the firm had been a “heavy user” of the now defunct CA and its predecessor the Economic League from the seventies onwards, carrying out an average of 15,000 checks a year from 2004 to 2008.

Although some have discovered their own blacklisted status, the vast majority of blacklisted workers are still unaware. Some are now pursuing a legal action, while some councils have taken a stand against blacklisting by committing not to give public contracts to the firms implicated.

The Blacklist Support Group, the national rank-and-file committee of construction activists in Unite, and the rank-and-file construction workers’ bulletin Siteworker have maintained a near-constant campaign of direct action against prominent blacklists, frequently bringing Oxford Street traffic to a standstill to expose blacklist and union-busting on the Crossrail development.

The Open Book is a bulletin produced by and for workers at the University of London, and published by Workers’ Liberty, an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy
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VC’s Blog: more effort needed (C+)

It's tough working part-time, often trying to cram in the workload of a full-time job. That certainly seems



to be the case for our VC, whose promised monthly blog currently boasts one entry, from back in April. We can only applaud his determination to enjoy the 'life-style benefits' that his predecessor Geoffrey Crossick complained were not yielded by the VC's 3-day week.

Besides the need for Sir Adrian to keep his work stress levels down, we should bear in mind that all employees need proper training before being asked to take on new roles and responsibilities. The leaden prose, allusions to the weather and attempts to promote his own 'Bayesian Theory and Applications', contender for the most tedious book of all time, suggests that the VC requires more support in honing his communication skills before being reintroduced to the blogosphere.

What’s going on in Unison?

Certain full-time Unison officials have allegedly been leafleting and posterizing against a rival union in the workplace.

Writers of this bulletin come from different trade unions, including Unison, but we understand that, fundamentally, any union’s role in the workplace is to organise workers to pursue their collective interests against the bosses.

If only these officials spent as much time defending workers and campaigning against BBW and the HR, then we might have made even more progress this year in winning sickpay, holidays and pensions for outsourced staff at the University, and increasing the London Weighting allowance.

Meanwhile, the Unison branch committee is now graced with the presence of a BBW manager. How this squares with the union’s ability to represent all staff at the University regardless of their employer is beyond us.

Summer of Action: latest news!

The University of London Union (ULU), the 3 Cosas Campaign and the University of London branch of the Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) have launched a 'Summer of Action' to step up the pressure on the University to grant sickpay, holidays and pensions to outsourced staff.



So far, students have launched two imaginative publicity stunts in the hallway of Senate House.

The first involved setting up a 'holiday camp', complete with beach balls and diving gear, to highlight disparities in holiday pay between staff.

The latest student stunt involved several activists dressed as the Vice Chancellor Sir Adrian Smith, exhorting students dressed as sick cleaners to scrub the floors, while explaining to conference guests why they did not deserve the same levels of sick pay as directly-employed workers.

The summer of action also saw outsourced workers protesting in solidarity with the Senate House security guards, demanding equality for all staff across the University.

The pressure will continue until victory!

Check out the videos:

Holiday Pay (<http://tinyurl.com/3cosasvideo>)

Sick Pay (<http://tinyurl.com/3cosasvideo1>)

Latest news from the Library

Times are tough in the Library. Unfilled posts, spending cuts on the book budgets, and seemingly no money for essentials such as stationery.

Yet, despite this, management can apparently afford to spend over £25k on Chesterfield sofas to redevelop the area on the 4th floor to make way for a coffee shop.

It doesn't stop there. Thousands more are spent on senior management away days and, not only that, money has been found to pay for a new senior manager with a salary in excess of £50k!

The UK in figures:

£450 billion (wealth of UK's 1000 richest individuals)

£13 billion (bankers' bonuses, 2011-12)

£3.2 million (average salary of FTSE 100 CEO)

500,000 (number of people dependent on food banks, according to Oxfam and Church Action Poverty)

London Weighting Scandal

In 1992, the University of London London Weighting allowance was £2,134 per annum.

Guess what it is now? Unbelievably the same, over 20 years later! Had it risen by RPI, it would have been £3,745 by 2012.

Any member of staff working at the UoL throughout this period will have lost out on around £15k.

Police LW is over £6.5k. In the NHS it's 20% of salary. In the post-92 Universities it's a minimum of £3,773.

Meanwhile housing and transport costs in London have continued to vastly outstrip the rest of the country ... and at the same time the University is able to announce surpluses of £4.5m for the last financial year.

If we're not going to be priced out of our own jobs, we need a new LW settlement - and the University knows it can afford it.

Contact *The Open Book* to find out more about London Weighting, and how you can help win an increase with other readers of this bulletin!

Stop sackings at Liverpool University!

Liverpool University has said it will sack 2,800 workers and rehire them on inferior contracts — or sack them if they refuse

Unions representing Liverpool University workers have described this as a "gun to the head".

The changes involved 52% of staff, from gardeners to managers. The UCU lecturers' union regard the attack as part of the move to make the institution a "business model" rather than an academic institution.

Industrial relations have broken down and management are trying to bully staff into accepting the new terms.

The Section 188 of TULRA notice was handed out this week. Previously, a 90-day collective consultation period would ensue, but the government has changed that, and the consultation will only last 45 days.

At the end of the 45 days, unless an agreement is reached, the university will issue all 2,803 members of staff with redundancy notices. There will then be a 90-day notice period.

When staff are issued with their redundancy notices the staff will also be issued with a new contract, and anyone who doesn't sign will be dismissed.

The local UCU recently had an emergency meeting which was queued out the door. Support has come from local Merseyside trade unions, messages have come from all over the UK and internationally.

More information: <http://tinyurl.com/lpoolucu>