



Courrier de soutien UCU

To the UCU General Secretary, NEC members and victimised UCU officers

Dear comrades

We have learnt that several UCU branch officers have been suspended or even sacked. David Muritu, a math lecturer at Sandwell College and also the local branch secretary of UCU, has been sacked for writing on a poster promoting the controversial Prevent programme. Lee Humber, a Ruskin College UCU branch representative, has been suspended. Last year, David Muritu played a key role in negotiating a pay deal for staff. Lee Humber was suspended after his branch passed a motion of no confidence in the leadership of the College. Before that, UCL UCU Branch Secretary Mr. Tony Brown was subjected to disciplinary sanctions by UCL for carrying out trade union activities. Despite the decision of the London Employment Tribunal that judged that the sanction was in breach with the laws protecting trade union activities and that Tony Brown was penalised for his trade union activities, UCL is pursuing its disciplinary sanctions. It comes after the USS dispute, in which thousands of lecturers joined UCU to fight and defend their pension scheme, against its transformation from a Defined Benefit (DB) Scheme into a Defined Contribution (DC) Scheme. It was the largest strike action in Universities for years.

In our opinion, there is no coincidence in the abusive suspensions and sacking of UCU reps that are involved in the defence of workers' rights at a time where governments and University leaders wants to go further in the marketisation of higher education. There is no coincidence in the attacks against UCU and the fact that UCU and hundreds of branch officers led the USS strike last year, and the fact that the USS dispute is not over and the USS pension scheme is still under attack.

The CGT Ferc Sup expresses its full support and solidarity with UCU and UCU officers that have been sacked or suspended and we ask University leaderships to reinstate those trade union representatives. We completely support the petitions, rallies and demonstrations supported by thousands of people and trade unionists, in defence of those trade unionists.

In France, the trade union movement also faces enormous challenges.

President Macron and its government have arrested more than 10 000 people during the Yellow vests demonstrations, 2000 of them have been badly injured by riot police using rubber bullets and sting-ball grenades causing permanent handicap. They passed a law which will make it easier to arrest demonstrators, based on suspicion of intended violence. Several trade unionists, especially in the education sector in which teachers and trade unions oppose the new reform of Minister Blanquer, have been arrested or victimised. The Blanquer reform includes an article preventing teacher to express any criticisms including outside the school.

These repressive and anti-democratic measures have been passed while, in the mean time, they are facing a huge resistance from the French workers and the population in general while Macron intend to make historical attacks against our rights. They want to transform the 42 existing Defined Benefits public pension schemes into a single Defined Contribution pension scheme which would lower everybody's pension. They also want to promote casualised contracts in the public sector and undermine the role of the trade unions to facilitate the privatisation of our public services.

As we face similar attacks in our countries, the CGT Ferc Sup believes in international solidarity, especially in defence of trade union rights and the implementation and the respect of ILO conventions ratified by the UK: the right to create and join a trade union, the right of the trade unions to represent, negotiate and take industrial action, including strike.

We ask British universities to drop the sanctions and reinstate Tony Brown, David Muritu and Lee Humbert and to respect trade union rights.

In solidarity.

Bureau National CGT FERC Sup, Montreuil
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