

Unsung Heroes

A newsletter for school support staff by Lambeth UNISON

More for potholes than pupils

Tory budget gives nothing to schools

Chancellor Philip Hammond's Budget gave school staff and parents nothing to cheer about.

His patronising language about providing money for the "little extras" was matched by the paltry amount he offered to hard pressed schools: £400 million. Less than the £420 million set aside for filling in potholes in the road.

As one headteacher said, "He has failed to find any new money to restore the £2.8bn of real terms cuts made since 2015."

The average primary school has lost £52,000 in funding per pupil, the average secondary £178,000 from their annual budgets. The Tories are offering just £10,000 for every primary and £45,000 for secondary schools... so austerity is not over; the cuts continue.

Fightback

UNISON is committed to fighting cuts to school budgets. And we know more are on the way.

The teachers' recent pay award was unfunded, which means it can only be paid by making cuts elsewhere.

The NEU teachers' union knows this is wrong so they're balloting for strike action. UNISON supports the teachers and will be uniting with them as best we can.

The national formula for schools funding is yet to be announced—probably next spring. When it is, we expect big cuts to the London region to pay for small increases for schools in Tory-voting areas, like Surrey.

Again we will be working with the teachers' union to prevent this. Also with our affiliation to the

Labour party, we will be fighting for an alternative that puts staff pay and conditions, students' welfare and education, and our collective future first.

As our General Secretary Dave Prentis commented on the Budget, "Our country deserves better than this. After eight years of letting down public services and our communities, we need a radical Labour government committed to fundamental change in our economy and our society."

Join UNISON: www.unison.org.uk/join

Next branch meeting:

22 November 12.30-2pm

Brixton Town Hall, Room B06

All members invited

(ask your head teacher for time off to attend)

Agenda items include: the fight against racism, solidarity with Brazilian trade unionists, health and safety issues

Contact us:

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Akala gives us a history lesson

Tory budget gives nothing to schools

Over 200 Lambeth Unison members crammed into the Assembly Rooms in Brixton Town Hall to hear an array of speakers celebrating Black History Month (BHM) and dedicating themselves to the struggle for full equality in the years to come.

Akala—the hip-hop artist, writer and educator—gave a blistering tour through 2,000 years of Black British History (more if you include allusions to the Cheddar Man!).

Entertaining, educational and inspirational in equal measure, Akala showed he hasn't forgotten his Camden working class roots. And he is available for school visits, as Elmgreen Sixth Form found out.

Other speakers included:

- Ansel Wong, who started Britain's BHM here in Lambeth
- Marc Wadsworth, another local activist who helped get Diane Abbott and other Black MPs elected
- Antonia Bright, who told us about the terrible ordeal of migrant families.

If you would like to get involved in Lambeth Unison's Black Workers Group, please email hmalik@lambeth.gov.uk

Anti-fascist trade unionism

Join the unity demo!

The recent election of self-described fascist Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil has brought home the reality of a rising far right around the world. The coalescing of racist and fascist groupings from the Democratic Football Lads Alliance through to UKIP and the fascists around the 'Free Tommy Robinson' campaign have resulted in far right demonstrations on a scale not seen since the 1930s.

UNISON and the Trades Union Congress are supporting the 'National Unity Demonstration Against Racism and Fascism. Join us!

Saturday 17th November, 12 noon.

Meeting point: Outside BBC,
Great Portland St, Oxford Circus.

- www.tuc.org.uk/events/national-unity-demonstration-against-fascism-and-racism

Thousands strike for equal pay

On 23 and 24 October, over 8,000 council workers in Glasgow, belonging to UNISON and GMB, struck for equal pay. 10,000 people, including both union members and supportive members of the public, took part in a march on City Hall on the first of these two historic days of action.

These workers, the vast majority of them women and first-time strikers, comprised workers in homecare, schools and nurseries, cleaning and catering services across the city.

They decided to strike over the council's failure to negotiate a settlement to more than 12,000 equal pay claims going back to 2006.

Over 600 male refuse workers, street cleaners and road workers took part in unofficial strike action in support of the two-day stoppage, in an incredible display of solidarity.

Pay talks have resumed following the strikes.

More action is expected. Watch this space.

Write for our newsletter! We're looking for workplace queries, stories from the union front line, and articles about wider issues. Send to: krogers@lambeth.gov.uk.