

# THE UNIVERSITY WORKER

*Rank and File Strike Bulletin: Special Issue 13th March*

## What is this?

The University Worker is a rank-and-file bulletin produced by academic workers.

## Help us distribute!

There are 64 picket lines across the country. We want to be on all of them. Download the PDF from [notesfrombelow.org](http://notesfrombelow.org) and print some out.

## Now Seven Universities are Occupied

Student occupations have now spread to Queen Mary, Bath, Exeter, Reading, Dundee, the SLADE school of art and Cambridge. Students won't be leaving until a decent deal is made. At Sussex, daily hard pickets have shut down the main administration building and roving noise demonstrations are now disrupting the functioning of the university by shutting down offices and departments.

Student leverage has to escalate now that the union leadership are trying a sell out. **Shut it down!**



## It's a Sell Out!

UCU and UUK agreed a sell out at ACAS on Monday 12th of March. The deal means that the union leadership has failed to defend the USS pension scheme - instead, they have negotiated to snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory.

On the 13th of March the Higher Education Committee will vote on the deal - it is currently dominated by the right-wing of the union. Rank and file members will have no say.

Although the deal will keep a defined benefit, it comes at a high cost to academic workers. Member contributions will increase by 1.7% (with employers only increasing by 1.3%) meaning we have to accept a pay cut to keep defined benefit.

These increased contributions are only in place for the duration of the 3-year transitional arrangement. In the longer term, there is a 2.5% cap on pensions (and there is no way that inflation will stay that low). This could mean a slower decline, rather than a sudden shift, but the end result will be the same.

The UCU has also decided to "engage in meaningful discussions as soon as possible to explore risk sharing alternatives . . . in particular Collective Defined Contributions (CDC)." We have no idea why the leadership has decided to discuss a further retreat in the future rather

## Liverpool Statement

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Following a meeting today of approximately 100 members Liverpool UCU roundly rejects this offer. Members in our branch and across the country did not join one of the most impressive shows of collective solidarity in the face of restrictive trade union laws for a compromise offer that does not guarantee them decency in retirement. Furthermore members should not be docked pay for taking action in a dispute that originated from the lack of due diligence carried out by universities UK in their actuarial calculations. Liverpool UCU call on all branches to reject this unacceptable offer and demand that UCU ensure a deal is brought about that is commensurate to the sacrifice of their members.

## UCL Statement

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This offer is hugely detrimental - seems like a punishment for going on strike. Our meeting was consulted on even better offers than this one today and rejected them outright - this is a disgraceful and derisory offer. If UCU adopt this it will be the death of the union!

## Student Occupations Statement

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We stand with all staff and branches who chose to express opposition to the deal and urge UCU to reject this deal at the meeting tomorrow. Our staff deserve fair pensions!

than defend our pensions right now.

## Stay Out!

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The sell out deal also agrees to suspend strike action from the end of today, Tuesday 13th. This is a huge mistake. Every day the strike has been growing in strength. New members are joining, universities are grinding to a halt, and the bosses are on the back foot. But at this crucial moment, the leadership have backed off. As a friend said: 'Trade union bureaucrats have got so used to losing, they've forgotten how to win.'

After all that, the UCU leadership have the cheek "to encourage its members to prioritise the rescheduling of teaching in order to minimise the disruption to students." Strikes are meant to be disruptive. If we're not getting paid, we're not rescheduling.

The bureaucrats have said that this sell out 'demonstrates a commitment by both parties to work together and avoid damaging disputes in the future.' The damage in this dispute was done by UUK, and if we're routed now, they might try it again. We've learnt how much power we have in this dispute - the genie is out of the bottle. There is no going back.

**Whatever happens, we need to stay organised. The rank and file have always been the ones with the power to win this dispute, not the UCU.**

## A Rank and File Strategy to Beat the Deal

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1. We need to vote to stay out. **On every picket line, we should hold emergency meetings and vote to stay on strike** past Wednesday regardless of what the HEC/ leadership decide. **We're not going back to work for this worthless deal.** This means starting a wildcat strike - but what other option do we have?
2. Anyone in/around London needs to get to **UCU HQ @ Carlow St., Camden, NW1 7LH at 10am** for a demonstration against the sell out. The bureaucrats need to feel us breathing down their necks.
3. We need everyone to sign the **'Open letter rejecting the UCU/UUK agreement at ACAS'** here:

<http://tiny.cc/ucureject>