TRAD Unions Campaign

Protect the right to strike

Tackling the government’s onslaught against the trade unions is a movement-wide priority, and the NEC agreed it was vital to get NUJ members fully engaged in campaigning to force the government to rethink the plans outlined in its trade union bill.

The draft legislation and associated guidelines will impact on NUJ members’ ability to organise effective strike action. The proposals include allowing employers to bring in agency workers to break strike action, onerous restrictions on picketing and new rules for industrial action ballots. The government is also consulting on making it compulsory for unions to submit what they are planning to write on Facebook, Twitter and on blogs during a strike and provide the details two weeks in advance to employers, the police and regulators. If unions breach this rule – almost impossible to comply with in reality – they could be hit with fines of up to £20,000 for each failure to comply. The plans also include forcing unions to appoint picket line supervisors who must wear armbands and carry letters of authorisation to be presented to anyone who asks to see them. If unions fail to meet these checks they could be taken to court. The government are trying to push these changes through parliament without proper scrutiny and consultation. If it becomes law the NUJ and other unions believe it will fundamentally undermine workers’ ability to organise together to protect jobs, wages, pensions and conditions at work.

Have your say on the Trade Union Bill

The Trade Union Coordinating Group (TUCG) has organised a public meeting in parliament on Tuesday 13 October.

The meeting starts at 6pm in committee room 10 and will discuss the fight against the government’s trade union bill. Speakers include NUJ general secretary Michelle Stanistreet, Mark Serwotka PCS general secretary, Matt Wrack FBU general secretary, John McDonnell MP, Ian Lavery MP, Caroline Lucas MP and Hannah Bardell MP. All welcome.

The parliamentary public bill committee has announced a public consultation on the bill. The committee is interested to hear from trade union members and you can submit your views in writing. The committee is expected to hold its first oral evidence session on Tuesday 13 October and the deadline for written evidence is Tuesday 5 October. Please write to the committee by emailing scrutiny@parliament.uk and copy your submission to campaigns@nuj.org.uk

More details about the committee consultation is available online: http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2015/september/have-your-say-on-the-trade-union-bill/

Contact your MP

Members of parliament will soon get to debate the trade union bill again in the House of Commons. The debate provides a crucial opportunity for all NUJ members to voice opposition to the proposed legislation. If you’ve not already been in touch and made your feelings clear, use the TUC’s Going to Work website to contact your local MP today:
https://secure.goingtowork.org.uk/page/speakout/will-your-mp-protect-the-right-to-strike

Birmingham – public meeting

Tuesday 22 September at 7pm
Church Room, Carr’s Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX
More details and download the poster:
https://www.tuc.org.uk/node/123446

Manchester – national demonstration

Sunday 4 October, assembly 12.00 and rally 1pm.
The TUC has called a national demonstration against the government’s austerity agenda and attacks on trade unions. The Federation of Entertainment Unions has organised its own bus, setting off from St Pancras at 7.15am, arriving in Manchester for 11.30, and returning at 5pm. To book your place on the FBU coach email: campaigns@nuj.org.uk

More details available on the TUC website:
https://www.tuc.org.uk/NotoAusterity

London – lobby of parliament

Monday 2 November, details to be confirmed.
The NUJ is looking for members who live in Conservative constituencies to take part in the campaign - if you have a Tory MP and you’re willing to attend the lobby of parliament please email: campaigns@nuj.org.uk
Challenging future for BBC

Fighting to protect our public service broadcaster in the wake of yet another dodgy licence fee settlement and the start of a Charter Renewal process in which its commercial and political enemies are circling was agreed as a key priority by the union’s leadership.

A whole range of campaign ideas were then agreed by BBC reps from across the corporation. We will be working with other unions and organisations to make the case for a properly funded BBC that protects its founding principles to inform, educate and entertain, standing up for quality content, and opposing creeping privatisation.

You still have time to tell the BBC Trust and government consultations what you think of the BBC’s charter renewal plan. We also want NUJ branches and chapels to hold local events and meetings to raise awareness of our Love it or Lose it campaign, that we’re running alongside the Federation of Entertainment unions.

The flat-cash deal struck by director general Tony Hall lumbers the BBC with financing and managing the provision of free licences to the over-75s, a welfare benefit. The NUJ believes the deal, which will lead to more savage cuts to staff and resources, runs contrary to the obligations in the charter and initiated a judicial review process to secure further information from the BBC.

Meanwhile the cuts in the current settlement continue. Members at the Asian Network went on strike last month to protest over the relocation of more work from Birmingham to London. The NEC gave the general secretary contingency authority to call national strike action at the BBC to protect individuals whose jobs are at risk — the moratorium on compulsory redundancies runs until October.
NUJ PayDay summit

All members will be sent a short pay survey in the next few weeks before a national reps meeting on Saturday 31 October to discuss pay rates, equal pay, performance pay, unpaid internships and shift rates - all key issues across the NUJ's entire membership.

The union wants to take a more co-ordinated approach to pay and will bring reps together to discuss common themes, showcase successful campaign tactics, provide practical advice on pay claims and tips on securing a good deal. If you want to register a branch or chapel delegate to attend, email: campaigns@nuj.org.uk

Trinity Mirror and Newsquest keep cutting

Trinity Mirror journalists are worried about the introduction of new ‘click-bait’ targets. The company wants to introduce individual targets for website hits at the same time as cutting more jobs in Birmingham, Coventry, Scotland and Wales.

Newsquest has also announced a huge cull of staff photographers at its titles in York, Bradford and Darlington. Managers want the cuts imposed before the end of September. Earlier this year, the company laid off staff photographers in Oxford, Bournemouth and Brighton. In Scotland, Newsquest is seeking a third round of job cuts in one year and threatening more restructuring of its editorial departments.

As part of the on-going Local News Matters campaign, the union will continue to publicise the cuts, campaign against them, raise concerns about their impact on quality journalism and win support from cross-party politicians and local communities. Following concerns raised by the NUJ about the future of quality journalism at Media Wales (Trinity Mirror), all four parties in the Welsh Assembly have pledged their support for the union’s campaign.

Chapels push on at Johnston Press

Staff at Johnston Press’s Belfast Newsletter have accepted a 2% pay increase – subject to further negotiations and agreement with the union.

A new house agreement has been given the go-ahead at JP in Scotland after six months of negotiations and the deal includes staff working in digital, news, community and features. The changes also introduce a revamped pay grading structure and salary increases.
Delegate meeting next year

The NUJ’s policy, objectives and campaigning priorities are decided at the NUJ conference – the delegate meeting (DM).

The union’s DM 2016 will take place in Southport next year, with sector conferences on Thursday 14 April, followed by the start of conference the next morning until it finishes on Sunday 17 April. Nomination packs for DM-elected bodies will be distributed this month and nomination packs for the national executive, industrial councils and other councils will be sent out in October.

Information on how to register delegates for DM will be issued in January and branches are advised to consider potential DM delegate nominations prior to their January meetings.

Dates for DM 2016
- Close of motions nominations 23 November 2015
- Preliminary agenda 14 December 2015
- Close of amendments, confirmation and DM statements 15 February 2016
- Final agenda and annual report 7 March 2016

NEC elections
Nominations for the national executive council (NEC) should be sent to the general secretary not less than 17 weeks before the delegate meeting (DM 2016).

For more information about the union’s democracy, delegate meeting and elections visit the dedicated website pages.

Strength in numbers

The union continues to recruit an average of 183 new members per month and every day 10 people chose to join the NUJ online via the union’s website application process.

Recruitment remains a top priority for the NEC and across all industrial areas. The freelance sector is now the biggest area of NUJ membership and freelances represents more than 30% of all union members. Getting more members organised and working together makes a huge difference in our industrial campaigns. If you know someone who hasn’t yet joined, do your bit and recruit them today.

New members can apply online today: www.nuj.org.uk/join

Refurbishment given go-ahead

Fifteen years after the union moved to its current headquarters, Headland House, the NEC has endorsed a project to renovate the building.

The work will include essential repairs and updating all office floors, bringing back into operation a currently disused basement to create a flexible space for training, exhibitions, events and union meetings alongside a café-bar on the ground floor that will also be open to the public. The plan, which will result in a building that is significantly increased in value with higher rental yields for the floors sub-let to tenants, will be self-financed by the funds transferred to reserves as part of the recovery plan. The NEC authorised the general secretary to take the next steps in the project by initiating a tender process with building contractors.

Healthy balance for NUJ accounts

The union’s financial position shows continuing sustained progress and the management accounts presented to the NEC showed that in eight months of the current financial year the union has achieved a surplus of £679,000.

By the end of the financial year (September 2015) the union’s net assets will be £2 million accrued in two years. The union’s NEC and finance committee have maintained a determined focus on the union’s financial stability since DM 2012 with the aim to ensure the challenges were tackled head on so that the NUJ can thrive as an independent and campaigning union. The budget for 2015/16 presented to the NEC by the general secretary continued that process and was unanimously endorsed.

NUJ Informed is published after each National Executive Council meeting to keep chapel and branch reps informed of key decisions of the union’s elected NEC.

Any questions or comments can be emailed to campaigns@nuj.org.uk