

Tory attacks on the union must be resisted

A hundred thousand PCS members have now signed up to Direct Debit and the battle continues to get every member signed over to direct debit in the face of withdrawal of check-off, writes David Semple (DWP Group Executive Committee and Kent Branch Secretary, personal capacity)

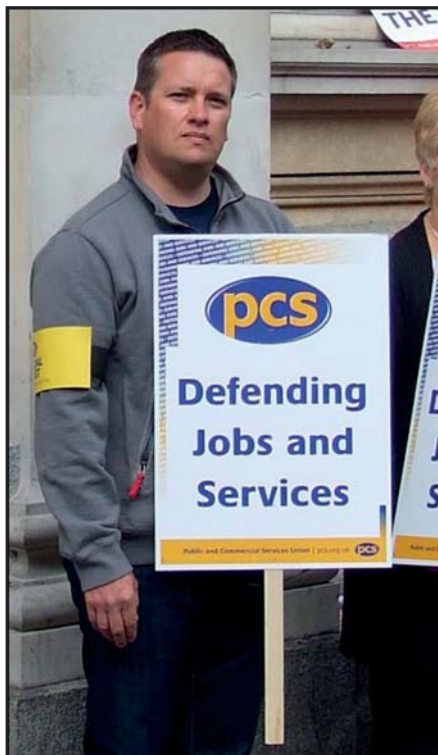
This is a tremendous response to the Tory attacks aimed at destroying PCS but is still

under 50% of the total union membership. Virtually all groups of the union are in de-recognition territory with just weeks to go in HMRC and DWP groups, our largest sections. The financial blow to the union by this attack from the pro-austerity coalition will be huge and it is in this context that the NEC has taken hard financial decisions, including suspending the 2015 group and national elections.

Working with General Secretary Mark Serwotka and Assistant General Secretary Chris Baugh, the NEC has put in place a three year plan designed to get the union back on an even keel without sacrificing the union's campaign priorities.

Our campaign work has secured concessions in the face of an overwhelming assault from the coalition government's austerity programme, including preventing the privatisation of Land Registry, securing more funds for Kew Gardens, winning extra staff in the Passport Agency, getting temporary staff made permanent in HMRC and fighting sustained targeted action in DWP and at the National Gallery.

Members and activists are rejecting the accusation the NEC is acting undemocratically by suspending elections. This is clearly a matter of survival and the NEC acted to protect the union against the union busting measures of the Tory government.



GET THE SOCIALIST



Subscribe now!
socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe
020 8988 8777

text 0776 1818 206
@Socialist_party
/CWISocialistParty

Vote Trade Unionists and Socialists against Cuts

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was set up in 2010 by the Socialist Party, Bob Crow, the RMT and other socialist groups. Its aim is to stand candidates who are pledged to vote against austerity in the council chamber or in parliament. In the 2014 General Election, TUSC is aiming to stand 1,000 council candidates and is guaranteed to stand 100 parliamentary candidates. We would like all trade union members – particularly PCS members – to think about standing!

Every time a Labour councillor thinks about voting against the cuts, they wind up being suspended from the Labour group on their council. This has happened in Southampton, in Hull, in Leicester, in Warrington and elsewhere. If these councillors maintain their principled stand against the cuts, they are expelled from Labour, whose leadership will tolerate no effective opposition to their Tory-lite policies of “kinder” cuts.

Equally, the Green Party, which purports to stand against the austerity policies of the mainstream parties, has voted through cuts where they have led the council in Brighton. Green Party MP Caroline Lucas actually visited the pickets of GMB workers on strike against Green Party councillors making cuts. Now the Green Party want to raise the council tax to pay for what they claim is a “no cuts” budgets. This is after passing measures to privatise social care in the city.



www.tusc.org.uk

PCS members need a political alternative to austerity. The silence which has greeted TUSC has been deafening. The BBC and mainstream media have deliberately ignored TUSC candidates when it comes to the televised debates proposed between the leaders of the main parties. TUSC candidates rarely if ever are asked to contribute to articles about the cuts. This is despite members of the national executives of the RMT, the Prison Officers Association, the NUT and PCS, elected by thousands of union members, standing as candidates under the TUSC banner.

The referendum debate in Scotland, and the pressure of potentially facing the SNP and the Green Party in a political debate has already forced the Labour Party to make concessions to those opposed to austerity. For example, Ed Miliband has

proposed a crackdown on the use of tax havens. Miliband fears having his pro-cuts agenda exposed in words, in a TV debate. What concessions might the working class win if Miliband had to have his pro-cuts agenda exposed in deeds, by those willing to propose anti-austerity measures in Parliament or in council chambers?

For this reason, the Socialist Party rejects the view that standing independent anti-cuts candidates will harm the anti-austerity cause. Whoever forms a government, the working class will be called on to fight against the cuts. Independent working class candidates can play a big role in that fight, uniting anti-cuts campaigners fighting against library closures, children’s centre cuts and shortages of adult social care with the unions, fighting for the terms and conditions of their workforce.

Fight UKIP!

“More Tory than the Tories”, UKIP promotes anti-immigrant feeling and division whilst wanting to carry out even more cuts in public spending. Some argue that standing TUSC candidates in the same seats where UKIP have a chance of winning risks splitting the anti-UKIP vote.

TUSC rejects this argument. UKIP are attracting disaffected Labour voters and many people who are revolted by the political Establishment of which Labour is a part.

Whether it’s the cover up by Thatcher of child abuse in the highest echelons of the

Establishment or the failure to oppose cuts and disgraceful abuses by Labour MPs, the so-called representatives of the working class, of parliamentary expenses, plenty of people simply will not bring themselves to vote for the mainstream parties.

TUSC aims to offer them an alternative who they can vote for. UKIP are seen as a vote against the Establishment. Their anti-union, anti-working class, ultra-capitalist politics are ignored by Labour and the Tories, in favour of a simplistic “immigration, good or bad?” debate.





Donate to fund the fightback!
socialistparty.org.uk/donate
020 8988 8777
 text 0776 1818 206 @Socialist_party /CWISocialistParty

Union busting is disgusting - Defend PCS

Francis Maude, Tory Cabinet Office minister, has had PCS in his sights because our union has advocated joint coordinated action across the public sector to defeat austerity, led the way in proposing economic alternatives to austerity and highlighting the devastating impact Tory cuts would have on the ability of HMRC to collect tax from the richest, or on DWP to support benefits claimants back into employment.

All reps have had their facility time cut, with many reps carrying out union work in their own time. NEC members have been particularly targeted by these vicious attacks.

This approach has recently been replicated in HMRC, where a leaked management document has demonstrated an intent to

frustrate any kind of negotiations and break the ability of PCS to represent our members.

Meanwhile, withdrawal of the check-off method of paying our subs through our salary is a clear and present danger to the survival of the union. In some of the biggest groups of the union, such as HMRC, management has refused permission for reps to use facility time when it comes to signing members over to Direct Debit.

Rightly, the NEC has urged branches to contact their local trade union councils and other unions to get support in resisting these attacks, and to enlist their help in getting PCS members signed over to Direct Debit. This must be priority number one; without the resources provided by members' subs, there can be none of the



collective campaigns which win victories for PCS members.

Left Unity has been at the forefront of getting PCS DD ready. The Socialist Party urges all branches to unite in solidarity to defeat this attack do everything they can to get 100% of their membership signed across to Direct Debit, re-recruiting every single member of the union and laying the basis for a major fight-back against a union busting employer.

Instead, we must organise workers to fight for the "rate for the job" and prevent capitalist exploitation of any worker, immigrant or otherwise.

Rather than pandering to Labour candidates like Will Scobie in Thanet South, who is running against Nigel Farage, and who will vote for exactly the sort of cuts that have left a majority of people disaffected with our political

system, we need a genuine alternative. This alternative could be TUSC.

The Socialist Party calls on PCS members to consider standing under the TUSC banner, and mobilise the rank and file to get out and campaign for these candidates, particularly where there are local issues to take up, such as the closure of child care centres in some civil service offices.



nationalshopstewardsnetwork
www.shopstewards.net

Get your latest trade union news with the National Shop Stewards Network bulletin.

Sign up at: lists.riseup.net/www/subscribe/shopstewardsnet

Come to the NSSN conference: Saturday 4 July, Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL. Put the date in your diary now!

NSSN Conference speakers include: Mark Serwotka

Greece: Socialist policies needed, not deals with the Troika!

After 30 General Strikes, and countless occupations, work-ins and demonstrations, the Greek working class anxiously hoped to win some respite from the austerity imposed by the Greek government and the capitalist class, with the victory of Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) in the Greek General Election. This ended a pro-austerity coalition between the Greek equivalents of the Tories and Labour (New Democracy and PASOK).

A blizzard of announcements followed the election, including promises to restore the minimum wage to €750 and re-employ 10,000 sacked civil servants. Regaining their job were former civil servants fired under the "evaluation" procedure, which was created by New Democracy as an annual test that would ensure regular sackings of up to 15% of the workforce. This procedure was abolished. Also re-employed were 600 cleaners from the government ministries and 2,700 staff from the Greek state broadcaster ERT. Through these measures, Syriza set course for a clash with the Troika (the European Central Bank, the EU Commission and the International Monetary Fund) – the holders of £320bn in Greek debt, who demand austerity so they can be repaid.

Troika pressure

Within weeks of taking power, Syriza began backing the process of backing

down, due to pressure from the Troika. The halting of privatisation in Piraeus port became merely a delay, while the matter was "reviewed". SYRIZA is not a revolutionary party, prepared, with the support of the Greek masses, to overthrow capitalism. They want to work within it. Their only hope is that the European ruling class wants to avoid a Greek exit from the Euro and the financial calamity this would cause.

The EU governments, however, want to make no concessions. Any concessions justify working class resistance across Europe, such as in Spain, where anti-austerity Podemos, a party founded a year ago, is riding high in the polls.

Governments across Europe want to make Greece pay, as a lesson to their own working class, that resistance is hopeless. This is true of Ireland in particular, where Socialist Party MPs have led mass opposition to austerity in the form of a non-payment campaign aimed against new taxes on water.

Greek workers themselves have not been silent. On 13th February, a demonstration of 100,000 took to the streets of Athens to demonstrate support for the Syriza approach of publicly refusing to meet the terms the Troika has set for repayment of the debt, which involve more austerity measures, more job losses and more pain for ordinary Greek workers. Tens of thousands also took to the streets of Salonika and other Greek cities.

Syriza retreat?

Initial demands that a portion of the debt be cancelled have now gone by the wayside following a "deal" with the Troika. In order to have their loan extended for four months, while a more substantive deal is negotiated, Syriza have agreed to Troika oversight of any measures they take



while in government and have promised to honour the whole debt. This was met with riots in Athens.


Between 70-80% of the population supported the government in their clash with the EU. There is huge potential for mass mobilisation, from below, of workers and youth to resist the Troika, and for this to be organised democratically in the workplaces, communities, schools and colleges. The government should now hold a referendum, posing default on the debt, exit from the Euro and the implementation of a pro-worker socialist programme as the alternative to continued compliance with the Troika.

Build solidarity with the Greek working class!

The Socialist Party calls on PCS branches to make links with Greek trade unionists, and where possible to participate in the demonstrations outside Greek embassies in support of the anti-austerity position taken by Syriza, with the support of and under the pressure of the Greek working class. Anti-austerity measures need to be at the forefront of our political and industrial campaigning as a union. The situation in Greece makes clear that we can fight austerity through strikes and resistance in the workplace – but we need to raise the banner of a political alternative to austerity as well!



Subscribe now!
socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe
020 8988 8777
text 0776 1818 206
@Socialist_party
/CWISocialistParty



Socialism TODAY
The Socialist Party's magazine
The February issue includes:
● **Britain's tipping point election**
● **Are the Greens an alternative?**
£2.50 including postage:
Socialism Today PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD.
Subscribe for £18 a year at www.socialismtoday.org