

PCS conference

PREPARE FOR UNITED ACTION ON 30 JUNE

Cuts can be stopped

John McNally, national vice-president of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), explains, in a personal capacity, some of the main issues facing delegates to this year's conference.

All delegates are focused on the national executive committee's (NEC) emergency motion, debated at branch mandating meetings, which sets out a strategy capable of defeating the cuts.

PCS will step up its campaign to defend jobs, pensions, pay, conditions and services on all fronts, including legal, publicity, parliamentary, anti-cuts alliance building. We will be arguing for the PCS Alternative based on tax justice, job creation and investment.

All this is vital work but the brutal reality is that if we are to defeat the cuts programme, defend the public sector and members' interests then we must build for widespread, coordinated industrial action. That is the view of the NEC and is likely to be overwhelmingly endorsed by delegates.

PCS has argued that the TUC should coordinate joint action against the cuts but we cannot hold on until other unions decide to ballot; to do so would mean leaving cuts in jobs, conditions and services

that are happening now unchallenged. The proposed strike with education unions on 30 June is not intended to be a one-off; protest action alone will not stop the cuts. Thursday 30 June must be the start of an unfolding campaign that will see other unions joining the battle as their members demand industrial action to defend their own jobs and conditions.

As part of building unity in action Len McCluskey, the recently elected general secretary of Unite will address the conference. PCS is also trying hard to build unity with Unison, whose members face the same problems as PCS members.

Almost a million public sector workers could be on strike on 30 June. The day will involve rallies and demonstrations; PCS is asking the TUC to coordinate such events in every town and city, and other activity, linking the strike to the wider battle in our communities against the cuts.

But first we have to win the debate at conference and then go on to



Part of the PCS contingent on the massive 26 March demo photo Senan

campaign as never before to win the biggest possible majority for action.

This government is attempting to finish the work Thatcher and New

Labour started but they are weak and increasingly divided. By autumn the cuts will be biting even more deeply. PCS will continue to

work to ensure that by then many millions of workers will be involved in the type of action capable of stopping the coalition in its tracks.

What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialist change – a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also fight, in our day-to-day campaigning, for every possible improvement for working-class people.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a democratic, socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

Work and income

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state

retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstating the link with average earnings now.

- Reject 'Welfare to Work'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

Public services

- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.
- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies!
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs – free at the point of use and under

democratic control. Kick out private contractors!

- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

Environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly-owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

Rights

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

New workers' party

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party!

Socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Iraq and Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neo-liberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!