

# FOR A SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP IN PCS AND A FIGHTING, DEMOCRATIC UNION!

PCS Annual Delegate Conference (ADC), the first for two years, convenes on 13th June in a new digital format that has provoked outrage.

Conference is traditionally the democratic centre of the union, where branches hold the NEC to account for their actions and where the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) is expected to stand up for the right of branches to be heard.

This year, for the first time in PCS history, branches do not have ownership of the Conference agenda. This has been determined in advance by the NEC Left Unity majority with the full support of the Left Unity-dominated Standing Orders Committee, acting as their guard dog:

- branches restricted to four motions, three on pre-ordained topics picked by the NEC
- branches given no chance to democratically overrule the SOC decisions on which motions will be heard
- emergency motions banned by the NEC, meaning that developing situations such as the Israeli military intervention in the Palestinian Territories are missing from the Conference paper.

Despite its stage managed character ADC is as important this year as it ever has been. The last year has seen catastrophic decisions by the current leadership of the union.

Their letter to the Cabinet Office, which threw out our 10% pay claim and substituting a petition on pay for a national campaign. Their refusal to provide steadfast advice to keep members safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, offloading this responsibility on

## FIGHT THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY FREEZE CAMPAIGN FOR COORDINATED ACTION BY PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS



**Socialist Party PCS and Unison  
Conferences fringe meeting  
Including speaker Marion Lloyd -  
Outgoing NEC and BEIS president  
All welcome  
Sunday 13 June 6pm  
Zoom ID 87928854998  
Passcode 739407**

to the shoulders of brave individual members and reps.

Total abdication of responsibility and leadership, in the hope that by appearing moderate and reasonable, the Tories would deal fairly with them.

“It’s too risky to ballot!” for action they said at the outset of the pandemic. A decision they were forced to reverse when their trust in the Tories not to force people back into the offices was proved mistaken.

“Including pensions as part of the union’s national campaign weakens the focus of our pay campaign”, reps were told at ADC 2019, only for the NEC, in the dying days of the 2021 electoral year, to decide yes, pensions must be included in the campaign.

“Digital meetings should be mandatory!” was the cry that rang out at the NEC. This is the intention behind their motion A9 on the future of the union. Oppose this motion. A10 is much better.

The NEC cannot hide all of their craven antics, however, like the decision not to support Black Lives Matter demonstrations or demonstrations over the murder of Sarah Everard.

We called for the union’s members to be mobilised, by encouraging those who felt they could demonstrate safely to attend, while also offering avenues to protest at home. This was voted down. PCS members attended these demonstrations in droves, the only difference was that there were no trade union banners, around which to unite workers.

Socialist Party members have steadfastly opposed the leadership of the union and their track record of posing on social media but otherwise sitting on their laurels. We have not been alone, fighting alongside independent socialists in the Broad Left Network (BLN) and those attached to no faction in PCS.

The most recent elections saw the number of socialists on the NEC reduced with BLN members going from four to one, and the number of socialists on executive committees in DWP and HMRC also thinned down a little. Far from discouraged however, we will continue to hold the NEC and the other executive committees to account and will continue to demand bold action to win for members.

Ensuring that Conference 2021 adopts a fighting programme, and repudiates the tired rhetoric of the NEC, concealing as it does their lack of a plan, is the first step in building that fight back.

**To all delegates, solidarity! The fight to reclaim our union continues.**

# RE-BUILDING THE LEFT IN PCS

Rebuilding the left in PCS is a necessity. The current union leadership whilst nominally on the left fails the test of what is expected of a left leadership.

We expect a left leadership to shift power and accountability into the hands of elected lay reps. In reality what we have seen is a concentration of power to the centre and into the hands of the (mostly unelected) bureaucracy.

Meanwhile long-standing conference policy to extend election of officials is ignored.

This year's stage managed conference is an affront to the union's democratic traditions. The old CPSA right wing would love it.

We expect a left campaigning leadership to mobilise the collective strength of our union to take on the Tories over pay and Covid-19.

Instead they stepped down the 2020 pay claim as a national unity gesture expecting the Tories would reward them for their "constructive approach". In fact the Tories reimposed pay limits. PCS responded with a petition.

The 2020 pay campaign collapsed and Mark Serwotka told the Cabinet Office in advance of 2021 pay negotiations that pay deals could be done by exchanging conditions for pay.

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## "VIRTUAL UNION...?"

The use of Zoom and related technologies were shown to have benefits during the pandemic - eg meetings held which might not otherwise have been possible.

But to what extent do we want to become a "virtual union" and are we happy with the amount of control it gives to the union bureaucracy.

These issues should have been central to the discussions at this year's virtual conference. Instead the National Executive Committee and a supine SOC has given us a stage managed conference. Motions which pose questions awkward for the leadership have been buried.

We know where the leadership want to go. They sent out a questionnaire to Branches and Groups. The first question asked how many physical meetings are required - the presumption being that virtual meetings will become the norm.

This is one hugely important reason for opposing motion A9 from the NEC which instructs the NEC to "Promote the use of virtual meetings....." This will give them a free hand to turn us into a virtual union.

Conference must oppose A9. A far better motion on the future of the union is motion A10.

At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic the Left Unity leadership actually issued this advice to members. "This Briefing provides general information about statutory rights which are available to all employees. We are not advising you to do, or refrain from doing anything."

A reversal of this approach was forced on them by DVLA management's scandalous disregard for our members and finally and far too late a strike ballot was called - a form of action which for months the leadership had said was not possible and had refused to organise.

These are not the actions of a left leadership and Left Unity as a supposedly rank and file group has long ceased to act as a check on this leadership.

The Broad Left Network in the period ahead will seek to rebuild the left in PCS based on activists who want to fight and around a programme to transform the union.

A start has been made in this year's national and group elections. A bigger challenge to Left Unity and their control would have been possible if the Independent Left had accepted our suggestion of working together. We regret their decision not to do so. But the serious and urgent task of rebuilding the left in PCS will not stop.

### ***PCS Broad Left Network***

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Buried by the SOC in positions on the agenda that make them unlikely to be heard are two motions that do address the issues of technology and how they should be used.

Motion A23 instructs the NEC to make available to branches IT and email records to enable branches to maintain contact with their members. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of this demand. Support A23.

Motion A65 lays down the democratic requirements for any virtual conference in future- in the event this is necessary. In essence it provides for Branch and delegate democratic safeguards and control. If debated support A65.

We can use these technologies to benefit us but we will lose the soul and control of our union if we allow it to become a "virtual union" - just faces on screens.

# WE NEED A FIGHTING POLITICAL STRATEGY

Socialist Party members reject the view that PCS should be apolitical or politically neutral.

We need a political strategy that can reinforce our aims as a trade union to use our bargaining power to protect and promote the interests of members and to campaign for social and economic change in the interest of working people and their families.

We believe the NEC decision for PCS to call for support for all Labour candidates in England and Wales was a serious error of judgment. It ignored the mandate given by ADC and the membership ballot by giving support to right wingers who had undermined Corbyn's leadership and who were not sympathetic to PCS policies.

Blanket approval and support to Labour looks even more indefensible with the replacement of Corbyn by Starmer and Labour's clear move to the right.

The NEC motion to this ADC on political strategy (A38) can be supported as it calls for a review and report to 2022 Conference. The review should include:-

- published procedures for branches to discuss and agree with the NEC support for parliamentary candidates worthy of PCS support.

- details of the PCS parliamentary group and publish the names.
- Westminster parliamentary group work to be directed by the NEC and a relevant sub-committee.
- work of parliamentary groups in devolved areas to be directed by the Nation Committees
- work in the regions with MPs and political activities in line with ADC policy to be directed by the appropriate regional committee.
- regular reports of political activities to be given to the NEC, Nation and Regional Committees and published to members.
- should we support candidates in Devolved, Mayoral and Council elections

The starting point for any review must be current policy which is to give PCS elected bodies the right to propose support for those candidates who support the union's position on fighting against austerity, in respect of jobs, services and pay and pensions.

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## C-19 TORIES PRIORITISE BUSINESS OVER LIVES

The evidence of Dominic Cummings to the Parliamentary Select Committees is an indictment of Johnson and the Tories handling of the Covid-19 pandemic:-

- Cummings said he was "baffled as to why No 10 is trying to deny herd immunity was the plan"
- Cummings said Johnson regretted his first lockdown decision saying 'I should have been the Mayor of Jaws and kept the beaches open'

The Daily Mail carried a claim about Johnson saying "No more f - - ing lockdowns let the bodies pile high in their thousands"

These revelations matter. They reveal a tragedy of thousands of C-19 deaths due to Tory incompetence and Johnson prioritising business over lives.

These revelations matter for us in government employment. It wasn't just senior management incompetence and/or complacency that caused the DVLA Covid outbreak. Staff crowded into this huge office complex was and is a direct result of the Tory 'business as usual' policy. A continuation of which led to a recent breakdown in talks to end the dispute.

As we enter a new phase of the pandemic - with it's many variants - our safety must drive the union agenda. We already know where the Tories stand - 'open and be damned'.

PCS must use it's collective strength to make sure work is carried out where it is safest - which for the foreseeable future will still be working from home and in made safe workplaces where we accept this is unavoidable.

## Join the Socialists

To read more about what we stand for and to join up with Socialist Party members in PCS

visit [socialistparty.org.uk/join](https://socialistparty.org.uk/join) or call 020 8988 8777

Text your name and postcode to 07761818 206

 Socialist Party in PCS

**TUSC  
AGAINST  
CUTS**

The Socialist Party is part of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, an anti-cuts electoral alliance with the RMT and others

# BLM - NEED FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

The brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police a year ago sparked a phenomenal worldwide anti-racist movement in 2020.

Waves of courageous protesters poured onto the streets to make their voices heard in a sea of human solidarity –just as they have done more recently in opposition to the Israeli state terror against the Palestinians.

Shamefully the PCS National Executive refused to give support to the BLM demonstrations despite the Covid -19 safety precautions which were put in place.

The BLM protests demanded justice for those murdered by police or in prison in the US - but also in Britain.

The need for fundamental change in the running of society is increasingly recognised. Grenfell, Windrush, the treatment of refugees, institutional racism, austerity, inequality, low pay, and of course Covid-19, show how capitalism's inequality has made BAME people vulnerable.

The Socialist Party is fighting to build a mass movement that can smash racism and the class inequality that together press on the necks of all sections of the working class.

The Socialist Party builds on the conclusion of Malcolm X and the Black Panthers: "You can't have capitalism without racism". What does that mean for building the Black Lives Matter movement?

It means building a mass united movement of working-class people with anti-racism at its heart; that fights for workplace safety and PPE for all who need it; for fighting trade unions; for free education; for democratic working class control of the police and for a decent future for all.

It means building a new mass party of workers because we can't trust the capitalist politicians with our lives and our future.

It means fighting for the alternative to capitalism – socialism. Capitalism is outmoded. It can't offer us a future.

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# FIRE AND REHIRE

It has long been clear that the Tories and the bosses want to make us pay for the cost of the C-19 pandemic.

Their attacks will take many forms. One of these is 'fire and rehire' - workers who resist cuts to pay and conditions are sacked and re-employed on new (inferior) contracts.

In the early stage of the pandemic aviation workers were faced by BA with a choice of voluntarily accepting new contract conditions or having them imposed.

British Gas workers too were faced with this choice. They chose to fight. After 43 days of strike action hundreds of British Gas workers were sacked. An outcome which could have been prevented had they not been left isolated.

It's not just big (private) business either. One of the earliest examples of 'fire and rehire' was the Labour Council of Tower Hamlets which forced UNISON members to take action last summer.

PCS members at Tate Gallery faced over 300 redundancies last September. It was noted at the same time management were advertising zero-hour contract vacancies.

Homes England, the public body that funds new affordable housing are threatening to fire and rehire PCS members on worse contracts.

Victories have been won. For example the Manchester bus workers, who after 85 days of strike action put a stop to Go North West.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that a challenge to 'fire and hire' will require serious action of an all-out indefinite character.

The trade union movement has to recognise this and coordinate action to defeat the Tories and the bosses - make it clear we will not give up our pay and conditions - we will not pay for the crisis.

**SOCIALISTS ARE ORGANISING AND FIGHTING FOR CHANGE!  
JOIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY!**

Throughout the pandemic, workers have had to battle for health and safety measures against the bosses' drive for profit. Britain's billionaires have got even richer. Capitalism is failing to provide a future with decent jobs and homes for all. We need a socialist transformation of society. Instead of handouts to the bosses, we call for the major firms and banks that dominate the economy to be brought into democratic public ownership. Production and services could then be planned by workers to meet the needs of all. That's why we fight for socialist change - so the wealth can benefit us all not just the super-rich!

**[socialistparty.org.uk](http://socialistparty.org.uk)**