

## Going backwards

The best-off 1% of the British population take home a greater share of national income than at any time since directly after the First World War; real wages have been slashed; and Cameron's business adviser declares low wages to be a business opportunity. **Britain is disgustingly unequal and going socially backwards.**

This woeful inequality is reflected in all important social measurements: the more unequal a society the greater its social ills such as mental illness, low life expectancy, low levels of social trust, lower and more unequal levels of educational attainment, social mobility.

### Suffering sooner and dying younger

A government commissioned independent review reported in February 2010: "... **people living in the poorest [English] neighbourhoods, will, on average, die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods...the average difference in disability free life expectancy is 17 years...people in poorer areas not only die sooner, but they will also spend more of their shorter lives with a disability...excluding the poorest five per cent and the richest five per cent the gap in life expectancy between low and high income is six years, and in disability-free life expectancy 13 years.**" Yet things have got worse since 2010 and are no better elsewhere in the UK.

### Divide and rule

The Tories and their junior partners have transformed a crisis of capital into a crisis of public expenditure; are using the cover to privatise the NHS, our schools and other services and to dismantle or run down what remains; finger people on benefits as lazy when most are in work and most of the remainder would like to work; and set employed working class people against unemployed working people. **And they play the same divide and rule game with public sector and private sector workers.** Yet PCS activists know that the true divide in Britain is between the "Have Nots" and the "Have Yachts" and their political underlings.

The big question is "what can we do?" Debating equality yesterday and social and economic issues today is ultimately only of benefit if we map out **and act on** policies which will make a material difference to the lives of our members and working people. To that end PCS should lead the fight for a visible, vibrant labour movement campaign to reverse the decades of growing inequality. The PCS Independent Left (IL) has long argued that a clarion call for equality has the potential to unite public and private sector workers, employed and unemployed and can be reflected in policies both for the wider working class (for example crash house building, positive trade union rights, nationalisation of banks, a national system of publicly funded crèches and childcare) and more narrowly for our members in their workplaces. Such a policy would help cut against the nationalist scaremongering of groups like UKIP and the overt fascism of the BNP.



The IL believes that PCS needs a coherent, national, NEC led Equality Action Programme that is actively pursued and which:

- Connects the issues in our workplaces to wider society;
- Makes links with other unions, campaigning groups, sympathetic academics, and Labour MPs who wish to see a decisive break with the clapped out policies of New Labour;
- Moves beyond calls for tax justice and seeks a wider and fundamental restructuring of society in the interests of working class people;
- Fights on issues such as draconian ill-health policies and sick leave trigger points, discriminatory PRP, and attempts to re-introduce UK mobility obligations where they have been abolished;
- Spreads best practice, ensures the equality checking of all personnel policies, robustly and legally challenges management failings.

PCS already has the policies such a programme of action because Conference adopted them in recent years – often when moved by PCS IL members. Unfortunately the NEC has just not given priority to making social equality, and therefore genuine equality of opportunity, central to PCS’ work. Join the PCS IL and work with us to place the fight for equality at the heart of PCS’ work.

Join the PCS IL: Minimum subscription £2pcm or £24pa. Please complete & return this form to PCS IL, 15 Routemaster Close, London, E13 0BE.

TO: (NAME OF BANK).....

FULL ADDRESS OF BANK.....

SORT CODE.....

BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER.....

TITLE OF ACCOUNT.....

PLEASE MAKE PAYMENTS DETAILED BELOW AND DEBIT MY ACCOUNT

SIGNED.....DATE.....

**BANK: CO-OPERATIVE BANK PLC**

**BRANCH: P.O.BOX 250, DELF HOUSE,SOUTHWAY,SKELMERSDALE,WN8 6WT**

**SORT CODE: 08-92-99**

**ACCOUNT NUMBER: 65231937**

**ACCOUNT TO BE CREDITED: THE CAMPAIGN FUND**

Please debit the amount of £\_\_\_\_\_ on the first day of month with the first payment commencing on \_\_\_\_\_