

## The type of Union we need

We must ask ourselves the question – what sort of union do we want? The answer for us is clear; a trade union championing membership interests, run by members, and employing elected officials who are in touch with members and who are not lifted to a lifestyle out of kilter with a large part of the membership by the fact of trade union employment. It cannot be right that the General Secretary earns four times that of the average member in a union that professes 'the alternative'.

This policy is not an optional extra for us and “voluntary donations” are not a substitute – the union needs a wage policy reflecting its philosophy, not a guilt trip on individuals’ sense of conscience (and if you look at the annual accounts you will see that virtually nothing is donated back by the most senior officials).

PCS Independent Left believe that every step that increases membership control over the union must be fought for. So we must continue to insist that full time officers should be elected by the members and paid a wage that is no more than the average skilled workers’ wage and certainly more in line with that received by members if we wish to increase rank and file control of our union.

**Fringe meeting – Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 6:00 pm**

How do we start winning?

Old Ship Hotel, Regency Suite, Kings Rd., BN1 1NR  
(turn left out of Conference centre – along the seafront)

Come along and join the discussion. All welcome.

Speakers: Pat Murphy, NUT Executive. Pat has been a key organiser of the NUT Local Association National Action Campaign (LANAC)  
Christine Hulme, IL Presidential candidate  
Rhys Martin, PCS Independent Socialists  
Plus speaker from Civil Service Rank and File Network (invited)

At last, there will be a debate at national conference on the issue of Full Time Officer pay. See Motion A69. Last year the Standing Orders committee blocked a motion on the subject on what looked like spurious legal advice. The NEC opposed the last attempt at conference by IL supporters to push the union into adopting a policy long held by our 'left' leadership. It will be very interesting to see what the response will be from them this year. Of course there is always the alliance with the PCS Democrats as a useful fig leaf if it's needed! However, much is made of the fact that the 'left' lead the union and they have done so now for over 10 years. It is time that words are turned into deeds.

Another essential ingredient in building a fighting union is election of the employed officials that organise and negotiate. The motion we supported on this has been X marked -see X347- on the basis that it is 'unclear in intent'. We disagree and will try to reference back in the usual way.

The Left Unity 'version' - A53- may not be heard due its place on the agenda. If debated we would support this on the grounds that it is a step forward. However, in our view, any moves to further democratise our Union should not be decoupled from the issue of pay. Officials elected but paid way in excess of most members is preferable to the current situation but we would go further. The time to deal with this is now.

We will continue to raise and fight for these policies in the same way that the current left leaders did when the right wing were in power. We will do so in order to combat the threat that is posed by bureaucracy to our movement.

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