

PCS INDEPENDENT LEFT

Annual Delegate Conference
2010

FRIDAY 21 MAY 2010

National Pay – Where Is It?!

If anything shows how badly the campaign for national pay has been handled over the past six or seven years, it is motion A109 from the NEC. Whilst the motion talks of a national pay campaign it is quite obvious that, as in 2009, the fight for cost of living pay awards has been passed back to the branches and Groups. The NEC will “coordinate” the Groups if **they** wish to take action but those “local” actions cannot, by definition, result in a movement to national pay arrangements or lead to any national agreement concerning Treasury pay remits. After years of running the Union the current NEC is not one step closer to national pay, has not succeeded in reducing the number of Bargaining Units (BUs), and has not put one penny extra of pay into members’ pockets.

The 2008 National Pay Debacle

We are where we are on national pay because of the NEC’s mishandling of the issue for many years. Conference will recall that the NEC called off the 2008 national pay campaign claiming:

- “A breakthrough” when there was no such thing;
- A “national agreement” when there was not a single employer document that suggested they were offering a pay agreement or delivering on any one of the NEC’s six national pay demands;
- Extra funding for pay from “efficiency savings”, the NEC’s claim being “...**now there is access to new money from these [efficiency] savings, which could amount to many millions of pounds**”, when a child could have spotted that Gus O’Donnell was offering no such thing.

The end result was not a penny extra on the table in 2008 or 2009 and below inflation awards for many members in both years. We are now heading for the same in 2010. In the meanwhile civil service pay arrangements remain scarred by all the same old evils.

The NEC Should Come Clean

The 2008 “national pay agreement” was always spin designed to justify calling off the national campaign, as the NEC lost confidence in its ability to wage a successful campaign. Now no NEC can guarantee victory and only demagogues would demand one, but claiming a breakthrough when there is no such thing miseducates, disorients, and disillusiones representatives and members. The NEC should now come clean on how badly it handled the 2008 campaign – a campaign that was launched without proper preparation, without a clear strategy, and after years of hyperbolic claims of being on the verge of a breakthrough, “talking” up the talks.

Nobody will easily put right what the current PCS leadership has put wrong on national pay. Nevertheless serious activists recognise that BU specific action cannot deliver national outcomes. National pay, equal pay, proper pay progression and an end to low pay and discriminatory Performance Related Pay, can only be won for all members by a united national membership campaigning as one body. At some point the NEC must devise a coherent national strategy that is persuasive to members and enables PCS to punch its national weight, supplementing national action with paid selective action, delivering imaginative political campaigning, and legal challenges within a coherent national legal strategy.

Campaign for Free travel!

Motion A120 calls for a campaign for free travel – an idea that the labour movement should take up afresh. School children and students enjoy concessionary travel in many areas. Currently those aged 60 and over enjoy free local bus travel. In some places they have the right of free travel on local rail and underground/ metro systems. Well over 15 million people are eligible for free and concessionary travel. That right should be extended to all, greatly reducing green house gas emissions and the cost of living for many workers. Free transport will also enable working class and lower middle class families to obtain more of the leisure and cultural benefits to be derived from travelling within Britain.

Of course some will argue that the idea is utopian, especially in the current economic climate. However a national health service free at the point of use was once seen as impractical and/or wrong and still is in America. We need to show the same ambition and belief as our labour movement ancestors and create an integrated, modern, free, transport system. Social provision is always utopian to those with wealth and power and always will be unless the Labour movement fights for it.

After all, the ConDem Government will find huge sums for Trident replacement whilst moving against universal benefits on cost grounds. Indeed we think the Con-Dem government will attack existing free transport s well, either by means testing it or raising the age at which older people become eligible. Passing this motion means that we can join any campaign against such moves to reduce and/or restrict free bus travel. The motion therefore looks to the future but also defends what we have now.

Motion A129 - Human Rights in the Workplace!

In many parts of the civil service and the private sector, trade unionists cannot hold a meeting in the workplace to discuss lawful strike action; management restrict the right of the union to circulate material amongst members and they restrict the right to recruit non members. No doubt the ConDem government will seek to restrict our rights as trade unionists even further as they “up” the pace of cuts in jobs and services. It is a fundamental right for workers to recruit, organise, and strike. Those rights are in large part being denied to us at present. Motion A129 seeks to address that.

Guillotine

If A120 and A129 prove to be too far down the order of motions to be heard, please consider submitting requests to the standing orders committee to have them moved into the guillotine section.

How to Join PCS INDEPENDENT LEFT

If you want a positive voice for members, creative solutions to the critical issues facing us, and honest accounting not spin, You should join the **Independent Left** – a socialist voice for members in the Union. To find out more simply fill in this form and give it to an IL rep or send to:

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