

PCS INDEPENDENT LEFT

DWP Group Conference
2011

DWP CONFERENCE BULLETIN - MONDAY 16 MAY 2011

Welcome to Conference

The Independent Left hopes delegates have a good conference. Conference is the place where grass roots activists should be able to tell our leaders what we want them to do for the coming year. You should vote the way members told you to at your mandating meeting, but if you are not mandated as you can't be on emergency motions, you should be free to vote how you wish without any interference from anyone outside your branch, whatever posts they hold.

Start the Fight Against the Cuts

Conference will start with a debate about the cuts. This is the major challenge for PCS over the coming year. In motion A1 Left Unity branches instruct the GEC to "continue" with its campaign on the issue. The Independent Left considers that continuing with the present campaign is nowhere near enough.

The GEC is instructed to continue to fight job cuts, yet except for a couple of individual branch industrial action submissions, nothing has been done to protect FTA members or insist on permanent recruitment in the Group. AAs jobs cannot continue to be protected, when we did not get the guarantees we needed for AA members in CCD. We cannot continue to campaign against privatization when members are told to get involved in TUPE exercises and branches are told that we should not even have members meetings when members are worried for their jobs.

The campaign cannot continue at this stage because it has never really got off the ground. However we can ensure it starts from today. The GEC has been ridiculously cautious and afraid that it cannot secure members' support for industrial action, yet even after a 16 month delay at the start of the CCD dispute, support was solid across the offices involved. Members are ahead of the GEC in their wish to fight for our jobs and our living standards.

We now have to build the fight in the Group. The CCD dispute must be escalated as a matter of urgency. Branches and regions must be encouraged to build local staffing disputes and we must move to Group wide action as soon as possible. Privatisation has to be actively opposed. Guarantees from the employer are meaningless and the union should encourage the questioning of management's plans, not reassure members that there is nothing to worry about.

Visit our website www.pcsindependentleft.co.uk

Strategy Needed on Welfare Reform

The GEC needs to build a political strategy to deal with the government's plans. We need to oppose attacks on claimants and encourage members to deal with people fairly. The GEC must have detailed negotiations with management to ensure that jobs and terms and conditions are maintained and that members consider the union is protecting them. At the moment secret negotiations are conducted by unelected Trade Union Sides. Members have many questions but the GEC does not consider they are entitled to any answers. If we are to oppose the worst excesses of the government's plans it is now time to have effective and open negotiations with the employer and to take serious industrial action where required.

Reps Need Basic Support

It is difficult to imagine how the GEC can achieve anything if it cannot even negotiate reasonable time off for our reps. The system in place in the Group allows some national officials to avoid doing any official work while reps in branches struggle to get the time they need. It must be possible to negotiate a better system of allocation which will save time and resources for both sides. If the GEC has to allocate time to branches, rather than regions coming to agreements, it should be done fairly and without political bias. Conference last year made clear that reps oppose the use of RM to record time but the GEC has done nothing to progress the issue. Even at this late stage, last years motion should be implemented.

Pilot Schemes Affect Us All

Management use pilot schemes to try out practices which are then rolled out across the Group. For the last year the GEC has ignored warnings about the Jobcentreplus Delegated Flexibilities Pilot, allowing unelected TU Sides to deal with it or not at national level. The result is that it will now come in everywhere. Work is being downgraded and the GEC is doing nothing to challenge it. We must now stand up for member's rights to receive the correct rate for the job, issue proper guidance to make sure members don't work out of grade and ballot for industrial action if appropriate. One region eventually managed to negotiate away the worst elements of a work trials pilot but only after members had been discriminated against due to a lack of support at national level. In future the GEC must agree a proper consultation framework for pilot schemes, which does not leave branches isolated to deal with issues which we know will eventually affect us all.

Who Are The Independent Left?

The Independent Left is a grouping of independent socialists. We believe the union can only properly represent members if we build strong branches and regions rather than dictate from the top. We believe in open debate in our organisation and in the union. If you would like to find out more, see any of our members with these leaflets, or come to our meeting tonight.

How Would We Run the Union? How Would We Run Welfare?

Monday 16th May 2011

6pm – 8pm

Friends Meeting House, Ship Street
(turn left out of conference, then third left)

Speakers from DWP Reps and London Coalition Against Poverty