

THE DRIVE TO WORSEN OUR PAY, TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Francis Maude promises to get rid of “poor performers” in the civil service by introducing ‘private-sector-style ranking of workers by ability’. Ideological loons call for the civil service to be cut by 70-90% and outsource “policy advice”- predictably rejected by more rational people who are no friends of PCS. The unvarnished fact, however, is that Ministers and Mandarins are behind a central and determined drive to cut real pay way beyond the pay freeze and the 1% policy (“regional pay”); to worsen non pay terms and conditions and make it easier to dismiss staff. This reality is at the heart of lead motions A131 and A132 on the Personnel Policy Agenda.

The drive to cuts T&Cs also casts a light on a critical aspect of Motion A133, which notes that some departments still do not have a domestic violence policy (and for those who do it is largely a “paper policy”): it is increasingly difficult to get senior management to focus on progressive employment policies as opposed to more punitive policies.

The establishment of “Civil Service Employee Policy” is an attempt to cut HR staff across the civil service by delivering pretty much common terms and conditions whilst maintaining the increasingly hollow, divide and rule, pretence of delegation. CSEP policies reflect minimum legal requirements (Additional Paternity Leave) rather than a commitment to develop best practice and are reactionary in nature, exemplified by its PMR policy. The equality consideration, if the PMR example is anything to by, is risible.

The centrally issued “guideline distribution” figures for box markings is an attempt to make performance ratings across the civil service fit to a curve. Whatever Departmental management teams or the Cabinet Office claim, they want to drive down assessments and ensure that every year a certain percentage of people “fail”, in a world where the bar is set to move higher every year, and to make this easier they have designed a PMR system even less transparent than those we already have.

As well as de-motivating and demoralising staff, this does nothing to address the existing and outrageous problems of discriminatory outcomes with lower ratings being allocated to Black and Minority Ethnic staff, the over 50s, disabled colleagues and those in the lower grades – increasing the prospect of them being disproportionately forced out as a result of sacking and redundancy.

CSEP is the joined up thinking of ministers and mandarins. PCS also needs to be joined up. Groups will need to work together with the NEC to oppose centrally driven, detrimental, changes and the introduction of reactionary procedures. The NEC needs to show a great deal more leadership in coordinating groups; in providing timely, legally supported, critiques of CSEP policy; in shaping CSEP’ priorities – they ought to be challenged to introduce best practice policies on issues such as domestic violence. The fight to defend and improve terms and conditions has to be tied to a PCS Programme for Equality. **Support A132, A132 AND A133** for the widest possible campaign.

Full time officer pay: What sort of union movement do we want?

Buried at the back of what should be by now your dog-eared conference booklet you will find motion C345, dealing with full time officer pay and because Conference has discussed the issue within the last two years. Leaving aside that the issue was discussed more than two years ago, 19th May 2010, we will return to the issue at next year's conference. The critical point is this: **should PCS pay salaries way in excess of what even the highest paid PCS members earn – in fact higher than the salaries paid to over 99% of full time civil servants?** Should PCS pay a salary which is 400% of the salary earned by 128,220 civil servants as at March 2009? The PCS leadership would once have said "No!" But not since their election some ten years ago!

A policy long held by the left in PCS and predecessor unions - that full time officers should be elected and paid wages linked to that of members – has seemingly been abandoned. We must ask ourselves the question - what sort of union movement so we want? The *Independent Left* wants 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 some wonderful lifestyle by the fact of trade union employment. This policy is not an optional extra 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). We believe that every step that increases membership control over the union must be fought for. So we will continue to insist that full time officers should be elected by the members and paid a wage that is more in line with that received by members.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PCS INDEPENDENT LEFT?

Tired of the same old spin and same old strategy of Left Unity leaders? Want a union that persists with the same old stale tactics or one that brings in new and innovative ideas? Then join *PCS Independent Left* – a new socialist voice for members in the Union. To find out more simply fill in this form and send to:

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