



PCS INDEPENDENT LEFT

For a fighting, democratic union

ADC Bulletin 2025

Wednesday

The union democracy we need, for the union we want

The Independent Left want to change how the union is run, not just the people at the top. This has been reflected in our slogan *"For a fighting, rank-and-file controlled union"*, as long as the IL has existed. If PCS is to survive and thrive it must be genuinely democratic, drawing on members and reps' knowledge to build the campaigns that can meet all our contemporary challenges.

Extending democracy within PCS is a crucial part of why we exist. We believe a more democratic union, which holds its leaders accountable, helps make us more than the sum of our parts as reps and activists more effectively than one with detached and unaccountable leaders and FTOs.

When the Coalition for Change won the NEC elections in 2024, of which IL was a part, but did not win the Presidency (retained by Martin Cavanagh of Left Unity), the union was thrust into a constitutional crisis. Papers were put to the NEC by the General Secretary and legitimate alternative motions to deliver what we were elected to do (our democratic mandate!) were regularly ruled out of order by the President. Amendments to papers proposed by the General Secretary would also be ruled out of order; the message was often 'take it or leave it'.

Most acutely this arose regarding the levy and the National Campaign,

an issue where IL and others wanted to make amendments to the levy that was in place ahead of building a sustainable alternative to it, but were prevented from doing so, and where discussion of a campaign of action against the coming cuts was blocked. **Why was this possible?** The rules as they stand:

- Require the NEC to have a two-thirds majority to overturn the procedural decisions of the President regarding the NEC like ruling a motion out of order;
- Allow the President unilateral power to rule on anything where *he deems the PCS rulebook is silent, whether it is or isn't*;
- Enable the President to simply refuse to let the NEC to carry out business from its first meeting if it doesn't have a 2/3 majority to pass new Standing Orders

This sounds both egregiously anti-democratic and mind-bogglingly convoluted because it is! Motions A16, A17 and A18 seek to change this potential for abuse of power going forward, regardless of who whole the presidency or the NEC. **All delegates who believe in a democratic, fighting union should support!**

ADC 2024 passed Motion A87 and instructed the NEC to review the current approach to branch ADC entitlement. The reason was clear, at present delegate entitlement broadly follows a linear path of an additional

delegate per 500 members until a branch has over 1500 members, where its delegate entitlement per 500 members halves, with branches only gaining an additional delegate per 1000 members.

Motion A87 had been brought to conference by HMRC branches most negatively affected by this rule. Their branches had been merged due to office closures and the result for their branches was they were able to send fewer people to conference, unfairly and completely arbitrarily. In the IL, we listen when legitimate concerns are raised when it comes to union rank-and-file democracy and so A13 this year seeks to right this wrong, while also tackling the issue of branches who do not send anyone to conference at present.

The motion also requires the NEC to develop and implement a strategy to improve ADC attendance for those that send zero delegates. It notes the rulebook allows branches to work together and send a consortium of delegates, so it includes the possibility to encourage branches with a single rep or advocate to work with more organised branches to encourage those potential attendees, as well as providing better, more comprehensive training opportunities for them.

Motion A13 seeks to tackle two lingering wrongs of conference underrepresentation, so delegates should support it wholeheartedly!

Motions to look out for

The PCS Independent Left recommends voting to **support** or **oppose**

A12, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22, A23, A24, A25, A26, A27, A28, A29, A30, A31, A32, A33, A34, A35, A36, A37, A38, A39, A40, A41, A42, A43, A44, A45, A46, A47, A48, A49, A50, A51, A52, A53, A54, A55, A56, A57, A58, A59, A60, A61, A62, A63, A64, A65, A66, A67, A68, A69, A70, A71, A72, A73, A74, A75, A76

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PCS Independent Left



Stand with Ukrainian workers, reject A30

It is deeply regrettable that the NEC decided by a slim majority to endorse motion A30, which draws the same false moral equivalence between the invading Russian imperialists and the embattled Ukrainian defenders that has been made by Donald Trump and forces PCS to explicitly campaign to 'end arms to Ukraine'.

The arms being sent have been called for by all Ukrainian trade unions, including our sister union, the State Employees' Union of Ukraine. **Like all occupied and oppressed people, Ukrainians have the right to call for the materials they need to resist imperialist occupation from wherever they can get it.** This is a sentiment rightly shared by former PCS General Secretary Mark Serworkta, whose video on the question can be viewed on the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign X/ Twitter feed.

It is such a truism, it shouldn't even need stating: If arms to

Ukraine were to be stopped, Ukraine would lose and Russia would win, but before then, the lack of air defence capability, entirely supplied by the west, would result in massively more civilian casualties at the hands of increasing Russian bombardment, by drones, ballistic and cruise missiles, and air strikes.

The Ukrainian people are the only ones who can decide what a just peace settlement looks like, and will need our solidarity long after the end of the war in securing a just reconstruction and a better future. Not Trump and his attempt to extort/ extract Ukraine's natural resources or Putin, the imperialist aggressor. **A30 fails to once mention the sole agency of the Ukrainian people or the role of, or assistance to, the Ukrainian workers' movement.**

If we pass this motion, it will send a very dangerous message to our members, give a (however pyrrhic) propaganda victory to the grinding Russian war effort and will represent a complete betrayal of our Ukrainian comrades. **Who are we to try and prevent the very thing Ukrainians are telling us they need?**

We urge delegates to vote against A30 and reference back E194 to make it A-marked, which explicitly mentions the Ukrainian workers movement, and to support any emergency motion in the vein of E194.



Championing equality at the heart of PCS

At this year's ADC, the PCS Independent Left reaffirm our unwavering commitment to placing equality at the core of everything we do. In a time of growing division and hostility, we must stand united in our fight for justice, dignity, and inclusion for all members.

Standing with Transgender and Non-Binary Members

We are deeply concerned by the Supreme Court judgment narrowing the legal definition of "woman." This ruling undermines the rights and recognition of our trans and non-binary members. The IL believes our union must:

- Campaign vigorously against this judgment, defending the rights of all members to self-identify
- Support motions and emergency motions at ADC that empower

our leadership to advocate for trans rights both within PCS and across society

- Ensure our union is a safe, inclusive space where all gender identities are respected and celebrated

Confronting the Far Right and Racism

The rise of the far right poses a direct threat to PCS members and the communities we serve. Their agenda of racism, scapegoating, and violence must be met with firm resistance. We call on PCS to:

- Work in solidarity with other unions to oppose racism
- Advance anti-racist policies that challenge scapegoating and protect our communities
- Educate and mobilise members to recognise and resist far-right narratives in the workplace and beyond

Embedding Equality in Every Campaign

PCS must lead by example, embedding equality into every campaign and workplace initiative. Our national equality programme must:

- Spread best practices and ensure all personnel policies are equality-checked and legally compliant
- Address systemic inequalities, including the overrepresentation of ethnic minority, disabled, and lower-grade members in personal cases
- End the multi-tier workforce, which leaves newer, often younger staff on inferior terms
- Champion flexible working, giving all members the right to choose where they work based on their wellbeing and personal commitments

