

26 May 2023

Conference calls for repeal of anti-unions laws

PCS conference gave full support to workers taking strike action against their employers and called for anti-union laws to be repealed.

Motion A79 said that the cost-of-living crisis, fire and rehire tactics and other attacks by employers in pursuit of maintaining profits at our expense, all mean workers are uniting to fight back. Many of these disputes are seeing workers win significant gains.

Ryan from BEIS Cardiff branch moved the motion yesterday (25) and said: “We have suffered 13 years of attacks from a hard-right Tory government, attacks on our terms and conditions and job cuts. This Tory government’s policies have hurt people throughout the UK and directly targeted the most vulnerable and tried to thwart any active opposition.

“The trade union movement is the voice of the working class. Unfortunately, a raft of anti-union laws hangs over the trade union movement like a sword of Damocles.”

The motion pledged to continue to give our solidarity, building practical support for all striking workers.

A79 called for the repeal of all Tory anti-union legislation, from Thatcher, Major, Cameron and Johnson to the present day and instructed the NEC to take the lead in organising campaigns and opposition to this attack on our rights.

Rob from DSg North West branch said: “Let’s organise and fight against the anti-trade union laws.”

Paul Williams spoke on behalf of the NEC and said the Tories need to stop hiding behind anti-union laws and settle our disputes.

“We must do everything we can and campaign in every arena to coordinate an industrial response. We must start to mobilise the rest of the unions,” he said.

Motion A80, which was debated alongside A79, described how the restrictions upon free trade unionism in Britain are not only anti-democratic, they are weapons in the hands of employers to further undermine workers' ability to fight for more rights, better terms and conditions of employment, and a greater share of the wealth of this grotesquely unequal society. Unions, shackled by hostile legislation, are left to fight the mounting challenges of low pay, precarious conditions of employment and lack of rights with our arms tied behind our backs.

The motion, moved by Tim from Government Legal branch, described how the government's minimum services legislation was a grotesque attempt by a "government seeking to once and for all cripple trade unions" by shackling them.

"We must promote trade unions as the bastion of people power and democracy," he said.

Bev Laidlaw spoke on behalf of the NEC and said: "We must ensure that we fight for our rights and we need all unions to come together. Get involved and fight for your rights."

A80 instructed the NEC to campaign clearly and actively for the complete and speedy repeal of all anti-union laws, for strong legal rights.

Both motions were carried unanimously.

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