

# BROADSIDE

Left Unity

## The Socialist group within PCS Revenue & Customs Group

April 2016

Throughout the last few years we have witnessed successive governments mount a sustained attack on public service workers and their trade unions. In particular, those of us working in HMRC appear to be at the forefront of these attacks since HMRC made the decision to close all of its 170 offices across the country to replace them with 13 regional centres and 4 specialist sites.

The HMRC cuts and office closures are not just a risky attempt to reduce costs to prop up the austerity agenda. What lies at their heart is the profound belief of this Tory government that the state is too large and that the "burden" of taxation should be reduced to a minimum; hence no need for an efficient and well managed taxation authority.

HMRCs disgraceful decision to dismiss over 150 staff by way of compulsory redundancy whilst at the same time running a major recruitment exercise gives us a clear indication of the employers utter contempt for their staff and indicates the lengths that they're prepared to go to, whatever the cost, to drive through their programme of devastating jobs cuts and office closures. This is despite the fact that proper consultation has not been carried out and redundancy avoidance measures have not been properly applied. The employer has argued that work cannot be transferred to the offices facing closure, however we know that to be untrue as they have no problem doing it when it suits them.

The **Left Unity** led Revenue & Customs (R&C) GEC has continued to fully support those members facing dismissal whilst we prepare to launch a legal challenge in the battle to save their jobs. These members will also of course be at the centre of our wider political and industrial campaign against HMRC's job cuts and office closure programme, which the employer erroneously claims to be "Building Our Future".

The **Left Unity** led GEC launched the campaign on 1<sup>st</sup> March at the largest parliamentary event PCS has ever organised. This was followed up days later by events and briefings in Edinburgh, Belfast & Cardiff. PCS Members from across the country led by our Group President, Lorna Merry have been assiduous in ensuring that parliamentarians at Westminster and across the devolved UK administrations have been comprehensively briefed on the department's plans and our alternative. This has led to our campaign against HMRCs plans receiving backing from a range of influential voices and has ensured that they come under the direct scrutiny of HMRCs policy from parliamentary select committees.

**Left Unity** fully supports the GECs programme and the demands made on HMRC for:

- A moratorium on proceeding with the closure programme to allow for public and parliamentary scrutiny of management's plans; including a case by-case re-examination of all current planned closures and a full copy of the business case produced by management
- A guarantee of 'no compulsory redundancies', including a re-examination of the present planned redundancies
- An assurance of no further privatisation; an important demand considering that the brigading of offices and functions has frequently been used as a stepping stone to privatisation
- An assurance of 'no compulsory relocations'; and strict adherence to all existing agreed criteria for relocations.

If the government's intention is to dismantle the welfare state and purposely disable its ability to collect tax, then we clearly have a common cause to make with the UK public who will suffer the results of the cuts to services. Our priorities now are to resist the attack on the UK tax system posed by HMRCs dangerous job cuts and office closures programme.

Of course it comes as no surprise that the government is simultaneously planning on cutting the level of compensation offered through the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. They clearly intend on slashing thousands of jobs and want to do it at the cheapest possible price. Your Left Unity led GEC have been working with the National Executive Committee to launch the 'PCS Against the cuts to redundancy pay' campaign in a bid to prevent these changes before it's too late

PCS has been singled out for special attention due to its role in organising the resistance to the Tories austerity agenda & exposing their lies inside and outside parliament. In turn, PCS within HMRC has been targeted by the employer with a co-ordinated attempt to bust your union; by withdrawing facilities from union representatives, attacking the union's funds through the withdrawal of check-off.

It is a tribute to PCS members and the leadership shown by the **Left Unity** led GEC that the employer's plans have failed and have been dispatched to the dustbin of history. HMRC have been forced to concede that their attempt to break PCS was a major error.

PCS remains the trade union that represents the vast majority of the workforce in HMRC. The past two years have effectively seen a battle as to who genuinely represents the interests of HMRC workers. The employer has been out fought and out thought at every turn. PCS has signed up more than 85% of its members to pay subscriptions by direct debit, whilst HMRCs senior leaders continue to clock record negative ratings in the civil service people survey.

Despite the hostile environment that we continue to operate in, we're proud to say that reps from many branches across the country have already started building a response to these attacks and have pledged their support in working together with the GEC to be ready to use all of the tools at our disposal to help protect our members. To build on this and to ensure that our campaign has the best possible chance of success, the **Left Unity** led GEC has organised a national meeting which will bring together representatives from every branch in the country prior to the PCS R&C Group conference on 23<sup>rd</sup> May. Our aim is to ensure that meticulous preparations and comprehensive consultation is carried out so that when action is called, it will be effective and decisive.

The task ahead must not be underestimated, there are no easy options. That is why there has been no serious or rational alternative posed to the **Left Unity** led GEC's campaign plans.

The PCS Revenue & Customs group gave critical early support to the campaign for Tax Justice. **Left Unity** has been at the forefront of arguing for Tax Justice and building the political consensus necessary to make the collection of tax a key mainstream demand.

**Left Unity** leaders have built important links with allies inside and outside parliament who will assist in arguing in support of our campaign against HMRCs job cuts and office closures programme.

It is essential that as the fight intensifies the leadership elected to the GEC is one that will stand up for members and defend our hard won terms & conditions.

*If you are reading this and are not already a member of Left Unity, join us. For further information about PCS Left Unity please contact the secretary at: [randclu@gmail.com](mailto:randclu@gmail.com) Visit us on our Facebook site "Revenue and Customs Left Unity Group", or contact any member of the Steering Committee. Also at: <https://rcleftunity.wordpress.com> Membership forms for both National and R&C Group Left Unity can be downloaded from the website or are available by contacting the Secretary.*



**Vote to defend jobs, pay, terms and conditions in HMRC.  
Vote for an executive committee that will fight back against HMRCs location strategy plans.**

**PLEASE VOTE FOR THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES IN THE GEC ELECTIONS**

<b>PRESIDENT</b>			
Lorna Merry			
<b>DEPUTY PRESIDENT</b>			
Hector Wesley			
<b>TREASURER</b>			
Hamish Drummond			
<b>DEPUTY GROUP SECRETARY</b>			
John Davidson			
<b>ASSISTANT GROUP SECETARIES</b>			
Clive Bryant	John Davidson	Barney Lawn	Mark Leopard
Marianne Owens	Gordon Rowntree	Colette Smith	John Smith
<b>GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b>			
Chris Barclay	Laura Bee	Mark Benjamin	Tracy Boyce
Mark Emmerson	Carol Gerard	Dave Hansford	Clara Harmer
Lynn Ion	Amjad Ismail	Lorna Kennedy	Leon Kilbourn
Andy Lord	Margo McCabe	Kevin McHugh	Alex Morgan
Martin Page	Alan Runswick	Bobby Young	



**VOTE FOR DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE**

**Vote to defend jobs, pay, terms and conditions in HMRC.**

**Vote for an executive committee that will fight back against HMRCs location strategy plans.**

**PLEASE VOTE FOR THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES IN THE NEC ELECTIONS**

**PRESIDENT**

**GODRICH Janice**

**VICE-PRESIDENTS**

**BROWN Paula**

**GEDLING Cheryl**

**McHugh Kevin**

**McINALLY John**

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**ALBERT Ian**

**HALL Sam**

**MERRY Lorna**

**BAKER Mark**

**HAVEN Elenor**

**MORRISON Chris**

**BRYANT Clive**

**HEATHCOTE Fran**

**OWENS Marianne**

**CAVANAGH Martin**

**HOLBOURNE Zita**

**PAILLARD Clara**

**CRANE Harvey**

**JAMIESON John**

**POPE Ian**

**DENNIS Alan**

**LEOPARD Mark**

**RODER Alison**

**DOUGLAS Richard**

**LICENSE Neil**

**UDWIN Candy**

**DUNNE Lawrence**

**LLOYD Marion**

**WATTS Karen**

**FERGUSON Mary**

**McFADDEN Dominic**

**WESLEY Hector**

**GREEN Jackie**

**MAGUIRE John**

**WILLIAMS Paul**