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SocialistAppeal

PCS CONFERENCE SPECIAL

PCS Left sweeps to victory!

Confirming the volcanic shift taking place in the British trade unions, the left have won a stunning victory in the elections for the leadership of the civil service union PCS. This is an amazing result. What a turn around!

The joint Left Unity/PCS Democrats list for the NEC overwhelmingly defeated the rightwing 'Moderate/Independent' slate. The political balance on the new NEC is Left Unity 25, PCS Democrats 9, Inland Revenue Members First 5, and Moderates 4. The previous balance on the NEC was: Moderates 24, Left Unity 13, IR Membership First 7, and others 2. This clearly shows the tremendous shift to the left following the victory of Mark Sewotka as general secretary.

Left Unity member Janice Godrich was re-elected as President in the first ever-straight

fight for that position, with a decisive 23,000 to 15,000 majority over her rightwing opponent. Three Left Unity members and a PCS Democrat won all the deputy president/vice president positions. The so-called Moderates were reduced to a rump in the 'General' constituency, coming bottom of the poll. They took only the four places left vacant by the fact that Democracy candidates standing for the presidential, deputy and vice presidential posts had also stood for constituency places. In the 'Taxation Constituency', Left Unity members also topped the poll, and the joint Democrats list won 5 seats. The IR Membership First faction disguised themselves as

'Independents' and managed to scrape 5 seats.

The election took place after a number of changes introduced by the former rightwing, which reduced the numbers on the NEC and gave it a different structure. They hoped this would benefit the right, but no manoeuvre could block the mood for change.

This result represents a tremendous advance for the left of the union. Left Unity has managed to win an absolute majority, even without the support of the 'centrist' PCS Democrats. It should therefore carry out its own left programme and not be side-tracked by 'moderates' in whatever form. This victory represents also a major challenge for the

left, which now has to show in practise the benefits of a left leadership within the union. We have to use this important opportunity to take the union forward and address the problems of our members.

The days of Reamsbottom and the rightwing are at an end. The result reflects the mood of bitterness within the union against the continuing attacks of the government. This is a generalised mood across the trade unions. As we have argued, this mood will inevitably reflect itself in the Labour Party, and is a confirmation that even right-dominated unions and workers' organisations can be changed. It is a red letter day for PCS members!

- Stop attacks on facilities time agreements.**
- Stop attacks on sick leave through attendants management.**
- Continue the campaign for national pay bargaining.**

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Advance Notice: New book from Wellred!

In the Cause of Labour A History of the British Trade Unions

By Rob Sewell

Approx 250 pages

Price: £9.99

Publication date: July 2003

We are pleased to announce the publication in July of a new book by Wellred on the history of British trade unionism. The original idea for this book arose from the series of monthly articles Rob Sewell wrote for the *Socialist Appeal* in the early 'nineties.

Although the material contained in this book is based on those articles, they have been considerably expanded, polished and revised. The conclusions are, nevertheless, the same as Rob Sewell wrote a decade ago. The only difference is that these conclusions have been confirmed by the events that have occurred since that time.

The book spans the two-hundred year history of the workers' movement, dealing with the birth of illegal trade unions, the Chartist movement, model unionism, New

Unionism, the rise of the Labour Party, the war years and their aftermath, the General Strike, and the period covering up until the present day.

The book is a Marxist history, which draws on the writings of Marxism to illuminate the lessons from the struggles of the working class in Britain.

It is particularly relevant today with the shift to the left of the trade unions and the emergence of a new generation of trade union activists.

A foreword for the book has been written by Jeremy Dear, general secretary of the NUJ and newly elected member of the General Council of the TUC.

All readers of *Socialist Appeal* are being given a chance to take up an introductory offer of receiving an advance copy of the book post-free.

To reserve your copy as soon as it comes off the press and to take advantage of our special offer please send a cheque for £9.99 to Wellred Publications PO Box 2626, London N1 7SQ