

8 August 2024

PCS responds to the far right

The fascist threat

During the Second World War, the United Kingdom played its part in the Allied Forces that defeated fascism. We rightly laud those who fought in that war as heroes and the freedoms that we enjoy today flow from their sacrifices.

Over the last week, their memory has been trampled upon by the far right, who have organised a series of riots across the country. The fascists involved have also trampled on the memory of three children tragically killed in Southport last week by attempting to exploit their deaths.

What we have witnessed has been utterly horrific. People of colour have been beaten in the streets, mosques and Muslim communities have been attacked and rioters have attempted to burn refugees to death in hotels. Everybody who stands for human decency must now unite against the fascist threat.

PCS response

PCS is playing its part. Our National President spoke at a demonstration in London at the weekend. We are supporting [Stand up to Racism](#) activities across regions and nations, encouraging members who feel able to, to attend and support communities affected by these atrocious far right attacks. Our members have been issued with safety guidance for attending demonstrations and we are liaising with unions across the UK to ensure any counter demonstrations are stewarded appropriately and authorities are informed.

We have also has published our anti-racism anti-fascism (ARAF) strategy document online which highlights our aims and objectives for tackling the far right in workplaces and communities, which also sets out key safety guidance. We have provided our members with contacts for 24-hour, free counselling as well as our own helpline which members can report racial incidents in the workplace.

Our incredible members and staff have assisted in [clean-up projects in Middlesbrough](#), fundraising for children housed in hotels in Bristol and laid a wreath in Southport on behalf of the union, showing our love and solidarity for the

families of the three innocent victims of a brutal attack. We have written to our branches urging them to work in regions to support our Black, Asian and Muslim communities and to liaise with mosques, businesses and charities who have been the target of far-right attacks in recent days.

PCS has been represented at two TUC meetings in recent days, with campaigns and equalities officers, to discuss coordination across the movement and ensuring communication within regions is prioritised. Safety has been central to these discussions; safety of our members in workplaces which have been targeted, safety of those promoting and attending counter demos and the safety of the communities in which many demonstrations are taking place.

TUC regions are in the process of establishing local meetings with reps and external stakeholders, including Stand up to Racism and [Care 4 Calais](#), to discuss regional campaigning and education on this issue and we are proud to be leading on this in many areas. Our ARAF strategy is central to these discussions.

Meetings with the Cabinet Office

Of course, the rioters also present a direct threat to PCS members, especially those in workplaces that have been highlighted by the far right on social media as potential targets for attack.

I have therefore been in discussions with the Cabinet Office over the last 24 hours to urge the employer to do all it can to safeguard our members.

Firstly, on the big picture, I have made the point that falling living standards across decades, coupled with decades of governments indulging in the worst type of racist rhetoric against refugees in a naked attempt to mask their failings on living standards, have created the conditions that the fascists are now attempting to exploit. I have urged the employer to make the point to ministers that the new government must do all I can to address falling living standards through pay restoration; and that it must also change the narrative around refugees from one of hostility to one of humanity.

Secondly, I have pressed the employer to implement immediate steps to ensure that our members are kept safe. I have asked them to ensure that departments issue condemnations of the riots; provide guidance to staff on safety measures; and maximise flexible working where there is a threat to our members safety, including closing offices when and where necessary and allowing homeworking.

The Cabinet Office has confirmed that they are impressing upon departments the need for a common-sense approach that maximises safety. This is welcome, and PCS representatives everywhere are on hand to ensure that such an approach is made a reality on the ground.

If you have any concerns in that regard, please contact your PCS representative for advice, guidance and support. You can find their details [by logging into PCS Digital](#).

We stand united against fascism. They shall not pass.

Fran Heathcote

PCS General Secretary