

## Suggested contemporary resolutions

On this and the next page are our suggestions for contemporary motions to 2004 Conference. CLPs and affiliated organizations are allowed only one motion, and this provided they have not already submitted a constitutional amendment this year. The motion must

be on a topic “which is either not substantively addressed in the reports to conference of either the NPF or the NEC” or which has arisen since the publication of those reports” (after 25 July). **The closing date for contemporary motions is 17 September.**

### ● Leadership

This Conference is seriously concerned at the direction of the party under the Prime Minister’s leadership. Despite New Labour’s early claim to be guided by social justice and equality, a report by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) published on 3 August shows that inequality of income has increased since 1997. Even some of the Prime Minister’s oldest allies are now expressing doubts. Two editors of the Labour journal *Renewal* and pioneers of the New Labour project, Neal Lawson and Paul Thompson, wrote in *The Guardian* on 9 August that Downing Street’s agenda of consumer choice in health and education is hard to distinguish from Tory policy. They argue that the leadership has wasted two terms in office with massive majorities, the second of which will be remembered for Iraq — “Blair’s poll tax”. They fear that “given the volatility of contemporary politics, it is by no means impossible that Labour will lose in a reverse landslide”. Conference believes that there is still time to avert this risk. But the only way we can preserve a governing majority and avoid a hung parliament or worse is to abandon the third way of personal choice user pays, the private finance and management of public services and the bottomless pit of the Iraq occupation. However, in view of the Prime Minister’s dogged unwillingness to change course, conference considers that a change of leadership is the only option. Accordingly conference instructs the NEC to convene a special session of conference as provided for under rule 3C1.1 and rule 4B2(d)(ii) which states:

*“When the PLP is in government and the leader and/or deputy leader are prime minister and/or in Cabinet, an election shall proceed only if requested by a majority of party conference on a card vote”.*

### ● Guantanamo Bay

Conference notes the statement from the Tipton Three published in the *Guardian* on 4 August 2004 alleging a range of human rights abuses taking place at the US prison at Guantanamo Bay. Furthermore on the same day the Red Cross expressed concern that the treatment of prisoners could amount to war crimes.

Conference further notes that nationals from other US-friendly countries are being repatriated but that several British nationals and permanent residents remain incarcerated there.

Conference believes that the government should demand their immediate repatriation and dissociate the UK from the continuing abuses by the US in Guantanamo Bay.

### ● Taxation

Conference notes the report by the Institute for Public Policy Research published in early August (The State of the Nation; An Audit of Injustice in the UK). Among its conclusions are that inequality in disposable income has actually increased since 1997, and that the richest have continued to get richer.

As the editors of *Renewal* magazine, Neal Lawson and Paul Thompson, point out in their *Guardian* article of 9 August 2004 we are saddled with a historically low level of taxation. This has prevented any effective redistribution of wealth and income. This situation will continue if the government policy remains simply ‘more of the same’. The consensus at the NPF in July — “[to] continue to build on our efforts to ensure the tax and tax credit system remains progressive” — clearly fails, in view of the findings of the IPPR Audit, to address the issue adequately.

The calls for a radical third term cannot be realized without reversing existing taxation policy in favour of a significantly progressive one. Conference therefore believes that this change of direction should be a central plank of Labour’s next manifesto.

## Whose finger on the trigger?

There is a complication arising out of a lack of clarity in the Constitution’s provisions. On the one hand, rule 4B.2d (ii) “Timing of an election” states unequivocally that “when the PLP is in government and the leader...[is] prime minister... an election will proceed only if requested by a majority of party conference on a card vote”. On the other hand, rule 4B.2b(ii) “Nomination” states that “where there is no vacancy, nominations shall be sought each year prior to the annual session of party conference. In this case any nominations must be supported by 20 per cent of the Com-

mons members of the PLP...”. This seems to imply that only MPs can set a leadership election in motion. So which rule prevails? At last year’s Conference two emergency motions on changing the leadership were ruled out of order, apparently on the grounds that only MPs can trigger the process. Yet Conference is sovereign. As such, and in line with the rule 4B.2d (ii), it has every right to give members the opportunity to say whether they want a change. It should not allow its sovereignty to be taken away because of an ambiguity.

# National Policy Forum 23-25 July

## Pete Willsman reports back

It is difficult to give only a short report on this intensive Forum meeting. Three documents were considered: *Building prosperity for all*; *Improving health and education*; *Creating sustainable communities*. These covered the eight consultative documents that had been circulated. One hundred and fifty two Forum members were present for voting out of a possible 183. This included a considerable number of substitutes for Ministers and trade union representatives, none are allowed for CLPs. Forum members submitted some 850 amendments, many from Centre Left Grass Roots Alliance supporters.

The threshold for a Minority Position was 38 votes. The Unions had some 45 delegates present and there were about 14 delegates supported by the CLGA. A number of amendments are accepted at the outset, the others are discussed with Ministers. Those where there is no consensus are put to the vote. The Unions produced a document *Towards a radical third term* in which they set out their policies. Their amendments covered employment rights, pensions, manufacturing, skills, and PFI. The unions were critical of the Government for issuing its five year plans for health and education by-passing the party's policy making process.

Throughout the weekend the unions were united and focused in pursuit of their agenda. The negotiation with Ministers was led by Tony Dubbins (GPMU) and ended at 5am on Sunday morning. The resulting consensus package included unions' gains on employment rights, pension rights, holidays, ending the two-tier workforce, more paid time off for skills training. A woman-at-work commission is to examine meas-

ures to reduce the pay gap between the sexes. Less progress was made on the pensions-earnings link, employment protection for workers in firms of under 21 employees, compulsory pension contributions by employers.

Negotiations with Ministers took place on other issues. A satisfactory consensus wording was agreed on protecting a publicly owned Royal Mail and promoting full civil rights for all disabled people. On the final day, the unions were not prepared to support any amendments that went beyond their commitment to the consensus package. Only two Minority Positions outside the consensus wording gained their support. Sixty-four votes were obtained for an amendment proposing that there be no financial disadvantage for council tenants who choose to remain under the management of their local authority. And the TSSA gained 40 votes for an amendment calling for the railways to be returned to public ownership. AMICUS was the only one of the big four unions not to support TSSA.

Delegates supported by the CLGA persevered with a range of amendments. Ending selection on aptitude (15 votes); ending selection on ability (19 votes after Charles Clarke said it would be massively damaging electorally); ending charitable status of private schools (15 votes); giving an additional grant to the least well off students (14 votes); positive action for working class students to enter higher education (17 votes); putting a windfall tax on companies making large profits from secondary market PFI share trading (16 votes).

Summing up, the unions were no push over for the Government and there was close liaison with the CLGA. Next year all 55 CLP places on the NPF are up for election (four adults and one youth in every region). A much greater effort must be made to secure the election of delegates supported by the CLGA

### ● Iraq

Conference notes that

1. on 7 August the US appointed Iraqi interim government banned Al-Jazeera from broadcasting in Iraq;
2. on 8 August the Iraqi government reintroduced the death penalty, not just for murder but for the vague offence of "endangering national security";
3. since 5 August, there has been an onslaught by American forces against a series of uprisings, with fighting raging in Najaf, Diwaniya, Sadr City and elsewhere, with considerable loss of life, including thousands of civilian casualties.

Conference also notes that the invasion and occupation of Iraq, despite its doubtful legality in international law, was originally justified on the basis of the threat of weapons of mass destruction. It is now clear that at the time of the US-led military action Iraq didn't possess such weapons.

Subsequently, the war was justified on new grounds, namely that it would restore human rights and democracy to the Iraqis. Far from respecting human rights, the occupation has ended up violating the basic right to life and freedom of expression of the Iraq people.

Accordingly Conference calls on the government to dissociate the United Kingdom from the occupation by withdrawing British forces from Iraq.

## 2004 elections to Conference Arrangements Committee VOTE ALICE MAHON



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Several organisations chose to submit to the 2003 Conference constitutional amendments. These will be taken at this year’s Conference as the NEC takes one year to decide whether to endorse them. All those we repro-

duce would give CLPs and affiliated organisations more say. Delegates should be mandated to support them. It is possible that some of them will be withdrawn — if defeated they couldn’t be re-submitted for 3 years.

## Amending National Policy Forum documents

Faversham & Mid Kent CLP, Newport West CLP, Canterbury CLP, Erith&Thamesmead CLP, Altrincham&Sale West CLP, Harrow West CLP, North East Cambridgeshire CLP, Cardiff South&Penarth CLP, North East Bedfordshire CLP, and North Southwark&Bermondsey CLP have submitted a rule change which would give CLPs, unions and other affiliated organizations the right directly to amend the final stage National Policy Forum (NPF) documents at Conference — documents which form the basis of the party’s Election Manifesto.

At present even though most Labour policies are agreed at conference, access to it is strictly controlled by the NPF, where not only are the CLPs and Unions under-represented but CLP delegations tend to be heavily influenced by a high-powered Ministerial presence. Not surprisingly few dissenting proposals receive the minimum support they need (25% of NPF delegates) to be voted on at Conference as Minority positions. This year only five such positions managed to achieve this.

If carried, the Faversham et al proposal would significantly increase the CLPs’ and affiliated organisations’ right to an input into Labour’s policy. The platform is likely to pretend that it would be difficult to handle so many amendments. In fact the amendments would be composited and the main ones tabled for debate by the elected Conference Arrangements Committee.

**The Labour Party Rule Book 2003, Section A, Chapter 3 — Party Conference, Subsection 3C Procedural rules for party conference, Conference rule 2 — Agenda**  
Paragraph 3C2. 3 reads as follows:  
All affiliated organizations and CLPs may submit one motion on a topic which is either not substantively addressed in the reports to conference of either the NPF or the NEC or which has arisen since the publication of those reports. The CAC shall determine whether the motions meet these criteria and submit all issues received to a priorities ballot at the start of conference. Motions must be in writing, on one subject only, or be in the form of a constitutional amendment and must be received by the General Secretary at the offices of the party by the closing date determined by the NEC.

**Amendment**  
Add at end: “In a year when conference is considering the final stage documents from the National Policy Forum, and as an alternative to submitting either a motion (as defined in this subsection) or a constitutional amendment, CLPs and affiliated organizations may submit, for debate and voting at Conference, one amendment to the material set out in the final stage document.”  
\* \* \* \* \*

*Please note that the reference to the proposed rule change 3C2.3 is taken from the 2003 rule book but reference remains the same, as indeed does the part of the text to which the amendment refers. The changes in the paragraph in the 2004 rule book are unrelated to the current proposal.*

## Policy documents: The right to refer back

Westmoreland and Lonsdale CLP submitted a rule change two years ago (in 2002) which would give CLPs, Unions and other affiliated organizations the right to refer back at Conference any part of a policy document they happen to disagree with. At present disagreement can be expressed only by voting down the whole document. In practice this means that delegates accept policies they are opposed to because these are part of a wider policy framework which they have no wish to wreck.

The Westmoreland and Lonsdale proposal is for some reason being taken after two years delay, instead of just one.

3C Procedural rules for party conference  
**Conference rule 2-Agenda**  
3C2.7 reads as follows:  
Conference shall consider policy reports and draft reports as part of the rolling programme, the NPF report, the NEC annual report, NEC statements and development strategy, constitutional amendments and motions on contemporary or emergency issues submitted and accepted. It shall not consider any business unless recommended by the NEC or the CAC. At any special session of the party conference, the NEC shall determine the business to be conducted.

**Amendment**  
Add at end:  
“Conference has the right to refer back part of any policy document without rejecting the policy document as a whole.”

## Socialism — not out of date

Calder Valley CLP has submitted a rule change that reveals the dissatisfaction of its members with the direction the party leadership is taking. The government's record fully demonstrates that the adoption of the "new" Clause IV ten years ago neither helped us to deal effectively with the problems created by capitalist society, nor did it strengthen the party's organization or increase its mass support. Modelled on the "old" Clause IV the Calder Valley proposal reminds us that socialist solutions need to be looked at again as well as the ideology associated with "new Labour".

The existing "Clause IV — Aims and Values" is self-contradictory. It claims that Labour seeks "*a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few*", and an economy which serves "*the public interest*". But then it goes on to pledge allegiance to "*a thriving private sector*", not to mention "*the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition*" — mechanisms which inherently lead to accumulation of private wealth.

New Labour has certainly fulfilled its promise to promote the private sector. At the special party conference which intro-

duced the current Clause IV, Tony Blair vowed to renationalise "*the national health service to make it once more a service run for the nation*". After seven years of Labour government, the result has been partial privatisation through outsourcing and foundation hospitals. He also promised to "*keep our railways as a proper public service, publicly owned, publicly accountable to the people*". In fact such piecemeal renationalisation as has taken place has been forced on the government by the catastrophic results of privatization.

At the same time, the constitutional imperative to govern for "the many not the few" has been ignored. The recent report of the *Institute for Public Policy Research* (2.08.04) shows that inequality of income is actually greater under Labour, with wealth concentrated in the hands of the richest ten per cent substantially increasing.

Capitalism and social justice don't easily mix. If we reintroduce *unequivocally socialist* party aims, we will be better placed to call for policies which would implement them. That is why delegates should give the constitutional amendment from Calder Valley their overwhelming support.

Section A of the National Rules of the Labour Party, Constitutional rules Clause IV – Aims and Values reads as follows:

- 1 The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone, so as to create for each of us the means to realize our true potential and for all of us a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few; where the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe and where we live together freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect.
- 2 To these ends we work for:
  - (a) A DYNAMIC ECONOMY, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership and co-operation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work and prosper with a thriving private sector and high-quality public services where those undertakings essential to the common good are either owned by the public or accountable to them
  - (b) A JUST SOCIETY, which judges its strength by the condition of the weak as much as the strong, provides security against fear, and justice at work; which nurtures families, promotes equality of opportunity, and delivers people from the tyranny of poverty, prejudice and the abuse of power
  - (c) AN OPEN DEMOCRACY, in which government is held to account by the people, decisions are taken as far as practicable by the communities they affect and where fundamental human rights are guaranteed
  - (d) A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, which we protect, enhance and hold in trust for future generations.
- 3 Labour is committed to the defence and security of the British people and to co-operating in European

institutions, the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other international bodies to secure peace, freedom, democracy, economic security and environmental protection for all.

- 4 Labour shall work in pursuit of these aims with trade unions and co-operative societies and also with voluntary organizations, consumer groups and other representative bodies.
- 5 On the basis of these principles, Labour seeks the trust of the people to govern.

### Amendment

Remove the existing Clause IV and replace with:

- 1 To organize and maintain in parliament and in the country a political Labour Party.
- 2 To co-operate with the General Council and the Trades Union Congress, or other kindred organizations in joint political or other action in harmony with the party constitution and standing orders.
- 3 To give effect as far as possible to the principles from time to time approved by the party conference.
- 4 To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.
- 5 Generally to promote the political, social, and economic emancipation of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.
- 6 To co-operate with labour and socialist organizations in other countries and to support the United Nations and its various agencies and other international organizations for the promotion of peace, the adjustment and settlement of international disputes by peaceful and diplomatic means."

# Vote for rule changes

## Justice for CLPs

West Suffolk CLP has submitted a rule change which would increase CLP representation on the NEC from 6 to 8. The “modernisation” of the NEC in 1997, under *Partnership in Power* rule changes, meant that the number of CLP seats was reduced from 7 to 6. At conference CLPs have 50% of the vote and on the National Policy Forum roughly one third. Yet, on the NEC, CLPs were required to help make room for new “stakeholders”- such as Ministers and MPs. The proportion of constituency rank and file representation was cut from one quarter to less than one fifth. As CLPs are the backbone of Labour’s electoral machinery it is hard to see why their voice on the NEC should be thought to be the most expendable. Their representation should be restored, at least, to its previous level. This is West Suffolk’s modest demand. Delegates should ensure that it is met.

4C.2 Election of the National Executive Committee  
4C.2a(iii) reads as follows:

Division III (CLPs) shall consist of six members at least three of whom shall be women, to be nominated by their own CLP and at least two other CLPs. The ballot for these places shall be conducted among all eligible individual members of the party by means of a national one-member-one-vote postal ballot conducted to guidelines laid down by the NEC.

### Amendment

Line 1 : Delete “six” and insert “eight”  
Line 2 : Delete “three” and insert “four”

## Support NPF minority positions

Of the five minority positions to the National Policy Forum Report tabled at Conference, the following are by far the most important. Even though these motions were lost at the NPF they received enough votes (38+) to go forward to Conference as “minority positions”.

### Investment in social housing Ref. No. C103

*Proposer: Daniel Zeichner    Seconder: Peter Medhurst*  
Add: “Labour will also ensure that where tenants choose to remain under the management of their Local Authority, they will not be financially disadvantaged – funds available for stock transfers will be equally available to Councils, ensuring a level playing-field.”

*Vote: 64 For, 72 Against*

### Supporting arguments

This proposal would establish a level playing-field for investment in council housing. At present council tenants (and through them local authorities) can only obtain extra investment in the housing stock by choosing one of three options – PFI; stock transfer; arms length management company. If tenants choose to remain with the council they are denied extra investment. This minority position will ensure

that where tenants decide to stay under the management of their local authority they will not be financially disadvantaged.

It is possible that Ministers will make concessions on this issue before we reach Brighton and that therefore this minority position will not be moved. If it is moved, we urge delegates to support it.

### Renationalisation of the Railways Ref. No.C182

*Proposer: Harriet Yeo    Seconder: Dave Tyson*  
Add: “Labour therefore commits to resolving the fragmented structure of the industry by introducing an integrated, accountable and publicly owned railway.”

*Vote: 40 For, 90 Against*

### Supporting arguments

This is a minority position from TSSA calling for railways to be taken into public ownership. Every traveller knows that privatization has been a disaster. Even the Blair government has accepted this point and are extending public control.

This minority position deserves Conference’s overwhelming support.

## Civil Service job cuts — an attack on women

At Conference there are likely to be contemporary resolutions and emergency motions on the government’s proposed job cuts in the civil service — more than 100,000 jobs are to go over the next four years. This will result in the public receiving a very much poorer service. A proposal to close over 500 Benefit Offices and 10 Pension Centres has already been announced.

Civil servants are not wasteful, faceless bureaucrats, they carry out essential front-line services, often for poor pay. Furthermore, approximately 70% of them are women, the majority in lower grades, ie on low pay. The civil service is

good in providing part-time and job share posts. But given the government’s recent announcements on developing better child-care, and its aim since 1997 of getting people off benefits and into work, there is something grotesque in their plans to axe jobs filled in the majority by women.

Cutting a fifth of the civil service is nothing less than a direct attack on low paid women workers. CLPD urges CLPs and delegates to support resolutions/motions opposing these cuts, and to back the PCS (the civil service trade union) campaign against the government’s plans.

*M.Loates*

# Grassroots Alliance vote holds firm

Almost every year since new rules for NEC elections were introduced in 1997, the number of votes cast for candidates in the CLP Section has declined. 2004 was no exception. We don't know how many members voted, nor how many used all six votes, nor how far voting was in line with the two slates — *Labour First* "centre right" and *Grassroots Alliance* "centre-left". Despite this, broad trends can be detected.

## Declining participation?

There seems to be a correlation between the decline of membership and the total vote for all candidates. This year 214,633 votes were cast as against 736,418 in 1998, the first year the ballot was conducted under the new rules — a fall of 71%. During the same period membership fell by about 55%. Thus the decline in the number of those voting exceeded the decline in membership by 16%. Are those who remain losing interest in the NEC?

## Prime Minister's question time

Given the reduced role of the NEC, this should surprise no one. The Blairite take-over of the Party has — in practice — deprived the NEC of its policy-making functions. This despite the fact that the rule book still gives the NEC this power. The NEC's increasing political irrelevance is surpassed only by that of its CLP Section. Even before the constituency representatives were cut from seven to six members — and from one quarter of NEC membership to one fifth — their numerical strength never counted for much. However until the late 1980s the NEC's constituency section provided a national forum for Labour's political debates. Today the voice of the CLP section is restricted. Political discussion on the NEC has been reduced to asking the Prime Minister questions. Other

ways of airing "off-message" views, through resolutions for example, are almost taboo. Attempts to initiate debate in this way are simply voted down by the built-in Blairite majority.

## Not entitled to know?

In any case what happens (or doesn't happen) on the NEC goes largely unreported, not only to the public, but also to Party members. In 1998 four of the six NEC seats were won by rank and file members supported by the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance. From the word "go", maximum pressure was brought to bear to stop them reporting back to those who elected them. Such reports as are given are expurgated versions. Despite this censorship, and even though many members have left, GA-supported candidates did better in 2004 than might have been expected.

The Grassroots Alliance total vote was 46%, whereas the total of the Centre-Right candidates was 54%. In the last (2002) election the two slates attracted almost the same support — Centre Right 50.2% and the Grassroots Alliance 49.8% (see table below).

Recent opinion polls point to Tony Blair being more popular among men than among women. It seems that this trend is reflected in NEC elections. Women candidates consistently contribute the larger part to the aggregate Centre-Left vote.

2004		2002	
Elected	%	Elected	%
Black, Ann (GA)	20,587 (9.60)	Robinson, Tony (CR)	35,316 (11.32)
Seddon, Mark (GA)	18,664 (8.70)	Black, Ann (GA)	31,179 (9.99)
Shawcroft, Christine (GA)	17,522 (8.16)	Shawcroft, Christine (GA)	29,537 (9.46)
Turner, Ruth (CR)	16,794 (7.82)	Seddon, Mark (GA)	29,110 (9.33)
Malik, Shahid (CR)	16,528 (7.70)	Malik, Shahid (CR)	27,784 (8.90)
Wheeler, Peter (CR)	16,501 (7.69)	Turner, Ruth (CR)	27,100 (8.69)
Not Elected		Not Elected	
Baldock, Louise (CR)	15,834 (7.38)	Price, Valerie (CR)	26,609 (8.53)
Willsman, Pete (GA)	15,734 (7.33)	Willsman, Pete (GA)	24,985 (8.90)
Azam, Mohammed (GA)	14,391 (6.70)	Foyer, Rozanne (GA)	22,272 (7.14)
Price, Valerie (CR)	14,204 (6.60)	Williams, Mari (CR)	20,309 (6.50)
Williams, Mari (CR)	13,210 (6.15)	Wheeler, Peter (CR)	19,142 (6.13)
Graham, Irene (GA)	12,698 (5.90)	<u>Murshid, Kumar (GA)</u>	<u>18,653 (6.00)</u>
Telford, Mandy (CR)	11,857 (5.50)	Total votes cast	311,996
<u>Ejiofor, Joseph (CR)</u>	<u>10,109 (4.70)</u>		
Total votes cast	214,633		

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