

CAMPAIGN BRIEFING

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LABOUR AND THE UNIONS TOGETHER: THE ONLY WAY TO WIN

**BILLY HAYES —
GENERAL SECRETARY, CWU**

This year's Annual Labour Party Conference should commence with the important step of restoring the right of CLPs and the affiliated trade unions to submit



contemporary resolutions for voting at Conference. This may be modest, but it is significant.

Conference should be the Party's internal, annual parliament, where we can debate all the key political issues facing the Labour movement and society at large. In recent years, we have submitted to the preoccupation that democratic debate appears divisive to the electorate outside the Party.

But this significantly underestimates the maturity of the electorate. Voters watching us know that the issues are important, and that there are always choices about which policies should be pursued.

What is truly repulsive to voters is the presentation of politics as a simple issue of efficient administration, where policy issues are of such supposed complexity as to require a stitch up behind closed doors.

The Party has lost five million voters since 1997, four million of whom were in the course of Tony Blair's premiership. This contradicts the myth that the politics of 'the project', was in tune with the abiding wishes of the electorate. Whoever wins the election for Labour Leader, now is the time for a new engagement with Party members and a broader electorate. This can only be achieved by a clear and compelling debate leading to appropriate decisions.

Live debate on current issues makes for enthralling and engaging viewing. Politics matters desperately, and it is not difficult to present our Conference as an important event in the calendar.

Unfortunately, for the most part, our Conference has been turned into a tedious reiteration of ministerial virtues, and a parade of selected activists delivering officially sanctioned rhetoric. This has been both unwatchable and damaging to the development of the Party.

So we must review our internal structures to meet the needs of the members, including the welcome addition of many new members. This surely means more serious and considered debates which will actively direct the policy of the Party leadership in opposition to the coalition government.

With the introduction of one member one vote for constituency delegates, we can expect a more reliable and critical role from the National Policy Forum. We must similarly establish a new urgency to the constituency structures of the Party. One clear lesson of the General Election result is that it makes a huge difference to have a constituency Party that is engaged with its community, and offers Party members an active outline for their convictions. This needs to include the right of CLPs to choose their own candidates, in a timely and effective manner, without insistence on loyalty to a few fashionable prejudices, or a particular Leader.

Equally, there needs to be a commitment from the Leadership to fight the proposals by the coalition government to break the collective affiliation of trade unionists to the Labour Party. We cannot have the constitution of the Labour Party being determined by its enemies. The trade unions contribution to Labour must be

valued. Yes we can, and should, utilise all the new methods of communication and information technology to get our policies across. But the alliance between trade unions and constituency activists is the guarantee of the strength and significance of Labour's message actually being delivered to the electorate.

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PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO ENSURE A WIDE CIRCULATION.

ALTERNATIVE VOTE — A SLIPPERY SLOPE TO THE RIGHT

**CHRISTINE SHAWCROFT
(NEC MEMBER)**

Many on the Left seem to feel that AV is the 'safe' option and the least worst way to head off a rising tide in favour of PR. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Lib Dems have made it clear that AV would just be the beginning, and that they would press on for full PR. Furthermore, although figures seem to suggest that, had AV been used for the last election, there would have been a slight increase in Labour and Liberal seats at the expense of the Tories, you never know how people would have voted differently if the system had been different.

The main problem with AV (apart from the fact that it's the top of the slippery slope to PR) is that many MPs would not be elected on first preferences alone. They would be dependent on second preferences. And those second preferences would not, most likely, be coming from the other major parties, but from those knocked out on the first ballot: UKIP, the BNP, the heirs of Screaming Lord Sutch etc.

So election manifestoes and campaigns will inevitably start 'looking over their shoulders' at these groups with serious consequences for their policies and platforms. AV would lead to elections as Dutch auctions, with parties vying to see how low they could go to appeal to fringe and second preference voters.

Supporters of AV are the same ones who assured us that PR would lead to Lib-Lab coalitions and keep the Tories out forever! We have to stop it.

BITEBACKS

'A truly fair voting system in the last election, based on votes cast, would have given UKIP 20 seats, the BNP 12 seats and the Greens 7 seats'.

(Ian Snowden, *Sunday Times*, 30/5/10).

'AV encourages the worst kind of lowest denominator politics — every marginal contest is a sordid scurry to be everyone's second choice'.

(Paul Anderson, *Tribune*, 9/7/10).

THE NOWHERE MAN

MARK SEDDON (FORMER EDITOR OF TRIBUNE AND FORMER NEC MEMBER) REVIEWS LORD MANDELSON'S *THE THIRD MAN*

Self-serving, egotistical, narcissistic: these epithets accurately describe the personality and motivations of former Business Secretary, former Northern Ireland Secretary and former Industry Secretary, Lord Peter Mandelson. This is why it has been such a relief not to see him on our television screens much since the General Election. But even now, stretching out from his political grave, leaning on the crutch that is his overblown and ever so slightly hysterical autobiography *The Third Man*, Lord Mandelson reveals that he wants one day to return to front line politics! — a prospect, to which all good Labour people will respond in unison: 'Over our dead bodies!'

"The last time I looked, Labour had lost five million voters during Mandelson's 'New Labour' era"

Peter Mandelson rejoices in the breathless prose of all too many commentators who fed from his hand, who laud him as the 'architect of New Labour' and claim that so significant was his role during the Blair/Brown years, he must be counted as one of their equals — hence the title of his book. He is not, to be sure, in the same league as Blair, still less Brown, but if he wants to be remembered as the architect of that weird sect, 'New Labour', a star-struck fan club that was run with the same élan as the old East German Communist Party, let him. Even now *The Guardian* talks of him 'saving his beloved Labour Party'. Excuse me from intruding into this love-in, but, the last time I looked, Labour had lost five million voters during Mandelson's 'New Labour' era, the Party is shorn of members (although in Mandelson's absence it is beginning to recover) and it is broke. To cap it all, it has just had its worst General Election result since 1983. 'New Labour', in case Mandelson and his friends haven't noticed, became a term of abuse some time ago.

As well as claiming this dubious honour, Mandelson would also like to be remembered as the architect of Labour's historical 1997 landslide — a myth recalibrated *ad nauseam* by his media friends. Well, Joe Haines, the former street-fighting adjunct to Harold Wilson, and no shrinking violet he, offered a different analysis in a recent *Tribune* review of Campbell's *Diaries*: 'We won in 1997,' says Haines, 'not because of their brilliance [Man-

delson, Campbell, Blair *et al*] but because the nation was irretrievably fed up with John Major and he couldn't have won a raffle in which he bought all the tickets.'

Lest we forget, as plain Peter Mandelson, he lasted barely five months as Secretary of State for Industry, having been forced to resign for failing to declare a £373,000 home loan from his pal Geoffrey Robinson MP. Having militated against the much loved Mo Mowlam, he persuaded Blair to let him have her job as Northern Ireland Secretary, this time lasting barely a year, before he was accused of helping to arrange a British passport for Indian billionaire, Srichard Hinduja, something for which he was later cleared. Mr Hinduja, it will be recalled, had promised a cool £1 million for Mandelson's beloved Dome, a ludicrous white elephant that finally did for any notion of 'Cool Britannia'. Bizarrely Gordon Brown then rehabilitated the man who had caused him so much grief over the years and made him Business Secretary — presumably on the basis that having him inside the tent would lance some of his legendary poison.

Now having attempted to stitch up a deal behind Brown's back during the General Election that would have seen his lordship 'loyally serve' Clegg, presumably as a coalition Foreign Secretary, Lord Mandelson would like us to buy his book. If we do buy it, we will be subject to chapter after chapter of empty banality and untruth about his relations with Blair and Brown and theirs with him *ad nauseam*.

Thankfully, it's all over now for Mandelson, in Labour politics at least. Clement Attlee once famously said to the disputatious Harold Laski 'a period of silence from you would be welcome,' which is surely what any of the current Labour leadership contenders would want from him.

BITEBACKS

'Fiona said "Is Tony aware how devious Peter can be?" I remembered John Smith's description, during some shenanigan or other, when he said Peter was so devious there was a danger that one day he would disappear up his own backside.'

(*The Alastair Campbell Diaries*, Hutchinson 2010).

FIGHTING THE BNP IN BARKING AND DAGENHAM



SABBY DHALU, JOINT SECRETARY UNITE AGAINST FASCISM

The British National Party (BNP) suffered its first defeats at the 2010 General and Local Elections since its electoral rise commenced in 2001. The BNP lost council seats and in Barking, it was pushed back and its vote share reduced. In Barking and Dagenham all 12 BNP councillors were overwhelmingly defeated and Labour took all 51 seats. Nationally the BNP lost 27 councillors, only two BNP councillors standing for re-election — one in Bradford and one in Pendle — held their seats and it made no additional gains.

The campaign in Barking has important lessons. BNP candidate Nick Griffin's vote reduced by 1.7 per cent (from 16.3 per cent* to 14.6 per cent). Labour candidate Margaret Hodge's vote increased by 4.7 per cent (from 49.6 per cent* in 2005 to 54.3 per cent in 2010) and she doubled her majority.

Increasing numbers of constituencies are

having to fight the BNP and need to know what is effective at holding down the fascist vote whilst increasing Labour's. For example, in Dagenham & Rainham, the BNP vote increased by 6.8 per cent (from 4.4 per cent to 11.2 per cent).

Barking Labour Party vigorously exposed and challenged the BNP and explained why people needed to vote. It rejected the racism of the BNP by fielding a team of candidates in the local elections that reflected the diversity of Barking, including several African, Muslim and Sikh candidates. It also worked hard in canvassing and obtaining accurate voter ID.

“Unite Against Fascism (UAF) mobilised its supporters to complement Labour's campaign”

Barking Labour Party also worked with those outside the party that wanted to assist the campaign against the BNP. Unite Against Fascism (UAF) mobilised its supporters to complement Labour's campaign, identifying anti-BNP voters through canvassing and distributing leaflets across the borough. The UAF debunked the so-called 'Africans for Essex' racist myth which the BNP had previously used as its cutting edge campaign in the borough.

As Margaret Hodge commented, 'Unite Against Fascism was part of the winning strategy in Barking which focused on those areas where the BNP was strongest. Our emphatic victory on 6 May in the General and Local Elections is a reflection of the support we received from Unite Against

Fascism who made a vital contribution to the campaign to drive the BNP out of Barking. UAF put in months of work that began before the elections. They knocked on thousands of doors and distributed many more leaflets. This helped to mobilise to beat the BNP and increase voter turnout which made such a difference in reducing the BNP's vote.'

Nationally, in the General Election, the BNP more than doubled its vote share from 0.7 per cent in 2005 to 1.9 per cent in 2010 and doubled its saved deposits, from 34 in 2005 to 72 in 2010. Therefore the BNP remains a threat, so the success of the Barking campaign needs to be integrated by Labour into its national campaign strategy.

■ For 2005 constituency vote shares this article uses the notional figures published by the BBC.



BITEBACKS

'As a black Briton and a licence payer, I would like to ask: how is the BBC representing my interests and sustaining civil society by giving a platform to a racist party that I am excluded from joining should I so wish?'

(John Siblon, *Guardian*, 1/10/9).

BITEBACKS

'This is an era that history will record as a new golden age for the City of London. Many who advised me, including not a few newspapers, favoured a regulatory crackdown. I believe we were right not to go down that road.'

(Gordon Brown, June 2007, quoted in *Tribune* 12/2/10).

HAYEK AND FRIEDMAN AND THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER OF NEO-LIBERALISM

KELVIN HOPKINS MP FOR LUTON NORTH

Neo-liberal capitalism is dying, mortally wounded by the financial crash and soon to be finished off by the second coming of a 1930s depression. This is what lies in store and government policy makes it inevitable.

Savage cuts in public spending, the sacking of hundreds of thousands of public sector workers and slashing public construction programmes can only lead to a deep recession and mass unemployment. And when people lose their jobs, have falling incomes or are fearful of the future, they cut their spending and consumer demand collapses leading to a downward economic vortex of deflation.

The EU will make the problem even more frightening. Cameron returned from his recent meeting of EU leaders positively gleeful that all of them had agreed to cut their financial deficits together, an act of mass economic suicide if ever there was.

“The government’s attack on public expenditure is driven by ideology, an ideology that seeks to cut state provision of public services and drive us backwards”

Parallels have been drawn with the 1929 Wall Street crash and the hungry 1930s, and so they should be. We have had the crash, and we are repeating just the same mistakes that drove the world into depression nearly eighty years ago. We are now at the 1931 stage, not the late 1930s recovery, and that recovery only happened when governments finally accepted the advice of John Maynard Keynes who said that governments should spend money — masses of it — to drive the economy upwards and create jobs, not cut spending and destroy them. Governments should again be expanding programmes of public investment, especially in those areas which are labour intensive and which will create most jobs quickly.

And what of the supposedly critical financial deficit? First of all it is not critical,



and secondly it will be made worse by a renewed recession. Tax revenues will crash and benefits costs will surge as hundreds of thousands are thrown out of work.

The government’s attack on public expenditure is driven by ideology, an ideology that seeks to cut state provision of public services and drive us back to the world which existed before Labour’s transforming socialist government of the 1940s.

If the government were really genuine about seeking to reduce the deficit quickly, it could simply take steps to close the vast tax gap, that gap between the taxes which should be paid and those which are actually paid. This gap is in excess of £100bn and collecting even a fraction of it would quickly transform government finances. Working people on PAYE would be unaffected but billionaire tax cheats would be forced to divi-up. Moreover, collecting these extra taxes would have little effect on aggregate consumer demand because rich people do not spend most of their money while those on lower incomes spend just about every penny they get on day to day living.

Britain’s gross debt is still lower than many other developed nations. It is also low by historic standards and much smaller than that which existed after the Second World War. That debt was reduced simply by growing the economy strongly with full employment, which is what the government should be doing now.

Reflation is a necessary condition for sustained recovery and full employment,

“Britain’s gross debt is... low by historic standards and much smaller than that which existed after the Second World War”

but it is not a sufficient one. Governments must re-engage in economic management once again, as they did after 1945 and until the 1970s. Controls on finance, an expanded public sector, income redistribution and sustained employment generation are vital.

Things went wrong only when the mad monetarists, the crazed zealots of neo-liberalism, the deluded disciples of Von Hayek and Friedman took over and set the world on the road back to the 1930s bringing us all close to economic catastrophe. The Frankenstein experiment with globalised free market neo-liberal capitalism has been disastrous. The future must indeed and can only be a democratic socialist future.

BITEBACKS

‘Deficit reduction is the victory of an orthodoxy that has little to do with rational analysis, whose main tenet is that imposing suffering is how you show leadership in tough times. And who will pay for this triumph of orthodoxy? Tens of millions of unemployed workers, many of whom will go jobless for years, and some of whom will never work again’.

(Paul Krugman, Nobel Laureate, *Guardian*, 29/6/10).

‘Throughout Cameron’s speech there was barely a mention of the market meltdown of the past few years, just the constant reiteration that government was the problem and needed to be hacked back. However hard one squints, this does not look like New Conservatism; this is Margaret Thatcher speaking through a ventriloquist’s dummy’.

(*Guardian* editorial, 29/5/10).

IN AMONG THE EGOS

RAY DAVISON REVIEWS CAMPBELL'S 'IN THE RAW' DIARIES, VOLUME 1, PRELUDE TO POWER

We have here some 750 pages of a virtually daily diary covering the period from John Smith's woeful death (May 12, 1994) to the brilliance of the landslide and triumphs of May 1, 1997. What filled a mere 180 pages of *The Blair Years* now quadruples in girth but the gravitational pull and interest of the additional weight of words and detail do not asphyxiate the apprehensive reader — far from it. Campbell's entries follow a pattern: they are vortices, swirling moments capturing the contingencies of the political and media life of the Labour Party in opposition with its determination to jettison that status.

The range and detail of his records rarely fail to excite or entertain or both; sometimes he is deeply personal, telling us about his rows with Fiona, his reactions to the sadness of deaths, including Harold Wilson's, his curious trypanophobia (all right, fear of the needles of inoculation), his secret wish that Germany expropriate England from the 1996 Euro semi-final, his even more curious affection and support of Burnley, bouts of illness, depression, impatience and real anger which do not stop him working.

Kinnock on Blair:

"He's sold out before he's even got there... Tax, health, education, unions, full employment, race, immigration, everything, he's totally sold out."

At other times, we find him erupting volcanically at Clare Short who every time she opens her mouth, he judges, pours Labour votes down the drain. Poor Harriet Harman fares hardly any better, provoking legitimate outrage, as did Blair himself, when she, like him, chooses the Oratory School and abandons principle for privilege — 'it's not fucking Eton,' says Tony, backing her totally, while the rest of us want to skin her alive.

Elsewhere we discover that TB does an awful lot of cogitating in his underpants (*nota bene* Steve Bell) or just plain starkers.

And then we have the priceless revelation that Kinnock, no doubt resentful of young Blair's characterisation of our Party under his predecessors as a 'fucking joke', exploding in larval fury at Blair's courting of Murdoch, money and bankers: 'He's sold out before he's even got there... Tax, health,

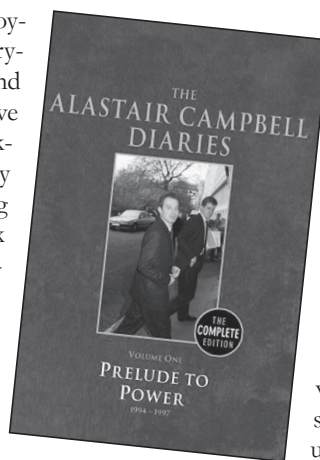
education, unions, full employment, race, immigration, everything, he's totally sold out. And for what? It won't matter if we win, the bankers and stock-brokers have got us already by the fucking balls, laughing their heads off.' Thus a prolix Welshman finally finds concision playing Cassandra.

On a lighter note, Robin Cook, under pressure from a tabloid, has to confess a long-past infidelity to Margaret, whom Campbell finds 'a mixture of sourness and misery.' And it's not long before Robin is at it again, this time with Gaynor but Campbell is on to this pretty speedily.

Much of this voluminous text concatenates daily the ever-changing dialectics of the 'big guns'. What a life it was for our diarist: Gordon is grumpy and grim but brilliant intermittently; Robin Cook's more consistent brilliance gets Gordon's goat, Prescott thunders about, feeling excluded, inadequately consulted and is invariably disjointed in his syntax; Tony worries about upsetting Gordon, knows he needs Prescott to placate union hostility and has to blend these key allies with all the other parasites and egomaniacs of the New Labour coterie.

This is a typical entry, capturing the swash and backwash of these interpersonal conflicts at the time of composition of the Road to the Manifesto; 'TB went quickly from his strong leadership mode to head-down, non-communicative, fed up. TB was unhappy that RC had neutered the section on the family. Peter M felt that it was not New Labour enough. JP complained that that he had not seen the latest draft. Liz said she thought it had too much Tony in it. It was all a bit bonkers... I had Ron Davies wanting to go out and do some mad new departure, JP still banging on about loyalty pledges and who said what to whom; it sometimes felt like a madhouse'. Nonetheless Campbell would have us believe that, during these opposition years, despite all the conflictual movements in the everyday surge of events and opinions, a Labour family was somehow formed and relentlessly focused itself on returning Labour to power.

It has to be said that New Labour's attempts to de-ideologise Party policy during these years and move us to the right, itself a totally ideological project, is nowhere more clearly exposed than in the plan to abol-



ish the old Clause IV. This is seen as a key strategy to capture public opinion and show that we had changed; it is also a precondition of victory as if, as Joe Haines has already pointed out, John Major had not already secured this victory for us and could not even win a raffle in which he had bought all the tickets.

One must also note that when Arthur Scargill finally, sadly and in desperation, gives up on the Labour Party, this band of brothers and sisters sees it as a pivotal moment in the great leap forward to government. How bereft then was Labour of Labour...

Perspective is everything in political life and history, and diaries always pose the problems of retrospection, especially when they are prepared for publication. The 'I' of the writer at the time of writing the diary and at the time of publication fuse and compound many time zones and memories. I shall look forward with real interest to reading the next and subsequent volumes to see New Labour jump for joy and finally die of heart failure in bed with the enemy. One other point: there is a good index and the 'running feet', summarising the major focus of each page, are brilliant (they were the idea of Richard Stott who edited *The Blair Years* but who died at its time of publication; this volume is dedicated to his memory).

BITEBACKS

'Any administration of the mines under nationalisation must not leave the mineworkers in the position of a mere wage-earner whose sole energies are directed by the will of another. He must have a share in the management of the industry in which he is engaged, he must feel that the industry is run by him in order to produce coal for the use of the community instead of profit for the few'.

(William Straker, Northumberland Miners' Leader, who sat on the Sankey Commission after WW1, quoted by Tony Benn, *Letters to my Grandchildren*, Hutchinson 2009).

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

KEY RULE CHANGE PROPOSALS ON THE AGENDA AT THE 2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN MANCHESTER

Delegates at this year's Conference at Manchester will have an opportunity to vote on several rule change proposals that will be moved by Constituency reps. These were submitted last year, but under an obscure convention (known as the '1968 Ruling') they are first referred to the NEC for its considered opinion and are not timetabled for debate and vote until the following year's Conference. This may seem a sensible procedure, but in practice it has not lived up to the intentions of its originators in 1968. The NEC was supposed to give thorough consideration to all proposed rule changes, but in fact the NEC hardly looks at them and every year invariably rejects all rule change suggestions from CLPs.

Unfortunately the situation is much worse this year because a whole range of important rule changes from some 23 CLPs and two unions have been ruled out of order by the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) in a very high handed manner.

■ OPPOSE CAC'S RULING — SUPPORT REFERENCE BACK

The CAC has ruled all these rule changes out by using a blanket application of the 'three-year-rule'. The CAC has employed an unfair and catch-all interpretation of the 'three-year-rule'. The rule states that, when a Conference decision has been made on a rule change proposal, no further amendment to that 'part' of the rules will be permitted for three years.

The key word here, of course, is 'part'. In other words, if a CLP amends a

completely different 'part' of a long clause in the Rule Book, compared to other parts that may have been recently amended, then that is in order. The CAC has ignored the significance of the word 'part' and applied a catch-all interpretation. This is unacceptable and any challenge from ruled out CLPs, insisting that the Rule Book is correctly interpreted, should be given full support. It is difficult enough for CLPs to have their voice heard in this Party, without the CAC gagging them.

Aggrieved delegates may go to the rostrum and seek redress by challenging the Chair of the CAC. Every delegate in the hall should do their best to support these challenges and oppose the gagging. It could be your CLP next!

The few important rule changes from CLPs that remain on the agenda to be debated in Manchester are:

■ ENDING THE DELAY BEFORE RULE CHANGES ARE TIMETABLED

(from Lancaster and Fleetwood CLP)

The procedure outlined in this rule change from Lancaster and Fleetwood CLP was precisely the procedure for changing the Party's Constitution employed at Annual Conference until 1968. But at the 1968 Conference it was agreed to adopt a convention so that in future all rule change proposals from trade unions and from CLPs (but not from the NEC) should be subject to a year's delay before being timetabled. The idea was that this would enable the NEC to examine the proposals in detail and at length and then make a considered response to the following year's Conference. The NEC's detailed response would then be timetabled at Conference alongside the rule change proposal. This convention may have been well intentioned but in practice the NEC invariably only gives cursory attention to their proposals and their response in usually one line.

The closing date for submitting rule amendments is normally early June and the Annual Conference is not until late September. Under the above proposed rule change the NEC would therefore have nearly 4



ALERT FOR DELEGATES

months to give the issue their attention; they do not need another whole year. All the 1968 convention does is annoy and frustrate the unions and CLPs. It is well past its 'sell by' date.

■ REFORMING THE RESELECTION TRIGGER BALLOT FOR MPS

(from East Lothian CLP)

The existing trigger ballot for the Reselection of MPs involves both Party branches and Trades Union and Socialist Society branches. East Lothian CLP is arguing that since the original selection of an MP is wholly by Party members, then the trigger ballot should also be entirely by Party members. East Lothian argues that the Unions never use their existing power other than simply supporting

the status quo ie. the sitting MP. There have been cases where the Party branches wanted a proper reselection process but were prevented from doing so by the unions voting for the status quo. This issue does need looking at, but it would be unreasonable to exclude the unions altogether. East Lothian should consider remitting their rule change proposal, but there should be some agreement that a better trigger ballot system will be brought forward for debate at a future Conference.

■ CLPS SHOULD HAVE A DISABILITY OFFICER

(from the Labour Party Disabled Members' Group)

This rule change provides for a disability officer in each CLP.

KEY VOTES IN PARTY ELECTIONS

Leadership:

vote Diane Abbott 1, Ed Miliband 2

NEC:

Treasurer: vote Diana Holland (Unite)

Constituency section: vote Ann Black, Ken Livingstone, Christine Shawcroft, Sam Tarry, Sofi Taylor, Peter Willsman

National Constitutional Committee

constituency section: vote Mark James

(Greenwich and Woolwich CLP)

Conference Arrangements Committee general section: vote Mick Murphy (Unite)

National Policy Forum

(constituency section):

for recommended candidates in your region ring 01865 244459

National Policy Forum

(councillors section):

vote Councillor Angela Cornforth

ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO REVIEW 2007 CHANGES AND THE WHOLE PARTNERSHIP INTO POWER PROCESS

In summer 2007, shortly after he became Leader, Gordon Brown submitted a document ('Extending and Renewing Party Democracy') to the NEC recommending a number of changes to Annual Conference procedures. Both the NEC and later Annual Conference accepted these changes. The main thrust of these proposals was to replace 'Contemporary Motions' by 'Contemporary Issues'.

Before the advent of New Labour, every CLP and Union could send motions and amendments to Conference and the whole agenda of Conference largely revolved around these motions. Tony Blair changed all that. Conference was downgraded to little more than a glorified rally, with only four motion subjects allowed onto the agenda for debate and vote. A further restriction was introduced in that these motions could only be 'contemporary motions', in other words they had to cover an issue arising after the end of July in each year.

Gordon Brown went even further. In 2007 'Motions' disappeared altogether. Their replacement, 'Contemporary Issues', cannot be voted on. They are debated and then remitted to the Policy Commissions of the NPF for further debate. The Policy Commissions then report on the progress of their deliberations to the following Annual Conference. These reports can either be voted on or remitted again to the NPF for yet more discussion and then another report to the next Conference. Perceptive readers will have concluded that these new arrangements are far from perfect. For this reason, in 2007, the Unions insisted that in 2009 there would be a review. The 2009 Annual Conference postponed the issue until the 2010 Conference. At Manchester a review of the whole Partnership into Power process will be launched. Several CLPs and Unions have already made suggestions for reform. These include:

That Conference must have the opportunity to express its clear view on matters of major political concern. This can only be done by voting on motions. Motions should therefore be reinstated.

The artificial criteria of 'contemporary' (restrictively interpreted as August onwards) should be dropped. CLPs and Unions should have the right to submit a motion on any matter of major concern.

The spirit of the '4 plus 4' rule for the Priorities Ballot at Conference should be properly honoured at every Conference – 4 subjects from the Unions and an additional 4 separate subjects from the CLPs.

At Conference there should be provision for voting in parts in relation to the lengthy NPF documents, instead of the current undemocratic practice of Conference having to vote on a whole document on an all-or-nothing basis.

Peter Willsman's

News from the NEC

A REPORT BY PETER WILLSMAN OF SOME OF THE MAIN ISSUES AT THE JULY NEC MEETING. PETER IS A CLP REP ON THE NEC SUPPORTED BY THE CENTRE-LEFT GRASSROOTS ALLIANCE AND IS CLPD'S SECRETARY.

Review of the party's policy making processes

It is now over 12 years since the Partnership in Power arrangements were adopted by Annual Conference. The NEC has agreed that



BITEBACKS

'Every gun that that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.'

(President Dwight D. Eisenhower, quoted by Tony Benn, *Letters to my Grandchildren*, Hutchinson 2009).

'People are always talking about the public interest but all they really care about is private property.'

(Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1516, also quoted by Tony Benn in the above).

'Terrorism is the war of the poor against the rich and war is the terrorism of the rich against the poor.'

(Peter Ustinov, again quoted by Benn as above).

'Thatcherism did not end with the defeat of the Conservatives in 1997; Mrs Thatcher awarded the new party an accolade. New Labour, she claimed, was her greatest achievement.'

(Tony Benn, again as above).

this year is an appropriate time for a full review to be undertaken. This review will be launched at the Annual Conference in Manchester. A consultation document will then be issued and submissions invited. The latter will all be considered by the NEC and then a report, containing a range of proposals, will be tabled at the 2011 Annual Conference. Conference will then be able to debate and vote on these proposals with the aim of improving our policy-making processes.

Supporting and increasing activity in CLPS

Not surprisingly, in the ten seats that had made the most voter contact, there was an overall swing to Labour.

The NEC is considering ways it could support local activity and, as a first step, is proposing to develop the following:

- a new training academy for staff, volunteers and activists.
- a trainee community organisers' scheme for marginal and core seat clusters.
- further development of free direct mail via Print Creator.

Since the General Election the Party has welcomed more than a thousand new members every week. 90% of these joined via the web, 41% were women and 1 in 3 were under 30.

General Election 2010 — mean regional swings (in all seats where Labour was in top two in 2005)

In Scotland there was a swing to Labour of 0.59%. The swing against Labour in the other regions was London 2.9%; North West 4.4%; Wales 4.72%; West Midlands 6.33%; Northern 6.45%; East Midlands 6.61%; Eastern 7.24%; South West 7.48%; South East 7.52%; Yorkshire & Humber 7.77%.

Labour council gains

Labour gained majority control in Brent, Camden, Coventry, Doncaster, Ealing, Enfield, Harrow, Hartlepool, Hastings, Hounslow, Islington, Lewisham, Liverpool, Oxford,

Southwark, St Helens, Waltham Forest.

Labour took minority control in Bradford, Leeds, Merton, Thurrock, Nuneaton and Bedworth.

2010 Annual Conference Agenda

At 4pm on Saturday 25 September our new Leader will be announced. On Sunday 26 September the review of policy-making will be launched ('Renewing Party Democracy'). Tuesday afternoon will be the Leader's speech. Wednesday afternoon will be Questions and Answers to the new Leader.

Labour groups to drive housebuilding campaign

Councillor Andy Walker Redbridge Labour Group Ilford South CLP

Labour Groups across the country must unite to highlight the dreadful shortage of decent affordable houses. Every Councillor will know families living in overcrowded flats with little chance of moving to a proper family house. Labour Councillors must work to create a consensus that it is in the national interest to build substantially more houses. This requires a sustained campaign, which has to start now and be a prominent feature of our next Labour manifesto. I want to encourage Labour Groups to send me proposals for new council housing in their authorities, which for planning or financial reasons are not being built now.

The aim is to collect so many proposals for new housing that the NEC will accept that it is best to publish the proposals on the Party website. Until such time as the Party agrees to this, I will publish them on my own ward site. The best of these proposals should also be part of our next Labour manifesto.

Labour Groups near parts of the Green Belt, underused parts of the Royal Estate or military bases must be encouraged to submit plans for development if they think that the land is suitable.

■ My email is andy.walker@talk21.com

TEL'S TALES

THE SHAME OF MACSHANE

In the *Observer* of 23 December 2007 Labour MP Denis MacShane wrote an open letter to Nick Clegg congratulating the latter on becoming the Lib-Dem leader.

MacShane boasted that he had 'shamelessly supported' Clegg's efforts to become a Sheffield MP. Of course if a rank and file Party member supported a rival politician in this way, they would soon be up for discipline before the National Constitutional Committee. But, under New Labour, there's one law for ordinary members and another for MPs.

In his open letter, MacShane wrote as follows; 'Before the 2001 election, I urged Labour voters in seats where Lib-Dem candidates were best placed to beat off Conservatives to vote tactically. I said that in Sheffield even though a good friend, one of the best young Labour Muslim politicians in Yorkshire, was trying to win your seat. We knew he would not and it is far better to keep dozens of Lib-Dem MPs in the Commons than see the Tories re-conquer Harrogate and Hallam and Eastleigh'.

THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

At the General Election, Gordon Brown wanted a clear message of 'Investment not cuts'. But Mandelson and the Blairites insisted that we must appease the Tory press and highlight our plans for reducing the deficit. Alistair Darling then did massive damage to Labour's campaign when he announced that Labour's cuts would be worse than Thatcher's.

Like the Bourbons, the Blairites learn nothing from history. They do not understand that the Tory attack on the public sector and on public spending is wholly ideological. The Tories deliberately create

unemployment, because to them it is a price worth paying. It forces down wages and eventually, they believe, gets profits flowing again. With every economic crisis someone has to pay to get the economy over it; either the rich or the poor have to suffer or both. The Tories always make sure the rich are protected.

"Investment (especially through government spending) is precisely what is needed"

Investment (especially through government spending) and thus economic growth, is precisely what is needed at the moment. After exchange controls were abolished in the 1980s, Labour was weakened relative to capital and this was reflected in the relative share of profits and wages. This meant that real wages were not growing fast enough to underpin final demand without excessive borrowing by wage earners. When the crunch came and the private sector cut back, government deficits were the natural counterpoint of the private sector's 'de-leveraging'. This remains the case. In fact

the UK is well placed to run a deficit — its average debt maturity is 14 years — ten year gilt yields are a mere 3.36% and the UK has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of any EU economy.

A comparison with the Great Depression in the early 1930s puts things into perspective. The latest Budget red book puts UK debt as 61.9% of GDP in 2010/11 (in 1932 the figure was 177%). It puts debt interest at 6.3% of total public expenditure in 2010/11 (this compares to 40% in 1932).

ANY LABOUR GOVERNMENT IS BETTER THAN A TORY GOVERNMENT

The Institute for Fiscal Studies found that anyone in the bottom half of the income distribution saw higher growth in real incomes under Blair and Brown than they did under Thatcher and Major. Anybody in the top half did better under the Tories.

Among the 23 members of the Coalition Cabinet, at least 17 are millionaires or multi-millionaires. History is likely to be repeated.



BITEBACKS

'To make the rich work harder you pay them more, to make the poor work harder you pay them less.'
(Paul Andrews, *Guardian*, 23/9/9).

'The credit crunch was not just a financial collapse but the collapse of an ideology. What response have we had to the crisis at the level of ideas? Virtually nothing.'
(Andrew Graham, an economist and master of Balliol College, Oxford, *Guardian*, 10/9/9).

'New Labourites caved in morally, economically and politically to the neo-liberal hegemony. Instead of showing there is something more than the market place they injected the corrosive values of competition and consumerism into what was left of the public realm and elevated the like of Tesco's Terry Leahy to gurus of the public sector.'
(Neal Lawson, *Chartist*, January/February 2010).

'The nightmare I sometimes have about this whole experience runs as follows... there may have been people making the actual policy decisions who never believed for a moment that this was the correct way to bring down inflation. They did,

however, see that it would be a very, very good way to raise unemployment. And raising unemployment was an extremely desirable way of reducing the strength of the working classes... that what was engineered there, in Marxist terms, was a crisis of capitalism which recreated a reserve army of labour and has allowed the capitalists to make high profits ever since.'

(Alan Budd 1992 talking about economic policies of the 80s, quoted by Professor R Davies, *Guardian*, 16/6/10).

'Privatising Failure: Subsidies to British rail in the decade before privatisation were £740 million a year. The private rail companies now get nearly £5 billion a year.'

Privatising electricity in Britain, New Zealand and California has only led to soaring prices and erratic supply.

10 of Britain's 11 worst prisons are private, according to a study in 2008. They had worse staffing levels, worse staff pay and conditions, and higher re-offending rates.'

(Warwick Funnell, Robert Jupe and Jane Andrew, quoted by Will Podmore, *Tribune*, 6/11/9 from *In Government We Trust; Market Failure and The Delusions of Privatisation*).



BITEBACKS

A sign of things to come from Nick Clegg the Thatcherite: 'I was at university at the height of Thatcher... Victory over a vested interest, the trade unions, was immensely significant; that was an immensely important battle for how Britain is governed.'
(Nick Clegg, *The Spectator*, 13/4/10).

WHY WE NEED A TRADE UNION FREEDOM CAMPAIGN AND TO STRENGTHEN THE LINK WITH LABOUR

The severity of the limitations placed upon trade union freedom in Britain today, and let's be clear about this, upon the rights of the people, of working women and men to act together in defence of their interests, is intolerable. It has to be challenged. But how? And what are the prospects for success?

Anti-union laws

The Tory governments of 1979 to 1997 introduced the banning of solidarity action, they gave the law control of union rule books including dictating how union leaders were to be elected, they threatened union finances with massive fines and civil claims, they forced through the most complex and onerous balloting rules for unions, they banned union membership agreements with employers, they threatened union political funds and the very existence of the Labour Party, they oversaw the most dramatic decline in collective bargaining coverage in the UK, they banned effective picketing, they created the basis for 'competitive trade unionism' whereby workers were given the legal right to join any union, they stopped unions from having the right under their rules to expel racists and fascists, and much more besides. All of this is still intact and handed to Cameron to build upon.

And tragically, as both feared and predicted by the LCDTU, the Labour governments of Blair and Brown have now achieved the one unimaginable feat of handing over to an incoming Tory government (after 13 years of Labour in power) a platform of vicious anti-union laws, virtually intact, all of which were enacted by previous Tory governments from the 1980s and 1990s. In the trade union movement, many unions, including the TUC itself, have policies calling for the repeal of all anti-union legislation. Also at present in Britain, two organisations exist outside of the official structures of the trade union movement which campaign for an end to anti-union laws. They are the 'United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Trade Union Laws', and, of course, the much longer established 'Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions'. Neither organisation has had much success in tackling the lack of trade union freedom in Britain, although not for the want of trying.

More anti-union laws?

And now we have the Con-Dems, effectively a new Tory government, albeit with the piti-

ful and slavish support of its Liberal Democrat friends, which is minded to introduce yet more restrictive anti-union laws. Witness David Cameron recently berating the democratic decision of BAA workers to vote for industrial action. 'These sorts of strikes never help anyone,' said Cameron. What he meant was 'strikes never help anyone'. Cameron's rationale of strikes as destructive and never helping anyone, inexorably leads to yet more anti-union restrictions on such 'unhelpfulness'. If strikes never help anyone, why tolerate them?

“The Labour Party was created to represent the cause of Labour — not of Capital”

But strikes of course do help. Very often. And more often than not, it is the mere threat of a strike that helps bring an employer to the bargaining table. Strikes in various industries, or the threat of strikes, have helped over many years to win improvements in pay and conditions, pensions, sick pay, health and safety, equality, redundancy, holidays and hours of work and in the rights of unions to organise effectively. Who believes that the massive improvements in working conditions won in struggle by trade unionists throughout the 20th century were after all, not actually 'won', but given 'freely and willingly' by employers and government to their deserving workforce without any pressure on them to do so? Utter rubbish! They were won directly as a result of both the threat and the reality of strikes. It is power that matters here. There is an unequal relationship between the individual worker and the employer. The employer has the power, not the individual worker. Collective worker power though is different, manifested as trade union power and necessarily expressed through industrial action. Let us be clear, strikes and the threat of strikes, have helped just about everyone at work, because improvements won in working conditions were never limited just to trade unionists, but were usually more generally applied to the whole workforce.

Which brings us to today's reality, one of massive restrictions upon unions and workers. The Tories will not end them and will in all likelihood add to them. The next Labour leader is highly unlikely to promise trade union freedom, and so unions have to

think afresh. It is to the unions themselves that we look for leadership in winning back the freedom for workers to be able to defend themselves effectively, in combination, collectively.

The Labour Party?

Unions should consider refocusing efforts upon Labour Party constituencies and begin rebuilding links at CLP level. Local trade unionists should be encouraged to get involved, because we must end the failed 'Party into Power' strategy of Tony Blair and the New Labour project. That strategy was designed to marginalise the unions, to neuter the Party Conference by stopping unions and constituencies from sending resolutions, to give the Party leadership control of the Party. It gave, in effect, the Labour government far too much power, influence and say over the Labour Party. Party members were in danger of becoming spectators in the process of policy making and decision taking. The task is for the Labour Party once again to re-assert itself so that there is a dynamic relationship with the shadow cabinet and any future Labour government, and not a subservient one. The Labour Party was created to represent the cause of Labour — not of Capital.

BARRY CAMFIELD NATIONAL ORGANISER LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF TRADE UNIONS (FORMER TGWU ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY)

Editorial note: this is the first part of Barry's article — the full version is available on the CLPD website (www.clpd.org).

BITEBACKS

'We have won political democracy and now we must go for industrial democracy'.

(Keir Hardie, quoted by Tony Benn in *Letters to my Grandchildren*, Hutchinson 2009).

TUC conference highlight



Fringe meeting: 'The unions and the Labour Party'

September 12, 6.00pm, Jury's Inn Hotel, Manchester (near conference centre)

Speakers:

Richard Ascough (GMB), **Mohammed Azam** (former Labour Party NEC member), **Billy Hayes** (CWU), **Diana Holland** (Unite and Labour Party NEC), **Michael Meacher MP**, **Cat Smith** (Compass Youth), **Barbara White** (Musicians' union)

Chair: Peter Willsman (CLPD secretary and Labour Party NEC).

Not to be missed

2011 CLPD AGM

Saturday
19 February

11.30am,
Conway Hall
Red Lion Square

Report of 2010 AGM
on CLPD website:
www.clpd.org.uk

DOUBLE RED ALERT:

**DON'T FORGET
TO READ THE
WILLSMAN GUIDE
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2010 EDITION —
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The indispensable hand-book for all delegates and anyone else who wants to understand what is really going on at Conference (available free of charge from 10 Park Drive, London, NW11 7SH or download from www.clpd.org.uk).

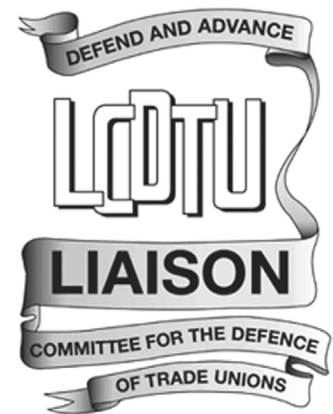
In a democracy, trade unions need to be able to represent their members, without the shackles of trade union laws.

Campaign for Trade Union Freedom

The committee is campaigning for the rights of trade unions and their members looking to organise and educate with our Bulletin and nationwide meetings.

For more information visit our website or e-mail us.

www.lcdtu.co.uk
liaison@blueyonder.co.uk



ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

**SATURDAY
25 SEPTEMBER,
BAR 38, PETER
STREET, MANCHESTER
(ADJACENT TO
CONFERENCE CENTRE)**

5.0 pm approx or as soon as delegates return from afternoon conference session. Grassroots Umbrella Network delegates' briefing and reception. Food and drink available.

Here delegates can meet each other, meet members of the NEC, TU general secretaries and MPs. Free for delegates (£5.00 others). Guest speakers invited: Diane Abbott MP, Katy Clark MP, Linda Riordan MP, Michael Meacher MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP, John McDonnell MP, Ann Black (chair of NEC), Peter Willsman (NEC, famed for his conference briefing), Christine Shawcroft (NEC), Peter Kenyon (NEC), chair: Tom Davidson (chair, Grassroots Umbrella Network).

**SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER
10.30AM, BAR 38, PETER
STREET, MANCHESTER
(ADJACENT TO
CONFERENCE CENTRE)**

CLPD rally and delegates' briefing with Mohammed Azam (former NEC member), Tony Benn, Ann Black (NEC), John Cryer MP, Maria Fyfe, Kelvin Hopkins MP, Jim Kennedy (UCATT), Michael Meacher MP, Teresa Pearce MP, Christine Shawcroft (NEC), Cat Smith (Compass Youth EC), Peter Willsman (NEC — special briefing for delegates).
Entry £2 (conc: 50p).

**WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 29,
6.00PM, BAR 38, PETER
STREET, MANCHESTER
(ADJACENT TO
CONFERENCE CENTRE)**

Conference assessment and the next steps for Labour with Mohammed Azam (former NEC member), Ann Black (NEC), Billy Hayes (CWU), Kelvin Hopkins MP, Mark Seddon (former editor of *Tribune* and former NEC member), Christine Shawcroft (NEC), Sam Tarry (Labour Youth), Peter Willsman (NEC).
Entry £1.00 (conc: 50p).

ABOUT CLPD AND ITS GAINS FOR PARTY DEMOCRACY

CLPD was formed in 1973 by a group of rank-and-file activists with support from about ten Labour MPs. The first President was Frank Allaun. The main motivation for the Campaign was the record of the Labour governments in the sixties and the way that Annual Conference decisions were continually ignored on key domestic and international issues. The immediate cause was Harold Wilson's outright rejection in 1973 of the proposal to take into public ownership some 25 of the largest manufacturing companies, covering the major sectors of the economy.

CLPD's first demand was, therefore, for mandatory reselection of MPs so that they would be under pressure to carry out Conference policies and be accountable to Party members. This demand was achieved in 1979/80 through the overwhelming support of CLPs and several major unions, especially those unions where the demand for reselection was won at their own annual conferences (eg. TGWU, AUEW, NUPE).

CLPD also sought to make the leader accountable through election by an electoral college involving MPs, CLPs and TUs. Previously Labour leaders were elected by MPs alone. This demand was achieved in January 1981 and was a great victory and advance for Party democracy, although some MPs saw it as a reason to defect and form the SDP, now defunct.

CLPD additionally promoted a range of reforms to give Labour women and black members greater representation within the Party. The main demand for a woman on every parliamentary shortlist was achieved over the period 1986-88.

“The major focus of CLPD’s work in recent years has been to win back the power for ordinary rank-and-file party members”

CLPD will sometimes promote seemingly non-democracy issues such as the significant extension of public ownership, defending the welfare state and the first-past-the-post electoral system (PR equals no Labour government). All such policies derive from our commitment to socialist values and socialist advance.

The major focus of CLPD's work in recent years has been to win back the power for ordinary rank-and-file party members, which has been surreptitiously transferred to the centre under the pretext of 'modernisation' and, ironically, 'extending Party democracy'.

To find out more about CLPD, visit our website at www.clpd.org.uk. CLPD can usually provide speakers for meetings, especially if requests are made well in advance. To arrange this, ring Francis Prideaux on 0208 9607460 and leave a message for him if you get the machine and not the man himself.

To join the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy please fill in the form below and return with a cheque payable to CLPD to: CLPD Secretary, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

I/we enclose £..... subscriptions/renewal/donation

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Annual rates: £20 individuals; £5 unwaged and low waged (under £8,000); £25 couples (£6 unwaged and low waged); £25 national & regional organisations; £15 CLPs, TUs and Co-op Parties; £5 CLP branches.