

Peter Willsman's

## NEWS FROM THE NEC

A report by Peter Willsman (0208 854 7326) of some of the issues at the January NEC meeting. Peter is a CLP rep on the NEC and has represented CLPs and members on the Party's National Committees since 1981. For more information visit [www.clpd.org.uk](http://www.clpd.org.uk) and [www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net)

- **Leader's Report**

Gordon Brown stressed that since the international banking system had broken down it was vital to have international agreement on a new system of global supervision. In April the government is hosting a Conference of world leaders to move this agenda forward. He highlighted that the policies of laissez faire have been completely exposed and that Labour, with its belief in the significance of the role of the state, can work towards a situation where markets and financial systems act much more in the public interest. Gordon stressed that our government must, above all, seek to protect the general public from the worst effects of the crisis, especially this means combatting unemployment. Ministers are looking at schemes in Germany and Holland, which subsidise training to avoid redundancies. There will be a considerable increase in jobs in the construction industry. Local authorities will be enabled to build houses and give mortgages. Northern Rock will be renamed and turned into a national lender. Ann Black said VAT reductions should be targeted rather than blanket. Dennis Skinner said the message should be that the Government is really only lending money to the banks, whereas it is giving real money to the public. Peter Willsman said the scandal of the tax havens should be addressed and that pressing local councils to hold down their budgets will mean a reduction in local services and investment, which is exactly the opposite of what is required to combat the crisis.

- **Vote 2009**

Harriet Harman and Douglas Alexander presented a detailed paper setting out the Party's organisational strategy for the 2009 elections. Many NEC members drew attention to the serious threat from the BNP. Tom Watson and Peter Willsman deplored the fact that due to the nonsense of proportional representation, the far right can win Euro seats with as little as some 8% of the vote.

- **Partnership in Power Report**

The chair of the NPF, Pat McFadden, came under heavy fire from Andy Kerr (cwu) and other union reps. for the latest moves against Royal Mail. The unions argued that what was being proposed was effectively a form of privatisation and was against the last Manifesto commitment and against NPF policy. Pat contended that this was not the case. Mike Griffiths asked about the understanding that there would be a second stage to Warwick II. Peter Willsman argued that all the CLPs, involved with the remitted Constitutional Issues from last year's annual conference, should be able to attend the relevant Policy Commissions. Pat's answers to both questions were somewhat equivocal.

- **EPLP**

Peter Willsman asked Glenis Willmot, the new leader of the EPLP, if the favourable trade agreement between the EU and Israel could be suspended, given that its human rights provisions have been violated. Glenis confirmed that there is a lot of sympathy with this point and that the agreement has been put on hold.