

CAMPAIGN

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for labour party democracy

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Call a moratorium on PFI

Eighty-three per cent of the public think public services should be publicly run. And that was even before the latest PFI revelations such as those involving air-traffic control and the Child Support Agency.

The common thread, whether we're talking railways, prisons or passports, is long-term profits for shareholders and long-term debts for the taxpayer – not to mention an unaccountable level (or even absence) of service, and the likelihood of a “two-tier” pattern of employment afflicting the lowest paid workers in particular.

One of the myths still peddled by the apologists for PFI is that the private sector takes on “risk”. In fact this argument is intrinsically flawed. Privateers contracted to provide an essentially public service know that at the end of the day the government will have to pay up whatever they demand or else face the wrath of the voters. And if all else fails it's not the fat cats who will have to bail out the service, but the taxpayers.

Blackpool gives us the opportunity to put a stop to the anti-social nonsense of PFIs and PPPs. Contemporary motions on PFI in practice are needed if the Government is to be told to ditch its Thatcherite dogma and start to recognise “what works”.

Did you know that

- The Rail Passengers' Council has received 146,288 formal complaints in the year ending March 2002 — even more than in the previous year ?
- Since 1996 public subsidies to the railways have amounted to £10 billion, while over the same period private companies' profits from the network have amounted to £7.5 billion.

This Newsletter contains our suggestions for contemporary resolutions to the 2002 Conference. CLPs can submit one contemporary resolution, provided they haven't already submitted a constitutional amendment this year. Contemporary resolutions must be on subjects not “substantively addressed in the NPF or NEC Reports”, or refer to events that occurred in late August or in September. The inclusion of such references increases the chances of the resolution being accepted.

● PFI in practice

“Conference notes recent revelations about the workings of PFI, in particular the statements of August 13 regarding further delays in introducing a new PFI computer system at the Child Support Agency.

“This system, originally due for introduction in April 2002, will now not be in use before the summer of 2003. The Child Poverty Action Group has pointed out that “every week's delay means that children in the poorest families receiving income support are losing up to £10 per week”. The US computer giant Electronic Data Systems, part of the consortium benefiting from the contract, has conveniently passed the buck by blaming the delay on the British government; and the Department of Work and Pensions has itself announced that questions alleging a £50 million over-run are too ‘commercially sensitive’ to be openly discussed.

“These statements clearly demonstrating the failings of PFIs follow hard on the heels of the July 30 report of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee concerning the PFI scheme involving Air Traffic services. This report notes both the company's flawed structure and the subsequent demand for an emergency government loan of £30 million, as well as pointing out that “the NAT's debt-level is crippling it both financially and organisationally, detracting from the primary focus of ensuring safe and reliable air travel.”

“Experience of PFI schemes in transport, the NHS, education, etc. shows that such schemes are unaccountable, uneconomic and unpopular, since they are geared to sacrificing the interests of the services' users and providers to those of the profit-motivated shareholders. Furthermore, the claim that PFI schemes transfer risk to the private sector is intrinsically flawed, because at the end of the day essential public services will always have to be rescued by the ordinary British taxpayer.

“In the light of these increasingly clear realities, Conference calls on the Government to announce a moratorium on all PFI and PPP schemes.”

Contemporary resolutions edition

● Let Ken back in

“Conference notes the letter of 31 July from the Greater London Labour Party announcing the closing date for receipt of applications to be Labour’s candidate for the London Mayoralty as 13 September 2002.

“Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to allow Ken Livingstone to rejoin the Labour Party and to reschedule the selection process for the Labour candidate for the 2004 London Mayoralty election in order to allow him to take part.”

On 23 July, the NEC voted 17 to 13 to prevent Ken Livingstone, rejoining the Party so that he could take part in the selection process to be Labour’s candidate for Mayor in 2004. This decision went against the wishes of 60% of London individual and 71% affiliated members.

As Mayor, Livingstone has pursued a programme consistent with Labour’s aims. It’s highly likely that the next London Mayoral election, will end up as a choice between a Conservative candidate and Livingstone.

Those opposing Livingstone’s readmission said he should not be made a special case when in reality he was made a special case by the selection process for the 2000 election. This was widely regarded as designed to prevent him becoming the Labour candidate. The NEC have now agreed that the candidate selection process for 2004 should be a 50:50 members:affiliates electoral college, correcting in part their decision of three years ago. To fully heal past divisions, Livingstone should be readmitted to the party to allow London members to choose their preferred candidate for Mayor in 2004.

The NEC’s decision sends a message to London members that the leadership doesn’t respect their democratic right to select the candidate of their choice. It presents a golden opportunity for the Tories to profit from Labour’s self-imposed divisions in the run up to a general election. CLPs are asked to submit the following contemporary resolution asking the NEC to reconsider.

Recent practice has been to suppress such resolutions, but sufficient support would ensure that were delegates forewarned they may instead choose to refer back the appropriate section of the NEC report.

CLPD NPF and CAC slate 2002

NATIONAL POLICY FORUM

Scotland : **Pauline Bryan, Simon McFarlane**

Yorkshire: **Eddie Hart, Ann Scarrett**

East Midlands: **Roy Mayhew, Ann Syrett**

West Midlands: **Nigel Knowles**

Eastern: **Russell Cartwright**

London: **Dorothy Macedo, Linda Oram, Cathrine Tuit**

South East: **Charmaine Morgan, Mick Moriarty**

South West: **Keith Evans, Julie Snelling**

CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE:

Aileen Colleran, John Cryer

● Don’t carve-out the CLPs

“This Conference believes that failure to give constituency parties direct input into Conference will lead to a further decline in CLP membership and participation. Conference is therefore concerned that, despite the assurances which they gave to the 2000 and 2001 Conferences, neither the National Executive Committee nor the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) appear to have produced any satisfactory proposal for the selection of Contemporary Motions to be debated at Conference.

“Conference recalls that an equitable proposal to the 2000 Conference from the TGWU suggested that 4 Contemporary Motions should be selected by the CLPs and 4 by the affiliated organizations. This was remitted to the NEC on the understanding that serious attention would be given to introducing measures to address the problem of CLPs’ feelings of disfranchisement. This Conference regrets that as of September 2002 no adequate measures appear to have been proposed.

“The current procedure for Contemporary Motions in effect awards just one motion to each of the Party’s 4 largest affiliates. The minor amendment to this procedure now advanced by the CAC would allow an additional motion to be timetabled but only if its subject were prioritized by over 50% of all CLPs, something which is never going to happen in real life.

“In the interests of maximising unity between all sections of the Party, this Conference now calls on the NEC to recognise that the CAC’s proposals do not meet previous assurances. Accordingly Conference calls on the NEC to lend its weight and support to the proposal for 4 motions chosen by the CLPs and 4 by the affiliates.”

Constituency delegates deserve to be treated with more respect than the expensive wallpaper favoured by some Cabinet members. The current practice for selecting Contemporary Motions for Conference carves CLPs out of the process. The 4 Motions allowed are effectively chosen by agreement between the Party’s 4 largest affiliated trade unions.

Two years ago the TGWU proposed that 4 motions be chosen by CLPs to go alongside the 4 chosen by the unions. This was remitted to the NEC on the understanding that they’d come up with something at least as good.

Last year the CAC acknowledged that (as their own consultation showed) the principle of giving the CLPs a genuinely fair say has widespread support. In response, the CAC has produced a mouse. Nevertheless their derisory amendment is hailed by the current CLP representatives Yvette Cooper and Stephen Twigg as “great progress”. The largest number of motions on a single topic that the 500 or so CLPs ever sent to Conference was in the region of 100 - less than half the CAC’s minimum requirement for awarding CLPs one resolution.

CLPs should now insist that they be given their fair and proper say at Conference. The health of our Party demands nothing less.

Contemporary resolutions edition

The content of the resolutions on this page is self-explanatory.

● Keep the Link

“Conference is concerned at the recent reports which have suggested that Downing Street will be considering proposals – following the publication of an IPPR report into the state funding of political parties in the autumn – which would reduce the current method of trade union affiliation to individual and local affiliation. This proposed ‘reform’, if acted on, would, by removing the ability of the unions to affiliate at the national level, end the unions’ role as an integral part of the party.

“The unions, which were responsible for the foundation of the Labour Party over 100 years ago have already voluntarily given up much of their influence in the Party. Conference believes that to end the unions’ involvement at the national level would end the party’s link with the organised working class and its commitment to social justice.

“Conference therefore strongly reaffirms that the trade unions should remain an integral part of the Labour Party at all levels.”

● Membership fees – Think Again

“This Conference notes the grave financial crisis facing the party, due in part to falling membership and reduced financial contributions from unions and business. Conference is concerned, however, that the NEC-proposed increases in individual subscriptions – the standard rate is to go up from £18.50 to £24, and the reduced rate from £7 to £12 – grossly underestimate the impact this will have on membership.

“Conference is perturbed that the 71% increase in the membership fee for those paying the reduced rate is proportionately two and a half times the size of that proposed for members paying the standard rate. This discriminates against those members who are most socially disadvantaged. The reduced rate is intended to make it easier for those on low incomes to join the Party.

“The proposal, if accepted, is also likely to be financially self-defeating. Many of the sixty percent of members paying the reduced rate will let their membership lapse and potential recruits will be deterred from joining.

“Conference notes that the NEC didn’t give sufficient consideration to the political and financial effects of the proposed increases. Consequently its Report fails substantively to address this subject. Conference therefore urges the NEC to limit the increase in reduced membership subscription to the rate of inflation.”

● No to War on Iraq

“Conference is alarmed by the increasingly frequent calls for a pre-emptive strike against Iraq such as that made in the US Vice-President’s speech on 26 August.

“Conference is aware of:

- a) the view of government lawyers, made public on 29 July, that Britain’s participation in an invasion would be illegal under international law;
- b) the view of most western experts, including former weapons inspector Scott Ritter, that no evidence exists to substantiate claims that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction;
- c) the growing opposition to war on Iraq, which now extends from former chief of defence staff Field Marshall Lord Bramall to the new Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams;
- d) successive opinion polls against war on Iraq, including the ICM-Guardian poll of 28 August which showed a clear majority of Labour voters opposed to Britain supporting it.

“Conference believes that:

- a) all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction are of concern, including those of the United States and Britain;
- b) a war on Iraq would greatly aggravate the present crisis in the Middle East;
- c) diplomatic and political solutions to the situation in Iraq should be sought within the framework of international law.

“Therefore conference:

- a) congratulates those Labour MPs who have made public their unease over a war on Iraq;
- b) welcomes the news that the Prime Minister is rethinking his position and urges the British government not to support a war on Iraq.”

● NO to State Funding

“Conference notes the interview with Labour Party General Secretary David Triesman, in the *Independent* on 26 August in which his support for increased state funding for political parties is stated. Conference also notes the £100,000 emergency donation from affiliated trade unions to the Party agreed at the meeting of the trade union liaison committee on 29 July.

“Conference believes that for Labour to introduce greater state funding of political parties would:

1. violate the basic civil liberty that, in a democracy, citizens should be able to decide for themselves whether, and to which party, they donate money. Taxpayers should not be obliged to fund political parties which they do not support.
2. eliminate the accountability of Labour’s elected representatives to the constituency parties and trade unions.
3. damage Labour’s prospects in the next general election.

“Conference therefore resolves to oppose increased state funding of political parties.”

Vote for Rule Changes

Several organisations chose to submit to the 2001 Conference constitutional amendments instead of resolutions on contemporary issues. These will be taken at this year's Conference as the NEC has a year to consider whether to endorse them. Below we reproduce the amendments and the sections of the rule book to which they refer. As all of the proposed changes we list would give CLPs more say in policy making and internal party elections it is important that CLP delegates should be mandated to support them.

The national rules of the Labour Party

Section A

Chapter 1: Constitutional rules

Clause VIII — The National Executive Committee

● Stop railroading policy

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PARTY CONSTITUTION

CLAUSE VIII — THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1.VIII 4 reads as follows:

"In furtherance of its primary purpose and key functions, the duties and powers of the NEC shall include:

- (i) to establish and oversee a National Policy Forum, Policy Commissions and a Joint Policy Committee to produce a rolling programme for submission to party conference. The NEC shall also produce guidelines to the establishment and operation of local policy forums."

Constitutional Amendment

submitted by the **Socialist Educational Association**

Line 4: after "party conference" insert:

"The NEC shall ensure that the NPF involves party members, units of the party and affiliated organizations in its deliberations. In particular, it will ensure that all drafts of reports that are to be presented to conference are first circulated to constituency parties and affiliated organizations in sufficient time for them to submit amendments to the national policy forum before the final report is agreed."

This lays down that in future NPF Reports that are to be presented to Conference are first circulated to CLPs and affiliated organizations in time for them to submit amendments to the NPF before the final report is agreed. This would be an important democratic reform. It would ensure that submissions from CLPs are given more attention by the NPF - at present they disappear without trace.

Chapter 3: Constitutional rules

3C Procedural Rules for Party Conference

● More Grassroots Reps

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PARTY CONSTITUTION

RULE 4 — ELECTION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

3C4.1 reads as follows:

"For the purpose of nomination and election the NEC shall be divided into five divisions: ...

- (c) Division III (Constituency Labour Parties) 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."

Constitutional Amendment

submitted by **Bury St Edmunds CLP**

Delete existing sub clause and insert:

"Division III (constituency labour parties) shall consist of 8 members, at least 4 of whom shall be women ..."

This will increase the constituency section of the NEC from six seats to eight. At annual conference CLPs have voting parity with the unions and other affiliated organisations. But on the NEC the unions have twelve seats and the CLPs only six. Up until 1997 the CLPs had seven seats, but the "modernisation reforms" of that year considerably increased the size of the NEC, but reduced the CLPs by one seat. The long-term aim should be parity with the unions. Bury St Edmunds are proposing a step in that direction.

CLPD Guide to Annual Conference

CLPD has recently published its Guide to Conference 2002. It is written by Pete Willsman who has represented CLPs on the NEC, Conference Arrangements Committee, National Policy Forum and National Constitutional Committee. The Guide

- covers the Conference timetable (including contemporary issue motions; rule changes; National Policy Forum Reports);
- outlines the daily business (including Priorities ballot; compositing, voting for the Conference Arrangements Committee and National Policy Forum);
- provides guidance on Conference procedures and conventions;
- gives tips on making a speech.

A copy of the Guide can be obtained from CLPD:
e-mail clpd@bun.com or 'phone 0208 458 1501

● No Lords in the NEC CLP Section

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PARTY CONSTITUTION

3C 4.3 (c) reads as follows:

“Commons members of the Parliamentary Labour Party and members of the European Parliamentary Labour Party shall be ineligible for nomination to Divisions I, II, III, and IV of the NEC”

Constitutional Amendments

submitted by **Kingston Upon Hull East CLP**

Line 2: after “Party” add a comma and insert: “members of the second chamber/House of Lords”

submitted by **GMB Tailors**

Add end: “Lords members of the Parliamentary Labour Party shall be ineligible for nomination to Division III.”

submitted by **East Yorkshire CLP**

Line 2 after “Labour Party”, Insert: “Members of the House of Lords/second chamber”

This rule change will prevent members of the House of Lords standing in the Constituency Section of the NEC. The original intention was that this section would be a “genuine grassroots” section without parliamentarians. The GMB and the two CLPs are seeking to bring the rule into line with the original intention.

● Stop all-or-nothing Votes

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PARTY CONSTITUTION

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 issues submitted and accepted. It shall not consider any business unless recommended by the NEC or the CAC. At any special session of party conference, the NEC shall determine the business to be conducted.”

Constitutional Amendment

submitted by **Westmoreland and Lonsdale CLP**

Add at end:

“Conference has the right to refer back part of any policy document without rejecting the policy document as a whole.”

This would give Conference delegates the right to refer back part of any policy document without having to reject the document as a whole. This is a simple democratic procedure that the platform has always refused to accept.

● Ungag CLPs

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PARTY CONSTITUTION

RULE 2 – AGENDA

3C2.3 reads as follows:

“All affiliated organisations 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.

**Conference Arrangements Committee*

Constitutional Amendment

submitted by **Castle Point CLP**

Line 8: after conference insert:

“This ballot will be divided into two sections. One section for CLPs and one section for trade unions and affiliated organizations. At least the first four priorities selected by CLPs will be timetabled for debate, as will at least the first four priorities selected by trade unions and other affiliated organisations.”

Constitutional Amendment

submitted by **Erith and Thamesmead CLP**

After line 8, insert:

“This ballot will be divided into two sections, one section for CLPs and one section for trade unions and affiliated organisations. In general, but depending on a final recommendation from the Conference Arrangements Committee, the first four priorities selected by CLPs will be timetabled for debate, as will the first four priorities selected by trade unions and other affiliated organizations.”

This rule change provides for at least 8 contemporary issues to be considered at every annual conference, rather than only four as at present. Four would be chosen in the Priorities Ballot by CLPs and four by the unions. At present the major unions determine all of them by voting as a block.

For the past two years the CAC has been indicating that it is prepared to give CLPs more say. So far nothing has changed.

The CAC even carried out a consultation exercise which showed an overwhelming demand from CLPs for more influence. this year It is likely that the CAC will propose a cosmetic change, which in practice will be no improvement on the status quo. The way forward for CLPs is along the lines proposed by Castle Point and Erith and Thamesmead.

Best ever vote — 2002 NEC Elections

This year's election for the NEC's six constituency places shows continued advance by candidates supported by the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance. Compared with last year their share of the vote went up by 4.5%. There was a corresponding decline in the vote for the Right-of-Centre candidates. This means that for the first time the vote received by Centre-Left and Centre-Right was the same.

This favourable result was not reflected in an increase in seats gained. In 2001 the 'Grassroots Alliance candidates' benefited from a split in the Centre-Right vote. Then eight Centre-Right out of fourteen candidates competed not just with the Grassroots Alliance six, but also with each other. Hence their advantage in votes (54.5% as against 45.5% cast for Centre-Left) was not translated into seats.

With total vote distributed between 12 instead of 14 candidates the share of the vote of each of them was likely to go up. The present advance of GA can therefore be seen only in the relative improvement of the position of its candidates. The gap between the Centre-Right Tony Robinson and the three GA candidates who won the second, third and fourth places has significantly narrowed. More obviously half of the 9.00% of the votes which separated the Centre-Right from Centre Left in 2001 went to the Grassroots Alliance this year. As the result Tony Robinson's share went up only very slightly, while Shahid Malik's remained virtually the same. In contrast Ann Black's the vote went up by 0.66%, Christine Shawcroft's by 0.33%

and Mark Seddon's by 0.89%.

This pattern was less pronounced in the results of candidates who were not elected. Here the Centre-Right did rather better. Val Price increased her share of the vote by 1.95% and Peter Wheeler by 1.42%. But the Grassroots Alliance also did reasonably well. Pete Willsman recorded an increase of 1.04%, Rozanne Foyer 0.89% and Kumar Murshid 0.66%.

Last year's, and previous years' gap between the votes cast for men and women candidates was wiped out. For the first time the women candidates got more votes than male candidates (157,006 and 154,895 respectively). Interestingly it was the votes for the GA women which were responsible for closing the gap between Centre-Left and Centre-Right. This year the GA women's share of the poll was 26.60% (24.66% in 2001) while Centre-Right women's share was 23.72% (24.75% in 2001), Centre-Right men's share was 26.36% (29.86% in 2001) whilst GA men continued to lag behind with 23.29% (20.72% in 2001). Detailed results are shown below.

The number of votes cast was higher than last year. This despite the fall in the I party membership. The shift to the Centre-Left suggests dissatisfaction with the leadership, more pronounced among Labour women than men. This may reflect a change in the national mood, as indicated both in opinion polls and recent trade union elections. With policy differences between the main parties narrowing the official opposition lacks credibility opposition to "New Labour" policies is now finding expression within the Labour Party.

2002	Votes	%	% change	2001	Votes	%
Elected						
Tony Robinson (MT)	35,316	11.32	+ 0.13	Tony Robinson (MT)	29,771	11.19
Ann Black (GA)	31,179	9.99	+ 0.66	Ann Black (GA)	24,947	9.33
Christine Shawcroft (GA)	29,537	9.46	+ 0.38	Christine Shawcroft (GA)	24,284	9.08
Mark Seddon (GA)	29,110	9.33	+ 0.89	Shahid Malik (MT)	23,727	8.87
Shahid Malik (MT)	27,784	8.90	+ 0.03	Mark Seddon (GA)	22,559	8.44
Ruth Turner (MT)	27,100	8.69	+ 1.14	Ruth Turner (GA)	20,178	7.55
Not Elected						
Val Price (MT)	26,609	8.53	+ 1.95	Pete Willsman (GA)	18,602	6.96
Pete Willsman (GA)	24,985	8.00	+ 1.04	Baroness Gould (MT)	17,751	6.64
Rozanne Foyer (GA)	22,272	7.14	+ 0.89	Val Price (MT)	17,595	6.58
Mari Williams (MT)	20,309	6.51		Rozanne Foyer (GA)	16,692	6.25
Peter Wheeler (MT)	19,142	6.13	+ 1.42	Kumar Murshid (GA)	14,227	5.32
Kumar Murshid (GA)	18,653	5.98	+ 0.66	Willie Sullivan (MT)	13,819	5.17
				Peter Wheeler (MT)	12,498	4.67
				Valerie Vaz (MT)	10,636	4.00

GA = Centre Left Grassroots Alliance MT = Overt or covert support by Millbank

NEC Report 23.07.2002

The most important items on the agenda were Ken Livingstone's application to rejoin the Labour Party, the procedure for the Mayoral selection in 2004 and the raising of membership subscriptions.

The main charge against Ken was that he broke party rules by standing against an official party candidate — an offence that carries automatic exclusion from the party for five years. During a two-hour heated discussion little was said about the circumstances surrounding his offence. These unquestionably were the electoral college. This college — devised to make Livingstone's candidature near impossible — not what Livingstone did or said — was the real cause of what happened. Today most NEC members concede that the college was a "bad one". But only Tony Robinson seem to have hinted that it was the way the London selection had been manipulated which produced the difficult situation the London party is now faced with. Robinson argued that while there are boundaries that a party member cannot cross with impunity, there were also boundaries that the party cannot cross. In this instance it did so with impunity. Such and similar high-handed actions is why many members today feel that the party is authoritarian, controlling, fixing elections and it is this which has caused substantial drop in party membership.

In the electoral college the NEC devised for the mayoral election in 2000 one third of the votes was virtually reserved for people whose loyalty to New Labour was ensured - thanks to prior screening by Blairite apparatchiks with the rest going along with it. The democratic process had been "corrupted" by manipulation from above. Having produced this situation the NEC is now hardly in a position to sit in judgement on the consequences of their actions. The failure to drive this point home meant that most of the time the NEC spent discussing the sanctity of party rules and the need for discipline and loyalty. When finally the vote was taken, those in favour of Ken's readmission were: Ann Black, Nancy Coull, Mike Griffiths, Diane Hayter, Diana Holland, Helen Jackson, Maggie Jones, John Keggie, Sally Powell, Tony Robinson, Mark Seddon, Christine Shawcroft, and

Mary Turner. Those against were : Jeremy Beecham, Tony Blair, Michael Cashman, Charles Clarke. John Gibbins, John Hannett, Vernon Hince, Helen Liddell, Shahid Malik, Ian McCartney, Blair McDougall, Simon Murphy, John Prescott, Dennis Skinner, Cath Speight, Ruth Turner Margaret Wall.

The next item was the procedure for choosing Labour candidate for London Mayoral election. Options were: (1) OMOV ballot (individual members only); (2) the same college as last time; (3) and (4) variations on 60% individual members and 40% unions; (5) 50/50 between individual and affiliated members. Charles Clarke supported Option 1 (which would exclude the unions) apparently on the basis that the unions couldn't agree on which of the options to adopt. Vernon Hince, preferred Option 2 — since he didn't see why MPs, MEPs and GLA members should be excluded, but other affiliated organisations' representatives wanted a different college. Clarke suggested that Option 1 was acceptable, but Mike Griffith said that there had not yet been a vote. When the vote was taken 10 were for Option 1 and 17 including Black, Seddon and Shawcroft were against. Option 5 was carried by 15 votes to 10.

Finally there was a report on "Improving Recruitment" which included proposals for increases in membership fees. The following options were put forward: **Reduced Rate:** Options: **A** £7.50; **B**. £12; **C** £9.50 from 2003 and £12 from 2004. **Standard Rate:** **A**. £24; **B**. £19; **C**. to £21. Lengthy discussion followed. Dennis Skinner proposed that to encourage everybody else, MPs should give a one off payment of £1,000 and ministers should give more. There was substantial support for collecting the subs monthly or quarterly. When the Options were put to vote, 16 voted for a £12 increase in the reduced rate from January 2003, only 7 members (Black, Hince, Seddon and Shawcroft among them were in favour of keeping the reduced rate at £7.50. The standard rate at £24 also received 16 votes.

(We regret that we were unable to give more space to the NEC Report. A substantial version is available from CLPD on request.)

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**Labour Party
Annual Conference 2002 Blackpool**

*Campaign for Labour Party
Democracy Pre-Conference Rally*

Keep the Party Labour — Keep the Link

**Sunday 29 September
10am to 12.30 — Doors Open 9.30
Regency Suite, Ruskin Hotel, Albert Road**

**Speakers: Tony Benn, Ann Black,
Aileen Colleran, John Cryer MP,
Rozanne Foyer, Kumar Murshid,
Alice Mahon MP, Mark Seddon,
Christine Shawcroft,
Dennis Skinner MP**

**Special Briefing for delegates :
Pete Willsman
Chair: Manuela Sykes**

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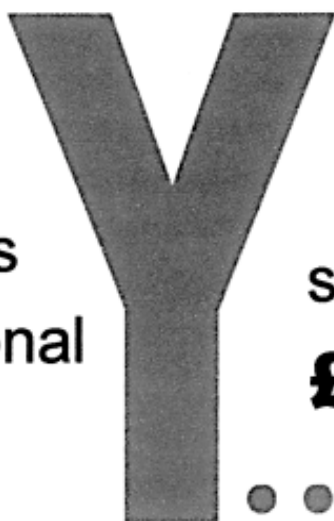
The Palace Nightclub
The Promenade, Blackpool
Tuesday 1st October 2002
Rally: 7pm - 8.30pm
Party: 9pm until late

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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