

CAMPAIGN BRIEFING

CLPD publication for CLPs and Labour Party Members www.clpd.org.uk (where this newsletter can be downloaded). For detailed and exclusive NEC and NPF reports, internal Party news and debates including *Shenanigans*, visit www.grassrootslabour.net and for lively debates where you can contribute, visit www.leftfutures.org or twitter.com/clpd_labour

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EDITOR: RAY DAVISON

EAST DEVON CLP AND

CLPD SW REGIONAL ORGANISER

All enquiries: R.Davison@exeter.ac.uk

Telephone 01395 277481

or email CLPD: info@clpd.org.uk

LOOKING AHEAD WITH THE UNIONS TO A LABOUR VICTORY

**BILLY HAYES,
GENERAL SECRETARY CWU**

All the signs are that Labour will form a majority government in 2015. Lord Ashcroft's larger opinion polls all indicate that the Tories and Lib Dems are going to lose a lot of seats to Labour.



David Cameron seems to agree. This realisation forced him into a large Cabinet reshuffle in an attempt to find more presentable faces for the Tories. This will fail, as the faces aren't the problem, it's the policies.

This realisation is also dawning upon establishment forces in the media. We can expect many more of the character assassination attempts against Ed Miliband that we've witnessed recently. Our opponents will fight dirty because that is their character.

Clearly, there's a premium on the unity of our movement to secure Labour's victory. In these few months before May, we have to concentrate our resources on winning every vote and seat possible.

But, we cannot pretend that all policy debate is resolved. Nor can we avoid continued discussion about the implementation of reforms following Collins' recommendations being accepted by the Spring Conference.

The decisions of the National Policy Forum have laid the basis for Labour's manifesto. This is our electoral offer to the British people. It should be good enough to win in

2015. Yet no one should seriously regard it as a sufficient basis for government until 2020.

After the victory of the Conservatives in the 1951 General Election, there is a famous incident where the new government reduced the anticipated Armed Forces Budget. Churchill pointed out, in Parliament, how this decision of the Tories was in line with the stance of Bevan against the over-inflated military spending plans of the Labour leadership.

Equally, after the 1997 General Election, the Labour government held itself to Tory spending limits for the first period of Parliament. Kenneth Clarke, the Tory Chancellor who proposed these limits previously, said that he wouldn't have stuck to them after the election.

It is this seam of pragmatism that has allowed the Tories to survive and remain influential. Unfortunately, Labour politicians frequently fail to demonstrate this admirable quality. Instead, they torment themselves about appearing unpatriotic, or against the armed forces. Currently, the inflexible dogma is to appear more responsible about the economy than the Tories.

An incoming Labour government must assess the economic situation much more flexibly than it is able to do in opposition. The dramatic and continuing cuts in living standards of the majority of people in this country require serious action from a Labour government. Sticking to Tory spending targets, which in government the Tories would probably ditch, is one-way that an incoming Labour government could make itself deeply unpopular.

(cont. on p2)

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ALERT 2014

**BY PETER WILLSMAN,
SECRETARY CLPD AND
MEMBER OF CONFERENCE
ARRANGEMENTS
COMMITTEE (CAC)
1981-1994**

**BRIEFING ON KEY RULE
CHANGE PROPOSALS
FROM CLPS COMING UP
AT MANCHESTER**

At Manchester delegates will be debating and voting on (by card votes) a number of key changes to our Party's Rule Book. Some of these will be tabled by the NEC. But there are also a number of very important rule change proposals tabled by CLPs. They were submitted last year, but under an obscure convention (known as the '1968 Ruling') have been delayed for a year. This ruling does not apply to rule changes from the NEC. The NEC can agree rule changes one week and have them voted on by conference the following week!

It is vital that delegates ensure that the CLP proposals are given a fair hearing and are not brushed aside. (For full details of these Constitutional Amendments (rule changes) see the Delegates' Report booklet for Manchester).

Last year, in addition to the rule changes from CLPs that have slipped through the CAC's nets, there were no fewer than a further eight rule changes submitted by a total of 14 CLPs

(cont. on p10)

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO ENSURE A WIDE CIRCULATION.

NO TO AUSTERITY, YES TO INVESTMENT AND A LABOUR EMERGENCY BUDGET

MICHAEL BURKE

The 'recovery' in Britain is driven by rising household debt and a housing bubble. Inequality is rising and living standards are falling for the overwhelming majority. These are a direct consequence of austerity. To achieve a different outcome, Labour's economic policy will have to be radically different.

The British economy has a huge deficit in productive investment (transport, infrastructure, housing, machinery and equipment), which accounts for economic stagnation and low wages. To end austerity Labour must be able to direct investment to key areas of the economy.

The Labour front bench has said it will borrow for investment. It will also invest in childcare, which yields a return from increased employment and pay, and in turn boosts tax revenues and lower social security payments. But the lost level of investment is now £300bn and rising by £50bn annually. This means much bolder measures are required to avoid permanently embedding poverty and slow growth.

Government can currently borrow at below the rate of inflation. But because of the scale, borrowing cannot be the only answer. Many other measures can be used to boost investment and prosperity at no cost to government. These include the following.

Direct the banks to lend. Ownership or control over the large banks means the government could direct lending away from financial speculation, like housing and towards productive investment.

Transform existing schemes. All the schemes like the notorious Help to Buy could be reversed, to become Help to Build

– a £40bn government guarantee to local authorities to fund council house building. Subsidising nuclear power profits could be replaced with investment in renewable energy, and so on.

Waste. Over the next two years alone PFI will cost £17bn. There should be no new PFI contracts under Labour, existing contracts should be strictly enforced with a view to ending them. Outsourcing can be reversed, saving billions.

Scrap Trident and cut military spending. Any Trident replacement will cost £100bn and serve no purpose. Military spending should be cut. Other successful EU economies survive without either nuclear weapons or Britain's bloated military spending.

Tax. The Coalition cut the 50p tax rate and corporation tax while increasing VAT. It also removed tax incentives for genuine investment. All these measures can be reversed at no fiscal cost. The tax gap could be closed considerably by targeting the largest tax-avoiding firms, including multinationals.

Ending private sector subsidies. Many firms receive billions in government subsidies, from the rail franchisees, to energy companies, to leeches on the NHS. If the firms cannot survive without subsidy, then their activity belongs in the public sector.

Renationalisation. The privatised rail firms, energy and utility companies and Royal Mail have all hiked prices, made huge payouts to shareholders and to executives and cut vital investment while receiving subsidies from the government.

Labour could renationalise these companies and receive these shareholder dividends, which are much higher than the govern-

ment's cost of borrowing. The extra resources could be used for deficit-reduction or for further investment.

Living standards. The Living Wage should become the Minimum Wage and be strictly enforced. Rights should be restored for workers, including collective bargaining.

Equality. The wage gap for women needs to be tackled by punitive measures on extortionate employers. Laws against job and other discrimination need to be strictly enforced.

The same approach is needed to combat discrimination against black and Asian people and ethnic minorities. A growing economy will also attract needed immigration, and should be welcomed.

There are many other measures that could be taken and these are only an outline. The Coalition has eased up on the pace of austerity since the 'omnishambles' Budget, but the intention is for it to resume with a vengeance post-2015. Labour can win and succeed in government by offering a real alternative.

• Michael Burke blogs for *Socialist Economic Bulletin* (bit.ly/SocialistEcon)



BITEBACKS

'You can't control what you don't own, so the private ownership of public goods needs to be ended so that key parts of our economy are democratically controlled and accountable. If you privatise public infrastructure and services, you end up privatising the public interest too.' (Andrew Fisher: *The Failed Experiment*, Radical Read 2014.)

'The loss of democratic control over the financial system in general and private credit creation in particular means that the state cannot regulate in the interests of society as a whole.' (Ann Pettifor: *Just Money*, 2014.)

'Sticking to Tory spending limits and solving the cost-of-living crisis are contradictory policies. We must ensure that a Labour government resolves this in favour of the latter, not the former.' (Billy Hayes, *Campaign Briefing* 78.)

(Billy Hayes cont. from previous page)

Sticking to Tory spending limits and solving the cost-of-living crisis are contradictory policies. We must ensure that a Labour government resolves this in favour of the latter, not the former.

In 2015 the whole constitution of the Party is to be changed by the introduction of "affiliated supporters" from political levy payers. However we view the decisions of the Spring Conference, there is a challenge for all now to show that Labour is relevant to trade union members.

The CWU is intending to offer the

chance of becoming an affiliated supporter to every CWU levy payer before the General Election. Such efforts have to be met by the Labour leadership showing a preparedness to respond to trade union concerns.

The agreement at the NPF to establish a Commission on the modern workplace is an important step in that direction. The commission will, we hope, lay the basis for a progressive reform of the labour market. We must move away from systemic insecurity at work. We need workplaces conditioned by respect, equality and rising living standards. This is a challenge which Labour must meet.

THE NPF AT MILTON KEYNES

MARIA FYFE, FORMER MP FOR GLASGOW MARYHILL AND NPF MEMBER REPRESENTING SCOTLAND

To put things in perspective, I will begin with a brief account of Warwick 2. In 2008, for the first time, the CLPs had the right to submit amendments to the policy documents. There were numerous side meetings to discuss outstanding amendments where no consensus had been agreed, that went on to nearly 6am. In the final plenary no fewer than 32 outstanding amendments were voted on. If any one of them received 41 votes or more (25%) it would go forward to Annual Conference as a Minority Position. In the event only 3 were endorsed, and 2 with 41 votes gained Minority Position. Many of the others had very low votes.

Compare and contrast with Milton Keynes. I was not at Warwick, but I read CLPD's account of it (Peter Willsman, *The Saga of Warwick 2*, *Campaign Briefing*, Edition 71 2008) and kept hearing throughout the weekend how horrendous Warwick had been. I can only speak for my experiences of the meetings I attended at Milton Keynes, but I found the relevant shadow ministers willing to find common ground, and not reject something just because they hadn't thought of it first. On workplace rights, for example, Chuka Umunna accepted my suggestions for strengthening the document.

On Trident they offered additional paragraphs that the entire Scottish delegation supported, but we found that they did not find favour with the others who had put down similar amendments to our own. But in the end we were all able to agree compromise wording, which will be enormously beneficial for our efforts to defeat nationalism in the coming referendum.

The best thing to come out of it all was the large number of improvements delivered by CLP and Regional Reps. In every policy document you will find several such amendments that won endorsement. Many of them cost little or no money to implement. Yet they form an appealing list of policies that are well worth the effort put in to secure them – and nobody was up all night trying to achieve it.

So, clearly a huge improvement on Warwick 2. It seems probable to me that Ed



Miliband had requested his shadow team to be receptive as far as possible, because his argument is that when we have a Labour government it can create many progressive advances while continuing a cuts programme until the debt is paid.

That in itself provided the sole subject that went to "final debate" and vote on the Sunday morning. I put "debate" in inverted commas because the sole speaker for the amendment (George McManus) got one minute, as did Ed Balls speaking against. George was pushing for an emergency budget in our first year of government, Ed B was arguing we couldn't open ourselves up to Tory accusations of spendthrift policies. Only 14 of us agreed with George, so a Minority Position debate will not take place at Conference.

"Why would CLPs raise funds to send a delegate to Conference just to nod through documents already agreed?"

I have remaining concerns about continuing to have a Conference that is reduced to a showcase for candidates and an extended rally. Why would CLPs raise funds to send a delegate to Conference just to nod through documents already agreed? We need to show attending Conference is worthwhile, and admit that all these conversations on stage, on the sofa, are less interesting than watching paint dry.



BITEBACKS

'The PM's pledge that "money is no object" in helping flood victims has holed Tory philosophy below the waterline.'

(Jonathan Freedland, *Guardian* 15/2/14.)

'The richest 85 people in the world have the same amount of wealth – \$1.7tn – as the bottom half of the earth's population. That's quite a staggering figure. You could get these 85 people on a London double-decker bus (not that they would ever be seen on a bus) and they would be as wealthy as 3.5 billion people.'

(Larry Elliott, *Guardian* 20/1/14.)

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON AT THE NPF

Before George McManus made his speech, he was asked if he wanted to withdraw his motion. He refused and was invited



to speak but Angela Eagle in the chair couldn't see him. When he shouted "here I am," Angela apologised and explained she couldn't see him as there was a bright light behind him. "That's my halo" said George, to much laughter whereupon Angela said "I'd like to invite Saint George to the rostrum," and this is what he said:

"Comrades. I say comrades advisedly because there's a war going on out there and it's our comrades that are losing. I was proud to march with striking workers this month and I'll do so again.

This amendment was motivated by the desire to communicate a message for the benefit of those workers that we should not box ourselves in to George Osborne's austerity spending plans. Austerity, in my opinion is not the solution to our problems, it is in fact the cause. I want to see us win the election and the two Eds getting on with the job.

But at dinner the other night, Steve Richards [columnist and guest speaker – Ed] said 'Get your message right' and I don't think the message workers are getting is the right one. Promising more austerity could damage, not improve our election chances.

Comrades, people don't march to war behind leaders who wave a policy document or a fiscal projection. They march behind leaders who show courage and have a vision of a better life with the clear messages that go with that.

Please support the amendment."

THE AMENDMENT WAS, OF COURSE, LOST.

EXPERIENCING THE NEC

CHRISTINE SHAWCROFT, NEC AND NPF MEMBER

The National Executive was dominated by the Collins Report this year. After a huge fuss in the media about trade union fiddles over the Falkirk selection, which later turned out



not to have happened, a panicking Leadership set Ray Collins to work out ways to cut the link between the Party and the unions. A confidential report into Falkirk was later discussed at the NEC, but as it was so confidential that only a couple of people had seen it, and I wasn't one of them; the debate generated more heat than light. I gather it was later leaked and turned up on the *Guardian's* website.

The vast majority of Party members are against Collins. GCs discussed it and Shadow Ministers spoke at Regional meetings about it. I never heard of one of these meetings endorsing it. Unfortunately, negotiations took place and a "deal" was agreed – which basically gave the Leadership everything they wanted but which delays the full implementation for five years. An implementation group of NEC members has been set up and we were assured at the NEC that they will not allow the Party to be bankrupted. Since then, we have had financial reports to the NEC saying that the position over union affiliation money is even worse than they thought it was going to be.

Dennis Sinner and I both voted against the recommendations at the NEC. Since then the knives have been out for both of us. Dennis was voted off the NEC when the rules were changed allowing all MPs to vote, rather than just backbenchers. I spent months fighting off a concerted effort in my CLP (which voted unanimously against

Collins!) to stop me getting the nomination, but ultimately I won. At least, at the Special Conference, Ed Miliband wasn't able to say that the NEC unanimously endorsed Collins, which he had dearly wanted to be able to say. At that Conference, delegates broke their mandate, voted the wrong way "by mistake", and CLPs emailed me beforehand and said that, although they were opposed to the Report, they felt they had to vote in favour of it.

I've never understood this. At the recent National Policy Forum (a fuller report is on my website) George McManus pushed his anti-austerity amendment to the vote. He made a brilliant speech (in one minute!) and got nods and murmurs of agreement all round. One very senior MP told him afterwards to keep up the good work and get the message out. Yet all these people voted against something they clearly agreed with! They're worried about rocking the boat but don't seem to have noticed that it's sinking.

WHY CLPS SHOULD HAVE MORE NEC REPRESENTATION

DANIEL BLANEY, CLPD EXECUTIVE MEMBER

The cycle of elections to the party's national executive committee involves various traditions. One of those is a regular, and fairly legitimate, complaint that there are not enough (or sometimes any) candidates from that member's region. The problem is that with only six NEC places reserved for direct election by the membership ("the CLP representatives"), and more than six party regions, it is mathematically impossible for representation from each region to be elected.

Until Tony Blair pushed through internal rule changes in 1997, there were seven CLP representatives. Since 1998 there have only been six. In contrast the parliamentary party has three elected representatives in addition to three selected from the front bench. The parliamentary party includes, for these purposes, MEPs and their leader is also represented. So that makes seven places for a few hundred parliamentarians, as opposed to only six places for tens of thousands of party members!

The trade unions have twelve places, which is about right, and CLPs should have equal representation to trade unions. This is consistent with the 50:50 split between CLPs and affiliates at annual conference.

It is suggested by some that the members should elect NEC representatives by region. This would be a backward step. It would almost certainly result in each party member only voting for one representative: a single election for each region. At present members have six votes. CLPD wants to increase democracy in the party and for members to have more representation. Reducing each ballot paper to one X, with candidates limited to that region, would not improve party democracy.

I want to support Ann Black for the NEC, who has diligently pursued members' interests over many years and commands much respect. She does not live in my region and if representation were regionalised I could NOT therefore register my support for her work. Similarly many people from across the country support Ken Livingstone, but also want their votes to ensure there is ethnic minority representation and spread of opinion and experiences.

CLPD has put forward rule changes in the past to increase the number of CLP representatives on NEC, but this has been discouraged by the party establishment, who seem to find plenty of places for parliamentarians on the executive (even if they can't find one for Dennis Skinner!).

People rightly note the limited spread of CLP representatives. They must be encouraged to support rule changes that ensure CLP representation is equal to trade union representation and greater than that of MPs. Proposals to limit a members' ballot paper for the NEC to one place by region must be rejected.



BITEBACKS

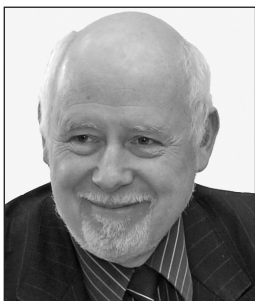
"The two Eds are now adopting economic policies they know to be wholly wrong in order to respond to an analysis they know to be utterly false, so as to go along with the voters. It is the most disgraceful piece of political defeatism I have ever witnessed in a long career in political journalism."
(Ian Aitken, *Tribune* 12/7/13.)

"To what extent, for example, did Labour leader Ed Miliband's unwarranted attack on Unite – and, by implication, the union movement – give Grangemouth's billionaire owner Jim Ratcliffe the green light to manufacture a dispute in order to take on Britain's largest union?"
(*Tribune* Editorial 1/11/13.)

REMEMBERING '45 AND THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

KELVIN HOPKINS MP

Labour looks set to win the General Election next year but it would be a tragic mistake if the leadership simply continues with the coalition cuts and squeeze on public spending. Such a programme would be profoundly misguided in economic terms and will lead to serious political unpopularity. There are lessons from history, notably when a decade of austerity in the 1920s, supposedly to reduce the post-war debt from 1918, saw the government deficit increase, followed by crisis and the hungry thirties. The voters expect Labour to be different after 2015 and rightly so.



Labour must address the poverty and inequality, the cuts in real wages and reduced living standards of the Tory/LibDem years. The party in government must restore the NHS and local government and above all it

must deal with the housing crisis by re-building and expanding council housing on a scale not seen since the sixties and seventies.

Such a programme cannot be achieved by tightening the vice on public spending. Our leaders should remember and seek to emulate the advances for working people by the great Attlee government after the Second World War and not simply recreate the Ramsay MacDonald tragedy of 1929-31 which saw the Labour Party split and out of power until it rediscovered its socialist roots in the magnificent election victory of 1945.

The government's rigid refusal to countenance public ownership in the railways, even where it has been proven to work on the East Coast Mainline which is paying substantial sums back into the public purse, is another blatant piece of destructive dogma.

Labour must adopt a programme of expanding vital public spending on the public services and reversing privatisation in health, the railways, water and energy, with more to follow. Labour must reassert its belief in state provision of essential services and public utilities and the active use of state power to sustain full employment, raise the living stand-

ards of working people and eliminate poverty.

If Labour does not start down this road next year, the party could see its public support drain away. There are serious lessons we must learn from President Hollande's failure in France where his popularity has dropped to just 16% and from PASOK in Greece which has effectively committed political suicide by joining New Democracy conservatives to enforce austerity on Greek people. Pasok's support is now well below 10% and has been abandoned millions of working class people.

Labour must show a practical socialist way forward next year. If it does so it could go on to win again in 2020 and beyond and show once again that democratic socialism really works and that neo-liberalism does not.



BITEBACKS

'Inequality – whatever the prosperity of the nation as a whole – squanders talents, depresses aspirations and diminishes the prospects of poor people'.

(Roy Hattersley, *Guardian* 15/8/13.)

'COMMUNITY LEADERS' OR GENUINE ADVOCATES?

LIZZY ALI BAME OFFICER, LEYTON AND WANSTEAD CLP

Back in the 1980s, a new generation of radical black leaders like Bernie Grant and Sharon Atkin emerged in the Labour Party, determined not only to increase minority representation, but also to commit the Party to socialist policies. The struggle for Black Sections took place against the backdrop of uprisings within the inner cities in 1981 and 1985.

Thirty years on, although the representation of BAME communities has improved in parliament and on local councils, it continues to lag behind the proportions in the general population and among the Party's membership, and the evidence of racial disadvantage is all around us, in employment, education and housing.

The mission statement of the national affiliate BAME Labour states that it "seeks to empower ethnic minority members within the Labour Party and campaigns for greater representation of ethnic minority communi-

ties in public life". The reality is that BAME Labour represents only a small minority of BAME Party members and is a pale reflection of the struggles that distantly gave rise to it.

In the 2010 leadership election, BAME issued only 3,363 ballot papers. Only 392 were returned – a turnout of 11.7%. Of these 137 were spoilt, leaving 255 valid votes. Of these, 78% voted for David Miliband. BAME, in the words of one commentator, resembles "a federation of minor community bosses [rather] than a true membership organisation" and "a trade body for these local power brokers".

Recent polling has shown that Labour is more than ever dependant on black, Asian and other minority voters, particularly in London and other large urban areas. Yet the Party, while cultivating conservative "community leaders" (for which read business people), has shown by its repeated interventions in selections that it distrusts local parties with high BAME memberships.

If progress is to be made in the representation of all significant minority groups (and not just the larger ones) and advocacy for their concerns, then it is not going to come primarily from BAME Labour. The last AGM of the BAME Labour branch in my constituency took place at 5pm at a business address, disenfranchising anyone with a job or with childcare responsibilities. We need a new generation much closer to the Party's grassroots.

There is an avenue organising BAME members contained within Refounding Labour in the creation of the post of CLP BAME officer. The discussion document also claimed: "The Party will establish a working group to work with BAME Labour to develop a transition to a single level of local organisation rather than two (with regard to BAME Local Branches and Ethnic Minority Forums)."

Little has been heard of this, but the opportunity exists to breathe new life into a crucial section of the Party's membership. We need to seize it.

BEWARE THE MACHINATIONS OF THE PARTY MACHINE AT CONFERENCE

GAYE JOHNSTON, CHAIR CLPD

As research for my book about New Labour showed, top down control on behalf of the Party hierarchy has long been used to curtail free speech and fair balloting for Party offices, resolutions



and rule changes during Conference. Control, once covert, is now almost completely hidden. However most Party staff, who delivered control, are still employed and the organisational culture of the Party has barely changed. If you are a first time or inexperienced delegate please be vigilant and pass this warning to other newbies.

Regional pre-Conference briefings for delegates appear to be like social occasions. Actually they are opportunities for Party staff to assess CLP delegates and deliver propaganda. Delegates are subsequently classified into three categories:

- 1) Party democrats and socialist thinkers to be marginalised, and prevented from speaking.
- 2) The naïve and docile, and uncritical Leadership admirers, prepared to follow the Party machine slavishly (these will favoured, allowed to speak etc.) or
- 3) Independents who might be leaned on to support the Party line.

At Conference Regional staff are covertly appointed as minders to keep an eye on each delegate and to prevent them straying.

At the briefing you will be given accounts of Party rules and procedures which are likely to economise with the truth.

Delegates are expected to attend regional delegates' receptions when Conference be-

gins. Here further misinformation and propaganda are pushed.

There is evidence that illicit intervention in internal Party ballots continued up to last year. Party rules prohibit staff intervention but these are never enforced. A former Party organiser told me: "When it came to policies and rule changes being debated at Conference, Party staff were expected to deliver the results that the Leadership required."

Alice Mahon recalled, "When I stood for the Conference Arrangements Committee I was on the Centre Left Grass Roots Alliance (CLGA) slate. The Party machine was working for leadership favoured candidates. A regional organiser was introducing a leadership supported candidate to our delegates. I challenged her saying: "What about us?" She replied: "No, you've misunderstood it."

When I was a CLGA nominee for the CAC; the following 'doggy practices' were reported:

- Four delegates, from two regions, reported that their Regional Officers spent most of Conference texting or approaching local delegates with requests as to who and what to vote for.

- A "dissident" delegate dozed off and missed voting in the CAC ballot. Later she asked her regional officer why they didn't awaken and remind her. They retorted: "It's not our job". The following day the same staffer fetched another (compliant) delegate to vote in the NCC ballot.

- A first time delegate was approached by a regional official who inquired about his views on an upcoming rule change and argued against it.

- Watch out for similar incidents this year.

DON'T BE BEFUDDLED

Important and urgent advice for all delegates to Labour Conference 2014 and for Labour Party members able to brief their CLP delegate(s) in advance.

To ensure that Conference is allowed to debate the full 8 contemporary motions that Party rules permit, it is vital that CLP delegates vote for four different resolutions in addition to the four being supported by the trade unions. Union-supported resolutions will obtain enough votes to be debated anyway. If CLP delegates support them that will pile up useless votes. The result will be that fewer than four resolutions from CLPs will be debated as they won't get sufficient support (this has already happened at all recent Annual Conferences).

Resolutions being supported by the unions will be notified in the *Campaign Briefing* newsletter, distributed outside Conference before the first session, and at the CLPD fringe meeting at Jury's Inn at 6pm on 20/09/14.

BEWARE: Party staff have regularly aggravated this problem by informing regional pre-Conference delegates' meetings that they should support resolutions supported by the unions and denied that this will reduce the number of CLP Contemporary Resolutions allowed for debate.

REMEMBER THE PARTY'S CODE OF CONDUCT

The NEC Code of Conduct for internal elections includes the following:

- Candidates are allowed to canvass delegates but must not distribute literature inside the conference hall. Contact with delegates must not be carried out in a manner likely to cause offence or be seen to be applying pressure to delegates.

- If one candidate is allowed to distribute literature at an official Labour Party event then that facility must be available to all candidates.

- Labour Party staff employed by the NEC shall not canvass or distribute literature on behalf of any candidate. (Please immediately inform NEC members and the general secretary of any infringements or possible infringements of the Code).

THE GMB SPELLS IT OUT

The GMB's Annual Congress agreed a motion, supported by GMB Executive, that the Labour Party must always uphold its Code of Conduct and that Labour Party full-time staff must always be impartial and not interfere by telling delegates how they should vote.



BITEBACKS

'How it must rile politicians that while only 18% of the public believe them to tell the truth, and just 34% of us believe business leaders, trade union officials are trusted by 41% and 78% believe trade unions are essential to protect workers' interests. Despite the media's best efforts, 49% of us believe that big business poses a greater threat to the public than trade unions, with just 13% dissenting.'

(Owen Jones, *Guardian* 7/7/14.)

THE PARLIAMENTARY LABOUR PARTY IN FOCUS

MICHAEL MEACHER MP

The PLP has changed dramatically over the long years of my political experience. It used to be the forum where policy differences were thrashed out, the front bench was



held vigorously to account, and ideological debate provided the lifeblood for political activism. No more. It must be the most placid in modern times. Good of course in terms of maintaining unity, which is an important objective, but less good in terms of political inspiration and campaigning drive.

The PLP is not unique in this respect. The same process of dumbing down has smothered Party conference which once was the heaving soul of the Labour Movement, but now has shrunk to become merely a showpiece for the Leader's speech.

There are three main reasons for this. One is that Tony Blair wanted the PLP to be a stage-managed army to secure his political base in Parliament and to that end the Left was squeezed out of parliamentary selections and the PLP was systematically colonised by those of Blairite/Progress persuasion. The culture changed too. Loyalty and compliance were rated over integrity and participation, and such habits, though they have somewhat ebbed since his time, die hard and still inform much of the mindset of the PLP.

Second, not unrelated, is the decline in ideology. The Labour party, or at least certain lead elements within it, have all too readily accepted the Thatcherite dictates of deregulated finance, market fundamentalism, ever more privatisation, and keeping the unions on a short leash. With those objectives it's difficult to see how a radical vision of a very different economy and society can gain traction.

Third, where ideology is downplayed, careerism and image and presentation gain the upper hand. Ed Miliband's brave speech denouncing this tendency and asserting that what matters is what politicians do, not what they look like, needs to be taken to heart by every single member of the PLP.

Clearly a transformation of the PLP is needed, at several different levels. It needs to be far more representative of the electorate it purports to serve. That means far less

drawn from the Progress route of middle class, university, student union, PA, special adviser to an MP, and thence eased access to a seat from the inside (just like the Tories). Instead it means far more with real experience of the working class who still represent

some 40% of the population at large, but only about 5% even of Labour MPs.

There has to be more debate about controversial issues in the PLP, more expression of genuine views, more consultation of Labour MPs before difficult decisions are reached.

A VOICE THAT MUST BE HEARD

RIDA VAQUAS, YOUNG LABOUR UNDER-19S OFFICER

What's the point in a political committee without any politics?

The duty of the Young Labour National Committee is to represent members' concerns, help them organise, and, importantly, vocalise our collective politics.

But as a committee member, I've seen that all too often this isn't the case.

There is no doubt that the committee is composed of immensely dedicated and diligent members.

But too frequently any political discussion is hastily averted. What should be the shout of our young members is quietened down to a whimper.

Significantly, the committee voted to render itself an essentially apolitical body in October 2013 – choosing not to debate two motions that had been put before it.

The use of the motion structure is a fair and democratic way of making resolutions, elucidating exactly what the beliefs are, and specifically what action will be undertaken. In the past, the committee successfully passed motions to reinforce Young Labour's support for the trade union link, and through this strengthening our bond with the wider labour movement.

Most members take part in these meetings via the phone – so having a written motion undoubtedly helps to follow what is being debated, and means that what is agreed to will be carried out. Given this, the objections to using motions in committee are unconvincing at best.

Through not discussing motions, the committee also determined that all policy discussion must be crushed into just a few hours of the youth wing's 'policy conference', which takes place every two years. This inevitably means that by the time things actually come up for discussion, the situation has changed to the point that our capacity for effective action has been reduced.

To take a recent example, at the last committee meeting, other members and I called on Young Labour to formally support the teachers in their industrial dispute, when they were balloting for strike action, but it wasn't definite. Conrad Landin suggested we send a message of solidarity to NUT, which you would think is relatively uncontroversial. It was however resolved that the message would be written and then discussed at the next meeting – in August! By this time, the crucial moment when our support was needed had already passed.

As young members, we all know Young Labour has the potential to be so much more, as shown by the creativity and radical optimism of the policies voted through at our last conference. Young Labour now has policy in favour of a "super-tax", and building 200,000 council homes a year. But we can only seize all that is possible if we transform how the committee works and equally importantly more frequently involve the entirety of our membership in policy-making and organising.

Ultimately Young Labour must decide between two purposes. It can be an organisation driven by fire, where every member engages consciously as a part of the labour movement. Or it can resign itself to the pallid exertions of an exhausted body that leaves the political decisions, and therefore the outcomes, to the grown-ups.



BITEBACKS

'Socialism is much more than either a political creed or an economic dogma. It presents to the modern world a new conception of society and a new basis on which to build up the life of the individual and of the state.'
(Keir Hardie, 'From Serfdom to Socialism', 1907. *Chartist* September/October 2013.)

BORIS A CROISSANT RICH AND SUBSTANTIAL

LAURA DAVISON, MEMBER OF FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE CLP REVIEWS ALEX CROWLEY'S VICTORY IN LONDON: THE INSIDE STORY OF THE BORIS CAMPAIGN (2012)

Publication of this book appears to have been met with a pointed lack of interest.

Judged "suitable for maiden aunts" by the editorial criteria of its publisher Bretwalda Books, it was released in 2012 and serialised in the *Standard*, but attracted little comment. Written by a member of Boris Johnson's election team, it purports to be an insider's account of the 2008 and 2012 mayoral campaigns but the lens of the author means that, rather than a warts and all account, it reads like a hymn of praise to Lynton Crosby et al. The pinnacle of its narrative powers is the description of Boris Johnson as like a croissant – rich and substantial...

The book portrays Johnson as a candidate with a scattergun approach who needs a deadline, crisis or 9 point plan to trammel him. In deciding whether to run at all, he puts his application in on deadline day. He ums and ahs over returning from holiday when the London riots break out, deciding to come back only when things have worsened considerably. He allows speculation in the press over his leadership ambitions when he should be concentrating on doing the day job.

It all adds up to potentially serious electoral problems. In the run up to the 2012 contest a series of focus groups is convened. The participants are asked what they can remember that Johnson has achieved. Damningly – after four years in the job – they can only think of two things to say: 1) "He was more interested in becoming Prime Minister" and 2) that "he was responsible for the bike hire scheme". They see someone who is only interested in their own career prospects and being a celebrity, not delivering for Londoners.

Sadly it's not only the public who don't know what's been achieved – neither do Johnson's own advisors. Of a campaign meeting at a low point in the run-up to 2012, the book says: "Frequently, one person would suggest an idea only for someone else to say it had already happened before someone else would promptly disagree." Polls at the time also showed that ideas like the Thames Estuary airport, the cable car and the notion of creating the "village in the city" were irrelevant to Londoners' real concerns.

The book also leaves a "nasty party" after-taste, with its account of the Tories nega-

tive "Not Ken Again" campaign, using Bob Crow as a bogeyman and unpleasant comments on Ken's concession speech, describing it as "typically graceless and undignified".

Reading it two years after the election does bring back the sheer foot slogging effort on the ground and the impact that the slings and arrows of the campaign – for example the tax stories – had



on activists. And it irks to think of all those hours put in while at the same time, according to the book, the work was being undermined by the leak of critical campaign info from inside Labour.

But as the badges distributed after we lost said: "Don't blame me, I voted for Ken".

POSTSCRIPT:

Enfin! The crafty croissant has at last come clean on his political ambitions.

LABOUR MUST SAY NO TO TTIP

MIKE HINDS, EAST DEVON CLP MEMBER

The Labour Party, nationally and in Europe, should vigorously oppose acceptance of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

National sovereignty is being eroded as never before by the growing power of transnational corporations whose sole purpose is to maximise profit regardless of the impact of this on the local populations and environments where they operate.

The terms of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will erode even further the ability of sovereign governments to defend the welfare of their citizens with such regulatory barriers as those on social standards and environmental regulation, the introduction of GM food, the use of toxic chemicals, health and safety legislation and indeed any regulation in any sphere that the corporation deems a threat to its profits.

A particularly alarming part at the heart of TTIP is the Investor State Dispute Settlement, which gives US companies (or US subsidiaries of European companies) the right to sue European governments for legislating in a way that reduces their ability to make profits. The lawsuit would not be heard in British or European courts but by a special tribunal made up of appointed arbitrators from the world of corporate law. For example, a British government attempting to renationalise the railways, minimise the use of the private sector in the NHS, or improve trade union legislation could be faced with multi-million pound lawsuits from transnational corpora-

tions claiming their profit-making ability had been impaired. (As an example, Philip Morris is suing the Australian government over the introduction of plain packaging of cigarettes). Any costs will be born by the British tax-payer, thus reducing potential funding for investment in national programmes.

There are also other problems as the central aim of TTIP is to get rid of 'unnecessary regulation' by 'harmonising standards' across the US and EU. Corporate lobbyists will have a field day with this, pushing to reduce hard won standards that protect workers, society and the environment. At a time when many people within the UK think all political parties are the same and that there is no one to champion the needs of the ordinary citizen, vigorous opposition to this European legislation would signal that Labour is firmly on their side.

(REPRINTED FROM ON TARGET JUNE 2014, THE NEWSLETTER OF EAST DEVON CLP, EDITOR RAY DAVISON.)



BITEBACKS

'A finding against Israel by the International Criminal Court would send a message that the policies of occupation are not acceptable and that they cannot continue to transgress international human rights with impunity'.
(Mark McDonald, *Tribune* 27/6/14.)

LONDON NEEDS A LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND A LABOUR MAYOR

DIANE ABBOTT MP

All eyes are on the General Election in 2015. But immediately after May 2015, London members will be plunged into the selection for London's Mayor. So it is perhaps not too early to think about some of the issues that London's Mayor should be campaigning on.



A key issue for London's mayor will be housing. The Party already has good policies on the private rented sector. But in London we need to go further. There is a tendency in some parts of the Party to think that London's housing problems can be solved by market mechanisms alone. They argue that all you have to do is increase supply with garden cities etc. and house prices will automatically fall. The further assumption is that this will also have an effect on rent levels. But the housing market in London is broken. There is an almost endless supply of the international super wealthy buying up property in

areas where London's upper middle classes used to live, like South Kensington. Often these properties are empty for most of the year and are merely used as a "safe haven" investment. This hollows out those communities. But worse for London as a whole is that London's middle classes have been displaced into areas like Hackney, where people on modest incomes used to live, driving up prices. Increasingly people on average wages stand no chance of buying inside the M25. Spiralling house prices are reflected in rents. As Ed Miliband has said, we have seen the rise of "Generation Rent" young people renting well into their thirties with no prospect of buying and at the mercy of predatory landlords and lettings agents. We need a package of measures to deal with the wildly distorted London housing market. First of all we need to consider some form of rent controls. We also need to look at ways of stopping the super-wealthy non-domiciled buyers turning some of the wealthiest parts of London into ghost towns and driving up prices for everybody else. Above all, we need to allow councils to borrow to build. It was a Tory housing minister in the 1950s, Harold Macmillan, who promised, and delivered, 300,000

homes a year. And half of them were council houses. A Labour government ought to be able to do at least as well.

A Labour mayoral candidate should also be defending London's diversity. London is the city that immigration made, whether it was the immigrants from all over the country who flocked to London in the eighteenth century, the Irish who came in the nineteenth century, Eastern European Jews, West Indians, Pakistanis or the Eastern Europeans of today. None of those waves of immigrants caused low wages. Predatory employers did that. Labour's candidate for mayor should not be wringing their hands and apologising for letting too many immigrants in. They should obviously be working with trade unions to defend trade union rights and freedoms to bear down on exploitative employers. But they should be saying loud and clear that London is proud of its multiculturalism and will make no concessions to racism and xenophobia.

Labour is fortunate that it will have a range of quality candidates for Mayor. But the important thing is, whoever Labour's mayoral candidate is, that they appeal to Londoners' better selves and restore it as a bastion of progressive policies.

TIME FOR MEMBERS TO NOMINATE FOR LEADER

MIKE WATTS, CLPD MEMBER & LABOUR'S DIRECTOR OF FINANCE FROM 1987-1992

When Ed Miliband first announced his intention of changing the relationship I feared the worst. The initial perception was that his intention was to detach the party from the trade union movement.

This would have been a disaster. It would have changed for the worse, the very nature of our party. Through our link with the trade union movement we are potentially in touch with millions of working people. With the Parliamentary Labour Party increasingly dominated by "professional politicians" this is an immensely valuable contact with real people who do real jobs.

The true beginning of the modernisation of the Labour Party organisation began after the 1987 election. The instigators of this were the trade unions and the then General secretary, Larry Whitty, himself a product of the trade union movement.

This led to the development of the National Membership System which revolutionised the ability of the party to talk to its members and gave us tremendous fundraising opportunities. It also gave individual members more opportunity to participate. There would be no OMOV without the National Membership System. Remember, up to that time, we didn't know who our members were.

So these new rules actually give us an opportunity to renew and rebuild our relationship with the trade unions. There is however one area that leaves cause for considerable concern. That is the procedure for nominating candidates for leadership elections. Surely, the time has come to involve party members more fully in this part of the process. That means allowing party members to nominate candidates. My objection to the current system is that we will end up yet again with a very small and narrow field. Remember, last time around David Miliband had to instruct some of his more pliable supporters to nominate Diane Abbott to ensure we weren't faced with a field of white men.

In the previous leadership election we were presented with the appalling fait accompli of just one white male candidate. To the best of my recollection, previous leadership elections gave us the choice of a total of eight white male candidates and one white woman. The current rules give the PLP the opportunity to repeat this.

Another problem with only PLP members nominating is their regrettable tendency to want to associate themselves with probable winners, perhaps with career opportunities overcoming principle.

I accept that we must restrict the field to a manageable size; therefore we cannot afford to make it too easy to be nominated. My proposal would be to keep the existing rules for PLP nominations but to also enable rank and file members and CLPs to nominate. Why not use the same figure? 15% of members or 15% of CLPs required to secure a nomination?

Surely this proposal is in line with Ed Miliband's plans to devolve power to all citizens of this country.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

(cont. from front page)

(Bermondsey and Old Southwark CLP, West Ham CLP, Bolsover CLP, Runnymede and Weybridge CLP, Maidstone and The Weald CLP, Bridgend CLP, Great Grimsby CLP, Meriden CLP, Newport West CLP, Saffron Walden CLP, Wirral West CLP, Bracknell CLP, Epsom and Ewell CLP and Redcar CLP). All of the rule changes submitted by these 14 CLPs were ruled out of order by the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC). In some cases the ruling out was out of order and in other cases it was questionable. It is obvious that the powers-that-be do not want pesky CLPs interfering with their preordained rally, which is what Annual Conference has degenerated into. And this despite the protestations from Ed Miliband et al that they take CLPs seriously and want to listen to them. Unfortunately these fine words do not butter any parsnips. The rule change proposals that remain on the agenda at Manchester are:

SUPPORT THE RULE CHANGE FROM EAST DEVON CLP, CITY OF DURHAM CLP, ISLINGTON NORTH CLP AND MID-BEDFORDSHIRE CLP. ALSO BURY NORTH CLP HAS A DIFFERENT VERSION FROM THE OTHER FOUR CLPS

To create a fair “three-year-rule” for rule changes at Conference.

This proposal is intended to clarify this clause (known as “the three year rule”) to prevent the abuse of the rule-book that stops constituency parties’ proposed rule changes being considered. The original intention of this clause was to prevent repeated discussion of the same issue year after year, and these words were interpreted in that way for many years. In recent years, however, it has been interpreted increasingly widely and unpredictably: the word “part” is not defined by the rules and has been interpreted to mean a whole clause or even

KEY VOTES IN PARTY ELECTIONS

National Constitutional Committee (Constituency Section):

Vote

Anna Dyer

Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn

Vote

Gary Heather

Islington North

more, covering in some cases several pages. Amendments on completely different issues to the subject of a proposed rule change which happened to fall in the same clause, sometimes no more than drafting changes, have been used to prevent debating and voting on constituency proposals. CLP rule changes ruled in order and scheduled for debate have sometimes been ruled out later in the week because of NEC rule changes (often on different issues) to the same clause made earlier in the week! These results are arbitrary and contrary to the spirit of the three year rule. The amendment clarifies the rule and helps the CAC reach its decision by considering what a proposed amendment is really designed to achieve, rather than simply

MANDATING OF DELEGATES IS IN ORDER

All unions and many CLPs instruct (i.e. mandate) their delegates how to vote on items of Conference business. This is a perfectly legitimate practice; it is up to each CLP as to what arrangements they make. The Rule Book is completely silent on the matter. Anyone who tries to oppose mandating should be asked to produce the (non-existent) rule which supports their case.

asking whether the proposal relates to the same “part” (whatever that means).

SUPPORT THE RULE CHANGE FROM BEVERLEY AND HOLDERNESS CLP, EXETER CLP, LEYTON AND WANSTEAD CLP AND LIVERPOOL WALTON CLP

The Conference Arrangements Committee (Constituency Section) to be elected by OMOV.



ALERT 2014

SUNDAY'S PRIORITY BALLOT

USE YOUR VOTE, DON'T WASTE IT

CLPs must give guidance to their delegates about how to vote in this ballot. Above all they must be made aware that there is no point whatsoever in wasting a vote by supporting any of the same four resolutions supported by the unions in the ballot even if, as is likely, you support any or all of them. The union four are rightly guaranteed automatic inclusion for debate. To maximise range of debate and

to make sure issues important to CLPs get a hearing, CLP delegates must make their choices on different subjects from the union four, thus giving Conference the opportunity to debate four subjects from the CLP section of the ballot and thus eight subjects in all. Delegates are likely to come under illegitimate and even browbeating pressure from Party officials, including parliamentarians, to replicate the union four, thus restricting the number of issues. Don't be fooled by this undemocratic malpractice. CLPD will be advising delegates of the four union choices in the Sunday edition of its Yellow Pages.

In recent years there has been a consistent trend towards giving all party members a direct vote for their representatives on our national committees. These moves have given the grassroots membership some rights and influence within their own party, which is particularly important given the countertrend towards more power accruing to the centre and the party machine. In 1997, party members were given the right to elect the constituency section of the NEC by one member-one-vote (OMOV) and recently they were further given the right to elect the constituency section of the National Policy Forum (NPF) by OMOV.

The Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) is the Standing Orders Committee of the party's annual conference and it has two constituency seats (at least one of which must be held by a woman). These two seats are elected every second year. It is an important committee, for example it decides which conference motion from CLPs are valid and which are not valid. It would therefore be an important step forward for a grassroots democracy if these two constituency seats on the CAC were also to be elected by means of OMOV. This reform need not cost extra money because the CAC election could run alongside the OMOV elections for the NEC and NPF.

A considerable number of CLPs no longer send delegates to conference and therefore they and their members are totally disenfranchised from the CAC election. This reform would effectively enfranchise every member in every CLP.

SUPPORT THE RULE CHANGE FROM BURNLEY CLP

Ministers and Shadow Ministers to be ineligible to serve on the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC)

The CLPs have two seats on the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) and for many years these were occupied by rank and file members. In recent years, however, they have often been filled by government ministers or shadow ministers. To operate as it should, the CAC must always be independent. Controversial policy issues at conference therefore put ministers or shadow ministers in an impossible position. They cannot serve two masters. They are always under pressure to follow the leader's line, rather than the democratic interest of the delegates. In practice this would mean that they would be under pressure to keep controversial issues off the agenda.

SUPPORT THE RULE CHANGE FROM BOLSOVER CLP, RUNNYMEDE AND WEYBRIDGE CLP MAIDSTONE AND THE WEALD CLP – MUCH BETTER THAN COLLINS!

In Spring 2013 three CLPs (Bolsover CLP, Runnymede and Weybridge CLP, Maidstone

and The Weald CLP) submitted rule changes which would restore the category of trade union affiliated members to the Rule Book. These CLPs did this well before the furore over Falkirk and Ed Miliband's ill advised decision to have a "Clause IV moment" by demanding changes to the Party-union link.

For over seventy years our Party's Constitution always began with the clear statement that the Labour Party has "two classes of members, namely: (a) Affiliated members (b) Individual members". In the last twenty years the Rule Book has been re-jigged many times and one result is that this clear statement has been lost sight of. This is unfortunate because the statement was a clear reminder that our Party was established as, and remains to this day, a federation. It was formed as a federal body in February 1900 at a Conference of 129 delegates (117 from Trade Unions, 7 from the Independent Labour Party, 4 from the Social Democratic Federation and 1 from the Fabian Society).

The rule change from the 3 CLPs simply wanted to re-instate a clear version of the seventy-year-old statement. But, although the 3 CLPs submitted their proposal in Spring 2013, and the Special Conference, covering the Collins Review, was not until Spring 2014, the CAC has ruled that the 3 CLPs should be denied their right to be heard. This is particularly unfair because at the Special Conference no actual rule changes were carried on the issue raised by the 3 CLPs. Thus there is, therefore, no question of any "three-year-rule" applying. The 3 CLPs have every right to be heard at the 2014 Conference. But, regrettably, the CAC's record suggests that the concept of fairness is not one with which it is much acquainted!



BITEBACKS

'What harm have I ever done the Labour Party?'

(RH Tawney turning down a peerage offered by Ramsay McDonald, *Guardian* 16/8/12.)

TRIBUTES TO VLADIMIR

There have been many tributes to Vladimir. Conrad Landin has done a brilliant job in putting them “all in one place” (Leftfutures June 14th 2014). We reproduce here an abbreviated version of Jon Lansman’s very fine obituary (also on left-futures and in full) and some of the tributes from Vladimir’s closest comrades.

Obituary: Vladimir Derer, leading campaigner for Labour Party democracy

Vladimir Derer who was the leading figure in the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) for forty years after its foundation in 1973 died on 10 June at the age of 94. Although almost unknown other than amongst Labour activists, he was the Labour Left’s leading strategist at the height of its influence in the 1970s and 1980s. The organisation he created and his strategic vision made CLPD the most effective organisation on the Labour Left not only in that period but through the New Labour years to the present.



Tony Benn, who died only three months ago, was rightly regarded as the Labour Left’s outstanding leader and communicator of the period but he was often wrongly credited with being the architect of the movement for democratic reform within the party. That role was performed by Vladimir Derer. As Frances Morrell put it in *The Struggle for Labour’s Soul*: “He was a strategist and tactician of outstanding ability... if any single individual was responsible for the changes to the party’s constitution that were agreed in the period after the party left office, then it was undoubtedly Vladimir Derer.”

Without Vladimir, there would have been no mandatory reselection of MPs, no electoral college in which Tony Benn could come within a whisker of winning the deputy leadership of the party and in which Ed Miliband was to win the leadership. Those two reforms together with the unrealised objective of Labour’s manifesto being determined by its elected executive were CLPD’s core objectives through the 1970s.

Nor is it only the victories of the early 1980s for which Vladimir should be remembered. Immediately after the victories on mandatory reselection and the wider

franchise for the election of the leader, the CLPD of the 1980s was, at Vladimir and his wife Vera’s instigation, the first organisation on the Labour Left to take up the issue of the representation of women and BAME communities within the party, and amongst its candidates for public office. This was vigorously opposed initially, but without this initiative, it is hard to see how Labour could by 2010 have had 81 women and 16 black MPs, compared with ten and zero respectively in 1983.

Together with Vera, Vladimir created the organisation which resisted the rolling back of all those democratic reforms for the following thirty years. Vladimir and Vera’s home in Golders Green, North London, was its headquarters. The Gestetner duplicators, typewriters, card index systems, stencils and ink of the late 1970s were eventually replaced with computers, photocopiers, laser printers and toner. Books, files, archived newsletters, bulletins, magazines penetrated every room in the house. They possessed what was probably a more comprehensive collection of national and regional Labour Party agendas, annual reports, conference arrangements reports, national executive minutes even than that of the Labour Party itself.

In the long period from 1981 until 2010 in which the gains of the Labour Left were gradually reversed, in which internal party elections and selections gradually (and with the help of cheating and manipulation of the rulebook) replaced socialists with careerists, it was Vladimir’s tenacity and strategic leadership which kept CLPD going, when many on the Left were leaving the party or dropping out of activity. Although the left was in a depleted state by the end of Blair’s premiership, demoralised and driven into opposition to the disastrous Iraq war, to privatisation and to neoliberalism, it was not nearly as weak as it would otherwise have been. In 2010, it helped Ed Miliband to victory over his brother.

Although Vladimir’s leadership of CLPD was never disputed, that is not to say that his views went unchallenged or without debate – a process that Vladimir would always encourage. Encouraging debate, however, did not mean that he accepted criticism easily. He was a great one for producing lengthy responses to every criticism, drafts of which would undergo umpteen revisions before eventual publication in the CLPD Bulletin or in letters to other publications and Left organisations.

One of Vladimir’s most consistent themes related to the need for the Labour Left to focus upon and win the support of Labour’s centre ground – the support of Labour loyalists who often held contradic-

tory positions, supporting left policies whilst also being loyal, deferential even, to Labour’s leadership. He criticised other Left groupings because, he said (in the CLPD Bulletin of January 1986), they:

“do not attempt to win the support of the majority, or if they believe that is what they are doing, the methods they choose to adopt to pursue their basic aims ensure they are not realised.”

A related argument remains a valid rejection of the arguments of those who argue against working within the Labour Party today. Two years later:

“The basic problem of the Left [is]... its unwillingness and therefore inability to come to terms with the political environment of bourgeois democratic institutions which constitute the framework for activity... [and have] displayed a degree of stability quite unexpected by those who prophesied their inevitable collapse...”

[Their survival] cannot be put down just to the the ‘betrayal’ of the leaders of mass working class parties... the fact that the great majority of members of these parties chose to follow reformist leaders rather than ‘revolutionary’ critics was not accidental.”

Vladimir rejected both the traditional left reformist faith that radical change was possible through socialist activities within the Labour Party, and the faith of those to the Left of Labour in the transformational potential of:

“mass movements, springing up spontaneously in places of employment and within working class communities. Such movements would create [their] own organs of political power, bypass representative parliamentary institutions, come into conflict with them and ultimately replace them.”

Instead, Vladimir believed the Left should take parliamentary democracy seriously but needed to focus on winning the support of the Labour Party membership to a socialist programme by building a rank and file organisation which was:

“opposed to the leadership but built on a programme that at any given time is acceptable to the mass of the party’s individual and affiliated membership.”

If the Labour Left doesn’t do that, then, like the left outside Labour, they are relying on “being rescued from their chronic political impotence by spontaneously arising mass movements.” A radical reforming government, however, elected on such a programme, pushing beyond the limits of a capitalist framework, will provoke a crisis which will create the potential for radical change.

Where this disappointed others on the Labour Left was the requirement to put aside campaigning objectives which were not

VLADIMIR IN HIS OWN WORDS, PRESCIENT AND PERTINENT AS EVER

(Extracts from 'Blair Must Go', Vladimir's lead article to our 2006 edition *Campaign Briefing* 69.)

Changing policies

For Labour's renewal to be credible, it must involve a break with policies which have lost the party so much support. In foreign affairs, it means that Britain must distance itself from policies which seek to bring about regime changes by military intervention, as in Afghanistan, Iraq and now Lebanon. In domestic policies it means both ending the partial privatisation of the Welfare state and the state sector generally, and not accepting the introduction into them of methods which imitate market forces (e.g. league tables). Within the Labour Party, it means the renewal of internal party democracy to give more say to members in determining policies and in ensuring the accountability of the leadership.

Towards a partyless regime?

The prospect of Labour's financial crisis, however, is not the only danger. Unions' affiliated membership is both a financial

and political link. Political influence of the unions is institutionalised in the Labour party structure through the unions' substantial representation on all Labour's ruling bodies and above all at Labour's annual conference. This is a partial guarantee that the party's parliamentary leadership does not stray too far from the interests of the working class mass organisations to which it owes its existence. The proposal to treat affiliation fees as donations would disenfranchise Labour's affiliated mass membership and cut the last link that binds the party to the trade unions and the working class.

Time is running out

With Labour's domestic policy increasingly permeated by creeping privatisation, foreign policy slavishly following a US obscurantist ideology, and the threat to the very existence of the Labour Party arising from the systematic undermining of the political role of the unions, of the party's financial independence and of its internal democratic structure, there is indeed a need to debate...

capable of winning a majority. There is no purpose to generalised socialist propaganda. Going beyond what the majority are capable of accepting, given their existing level of consciousness, only serves to alienate people and results in a failure to win that majority.

Many of us who worked with Vladimir came to share this outlook. We may call ourselves Bennites, but in many ways we are really Dererites.

Vladimir, like Tony Benn, was the son of a cabinet minister. His father, Ivan Dérer, had been a Social Democratic minister in various Czech governments from 1920 until the Munich agreement between Hitler, Chamberlain et al in 1938. He was involved in the anti-fascist resistance in Prague and interned in Theresienstadt as a result but survived to chair the Czechoslovakian Labour Party until the Communist Party consolidated its control in 1948.

Vladimir, himself, a nineteen year-old with Trotskyist sympathies at the time, escaped in 1939 via Poland to Britain. His Jewish girlfriend and other friends with whom he travelled were denied visas, and Vladimir was able to obtain one only because of his father's reputation.

Following military service, working as a translator and as a courier, he didn't set-

tle into a life of political activity, supported by his second wife, Vera, until well into his middle years. Although he was active in Trotskyist politics in the late 1940s, he was politically inactive for many years until he joined the Labour Party in the early 1960s. Thereafter, it became his life's work.

Vladimir Derer, born 6 November 1919, died 10 June 2014.

■ *And former NEC member and Vladimir's successor as CLPD secretary, Peter Willsman, had this to say:*

Jon has spoken for all of us and has brought out Vladimir's many strengths, including his sharp sense of humour. Vlad (as I always called him) was in a class of his own as a political organiser and strategist within our Party. We were all aware of that at the time, as Vlad came up with one clever tactic after another. As the situation changed so did the tactics. He always saw the extent to which the working class are kept under the heel in our society. He often said that in Britain the class system is more like a caste system.



Memorial Meeting Vladimir Derer 1919–2014

Founder member and
Secretary of CLPD
for some 30 years

**Thursday,
30th October
6–8pm**

Invited speakers will pay
tribute to Vladimir's life and
his work establishing CLPD

Attlee Suite
Portcullis House
Embankment
London SW1

*Adjacent to Westminster Tube
(Please allow 15 mins to pass
through security)*

■ *CLPD treasurer Russell Cartwright recalls:*

With English as a second language, Vlad had a better understanding than many for whom it was a first language. I shall remember his nuancing of articles at 2am during Conference weeks and not his d(u)ancing!

■ *Diane Abbott MP commented*

Sad to hear that Vladimir Derer has died. He was a great socialist.

■ *Ex-MP Chris Mullin, a former editor of Tribune and one time CLPD activist, wrote in the Guardian that:*

Derer "was among the first to grasp that there was no point in endlessly passing resolutions on policy if the party leadership took not the least bit of notice".

■ *Campaign Briefing Editor Ray Davison paid this tribute:*

Debating and arguing with Vladimir over forty years has been one of the great pleasures of my life. I shall miss his tenacity, warmth and humour, his kindness to me and my family and that oh so rare sense of strategy and praxis that hallmarked his socialism. CLPD has produced many good socialists but none greater than Vladimir, an inspiration to us all.

TEL'S TALES

PLAYING THE MAN NOT THE BALL

The Tories and their press backers are well aware that without a veritable miracle they cannot win in 2015. They are therefore going after Ed big time. Unfortunately snide and malicious “off-the-record” comments by assorted Blairites are giving our enemies ammunition. According to the *Guardian*, the Murdoch empire has been touting “almost Gareth Bale-level rewards” to selected Labour insiders to go negative about Ed.

Our job is to intimidate these treacherous malcontents into keeping their mouths shut.

APPEALING TO THE FLOATING VOTER

When his chums in the Home Counties were flooded out, Cameron immediately dipped into the till. Had they been benefit claimants, he would no doubt have said that the best way to assist would be to reduce support, so encouraging them to help themselves.

GORDON IS ONE OF US

Gordon Brown started off on the Left and it is wrong to suggest that he degenerated into an out-and-out Blairite. He was taken in by the City and “light-touch regulation”, which he now bitterly regrets. But the Campbell Diaries make it clear that Gordon still kept his Labour principles. When Charles Clarke recommended university top-up fees to Cabinet, Campbell records that “GB really laid into it, non-stop for 20 minutes, saying it was unfair, regressive, wasteful and not what the Labour Party was about”.

On another occasion Andrew Adonis complained that GB had sent a 44-page letter to all Cabinet ministers attacking foundation hospitals. Alan Milburn told Campbell that “GB was totally against anything that looked like private sector provision of public services”. Gordon spelt out his position in a statement that was recently trivialised by the *Guardian* – “The public square is more than a marketplace and we are bound together by more than contracts, markets and exchange”.

NEO-LIB. DEMS

It was a bit rich for Vince Cable to talk about restoring the value of the minimum

wage, when his Lib Dem mate, David Heath the Minister for farming, was forcing through the abolition of the minimum wage structure for agricultural workers. Heath did this on the grounds that it would lead to “a more flexible labour market”. As a former member of the Agricultural Wages Board pointed out in the *Guardian*, Heath’s own department has estimated that, as a result, lower paid agricultural workers will lose £279.7 million over 10 years.

WHAT “SELF EMPLOYMENT” REALLY MEANS

There has been a significant rise in the official figures for the self employed. Some Tories suggest this represents a blossoming of entrepreneurial zeal. Much more likely is a link to the scandalous exploitation of zero hours “contracts”. We can be sure that the bosses are telling many of these vulnerable workers that they would be better off if they registered as self employed, thus saving the employers a national insurance bill. In effect, we are going back to the days when workers queued up at the dock gates, hoping the bosses would choose them for a day’s employment. Even the official estimates put the number of zero hours “contracts”, at 1.4 million, with another 1.3 million “inactive”. They are hardly “contracts”, the word itself is pretty Orwellian!

Some employment agencies are also getting the unemployed to sign up as “self employed”. The agencies deduct an admin fee out of future pay packets.

ALL WOMEN SHORT LISTS – THE WAY FORWARD

Those who have read Meg Russell’s book, *Building New Labour: The Politics of Party Organisation* (2005), will know that CLPD played a significant role in the achievement of All-Women shortlists (AWSs). Even the Tories (or at least the Tory women!) are making friendly noises about AWSs. It is at last becoming generally accepted that positive action is necessary to achieve gender equality.

But the organisational practices in our Party have left a lot to be desired. Regrettably party staff and assorted luminaries have, on more than one occasion, manipulated the recommendations for which CLPs should have an AWS, in order to benefit favoured daughters and sons. These abuses have generated much local hostility and threaten to undermine the commitment to AWSs. We need to introduce some automatic randomness into the process to stop the politically

corrupt interference. CLPD is working on this!

NETWORK RAIL – NOW IN FULL PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Unless you are a trainspotter you may not have read the June 2014 edition of the magazine, *Modern Railways*. It has an excellent article explaining how the renationalisation of Network Rail is now complete. On “value for money” grounds Network Rail can now borrow directly from HM Government. This returns it to the position that British Rail was always in, or to put it in the words of the magazine, “So with Network Rail owned by the state, funded by the state and, now, borrowing from the state, it is undeniable that half of the railway has been re-nationalised”.

We now need Ed and his team to renationalise the other half, not least for “value for money” reasons.

YOU COULDN’T MAKE IT UP

The producer of *Newsnight* tweets to his limited number of followers that a Shadow minister is “boring snoring”. Labour’s Director of Communications, Bob Roberts, immediately makes a song and dance about it, demanding a full public apology. This turns it into a national press and media story seen by millions.

CLPD’S ALTER EGO

Not many people know this, but the Tory Party contains a (very small) pressure group calling itself “The Campaign for Conservative Democracy”. It recently issued a press release, picked up by the *Guardian*, revealing that the Tories are now down to a mere 133,000 members, with an average age of 68. Information elsewhere suggests that their membership has slumped by some 70% since 1997.

(cont. on p15)



BITEBACKS

‘You are Neville Chamberlain, I am Winston Churchill, and Saddam is Hitler.’

(Tony Blair upbraiding an official who cautioned him on Iraq. Quoted by David Owen in a book analysing ‘hubris syndrome’, *Guardian* 27/7/12.)

THE BLUNDERS OF OUR GOVERNMENTS

COLIN BURGESS, THORNBURY AND YATE CLP, REVIEWS ANTHONY KING AND IVOR CREWE *THE BLUNDERS OF OUR GOVERNMENTS*, LONDON (2013) ONEWORLD PUBLICATIONS, HARDBACK, £25.

CLPD is upwardly socially mobile – hardback, high prices, top commentators on liberal democratic ideological functioning (or rather dysfunctioning) of the political machine. We are impressed. This takes us to the second strand of liberal democratic ideology: the first is neo-liberalism; the second is populism. Written by two now retired masters of their craft of monitoring the British democratic machine.

The title is taken in true English ruling class way from an American source, “the great American statesman and political philosopher James Madison”. In his series of essays *Federalist Papers* of 1787, Madison refers to the “monuments of deficient wisdom” filing the codes of law of the thirteen united states as “the blunders of our governments”. Our authors see this as a useful label for the mistakes of recent British govern-

ments. They give as examples: Eden’s invasion of Egypt in 1956, the joint French and British Concorde, Harold Wilson via Castle’s White Paper *In Place of Strife* and Heath’s 1971 Industrial Relations Act. An interesting reference to this series of essays by Madison is contained in Angelo M. Codevilla (2010) *The Ruling Class*, written from the Tea Party’s anti-Democrat point of view. Codevilla’s book is a crude American discussion of the blunders of their recent governments.

Returning to King and Crewe, our authors helpfully include a note of the aim and the structure of the book on page xi. “We are not interested in individuals. Our interest lies precisely in any general lessons to be drawn”.

In part I, using *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, they define the noun “a blunder” as “a stupid or careless mistake”, and the verb “to blunder” as “to move blindly, flounder or stumble”. They say that one sign that a blunder has probably been committed is if “the government that has first introduced the measure in question has subsequently abandoned or drastically revised it”. Really serious blunders are widely discussed in social life, and agreed to be so. Thatcher’s disastrous Poll Tax is one example given. Blair’s less than honest entry into the “shock and awe” invasion and occupation of Iraq

is mentioned but not discussed. From my point of view, that commitment was probably much more than merely a blunder. Can blunders be seriously obscene, I ask myself?

In part II King and Crewe “tell a variety of blunder-related horror stories – the main purpose of which is not to entertain but to provide a body of evidence from which we and our readers can begin to draw general inferences”.

In parts III and IV, our authors set out their own conclusions drawn for their studies. They first make it clear that the book is not about party politics but about the blundering incompetence of democratic governments. They pinpoint the recent tendency of the media to treat prime ministers as film stars and the difficulty for them to control their cabinets. Another problem they find from interviews with ex-ministers is the circulation of elites, as ministers and civil servants are reassigned to new offices. At least King and Crewe did not rely on broad criticisms of “bureaucracy”, but seem to be prepared to research problems. Their main conclusion is that blunders are the result of our faulty system, but they are convinced that the system can be put right. Perhaps we have to insist that the system is put right, and that the next Labour administration can begin the task.

Ann Henderson, Scottish Policy Forum Member and CLPD Organiser in Scotland:

ORGANISING FOR LABOUR IN SCOTLAND

Our schedule regrettably prevented inclusion of Ann’s article, which will be posted in full on our website. (Editor’s note.)

NOT TO BE MISSED

2015 CLPD AGM

Saturday February 28th,
11.30am,
Conway Hall,
Red Lion Square.

Report of 2014 AGM available on CLPD website.

CLPD’S CHARTER FOR A DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE

- At least 50% of conference time should be reserved for contributions in policy debates by delegates
- The criteria for motions should be flexible and fair
- Conference should choose the right policies, not rubber stamp them
- Conference decisions and all papers should be available online to party members
- The structure of conference therefore needs a review by the Conference Arrangements Committee

TEL’S TALES EXTRA

(cont. from p14)

DON’T PANIC

The electoral number-crunchers at the Political Studies Association have delivered their verdict. Labour will win in 2015 provided we retain the Lib Dem voters who have switched and if UKiP retains the support of 5–6% of former Tory voters.

Also, we should not obsess about the public’s view of our economic competence. Polly Toynbee has pointed out that at the time of our landslide in 1997 we were 22% behind in the polls on the economy.

NOW WE KNOW!

The National Archives have recently made available some post-war government documents covering Whitehall discussions of the possibilities of nuclear war.

From reading these it is quite obvious that, when contemplating such a war, the government’s advisers did not consider the possession of nuclear weapons made the UK safer. Rather, they believed it made us a target!

TUC CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHT

CLPD fringe meeting at TUC 2014 – 1pm, Tuesday 9 September, Premier Inn, Room 4, Albert Dock, Liverpool

The Unions and the Labour Party – How to build the strength and influence of the TUs within the Labour Party and ensure we win in 2015 No Refreshments

Speakers: Mohammed Azam (former member, Labour Party NEC)
 ● Lucille Harvey (Youth rep. on Unite Political Committee) ●
 Billy Hayes (CWU) ● Gaye Johnston (Chair, CLPD) ●
 Jon Lansman (LeftFutures website) ● Len McCluskey (Unite)
 ● Hazel Nolan (GMB rep. on Young Labour National Committee)
 ● Peter Willsman (Secretary, CLPD) ● Chair: Glen Williams
 (Branch Secretary, Sefton Unison)

CLPD CONFERENCE ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF THE WEEK

Tuesday 23 September, 7.30pm, at Jury's Inn, 56 Great Bridgwater St. Entry £3 (Conc £1)

Speakers: ☐ Chair: Peter Willsman (CLPD Secretary) ☐
 Katie Clark MP ☐ Martin Mayer (Unite) ☐ Michael Meacher MP
☐ Steve Murphy (UCATT) ☐ Kate Osamor (CLPD) ☐
 Max Shanly (Young Labour National Committee) ☐
 Christine Shawcroft (NEC)

Manchester Labour Annual Conference 2014 Highlights

CLPD rally and delegates briefing

Saturday 20 September, 6pm, at Jury's Inn, 56 Great Bridgwater St. Entry: £3 (Conc. £1)

Speakers:

Chair: Gaye Johnston (chair of CLPD) ● Diane Abbott MP
 ● Ann Black NEC ● Annelise Dodds MEP ● Diana Holland
 (Unite) ● Kelvin Hopkins MP ● Conrad Landin (Young Labour
 National Committee) ● Tosh McDonald (ASLEF) ● Peter
 Willsman (special briefing for delegates) ● + Special Guest!

RED ALERT:

Don't forget to read the Willsman Guide to Conference. 2014 edition now available and as ever up to the usual exceptional standard of insight and intrigue.

The indispensable handbook for all delegates and anyone else who wants to understand what is really going on at Conference.

The Guide can be downloaded from www.grassrootslabour.net

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 imperious and undemocratic rejection in 1973 of any decision by Annual Conference to adopt an alternative economic policy involving the possible public ownership of some 25 strategic companies.

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 an advance for Party democracy, although some MPs saw it as a reason to defect and form the SDP, eventually to get fewer votes than Lord Sutch's Party.

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.

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 would mean no majority Labour Governments). 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'. For example, recently CLPD campaigned for, and achieved, OMOV for the CLP section of the National Policy Forum. CLPD continues to campaign for a real policy-making conference and an effective and accountable NEC.

■ 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 020 8960 7460 and leave a message for him if you get the machine and not the man himself.

Campaign Briefing is sponsored by:



To join the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy please fill in the form below and return with a cheque payable to CLPD to:
 CLPD Treasurer, 157 North Street, Luton, LU2 7QH.



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

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone Email

CLP..... Region.....

TU..... Date

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. Young members (under 27) introductory sub £3.