

Campaign Briefing

Tuesday

28 September 2004

Briefing for delegates published daily at Labour Party Conference and online at www.clpd.org.uk

More say for members

Vital rule changes will be debated today. Delegates should remain in the hall after the Leader's speech to make sure they can cast their card votes.

Rule amendments offer the potential to increase members' influence over policy and party affairs. These have been submitted by CLPs but are also gaining strong union backing. A broad range of support will get the rule changes passed. Delegates will need to follow proceedings carefully so that they cast the correct card vote number for the relevant amendment.

Support West Suffolk – more say for CLPs on the NEC

West Suffolk CLP will be moving a rule change which will increase the number of CLP seats on the National Executive from 6 to 8. At least four of these will have to be women. Under Partnership in Power, the CLP section of the NEC was reduced from 7 to 6 seats. Yet at Conference, CLPs have 50% of the votes. The Trade Unions have 12 seats on the NEC and this rule change should be adopted to help redress the imbalance.

SUPPORT

Better representation at Conference

The large number of empty seats at Conference is evidence of the need for a re-think on Constituency representation. The amendment from Bethnal Green & Bow will allow CLPs with less than 750 members to appoint two delegates. This would give CLPs much stronger representation, and would mean that a male and female delegate could be sent each year. If CLPs chose to send only one delegate, the rules still require that a woman be sent at least every other year. This is a perfectly sensible response while membership is regrettably falling.

SUPPORT

Conference to elect the Party Chair

The Party Rules have always stated that the Chair of the NEC is also the Chair of the Party. Nevertheless, despite this rule, the leadership decided to appoint an extra "Party Chair" and give the holder a Cabinet seat. If the Manchester Central proposal is carried there would only be one Party Chair in the future and this person would be elected by Conference. This would give the post greater accountability.

SUPPORT

Enhance democracy in Young Labour

The democracy of Young Labour would be dramatically improved by an amendment from Hamer-Smith and Fulham. If passed, it would mean that young members will be able to vote directly for the officers of YL. At present officers are chosen solely by the National Committee, which is itself not directly elected by, or accountable to, young members. Currently the YL Conference, open to all young members, as well as Labour Student and young trade unionists, only elects the YL rep on the Party's NEC. Correct this injustice by allowing YL members to elect their own officers.

SUPPORT

Oppose glass ceiling

Islwyn CLP's change would roll back women's representation. It would set another glass ceiling by limiting the number of women in delegations and other areas of the party.

OPPOSE

National Constitutional Committee elections

Delegates should support the sitting member, Rosina McCrae. At the time of nominations, Scottish CLPs were being re-organised, and there was no guarantee Rosina would be nominated. In the event, she was, and therefore Russell Cartwright is asking delegates to vote for Rosina.

NEC's rule changes

Section A: The Government established the Electoral Commission with the aim of capping Tory party election spending and its financing by dodgy overseas millionaires. However, the Commission is using its powers to intervene in all political parties' activities however legitimate. Onerous responsibilities and duties are causing hard-working voluntary officers to throw in the towel. All these rule changes give further powers to the NEC over CLPs and other party units. In creating the Electoral Commission the party may have made a rod for its own back. **OPPOSE**

Section B: Black and Ethnic members of the party have always been under-represented in its structures. This section of rule changes enables Black and Asian members to establish forums. This is a welcome move in the right direction. **SUPPORT**

Section C: Council Groups: These rule changes impose more control over local councillors. While party discipline should be maintained to ensure effective implementation of local policies, these amendments go beyond that aspiration to limit legitimate debate and the holding of genuinely

held minority views. Moreover faction-fighting and personal point-scoring could be encouraged through these changes. At the same time the role of the local government committee is reduced with Labour Groups given more say over policy thus reducing their accountability. **OPPOSE**

Section D: Gives greater powers to the NEC over property owned by local parties. **OPPOSE**

Section E: Would ensure that a female Young Labour representative has to be elected to the NEC in, at least, alternate terms of office. **SUPPORT**

Section F: European Party units: Lays down criteria for Regional Board and clarifies their role in relation to European Elections and campaigns.

Section G (if tabled): On the eve of a General Election campaign, the Party holds a meeting between the NEC and the Cabinet to adopt the Manifesto. The NEC is proposing a change to this process which would involve a wider range of party 'stakeholders'. **SUPPORT**

Leadership disappearing trick
At least one CLP (SW Surrey) submitted a Contemporary Motion calling for a special session of Conference to consider the question of a possible leadership election. This was ruled out on the strange (and incorrect) grounds that it was "unconstitutional". A list of all the CLPs submitting Contemporary Motions that were ruled out have been published in the green CAC Report 1 (pages 12 and 13). Except one: SW Surrey has disappeared without trace!

DIRTY TRICKS (PART 5)

Party officials continue to abuse their positions by exploiting the esteem in which delegates hold them. Delegates undecided on the rail issue were called to one side and asked if they would like 'a meeting with the Minister/policy adviser'. More than one delegate decided that this approach made up their mind for them and voted to return rail to public ownership.

No such thing as a free lunch
Nor information.
Volunteers give their time free to produce *Campaign Briefing*, but we have yet to find anybody giving away paper and ink!
So when you see us tomorrow (and Thursday) with buckets in hand, please be generous. *Campaign Briefing* will have a cover price of £2 for the week.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign and War on Want
Justice for Palestine
12.45 Thistle Hotel, Kings Road
Speakers: Gerald Kaufman MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Richard Burden MP

12.30 Thursday, Belgrave Hotel
CLPD & Labour Reform
The Way Forward
Ann Black [LR/NEC], Billy Hayes [CWU], Ros Stock [LR], Mark Seddon, Christine Shawcroft [NEC], Pete Willsman [CLPD]

Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs
Not the Leader's Speech
6pm, Brixton Centre, North Road
Chair: Ann Cryer MP
Speakers include: Tony Benn, John Cryer MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP, John McDonnell MP, Alan Simpson MP, David Taylor MP, Bob Wareing MP, Christine Shawcroft

Sinn Fein: Working for Irish Unity
1pm Wednesday, Royal Albion Hotel, Old Steine
Speaker: Alex Maskey MLA, Sinn Fein