

Campaign Briefing

SUNDAY

23 September 2007

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www.clpd.org.uk Tel. 07767 761338

Priorities Ballot: CLP delegates – don't waste your votes

This afternoon each CLP has four votes in the Priorities Ballot. We recommend that CLPs vote for the following vital subjects: **Housing, Equitable Taxation, Stop the BNP and Food Additives.**

The Party rules guarantee that the four contemporary issues the unions pick will be timetabled, along with the top four voted for by the CLPs.

This means that in order to ensure the widest range of issues are debated by this conference, (i.e. eight issues), CLPs *must* vote for four issues that are different from the four supported by the unions.

The unions vote as a block and have already decided on their four issues. These are Manufacturing (Unite/Amicus); Employment Rights (Unite/T&G & CWU); Remploy (GMB); and Equalities and Equal Pay (Unison) – so these four issues are certain to be debated. If a CLP votes in the ballot for any of

these four they are wasting their vote.

Council tenants need real choice through the introduction of a level playing field for direct investment in council housing as an alternative to privatisation. This "fourth option" has been agreed as party policy on three previous occasions, but still not implemented.

Equitable taxation: It would be both just and popular for the government to close the tax loopholes that are used by private equity executives and non-domiciles.

The BNP's electoral advance can be halted, but clearly this will require a different strategy than has been largely pursued to date. The BNP came close to winning a seat on the London Assembly in 2004, so Labour will need to significantly step up its campaign if they are to be stopped next year. Labour must ensure that the BNP's arguments are convincingly rebutted and defeated.

Additionally, it must oppose the legitimisation of racism promoted by tabloid myths.

The government should legislate to ban food additives in children's food which lead to health disorders and behavioural problems.

VOTE FOR:

1. Housing
2. Equitable taxation
3. Stop the BNP
4. Food additives

Don't vote for:

1. Manufacturing
2. Employment rights
3. Remploy
4. Equalities & Equal Pay

As these are guaranteed to be on the agenda from the unions.

Conference sovereignty—not pass-the-parcel!

Gordon Brown's proposals would end Conference's right to decide on policy resolutions. Future conferences would be debarred from debating and voting on

contemporary motions. Instead there would be the much reduced provision for CLPs and affiliates to submit a

'contemporary issue' which would be referred elsewhere - if successful in the Priorities Ballot. Permissible 'issues' would be restricted to subjects that were not 'substantially ad-

dressed' in the NEC and National Policy Forum (NPF) reports to the Conference. An 'issue' would have to be 'ten words or less'.

'These proposals would complete the New Labour project ... New Labour do not want any decision reached that they do not control.'
Tony Benn Guardian 20 Sept.

Vital issues such as defending public services, equalities and a more peace orientated foreign policy need proper discussion at the party's sovereign body. Conference's role should not be reduced to that of a conveyor belt.

The past ten years has seen a

Continued over

No increase in CAC

It has been claimed that the Gordon Brown proposals to erode Conference sovereignty have been fully consulted on. This was certainly not the case in relation to one key proposal, which was neither mentioned in Gordon's consultation document, nor in discussions with the unions, nor requested by any of the 90 organisations responding to the consultation. This proposal, which popped up out of the blue at last Tuesday's NEC, would increase the CAC from seven members to eleven. The extra four would not be elected by Conference (some

Continued over

Conference sovereignty—not pass-the-parcel

Cont.

continued erosion of Conference sovereignty. During this time the membership has declined from 400,000 plus to some 180,000.

The consultation on these proposals was short - over the summer, when most local parties do not meet. Delegates would be forgiven for thinking that they are being

bounced during the honeymoon period - in the same way that Tony Blair bounced through the Partnership in Power proposals, which led to precious little partnership and no power for CLPs and members.

Additionally, the proposed ballot of individual members on the draft manifesto - being a take or leave it

'...passing over the last vestige conference sovereignty to a leadership-controlled party machine is a historic step for a party which has a proud tradition of forging nationally reforming policies from the ground upwards.'

Tribune editorial, 21 September

vote - would not allow real participation in policy making and consume vital financial and staffing resources. It would also disenfranchise the party's

three million affiliated members. A real extension of party democracy would be for NPF papers to be bought to Conference for discussion, with CLPs/

affiliates able to submit amendments which Conference would then decide on.

Vote against!

NEC supports Grassroots

At last Tuesday's NEC there was a refreshing move to support grassroots democracy. The meeting was considering a recommendation from party staff that the NEC should oppose the rule change from Halifax, Hazel Grove, Islington North and Montgomeryshire CLPs (Delegate's Report p9).

This rule change debar members of the Government/shadow cabinet from serving on the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC). The rule change is timetabled to be debated late Tuesday afternoon.

Many members of the NEC agreed with the CLPs that the CAC should be totally independent and that it is difficult, if not impossible, for Ministers to wear two hats. By a large majority the NEC overturned the staff's recommendation and gave their full support to the 4 CLPs.

FRINGE MEETINGS

Labour Against the War
7pm Bournemouth International Hotel
Taking Liberties—the War Legacy

Agreed Ireland Forum
9pm Lampeter Hotel
Respecting identity in post-conflict Britain and Ireland

Contemporary motions: Conference gagged again!

This Conference has again had the concerns raised by a large body of CLPs and affiliates kept off the agenda. Only some half of the motions, out of the 150 plus submitted, have been accepted as 'contemporary'. But the overwhelming majority of motions that seek changes to leadership policies have been ruled out by the CAC. CLP delegates who made appeals to the CAC yesterday afternoon were presented with convoluted and conflicting reasoning as to why their motions cannot be discussed at this Conference. In stark contrast, motions that echo government's policies encountered no such difficulties. Conference is not given the CAC's rationale, nor is it given copies of the ruled-out motions - so has no way of assessing the CAC's judgement.

The motions from the four main unions - that the CAC would not dare keep off the agenda - are in the Priorities Ballot. But yet again they are surrounded by a large number of pro-government ones. Many key issues have been kept off the agenda, including: withdrawal of all British troops from Iraq, Trident replacement, US National Missile Defence bases in Britain, use of UK airports by US 'extra-ordinary rendition' flights, Chavez's democratic improvements in Venezuela, halting privatisation in the NHS.

The CLPs which submitted these important subjects have not suddenly forgotten how to draft contemporary motions. Strong arguments can be made to show that many of the rejected contemporary motions are certainly as valid many of those that have been accepted. What we are seeing is not procedural judgements but political ones.

The same bias also appears to have applied to the CAC's rulings in relation to emergency motions submitted to this conference. Emergencies have been submitted on the following subjects - Zimbabwe, Northern Rock and last Sunday's warning by France of the need to be prepared for military action against Iran. The latter emergency being the only political hot potato, it is not surprising it is the only one ruled out of order.

No increase in CAC *cont.*

1,000 delegates) but would come through the back door from the relatively small National Policy Forum (183 members).

This proposal goes against the accepted procedures within our Party and movement. The CAC is the Standing Orders Committee of our Annual Conference and it is accepted practice that an SOC is elected by its Conference and wholly accountable to it.

The Trojan horse proposal presented to the NEC completely goes against customary practices and undermines the CAC's independence and accountability. Following strong objections from the unions and CLP pressure groups we understand that the platform are having a rethink.

It is therefore likely that this wrong-headed proposal will disappear into the 'black hole' that Gordon talked about in his consultation document.

But delegates must be alert.

Vote down any move to increase the size of the CAC.

Campaign Briefing

Monday

24 September 2007

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Social Housing - a priority

Following yesterday's decision of Conference to prioritise the topic of housing for debate this week, Lynne Jones MP sets out some of the key issues.

The Tories left us with a shocking legacy including a £19 billion repairs backlog in social homes, a huge rise in rough sleeping and run-down city centres. No one could dispute that the Government has put in more money but this has been mainly targeted at achieving the decent homes standard and tackling rough sleeping with far less attention being given to the supply of affordable homes. As a consequence housing waiting lists have risen by 50% to one and a half million, higher than at any time in the last 20 years since comparable figures were collected.

The continuing inequality between those who have adequate housing and those who do not is creating great resentment. We are seeing how extremist political parties are tapping into the search for scapegoats.

It has certainly lifted my spirits to see affordable housing now being prioritised by Gordon Brown and I hope that he will use his Leader's speech today to give more detail of what's in store for housing in the forthcoming spending review. There will need to be a substantial increase in housing investment if the plans for increasing the social housing supply are to be as ambitious as we have been led to believe they will be.

It would be even better if that investment could include direct investment in council housing - the "Fourth Option", as already sup-

ported by Conference. After all local authorities can borrow more cheaply and this would also be popular with tenants!

Lynne Jones MP

4+4=5?

Yet again the confusing Priorities Ballot system frustrated the chance of debating 8 topics - 4 chosen by CLPs and 4 chosen by Unions and societies. Three of the four topics coming top in the CLPs' ballot were already guaranteed debate by the unions. So CLPs only added Housing to the Union's own priorities. The CAC should change its interpretation of the 4 + 4 rule so that the CLPs' topics are 4 different ones to those of the Unions. Party staff have been known to lean on CLP delegates to vote for union priorities thus ensuring the CLP votes are wasted, and minimising the chances of 8 different topics being debated.

See overleaf for Grassroots Alliance supported candidates for the National Policy Forum

NEC U-turn

Yesterday we reported that last Tuesday, in a flush of democratic enthusiasm, the NEC had overturned the staff's recommendation and agreed to support the rule change that would debar members of the Government/Shadow Cabinet from serving on the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) - see *Delegates' Report* p9. Unfortunately, no sooner had *Campaign Briefing* hit the streets than the NEC was having second thoughts.

The NEC was informed that, following strong representations, it was now being recommended that the proposal in Gordon Brown's consultation paper to increase the size of the CAC from 7 to 11 members should not be proceeded with, since "wider debate" was needed. As a *quid pro quo*, the NEC was asked to rescind its support for the rule change, agreed last Tuesday, and instead to seek remit of that rule change. It was then pointed out - by Dennis Skinner and others - that the NEC's own standing orders state that decisions by the NEC cannot be changed until three months have elapsed. In response to this procedural point it was argued that in exceptional circumstances the standing orders could be treated "flexibly". The NEC chair then gave a ruling to this effect and on being put to the vote it was carried with only five against.

The rule change (from Halifax, Hazel Grove, Islington North and Montgomeryshire CLPs) is now time-tabled for Wednesday morning. In the meantime readers should lobby constituency and union delegates to support this important democratic reform. The CAC must be fully independent. It is difficult, if not impossible, for ministers to wear two hats.

Contempt for CLPs

First thing yesterday afternoon CLP delegates were given an early taste of democracy New Labour style. Delegates went to the rostrum with legitimate grievances about the CAC's rulings, only to be brushed aside. Those from Kilburn and Islington North challenged the ruling out of their Emergency Motion covering the threat of military action against Iran and argued that they had precisely followed the CAC's advice set out in its own booklet – *How Conference Works*. Their motion had quoted a bellicose statement by the French foreign minister made only a few days ago. If this is not an Emergency nothing is. But the delegates were unable to properly make their case since the mic was promptly turned off. In reply the CAC Chair asked the two delegates to seek an audience with her committee.

Another CLP delegate tried to challenge the CAC's ruling in relation to her Contemporary Motion - the CAC having decided that it was not 'contemporary'. This was also brushed aside. Conference was told that these decisions cannot be challenged. Thus the CAC is not properly accountable to its own conference.

At this point the Conference Chair berated delegates for taking up crucial conference time. It will be interesting to see if the Chair issues a similar warning later in the week when platform speakers continually overrun their time. The last CLP delegate, from Middlesbrough, asked in vain that the forthcoming debate on the Gordon Brown proposals be a balanced one. He clearly had an inkling of what was to come.

Iran Saga – Chapter one

The Kilburn and Islington delegates dutifully sought to exercise their right to make representations to a full meeting of the CAC. They later reported to *Campaign Briefing* that it was like waiting in a doctor's surgery. In fact they got a similar result. After a long wait an official

told them to come back tomorrow. Make sure you get Campaign Briefing for the next episode in this saga.

Equalities – Improve the Green Paper

During today's discussions on equalities, delegates should press the government to improve its proposals in the recent Green Paper. Anti-discrimination law must be strengthened with robust mechanisms to ensure proper enforcement. It remains legal to discriminate in many areas: if you are old and want travel insurance; a carer trying to juggle paid work. Race discrimination in immigration is legal. The law on harassment protects some people and not others; on religion, anti-Muslim harassment can be legal. The gender pay gap is wider in the private sector, yet there is no duty to carry out equal pay reviews. Positive action to make workforces more representative is largely unlawful.

The Green Paper proposes few improvements and its proposals undermine recent laws which place duties on public authorities to promote equality and identify institutional discrimination. Age Concern are urging closure of the legal loopholes that permit widespread age discrimination. Spokespeople of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission have criticised the Green Paper's proposals.

Unison is calling for the duties to promote race, gender and disability equality that now apply to public bodies to be extended to cover age, sexual orientation and religion. It is also seeking real measures to close the gender pay gap, including mandatory pay audits and adequate public sector funds.

Support the Unison motion

FRINGE MEETINGS

Venezuela: democracy and social progress 12:45pm Punshon Methodist Church

Unite Against Fascism: 17:45pm Punshon Methodist Church

CND/Labour CND/LAP: No to Trident and NMD 7pm Whitehall Hotel

Socialist Campaign Group/Briefing/CfS: Extending Party Democracy... or exterminating it? 7pm Royal Exeter Hotel

Elections to the National Policy Forum

Scotland: Gordon McKay

Wales: Nick Davies, Fran Griffiths and Darren Williams

East Midlands: Roy Mayhew

Eastern: Daniel Blaney and Lorna Trollope

London: Laura Bruni, Lorraine Monk, Francis Prideaux

North: Mathew Teale

North West: Warren Flood, Kath Fry, Gaye Johnston and Cat Smith (youth section)

South East: Joy Hurcombe

South West: Simon Crew, Ray Davison and Veronica Kelly

Yorkshire & Humberside: Martha Hanson, George McManus and Alex Sobel

[voting 9am - 4pm today; results announced Tuesday morning]

Unbalanced debate

Those who had hoped that the ruthless stage management of the *ancien régime* would become a thing of the past were soon disabused. In the debate on the Gordon Brown proposals it was the same old story. Delegate after delegate read out platform-friendly speeches that sought to portray the somewhat uninspiring document that we had before us as akin to a political Kama Sutra. Only three delegates were allowed to speak against the proposals. Michael Meacher's 'storming of the Winter Palace' speech was particularly noteworthy. Another reminder of the bad old days was the way that candidates for today's NPF elections were allowed to speak. At least seven of these were called up. Without exception they were on the 'establishment' slate.

Campaign Briefing

Tuesday

25 September 2007

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Vote Jones and McManus for the CAC

A voice for the constituencies – a vote for democracy

Lynne Jones and George McManus are standing for election in the CLPs' section of the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC). The ballot takes place today (9am to 4pm in the Solent Room). All CLP delegates have a vote in this section of the CAC. *Campaign Briefing* urges you to vote for Lynne and George.

"I would look to create more opportunities for CLP delegates to initiate and participate – and vote – in debates."

Lynne Jones MP

They will both be a strong voice for CLPs and party democracy. They will speak up for the rights of delegates. They will ensure that the Priorities Ballot produces

four subjects from the unions and four separate subjects from CLPs. They will be fully accountable by regularly reporting-back to CLPs.

This year – once again – the CAC has ruled out of order many contemporary motions on subjects which members consider vital. Issues such as Iraq, Trident and faith schools were ruled out on dubious grounds. In addition, emergency motions on key issues such as possible military action against Iran were also ruled out unfairly.

Gordon Brown has made a commitment to re-building Labour. This requires the party to have confidence in, and listen to, its members. A democratic conference is an essential part of this process.

Lynn and George will be a much-needed voice for delegates, members and for democracy.

"We need to re-create the debating chamber which engages the public not a talking shop cosmetic exercise."

George McManus

Threat to local union link

During the previous regime the NEC had several heated arguments over the importance of Constituency General Committees (GCs). The Blairite Project has always proposed the abolition of GCs, since this would destroy the formal link between the party and the unions and, at the same time, undermine the influence of party activists. The trade union reps on the NEC always stood firm against these attacks. The agreed NEC policy is that it has no predisposition against GCs; individual CLPs have the flexibility to experiment with local variations to the traditional structures.

The Gordon Brown document on party democracy made no mention of the role of GCs and neither was this subject discussed at the NEC, or with the unions, when the consultation paper

was under consideration. The consequent rule changes (considered by Conference on Sunday) were only drawn up on the eve of Conference and a recommendation to replace GCs by 'all member meetings' was deviously sneaked in. This is unacceptable and the issue will be pursued within the unions and at the NEC.

All member meetings can be useful, but not as a substitute for the representative and authoritative GCs. GCs can be, and often are, opened to all members as participant observers. But if members are deprived of regular, formal meetings with power and purpose, the CLP loses its organisational hub and focus. Enfield Southgate was lauded by the 'modernisers' for abolishing its GC and branches.

But after a flurry of interest in something new, organised activity declined, and the seat was lost with one of the worst swings in the whole country.

NCC elections

The NCC sits in judgement on cases where members are alleged to have broken the rules. Peter Kenyon will uphold the Party Constitution and reassure members that they will be treated fairly and equitably. A former councillor, Peter believes that if members have confidence in just treatment, they are more likely to stay or rejoin the Party.

NCC: VOTE KENYON

Britain in the world — or 51st state?

In today's international debate delegates will not be able to focus on the issues that concern many CLPs. Every single one of the 19 contemporary motions submitted under this heading were kept off the agenda by the CAC.

They included: withdrawal from the occupation of Iraq, stopping the US using UK airports for its 'extraordinary rendition' torture flights, opposition to giving the US more facilities for its National Missile Defence programme, as well as a motion calling for Britain to adopt a less interventionist foreign policy. The widespread concern that the government has become a junior player for George Bush needs to be addressed. The public perception that the government's foreign policy is orientated around US concerns has caused the party significant electoral losses. It is widely attributed as having helped propel Blair from office.

CLPs must continue to press these concerns so that Gordon Brown firmly distances himself from Bush.

FRINGE MEETINGS

40 years on: time to end the attack on abortion rights

12:45pm Whitehall Hotel

Palestine Solidarity Campaign: the way forward

12:45pm Marsham Court Hotel,
Russell Cotes Road, East Cliff

Cuba Solidarity Campaign: how the US blockade forces companies to breach UK law

5:30pm Whitehall Hotel

National Assembly Against Racism/Unison: One Society Many Cultures

5:45pm Lampeter Hotel

Labour Representation Committee: Another World is Necessary

7.30pm Marsham Court Hotel

Iran Saga - Chapter 2

Yesterday the delegates from Kilburn and Islington returned to the CAC to seek an explanation as to why their Emergency Motions (covering the military threat to Iran) had been ruled out. Eventually they were granted an audience with the committee, but for some reason they were given separate interview times. But, instead of being allowed to put their case to the elected members, they were referred to a besuited young policy adviser. He argued that the CLPs should have submitted Contemporary Motions and not Emergencies. But it was pointed out that since the Emergencies dealt with the hostile statements by the French foreign minister, which occurred after the closing date for Contemporaries, the apparatchik's case did not hold water. He retreated in disarray.

The CAC itself also had no answer to the delegates' legitimate point and they were asked to leave. They were told 'don't phone us, we'll phone you!'

Chapter 3

In the absence of any phone call our indefatigable delegates eventually returned to the CAC. The doorkeeper anxiously assured them that a reply to their representations would soon be forthcoming. Later a regional official approached the Islington delegate and stated that he had been instructed to pass on a message from the CAC. The message was (and here we paraphrase) 'Get Lost' The delegate sought clarification of this rebuff and the official undertook to seek clarification from the CAC.

To be continued...

"indispensible", and only £2 for 5 issues

Michael White, writing in his *Guardian* blog, described *Campaign Briefing* as "indispensible". It is produced by volunteers, but we need money for paper, ink etc.

Tomorrow's edition will show a nominal "price" of £2 for the week, and "sellers" will have buckets. If you have found it useful, please contribute as much as you can.

How the NHS went private

Back in 1997, the NHS had major capacity problems. Waiting lists kept rising, accident and emergency wards were overflowing, public discontent was growing and staff morale plummeting. Tony Blair found a solution one night in 2000 as he was leaving the smart River Cafe. He was introduced to Tim Evans, external affairs director of the Independent Health Care Association, the body that represented the private health-care industry, who convinced him that the private sector had all the answers.

But the Labour government knew that a public sector NHS was close to the heart of most Britons, and a spin operation was required. So, from the start of the Labour government, ministers dismissed the NHS as Stalinist, a 1940s relic of socialism, bureaucratic and rigid. Then, in 2002, the highly respected British Medical Journal published a paper purporting to show that Kaiser Permanente ... was more efficient than the NHS. Within hours, hundreds of emails had poured into the BMJ exposing the flaws in the paper, from the misleading nature of the claims to the authors' links to the company. But the BMJ's editor, Richard Smith, declined to retract the paper, correct it or publish a proper scientific rebuttal.

The paper had done its work. Its propaganda was cited and repeated everywhere by academics and policy-makers and, most crucially, by the government in its white papers and documents, including the Wanless Report. The much-despised US healthcare industry, of which Kaiser Permanente is a part, was to be the new model for Britain.

An extract from an article by Allyson Pollock, professor and head of the centre for international public health policy at the University of Edinburgh in Monday's Guardian.

Campaign Briefing

WEDNESDAY

26 September 2007

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Vote for an independent CAC

By Gary Heather (Islington North CLP), Pauline Leach (Halifax CLP), Paul Wright (Hazel Grove CLP)

Our three CLPs have an important rule change on the conference agenda this morning. This seeks to protect the independence of the Conference Arrangements Committee. The CAC should be accountable only to Conference delegates and independent of the platform and party leadership.

Our rule change proposes that Ministers (or members of the shadow cabinet when in opposition) be ineligible to stand for the CAC. Ministers often feel the need to be responsive to the party Leader so are placed in an invidious position when ruling on submissions that take a different perspective from the government.

Our rule change would not affect any sitting members of the CAC, but

protect its independence for the future. It was backed by the NEC when it met last week. Unfortunately the NEC later changed its recommendation to 'remit' on the advice of the staff that it somehow conflicted with the Gordon Brown proposals.

It is difficult to see how the issue of whether or not there are Ministers on the CAC has any connection with Gordon's proposals agreed on Sunday. Our rule change should be considered entirely on its own merits and delegates should not be bamboozled by any arguments to the contrary.

Please support our rule change.

VOTE 'FOR' IN THE CARD VOTE

Chapter 4, Clause 4C.3 Election of CAC

"Every affiliated organisation and CLP may nominate an eligible member of the party for a seat on the CAC"

Amendment:

Add at end: "Members of the Government (when the party is in power) and members of the Parliamentary Committee (when the party is in opposition) are ineligible to stand for the CAC".

Platform Manoeuvres

The last election (in 2006) for the six CLP seats on the NEC saw candidates supported by the Centre Left Grassroots Alliance win the top four places (Ann Black, Christine Shawcroft, Peter Willsman, Walter Wolfgang). The next election is due in Spring 2008 and so, yet again, we are seeing manipulative practices to promote those candidates who can be relied on to toe the party 'establishment' line. On the NEC, responsibilities are usually shared out reasonably fairly. But this democratic arrangement has now been put on hold. Of the top four in the CLP section only Ann Black has been allowed to

speak at this Conference on behalf of the NEC. But in stark contrast both of the bottom two have been given high profile speaking roles. In addition one of the bottom two is even chairing two sessions of Conference.

We saw another trick on Sunday when at least seven of the line toers, standing for the NPF, were called to speak, just hours before the NPF ballot opened. Of course, none of the 22 doughty NPF candidates supported by the Grassroots Alliance were called to the rostrum. This despite the fact that several of them were vigorously indicating throughout the debate.

The help given to one of the bottom two in the NEC's constituency section was even more blatant. On Sunday he was allocated a whole page in the official Party newspaper handed out to delegates. But in order to disguise this manoeuvre this CLP rep. was falsely described as 'Unite rep. on the NEC'.

Mohammed Azam, who was also supported by the Grassroots Alliance, and who came runner up in the 2006 elections, has been unable to gain access to this Conference, despite applying for his credentials in the normal way. Mohammed waited in vain for his credentials

Continued over

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Education — a socialist priority

By Kelvin Hopkins MP

Educational inequality still scars Britain more than other developed nations and is reflected in the country's persistent and deep social divisions. OECD figures show this to be the case.

Despite decades of warm words, education policies have actually been going in the wrong direction. Fragmenting our schools system and setting individual schools in competition with each other has led to greater segregation of our children. Trust schools, faith schools, academies, and before that foundation schools, as well as surviving grammar schools, have perpetuated local hierarchies of schools. This inevitably leaves behind those children whose educational needs are greatest.

With the emphasis on league tables it is unsurprising that academies, will seek to maximise admissions of children likely to be higher academic achievers. This often means squeezing out entrants with the greatest educational needs.

Platform Manoeuvres *cont*

for over two days.

Those many Party members who are committed to fairness and democracy in internal party elections must do everything they can in their own CLPs to ensure that in the Spring there is a level playing field. Regrettably, if past evidence is anything to go by, full-time Party officials will be interfering in favour of the 'establishment' slate. Yet under the Rule Book's Code of Conduct all party employees are instructed to be independent at all times. Any breach of the Code is a serious disciplinary matter. Members need to be vigilant and immediately report any possible infringements.

Finland has the most successful educational system in the world, a fully comprehensive school system and free higher education. Labour should renew its commitment to an egalitarian, well funded state education system with every school a good school meeting the needs of all children.

It may be too much to hope for an early abolition of the public schools but we should at least take away their undeserved charitable status.

There were encouraging signals in Gordon Brown's speech, particularly a concern to help those children most in need. Gordon would do well to abandon the wrong-headed Blair 'reforms'. These would perpetuate educational divisions and fail more of our most disadvantaged children.

(Kelvin Hopkins MP is the PLP Liaison Officer of CLPD, and a Vice-President of the Socialist Education Association.)

'Britain has forcibly returned more Iraqis than any other European nation and is not doing enough to help Iraq's neighbours cope with the largest population movement in the Middle East since Palestinians were displaced after the creation of Israel in 1948'.

Extract from Amnesty International report.

An Amnesty spokesperson said 'It's staggering that the UK is sending people back to Iraq when it should be helping Syria and Jordan to cope with the refugee crisis.' 'As one of the countries involved in the invasion it has a moral obligation to help those displaced' *Guardian* 25 September

More women and youth delegates: support Bethnal Green & Bow rule change

The rule change from Bethnal Green and Bow CLP would reduce the membership thresholds required by CLPs to send additional women and youth delegates to Annual Conference.

The original rule gave more opportunities for women and youth to participate in our political processes. But with the present thresholds - 400 women members and 100 young members - is now set far too high to be of any practical use, given membership has halved since the rule was introduced.

The Bethnal Green and Bow proposal would change the thresholds to 100 for women and 30 for youth. This would again allow the principle to operate in practice. Also, if a CLP could send an additional woman delegate, the other delegate could then be a man, which would remove the need for alternating male and female delegates, often leaving CLPs without representation at Conference.

Support the rule change from Bethnal Green and Bow.

FRINGE MEETINGS

Sinn Fein: Peace in Ireland—the next steps

12:45pm Whitehall Hotel

Tomorrow: don't rush away— come to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's **Conference assessment and the next steps** at 1pm (when Conference ends) at the nearby Bournemouth International Hotel with Peter Willsman (chair), Ann Black, Billy Hayes, Christine Shawcroft, Walter Wolfgang and Cat Smith, delegate from Lancaster & Fleetwood CLP, and youth candidate for the NPF.

Campaign Briefing

Thursday

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Agenda for change

Gordon Brown's first Conference as Leader has seen a palpable feeling of relief evident across the hall. The shift in focus of the agenda back to core issues of public services, living standards and the environment has been welcomed. Delegates are keen to see the aspirations set out in Gordon Brown's speech now fleshed out into concrete new policies.

The prime task is to develop those changes into a programme that can deliver a fourth term of government. One essential element will be winning back support for Labour's public service policies, in particular health. The experience and commitment of the staff will need to be harnessed, their pay and conditions defended.

A progressive agenda

Another key area where change must be evident is foreign policy – ending the slavish adherence to the White House. As part of that, Labour needs to distance itself from the war drums against Iran. The Party must also give attention to fighting back against the tabloid agenda on migrants. The economic benefits of migration need to be firmly stated. A progressive agenda can reunite the wide coalition amongst the electorate that is needed to win.

This week's decision to abolish contemporary motions is a set back. That, along with the CAC practice of ruling out most motions that seek policy change, will isolate the leadership from grassroots pressure at future Conferences. In this year's elections delegates also missed the opportunity of making the NPF more representative of the breadth of views within the party as a whole. The high degree of uniformity of views within the NPF is becoming unproductive.

Undemocratic practices

The new regime must address the undemocratic practices within the Party that have regrettably

continued at this Conference. This year proposals were sneaked into rule changes that were not openly declared. The one that undermines GCs will need to be resisted. The platform's speaker selection was partisan in its promotion of candidates in forthcoming internal party elections. Whilst such abuses persist, CLPs and affiliates will need to remain vigilant.

Trade union link

The party will also have to watch out for the forthcoming final report from Hayden Phillips on party financing. Given his previous suggestions, this could threaten the Party's trade union link. The key to the party's strength and its rebuilding is that CLPs and unions should continue working together at all levels.

The new process of 'contemporary issues' is likely to make it more difficult for CLPs and unions to get the Parliamentary leadership to accept popular policies with which they are unhappy. More cooperation will be needed between the CLPs and unions to overcome these barriers. It will be important to press for rule changes that permit more open debate.

TODAY

AT 1:00 PM

Don't rush away—come to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy's
Conference assessment and the next steps
at the nearby Bournemouth International Hotel
with
Peter Willsman (chair), Ann Black, Billy Hayes,
Christine Shawcroft, Mohammed Azam,
Gaye Johnston, Walter Wolfgang and
Cat Smith - delegate from Lancaster &
Fleetwood CLP and youth candidate for the
NPF.

Shenanigans

In the past few years the practice has developed in the constituency section at Conference that in each region, several full-time officials sit amongst the delegates. Ostensibly this is so new delegates can be given advice on procedures, but sceptics could be forgiven for thinking there may be a more nefarious motive.

Yesterday, when Islington North moved the rule change to open up the CAC to ordinary members, at least one regional official was urging delegates to vote it down because "it comes from the dinosaurs". Delegates will recall that Mike Griffiths, NEC Chair, associated himself and the majority of the NEC with the democratic principle in the rule change. The NEC may not take kindly to being written off as extinct.

It gets worse. On Monday there were reliable reports that regional officials were circulating lists of "moderate" candidates. Delegates must report examples of these abuses to NEC members so that action can be taken. It is a serious disciplinary offence for paid officials to interfere in internal elections.

CAC grilling

By Carlie, a Hampstead and Kilburn CLP delegate

As already reported in *Campaign Briefing*, Gary from Islington North and myself were finally allowed to put our case to the CAC as to why our Emergency on the military threat to Iran should be accepted as being in order. We were called in separately. I was confronted by a table full of young suits, with the elected CAC and its chair, Margaret Wheeler, far away in the distance. They questioned me as to why I considered our motion was an emergency. I replied that everything in the motion happened in the last 10 days.

A man, who I was led to believe was Stephen Twigg, maintained that our resolution was sent out by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) and said that the covering letter stated that CLPs could have a "second bite of the cherry" if CLPs had missed out on a contemporary motion. I replied that I had no knowledge of this and that possibly it had been put forward by a CLPD supporter, but that our CLP had formulated its own motion. I quoted each section in the CAC's own explanatory booklet and demonstrated how our emergency satisfied all their criteria. I was then told that I would be informed of the CAC's decision. Later an official informed me that the rejection of our motion had been upheld.

The whole experience was quite intimidating – like going for a difficult job interview.

CLPD has pointed out that if Stephen Twigg did make this attack then he has a cheek. He is associated with a Blairite caucus that, by one means or another, managed to get a number of contemporary motions onto the conference agenda that were a "moderate" alternative to those from the unions.

Housing – Support Comp. 6

By Austin Mitchell MP, Chair House of Commons Council Housing Group

Party members, trade unions, councillors and MPs continue to campaign alongside tenants for a change in housing finance rules to enable local authorities to improve existing council home and build new ones. The 'Fourth Option' is important because council housing has 'secure' tenancies, lower rents and charges and is run by an elected landlord that it is easier for tenants to hold to account.

If you would like copies of *Campaign Briefing* for your local party/TU, please send a cheque for £3 to CLPD at the address below.

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Send your cheque (payable to CLPD) to: CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

I/we enclose £ Subscriptions/renewal/donation Date

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