# Saturday

20 September 2008

Published daily at Labour Party Conference and on line at www.clpd.org.uk Tel. 07767 761338

## Priorities Ballot: don't waste your vote

CLPs are allowed to pick four issues for debate, and the Trade Unions another four. Every year, CLPs waste their votes by picking issues the Trade Unions have already picked, and waste the opportunity to raise important subjects. **Don't let this happen again.** 

Congratulations to the many CLPs who raised the windfall tax as a contemporary issue – it could be the most important topic of the week. However, CLPs don't need to vote to prioritise it. All of the unions have already agreed as a block they will prioritise: Tackling Fuel Poverty (the Windfall Tax), Energy Regulation, Employment Rights and Workers in a Global Economy. So these will already be on the agenda and CLPs should not waste their votes on them.

There is uncertainty about the exact subject titles of other issues but we would urge strong support for the issue of **Georgia** – the Government's slavish support for the US line invites a new Cold War. And, in the week of the

biggest global financial crisis since 1929 it is vital that conference discusses the Economy.

The continuing importance of confronting repossessions and the need for social housing with a major council house building programme makes **Housing** a vital priority again. The ownership of monopoly **Water** companies who hold the public to ransom also needs to be addressed.

#### **DON'T PRIORITISE:**

- Windfall Tax ("Tackling Fuel Poverty")
- Energy (regulation)
- · Employment Rights
- · Workers in a Global Economy

...THEY'RE ALREADY CHOSEN!

#### **VOTE FOR:**

- Georgia
- The Economy
- Housing
- Water (ownership)

### **Dump the Blairite sirens**

In the face of the recent media onslaught, stoked up by a few disgruntled New Labour MPs, the Party needs to focus on the progressive policy changes needed to win. In doing this it is important to make a dispassionate assessment of how we've got where we are.

Our Party's peak of political success since 1945 was under John Smith/Margaret Beckett in the Euro-elections in 1994 when we won 62 seats. Since then it has been downhill all the way. Under Tony Blair we had so-called triangulated neo-liberal domestic

policies, the destruction of the democratic structures of the Party and the illegal invasion of a sovereign country with an obscene number of casualties. After that support has ebbed away. The Brent East by-election recorded a 29% swing against us and our total vote in 2005 was less than in 1979 when we lost. Serious misjudgements by Gordon Brown (the 75p pension increase, the abolition of the 10p tax rate, the election that never was), together with the effects of the economic

Continued over

#### Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs

Rally:

#### Real Change Needed

Sat 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm Mechanics Centre 103 Princess Street

Speakers include:
Diane Abbott MP = Tony Benn
Katy Clark MP = Jeremy Corbyn MP
Ann Cryer MP = Ian Gibson MP
Kelvin Hopkins MP
John McDonnell MP
Linda Riordan MP
Alan Simpson MP = David Taylor MP
Mike Wood MP

Campaign Briefing is published daily at Labour Party Conference by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

# Support CLPs' democratic rights: oppose gagging by the CAC

The following CLPs submitted rule changes that have been thrown in the bin by the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC). Their delegates may go to the rostrum today to seek a fair hearing — Twickenham, Hampstead and Kilburn, East Devon, Orpington, Meriden, Islington South & Finsbury, Beckenham, Ilford South, Gloucester, and Lewisham Deptford.

Conference should support them so that it can have the opportunity to consider these rule proposals. The CAC has deemed them all to be out of order by using a highly controversial and catch-all interpretation of the '3-year-rule'. Party rules state that when a Conference decision has been made on a rule change proposal, no further amendment to that "part" of the rules will be permitted for 3 years. The key word here, of course, is 'part'.

In other words, if a CLP seeks to amend a completely different 'part' of a long clause in the Rule Book, compared to other parts that may have been recently amended, then that is in order. The CAC has ignored the significance of the word 'part' and applied a catch-all interpretation. This is unacceptable and any challenge from ruled out CLPs, insisting that the Rule Book is correctly interpreted, should be given full support. The CAC has also ruled out proposed rule changes to clauses that have not even been voted on in the last 3 years, so there is no way this can be justified.

# CAC prevented debate on the 10p tax band cut

Delegates may be unaware that contemporary resolutions on the proposed cutting of the 10p tax band were submitted to last year's Annual Conference. The CAC ruled them out of order, claiming they were not 'contemporary'. The CAC did the party no service by gagging this debate. The mistaken policy, effectively shifting money from the lowest earners to middle earners, has cost the party considerable electoral support. Proof, yet again, that party activists have good political judgement. They need to be listened to, not treated with contempt.

#### **Dump the Blairite sirens**

continued

crisis has simply reinforced the downhill slide.

The Tory press are promoting David Miliband and Alan Johnson. But they both, to a greater or lesser extent, are committed to Blairite policies and as such are part of the problem and not part of the solution. Predictably the Blairite cheerleaders in the press treated Miliband's recent vapid out-pourings as if they were the wisdom of Solomon. The general public are not so easily taken in.

Under any new leader we may well have to have an early election, which we would lose. Under Gordon Brown we have nearly two years of a Labour government. If the Labour movement exerts sufficient pressure there is no reason why the government shouldn't change direction and carry out policies to benefit millions of voters. This way forward requires party activists and unions to up their game and use every avenue to mount such pressure. From feedback that the four NEC members supported by the Grassroots Alliance have been getting in recent months it is clear that party members favour this way forward.

Peter Willsman Secretary – Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and NEC member

"I was imprisoned for my role in Baring's
collapse. Who will face justice for this
recklessness today?"

Nick Leeson

Guardian 19 Sept 2008

#### Forthcoming fringe meetings

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#### Sinn Fein

#### **Towards a united Ireland**

Sunday 21st - 1pm

Arora International Hotel, Princess Street

Speaker: Raymond McCartney, Sinn Fein

# Conference assessment and the way forward for Labour

Tuesday 23rd-6pm

Relish Bar, Deansgate (next to Radisson)

# SUNDAY

21 September 2008

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### **Policy Seminars - vital questions to Ministers**

Delegates are here to make policy not simply talk about it. Nevertheless, policy seminars and Q&As are an opportunity to put to ministers some of the following issues raised by CLPs in amendments to the NPF in July:

- Building Prosperity: progressive tax rates for the rich, trade union freedoms, secondary picketing, corporate liability for the death of employees, the level of state pensions and incapacity benefit.
- Britain in the World: Israel & Palestine, Georgia and US missile defence systems, Iraq and Afghanistan, Trident replacement, Venezuela, and Cuba.
- Public Services: Privatisation and internal markets, public ownership of Rail and the Post Office, Council housing, PFI, equal pay claims.
- Crime & Justice: 42 days detention, ID cards, legal aid and law centres, immigration and asylum.

And raise these in this afternoon's Q&A too!

## **Support Remploy workers**

Delegates should support any moves by the GMB to achieve justice for Remploy workers. The Annex Report on Remploy is unacceptable and breaks promises by former Work and Pensions Secretary, Peter Hain. Remploy was established to ensure supported employment for disabled workers. Properly managed, this work can be economic and productive.

Despite protection for supported employment under EU law, the government is determined that many disabled workers have to face free-market labour forces. As a result 28 Remploy factories have closed and Ministers have led the unions in a dance. GMB official for Remploy, Phil Davies has resigned his life-long membership of the Labour Party

due the government's intransigence.

The 'consensus' wording in the NPF document does not go far enough in protecting the remaining Remploy workers. Delegates should follow the GMB's lead if it chooses to oppose its acceptance.

# ELECTIONS TO CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENT COMMITTEE

WE URGE CLP DELEGATES
TO VOTE FOR THE
FOLLOWING
CANDIDATES:

- ELCENA JEFFERS
- GEORGE MCMANUS
- MICHAEL MURPHY
  - ROY PRESTON

#### 'Undeserving Poor' back to Victorian bigotry

"When he introduced his latest Welfare Reform Green Paper, Secretary of State James Purnell....proposed a series of major changes that will use forceful encouragement to push people with disabilities into work, remove benefit from those who are not considered to be adequately seeking work (building on the Tory 1986 Social Security Act) and fail to address the current complex welfare and benefit traps..... according to his guru, David Freud, there are a very large number of people who claim incapacity benefit who do not deserve it."

Jeremy Corbyn MP writing in September's Socialist Campaign Group News

Campaign Briefing is published daily at Labour Party Conference by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

# **NPF-plug the leaks!**

Yesterday we heard from Pat McFadden and two platform plants from the NPF that the NPF/Warwick process is simply spiffing. We were told that Conference should never return to Contemporary motions, or, heaven forbid, ordinary motions and amendments.

The truth about Warwick was very different – and it wasn't the fault of the delegates nor of the Labour Party staff – it was the process that was deficient:

- NPF members never saw the vast majority of the 4000 textual amendments from CLPs and other organisations.
- They only saw the 1500 amendments that were put in by individual NPF members late the night before they met to debate them and certainly did not have time to read them.
- They did have the opportunity to meet with Ministers about the very small number of amendments in which they were personally involved, but they had little information about the hundreds of other similar meetings.
- The majority of amendments either disappeared into a

black hole or new words were agreed between Ministers and a tiny number of forum members and incorporated in the final text with no oversight by the rest of the NPF.

- The final document was, with only a few dozen exceptions, agreed as a large block without forum members having time to read it.
- With the exception of two minority reports, the results are being presented to conference as "consensus" documents, completely ignoring the dissenting position of the majority of party members on such issues as privatisation in health service and education, progressive taxation, 42 days detention and the Iraq war.

Unless these deficiencies are addressed the NPF process will have little credibility with many party members. In 2009 Conference is due to review the new Constitutional Issue arrangements. The NEC should combine this with a review of the whole NPF process.

Ben Bernanke, chair of the Federal Reserve, and Hank
Paulson, US Treasury Secretary, have done more for
socialism in the past seven days than anybody since Marx
and Engels"

Larry Elliott, *Guardian* 20 Sept 2008

Conference assessment and the way forward for Labour Tuesday 23rd—6pm

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Relish Bar, Great Northern Square (corner Peter Street and Deansgate—just along from the Radisson)

## Mandatory pay audits: the way to close pay gap

Delegates may wish to raise the government's Equality Bill during the discussion of Equalities today. Despite almost 40 years of equal pay legislation the gender pay gap continues to exist. The Bill would be significantly improved if it were to legislate to place employers under a positive duty to conduct mandatory equal pay audits in all areas.

#### **FRINGE MEETINGS**

#### Today

Sinn Fein

#### Towards a united Ireland

1pm Arora International Hotel, Princess Street Speaker: Raymond McCartney, Sinn Fein

National Assembly Against Racism/Unison

### One Society Many Cultures

5.30pm Novotel Hotel Speakers include: Mohammed Azam Soumaya Ghanoushi Doreen Lawrence Ken Livingstone Keith Vaz MP

**Cuba Solidarity Campaign** 

#### Free the Miami Five

5.30pm Unite Marquee
Speakers include:
Olga Salanueva
Adriana Perez
plus Tony Woodley—Unite
Dave Prentis-Unison
Billy Hayes-CWU
Father Geoff Bottoms
Tony Lloyd MP

**22 September 2008** 

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# Working Time Directive: End the Opt Out Support GMB/UCATT/UNITE Emergency

By Richard Ascough - GMB Regional Secretary

(We understand an Emergency Motion has been accepted by CAC and that it will be timetabled today. The GMB has provided the following article.)

The case for the end of the opt out in the Working Time Regulations is over-whelming. In the debate on our Emergency, the government are likely to press a business-friendly argument.

The principle points of the union case against the opt out have been made for many years and are as follows:-

- The health and safety implications of long hours
- The counter-argument that individuals have a free choice is often not the case. Many employees are pressurised to sign the opt out
- The UK has the longest working hours in Europe

- The public were told that the opt out was only to be a short-term transitional measure.
- In addition there is real concern over the proposed changes to on-call working.

If the government refuses to respond to the fair and just case against the opt out, there will be a worsening of employees' working conditions. We should remember that the opt out was introduced by the Tories and was opposed by the Labour Party and TUC. If it was wrong then, it is certainly wrong now.

Some employers and their supporters in the media, argue that working over 60 hours a week is acceptable. No delegate at this Conference would take this view. It is time we returned to a Social Europe and not continue with this probusiness, anti-worker agenda.

#### **SUPPORT THE EMERGENCY MOTION**

Support contemporary issues on workers in a global economy concerning the European Court of Justice judgements – from CWU / Unite / TSSA and several CLPs

Elections to the National Constitutional Committee
We urge CLP delegates to vote for the following candidates:
Teresa Pearce (sitting member) — Rita Stephen

### Shenanigans

The meeting of CLP delegates with contemporary issues on housing, following their success in the priorities ballot, shows just how unsatisfactory the new process is. Nine CLPs had submitted the following issues: "Government must lead and fund a council house building programme"; six others were included under the more general heading "housing", some of which were much more "on- message" and less focussed on council housing.

Delegates were called to see the CAC. Before they got into the room, a member of the Party staff sidled up to some delegates to urge them to support guess which text! After a polite introduction from Jack Dromey and Iain Wright, junior Housing minister, the chair proposes an "onmessage" delegate to move. When this was challenged by a delegate supporting the majority policy position, the chair was upheld by 6-5 in a very confusing vote.

This sort of behaviour does not bode well for the new process, especially given all the effort the platform has made to sell it as a step forward for party democracy.

Delegates should be in their seats early tomorrow (Tuesday) to ensure they are ready for the rule changes from CLPs which are the first item of business.

## **Tackling fuel poverty**

With the economy slowing and domestic fuel prices soaring the party needs urgently to change its energy sector policies to prevent a dramatic escalation in fuel poverty. The government's attempts to secure a voluntary agreement with the energy companies were rebuffed and the recently announced package of measures are woefully inadequate. A tax on the windfall profits of the energy companies should be supported. Additionally the government should review the ownership of the energy sector, as despite its recent colossal profits there has been little investment in renewable energy. Obscene profits are being made from essential utilities, that if returned to public ownership could be directed to eliminating fuel poverty.

"The monopoly of deciding whether to hold a leadership
election—a privilege MPs lost in 1981 when the Electoral College
was established—has been handed back to them. Had the rules
been respected party members would still be able—through the
nomination process—to express their views."

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Vladimir Derer, former Secretary of CLPD, writing in *Tribune*, 19 September 2008

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# Conference assessment and the way forward for Labour

Tuesday 23rd-6pm

Relish Bar, Great Northern Square (corner Peter Street and Deansgate just along from the Radisson)

Chair: Pete Willsman (NEC)

Speakers: Mohammed Azam, Ann Black (NEC), Kelvin Hopkins MP,
Jim Kennedy (NEC, UCATT), Peter Kenyon (NEC),
Christine Shawcroft (NEC), Walter Wolfgang (NEC)
Entry: £1 (Concessions 50p)

#### TODAY'S FRINGE MEETINGS

Unite Against Fascism

What strategy to defeat the
BNP?

6pm Jury's Inn Speakers include: Ken Livingstone, Mohammed Azam, Billy Hayes CWU, Sabby Dhalu

#### CND

#### Opposing US missile defence

7pm Novotel Hotel Speakers include: Lubomir Zaoralek MP Czech Shadow Foreign Minister, Tony Benn, Katy Clark MP, Alice Mahon, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Kate Hudson CND, Ann Cryer MP

Labour Representation Committee **Political crisis, economic crisis... There is an alternative** 

7.30pm The Mechanics Institute Speakers include: Tony Benn, Katy Clark MP, Billy Hayes CWU, John McDonnell MP, Mark Serwotka PCS, Elaine Smith MSP, Matt Wrack FBU

# Defend finance workers' jobs

The first victims of a banking crisis are always the employees. Unite, with many members in the finance sector is moving an Emergency Motion today calling for a review of banking regulation to avert further disasters. This should be supported.

The expansion of the financial sector grew out of Thatcher's deregulation measures. The subsequent growth of the sector has meant that in some areas institutions are dominant employers. Tighter regulation of banks is required to ensure that inexperienced managers are not permitted to gamble with people's life savings or the jobs of their staff's. Jobs at Northern Rock have been lost and workers at HBOS are under threat.

The Bank of England has almost admitted that it was sleeping on its job of regulation before the run on Northern Rock. Brown assisted Lloyds' takeover of HBOS in order to avoid a repeat of the crisis that led to the collapse of Northern Rock.

It is ironic, that faced with similar but magnified circumstances in America, the Bush government has chosen to intervene to save its two largest mortgage banks and to ease lending between banks. These measures will go some way to save US jobs. The British government should be as decisive.

### SUPPORT THE UNITE EMERGENCY ON BANKING

#### No such thing as a free lunch

Nor information. Campaign Briefing, is produced by volunteers, but we have yet to find anybody giving away paper and ink!

So when you see us tomorrow (and Wednesday) with buckets in hand, please be generous. Campaign Briefing will have a cover price of £2 for the week.

# Briefing

campaign Tuesdau 23 September 2008

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### **Reject the Housing Annex**

"Whilst we welcome the concession made at Warwick to allow local authorities to bid for Social Housing Grant to build first class council homes this is not sufficient to justify taking our foot off the pedal now. Without substantial new funding the concession is largely symbolic.

Crucially, government has not provided a solution for embattled authorities with existing council housing who are either unable to meet the Decent Homes

Standard without additional resources or maintain this standard in future years.

The alliance between tenants, trade unions, councillors and MPs is starting to demonstrate benefits. We would be doing all our members and supporters a disservice by letting up on our efforts now."

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

### **Support Calder Valley and** other rule changes

CLPs have submitted several rule changes this year, many of which will enhance the party's democratic structures but several NEC changes should be treated with caution.

Past practice has been for the platform to take the rule changes in a single debate with card votes on each rule change at the end, which can be confusing.

We urge support for the following rule changes:

• Chap 1, Clause 1: Islington North CLP is seeking to define the legal territory in which the party operates as Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). This will help advance the peace process in Northern Ireland - one of Labour's finest achievements - and avoid any more expensive

legal settlements to appease questionable challenges on equalities grounds. It will also avoid challenging our sister party in the Socialist International, the SDLP.

- Rule 4b, 2b(i): Calder Valley and others seek to lower the threshold of MPs' nominations for the post of Leader and Deputy when there is a **vacancy** from 12.5% to 7.5% (i.e. from 45 to 27 MPs in the current Parliament). This could benefit potential candidates from all wings of the party. Note that it does not apply to contests against a sitting leader.
- Chap 11b: Lancaster and Fleetwood CLP seek to extend democracy in Young

Continued over

#### More Shenanigans

"These are the CAC people we'd like you to vote for", a Yorkshire NPF rep was overheard saying to a first time delegate from her city of Sheffield, discretely passing over a list of the conference platfom's favoured candidates. Keen also to arrange suitably supportive speakers for the Crime & Justice debate, she also sounded out this delegate's views on equal pay and equalities before reporting back on her mobile phone.

We also hear that several NPF members in other regions were actively encouraging CLP delegates to support the union contemporary issues in the priorities ballot and so waste their vote. The manipulative role previously played by some Party staff seems to have been outsourced! But there is still some in-house activity. A Regional Director was heard encouraging a hapless delegate to vote against the Emergency Motion from the unions opposing the opt out from the Working Time Directive.

#### Mystery speaker?

Who was the female "delegate" described as from "Richmond Park CLP" who spoke in the debate on the Working Time Directive? She argued that the opt out was popular. Not, it seems, with delegates in the hall given that it only received 15 votes. Nor, it seems, was she the delegate from Richmond Park, who is male. So who was she?

#### "Indispensible", and only £2 for 5 issues

Michael White described Campaign Briefing in his Guardian blog as "indispensible". If you missed our buckets today, we will have them again tomorrow!

#### Rule changes—continued

Labour by ensuring elections for the Executive officers at YL conference.

Rule changes submitted by the NEC are less helpful to the party and need to be studied closely:

- Rule 2C.2: This stops CLPs getting the whole membership sub in a General Election year.
   Subs are being raised in line with inflation.
- Rule 3A.1: Do support this proposal to permit more delegates from CLPs where membership justifies it, as originally proposed by Bethnal Green and Bow CLP last year.
- Rule 3A.1(b): NEC member Ann Black has campaigned to do away with the interpretation of the rule which prevents CLPs sending a man to Conference if they were unable to find a women delegate the previous year. We urge support.
- **Rule 4C.3:** [This has been withdrawn as it was opposed by the unions.]
- Rule 5D: Will introduce a £25 per month levy on CLPs up to the 2014 Euro-election campaign which will bankrupt smaller CLPs and there is no guarantee this money will ever be used for this purpose given the dire state of the party's coffers.
- Chap 6: The changes to the disciplinary section should be opposed as they allow all-member meetings to initiate charges against members and could become a kangaroo court.

#### TUESDAY FRINGE MEETINGS

Defend And Extend Abortion Rights
12.45pm, The Rain Bar, Gt. Bridgewater Street
Palestine Solidarity Palestine: The Way Forward
12.45pm, Palace Hotel, Oxford Street

# Conference assessment and the way forward for Labour

6pm—Relish Bar, Great Northern Square
(Near corner of Peter St & Deansgate—behind Bar 38)

Chair: Pete Willsman (NEC)

Speakers: Mohammed Azam

Ann Black (NEC) \* Kelvin Hopkins MP

Jim Kennedy (NEC, UCATT) \* Peter Kenyon (NEC)

Christine Shawcroft (NEC) \* Walter Wolfgang (NEC)

Entry: £1 (Concessions 50p)

#### **The Right target T&G**

A glance at Appendix I to CAC Report 3 reveals the strength of the Right wing among CLP delegates at this conference. The Right had a slate for the CAC elections on Sunday. This included four of the five union nominees, but did **not** include Mike Murphy of Unite (TGWU).

In place of Mike, the forces of darkness supported Andy Furlong, a hard right NPF CLP member in the East Midlands. Unfortunately, the CLP section at conference is becoming something of a rotten borough. Some 200 CLPs have not sent delegates and many of those that have fail to mandate their delegate. It is also not unusual for regional officials to mislead delegates by telling them that mandating is not permissible.

#### **NEC Political Bias**

It has always been custom and practice that the NEC Chair is chosen strictly by seniority. And where two have identical lengths of service, the choice is alphabetical.

Christine Shawcroft is now the most senior member. Last year she should have been nominated for vicechair but was brushed aside with no attempt at any justification.

This is by no means the only example of political bias. Yet again Christine, Peter Willsman and Walter Wolfgang were denied a speaking slot on behalf of the NEC. But, of course "trusty" Peter Wheeler, was given a slot. Wheeler also has a daily column in the official conference newspaper. Shawcroft, Willsman, Wolfgang, and Wheeler are all members of the NEC's CLP section. Wheeler has the least support amongst party members having come bottom of the six elected. This despite being promoted as the NEC speaker at regional conferences.

#### Yet More Shenanigans

We hear there was a "political briefing" organised for West Midlands CLP delegates this week. How generous of Robert Flello, MP for Stoke South, to give his time to explain the historic role of the trade unions in the founding of the Labour Party! And how imaginitive of Brother Bob to suggest that the contemporary issues priorities ballot was a good opportunity for CLPs to demonstrate support for the unions (and thus waste their vote)!

Brother Bob also questioned the need for extra debates. After all, he said, debates involve unhelpful division.

# Wednesday

PRICE FOR THE WEEK: £2

**24 September 2008** 

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### Change direction or lose election

After conference Labour faces its greatest challenge for more than 10 years. Between 1997 and 2005 the party lost 41/2 million votes and the situation since then has got worse. The root of the electoral decline has been the New Labour agenda that maintains the legacy of Thatcherism. The rejection of progressive taxation, the privatisation of public services, the curtailment of civil liberties and participation in George Bush's military ventures have all taken a severe toll on Labour's support.

The past fortnight's manoeuvrings by Miliband and his Blairite acolytes have found no support at this conference. This is hardly surprising since the unions and most party activists reject the Blairite policies that are responsible for the party's current problems. The government's Autumn 're-launch' plus the new measures announced by Brown yesterday; from nursery education to health checks, are all welcome. But we must go further if we are going to build support sufficient to win a fourth term.

The CLPs showed their support for change in the amendments they submitted prior to the Warwick NPF conference, whilst the unions have done so this week. Where the procedures still permit conference to make a decision it has voted for change, as with the support given to the motion calling for the scrapping of the

opt-out from the working time directive. Conference cheered Tony Woodley's and Michael Meacher's demand for a return to public ownership and it approved the further examination of several issues including the windfall tax and equal pay for women.

There is agreement across the party that it must stand for a progressive agenda, rooted in improving living standards and public services, fighting inequality, promoting civil liberties, combating climate change and promoting international peace. However the problem is that the Leadership's rhetoric is not sufficiently matched by tangible policies and in a few cases, such as Iraq, policy is at odds with it.

#### **Progressive agenda**

With the current convulsions of capitalism it is evident that the market does not have the solutions. Bold radical initiatives are both necessary and are popular.

If the government fails to make the policy changes that conference has been urging the party risks defeat at the next general election and a Tory government, committed to cutting public spending and hitting the poor, will take over. CLP and union delegates leaving conference will want to keep up the pressure for policy changes.

The new procedures at this year's

conference leave a lot to be desired. Contemporary issues are of limited value for CLPs and unions to raise their concerns. The criteria that the CAC insists are met are unrealistic. The new annex reports have not resolved issues satisfactorily and if an annex is not accepted the issue is returned to the NPF, leaving important policy questions just being moved around in a circle from conference to NPF to conference .... As conference can make a decision on emergency resolutions, these are now important vehicles for pursuing policy change.

# Support OMOV elections to the NPF

Next year's annual conference will be considering 12 rule change proposals that call for an extension of democracy into the elections of CLP representatives to the NPF. (See this year's Delegate's Report pg 18) Currently the bulk of party members are excluded from this election as the vote is restricted to annual conference delegates. A one member one vote (OMOV) ballot, as with the elections to the NEC CLP section, would rectify this deficiency.

"Indispensible", and only £2 for 5 issues Michael White described Campaign Briefing in his Guardian blog as "indispensible". If you missed any issues, or would like copies for your local party/TU, please send a cheque for £3 to CLPD at the address overleaf.

### The way forward

Delegates set out their priorities for the next year at the CLPD fringe meeting to assess the outcomes from Conference. NEC member Peter Willsman, referring to the next year's appraisal of the Contemporary Issues process promised last year in Gordon Brown's "Extending Democracy" review, set out a number of matters for discussion. He said that the limitation to "contemporary" should be abolished. CLPs and unions should be able to submit any issue they consider important. The 4 + 4 rule on issues to be debated should be interpreted as originally promised, to permit eight topics to be debated and not five as in this, and most, years. Peter also said that 'minority positions' should be allowed on Annex Reports to permit delegates to discuss a choice of options.

NEC member, Jim Kennedy from UCATT, described what his own union had set out to achieve from Conference, recognising that their relative size and the political situation had made them realistic in their aims.

Ann Black, who was congratulated on being elected Vice-Chair of the party, said she hoped to introduce improvements that would help CLPs - such as issuing information earlier to allow timely and proper debate and mandating of delegates.

Kelvin Hopkins MP set out a range of priorities that were popular and would lead to a fourth Labour victory. These included a 2% reduction in the interest rate, a massive house-building programme and free long-term care for the elderly.

#### **Abortion Rights**

Public Briefing Meeting ahead of further votes on abortion this autumn

Tuesday 7 October—7pm, House of Commons, Committee Room 10 www.abortionrights.org.uk

### Look Back in Anger

Lorraine Monk, delegate from Twickenham CLP, last came to conference five years ago. Until this morning, Lorraine was the only delegate who challenged the CAC – when her CLP's rule change was ruled out of order. "Five years ago there were more challenges to the rostrum," she says "but there are just as many things to complain about now."

"For example there are a disgracefully small number of contributions from the floor and we have to listen to an endless number of platform speakers. Delegates seem increasingly to have been lulled into the false notion that they are at a convention rather than active participants at the party's sovereign body."

### Second class citizens?

First thing yesterday morning, after a series of platform speakers had strutted their stuff, Keith Vaz, the Chair, said there was time for a few contributions. But as the CLP delegates approached the rostrum he said they must be very brief because "we are already running late". A little later some 14 rule changes were moved affecting the future of the party, but only a mere 4 speakers from the floor were permitted. The reason why CLP delegates are treated in this offhand way is because Conference is not governed by the interests of the rank-and-file, but by the TV schedules to suit the "super stars".

#### Mystery Solved

We reported yesterday that a mystery woman, wrongly described as from Richmond Park CLP, attacked from the rostrum the emergency union motion on the working time directive. Yesterday, she popped up again, this time described as from Richmond (Yorks) and proposed a rule change to increase union affiliation fees almost fourfold. What have our brothers and sisters done to deserve this?

# Support the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Annual rates: Individuals - £; un- and low-waged (under £8,000) - £5; Couples - £25; un- or low-waged £6; National & regional organisations - £25; CLPs, TUs & Co-op - £15; LP branches - £5. Send your cheque (payable to CLPD) to: CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH. [Ref CB2008]

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Name(s) (1)		(2)			
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