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## Economy debate

We've not yet seen composites so read them carefully, but we recommend:

- Support for **Unite** in prioritising growth and jobs, opposing rapid or immediate cuts in spending, and supporting fair and progressive taxation;
- Support for **UCATT** in opposing cuts in building schools for the future and social housing and the consequent loss of construction jobs ;
- Support for **Easington & Hastings & Rye CLPs' call** for investment not cuts, rejection of the claim that deficit is due to an unsustainable level of public spending, and opposing the cuts as a threat to further weaken economic growth;
- BUT opposition to Labour's previous "credible plan to halve the deficit within four years".

### CAC gagging saga – Part II

When "Partnership into Power" was railroaded through Conference in 1997 it was intended that a mere handful of "Contemporary Motion" would replace the wide range of policy resolutions and amendments which all CLPs and unions had hitherto been able to submit. CLPs and unions had also been able to submit resolutions on party organisation and campaigning and there was no reason why this practice could not have continued. But the control freaks swept up resolutions on party matters into the Contemporary Motions straight jacket. Thus the Rule Book states "All affiliated organisations and CLPs may submit one contemporary issue (motion) which is not substantially addressed by reports of the NEC (ie. covering party matters) or NPF (ie covering policy) to Conference".

This year Sefton Central CLP submitted an excellent Contemporary Issue on party matters criticising those MPs and former MPs who have chosen to assist the present government. But this was immediately ruled out by the CAC who claimed that such Contemporary Issues are not allowed!!

### Meacher heads democracy response

Yesterday, the NPF Chair, Pat McFadden, launched the consultation document that will provide the basis for the year long review into "Partnership into Power". In fact Pat was ahead of the game, since the document will not be available until the end of the week, if then. Last year Conference was given the impression that the review would be fairly far-reaching and address the Party's democratic deficit, which the leadership candidates have been highlighting. Unfortunately it increasingly looks as if the review will be limited to tinkering about with the NPF process and its cycle of meetings. Nevertheless, CLPs and Unions should take this opportunity to respond to the review with more robust proposals. CLPD has set up a Task Force, chaired by Michael Meacher MP that will draft a model response; this will then be circulated to CLPs.

### Ed Balls uniquely qualified to be Shadow Chancellor

There have been two important outcomes from the debate over the last few months: Ed Miliband has come from behind to win support for change in the party. And Ed Balls has, in beginning to turn public opinion on the deficit back towards Labour, demonstrated his unique qualification to be Ed Miliband's shadow chancellor.

Ed Miliband said himself, in his acceptance speech as Leader:

*"Every Tory minister will be quaking in their boots about the prospect of you shadowing them because you can both take on, and win, big arguments for Labour."*

What argument will be bigger over the coming year or two that that over the deficit and the right response to the economic crisis? What argument will make the biggest difference to restoring employment growth in Britain, protecting living standards and the well-being of the most vulnerable? Mark Ferguson at Labour List said of him:

*"His Bloomberg speech in which he attacked "growth deniers" was seen as the point at which the country at large began to sit up and listen."*

There are those who suggest appointing a less well qualified candidate, committed to policies which have already failed to convince the electorate, as an expedient response to "answer Conservative taunts of 'Red Ed', a poodle of the unions". They are suggesting taking a terrible risk.

**Balls to that.**

## What an Ed Miliband victory will mean

Ed Miliband has run as the change candidate and that was unquestionably the right stance. Change is what is overwhelmingly needed both by the Labour Party and by Britain. If he wins, that change will come in four key areas.

First there will be alternative policies to redress the deficit which will oppose huge mindless cuts that hit the poorest hardest and decimate public services. The Labour Party's position on the cuts so far has been timid, rigid, compromising. That will change as much greater focus is put on growth, job creation and taxing the super-rich. When the weight of the cuts over the next 2 years cracks the coalition, a relentless Labour political onslaught on the Tories' needless destruction of the Welfare State will be backed by sound economic alternatives on the deficit.

Second, the obsessive fixation with the market as the model for all things, warts and all, will be rebalanced. Markets will always remain important in a free economy, so long as they are properly regulated. But there are two caveats. One is that there are several parts of public life where markets do not work well – including health, education, pensions, housing, energy, transport – where a different model has repeatedly been shown to work better. The other is that the unwinding of regulation so often has disastrous results – in unleashing a financial crash, or undermining needed quality standards in the environment, employment conditions and health and safety. Labour will now take a more mature view of markets and oppose the

reflex reaction of privatisation dogma.

Third, Britain is now the most unequal country in Europe. Thatcher did it deliberately, New Labour condoned it by vacuous piffle about opportunity, social mobility, and improved personal support. There is a whole range of actions that now need to be taken – a prolonged and relentless crackdown on tax avoidance/evasion by big business and the ultra-rich, a High Pay Commission, ending tax breaks for top incomes, stopping the non-dom tax loophole, a more progressive income tax structure, and a big increase in the minimum wage. Ed M put the latter at the forefront of his campaign – an increase from £5.93 an hour (from 1st October) to around £7.50 an hour. But Labour will move gradually towards these other fronts too in the war for greater fairness.

But there's one other area too where change is desperately needed, and that's in the feel and atmosphere of political life in Britain. Both Thatcher and Blair pursued a social authoritarianism and centralisation of power that virtually asphyxiated political activism. That will now begin to change. Labour needs an elected party Chair to represent its members, a resolution-voting party conference whose decisions are respected by the leadership, a party Ombudsman to protect members' rights and ensure greater transparency, and end to the gross shenanigans that have marred and distorted parliamentary selections.

Ed, you have the chance of a lifetime!

**Michael Meacher MP**

## NEC overturn members' choice in Tower Hamlets

In a denial of natural justice the September NEC removed Cllr Lutfur Rahman as candidate for Mayor of Tower Hamlets, just 3 days before the close of nominations. Without his knowledge a number of complaints were put before the NEC. Cllr Rahman had won the members' ballot, having topped the poll with 45% first preferences. Instead the NEC imposed Cllr Helal Abbas (one of the complainants) who had come third. Party members in Tower Hamlets have not been allowed to select council candidates in most wards for 12 years, having been run by Regional Office all that time. Every new member has been vetted before admission by the Region in that time. Council candidates have been appointed by Region. And in this selection, every voter's identity was carefully checked before they voted.

**Steve Beckett**

Tower Hamlets BLP Secretary  
and Conference delegate

## Mandating is in order

Since the days of yore CLPs have mandated their Conference delegates on issues they feel are important.

This is a perfectly legitimate practice since obviously delegates are at Conference to represent their CLPs and not themselves. There is nothing in the rule book to prevent mandating. But of course regional party apparatchiks have found that it is more difficult to lead mandated delegates up the garden path.

It is therefore becoming quite common for officials to pop up at Regional briefing meetings and claim mandating is "against the rules". They should be asked to produce the rule.

## Challenging the cuts consensus

**12:45—13:45 today—Bar 38, Peter Street**

**Speakers include:**

**Ken Livingstone, Ed Balls, Frances O'Grady,  
Jon Trickett, Billy Hayes & Mehdi Hassan**

## Socialist Campaign Group

**7:30pm tonight**

**Main Hall, Mechanics Institute, 103  
Princess Street**

**Speakers:** Tony Benn, Alan Simpson and MPs:  
John McDonnell, Katy Clark, Jeremy Corbyn, Cathy Jamieson, Diane Abbott, John Cryer, Kelvin Hopkins, Linda Riordan & Austin Mitchell