

Campaign Briefing

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Message to CLP delegates Priorities Ballot: How best to use your vote

In the Priorities Ballot, CLPs are allowed to pick four priority issues for debate, and the Trade Unions also pick four. To maximise the number of important subjects that are debated the four subjects the CLPs choose should be different to the four subjects the trade unions choose.

The trade unions' four priority issues will automatically get on to the agenda, so CLPs should not waste their votes on the same topics, but vote for four different issues. That will ensure that at least some of the topics CLPs consider important will be discussed.

Below we list the four subjects that the Unions will put on the agenda and the four separate subjects that we recommend CLPs should vote for. This Conference should have the opportunity to discuss the banking scandal.

Housing benefit is being cut, the unemployed targeted and security of social housing tenancies being questioned. Housing should also be discussed this week.

The improvements Labour

bought to health care must be defended by keeping the NHS in the public sector and Conference should reinforce this message.

The government's undemocratic referendum proposals, combining a reduction in the number of MPs and AV, is a purely partisan package that should be opposed by this Conference.

CLPs are urged to vote for:

- Banking
- Electoral Reform
- Housing
- NHS

CLPs should not squander their votes on:

- Economic & industrial policy
- Electoral reform
- Housing
- NHS

as these important topics are guaranteed to be put on the agenda by the unions as their four priorities.

Victory for Labour: Party unites around "Red Ed"

Yesterday's election of Ed Miliband gives the party the best chance of winning back power committed to policies that are based on Labour values. Despite the best efforts of the Blairites and almost the entire media backing the New Labour continuity candidate, the party has voted for change. The debate during the campaign also drew out some important points: Ed Balls set out clearly the economic policy required to defeat the Tories – the priority being investment to encourage growth as opposed to cutting public services. His efforts have already begun to move public opinion in our direction. Diane Abbott urged the party to rebuild the trust lost over invading Iraq and to avoid conceding to the tabloids' agenda on immigration.

But there's no room for complacency. There is an urgent need to review party policy; to build united opposition to the Tory cuts in conjunction with the TUC and local communities; and to ensure that individual & affiliated members are fully involved in party decision-making.

CAC gagging saga – part 1

The CAC has ruled out 10 proposed rule changes by employing the spurious grounds of the “Three year rule”, effectively gagging CLPs and reducing their influence. Last year, 39 CLPs and unions submitted 14 rule changes due to be discussed this year.

The Three Year Rule states 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 three years. The key word here, of course, is ‘part’. In other words, if a CLP amends 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.

ASLEF, Chichester CLP and Beverley and Holderness CLP are pursuing the illegitimate gagging of their rule changes and are going to see the CAC on Monday morning.

Over the last 15 years CLPs have had less and less influence at conference. It is not surprising that many CLPs consider that the money needed to fund a delegate to Conference could be better spent elsewhere.

The one area where CLPs have had a modicum of influence is by submitting proposals to change the party’s rules. Rule changes have an automatic right to be debated and voted on. Support proposals to ensure a debate.

The shame of MacShane

In the Observer of 23 December 2007 Labour MP Denis MacShane wrote an open letter to Nick Clegg congratulating the latter on becoming the Lib-Dem leader. MacShane boasted that he had ‘shamelessly supported’ Clegg’s efforts to become a Sheffield MP. Of course if a rank and file Party member supported a rival politician in this way, they would soon be up for discipline before the National Constitutional Committee. But, under New Labour, there’s one law for ordinary members and another for MPs.

In his open letter, MacShane wrote as follows; ‘Before the 2001 election, I urged Labour voters in seats where Lib-Dem candidates were best placed to beat off Conservatives to vote tactically. I said that in Sheffield even though a good friend, one of the best young Labour Muslim politicians in Yorkshire, was trying to win your seat. We knew he would not and it is far better to keep dozens of Lib-Dem MPs in the Commons than see the Tories re-conquer Harrogate and Hallam and Eastleigh’.

Sinn Fein
Ireland: Labour’s legacy

What next for the peace process?

6pm Rochdale Suite, Jury’s Inn Hotel, Bridgewater St.

Speakers include:

Gerry Kelly, Peter Hain, Diane Abbott, Lord Alf Dubs

Another Victory for Labour London Party unites around Red Ken

Following his selection as Labour’s London Mayoral candidate on Friday, Ken Livingstone indicated he will be campaigning to defend living standards and to protect people from the government’s cuts. The 2012 London election will be an opportunity for voters to tell Cameron and Osborne that they don’t want devastating cuts to public services, fewer jobs and declining living standards. Boris Johnson has pioneered Cameron’s cuts in London, defeating him will give Labour a big opportunity to show that Cameron can be defeated too.

Ed would have won by more under OMOV

The Tories have been criticising Ed Miliband because of the importance of trade union support to his victory, as if there was something wrong with the votes of 211,234 individual trade union members who support the party. Others – like the Guardian and Andy Burnham - think that we should have a simple OMOV ballot rather than an electoral college. It’s interesting therefore that if you just add up the votes of every individual who voted, Ed beat David by 175,519 to 147,220 – a rather bigger margin of about 9%.