

Campaign Briefing

Tuesday

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Vote for two grassroots voices on the Conference Arrangements Committee

Vote for Catherine Donovan and Gary Heather

Today, Catherine Donovan and Gary Heather are standing for election in the CLPs' section of the CAC. The ballot takes place between 9am and 4pm in the Ballot Area, Lower Galleria near the entrance to the conference hall. All CLPs have a vote in this election.

Catherine Donovan says:

Members need to have confidence that the resolutions put forward can progress to Conference with a realistic chance of being debated. New delegates need support, encouragement and impartial advice. I would aim to make Conference fully accessible and also a satisfying experience.

I have been a party member for 35 years and a lifelong trade unionist.

Gary Heather writes:

As a longstanding member I have always taken a very keen interest in our party's democracy and rulebook. On the CAC, I would seek to make Annual Conference more democratic and inclusive with more participation by delegates. Our conference should be a place where our delegates debate and vote on policies—not dominated by privileged platform speakers while delegates are left to cheer them on.

Catherine and Gary spoke exclusively to *Campaign Briefing* - "Were we to have the privilege of representing CLPs on the CAC, we would insist on studying the logistics for Conference so that 400 yard long queues to gain access would be avoided."

CLPs and Unions denied their rights

When Partnership in Power was agreed by Annual Conference in 1997, it was made clear in the document carried by Conference that there would be two types of Contemporary Motions (CMs), namely CMs on policy and CMs on Party organisation and campaigning. This simply carried on the previous practice. Since 1918 CLPs and Unions had been able to submit motions on policy and on internal party matters. Indeed, the fact that there are two types of CM is implicit in the head office

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Sharp Practice

This year the Conference Arrangement Committee, in its interpretation of the Rule Book, has added even newer dimensions to the elasticity of meaning. Yesterday Amber Valley and other CLPs (Blackpool South, Caerphilly, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Newport West, Uxbridge and South Ruislip) were called to the CAC in relation to the rule change they submitted 18 months ago (*Delegates' Report* page16). This rule change was against the 'parachuting' of Parliamentary candidates into safe Labour seats.

Prior to Conference the CLPs were asked to confirm that they wanted to pursue the rule change and it was scheduled to be taken on Wednesday morning with the other rule change proposals from CLPs. The Unions have a particularly strong interest in this rule change because it is often good Trade Unionists who are pushed aside by sharp-suited career politicians.

At the CAC, the delegates were shocked when told that their rule change had been ruled out 'under the three year rule.' The feisty delegates demanded an explanation. The officers, under pressure, eventually argued that because on Sunday under Refounding Labour there had been a very minor amendment to Chapter 5 of the Rule Book, their rule change was caught by the three year moratorium. In fact, the Amber Valley rule change was to a wholly distinct and separate sub-clause much later in the chapter and dealt with a totally discrete issue. The Amber Valley sub-clause

Continued over

**DON'T FORGET! 6PM TOMORROW
COME TO CLPD'S ASSESSMENT OF
CONFERENCE MEETING IN THE GREEN ROOM,
78 DUKE STREET WITH TONY BENN AND MANY
OTHER SPEAKERS.**

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Sharp Practice continued

and its subject of NEC Parliamentary impositions of candidates was also unrelated to anything discussed under Refounding Labour. Following the CAC meeting, the angry delegates consulted the text of the new Rule Book to establish what exactly the three-year rule said. This is on page 14 of the Rule Book issued to delegates and reads as follows:

“When Party conference has made a decision on a constitutional amendment, no resolution to amend that PART of the constitution or rules of the Party shall appear on the agenda for a period of three years from the time such decision is made, except such resolutions to amend the constitution and rules that are in the opinion of the NEC of immediate importance.”

The CAC seems to be illegitimately redefining the meaning of a ‘part’. Clearly a part is not a Clause and it is certainly not a Chapter. Had the designers of the Rule Book wanted to put ‘Clause’ or ‘Chapter’ they would have done so, but they put ‘part’. The delegates and Conference have been denied their democratic rights of debate. If complaints are made at the rostrum, they should be given full support.

Shenanigans

Sunday at a Regional Briefing, delegates were treated to another dose of ‘liaison’ or the dodgy and illegitimate practice of telling delegates how to vote. The Regional Director started off by advising support for Refounding Labour and the rushed omnibus rule changes that went with it. Then a Peer, no less, told delegates which subjects to support in the priorities ballot and, yes, you’ve guessed it, they were the four selected by the Unions, which of course were automatically on the agenda. For CLPs to vote for these would be a waste of a vote. Surprise, surprise, the platform failed to explain this very pertinent point. Opposition to the blatant steer was made very unwelcome by the officials, who seem to have been closely watching the dissidents ever since.

**Fringe meeting:- Wednesday 28th
12.30 - Unite for Palestine -
Marquee 4, ACC Level 2
(Ground floor)
Speakers: Len McCluskey, Andy
Slaughter MP, Karma Nabulsi, Hugh
Lanning & Steven Cavalier
Organised by: Unite, Palestine
Solidarity Campaign & Thompsons
Solicitors**

Feral Tories

The August “riots” gave birth to a vivid diversity of explanations in the gutter press: individual moral failure, causal circumstances of deprivation, genetic attributes, a feral sub-class of inadequate, etc, etc. One of our supporters was reminded of an episode in a remote peninsular location when a large container ship ran aground. Looting was rife, and one particular looter caught our supporter’s eye: a local Conservative county, district and town councillor, a major portfolio-holder and a member of the Police Authority, was spotted by the Bill pushing a large barrel of red wine up a hill towards his waiting vehicle. Suspension from the police authority followed.

Ferality, it should be remembered, is not a characteristic of a single class.

A free press?

Campaign Briefing is produced by volunteers, but we have yet to find anyone giving away paper and ink! So when you see us tomorrow (and Thursday) with buckets in hand, please be generous. *Campaign Briefing* will have a cover price of £2 for the week.

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CLPs and Unions denied their rights continued

letter sent to CLPs and Unions inviting CMs. But, in recent years, very few CMs covering internal issues have been submitted. However, this year there were several CMs criticising the proposed arrangements for handling Refounding Labour at this Conference and one CM on the implications for the Party of the Boundary Commission proposals. They were all inexplicably ruled out.

Aggrieved CLPs have visited the CAC and sought to appeal. They were told by senior officials that only CMs on policy are allowable! Now, 1997 may be quite a long time ago and senior officers may have changed, but the rights of CLPs and Unions, given to them by Conference don’t change unless Conference so directs.

CLP delegates have it in their power to make a major change in the way they are treated at Conference by electing Cllr Catherine Donovan and Gary Heather to the Conference Arrangements Committee.



BITE BACKS

“There is a very real risk that this fiscal tightening will condemn Britain to the same situation Japan faced in the last decade and the US faced during the Depression.”

**Grant Lewis of Daiwa Capital Markets (the Japanese bank)
Guardian, 25 September 2011**

“Change in the chemistry of the Labour Party is going on. And it’s only really visible by coming to a conference and listening”.

**Jackie Ashley, *Guardian*,
26 September 2011**