

# CAMPAIGN

## Briefing

Annual Conference 2012

Sunday

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**50th  
year!**

## How CLPs can best use their votes in the priorities ballot

In the priorities ballot, CLPs and the trade unions are *each* allowed to pick four issues for debate. To maximise the number of important subjects that are debated, **the four subjects the CLPs choose should be different from the four subjects chosen by the trade unions** and guaranteed to be on the agenda. CLPs should not waste their votes on the same topics.

### Four important subjects CLPs can put on the agenda

#### 1. Health and social care

The health service is under sustained attack from the Tory-led government. It is being cut and broken up and the last Labour Government's privatisation drive intensified. Conference needs to show voters that Labour will provide health care on the basis of need, not ability to pay. Next time, Labour will end privatisation and outsourcing and repeal the Tories' Health and Social Care Act. Any composite on the NHS must make these clear commitments now.

#### 2. Hillsborough

Support the people of Liverpool and demand new inquests into the deaths at Hillsborough, which should reveal the unvarnished truth and bring justice to the victims.

#### 3. Public services

The health service cannot be maintained by driving down wages, which is the hidden agenda behind the proposals for regional pay.

#### 4. Schools

The Tories again want to run down the education system by reintroducing two tier systems – something Labour needs to be seen strongly opposing.

### Four subjects the unions have already put on the agenda

#### 1. Investment, Banking and Growth

#### 2. Promoting an Alternative to Austerity

#### 3. Employment Rights

#### 4. Housing

These are important subjects, but you don't need to use your four votes on them.

Following the priorities ballot, compositing meetings on the successful topics will probably take place from 6.30pm in the Midland Hotel. Delegates will need to pay attention to ensure composites take policy forward, away from the Blairite framework that drove so many voters away. Party staff will bring draft composites which should be treated with caution. To restore economic growth, jobs and wages should not be counterposed – both need to be defended and accompanied by the type of investment programme proposed by Unite.

## Contemporary? Who's asking?

Every year CLPs are forced to jump through hoops when submitting their "contemporary motions". It has never been clear what exactly is meant by "contemporary". To a large extent it depends on the judgement of the elected members of the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC). This year by far the greatest number of motions from CLPs were on the subject of health and social care, housing and railways. Those on railways were deemed not to be "contemporary", despite focusing on the row in August between Richard Branson and First Group. They have now disappeared without trace. Usually, to be accepted as "contemporary", it is only necessary to make reference to an event after July. Look at the motion in the "Housing" section from the Association of Labour Councillors and Young Labour. Where is the reference to a contemporary event in these motions!? Yet again CLPs seem to be treated as second class citizens.

The only daily briefing for delegates at 2012 Annual Conference.

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**CLPD**  
Campaign for  
Labour Party  
Democracy

# Refounding Labour fails to deliver

The latest package of *Refounding Labour* measures is shrouded in the language of empowering members, just like the changes introduced by Tony Blair. The reality, once again, will be very different.

Back in 1997, when Tony Blair introduced the process we now all agree did not give members enough say in policy-making, there was a promise:

*"Annual conference would for the first time have the opportunity to debate and vote on alternative positions within policy statements."*

Of course, in practice, New Labour control freakery quickly sought to eliminate dissent. It is therefore deeply disappointing, given Ed Miliband's genuine renunciation of control freakery, that his avowed commitment to more democracy has not been delivered.

The only new "power" now left to Conference is to select a small proportion of the topics that will be considered each year by the national policy forum. No options in the policy statements from the national policy forum, no minority positions, no amendments.... just take it or leave it.

Oh yes, the new "policy hub" may make it easier for members to feed in their views (though similar promises have been made before). It may enable more national policy members to participate in discussions (though what relationship these will have with the policy review being led by Jon Cruddas is unclear).

But if CLPs want a democratic party, you are going to have to make it happen yourselves. *Refounding Labour* won't give it to you. For a modest shift in the balance of power towards party members, vote for the rule change proposals from Bridgend and Islington North later in the week.

## Is Conference Arrangements Committee using Kafka to interpret the rules?

Harry Donaldson, chair of the CAC, is a reasonable person, so he must be puzzled by some of his own committee's decisions. Several rule changes have been declared out of order using the three year rule. This states: *"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..."*

However, Harry's committee has decided: if a rule change has been debated on an entirely different subject matter that is totally discrete and unrelated but is touched upon in a clause or sub-clause, then any "part" of that clause applies to the whole clause in terms of the 3 year rule. This allows the CAC to use a wide net to declare that many undebated and unrelated matters are in breach of the 3 year rule. Once the CAC has made such a ruling, there is no right of appeal against the decision, just a chance to meet the chair to hear the reasons for the decision. The finality of the decisions of the CAC on these rulings is also not in the Rule book, another bit of Kafka. A clause may have many parts but a part is a part and not a clause – end of story.

## Fair Treatment for CLPs!

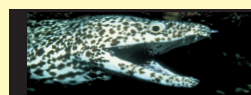
A year ago, Bridgend CLP and Islington North CLP each submitted a rule change to Annual Conference (see *Delegates' Report* for details). Under an arcane ruling dating from 1968, both of these rule amendments have been held back for a year. They are timetabled for discussion on Wednesday morning.

This afternoon the NEC is bringing forward some last minute rule changes under *Refounding Labour*. These will not be on the same subject as the issues covered by Bridgend and Islington North, although they may be in the same section of the Rule Book.

We understand that if the NEC rule changes are carried today, it will be ruled that somehow this means that Bridgend and Islington North's rule changes "fall". **This would be totally unfair.** And they are quite compatible.

If, in any way, the CLP rule changes do have implications for the NEC proposals then the correct procedure to follow would be for the two CLPs' proposals to be taken alongside the NEC's, not contemptuously thrown in the bin!

Fair treatment for CLPs – that would be "real change".



## Biteback

"Drawing up a wish list for Labour Party Conference is a little like sitting on Santa's knee at the Grotto, rehearsing a long wish list before being fobbed off with some cheap plastic toy." Mark Seddon, October *Labour Briefing* (the original).

*Labour Briefing* is available from sellers outside conference.



### Sinn Fein Fringe Meeting Uniting Ireland; fighting austerity

6pm, Sunday, 30th September  
Rochdale Suite, Jury's Inn Hotel,  
Great Bridgewater Street,  
(5 minutes from conference centre)

#### Speakers:

Jennifer McCann MLA, SF Minister  
Senator David Cullinane, Sinn Fein  
Jeremy Corbyn MP  
Michael Burke,  
*Socialist Economic Bulletin*  
Owen Jones, writer and commentator

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