

CAMPAIGN

Briefing

Annual Conference 2012

Thursday



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Be clear; be bold – and we can win

This year's Conference has been good for Labour and our public image, with Ed Miliband's Leader's speech well received. The media widely acknowledges that Ed is potentially the next Prime Minister. The Tories, unable to form a majority government two years ago, lag behind in the polls, while Lib-Dem support collapsed.

With morale within the Party rising, but probably over two years till a General Election, Labour cannot afford to be complacent. We should advance a policy agenda that generates real public enthusiasm and builds up our support.

Economy

The principal problem that will confront Labour is the continuing economic crisis. Austerity can no more work for Labour than for the Tories. They are implementing 'ruthless', 'tough' public spending cuts and reducing public sector wages – the result is the crisis has intensified. The possibility of creating a more equal (one nation) society, whilst implementing an austerity programme, is remote.

A radical alternative is required to stimulate growth, create jobs and

By Peter Willsman
CLPD Secretary



raise living standards. Without a programme of public sector investment, such as in infrastructure and housing, economic growth is unlikely to recover.

Those within our party arguing for economic austerity to end, whether from the unions or the CLPs, are not pursuing some sectional interest of a pressure group – but advocating the interests of the whole of society.

Campaigning to win

With a clear set of policies Labour should campaign for an outright majority government. With Blairite public attempts to undermine Ed defeated for now, we can concentrate on attacking the Tories. No agreements should be considered with the Liberal Democrats this side of an election, unless they bring down the government. Our aim is to win and urge everyone to vote Labour.

Party democracy: some way to go

Delegates have expressed concern this week about Conference democracy. Party rules and procedures should be implemented impartially; where delegates have the right to call for a card vote or to

refer back part of the CAC report. This should be respected. Genuinely contemporary resolutions, such as on the West Coast Main Line rail franchise, should not be arbitrarily ruled off the agenda – likewise preventing discussion of every single CLP rule change proposal. Such unfairness undermines Party unity.

Iain McNicol is a breath of fresh air as General Secretary. He has already made it clear to his staff that they are expected to be impartial and not interfere in our internal democracy. Regrettably some officials have a tin ear. We were told that this week one regional official encouraged delegates to support the platform in as loud a way as possible. In another region, an official admonished a delegate for voting against the recommendations of the CAC. What delegates do on these matters is none of our paid officials' business.

Ed's Q&A yesterday was also very refreshing from a party democracy standpoint. Instead of taking stage managed, platform-friendly questions, Ed chose them at random. It was a relief to hear so many down-to-earth working class voices, asking questions on most of the significant political issues. Ed believes in genuine debate, not sterilised control freakery. That is one of his greatest strengths. It is a major reason why CLPD helped Ed become our Leader.

Islington North youth delegate Kaya Makarau Schwartz told the *Morning Star*:

"I'm shocked at the aggressive attitude over something so simple, it's not as if our amendment posed a great threat.

"We've spent a lot of time and money to get here and this was our main reason for coming.

"What's the point of coming to conference if our voices are ignored despite clear support.

"I can't understand why a card vote wasn't allowed."

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Support Composite 5 – Housing

When it comes to council and social housing UCATT is in a unique position. Our members build the homes, maintain the homes and often live in the homes. It is why we are passionate about housing.

For 30 years we have been suffering from a combination of misguided and downright vindictive social housing policy. As a result there are now over 5 million people on housing waiting lists.

The Right-to-Buy which the Conservative-led Government is resurrecting is at the centre of many of the problems we now face, creating shortages in the housing stock which has progressively worsened.

Labour for much of its term in Government also failed to understand the importance of council housing. They believed that housing associations were the panacea to our problems. They were wrong; the fact is that it is only democratically elected councils which have ever built sufficient homes for local populations. If we are going to solve the housing crisis then councils must take the lead.

The Conservatives are set to promote further destructive housing policies. Last month the new housing minister, Mark Prisk, suggested that he

By **Steve Murphy**,
General Secretary,
UCATT



wanted housing associations to start building homes specifically for private rent, diverting land and resources from social housing and further worsening the housing crisis.

UCATT campaigns for the adoption of Government procurement rules which would require companies undertaking new council and social house building to train apprentices. Companies that refused to train would not get work.

The challenge now is to get the Labour Party to sign up to our progressive vision, and then ensure that they deliver it in Government.

It is essential that we finally put the mistakes of the past 30 years, in regard to housing policy, behind us and finally start building the homes that society needs.

By supporting the contemporary motion on housing we will be taking the first steps in putting the Labour Party and the next Government in the right direction to solving the housing crisis.

Colombia - give peace a chance

says ASLEF's
General Secretary
Mick Whelan



The Emergency motion I'll be moving today on Colombia deserves conference's unanimous support. Yes, things could get better in the UK. But at least we're likely to get home alive tonight. For Colombian political activists, human rights campaigners and trade unionists, that's much less certain.

We want our Party to back calls for a ceasefire while peace talks between the government and guerrillas take place. President Santos is not of this mind, and on 6th September he gave the order to "intensify the military offensive." One result of this was the army moving into the Filipinas village, putting civilians in the direct line of fire.

Incredibly, activists in Colombians for Peace are still threatened and targeted for assassination while members of the "Patriotic March" are arrested. This is Santos' idea of reconciliation, his concept of "One Nation".

That's why we want to add Labour's voice to those calling for a ceasefire, civilian involvement in the peace process and an end to government brutality in Colombia, and backing for UK-based Justice for Colombia in its efforts to raise international support for the peace process. We've spent this week defining Labour's values. Back this motion and show that they're not only for home consumption. We believe Colombians too have a right to peace, justice and liberty.



Biteback

"between 1997 and 2010, for every *one* voter that Labour lost from the professional classes, we lost *three* voters among the poorest, those on benefits and the low paid. You don't need to be a Bennite to believe this represents a crisis of working class representation for Labour – and our electability."

Ed Miliband – writing in a Fabian document before he became leader.

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