

# CAMPAIGN BRIEFING

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## WINNING IT FOR LABOUR

### KEN LIVINGSTONE

The London Mayoral election is the largest single electoral battleground before the general election. It gives Labour the very real possibility of an historic bombshell victory.



I say bombshell because we must be clear the Tory candidate starts this campaign with the money, incumbency and media support in his favour.

So this will be a hard-fought campaign. We start this campaign as the fighting underdog.

Our strength is the enthusiasm factor of our grassroots campaign. We have reached out to Londoners in all parts of the city through our weekly phone-bank in Party headquarters. In one month we contacted more people in Bromley than in the previous fifteen years. That kind of enthusiasm cannot be bought.

We will put London first. At each stage Boris Johnson has failed that test. When the first stories of phone-hacking were published Johnson protected his friends in the Conservative Party and News International, attacking the stories as 'codswallop cooked up by the Labour Party.'

The Tories' strategy is for Boris Johnson to differentiate himself from the Tory-led government to avoid electoral flak. But in doing so he shows how much of a Tory he really is. As Benedict Brogan of the *Telegraph* has reported, this is "an agreed strategy rather than a unilateral declaration of independence." Brogan reports: "In the near daily exchanges of text messages between the three [Cameron, Johnson, Osborne], there is

an informal understanding that when Boris plans to go off the reservation, he will alert the high command."

He says the government is "absolutely right to make cuts" and there is no part of government that's moved "so far and so fast to make cuts" as he has.

He failed to stand up for Londoners over higher student fees and cuts to EMA.

He has concentrated on taxing Londoners through above-inflation fare increases. A single bus fare by Oyster has increased by 44 per cent. His business plan commits London to fare rises of inflation plus two per cent for twenty years.

Johnson's campaign to cut the top rate of tax – while raising travel fares – favours the wealthiest at the expense of the overwhelming majority of Londoners.

*(cont. overleaf)*

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE ALERT 2011

## REFOUNDING LABOUR A DISAPPOINTMENT

### PETER WILLSMAN, SECRETARY CLPD

This initiative has been driven by Ed Miliband and Peter Hain (Chair of the National Policy Forum) and it promised much. CLPs, unions and individuals responded in considerable numbers, making a wide range of suggestions for reform. Party members saw this as a chance to start afresh after the banality and control freakery of so-called 'New Labour'.

*(cont. overleaf)*

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PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO ENSURE A WIDE CIRCULATION.

## WINNING IT FOR LABOUR

(cont. from p1)

When the Mayor of London is paid £250,000 a year by a newspaper to write a weekly column – £100,000 more than his mayoral salary – then something is wrong. Even more so when he dismisses that salary as ‘chicken feed’. Under Boris Johnson twenty-eight staff members in the Greater London Authority are earning more than £100,000, compared with sixteen three years ago.

Boris Johnson, by not standing up for London, has made Londoners less well off and less safe. His approach is to cut the police, not crime.

Burglaries, robberies and muggings are on the rise. Injured knife crime victims aged thirteen to twenty-four have increased by more than thirty per cent under Boris Johnson. Yet his own figures show that he will cut 1,800 uniformed police officers by 2013/2014. He’s watering down the deployment of local neighbourhood police teams and forcing local police sergeants to reapply for their own jobs.

My approach will be to protect Londoners in tough economic times. I will tear up the inflation-plus-two-percent fare rise plan. I will protect front line police services. I will work with young people and students instead of backing Tory government attacks on them. I will do only the job of mayor, and no other, and freeze the pay of my senior political appointments. I will take no pay rise myself and fight to put Londoners back to work.

If you want to make a difference, be part of the grassroots movement to put London on the right track, and help put Londoners first, visit my website at [www.kenlivingstone.com/difference](http://www.kenlivingstone.com/difference).

### BITEBACKS

‘In recessions, profits fall faster than wages. From this comes the drive to restore profits – lowering wages, cutting workers, removing regulations on business and lowering their taxes. Businesses have enacted the first of these two and the government has enacted the second two. There is also the hope that lower wages in the public sector and reduced benefits will push wages lower in the private sector. The Tory-led coalition believes it is doing the right thing in sticking to plan A. This involves the restoration of profits by transferring incomes from labour to capital.’

(Michael Burke, former senior international economist with Citibank, *Tribune* 8/4/11.)

## REFOUNDING LABOUR A DISAPPOINTMENT

(cont. from p1)

Discussions are continuing during the weeks leading up to Party Conference, but what is taking shape is hardly a qualitative change. The final document, being put together by Ed and Peter, is certainly not banal and makes an effort to respond to many of the suggestions made by Party organisation and members. But in places there seems to be a lack of appreciation of the importance of the formal institutions of Party democracy and there is a major attack on the power of the unions within our Party.

Several Party leaders in the recent past have carried out consultation exercises about Party democracy. But it became clear that these were largely phony in that the leaders knew what the results were going to be before the exercises took place. In each case the fact that few of the responses supported the Leader’s position made no difference. The ‘consultation’ was used as a cover for putting forward what the Leader had always wanted. Unfortunately there is a strong suspicion that, to some extent, the same applies to Refounding Labour, particularly in relation to giving ‘registered supporters’ votes in leadership elections, and in relation to reducing the union vote at Annual Conference.

Our Party has some 3 million affiliated members who pay the political levy through their unions. This was always spelt out at the very beginning of the Party’s Constitution as follows – “There shall be two classes of members, namely; (a) Affiliated members (b) Individual members”. This clause has never been removed by Annual Conference but, during the various consolidations and re-jiggings of the Rule Book, it seems to have been lost sight of. For example, the proposal for ‘registered supporters’ completely ignores the fact that some 3 million of our supporters are already members, i.e. affiliated members. It is, therefore, by and large only members of non-affiliated unions (eg teachers, civil servants, rail workers, fire fighters) that would comprise ‘registered supporters’.

E and P are putting forward a range of very constructive proposals about involving levy payers at the CLP level, but seemingly without realising that these are all members, albeit affiliated members. But they are proposing a three-pronged attack on the power of the unions within the Party. E and P want ‘registered supporters’ to have a vote for Leaders and Deputy Leaders by reducing the Union share in the electoral college. They want to reduce the size of the union vote at Party Conference by perhaps giving a vote to MPs and/or councillors and/or NPF members. This would destroy the current and justifiable balance of two equal wings (50% political and 50% industrial). And E and P

want to reduce the number of union reps on the National Conference Arrangements Committee.

Many submissions to Refounding Labour, including from unions, pointed out that CLPs are underrepresented on the NEC compared to the unions (6 seats against 12) and that the NPF needs root and branch reform. E and P seem to be ignoring these suggestions. Instead they are proposing that the powers of the Leader are greatly enhanced at the expense of the NEC. They also want formal LGCs, District and County Parties replaced by nebulous small groups of local officers, which would undermine the opportunity to make Labour Groups and their leaders properly accountable. On the more positive side, E and P are proposing that changes to PLP standing orders should be voted on at Annual Conference and they float the option of a local electoral college to elect Labour Group leaders. Unfortunately the latter proposal does not appear in the most recent draft from E and P.

At Liverpool delegates will be faced with a final document from E and P that is likely to be tabled as an NEC document. There may be undemocratic attempts to force this through in the ‘New Labour’ way of take-it-or-leave-it. Delegates are also likely to face a range of associated rule change proposals to various parts of the Rule Book. Even ‘New Labour’ never attempted to force a decision on many different rule changes into one omnibus vote.

### BITEBACKS

‘It was precisely the New Labour project that helped undermine if not destroy the old Labour Party in the constituencies and the unions, which Ed Miliband now seeks to rebuild.’  
(Geoffrey Goodman, *Tribune* 6/5/11.)

‘The UK public sector net debt was 58% of GDP in March this year. UK net debt was 180% after the Second World War and is low compared with Japan’s current 194% and Italy’s 100%.’  
(*Investors Chronicle*, 6/5/11.)

‘The UK finance industry remains free to indulge in unlimited gambling and is not held liable for the resulting devastation. The next financial crisis is inevitable.’  
(Prem Sikka, professor of accounting, University of Essex, *Tribune* 8/3/11.)

# DEFENDING THE LINK

## SIMON WELLER, ASLEF NATIONAL ORGANISER

Trade union rights and freedoms, which we have long taken for granted, are now faced with a serious threat. Margaret Thatcher's anti-trade union laws are still in existence and supported by all three of the main political parties in parliament, and the Conservative-led coalition is threatening to introduce even tighter controls to regulate trade union activity. This is why it is essential that the link between the Labour Party and the trade unions, which helped to found it over one hundred years ago, is not only maintained but strengthened. It is the Party that has traditionally given a voice to working people everywhere. Break the link and you break the Party.

From the introduction of the National Minimum Wage to the improved rights both inside and outside the workplace, trade unions have led the campaign to improve life for working men and women, Labour's key constituency.

Facing the biggest cuts to the public sector since the foundation of the welfare state

and the NHS, Labour and the trade unions must present a united front. Any weakening of the relationship between trade unions and the Party it helped to create will only make it easier for the government to press ahead with its reform agenda, damaging the lives of trade union members everywhere.

Rather than distancing itself from the struggle to overturn anti-union legislation, the Labour leadership, and in particular Ed Miliband, who owes his election victory in the Labour leader's election to levy-paying trade union members, should unite behind the 500,000 workers who took to the streets back in March in the largest ever demonstration in the history of the trade union movement. With the 6,500 Shropshire council workers facing redundancy or a 5.4 per cent pay cut, with the 50,000 National Health Service Staff expecting to lose their jobs and with the workers at Bombardier who have lost their jobs due to the government's short-sighted decision not to support train manufacturing in Britain, now is surely the time for solidarity between Party and unions.

The link delivers results for working people and ensures working people are represented and elected to Parliament, to local

and regional government and to the European Parliament.

At every general election, trade union members up and down the country go out on the streets and campaign for Labour, as they have done throughout Labour's history. Trade union leaders have always made it plain that for trade unionists and working people there is only one practical political choice: 'It has to be Labour.' It's no exaggeration to say that without the trade unions, and the support they offer to the Labour Party, financial and political, the Party could not continue to function as the main opposition in the country.

The Tory-led coalition realises this, hence its cynical attempt to cap political donations at £50,000. If this were allowed to happen, without the consultation of union members who pay their political levy, it would cripple the Labour Party and represent an all-out attack on hard-won trade union rights to representation.

The millions of affiliated trade unions members represent a huge constituency of working people with a very real stake in the Labour Party and its future. The link is alive and well, relevant, modern and still delivering for working people.

## BITEBACKS

'If this government implements bigoted policies of social exclusion-deliberate creation of unemployment, ending of education maintenance allowance, dumping of Sure Start, attacks on social housing tenancies et al-then a small but violent minority of those excluded may turn to other ways of being noticed. And the huge police cuts mean that the riots are even more difficult to deal with.'

(Gerald Kaufman MP, *Guardian* 10/8/11.)

'I regard these people as the forces of stagnation.'

(George Osborne on the prospect of co-ordinated trade union action over the cuts, *Guardian* 2/2/11.)

'Unions are the very core of the big society.'

(Robert Halfon, Tory MP, *Tribune* 17/6/11.)

'There has been no greater assault on working class Britain than Thatcher's two-pronged attack on industry and trade unions.'

(Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 2011 p.48.)

# FORWARD TO SOCIALIST POLICIES

## KELVIN HOPKINS MP

Blair claimed recently that New Labour died when he left Downing Street, grandiose and egotistical as he always was, but not quite truthful. It may well be that only he



and Mandelson were truly New Labour, as Mandelson has recorded in his book, but the nomenclature of the regime were still numerous after Blair, with many in positions of power and influence as indeed some still are. Khrushchev's 1956 denunciation of the three years dead Stalin marked a decisive change, but it was not the end of the Soviet Union. In our Party too there are many who still hanker after a return to the Blair era and a continuation of his reactionary permanent revolution against social de-

mocracy and those vestiges of democratic socialism which remain. Moreover, there is big money, business money, still funding New Labour propaganda, and Progress ('Regress?') is more dangerous than ever *Soviet Weekly* was!

**“The name of Tony Blair has become a toxic brand, reinforced in its toxicity every time Cameron invokes Blair in aid of Tory policies”**

Fortunately, the name of Tony Blair has become a toxic brand, reinforced in its toxicity every time Cameron invokes Blair in aid of Tory policies in the Commons. Milburn, Purnell, Hewitt and others have thankfully chosen to leave the Commons and the 2010 election cut a swathe through the ranks of New Labour acolytes in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Many new Commons comrades are fine replacements,

(cont. on p10)

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## BRIEFING ON KEY RULE CHANGE PROPOSALS FROM CLPS COMING UP AT LIVERPOOL

**PETER WILLSMAN  
SECRETARY CLPD**

At Liverpool delegates will be debating and voting on a wide range of changes to the Party's Rule Book. Many of these will be tabled by the NEC as part of the Refounding Labour consultative exercise masterminded by Peter Hain (NPF Chair) and Ed Miliband. But there are also a number of very important rule change proposals tabled by CLPs. These were submitted last year, but under an obscure convention (known as the '1968 Ruling') have been delayed for a year.

It is vital that delegates ensure that the CLP proposals are given a fair hearing and are not brushed aside. Many of them are in line with the general thrust of the Hain-Miliband document.

### Oppose attempts to gag the CLPs

At last year's Conference, the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) dealt with rule changes from CLPs in a very unfair manner. Many were ruled out by a very questionable and blanket application of the "three-year rule". This 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 ignored the significance of the word 'part' and applied a catch-all interpretation. This is unacceptable and if there is any repeat of this unfair practice this year, then any challenge from ruled out CLPs insisting that the Rule Book is correctly interpreted,

should be given full support. It is difficult enough for CLPs to have their voice heard in this Party, without the CAC gagging them.

Aggrieved delegates may go to the rostrum and seek redress by challenging the Chair of the CAC. Every delegate in the hall should do their best to support these challenges and oppose the gagging. It could be your CLP next!

At the time of writing, the important rule change proposals from CLPs that remain on the agenda at Liverpool are:

### ■ A NEW CLAUSE IV

**(from Castle Point, Ceredigion and Dagenham and Rainham CLPs)**

One of New Labour's first acts was to remove from the Rule Book the iconic Clause IV, which had been inserted in to our Constitution by the Fabians, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and which was reprinted on every member's card. This removal was a PR exercise that was presented by New Labour, and their hacks in the media, as some sort of symbolic act. The replacement Clause IV was written by Tony Blair in his back garden and is uninspiring to say the least.

Castle Point and the other CLPs have taken up the challenge and set out a new Clause IV, which is a reasoned critique of the current economic system, with a commitment to democracy, human rights and the promotion of human welfare. It reads like a powerful speech by Ed Miliband, or indeed by Ralph Miliband.

### ■ A LABOUR PARTY CODE OF ETHICS

**(from South Ribble CLP)**

This rule change proposal provides for a Labour Party Code of Ethics that would lay

down principles and standards of behaviour to cover all Party members, officers, employees, contractors and public representatives. This would fill a gap in the Rule Book that needs filling.

### ■ A CHARTER OF LABOUR PARTY INDIVIDUAL AND AFFILIATED MEMBERS' RIGHTS

**(from Hyndburn CLP)**

This rule change proposal sets out a wide range of rights to which members would be entitled, for example the right to be fully involved in policy making, including clear audit trails and feed-back and the right to complain to a Party Ombudsperson. The responses to the Refounding Labour consultation revealed a desire within the Party to set out the rights of Party members in our Rule Book.

### ■ THE RIGHT OF CLPS AND UNIONS TO AMEND NPF DOCUMENTS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**(from Bridgend, Burnley, Cardiff Central, Chingford and Woodford Green, East Devon, Gower, Mid Bedfordshire and Nottingham South CLPs)**

This rule change proposes that in the year that Annual Conference is considering the final-stage policy documents from the National Policy Forum (NPF), each CLP and each union should be permitted to submit one amendment to the material in the documents. This would give CLPs some direct role in the Party's policy-making process.

### ■ FOUR PLUS FOUR SHOULD EQUAL EIGHT

**(from Bristol North West and Hemsworth CLPs)**

Subsequent to the adoption, at the 1997 Annual Conference, of the Partnership in Power process, several CLPs, supported by many trade union delegates, managed to achieve the right for CLPs to have four subjects of

their choice debated at Conference. The intention of this reform was to have four subjects from the unions debated and four separate subjects from the CLPs timetabled. Unfortunately the powers-that-be have not honoured the intention of the reform and have only allowed debates on those CLP issues that were not also chosen by trade unions. The rule change from Bristol North West and Hemsworth prevents any further shenanigans by making it crystal clear that the CLPs have the right to always have four subjects debated in addition to a further and separate four chosen by the unions.

### ■ CLPS AND UNIONS TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO SUBMIT A RULE CHANGE AND A CONTEMPORARY MOTION

(from Buckingham, Harrogate and Knaresborough, Hitchin and Harpenden, Holborn and St Pancras, Horsham, Ilford South and North East Bedfordshire CLPs)

The right of CLPs and affiliated organisations to amend the Party's Constitution is an important democratic right. There should be no restriction on this right. At present, CLPs and affiliated organisations can submit either a rule amendment or a 'contemporary motion', but not both. This is an arbitrary and unnecessary restriction, since there is no link whatsoever between rule changes and 'contemporary motions'. The rule change from Buckingham and the other CLPs would remove this unreasonable restriction. The trade unions are generally very supportive of this proposal.

### ■ TO GIVE CONFERENCE THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN PARTS ON DOCUMENTS

(from Islington North CLP)

Conference has the right to refer back any section of the NEC Report. But the platform has always refused to extend this right to NEC policy statements (except in 1974 when Tony Benn chaired the Conference). When Partnership in Power was introduced in 1997 delegates were led to believe that National Policy Forum reports would be voted on in parts if Conference so wished. But in practice this has not happened. Conference has to vote for the whole document on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. This means that documents are always passed, although delegates

may be unhappy with one or more particular sections. This proposed rule change from Islington North would allow Conference to have a separate vote on any part of a policy document. It is a simple democratic procedure that is long overdue. The trade unions are very supportive of this proposal.

### ■ INCREASING DEMOCRACY IN LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

(from Slough CLP)

At the moment CLPs and unions are not properly involved in the election process for the Party Leader and Deputy Leader. The rule change proposal from Slough would introduce more accountability and give members and trade unionists more of a direct role in these elections.

### ■ SEPARATE NEC SEATS FOR PARTY MEMBERS IN SCOTLAND AND WALES

(from Beverley and Holderness, Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweedale and Stratford upon Avon CLPs)

The Scottish and Wales Labour Parties have a separate identity to that of the English Regions and each has its own General Secretary. In addition the Scottish and Welsh Parties now monitor the work of the Labour Groups in the Scottish parliament and Welsh Assembly. There is, therefore, a strong case for automatic representation on the NEC from Party members in Scotland and Wales.

## BITEBACKS

'I'm often asked in what ways Party policy will change radically under a new leader. The answer is that this is the wrong question. Social democracy is a people's movement, which never will be led by a single individual. To those who ask how policy will change we say: study the debates and decisions of Conference. Go to regional conferences, the areas where working people live, and to trade unions and listen to their debates. That's where the answer lies.' (Olof Palme 1969, quoted by John Veit-Wilson, *Guardian* letters 1/4/11.)

'For many, a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right.' (Thomas Paine, quoted in *Tribune* 22/4/11.)

'There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making the war, and we're winning.' (Warren Buffett, the world's third richest man. Quoted by Michael White, *Guardian* 14/9/10.)

'When you look back at the 1945 Labour Cabinet that constructed the welfare state, the contrast (between past and present Labour MPs) is almost obscene. The giants of Clem Attlee's government (Bevin Bevan Morrison) were all from working-class backgrounds... It was the trade unions and local government that had provided them with the ladders to climb, enabling them to end up as towering political figures and respected statesmen.' (Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 2011 p.105.)

## KEY VOTES IN PARTY ELECTIONS

### Conference Arrangements Committee Vote for a grassroots voice on the CAC

CLPD and CLGA ask for your support for the following candidates for the two constituency places on the Conference Arrangements Committee:

- Vote: **Catherine Donovan** (Gateshead CLP, member of UNITE)
- Vote: **Gary Heather** (Islington North CLP, member of CWU)

### We also ask for your support for a grassroots voice on the National Constitutional Committee (constituency section)

- Vote: **Mark James** (Greenwich and Woolwich CLP)

Help us win the support of Labour's new generation for democracy and accountability and make Labour fight again for the socialist aspirations of rank and file Party and trade union members.

## BRITISH POLITICIANS NEED TO ADDRESS FAR RIGHT TERROR THREAT NOW!

### MOHAMMED AZAM, FORMER NEC MEMBER

It should not take the murder of 77 innocent people in Norway at the hands of a fascist terrorist for a discussion to begin about how the Western world deals with far right terrorism. Yet despite this despicable terrorist attack, and the exposure of Anders Behring-Breivik's links to members of several fascist and far right groups in Britain including the English Defence League (EDL), British National Party (BNP) and Stop the Islamification of Europe, David Cameron has failed to act decisively and launch a far right counter-terrorism strategy equivalent to Prevent that is aimed at countering terrorism from Al Qaeda and linked organisations. The recent announcement of the Prevent Review strategy in June this year, sadly omitted the EDL, BNP and far right terrorism.

Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and other anti racists have consistently warned of the far right terror threat in Britain. Terence Gavan, a former soldier and BNP member, was convicted of manufacturing nail bombs and of possessing a staggering array of explosives, firearms and weapons, in January 2010. Neil MacGregor pleaded guilty to "threatening to blow up Glasgow Central Mosque and behead a Muslim every week until every mosque in Scotland was closed". Robert Cottage, a former BNP candidate, was jailed in July 2007 for possessing explosive chemicals in his home. The cache was "described by police at the time of his arrest as the largest amount of chemical explosive of its type ever found in this country". The lack of media coverage of these convictions and the knee-jerk reaction in some sections of the media attributing the Norway attacks to Muslim extremism, reflects endemic Islamophobia and racism in society.

Norway's Nobel Peace Prize Committee Chairman and former Norwegian Prime Minister, Thorbjørn Jagland, warned Europe's leaders, including David Cameron, that they would be "playing with fire" if they continued to use rhetoric that could be exploited by extremists. He told them they risk inflaming far-right and anti-Muslim sentiment and urged them to adopt a more "cautious" approach when discussing multiculturalism. Yet Cameron and other politicians have failed to heed this warning.

## FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

### MARK SEDDON, FORMER EDITOR OF *TRIBUNE* AND FORMER CONSTITUENCY NEC ELECTED MEMBER

As soon as commentators began to refer to the popular uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East as the 'Arab Spring', I began to worry that the near universal optimism that had accompanied the revolts might be misplaced. Remember the Prague Spring? In 1968, Alexander Dubcek's attempt to replace hard-line Communism with social democracy failed as Soviet and Warsaw Pact tanks rumbled across the borders of Czechoslovakia. In recent weeks tanks have been rumbling through the streets of towns and cities throughout Syria, the only difference being that the forces crushing peaceful civilian demonstrators do not come from beyond Syria's borders. They are the forces of the Assad regime itself.



**"The massive spread of global communications, coupled with a better educated youth and a severe lack of opportunity, has created a perfect storm"**

My former TV network Al Jazeera has I believe played a major role in educating a whole generation of young people throughout the Middle East. Al Jazeera and the rise of social networking sites, the internet and the cell phone have finally put paid to the old state-run TV networks. Today what may be happening in Damascus or Aleppo is immediate news throughout the whole region. But watching Al Jazeera television is not in itself enough to spur the bravery and audacity of millions of people from Benghazi to Tunis, Cairo to Sana'a, who have marched, demonstrated and occupied. What I believe we are seeing is the unravelling of an old order of rigid dictatorships that were suffered by the majority because at the very least the same dictators offered low food and fuel prices and jobs for the youth. That compact is broken, because the dictators and the military can no longer fulfil their side of the bargain.

The massive spread of global communications, coupled with a better educated youth and a severe lack of opportunity, has created a perfect storm. In Tunisia, ordinary people appear to have made some solid advances; in Egypt some solid achievements, while in Syria, Yemen, Iran and Bahrain the old order is fighting bloodily to retain its privileges.

Britain's record throughout the area has been distinctly chequered. Our support for regimes such as Mubarak's in Egypt compromises us, while our military intervention in Iraq was a disaster. David Cameron and William Hague have even managed to subvert the UN Security Council's express wish to see humanitarian intervention based on the 'right to protect' in Libya. Britain rightly went to the aid of the civilians of Benghazi as yet another dictator, in this case Colonel Gaddafi, sought to crush them. But Britain and France have also been engaged in seeking regime change in Libya, which is not part of any UN Resolution.

Now surely is the time for Ed Miliband to reach out to pro-democracy groups throughout the region and offer Labour's help in building the new democracies in the region. The time for bi-partisan policies with the Tories and Liberal Democrats must surely be over when it comes to North Africa and the Middle East.

■ Read about Mark's new book *Standing for Something* on p.12.

### BITEBACKS

'It is not simply racism that has driven hundreds of thousands of working-class people into the waiting arms of the BNP. The rise of the far right is a reaction to the marginalization of working-class people.'  
(Owen Jones, *Chavs*, 2011 p.223.)

'Anthony Giddens once reported that The Leader, as he referred to the Libyan dictator, very much liked the term "third way".'  
(*Tribune* 4/3/11.)

'In November 2010, at least 50 arms trade companies visited Libya on a UK trade delegation. Weapons licensed for export in the latter half of 2010 included rifles, crowd control ammunition and surface to air missile components'.  
(Glen Rangwala, *Labour Briefing*, April 2011.)

# COULD THE GENERAL ELECTION HAVE BEEN WON?

## ANDY NEWMAN, MEMBER OF SWINDON SOUTH CLP

On the eve of last year's election, Gordon Brown visited Skelmersdale, and was, mobbed by ordinary people shouting: "Come on Gordon!" His speech to Citizens UK was assured, putting social justice at the heart of Labour's message. We had a strong story to tell: a decisive response to the banking crisis had prevented economic meltdown, and saved tens of thousands of jobs. This is how we could have fought the whole campaign.

Instead the Prime Minister was treated as a liability, wheeled around like a minor royal, having cups of tea with handpicked voters to generate photo-ops for local newspapers.

Labour's weakness was not Gordon Brown, nor our record in office; the weaknesses were the public disloyalty of the Blairites, and a misunderstanding about the nature of the Liberal Democrats.

In 2009 a handful of ministers resigned on the eve of the Euro elections. Subsequently Patricia Hewitt and Geoff Hoon called for a leadership challenge, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. They made the Party look unstable, and then blamed Gordon for

the disunity they themselves had created. Their self-serving justification was the belief that Labour could only win an election by moving further to the right.

The Blairite strategy was triangulation towards the priorities of swing voters in marginal constituencies and a consequent abandonment of any bold policies that challenged their prejudices. Indeed it is a paradox of Tony Blair that his government undersold its own progressive achievements.

### "The traditional labourist message is an inherently modern one"

The Blairites and the centre-left Compass group also share a conceit that Liberals are our natural partners; and that the historical legacy of labourism is an obstacle. However, the Liberal ideological tradition rests upon individualism, and the belief that as John Stuart Mill puts it: "The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the

proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental or spiritual."

The Liberals see organised labour and trade unions as just another vested interest, a force of conservatism, and a constraint upon liberty.

But the mainstream values of our movement derive from experience of collective organisation: solidarity, advocacy for the poor and disadvantaged, fighting against inequality and privilege.

This is not the same tradition as liberalism. They do not share our values.

We needed to recognise that the working class, managers and professional grades, and the intelligentsia share a common desire for economic and social stability. The traditional labourist message of using state power to seek to protect individuals from the power of capital, and to steer democratically the economy towards meeting the needs of people not just corporations is an inherently modern one, around which a progressive electoral coalition can and should be built.

■ Andy Newman is contributing editor to the Socialist Unity blog ([www.socialistunity.com](http://www.socialistunity.com)) where a fuller article on this subject can be found.

# BLUE NO WAY FORWARD FOR LABOUR

## BARRY GRAY, CLPD ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Blue Labour, widely associated with the platform of 'flag, faith and family', imploded in July. Whilst it attracted negative headlines for controversial positions on immigration, its overall framework is equally unhelpful for Labour.

The central problem confronting people arises from the deterioration of the economy. The Tory-led government is attacking the living standards of the majority of the population and Labour must have a clear programme to defend people. At its core is the issue of public spending, where Osborne's cuts have replaced an economic recovery with stagnation. With frozen wages, reduced welfare and the axing of services, people are being made significantly worse off. Labour needs to promote vigorously the economic importance of the public sector and reject arguments for a shift away from the state, including Blue Labour's claims that the problem has arisen because the state has become overbearing since 1945. Its criticism of the introduction of universal benefits

and suggestions that voluntary class solidarity can substitute for public provision just strengthens the finance capital Blue Labour claims to critique.

Blue Labour has become best known for its conservative social agenda, with commentators referring to the way it promotes a set of values prevalent at a time when women were largely confined to the home. Such backward looking ideas as 'putting patrimony first' or 'placing true manliness at the heart of the Labour manifesto' are incapable of engaging right across today's society. Added to which there has been the call for a moratorium on EU immigration and the proposal that we should involve 'those people who support the EDL [English Defence League] within our Party'. Women's participation in the workforce and migration to Britain are not the determinants of falling living standards. Both add to the well being of the whole of society. There should be implacable opposition to the EDL and its violent assaults on Muslims and other minorities.

Blue Labour's agenda is premised on the view that the future is conservative; its name explains its analysis. Labour needs to

be more blue – the colour of the Tories. It needs to prioritise reaching out to former Labour voters who, it is claimed, have left us for the Tories. It is suggested that the Conservative Party and the values it represents have become popular. This is evidently false and does not describe the real shift that has been taking place in British politics. The fundamental decline in Labour support has not been to the benefit of the Tories, which is why the latter, with only 36.1 per cent vote share in 2010, could not achieve a parliamentary majority. Instead Labour's electoral decline has been accompanied by the rise of the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish and Welsh nationalists. Adopting a set of values that even the Tories cannot advance on clearly offers no way forward for Labour.

## BITEBACKS

'It would be difficult to create a more half-arsed political initiative than Blue Labour.'

(Paul Anderson, *Tribune* 5/8/11.)

# FOCUS ON THE FORUM

## A LABOUR COUNCILLOR LOOKS AT THE NATIONAL POLICY FORUM

When I stood for election to the National Policy Forum (and only councillors could vote in my section), I argued that the Association of Labour Councillors should have more than four seats, and that there should be greater representation from colleagues from Scotland and Wales.

I believe that councillors should be given a vote at Conference, and I continue to think that our Party should fully involve councillors in the fight back against the Tory-led Coalition's attack on the most vulnerable. Councillors have a key role to play in promoting strong, diverse, cohesive communities and in arguing that we need to provide decent, affordable homes and high quality, inclusive and comprehensive education delivered by qualified teachers. Since meeting representatives from all over the country I am even keener to argue the case that councillors should have a greater voice.

Straight after our election, members of the NPF were invited to put themselves forward for a second ballot, this time to be members of the six Policy Commissions: Britain in the World; Creating Sustainable Communities; Crime, Justice Equalities and Citizenship; Health; Prosperity and Work; Education and Skills (which later transmogrified into 'British Promise'). I was successful in my bid to join the Education and Skills Commission, and I have enjoyed attending the meetings of the Commission. I feel for all those NPF members who went through the effort of being nominated and elected to the NPF but who were unsuccessful in their attempts to serve on a Policy Commission: it means that they will only be attending at the most two meetings a year. That doesn't seem right. Furthermore, I have queried with Peter Hain the current system in which Commission groups cannot elect their own Chair and have to wait until a Chair is allocated to them; I thought we were moving away from a command and control system.

There were elections also to the Governing Body of the NPF, (which was called the Joint Policy Committee the last I heard of it, although maybe that's been changed by now to *Britain's Got Talent!*).

In workshop sessions we have discussed our educational promises, and I have pressed the issues of how Labour is going to respond to the growth of academies, and about how we are going to deliver good comprehensive provision and to argue against selection of pupils by ability.

Since my election to the NPF I have accepted invitations to speak at Labour Party

meetings and have gleaned from these discussions that Party members are keen to be involved and to have a say. Members do not feel that they have a guaranteed route into policy making. Can anybody name one NPF policy decision which made its way into a manifesto document? Members would welcome feedback after they have passed a resolution, say on housing, or on our response to Free Schools, confirming that the issue has been placed on an agenda and has been discussed. The abolition of the NEC's Local Government Committee did not send a positive message to Labour councillors. I believe that the NEC should include within its remit the development of a co-

ordinated and best practice strategy for Labour councillors faced with government cutbacks.

At the NPF meeting in Wrexham, delegates called for a co-ordinated response from the Shadow Cabinet on behalf of those people who are increasingly affected by the cutbacks being brought in by the Tories. It is heartening to see our Labour representatives holding the Tories to account recently.

## COUNCILLOR ANGELA CORNFORTH, NPF MEMBER REPRESENTING LABOUR COUNCILLORS

## SO, WHAT HAPPENED IN SCOTLAND?

The surprise was the SNP winning a majority of seats, in a system designed to prevent any party from achieving that. Yet not so surprising after all. Everyone knew the Lib Dem vote would collapse, and the Tories would get an abysmal vote. It was a two horse race and the SNP did NOT win a majority of votes.

Labour lost votes badly – our worst result in 80 years. Among the reasons we have to acknowledge are:

The Nationalists claimed this was not a vote for Independence, just support for their devolved administration. Nothing would happen without a referendum. (But as soon as Alex Salmond realised the final result, he was declaiming Scotland was now on the road to Independence.)

Salmond announced a Council Tax freeze for five years and we tried to combat that with a 2 year freeze. We did not get across the message that a council tax freeze means cuts in services.

A few days before the election, prescriptions became free for all, and a Labour MP went to jail for fraudulent expenses claims.

The Nationalists persistently portrayed Iain Gray as "grey by name, grey by nature". When the broadsheet Herald could well be renamed "Nationalist News", and the Sun supports the SNP because there is so little support for the Tories in Scotland and only the Nationalists can beat Labour, we need to smarten up our handling of the media.

We spent two years drawing up a policy programme full of good things, but failed to get it across even to our own Party members.

Our focus groups told us we should not attack Salmond because it didn't go down well with the public. The SNP keep on saying they won because they ran a positive campaign, but

in truth Nationalist bloggers write vile stuff that none of us has ever sunk to. Personally, I would argue we must draw attention to the holes in SNP policy, and their funding by right wing multi millionaire Brian Soutar.

So where do we go from here? The Party is conducting a review of what went wrong and what we need to do. Much of the above is equally applicable to Peter Hain's review. I hope everyone will recognise we must reform the way the Party operates. Members must feel there is a point in going to a meeting on a wet Monday night. While developing policy, we must get across our values and what we stand for. Too many candidates' leaflets are so bland you could wonder which Party they were from. We must restore confidence in the probity of all our elected representatives.

Some here are urging, back to Blair. Nonsense. There is a small minority who want us to separate from the UK Party. This, too, is dead wrong. We are an internationalist Party, linked to the UK trade union movement and socialist societies, and proud of it.

## MARIA FYFE, FORMER LABOUR MP FOR GLASGOW MARYHILL, CLPD MEMBER

### BITEBACKS

'It is certainly a tragically comical situation that the financiers who have landed the British people in this gigantic muddle should decide who should bear the burden.'

(Beatrice Webb, 1931 (NB, editor), quoted *Guardian* 9/9/10.)





'Labour's policies and voting strategy must go beyond an emphasis on the south and take a much more assertive stance on boosting jobs and growth (and winning back key marginals) in the Midlands and north of England.' (Quoted in *Tribune* 18/2/11.)

## NPF: A YOUTH REP'S VIEW

**BECKY HODGSON, NPF YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE, NORTH WEST REGION**

It has often been said that the Party needs to listen more to the voices of the grassroots activists, those Party members who do the hard work on the ground, knocking on doors and talking to the voters. Judging by the speeches of Ed Miliband and Peter Hain at the opening of the last meeting in Wrexham, it seems as if the Party has finally started to take notice and realise that the best way to win back the 5 million voters lost between 1997 and 2010 is by actually listening to them. Ed Miliband admitted it was not easy hearing some of the feedback that the recent Refounding Labour review has provided but conceded that we had lost touch with many of our members and voters over the past few years. He also noted that many good ideas can often come from outside the movement itself and that we needed to reach out and connect with these people through organisations like the NPF and local Party groups.

However, despite all the good work that the NPF has begun to do since the general election, there is still a long way to go before it becomes the real voice of grassroots members. Whilst there is now more listening to representatives and less preaching, it's hard to see what the outcome of all these discussions and conversations is. This is a real problem not only for NPF reps after meetings but for members too who submit ideas to things such as the Refounding Labour Consultation.

We also need to work far harder to encourage young people to get involved. Whilst constituency and branch meetings are a vital part of the Party they can often form poor first impressions. After sitting through all the bureaucracy that the meeting will inevitably entail, there is often little time for discussion and many new young members can feel intimidated when voicing their opinions. Try to imagine yourself at 16 voicing your

## A VIEW FROM WALES

**DARREN WILLIAMS (NPF WELSH CLPS REPRESENTATIVE)**

A year has now passed since the first OMOV ballot for CLP representatives on the National Policy Forum (NPF). In those elections, the left and centre-left did better than under the previous set-up, when elections were carried out at national conference by the dwindling number of CLP delegates from each region, who often had their arms twisted to vote for 'on-message' candidates. Wales and Scotland, in particular, saw the impact of the change last year, with progressive, grassroots candidates sweeping the board.

Since then, the Party's internal discussions have been dominated by the reviews initiated by Ed Miliband of Labour's policy programme and its democratic functioning.

Two NPF meetings have been held during this period, the first in Gillingham on 27 November and the second in Wrexham on 25 June. On each occasion, the leader's keynote speech has conveyed a welcome acknowledgement that New Labour lost touch with the British people as its policies remained fixated on market-based approaches to the economy, and that it alienated Party members by its centralisation of power and stage-management of conferences. While ruling out a return to the pre-1997 era, Miliband has promised to re-connect the Party to the concerns of ordinary people and to re-empower its members. He talks about Labour becoming a movement once again.

This is all positive but the progress of the reviews has been mixed. The policy review, overseen by Liam Byrne, began with the publication of the New Politics, Fresh Ideas document, which divided policy into four main areas and included a one-page summary of each. These summaries suggested an unwillingness to come to terms with New Labour's mistakes, with the section on foreign policy, for example, making no reference to Afghanistan or Iraq!

The results of the subsequent consul-

tation exercise have now been summarised in the Better Future for Britain document, which contains excerpts from the consultation responses and summaries of the Party's developing thinking in each policy area. Supposedly recurring themes from the submissions have been identified but it is unclear to what extent these have influenced the Party's thinking, and how far Byrne & co. have simply highlighted the responses that fit in with their existing ideas.

The review of how the Party operates has been more encouraging. The initial consultation, launched at the 2010 conference, has since been overshadowed by Peter Hain's Refounding Labour document, which contains some generally common-sense proposals, as well as welcome comments about the positive role of Party activists, affiliated unions and community campaigning.

In relation to the 'Partnership in Power' (PiP) process itself, however, little progress appears to have been made so far. This has been clear from the repetitive and inconclusive nature of the NPF meetings held in the last year: the Wrexham gathering was largely a repeat of the Gillingham event six months before. Both were presented at the last minute with policy documents to which representatives will have been unable to give a considered response. Workshop sessions on PiP at both meetings saw the same points being made regarding the lack of transparency and the failure to explain clearly to Party members how the process is supposed to work. There also seems a growing consensus that the role of those NPF members not elected onto policy commissions needs to be clarified; indeed, the contribution of the whole Forum needs to be defined more clearly - especially now there are parallel structures headed by shadow cabinet ministers.

The Labour leadership therefore needs to demonstrate more consistently that it is serious about a transparent and accountable policy-making process. Having raised expectations, it has helped to create a mood in the Party favouring genuine democratic renewal.

opinion on politics in a room full of people your parents' age or older. This is where the young Labour groups and young NPF reps come in. They do a great job in organising a variety of social situations for their members to discuss politics in less daunting circumstances. The problem is that there are simply not enough of them, meaning that young members have to travel considerable distances to get to the meetings. Many of these

members are still at school or university and simply cannot afford to pay for the travel to these events.

Under Ed Miliband the Party has finally started to sit up and take notice of their members and fresh ideas are coming thick and fast as a result. However, it seems that they are being drip fed through and the pace needs to quicken if we are to see the changed Party that he promises before the next general election.

# THE TORY COALITION'S HEALTH POLICY – HOW SHOULD LABOUR RESPOND?

**GORDON WILLS, MEMBER BIRMINGHAM HALL GREEN CLP, FORMER HEAD OF HEALTH WEST MIDLANDS AND RETIRED UNISON OFFICIAL**

The Tory coalition government's health policy has two main thrusts:

The Health and Social Care Bill which is a vehicle for privatisation of many NHS services in the guise of choice and competition and £20 billion of so called efficiency savings over the next four years which are unattainable in that form and which in reality will be cuts.

The coalition has no mandate for the massive reorganisation of the NHS proposed in the Bill or the privatisation ideology that underpins it. Neither the Tories nor the Liberal Democrats included such proposals in their election manifestos. Whilst the Bill has faced massive opposition within the NHS from staff and organisations as diverse as the BMA and UNISON, few seem to have posed the question as to what problem raised by the public is being addressed. Prior to the current cuts the NHS had the highest satisfaction ever in public surveys

The main proposal in the Bill is to transfer £80 billion of public money for commissioning of health services from the current Primary Care Trusts to Clinical Commissioning Groups consisting of consortia of general practitioner practices (GPs). GPs are private contractors who operate within the NHS. They are not NHS employees and their main skills are medical, not financial or managerial. It seems inevitable that the more entrepreneurial GPs will commission services from providers in a way that will be financially beneficial to them.

The Bill as originally written enforced competition by allowing 'any willing provider' to provide NHS services and to 'cherry pick' the profitable 'easy' routine operations such as cataracts and hip replacements. In addition and most importantly the NHS was and is to be opened up to EU competition law with the presumed intent of making the privatisations irreversible.

Meanwhile in the real existing NHS £20 billion of cuts loom in the guise of unattainable efficiency savings.

What of Labour's reaction? John Healey, shadow Health Secretary, in writing to me, acknowledged that the Tory coalition's plans

were 'ideologically based'. This analysis does not always come over by my observation. For example I heard a Labour Health spokeswoman on Radio 4's 'Any Questions' being congratulated by a Tory MP for not claiming that the bill was about privatisation.

This is probably a consequence of Blair's calamitous legacy and his infatuation with private sector solutions to perceived problems. Labour also has difficulty in addressing the cuts issue, since they have no strategy for saying where the money is to come from to solve the financial deficit problem and to finance public services.

I would make two suggestions to Ed Miliband:

1) Have the courage to dump New Labour's obsessions with private sector superiority, choice and competition and come out unequivocally in support of a publicly funded and publicly provided NHS. This to be run on the principles of cooperation and collaboration (many people in England do not know that these principles continue to operate in Scotland and Wales incidentally).

2) Acknowledge that the tax gap has to be bridged. Whilst additional taxation of the banking and financial sectors would be well merited, the main emphasis should be on eliminating tax avoidance by the rich and the corporations. I've seen estimates of tax avoidance ranging from £25 billion to £175 billion annually. This would be sufficient in itself to bridge the gap. The first step of an incoming Labour government should be an anti-tax avoidance measure giving the Treasury the right to strike down all the wheezes thought up by corporate lawyers and accountants.



## BITEBACKS

'Shares in PFI contracts for the Calderdale Royal Infirmary in Yorkshire have changed hands nine times since 2002. Average profit margins are 50%.' (Quoted in *Tribune* 13/6/11.)

'Can someone explain why GPs, mainly I suspect, with no formal training in management or finance, are deemed fit to run the massive NHS budget but can no longer be relied upon to assess people for disability allowance?' (Rick Kemperer, *Guardian* letter 15/3/11.)



## BITEBACKS

'Magistrates have been told to disregard normal rules on sentencing of rioters. What next? The return of transport to Australia for the theft of a loaf of bread?'

(Dr John Davies, *Guardian* 17/8/11)

## FORWARD TO SOCIALIST POLICIES

(cont. from p3)

and the PLP, though smaller, is a happier band of sisters and brothers, especially under our new leader. Ed is not quite as red as the media try to portray, but he is a listening leader, more consensual, and with a lighter touch than his two more authoritarian predecessors.

One thing is certain. Ed's election as leader last year was an event of immense importance. It was too a massive defeat for the forces who would take us back to the Thatcherite extremes of New Labour. Ed may not do or say everything we would wish him to, but there is now at least a dialogue between comrades across the Party and policies have inched in the right – that is to say the left – direction.

## "Ed's election as leader was a massive defeat for the forces who would take us back to the Thatcherite extremes of New Labour"

CLPD played its part in Ed's victory. We urged Party members to put Diane Abbott as first preference in the ballot and, as Diane's campaign agent, I was delighted that she stood and did such a tremendous job in ensuring that the voice of the left was heard on the hustings by thousands of Party members across the land. Significantly, however, we urged members to use their second preference votes for Ed, following the backing of Ed by most of the big unions. With such a small margin of victory it could indeed have been CLPD that made the difference.

Now, and for the future, CLPD has a big and continuing role to play. The damage wrought by New Labour in both policy terms and to the Party's democratic structures has been quite terrible. Simply repairing that damage, piece by piece, is going to be an enormous job, but CLPD, as the democratic and socialist forefront of the Party, must play its part and put its mind to that task.

# WHY TRADE UNIONS MUST DEFEND MULTI-CULTURALISM

## BILLY HAYES, GENERAL SECRETARY CWU

It is well understood in the trade unions today that the economic policy of the Coalition government is a major assault upon working class living standards. Correctly, this has led the majority of trade unions to organise in opposition, in some manner or another, to this policy.

Unfortunately, what is not so well understood is that the social policy of the same government is an equally devastating attack upon the working class. In particular, David Cameron's recent statements concerning multi-culturalism and the Muslim community, and immigrants, represents the social corollary of a reactionary economic policy. If you are going to inflict the biggest reduction in living standards since 1945, then a good dose of racism, Islamophobia and xenophobia helps to divide the opposition.

As usual, the Conservatives demonstrate a degree of intelligence in the manner in which they promote their policy. David Cameron, whilst steering public opinion towards respectable forms of Islamophobia, also tacks back by insisting that Islam is a good religion, and Muslims are generally peaceful. But it is evident that the suggestion that Muslims have to accept "our" values places them in total as a problem for the rest of society.

Of course, these prejudices are not created by a few political speeches. A basic audit of British history would demonstrate that for hundreds of years, British policy was premised on the subjugation of large parts of humanity. If you are going to enslave, colonise, or super-exploit people, then defining these people as inferior rationalises and justifies the abuse.

Again, Cameron displays the confidence that comes from being part of a party and class which was prominent throughout those centuries. He is able to issue an apology on behalf of the Government for the murder of Irish people on Bloody Sunday in Derry. Further, he even lets it drop before journalists that previous British governments were responsible for many of the current problems in the world. Yet the dominant discourse, as outlined in his Munich speech, is to provide aid and comfort to Islamophobia, and a return to narrow British nationalism.



There is a long tradition of institutionalised racism in British society. Naively perhaps, after the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the findings of the Macpherson Inquiry, many of us dared to believe that the lesson had been learnt and systematic progress was possible.

But constant vigilance is the custodian of liberty. It has only taken the return of the Tory-led Coalition government to demonstrate how fragile progress has been in the fight against such racism.

The price to be paid for the promotion of racism, Islamophobia and anti-immigrant prejudices is not just to be measured in the spread of bigotry, attacks on Muslims, and abusive attitudes to immigrant workers. It is also deeply damaging to the economic development of our society.

### **“Multi-cultural Britain has a competitive advantage in the inter-connected world”**

In a globalised economy, there is a strong bonus for ethnically diverse nations. Between nations, those will benefit who are familiar with the history and makeup of other nations, able to address them directly in their own language and offer a kindred face in trade, exchange and negotiations. Multi-cultural Britain has a competitive advantage in the inter-connected world.

The trade unions have a special responsibility to ensure this element of the debate around multi-culturalism is not lost. The more open connections to the world economy, gives the government the potential to address some of our traditional problems of under investment in the productive economy and over reliance upon the City of London

## BITEBACKS

‘Socialism is about the pursuit of equality and the protection of freedom – in the knowledge that until we are truly equal, we will not be truly free.’

(Anthony Crosland, 1977. Quoted in *Tribune* 7/1/11.)

‘The government’s clear aim is a permanently smaller state and markets taking over from public accountability and privatisation’s profit motive replacing public service. Deficit reduction is just the cover story.’

(Brendan Barber. Quoted in *Tribune* 21/1/11.)

and the financial sector. All this means new jobs and improved welfare services.

A free movement of people and goods means an introduction of more dynamic forces into our economy. Instead of City short-termism, inward investors will seek long-term commitments if we provide an environment which welcomes the innovation that diversity brings.

Alongside this, immigrants provide a wide variety of advantages especially in the stimulation of domestic economic activity. The economist Philippe Legrain states, in his book *Aftershock*, immigrants are twice as likely to start a new business as people born in Britain. A government study found that in 2006, immigration’s net contribution to GDP was to add £6 billion to annual growth.

Inward immigration is absolutely necessary. Even the Coalition government is forced to recognise this, at the same time as it stokes up popular prejudice against migrants.

### **“Multi-culturalism is one of the most powerful forces of production in the globalised economy”**

We must defend multi-culturalism. Not just because it is phenomenally creative in social, cultural, scientific and artistic terms. But also because it is one of the most powerful forces of production in the globalised economy.

■ This article is an edited extract from a chapter that Billy Hayes has contributed to the forthcoming book *Defending multiculturalism*, edited by Hassan Mahamdallie. The book is due to be published in late summer. The full chapter is available on the CWU website, Billy Hayes’ blog, posted June 14 2011.

# TEL'S TALES

## BLAIRITE MYTH MAKING

In order to undermine Ed Miliband and prepare the ground for his brother, the Blairites are propagating a myth that Labour's electoral performance in May 2011 was poor. In this they are being aided and abetted by their poodles in the media, such as Patrick Wintour of the *Guardian*. The facts show the opposite: in 2010 we had the same share of the vote as in 1983. And yet, after only one year, to be ahead in the polls, having won 800 council seats, some 30 councils and a landslide in the Leicester South by election, is a basis for quiet confidence not carping criticism.

Under the yoke of Blairism we lost nearly 5 million votes. The Labour government did not do enough for our core voters on housing, jobs, pensions, inequality, rights at work, to name but a few issues. On the doorstep, residents bitterly threw back the lies over Iraq, the 75p pension increase and the abolition of the 10p tax rate. The Blairites and their banana brandishing champion need to be permanently locked away in the dustbin of history.

## NORTH OF THE BORDER

The Blairites have worked themselves into a lather over the elections for the Scottish parliament and are seeking to use this as more ammunition against Ed Miliband. The fact is this election was always going to be difficult and Labour was too complacent. The Scots vote for us for Westminster but for Holyrood it's more complicated. The SNP have a canny leader who is carrying out quite a few Labour-type policies. Our campaign should have consistently concentrated on what Labour would do as a Scottish government, rather than running an anti-Tory, anti-central government campaign and trying to scare voters about independence.

One important factor that has been overlooked is the adverse effect on Labour of proportional representation in local government, yet another baleful legacy of Blairism. In 2003 we had 509 councillors and the SNP only 176. After 2007, and the switch to STV, Labour was reduced to 348 councillors and the SNP shot up to 363. The loss of active councillors undermines Labour's local electoral organisation and reinforces the SNP's base.

## TO BE OR NOT TO BE

This is the story of a parliamentary candidate who stood in Somerton and Frome in 2010 and narrowly lost, having taken 44%

of the vote. The candidate then re-applied to the head office panel, but after a 20 minute interview was informed that unfortunately she did not meet the criteria of the "assessment process". Despite having passed all the tests in the past, she was now told she failed to display "energy and commitment, campaign leadership and motivation, conviction, manner and attitude, depth and intellect, communication and ability to relate to people or commitment to inclusion and diversity." This may sound all too familiar to readers of *Tel's Tales*, but it isn't the story of a progressive Labour candidate under New Labour. It's the story of a Tory candidate under Cameron.

## THE FOLLY OF MANDELSON

Lula da Silva retired as an exceptionally popular President of Brazil, lauded around the world. As *The Guardian* has pointed out, it should not be forgotten that in 1998 Peter Mandelson had the presumption to recommend to the Brazilian electorate that they should not vote for Lula, but for the incumbent, Cardoso, and his privatising policies.

## PENSIONS – THE CAT'S OUT OF THE BAG

John Cridland, director general of the CBI, has spelt out what is really behind the attack on public sector pensions and on TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment). The bosses' nark had this to say to *The Guardian* – "public sector pensions remain the biggest barrier to the private and third sectors providing public services. Pension costs and liabilities are far higher for providers outside the public sector. When third sector and private sector organisations currently bid for work they have to be able to cover the full costs of public sector pension liabilities, and many simply do not have the money to do so".

## LABOUR'S LATEST FAD

The latest fad at HQ is to tell CLPs to reach out into their local communities and identify future Labour candidates. It doesn't matter

whether they are Party members or not. A similar faddish notion is the motivation for Peter Hain's and Ed Miliband's obsession with "registered supporters". It's something the Blairites have always been pushing, as a way of undermining the union influence and moving towards their desired model of the US Democrat Party.

There is, of course, nothing new in all this. For example, in the early 70s Canterbury CLP 'reached out into the community' and asked a local tenants' leader to join the Party and become a councillor in a safe seat. An NEC dispensation was obtained and the new comrade duly took her seat in the town hall. Unfortunately she had no idea about Party politics and saw nothing wrong with supporting the Tories against the Labour Group, which had a wafer thin majority. Before long the new comrade left the Party and the council in disgust.

The lesson here is that people who share our ideals and values need at least to make the commitment of joining the Party and showing willing before they move on to being candidates.

## IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE

The prominent Tory, Louise Bagshawe (now Louise Mensch MP) has a somewhat chequered political history. She was apparently unhappy with the moralising of John Major and she briefly left the Tories for New Labour. Louise has confessed to *The Observer* – "I thought, Tony Blair is a Tory, I'm joining the Labour Party".

## A BOOK NOT TO BE MISSED

Mark Seddon's *Standing for Something* (fully illustrated by Martin Rowson) 300pp, £18.99.

*'Standing for Something* is not your standard piece of hackery, re-hashing intrigues and irrelevances of the Blair/Brown years. Rather it is a considered, poignant and deeply personal account of Britain under New Labour from the point of view of a glorious outsider.'

Further details at:  
[www.bitebackpublishing.com](http://www.bitebackpublishing.com)



## BITEBACKS

Labour's share of the vote among social groups C2, D and E has fallen year-on-year since 1992. Labour has lost five million votes since 1997 and one reason for this is its neglect of those who ought to be its core voters'. (Quoted in *Tribune* 13/8/10.)

# A RED DIAPER BABY

## RAY DAVISON REVIEWS SUZE ROTOLO'S *A FREEWHEELIN' TIME*, A MEMOIR OF GREENWICH VILLAGE IN THE SIXTIES

Suze Rotolo died of lung cancer in February this year at the age of 67. She left behind an Italian husband Enzo Bartoccioli, their one son Luca and this 371 page memoir of her life republished in the year of her death. *Campaign Briefing* pays tribute to her memory for her 'red diaper' radicalism as a political activist in the Congress of Racial Equality and the anti-nuclear group Sane, for her civil rights campaigning, for her opposition to the Vietnam war, for her spirited defence of Cuba and her brave challenge to the American passport restrictions on travel to that country and, last but not least, for politicising Dylan and helping to inspire some of his best lyrics.

Rotolo writes like she lived with existential energy and thrust but the political focus is always present, as you would perhaps expect from a full-blooded woman of Italian American descent, whose parents were members of the American Communist Party during the period of McCarthyism. This is a book full of life, fractured, discontinuous, always on the boil. This is also a life full of books, art, songs and music, capturing that sense of appetite, freedom and the possibility of clearing blocked horizons and lessening the coefficients of adversity that characterised the sensibility of the sixties. Not for nothing did Dylan say of her when he met her in 1961 that she was 'the most erotic thing (sic)' that he had ever seen, that 'she had a smile that could light up a street full of people', she was a 'Rodin come to life' and yes he was truly smitten and the feelings were reciprocated.

Inevitably, Dylan is central to this narrative but Rotolo in the opening pages is impressively cautious and guarded about the fallibility of memory, the dangers of nostalgia, the vulnerabilities and pain that attempting to recreate the past can induce. The end of her relationship with Dylan evidently hurt her very badly but there is no bitterness in the reconstructions, no trace of resentment about her pregnancy and abortion (p.280) or even Joan Baez, perfidious Dylan's replacement muse. No doubt her robust philosophy assisted her and she knew all about muses from her studies of Gilot's 'Life with Picasso'. Indeed, a constant preoccupation of this woman in a pre-feminist period is to avoid being thought of as 'so-and-so's chick' and



"The sixties were an era that spoke a language of inquiry and curiosity and rebelliousness against the stifling and repressive political and social culture of the decade that preceded it. The new generation causing all the fuss was not driven by the market: we had something to say, not something to sell... A compelling and necessary idea will always find a place to plant itself. The creative spirit finds a way."  
– Suze Rotolo.

she 'did not want to be a string on Bob Dylan's guitar'. She had a strong sense of being her own person and her desire for equality reminds me of Simone de Beauvoir.

There is so much to ponder in this exciting book. It charms when Rotolo tells us, to my surprise, that she took the name Suze from a French liqueur that she liked (I thought I had experienced all such French drinks but not this one) or the intense pleasure that she feels when she first tastes a bottle of Médoc, soon to be her favourite wine (compare this to the rather snobbish description 'vin médiocre' of certain 'experts'). It saddens when you realise how the brilliance of Dylan is coupled to such disloyalty and deceit (even his name and background were myth to some extent). Most of all it is that picture of young love and freedom, so much the spirit of the times, a love that failed, which also seems to symbolise the dissipation of sixties hope and optimism. Dylan thinks of freedom when he asks; 'Are the birds free when they have to fly?' Rotolo seems to like the thought but defining freedom as unrestricted by rules is not adequate, as we know to our cost now. The times are not so changed: concentrations of

real power are still in place and it is doubtful that they can be shifted by a rebirth of sixties bohemianism for all its seductions.

Finally, this is a book with a lot of interest as a material object in itself. As you would expect from Rotolo, who was a practitioner of Book Art and specialised in making one-off books from memorabilia, this book is a fine specimen of the genre with a constant stream of really fascinating illustrations, many from Rotolo's own unique reliquary.

NOT TO BE MISSED

## 2012 CLPD AGM

SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY,  
11.30AM,  
CONWAY HALL,  
RED LION SQUARE.

Report of 2011 AGM  
available on CLPD website.

## DOUBLE RED ALERT:

Don't forget to read the Willsman Guide to Conference. 2011 edition now available and up to the usual exceptional standard of insight and intrigue this year.

The indispensable handbook for all delegates (it is 14 pages long this year) and anyone else who wants to understand what is really going on at Conference.

The Guide can be downloaded from  
[www.grassrootslabour.net](http://www.grassrootslabour.net)

## BITEBACKS

'George Osborne wrote in the *Times* in 2006 on the global economy: "In Ireland... they have freed their markets, developed the skills of their workforce, encouraged enterprise and innovation and created a dynamic economy. They have much to teach us. If only we are willing to learn".'

(*Guardian* diary, 19/11/10.)

# NEC REPORT FROM A YOUTH MEMBER

**CALLUM MUNRO,  
NEC YOUTH MEMBER**

“Parties that do not change, die, and this Party is a living movement not an historical monument.” Those words are as relevant today as they were in 1994. One year ago, Ed Miliband was elected leader of our Party. One of Ed’s most valuable qualities is his recognition that our Party must change if we are once again to win the trust of the British public. The role of the NEC in helping to change the Party is an important one and this has meant a busy year for all those Party members who sit on our governing body.

**“Young Labour has a bright future... it is fast becoming a movement of which the Party can be proud”**

As the NEC’s youngest member (by quite a bit!) I joined in February after my election by young Party members, students and young trade unionists at Young Labour Conference in Glasgow. With the whole Refounding Labour process to deal with, as well as a general secretary election, it certainly has been a baptism of fire. I am sure that most members will have taken part, some way or another, in the Refounding Labour process. It was great to see young members organise their own events about how they wanted to see their Party and their youth movement changed for the better. Young Labour has a bright future. The appointment of a full-time youth officer and the election of an active national committee coupled with a significant burst of localised activity means that Young Labour is fast becoming a movement of which the Party can be proud.

Refounding Labour has brought together all sections of our Party. Examining our Party was important but we must now move on together and present Labour as a credible alternative Party of government. Helping drive this alternative will be our new general secretary.

The next year will be challenging for all parts of our Party. Only by reconnecting with the values and aspirations of voters can we even begin to dream of government.

# CANADIAN ELECTIONS IN FOCUS: NEW DEMOCRATS’ CHERISHED POLICIES UNDER PRESSURE

**JIM MALLORY, LABOUR  
COUNCILLOR IN LEWISHAM**

We’ve all seen left-wing parties trim policies once in power, or after heavy defeat, but what about on the back of electoral success?

Canada’s New Democrats (NDP) became for the first time the country’s official opposition in May’s election after sweeping gains, up from 37 to 102 seats in Parliament. They replaced a shambolic Liberal Party – led by Michael Ignatieff – and nearly wiped out the separatist Bloc Québécois in French-speaking Québec on an appeal to “soft” nationalists.

Can the Party sustain its momentum and establish the strong opposition voice Canada has lacked? New Democrats are under pressure to act “responsibly” and abandon many cherished policies. Already, there have been rumbles about removing “socialist” from the Party’s constitution. So far, the NDP has steered a steady course, defending workers in a postal dispute – so maintaining its union links with the Canadian Labour Congress (Canada’s TUC) – and its many inexperienced Québec MPs have avoided first-year mistakes.

**“So far, the NDP has steered a steady course, defending workers in a postal dispute – so maintaining its union links with the Canadian Labour Congress”**

The right-wing Conservative government, buoyed by its first majority in 20 years, is committed to a “review” (i.e. cuts) of welfare and public services, cuts in immigration and against protecting the environment.

To maintain credibility, it’s argued, the NDP needs to show it can manage the economy, roughly translated as keeping capitalism afloat. While Canada didn’t suffer as badly in the banking crisis as most Western countries, largely because of tighter regulations, that won’t stop the Tories favouring the private sector with cuts in corporate taxes and opening up services to greater competition.

The Tories broke Kyoto targets to tackle

climate change. Now, the world is watching how it exploits Alberta’s vast tar sands oil reserves. The NDP’s programme includes restoring global warming targets, stricter controls on oil sands development, renewable energy programmes and stopping subsidies to fossil fuels.

After softening their line on immigration during the election, the Tories have since announced a crackdown. The NDP has argued for recognition of the benefits of immigration, particularly reuniting families and speeding up procedures.

Canada stayed out of the Iraq war, but not Afghanistan. The NDP is no longer a lone voice against that war as the country’s troops are returning home.

It is on health that the NDP should find most resonance with voters. The Party that introduced Canada’s first universal health-care service in the 1940s will have a tough fight to save services, as siren voices call on it to follow European left-wing parties and go for a “mixed economy” provision.

The Party faces an immediate challenge, however, as charismatic leader Jack Layton takes time off to fight cancer. With typical bravado, he’s proposed first-time Québec MP Nycol Turmel as interim leader over two established deputies. A long-time women’s rights activist, she will also show the NDP is serious about reflecting Québec voters’ concerns.

This is a critical time for the NDP, one that will determine its future for a generation.



‘As JK Galbraith chronicled some years ago, every financial crisis has been caused by the private sector and every one has become the public sector’s problem.’  
(*Tribune* editorial 18/2/11.)

‘The great deregulation experiment of the last 30 years-embraced by all the political parties-turned Britain from a high-wage, low-debt and relatively equal society, into a low-wage, high-debt and deeply unequal nation.’  
(Frances O’Grady, deputy general secretary TUC, *Guardian* 7/6/11.)

# REFOUNDING LABOUR – A HIDDEN THREAT TO LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

**DAVID L GARDNER,  
VICE CHAIR, LABOUR  
DEMOCRATIC NETWORK**

Rumour has it that the NEC is considering abandoning the Local Government Committee and handing over local policy formulation to an as yet undefined group of local officials to include the Labour group leader!

A fig leaf of a local co-ordinating forum would take on the role of panel formulation, candidate selection supervision and election oversight.

This was not a specific issue flagged up in the original Refounding Labour consultation and has come through the back door at the instigation apparently of the LGA Labour Group.

Our Local Government Committees, previously called County, District or Borough Parties, are charged with holding the Labour Groups on those councils to account and ensuring collaboration between the Party and Labour Group. They are just as vital in the many areas where we are devoid of Labour councillors or have a sole or just a handful of councillors who need and appreciate support.

**“We must ensure that any change has genuinely wide and transparent support from throughout the Party”**

Now, I am not going to the barricades over preserving LGCs; there are arguments for smaller co-ordinating forums in many areas. But there are two vital principles at stake here:

1. Deliberative policy making and transparency – it is far too early to rush a change through before there has been a wide debate in the Party on whether this is a desirable move and how an alternative might work. There should be some assessment of how effective LGCs are in fulfilling their functions and the wider objectives of the Party before imposing ill-thought out changes. And we must ensure that any change has genuinely wide and transparent support from throughout the Party – this is not clear as it was not a specific question and responses to Refounding Labour have yet to be published.

2. Accountability – it was David Blunkett who established the current rules of groups and LGCs to focus on collaboration and accountability on policy – in many ways a forerunner to Partnership in Power. At its best, this can work very well, with open and deliberative policy-making including members and councillors at local level, leading to a high quality manifesto with significant consensus – backed up by ongoing policy dialogues on contemporary issues. Under the proposals, we could go back to pre-Blunkett days where the Group and the Party can be locked in a confrontational, adversarial relationship without any real accountability.

So there is a case for some reform or allowing some flexibility but just abolishing LGCs is not the way forward. In a county council area, and many of the counties only have a few Labour councillors, an LGC is a tremendous way to bring the CLPs together with the few councillors to support their opposition and to inform local parties about county issues and to help co-ordinate county-wide campaigns. In Labour areas, it brings the Party and group together and

can provide a reality check for councillors who can (occasionally) become cocooned in the Town/City/County Hall or sometimes have not considered wider issues or implications.

**“Let us be very careful before we throw out the baby with the bathwater – and let’s have a full democratic debate before any changes”**

Of course, the LGC can lead to duplication sometimes, there can be too many meetings and bureaucracy, and they can divert us rather than support campaigning. But, there are other ways of overcoming these challenges. Let us be very careful before we throw out the baby with the bathwater – and let’s have a full democratic debate before any changes.

## BITEBACKS

‘Local areas need strong, effective and accountable leadership. Governance arrangements enable local leaders to use their wider influence as well as their powers to get things done for their communities. All councillors have a role to play in representing their communities and for the successful delivery of services. Local authorities are the main mechanism for citizens to drive local priorities and shape the type and standards of services they receive. They enable citizens to hold to account service providers. They can also empower individuals to take part and be responsible for the issues that matter most to local people. Local authorities need to involve communities and local people in decision making - people need to have a reason to vote for their councils.’  
(Extracted from Department for Communities and Local Government (Pickles) website.)

‘The Mayor of London asks: “Can it be right that the action of such a small handful can bring great misery to the lives of millions?” Who was he talking about? Bankers?’  
(*Guardian* letter 17/6/11.)



The ACC Liverpool, venue of this year’s Annual Conference

## TUC conference highlight



### CLPD fringe meeting at TUC 2011: **'The unions and the Labour Party – Defending the link'**

Tuesday September 13, 6.00pm,  
The Plough Pub, Museum St  
(opp. British Museum)

Nearest tubes: Tottenham Court Road or Holborn

This meeting will discuss how to increase the role and influence of the unions within the Party and thus help to ensure we have a Labour government that properly serves our Movement.

Speakers: **Richard Ascough** (GMB), **Jon Ashworth MP**, **Ann Black** (LP NEC), **Sam Gurney** (LP NPF), **Billy Hayes** (CWU), **Carol Hayton** (LP NPF), **Becky Hodgson** (LP NPF Youth Rep) **Diana Holland** (Unite and Labour Party Treasurer), **Kelvin Hopkins MP**, **Christine Shawcroft** (LP NEC), **Liz Snape** (UNISON). Chair: **Peter Willsman** (CLPD secretary).

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

### CLPD Rally and Delegates' Briefing

Sunday 25 September 10.30am, The Green Room,  
78 Duke Street, Liverpool L1 5AA

With: Chair Carol Hayton (NPF), Mohammed Azam, Ann Black (NEC), Councillor Catherine Donovan, (Gateshead CLP and CAC nomination), Jack Falkingham (NPF Youth Representative), Gary Heather (Islington North CLP and CAC nomination), Kelvin Hopkins MP, Ken Livingstone, Michael Meacher MP, Christine Shawcroft (NEC), Jon Trickett MP, Simon Weller (ASLEF) and Peter Willsman (Special briefing for delegates). Entry £2, (conc: 50p).

### Conference Assessment and the Next Steps for Labour

Wednesday September 28, 6.00pm, The Green Room,  
78 Duke Street, Liverpool L1 5AA

Speakers: Peter Willsman (chair, CLPD secretary), Richard Ascough (GMB), Mohammed Azam, Tony Benn, Ann Black (NEC), Rhian Greaves (NPF Youth Representative), Billy Hayes (CWU), Kelvin Hopkins MP, Michael Meacher MP, Chris McLaughlin (Editor *Tribune*), Christine Shawcroft (NEC), Councillor Barbara White (Musicians' Union). Entry £2.00, (conc: 50p).

## ABOUT CLPD AND ITS GAINS FOR PARTY DEMOCRACY

CLPD was formed in 1973 by a group of rank-and-file activists with support from about ten Labour MPs. The first President was Frank Allau. The main motivation for the Campaign was the record of the Labour governments in the sixties and the way that Annual Conference decisions were continually ignored on key domestic and international issues. The immediate cause was Harold Wilson's outright rejection in 1973 of the proposal to take into public ownership some 25 of the largest manufacturing companies, covering the major sectors of the economy.

CLPD's first demand was, therefore, for mandatory reselection of MPs so that they would be under pressure to carry out Conference policies and be accountable to Party members. This demand was achieved in 1979/80 through the overwhelming support of CLPs and several major unions, especially those unions where the demand for reselection was won at their own annual conferences (e.g. TGWU, AUEW, NUPE).

CLPD also sought to make the leader accountable through election by an electoral college involving MPs, CLPs and TUs. Previously Labour leaders were elected by MPs alone. This demand was achieved in January 1981 and was a great victory and advance for Party democracy, although some MPs saw it as a reason to defect and form the SDP, now defunct.

CLPD additionally promoted a range of reforms to give Labour women and black members greater representation within the Party. The main demand for a woman on every parliamentary

shortlist was achieved over the period 1986–88.

CLPD will sometimes promote seemingly non-democracy issues such as the significant extension of public ownership, defending the welfare state and the first-past-the-post electoral system (PR equals no Labour Government). All such policies derive from our commitment to socialist values and socialist advance.

The major focus of CLPD's work in recent years has been to win back the power for ordinary rank-and-file Party members, which has been surreptitiously transferred to the centre under the pretext of 'modernisation' and, ironically, 'extending Party democracy'.

■ To find out more about CLPD, visit our website at [www.clpd.org.uk](http://www.clpd.org.uk). CLPD can usually provide speakers for meetings, especially if requests are made well in advance. To arrange this, ring Francis Prideaux on 020 8960 7460 and leave a message for him if you get the machine and not the man himself.

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