

YELLOW PAGES

Annual Conference 2021 WEDNESDAY 29.09.21



The *Yellow Pages* for Labour Party Conference 2021 has been supported by a generous donation in memory of Walter Wolfgang, 1923-2019, a tenacious advocate of party democracy who always spoke truth to power.

Don't give up the fight!

The left has the policies, the ideas, the people and the enthusiasm. The right has control.

That was the contradictory message coming out of this conference. We have been able to win on a string of policies, and even make advances. Conference backed the Green New Deal, a £15/hr statutory minimum wage and nationalisation of energy firms, as well as support for the Palestinians.

The current leadership showed what they thought of all these policies and the democracy of our party by immediately taking to the airwaves. They rubbished the policies we had just agreed on. This demonstrates very clearly this leadership does not abide by our democratic procedures we have collectively formulated. It holds our members in disdain and our rules in contempt.

Peter Mandelson has his uses. He made it explicitly clear that the purpose of the rule change for electing the next leader was to prevent another Corbyn becoming leader. And CLPs will also now have much less say in the selection of parliamentary candidates. The aim is that MPs will not be at all accountable to members, and instead are beholden to the party centre, the party apparatus and the leader.

But there should be no self-indulgence, or despondency or demoralisation about the scale of these undemocratic attacks, as well

as the old-fashioned stitch-ups and the unjustified expulsions. The ordinary people of this country and internationally cannot afford to give up. So neither can we.

During a deadly pandemic that it still raging, they are being threatened with fire and rehire, a rise in National Insurance, cuts to Universal Credit and higher food and fuel bills. For those still on furlough, unemployment is possible even in the near-term. Internationally, the Government seems set on a course of Cold War-mongering and confrontation, despite the debacle in Afghanistan. This is a Government which intends to "push back" not against rapacious landlords or oil companies, but against refugees in the Channel.

These are the reasons that we must not

By Diane Abbott MP

give up or give in. This Government must be opposed in all these areas and more. The ordinary people of this country and internationally need to know that there is real opposition to this Government. And if the opposition does not come from us, then from whom?

So we must continue to fight with our ideas and our policies. And we must reach out to other members, into the trade unions, our campaign groups and our communities in the fight against the attacks of this Government. We need a better future and the fight for it begins now.

Stay together – and organise

Yesterday we highlighted some rays of hope from this Conference, amid the giant clouds of anti-democratic rule changes that squeaked through. In particular we welcome the positive (and much needed) relationship between left unions and ordinary members from NEC to grassroots. The energy from the left – down but not out – can now, we hope, be channelled for the future.

- In June, the left won all CLP places on the new Women's Committee, which is already making its presence felt. Long overdue progress with Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic and Disability structures gives members a real chance to have their voices heard.
- There are Regional Conferences and

Continued overleaf

Our priority is the election of a Labour Government

Tory policies are responsible for the fuel shortages, price rises, reduced living standards and worsening public services. Winning a Labour government has to be our Party's number one goal.

If we align our policies closely with the Tories, as currently appears the case, it makes it much more difficult for us to win.

Our Party needs to be a pole of attraction for voters. As Andrew Gwynne points out in *Yellow Pages*: "think big". The 2017 manifesto was popular, as the swing to Labour demonstrated. The 2019 election was different - dominated by Brexit with an establishment throwing everything it could at our Party (aided by some on our side). Keir

said yesterday he prioritised winning over unity, but that is obviously a false choice – we are less likely to win if he continues to attack his own members and trade unions.

As we head towards the next election, it is a mistake to hope a bold agenda will not prove necessary, that Tory support will just decline and we shall benefit. To build up our support we need to demonstrate we have clear alternative policies to the Tories that will solve the problems people are struggling with. Our Party needs a bold agenda and a leadership focussed on winning round the voters, not on internal battles which divide and weaken us. Winning and unity go hand in hand.

Daily briefing for Conference delegates published by:



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Election mythbuster

Today Conference discusses a General Election report. No doubt there will be further attempts to rewrite history to attempt to discredit the last five years – not letting facts get in the way of the right-wing narrative. For example, the last decade has been ludicrously described by Peter Mandelson as Labour's "10-year electoral decline". Delegates may wish to remember, and learn from, the 2017 General Election – not wipe it from the record books – which saw Jeremy Corbyn become the only Labour leader in the 21st century to gain seats. It's also worth remembering:

- Between 1997 and 2010, Labour lost five million votes.
- Labour won more votes in 2019 than in 2005, under Blair.
- Labour won just over 40% of 18-24 year olds' votes in 2015, rising to over 60% in 2017 and 2019.
- Labour's vote went up 10% in 2017 to 40%, its highest share since 2001, with Jeremy Corbyn increasing our vote share by more than any other of the Party's leaders since 1945.
- In 2017 Labour gained vote share in 97% of the constituencies they ran in.
- In 2019 Labour's vote share (32%), with Jeremy Corbyn, was greater than with the previous two Leaders (30% - 2015 and 29% - 2010).

Highlights from CLPD's Conference Review: Beyond The Fringe

It was standing room only. The first three speakers took the room by storm: Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, Laura Pidcock (NEC), Mish Rahman (NEC). They emphasised the alarming extent to which our Party is increasingly subject to control-freakery from the centre.

More excellent speakers followed: Seema Chandwani (CAC), Billy Hayes (CAC), Jean Crocker (WCAC), Fraser Amos (Student Rep, YLNC), Ruth Hayes (NWC). Seema and Billy confirmed that the CAC is steadfastly resisting the upsurge of control-freakery. Ruth outlined the significant democratic gains for women comrades in our Party – all of these a response to Jeremy Corbyn's Democracy Review.

At this very point Jeremy burst into the room and was called to speak as a "special guest". Jeremy stressed that Labour's focus must be on effectively undermining the pathetic Tory Government. We need a programme that fully addresses all of the major deficiencies in our society.

How do we get back on the winning path and back into Government?

By Andrew Gwynne MP

First – and this seems somewhat obvious, after eleven years in the wilderness of opposition – we need to have a vision. If there wasn't a Labour Party (and there certainly isn't a God-given right for one to exist), would the major positive advances of the 20th century have happened? I would argue almost certainly not. We need to remind people of the advances we've made as a movement – not to live in the past, but to anchor our values for the future.

Second, we need a coherent programme for government – and we shouldn't be afraid to think big. I remember doing the early morning media round in 2017, after a draft of our manifesto had been leaked. You know what? It turned out thinking big was popular.

Third, we need to recognise the electoral game of chess is changing. In Scotland, the SNP already reigns supreme over once solid Labour seats; and in England the shape-shifting Tories (from "Get Brexit Done" to "Levelling-Up" to a full-on assault on culture wars) are eating into our

bedrock while swing seats also remain stubbornly in the Blue column. There isn't a quick fix to either but we need to offer something that better chimes with Scotland's socially-minded sense of fairness. In England, we absolutely should not try to beat the Tories at their culture wars. That's the battleground Johnson wants.

Last, we need to learn to live and work under the same umbrella, but we can only do that by harnessing the ideas and talents from across the Party. No one section is the holder of all wisdom. We work best – and win – when we share a vision of a better, fairer, more equal society; with a programme we've all fed into; and with the best talents of the whole labour movement working for one aim: to convince enough people out there we have the answers to society's problems, and can offer hope and optimism for the future, by owning it. That's how we win.

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local selections coming up where only the left has the policy platform and dynamism to lead the way regionally and locally in the interests of our communities.

- We may have lost the rule change, but the campaign to restore the Whip to Jeremy Corbyn goes on.
- The long awaited outcome from the National Policy Forum review has led to no changes to improve democracy and accountability, despite decades of inadequacy. There will be NPF elections next year. Be prepared!

With the rule change in the bag, and pledges for authority, integrity and unity each in tatters, it surely can't be long before there is a new leadership contest. New rules mean you will need six months' membership to vote. Sit tight and let's do better next time!



Is "SDP" Polly on another planet? "As Johnson loses control, Starmer is now getting a grip. McDonald's resignation... feels like a last-gasp gesture from the losing Corbynites."

Polly Toynbee, The Guardian



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