



CONFERENCE BULLETIN

Saturday 25 September

Democracy, exclusions

As too often before, the National Executive Committee (NEC) will seek to ram through large rule changes at this conference at short notice. Many are presented as responses to the EHRC report on antisemitism. But that called for an independent disciplinary procedure. The rule changes set up procedures run by the NEC and “Boards” appointed by committees appointed by the General Secretary. We call on delegates to oppose those rule changes. We want due process, and disciplinary committees elected and operating independently of the NEC and the General Secretary: more at bit.ly/lp-dp. The issues here are part of the broader battle to push back the “auto-exclusions” and arbitrary and indefinite suspensions which have hit the party in waves since 2015: bit.ly/c-proc.

Other rule changes

There will be other regressive rule-changes from the NEC. These may include:

- Increasing the “trigger” threshold for open parliamentary selections where there are sitting Labour MPs
- Increasing the threshold for forcing leadership challenges.
- Limiting the number of motions debated at conference. (In 1997-2003 it was only four; in 2007-9, zero! Currently 20 topics are debated).
- A return to giving MPs one-third of the voting power in leadership elections. Before 1981 only MPs had a vote

An open door for Afghan refugees! Solidarity with the peoples of Afghanistan against the Taliban!

Protest outside the conference centre, Saturday 25 September, 11:45

Supported by Momentum Internationalists, RAWA and others.

on the leadership. In 1981 we moved to an electoral college of 40% union block votes, 30% MPs, 30% CLP block votes. Most of the left preferred leader election by party conference, but we backed the electoral college because it had wide support in the unions and gave much-increased deliberative democracy. It was later modified to one-third, one-third, one-third, and then in 2014 to one-member-one-vote. The left opposed OMOV then because it sidelined deliberative democracy in favour of a plebiscite. We’re against restoring exaggerated power for MPs.

Making Parliamentary Labour Party accountable

There will also be good rule changes proposed by CLPs. One would make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable to conference. It’s a good change anyway, and will give conference the power to reinstate Jeremy Corbyn to the Labour whip. Another would repeal the “three-year rule” which bans revisiting rule issues within three years. (Bans CLPs, anyway: as we’ve seen, the leadership can and does throw in big rule changes at only days’ or hours’ notice).

Approving David Evans as General Secretary?

The rulebook says: “The General Secretary shall be elected by Party conference on the recommendation of the NEC... Should a vacancy... occur... between Party conferences, the NEC shall have full power to fill the vacancy subject to the approval of Party conference”. That “approval” has in the past been given “on the nod”, but no previous General Secretary has scattered suspensions and exclusions and prohibitions like Evans. Unite, CWU, FBU and other unions are against “approving” Evans. We need to force a card vote on this.

Referring back the National Policy Forum report

Neurodivergent Labour will move a

reference-back on the National Policy Forum report because it contains nothing on neurodiversity despite ND Labour’s submission being the second most popular in its section: bit.ly/ND-ref

Climate

A compositing meeting will decide two or three alternative “composite” texts for conference to debate. We urge delegates to see that public ownership of energy industries, transport, and high finance, contained in the Fire Brigades Union text, do not get lost in compositing. The Labour for a Green New Deal version in this section was initially ruled out by the CAC, but reinstated on appeal.

Uyghurs and Hong Kong

Versions of a motion drafted by the Uyghur Solidarity Campaign and Labour Solidarity with Hong Kong have been submitted by East and South East Asians for Labour and Finchley and Golders Green CLP. The Hong Kong labour movement is being forced underground, and several trade unionists are already in jail.

Social care

The conference has many motions on social care. We want to see text reaching conference floor which calls for social care to be run as a publicly-owned public service, free to those needing care, and for care workers to be on at least NHS-level pay and con-

Fringe meeting Afghanistan solidarity

6pm, Sunday 26 September, at The Walrus, 10 Ship Street, BN1 1AD. Speakers: Hazara activist and others.

Join us afterwards for an informal chat about conference so far!

Open door

Come to meet MI and talk with use about conference issues.

From 8:30pm, Tuesday 28 September

Both at The Walrus

ditions.

Borders Bill, Afghanistan

Lewes CLP (at least) has a motion against the Tories' Borders Bill. Putney CLP has one for an open door for Afghan refugees.

Anti-union laws

Labour conferences 2015, 2017, and 2019 voted for the repeal of all anti-union laws, the Thatcher-era ones as well as the Trade Union Act. 2019 conference even voted to refer back a section of the National Policy Forum report on the issue. In July Shadow Employment Secretary Andy McDonald said "Labour is committed to repealing anti-union laws", but that tweet is almost all we've heard from the Labour leadership on this since early 2020. Several motions to conference will seek to reaffirm the commitment.

Proportional representation

144 motions call for Labour to support Proportional Representation. And, yes, PR is more democratic. Under FPTP voters in marginal seats have more sway than those in "safe" seats, voters are pushed into "tactical voting" (e.g. for Lib Dems when they seem more likely to beat the Tories in a particular seat), and regionally-based minorities are favoured over more evenly-spread ones. But we worry about PR being seen as a short-cut enabling Labour to shelve the task of winning a positive majority for socialist policies in favour of the apparently easier route (to what?) of a centrist "anti-Tory" majority via alliance with the Lib-Dems.

"Zero Covid"

Birmingham Hall Green CLP calls for Labour to back a "Zero Covid" (ZC) policy of "eliminating" the virus. (The motion doesn't say how, but the ZC campaign looks to longer and stricter lockdowns). The York Central motion for a Covid inquiry is better than ZC.

For minute-by-minute conference info, follow us on Twitter

Twitter: @MomentumInt_

Email: team@momentuminternationalists.org

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Web: momentuminternationalists.org

Elimination is not possible any time soon, any more than elimination of flu. Lockdowns have their place, but long strict lockdowns (like Argentina, eight months in 2020) do not work in countries whose geography precludes rigidly closing borders. To focus on police measures (lockdowns, rigid border closures) ignores the fact that the best predictor of lower Covid tolls, between areas and countries, is lower social inequality. One of us debated with the "Zero Covid" campaign back in February 2021: bit.ly/zc-debate

Social reconstruction

Social inequality worsened the pandemic; the pandemic has worsened inequality. The "Build Back Fairer" motion on reconstruction, originated by MI and then prioritised by Momentum, has been ruled out by the CAC on the same grounds as the Labour for a Green New Deal text was initially ruled out (too wide-ranging; but then motions on the "one subject" of climate, or of reconstruction, are bound to be wide-ranging). Newark CLP has appealed. Other motions on similar lines include one from Unite, ok as far as it goes, but weaker in specific.

Housing

Who are Momentum Internationalists?

Momentum Internationalists was formed by activists from the left anti-Brexit campaign Labour for a Socialist Europe, L4SE, in early 2020 to continue the fight for left-wing and internationalist politics after the Tories finally forced through Brexit. We ran candidates in the Momentum NCG elections of 2020 and promoted motions in the Momentum policy priorities ballot of 2021. We are not just a caucus within Momentum. We have been active on the streets, for example in the Black Lives Matter and NHS pay protests of 2020. We have run public Zoom meetings on the farmers' movement in India, on the resistance in Myanmar, and on the EHRC report and antisemitism in Labour (we reckon there is a real problem there, not just a concocted smear). At this Brighton conference we are organising activities to support Afghan refugees, as well as pushing our favoured motions on conference floor.

Points in the many housing motions which are important not to lose in compositing include building for zero emissions (Coventry South), rent controls (SW Beds, Wirral W), requisitioning empties (E Worthing).

Reversing academisation

The Socialist Education Association motion (and others) reaffirm commitment to reversing academisation (quasi-privatisation) of schools, and restoring them to democratic local government control and cooperation. Sadly, no motion picks up on the exam fiascos of 2020 and 2021 to propose abolition of GCSEs and statutory high-stakes testing in primaries.

EU and free movement

Aberavon and Neath CLPs have motions calling for UK re-entry into the Single Market and the Customs Union. That would restore free movement with Europe and remove the threat of a harder border within Ireland. Some on the left argue against on grounds of Single Market rules against state aid, but the UK is very far from testing the limits of extending public ownership within the Single Market, and in fact the rules against state aid work mostly to block competitive bribes to big corporations to site operations here or there, of the sort that US states and cities offer on a huge scale.

Trans rights

Edinburgh Central CLP has submitted an emergency motion (bit.ly/ed-cen)

Working with campaigns

We have worked with a range of other campaigns, including the Labour Campaign for Free Movement, the Uyghur Solidarity Campaign, the Hong Kong campaign LMSHKUK, Free Our Unions, the UK support group for the Jewish-Arab movement for equality and justice in Israel-Palestine Standing Together bit.ly/uk-st, the Labour Homelessness Campaign, and Neurodivergent Labour.

