

Now campaign for conference policies!

“A senior Labour source... said the party’s policy was ‘what Keir says it is’” – The Guardian, 27 September (bit.ly/w-k-s).

Keir Starmer has been reviving Blair-era ploys. When conference passes a strong policy, like public ownership of big energy companies or £15 an hour minimum pay, he says that he decides, not conference.

The Humpty-Dumpty line – policy is “just what I choose it to mean” – is straight from High Blairism of 1997-2001. And Keir Starmer couples it with another Lewis Carroll motif – “off with their head!”

But the Blair Return Project is as yet far from full victory. On policy, at this conference, they’ve been able to win only what they “won” by arm-twisting to remove text in compositing sessions.

Conference voted for public ownership of big energy companies.

It reaffirmed 2017, 2018, and 2019 decisions for repeal of all anti-union laws.

It voted not just to stop, but to reverse, local government cuts.

It voted for a universal, comprehensive, publicly-provided NHS.

It voted for access to food to be a right guaranteed by law.

It voted for safe and legal routes for refugees, and to close detention centres.

It voted to end the scandal of the backlog in trans health services.

It voted to “remove profit” from social care, for a £15 per hour minimum wage, for good statutory sick pay.

It voted to condemn the Australian nuclear-powered submarines pact.

On Tuesday, unusually, most of the references-back of NPF reports went through, too. Those who want to bland down Labour policy lacked the confidence to argue their views on conference floor.

In the days of High Blairism, the unions were dominated by so-called “new realism”, and many in the constituencies would back Blair because they thought he would win the next election.

Despite all the talk of “levelling up”, the Tories are set on a surge of cuts to recoup the money they paid out to Serco, G4S, Deloitte and other cronies during the lockdowns.

If CLPs and unions campaign against that surge and for the positive policies decided this week, then we will push back the Blair Return Project.

Winning the next election

In mid 2020, when Keir Starmer still had the glow of the “Ten Pledges” and the unity pitch on which he stood for leader, polls gave him a positive public approval balance of 48%-21%. As he has shifted to clampdowns, exclusions, and attempts to override conference policy, his approval balance has shifted to 20%-59% negative.

Stephen Rodgers

Stephen Rodgers, Edinburgh Central delegate. “To be fair, after this week I think Keir Starmer now has some policies, just they are either bad, boring or uninspiring.”

Simon Fletcher

Simon Fletcher, former Starmer staff chief for elections and planning, now says: “While the unifying pitch that Starmer put to the membership was open, conciliatory and correct – and explains the big vote he secured – it has not been delivered. It sadly proved to be the wrong thing, for me at least, to have supported that leadership campaign... You cannot promise unity then deliberately pick fights

and expect people to say that is OK. It’s not”.

Andy McDonald’s Green Paper

Before he resigned, Andy McDonald was able to get a “New Deal for Working People” published as an official Labour document. It has gaps and omissions, but many positive policies reflecting conference decisions. Don’t let it be disappeared! We’ve put it online at bit.ly/amc-nd

Bakers’ disaffiliation

We blame the leadership for pushing them into it, but think that the Bakers’ Union disaffiliation is a mistake. Inside Labour the Bakers could strengthen us on many issues, as other left unions like the FBU have done. Outside Labour... Since the RMT rail union disaffiliated, it has been reduced to political projects like the No2EU Euro-election campaign of 2009. As a group which came out of Labour for a Socialist Europe, we in MI think No2EU was going in the wrong direction. In any case, nothing positive and lasting was built from it.

Trans rights protest

From 5pm onwards yesterday there was a lively, fun demo at The Old Ship of about 100 local grassroots queer and trans activists. They were promoting the rights of trans women to play sports and protesting the TERF Labour Women’s Declaration.

There were multiple speeches and chants, football games, and songs. Understandably, there was serious anger at Labour and its leadership.

As time went on, Labour members and delegates gave positive speeches and were celebrated. Inside conference, transphobic speakers had been booed, and a motion on LGBT+ rights

Organising the internationalist left after conference

“Labour: the fightback begins”. Momentum Internationalists planning meeting Sunday 10 October, 4:30pm-6pm:

Zoomlink bit.ly/mi-after
Eventbrite bit.ly/mi-ebrite

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passed with good debate.

For too long, Labour has given quarter to transphobia. Labour should not repeat the mistakes of the antisemitism crisis. We should fight transphobic organisation in the party.

Social care

The two motions passed on social care on Tuesday contained many good demands. But key text was eliminated in the composite. We need a completely free, fully publicly funded and fully publicly run and provided care system, and strong free, public provision for independent living support too. The motions evaded that. Check out and support the Care and Support Workers Organise network twitter.com/CaSWO_

Labour Friends of Victims of the Police?

Let's take our cue from the lively protests this spring against the Police Bill! Since the Thatcher years and the miners' strike we've seen more and more laws to increase police powers, from the Public Order Act 1986 onwards. Labour should be campaigning for more democratic accountability and scrutiny and demilitarisation of the police.

Yet Jessica Morden MP has set up a "Labour Friends of the Police" group (bit.ly/labfp). Nick Thomas-Symonds (shadow Home Secretary) made a point of inviting the chair of the Police Federation to the conference, and name-checking him in his speech.

Only months ago police piled in against the peaceful vigil for Sarah Everard on Clapham Common. Only one month ago they arrested hundreds at the XR protests in London. The Tories plan further measures against the right to protest through

Support left & internationalist 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. ♀

the Police Bill (now in committee stage in the House of Lords).

Antisemitic tropes

The immigration composite mandated Labour to dissect and refute "antisemitic tropes". Instead, the leadership is using the real issue of antisemitism as a lever for exclusions. As if scattershot exclusions without due process will educate or enlighten anyone! CLPs moving to organise their own discussions and educational programmes about antisemitism have been told to drop them by head office. If enough CLPs go for education and discussion, then head office will not be able to stop it.

Fight for migrant rights

Another Europe is Possible (AEIP) and Labour Campaign for Free Movement (LCFM) co-hosted a Tuesday fringe meeting on "Resisting Rising Borders: The Fight for Migrants' Rights in Labour" with speeches from Nadia Whittome MP, Ana Oppenheim (Momentum NCG), Ricardo La Torre (Fire Brigades Union), and Dr. Dina Chami (UCU Migrant Members Standing Committee). The meeting was welcomingly frank about shortcomings of Labour and the unions on standing up for migrants. Ways forward include organising migrants' sections within the unions and linking them together.

Curtain twitchers

Starmer and his shadow home office ministers have announced a new attempt to tail the Tories with a right-wing "law-and-order" and "antisocial behaviour" drive. They want more unpaid Special Constables (What's worse than cops? scab cops...), heavier street presence with neighbourhood police hubs, and "next generation neighbourhood watches" encouraging Stasi-wannabe curtain-twitchers to surveil and report on their communities with tools like video door bells. This follows the deletion in compositing of text acknowl-

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edging the well-evidenced institutional racism of the justice system and emphasising measures against the inequality driving crime, rather than increased police powers.

This is a slap in the face after the Black Lives Matter protests highlighted police violence and institutional racism and when Labour should be uncompromisingly opposing the racist, anti-protest Policing Bill.

The Corbyn leadership was far too weak on these issues, emphatically pledging more cops. The Labour left needs to firm up and be clear – harsher policing and intrusive surveillance are not answers to real social problems. ♀

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. ♀

