

Suggested Rule Change

Trade Union levy payers to be properly recognised as affiliated members of our Party

The Labour Party Rule Book 2013, Chapter 2 Membership Rules Clause I Conditions of Membership

Amendment

Add a new sub-clause 2 as follows (and renumber subsequent sub- clauses):

“2. There shall be affiliated Party members of the Labour Party. Political levy paying members of a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party shall be deemed to be Party members by virtue of their organisation’s affiliation to the Labour Party, their affiliation fee passed on and their membership rights exercised through their trade union. In order to qualify as affiliated Party members, political levy payers must indicate their support for the Labour Party and confirm that they are not members or supporters of any other party or otherwise ineligible to be members of the Labour Party.”

Supporting argument

Rival political parties and hostile voices in the press and media continually question the role of the Unions and of their members within our Party. Of course, the vast majority of Labour’s members are well aware that the Party was brought into existence by the Unions as a federal body, consisting of CLPs, Unions and Socialist Societies. At the founding Conference on Labour Representation, February 1900, the delegates consisted of:

117 from Trade Unions representing 545,316 members; 7 from the Independent Labour Party representing 13,000 members; 4 from the Social Democratic Federation representing 9,000 members; 1 from the Fabian Society representing 861 members.

This federal structure gives the Party its underlying strength and is precisely why the bond between Labour and the Unions is always being questioned by our political enemies. That affiliated union levy payers are de facto affiliated Party members is actually already implicit in the Rule Book. This rule change would make it explicit. It could also lead to trade union members feeling more involved and playing a more active and campaigning role at CLP level.

In recent years, our Rule Book has been comprehensively re-jigged so many times that clear principles have sometimes become opaque. For the first seventy years the Party’s Constitution was crystal clear viz

“Clause I – Name – The Labour Party

Clause II – Membership – There shall be two classes of members, namely

a) Affiliated members b) Individual members”

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 21 June 2013