LABOUR LEFT INTERNATIONALISTS

#8 November 2026

Baby steps?

The sad truth is that the first Budget under Andy Burnham, on 28 October 2026, was overall worse than those under Keir Starmer, not better.

Rachel Reeves did increase taxes, most on employers, by £40 billion in 2024, and raised the NHS Budget by £24 billion. Cuts continue in NHS Trusts, and the total NHS England waiting list is 7.4 million and rising, but visibly there are more outpatient sessions. Reeves fouled up by cutting the Winter Fuel Allowance (to save very little money) and refusing to scrap the two-child benefit cap, but then was forced to u-turn on both.

This Budget has been called "welcome news" if only "baby steps" by Unite general secretary Sharon Graham, and other union leaders have commented warmly. But really the very "orthodox" Institute of Fiscal Studies was nearer the mark: "a raft of fiddly measures that will do very little that will move the dial on growth". Or on anything else much. Put it another way, when babies make their first steps, they are often not in the direction they need, and are quickly followed by falling over.

£100 off (the increase in) energy bills for some of us. Gas standing charges abolished. More rates relief for small businesses. All this covered by small tax increases on bank profits and on income from property and savings. The amounts are all rounding errors on the scale of total government operations. It was indeed a "low-key Budget", as promised.

But there are two stings in the tail. First, world conditions are likely to get worse, not better, and maybe much worse.

Chancellor John Healey promised that in 2027 "we will bring down the welfare bill". He added: "we will do it in a Labour way". What does that mean? Like the 1974-9 Labour government in its later years?

Better early-years provision, more council housing, expanded public services offering good new jobs, would all cut welfare bills. But there are few signs of hope on those fronts. Every government department has been told to cut its capital investment by 2% to fund military spending rises.

Labour movement activists will continue to push for serious taxation of the rich – a "Zucman" wealth tax, capital gains tax equalised with income tax – and for public ownership and democratic control of high finance.

Stop Rosebank!

Use this QR-code for the Mainstream model motion to adapt for your CLP.

Andy Burnham told annual conference "we will be pragmatic in relation to the North Sea". Three weeks later the government approved the Jackdaw drilling. As *Stop Rosebank* put it, "Jackdaw is a relatively small gas field. Even in the most optimistic scenario and assuming none of its gas is exported, its reserves would power the UK for just over two months at current levels of demand. If Jackdaw is a disaster, Rosebank is catastrophic. Rosebank could release **7 times more CO2e than Jackdaw**. A field on this scale is fundamentally incompatible with any credible pathway to a liveable future. The Jackdaw decision shows just how hard the fossil fuel lobby is pushing behind closed doors.

As the SERA statement puts it:

"We need to ditch the corporate handouts and continue to invest directly in the public green infrastructure, opening up high-quality training, apprenticeships, and careers in the industries of the future. That strategy starts with drawing a firm line: by rejecting Rosebank, refusing consent for any new fields, and banning all new licensing as is planned in the Energy Independence Bill."

Also see the statement from ten trades unions in May at www.stopcambo.org.uk.

Unaccountable NPF

In the party rules, the *National Policy Forum* is accountable to conference - conference has the right to 'refer back' any sections of the NPF report without having to reject the report as a whole. But in 2026, just as in 2025, the conference was not allowed to vote on references back submitted by CLPs.

We urge CLPs to write to the CAC demanding they stick to the rules. And if your conference motion was ruled out ("referred to the NPF") write to the NPF demanding a report back on their discussion of it. See https://labourleftint.uk/2026/09/28/conference-diary-seven-more-on-the-disappearing-reference-backs/

Reports from the NEC

Outrageously, there are no official reports from NEC meetings made available to Labour Party members. Ann Black used to do regular and useful reports when she was an NEC member. The best replacements now are from Gemma Bolton and Cat Arnold.

Gemma does regular reports on the Labour Outlook website, and Cat - elected onto the NEC this time on the Mainstream slate - does NEC reports on her dedicated site: https://www.catarnold.co.uk/nec-reports

SocSoc blogs

Two of the party's affiliated socialist societies publish useful and critical blogs. Recent entries on the Socialist Educational Association blog *Education Politics* look at Labour Conference, the French school protests, Labour and the education unions, and the unregulated world of multi-academy trusts: https://educationpolitics.substack.com

The Socialist Health Association's recents blog posts look at the issues behind their ruled out 'Cash for influence' rule change, and the UK/US Pharmaceuticals Deal: https://sochealth.co.uk/18161-2/blog/

Charter for Labour Democracy: https://bit.ly/44sdyLv

Annual Conference

What wasn't in the leader's speech?

"There was an evident contrast between what Andy Burnham was saying and what conference had just voted for. He said "we will reform Right-to-Buy" - just 24 hours after the conference had voted not to reform it but abolish it altogether. And 48 hours before Andy's speech, conference had voted for a wealth tax to fund public services - but he announced that the care service would be funded *not* through wealth tax, but by reduction over time in the value of the state pension."

Taken from a delegate's report - follow the QR code for the rest.

What was passed?

Despite the ruling out of key CLP motions, and a discernible 'holding back' by unions, there was some important policy passed (not that you would know it from the Party website).

On **housing**:
- ending right to buy,
- cancelling council housing debt, freeing resources for building and maintenance"
- 90 000 annual target for building or acquiring social rent homes
- "direct employment" (ie DLOs).

On '**Insourcing and Public Ownership**':
- bringing rail freight "back in-house by expanding publicly owned rail freight"
- ensuring all workers moving into GBR are covered by collective bargaining agreements,
- to insource all Network Rail train operations

On '**public services**':
- defence of migrant workers and leave to remain
- rejection of forced academisation as "a failed education policy"

On '**Rebuilding our Economy for Working People**'
- "single status of worker" (a key point missing from the ERA)
- "introduction of a wealth tax"

In the **emergency motion**:
- "deliver the New Deal for Working People in full, without further dilution or delay, and finally end the scandal of fire and rehire".

Read more at https://labourleftint.uk/2026/10/05/what-was-passed-at-conference/

What was ruled out?

More was ruled out than was passed - motions from dozens of CLPs on **Public Ownership of Water** and on **Council Housing**, and motions from affiliated socialist societies, Young Labour and others. See the details at https://labourleftint.uk/2026/10/05/what-was-ruled-out-from-conference/

Housing

At this year's Labour conference the Labour Campaign for Council Housing's resolution, sent in by at least 10 CLPs, was kept off the agenda by a decision of the Conference Arrangements Committee. It was judged not to be a 'contemporary motion' because, we were told, the National Policy Forum report had 'substantially' covered the issues in it. That was nonsense. There was only a single paragraph on housing. It was a political exclusion. The CAC has used a new rule on 'contemporary motions' to keep off the agenda resolutions of which the party machine does not want debated.

However, we are pleased to report that much of the content of our resolution was included in one by the union UNITE. This resolution was incorporated into a composite motion which the conference passed, which stands in stark contrast to the government's actual housing policy.

Continued at https://labourleftint.uk/2026/10/14/housing-and-the-2026-labour-conference-2/

From the *Labour Campaign for Council Housing* - also follow the QR-code for LCCH budget comment.

Rejoin the EU!

The CLP and socialist society motions & reference backs to Labour Conference on relations with the EU were suppressed, probably to keep the powder dry for Burnham's speech. After the conference speech the three leading pro EU pressure groups restated their positions to align with the speech's call. We welcome Burnham opening the debate in the Labour Party and urge members and party units who support rejoining to submit their views.

Follow the QR code for more, including a template motion on **Free Movement**, welcoming Andy Burnham's statement that he is open to "honest discussion" about restoring free movement between the UK and the EU, and calling on the government to move fast in "resetting" relations with the EU, with rapid re-entry into the Single Market, free movement and the Customs Union, and a move towards negotiations on rejoining.

Israeli elections

At the time of writing, neither the far-right coalition led by Benjamin Netanyahu, nor the "change bloc" led by former IDF general Gadi Eisenkot, had a clear path to government, following a general election in Israel on 27 October.

The deadlock is unsurprising. A more positive outcome from the election is the record results for Arab-Palestinian parties, which now have their highest ever level of representation in the Knesset (Parliament), following a record turnout from Palestinian voters.

That matters less because of its immediate impact on the balances of forces in the Knesset, but because it could presage more sustained political self-assertion by Israel's Palestinian minority. Such assertion cannot be solely, or even mainly, electoral: it must express itself in workplaces and communities, and on the streets. There have been mass demonstrations of Palestinian citizens of Israel this year - of which ***Standing Together*** have been an important part - protesting the lack of social provision that has led to a deadly crime wave.

*Read about **Standing Together** at https://ukfost.co.uk* **There is now a network within the party of people working to promote the work of Standing Together - contact LLI for more information.**

https://labourleftint.uk

This is the 8th issue of a regular bulletin for supporters and friends to share in their CLPs. Email lableftint@gmail.com or download from our website.