

FABIAN REVIEW

The quarterly magazine of the Fabian Society

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REVIVAL



*Can the European left make a comeback? Philippe Marlière on France's radical reformer and Eunice Goes on social democracy's renewal **p10** / Polly Toynbee and David Walker lament our dismembered state **p14** / Steven Fielding and Jon Cruddas reflect on 1997 **p19** / Kate Murray speaks to Angela Rayner **p17***

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FABIAN REVIEW

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Gazing towards the horizon

Labour must not be a heritage brand, but must build a vision for the future that has something for everyone, writes *Andrew Harrop*

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY of Labour's extraordinary 1997 election campaign arrives at a very dark moment for the left in Britain. The triggering of Article 50 marks the moment where the UK turns away from a forward-looking European partnership to grasp at an imagined rose-tinted past. Meanwhile the Labour party seems incapable of opposing, let alone of competing for power. The party is weaker than at any time since the 1930s and while Labour's problems go much deeper than Jeremy Corbyn, it is now clear that he cannot offer a way out of the morass.

It is also the second anniversary of Labour's defeat in the 2015 election and that is a further reminder of the depth of the party's crisis. For what has Labour achieved in those two years? It has failed to prevent cuts and failed to stop Brexit. But has it come up with any new ideas at all, bar the idealistic but empirically flawed notion of replacing all benefits with a universal basic income? In its unsuccessful defence of the status quo Labour is a bad conservative party. In its half-hearted, unsubstantiated prosecution of ideas that will never work, it is a bad socialist party. If that is all the left has to offer, we deserve to lose: Labour now needs a re-set that is just as far-reaching as the one which preceded the 1997 victory.

However, that should not be confused with seeking to recreate New Labour, whose economic assumptions were far too complacent. Nor should the party ape the right's 1950s nostalgia, even in these culturally anxious times. Labour cannot be a heritage brand of workplaces and communities that no longer exist. Yes, it should be a party of security and belonging, not just ambition and opportunity, but one that reflects the lives we will lead in the decades to come.

This is one of the lessons of the 1990s. Then New Labour combined an inspirational story about the coun-

try's bright future, which the left has always needed to win, alongside more traditional values of community, protection, responsibility and nationhood. Blair in office and Miliband in opposition forgot this and increasingly pitched their message exclusively towards the young, restless and aspirational.

To find the sweet spot between cultural conservatism and impatient progress, the left must start by raising its eyes to the horizon. We must deeply interrogate how the fabric of life in Britain will change in the decade ahead, and what that will mean for the nation's political psyche. It is likely to be a time of intensifying poverty, rising pressures on family budgets and crippling business uncertainty. But it will also be a decade where extraordinary new technologies permeate ever more widely, with implications for our cultural, social and family life as well as the world of work. In this terrain, how can Labour promise security, power and opportunity for all?

The way we imagine ourselves as a people will also catch up with creeping demographic change, as we realise that the country is far older and far less white British than we think. That has big implications for public policy but also for political culture. The chances are that we will become both more open-minded and more focused on community and security; not only because the nation will be more demographically diverse but also because each of us is a bundle of competing emotions.

The goal must be to bring people together in our ever less homogenous society: to build bridges, when others seek to divide, by appealing to the better angels of our nature and painting a vision of a future which has something for everyone. The British left will make its comeback when it can tell stories that provide reassurance, bring people together and are optimistic about what is to come. Just like in 1997. ■

Shortcuts



A CHANGED SCOTLAND

With the SNP determined to replay the referendum, Scottish Labour needs to up its game

—Margaret Curran

Nicola Sturgeon's call for a second referendum, and Theresa May's subsequent rejection of it, throw into sharp relief the urgent need for renewal for Scottish Labour – but also bring some political opportunities. The SNP wants a repeat of the framing that served it so well during the referendum. Conflating Tory Westminster rule with the very existence of the Union itself enabled SNP politicians, in a binary-choice referendum, to position themselves as the progressive alternative to a broken Westminster. Labour got squeezed into the uncomfortable position of defending the status quo.

Reprising this experience hasn't, as yet, been as useful to the SNP. Firstly, the pretext for a new referendum – or material change as Nicola Sturgeon styles it – was Brexit. Membership of the EU is so fundamental to our interests and our views that she has absolutely no choice but to call another referendum. Yet she seems to be able to set aside the expressed view of the Scottish people when it suits her. The arguments she uses about the centrality of the EU to Scottish interests are remarkably similar to the arguments we were making to maintain the partnership of nations that is the UK. It is also apparent that a significant number of Yes voters don't want to be in the EU either.

Nicola Sturgeon wants to make this a Holyrood vs Westminster trial of strength but it doesn't seem to have altered the opinion polls much and the majority still don't want or see the need for another divisive referendum. As my local hairdresser said: "I'm fed up with voting", a view echoed on the doorsteps. People want their politicians

to focus on the issues affecting their local communities.

So it's not as straightforward as the SNP thinks – but Scottish Labour needs to step up and get back in the game.

To begin with, we need to signal to the Scottish electorate we get it and are prepared to go through real and painful change to be worthy of their support. We need to listen more and be less aggrieved at those we see as our natural supporters turning to others. We need to propose new ways to address inequality and share prosperity amongst all our citizens.

It is time to accept that we live in a changed Scotland and there is no going back to the past. Kezia Dugdale is right to talk about a new federalism within the UK as she formulates a new sense of patriotism within Scottish Labour. A patriotism that prioritises the interests of our country but is also comfortable with Scotland's place within the UK.

Secondly, the SNP has undoubtedly been enormously successful in their political strategy of positioning themselves against the Tories and austerity. But the party's record in government raises real questions and it is clear they have no great plan for reform within Scotland. We have lots of commissions and consultations but no demonstrable progress in social and economic indicators.

On the contrary: things seem to be getting significantly worse. Scotland's education system recorded its worst ever performance this year. Shockingly, standards of numeracy and literacy have dropped, and the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children is demonstrably widening. Increasingly there is evidence of pressure within the NHS, and Scottish economic growth has stalled.

If Scottish Labour is to find a new way it must make these issues a concern of the Scottish people and show them there is an alternative.

Which takes me to my third and final point, namely the need to rebuild the party and shake off the bad habits of the past. There is no easy way through but Scottish Labour needs to look more long term at how we build a more positive and informed party. In the recent Holyrood elections, it was interesting that those who survived the tide against Labour – Daniel Johnson, Jackie Baillie and Iain Gray – dug deep into their

constituencies and created something of a personal political brand. We need to learn from their experience.

Electoral success is not around the corner for the Scottish Labour party. We need to take this time to learn from our mistakes and rebuild. The Scottish Fabians can play a vital role in this through, among a number of initiatives, our research project looking into the new world of work and our futures of Scotland work looking at the challenges and opportunities poised by Brexit.

The drivers of Scottish Labour politics remain fundamentally the same – to tackle the profound inequalities within Scottish education, the need to modernise our economy and make it work more fairly and more effectively, and the need to invest and improve our public services. Whilst the rhetoric of the SNP sounds good the reality is somewhat different.

There is a real sense amongst Scots that we cannot afford to spend the next two years talking about the constitution. We need an assertive opposition that can offer Scots a better future. There is still a need and a place for the Scottish Labour party. **F**

Margaret Curran is the former shadow secretary of state for Scotland. She is now an honorary professor at Glasgow Caledonian University and a member of the Scottish Fabians executive



SECURITY BLANKET

Labour needs a defence policy that is ready for the dangers we can't predict as well as those we can

—Peter Apps

By the time the next Labour government takes power, the United Kingdom may well be facing the most complex defence, military and security challenges at any point in recent memory.

International tensions are rising and the future of some of the most basic international structures and assumptions – the EU, NATO, a United States heavily invested in the rest of the world – is being thrown into question. Meanwhile, changing technology and growing social strains across the world are generating new, deeply unpredictable dangers.

This kind of volatility isn't new. When it was elected in 1997, few in the Blair government would have foreseen how much it would come to be defined by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Cameron government was confronted by the Arab spring and war in Libya within a year of taking office.

What is needed above all else, then, is not just flexibility but a worldview and degree of sophistication that allows the UK to deal with a wide range of possible scenarios.

In doing so, however, we should remain fundamentally true to Labour's core values: defending not just territory and peoples but liberties and principles. Military service is a risky occupation, and those who take it on accept that. Still, their welfare – as well as that of the rest of the nation – must be a driving concern, whether in taking action overseas or making spending decisions at home.

A significant portion of the party has often viewed Britain's military and its activities with a healthy degree of scepticism. Their views should not be discounted – not least because in recent history, they have more than once been proved right. Our forces and the population of the Middle East would have been better served if we had listened to those who marched against the Iraq war.

Priorities, though, are important.

Deterring a catastrophic attack has been at the heart of British defence policy since the days of the Cold War. It will continue to be so: tensions are going to keep rising with Russia and perhaps also with China. North Korea might have a missile that can reach the United Kingdom within a decade or so. We shouldn't delude ourselves that Trident – and the replacement Dreadnought class submarines that will carry it – protect us against all dangers. But they are the only line of protection we have ever found against that kind of existential threat.

Beyond that, planning becomes ever more complicated, not least because the time it takes to construct some of the more sophisticated military platforms is growing ever longer. The first plans for building Britain's Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers were announced in the strategic defence review of 1998. The ships themselves will

only enter service at the end of this decade, finding themselves in a rather different world from anything anticipated in the late 20th century.

They will also, like just about every other piece of military equipment, have proved dramatically more expensive than initially anticipated.

In recent decades, British governments have tended to try to use military procurement to shore up a relatively small defence industrial base. There's no doubt that that's helped ensure that some companies remain big employers. But where possible, defence procurement decisions should also be aimed at growing broader, peacetime industries. That is already the case, at least up to a point, in aerospace. It hasn't been in shipbuilding. Any future Labour government needs a much more comprehensive plan for this than any which has preceded it.

At its heart, however, defence is about people and it is those who serve who have ensured that Britain's armed forces remain amongst the best in the world.

If you talk to members of those services today – particularly in the ranks – they are pretty underwhelmed at how successive governments, of whichever political persuasion, have treated them. There's a feeling that they have been used – and in some cases, suffered serious casualties – without sufficient planning. But also a clear sentiment that there has been far too little attention paid to what military life is really like.

That's somewhere where the Labour party could really be upping its game. With Nia Griffith as shadow defence secretary, there are signs it is beginning to do so. Labour is beginning to make much more noise on substandard accommodation, better career structures and lifestyles.



© Defence Images

At the end of February, we relaunched Labour Friends of the Forces, which we hope will be at the heart of this campaigning.

In some respects, what the electorate wants from defence is not so different from what it expects from the welfare state and social welfare net. Individuals have a reasonably good idea of some of the situations they will be in and services they will require – education for their children, social care for their relatives as they age. But they also want protection against the unexpected – catastrophic ill health, redundancy, violent crime or natural disaster. With defence too, we need to be ready for the dangers we can't predict as well as those we can.

That means having a plan, staying within budget and valuing those who actually provide the services the country needs. Getting that right in a complex century is going to be a challenge – but it's one we have to meet. **F**

Peter Apps is a global affairs columnist for Reuters news agency. He is also a member of the British Army Reserve and the Labour party



NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Social care must be both adequately funded, and properly valued

—Lib Peck

By 2025 a fifth of the UK's population will be over-65. This is a very positive development, reflecting huge advances in health care and technology.

But while people are living longer, our services and networks have not kept pace. Age UK has found that 1.2 million over-65s currently lack the care they require, a 48 per cent increase since 2010. And although the Chancellor recently promised £2bn in extra funding, social care remains in crisis.

This crisis comes into harsh focus when we look at the local level. My borough of Lambeth is proud to be a young and very diverse borough, but the age profile is likely to change over the next ten years with our

population of over-60s expected to grow at well over twice the rate of the rest of the UK. In an area like Lambeth, with high levels of deprivation, increasing life expectancy is particularly welcome. But it brings significant challenges – especially under the government’s austerity agenda.

In Lambeth, 4,000 people are in receipt of adult social care. Unlike other boroughs, we have a higher percentage of social care clients with disabilities, who are also thankfully living longer. We also know that the vast majority of the increase in people over 60 in Lambeth over the next ten years will be from Black Caribbean and African populations which have disproportionately worse health and deprivation outcomes.

As a council we spend 60 per cent of our budget on social care for adults and children. Yet our government funding has been slashed by more than 56 per cent, while we are having to deal with rising expectations, need and numbers. The challenge is even more difficult when you consider the public perception that the bulk of the council’s money goes on services like libraries, parks and street cleaning.

The social care market is broken, with unsustainable pressures on staff and low wages. In London, high living costs put a huge strain on the sector. We’ve provided the London Living Wage to all domiciliary carers, which we are very proud of – but it is a further cost pressure on services.

And as social care is inextricably linked with the NHS, the pressures on the health service, creaking under the weight of demand and the lack of funding, are pushing them collectively to crisis point.

That is why local government has been calling on national government to recognise this with a proper strategy and proper funding for these services.

The response to date has been utterly inadequate. Thankfully, the government remembered to mention social care in last month’s budget, after leaving it out of the autumn statement. All extra funding is welcome, but pledging £2bn over three years for a service that the LGA estimates needs at least an extra £2bn per year does little to meet the challenge.

The government’s other solution is to allow councils to raise money through a 3 per cent council tax precept, supposedly under the banner of devolution. But while Labour in local government is always keen to fly the flag of devolution, the adult social care precept is a poor example: underfunded and without a genuine power shift. Even after almost all councils in London took the precept, only £80m of the estimated £900m

needed for social care in London will be raised. It is both insufficient and a cynical attempt to muddy the waters of responsibility.

So what can we do when government fails to act?

First, we need to reset the relationship between the NHS and adult social care. We need to recognise that partnership and integration between services can result in better care, reduced costs and can also provide parity of esteem for an adult social care sector that is too often regarded as a poor relation.

Second, this is a structural budget question. We need a genuine cross-party commitment to tackle this problem, drawing on solutions from other countries and not ducking tough options or playing politics, as the Tories have sadly done several times already.

Underpinning that commitment has to be a proper taxation system – predicated on an increased, ring-fenced income, whether it be from income tax or national insurance or using people’s assets and wealth to contribute to the funding gap for their later life care. Specific levies, such as the soft drink levy, could raise revenue and contribute to better health outcomes.

Fundamentally, we need to start a new national conversation about how we look after and care for each other. We must be honest about how we prioritise the most excluded and vulnerable in our country and how we can send a strong message about the type of society we need. **F**

Lib Peck is the leader of Lambeth Council



AMBITION TO BUILD

Labour needs a comprehensive housing policy which can meet the scale of our housing crisis

—Steve Hilditch

To mark the recent 40th anniversary of the death of Anthony Crosland, I re-read his influential 1971 Fabian pamphlet *Towards a*

Labour Housing Policy, which led to a serious rethink within the Labour party.

It led me to conclude that, although Labour has developed a substantial set of housing policies which attract wide support, skilfully marshalled by shadow secretary of state John Healey MP, I have growing doubts that they will meet the *scale* of the task, which is so much bigger than any of us could have imagined possible a decade ago. We must find more ambitious, radical and transformative solutions. Of the many areas to explore, there are five I would like to highlight here.

First – where will the money for investment come from? After 2010 the coalition massively cut traditional housing investment – by 60 per cent in the 2010 budget alone. We are now building virtually no new social rented homes. Despite austerity, the Tories have propped up the failing housing market, throwing money at it in the form of subsidies, loans and guarantees. Yet most economists agree that their action on the demand side will increase prices in the longer term, intensifying unaffordability with little impact on supply. The main rented programme – so-called ‘affordable rent’ – was an abuse of language with very high rents.

Based on Treasury figures, a new government reverting to Labour’s balanced 2010 priorities would have a bonanza of £32bn available as subsidy for genuinely affordable housing including a major new programme of social rent. That is a transformative amount.

Second, and linked to this question of funding, we must finally end the Treasury conventions that discriminate against public investment. No other country in Europe accounts for public investment as we do. That’s why foreign state-owned companies can invest in our utilities when we can not. Council borrowing for housing, which pays for itself by generating an income stream (rents), should be taken out of the main measure of public borrowing – as happens across Europe. Councils, controlled by effective prudential rules, could become major contributors to housing supply once more.

Third, a century ago Winston Churchill called land ownership ‘the mother of all monopolies’, describing owners as benefiting from ‘enrichment without service’. Land values are not created by owners but by all of us. The public should share in land value appreciation, especially when planning permission – the process by which the community takes on the costs and externalities of development – is provided. Instead of selling land, public sector land purchase and

effective value capture would give greater control over outcomes and moderate the high cost of land that underpins the housing crisis.

Fourth, private renting is the last great unmodernised industry, with outdated standards and management. Labour should now go well beyond the 2015 ‘Miliband’ reforms. There is better understanding now of how other countries successfully regulate rents without undermining the market. Tenancies should be longer, grounds for eviction clearer and rules concerning harassment and illegal eviction tougher. Crucially, there should be a revolution in standards. Landlords should be licensed, with a crack-down on letting hazardous or non-decent homes. We don’t accept hazardous food or cars, why allow hazardous homes?

Fifth, there is the whole question of rents and benefits. Out of control house values and dysfunctionality mean that intervention in ‘market’ rents is justified. The Tory policy of linking public rents to market rents is not rational. Instead, council and housing association charges should be linked to the collective cost of provision plus a return to encourage further investment. Subsidy is needed to get the homes built but then they will ‘wash their own face’ for decades to come. Rent setting should be open and predictable with tenants in comparable properties paying comparable rents. Vicious benefit caps, which penalise people with little or no choice in the housing market, should be ended. Over time the subsidy system should move ‘from benefits to bricks’ – supporting greater supply at lower rents, reducing the need for benefits.

That’s five for starters. So many other areas could be mentioned – including rights for homeless people, the crisis in estate regeneration, construction standards, the use of energy, and how to promote ‘yimbism’ (yes in my backyard). It’s a debate to which we can all contribute.

Tory policies have been piecemeal, forged around soundbites. The more they mention strategy the less there is of it. Labour should develop a comprehensive housing strategy, with a strong emphasis on important regional variations, which takes a clear view of future investment needs and how they will be met, adopts a balanced view of tenure with fair treatment for renters and owners, and has as a core principle that there must be a decent housing solution for everyone, irrespective of their income.

Housing is central to the pursuit of equality, social justice, economic progress, health and well-being. We do not have

to go on as we are. As Anthony Crosland showed all those years ago, other choices are available. ■

Steve Hilditch has worked in housing for 45 years including for Shelter and London boroughs and is a former chair of Labour Housing Group. He edits the Red Brick housing blog www.redbrickblog.wordpress.com



FIXING THE WINDOWS

The state of our prisons reflects badly on our society

—Sheila Chapman

“If you don’t fix the first broken windows, soon all the windows will be broken.”

Those are the words of American political scientist, James Q. Wilson, one of those behind the ‘broken windows theory’ on the impact of the environment on crime. According to Wilson, if a few broken windows on a street were left unrepaired, more serious vandalism tended to follow. That in turn made violent crime more likely to occur: disorder escalating until full-scale social blight took hold.

In a prison, a broken window signifies to a prisoner that the society that removed his liberty no longer cares about him – his material comfort, his wellbeing and, by implication, his rehabilitation. It signals, too, to the prison officer that society does not value the job she does enough to maintain a decent and safe working environment.

There are other less abstract consequences. Broken windows serve as portals through which the criminal community outside prison and within it can transact. In Pentonville, a category B local prison in Islington – London’s poster-borough for inequality of opportunity – drones fly over the wall and deposit their cargo of phones, drugs and weapons into cells. The availability of phones facilitates an illicit trade in drugs, resulting in a culture of fear and intimidation where self-harm

and assault are commonplace. The drugs being droned in are often new psychoactive substances. Practically impossible to detect, these substances cause inmates to behave unpredictably and often violently.

In its last annual report to the Ministry of Justice in July last year, Pentonville’s independent monitoring board said:

“Pentonville has had the ambition to replace windows for 2 years. In October 2015 the Minister for Prisons wrote to the IMB saying that MoJ Estates had developed a proposal and would submit a business case for funding. By December a business case had been agreed. At the time of finalising this report – June 2016 – only 10 windows have been replaced. And not 10 of the worst because the glazing units were the wrong size. 100 more are supposed to follow. Everyone is waiting.”

By now, a few more windows have been replaced – but Carillion, the private firm which has the building’s maintenance contract, has quite a way to go to finish the job.

In the past six months, Pentonville has seen the murder of one inmate and the escape of two others. There have been riots at Lewes, Bedford and Birmingham prisons and disturbances at others. Beleaguered prison officers have taken industrial action and across the prison estate violence and self-harm is rising. Every third day an inmate commits suicide. The media proclaim a ‘crisis in our prisons’ as if it were a sudden or unexpected phenomenon. Actually the drug-fuelled violence in Pentonville and the rest of the prison estate has been well documented by monitoring boards throughout the country for several years. It has been highlighted by the prisons inspectorate, which said last year: “We continued to find evidence that self-harm was linked to bullying, violence, debt and the prevalence of new psychoactive substances and yet too little was done to address the underlying issues.”

Finally it seems that the government has taken notice. Its white paper, Prison Safety and Reform, published in November, contains proposals to tighten prison security, including no-fly zones over prisons, investment in anti-drone technology, teams of search dogs and the installation of scanning wear and X-ray machines in jails. Ambitious plans indeed for an administration that in three years hasn’t managed to fix some broken windows in Pentonville. And these costly, long-term solutions might never come to pass, dependent as they are on the government managing, in this environment of austerity, to drum up public

support for spending on prisons – notoriously difficult at the best of times.

Meanwhile in Pentonville, staff shortages mean there is little opportunity for meaningful interaction between officers and inmates. The cells built in 1842 to house one man, now typically house two. Inmates with mental health conditions and/or addictions are, despite the best efforts of healthcare and prison staff, not always getting access to the therapeutic interventions that might break the cycle of crime. Prisons have a budget of just £2 a day to feed men, including growing teenagers, and they are often left hungry. Centralised procurement results in men not having sufficient clothes or clothes of the right size or necessary sanitary items like incontinence pads.

To conclude with another quote from Wilson: “The most remarkable change in the moral history of mankind has been the rise – and occasionally the application – of the view that all people, and not just one’s own kind, are entitled to fair treatment.” Those in prisons, whether they be officers, healthcare professionals or inmates, are entitled to fair treatment. We must fix the windows. **F**

Sheila Chapman is a lawyer, winner of the Bridport Prize for first novel and a participant in both the Fabian Women’s Network’s mentoring programme and the Jo Cox Women in Leadership programme. She sits on the independent monitoring board of HMP Pentonville. This article is written in a personal capacity and does not reflect the views of any other parties, in particular, the IMB of Pentonville



PRESERVE AND PROGRESS

For the left, responding to today’s challenges should not mean attempting to relive the past

—*Olivia Bailey*

Modernity defined the New Labour project. As Tony Blair exclaimed a few weeks after taking office: “New, new, new, everything is new”. Britain would only fulfil its promise



© Alexandre Dulaunoy

if it moved relentlessly towards the future, making a virtue of change.

As we mark the 20th anniversary of the 1997 election, it is worth reflecting that this determined pursuit of the future left our country in an immeasurably better state. We are more open and tolerant as a nation, thanks in part to Labour’s bold equalities agenda. Investment in schools and early years transformed the chances of the poorest children, and reared a generation for our changing economy. Prior to the global financial crash, the economy grew every quarter for 11 years in a row.

But it is now clear that for some people the pace of change in British society over the last 20 years has also brought a sense of loss. Globalisation has left too many in our country in part-time, low wage, and insecure work, without the opportunity to move up and on. Increased labour mobility has meant rapid change in communities. And too many people feel powerless to make change in their lives, echoed in the leave campaign’s potent call to “take back control”.

Growing numbers on the left, influenced by groups such as Blue Labour, have responded to this insight by concluding that Labour should talk more about what once was; to hark back to a time when people supposedly felt more culturally secure. There has been a renewed focus on institutions that have traditionally been at the centre of communities, such as marriage and the family. Left-wing commentators have worried about the loss of what is described

as ‘patriarchal authority’, and some have suggested that many women don’t want to work and that the state should stop focusing on those that do. On the question of identity, a number have argued that white working class people are moving away from Labour because it has spent too much time talking about marginalised groups.

It is correct to say that there is a cultural disconnect between the Labour party and many of its voters. It is correct to identify cultural concepts like community, power and identity as crucial to the left’s revival. But we must never assume knowledge of working class instincts based on a romantic view of the past.

Instead, Labour must mesh the restless modernity of Blair with a deeper understanding and respect for peoples’ lived experience. People value marriage because it provides love, support and mutual respect. People don’t value marriage because historically it had use as a tool of control and oppression. White working class voters aren’t turning away from Labour because it occasionally highlights inequalities that don’t affect them. They are turning away from Labour because it has had nothing to say to them. Most people don’t worry about immigration because they yearn nostalgically for a community they perceive they’ve lost, but because they want to feel connected and together in the community they have.

The left must never race to the base instinct. Instead we must seek to preserve and progress at the same time. A Labour story must value the things that bind our communities and our families together. It must embody a confident and progressive national identity that cherishes difference but isn’t afraid of talking about commonality. And it must be unafraid to challenge the powerful forces that are leaving people impotent in their own lives, because Labour should be the party that truly enables citizens to take back control.

But we must always remember that the Labour party loses when it faces the past; in pursuit of its lost ideological purity, or railing against the change we’ve seen. Labour wins when it has a bright and optimistic vision for the future that is rooted in the reality of day to day lives; pledging that every citizen will share in the promise of the world to come. In the words of Tony Blair, we must not say: “This was a great country”, but instead: “Britain can and will be a great country again”. **F**

Olivia Bailey is research director at the Fabian Society

The radical reformer

With his poll ratings falling, Benoît Hamon is unlikely to make it into the final round of the French presidential election next month. But his candidacy has been a breath of fresh air for French socialists after François Hollande's unimpressive term, argues *Philippe Marlière*



Philippe Marlière is professor of French and European politics at University College London

WHEN BENOÎT HAMON emphatically defeated Manuel Valls, the former prime minister, in the French socialist primary elections earlier this year, the British media were quick to label the victor a representative of the 'hard left' or even a 'French-style Corbynista'. Those tags could not be wider of the mark. Hamon is certainly on the left-wing of the party, however his progressive politics bear little resemblance, in style and in content, with those traditionally associated with the radical left.

Until his primary election victory, the 49-year-old presidential candidate was no household name in France. Yet, unlike Emmanuel Macron, his centrist opponent, Hamon is not a political neophyte. He joined the Parti Socialiste (PS) in 1988 and since then has had a party career spanning a 25-year period, starting off as leader of the Socialist Youth from 1993 to 1995.

His involvement in internal party politics make him, according to his critics, an 'apparatchik'. There, he is similar to Valls and to Corbyn who both have also had significant stints as party officials. But unlike Corbyn, Hamon has managed to reach out to constituencies beyond the traditional territory of the party left. He was the protégé of the party centrist Martine Aubry who has always had a soft spot for the man she motheringly calls 'Benoît'. Hamon served as party spokesman during Aubry's spell as party leader between 2008 and 2012.

But Hamon's political experience stretches beyond the realm of party politics: he was an MEP from 2004 to 2009, and is currently an MP for the Yvelines department to the west of Paris. He was appointed junior minister for social economy in 2012, and then two years later to the senior role of minister of national education. Hamon resigned from

the Valls government in the summer of 2014 – together with Arnaud Montebourg, another left-wing critic – in protest at François Hollande's supply-side economics, his austerity policies and what they saw as his quasi-complete alignment with the big business agenda.

The PS' radical shift to the right under the Hollande presidency explains the current débâcle of the party right-wing. Hamon won the primary election because rank and file Socialist party activists and sympathisers felt that their party's five-year period office had been dominated by a neoliberal agenda with little on offer for ordinary salaried workers and feared their party was running the risk of extinction as a progressive and pro-social justice force. Hence their choice of a leader who would not be afraid of promoting and defending true social democratic values against Manuel Valls, positioned on the PS' very right wing.

Valls was proposing more of the same as Hollande: policies which have made the incumbent president so unpopular that he was unable to run again this year. To top it all, the former prime minister made the left increasingly uncomfortable with his die-hard brand of authoritarian republicanism and with what some of his critics saw as his inflammatory comments on Islam. In other words, Hamon's victory was an act of self-defence and survival for the left. Voters did not want the PS to shift to the centre and align itself with François Bayrou and his centre-right Mouvement Démocrate.

The former education minister indeed proposed a clean break with the Hollande-Valls neoliberal years. He unshamedly put forward a left-wing social democratic policy platform which combines bold and radical proposals on the economy and civic liberties, as well as more traditional left-wing measures on jobs, salaries and public services.

Unlike Corbyn, Hamon has managed to reach out to constituencies beyond the traditional territory of the party left



© Parti Socialiste

Hamon's core proposals are original – at least in the context of the French left: a universal basic income (although now restricted to people earning less than 1.9 times of the set minimum wage) and a further reduction of working time. Hamon stands alone in his defence of a basic income, a proposal which is popular amongst the young and unemployed.

Hamon is liberal-minded, as well as a pragmatist when it comes to individual freedoms and cultural diversity. It is on the question of *laïcité* – the secularism that is so central to the French republic – that he is truly showing his progressive instincts. Here, Hamon departs from the large left/right consensus by defending a resolutely pluralist and multiculturalist model of citizenship.

Unlike his left-wing rival Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Hamon does not argue that the hijab is a sign of 'female subordination', but instead considers that it is up to women to freely decide what they should wear. His appeasing message on race and intercultural relations – in a national context of open hostility to Islam – have led some of his hateful critics to nickname him 'Bilal Hamon'. The socialist said that he would be wearing the tag as a badge of honour. As president, he would recognise the Palestinian state, a departure from the traditional pro-Israeli stance of the PS.

Benoît Hamon wants to end the 5th republic – Charles de Gaulle's institutions – which have supplied the institutional framework of a de facto 'republican monarchy', with its absurd pomp and its dangerous over-concentration of power in the hands of the president. If elected, he would launch a 6th republic which would shift the balance of power to the prime minister and parliament. Pro-European, he advocates fiscal harmonisation in the European Union, and would oppose the CETA and TAFTA free trade deals with Canada and the US.

Hamon has the most eco-friendly policy platform ever of any socialist presidential candidate. He proposes huge investments in renewable energy (by 2025, renewable

sources would provide 50 per cent of French energy) and wants to protect the "common goods" (air, water, biodiversity) by formally guaranteeing them in the constitution.

In short, Benoît Hamon blends the two main traditions of the French left. Namely, the 'first left' that is statist and is essentially interested in socio-economic issues and the 'second left' that favours the devolution of powers at all echelons, is anti-authoritarian and thinks that post-materialist issues are as important as socio-economic ones.

In the run-up to the first round of the presidential election, the socialist candidate has a mountain to climb: to his left, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a former socialist member of the PS will probably secure between 10 and 15 per cent of the share of the votes. Mélenchon is appealing to traditional left-wing voters who have radicalised and think that the Hollande presidency has been an unmitigated disaster. Most of these people are committed to never voting for any socialist candidate again. To his right, Emmanuel Macron appears to be, as things currently stand, the likely beneficiary of tactical voting. A significant fraction of the centre-left electorate might not vote PS this time round because they want to support the candidate best placed to avoid a Le Pen-Fillon run-off, an absolute non-choice between a neo-Thatcherite under investigation in a corruption scandal and the figurehead of the far right. This is the main reason why the untested Macron is running so high in the polls at present.

Benoît Hamon, a modern left-wing social democrat, has just a couple of weeks left to prove to his doubters and opponents that his brand of radical reformism represents the future of the French left. In the current crazy circumstances, and with the left-wing vote evenly split between Mélenchon and himself, it seems unlikely that he will manage to do so. The left is largely expected not to make it through to the second round. But some of Hamon's ideas and his more relaxed and informal style will surely endure as great contributions to reconstruct an out of touch French left. ■

Changing the scene

The rise of populism across Europe has its roots in the approach taken by parties of the centre-left for years. European social democracy must rediscover the will to renew itself, writes *Eunice Goes*



Eunice Goes is associate professor of politics at Richmond University and author of The Labour Party Under Ed Miliband: Trying But Failing To Renew Social Democracy

IF THERE WERE still any doubts, the results of the Copeland by-election dispelled them. The Labour party is going through an existential crisis. Its causes are varied, but the woes of European social democracy have been invoked as a key factor in the crisis. Guardian commentator John Harris, for example, has claimed that Labour's crisis is 'structural' – that is, it is not merely caused by the ineffective leadership of Jeremy Corbyn but it is part of a wider phenomenon that is affecting the electoral fortunes of social democratic parties across Europe.

Harris is correct in his suggestion that Labour's troubles are partly structural, however the party's own decisions and actions play a role too. The political scientist Sheri Berman argued in *The Primacy of Politics*, the most significant obstacles to a social democratic revival 'turn out to come not from structural or environmental factors, nor from the vibrancy of alternative ideological approaches but from the ideological fallacies and a loss of will on the part of the left itself'. If Berman is correct, the renewal of social democracy largely depends on the will of the social democratic players themselves.

Crisis and revisionism

To understand the current crisis, it is important to bear in mind that the history of social democracy is defined by crisis, renewal and a fair amount of ideological revisionism. The fact is, since their emergence in the late 19th century,

European socialist parties had to change in order to have the chance to transform politics.

This realisation led to a big schism in the socialist movement dominated in its early days by its Marxist faction. At the turn of the 20th century, democratic socialists like Jean Jaurès rejected the idea of class struggle and argued instead that "great social changes that are called revolutions" could only happen if socialists were able to mobilise the support of a wide coalition of voters. Likewise, German political theorist Eduard Bernstein argued that democracy provided socialists with "the most effective tool for implementing profound, step-by-step reforms without bloodshed". This understanding soon became orthodoxy amongst socialist parties.

Then it took the rise of fascism, the great depression of 1929 and the second world war for the second revisionist moment to arise. Social democrats like Bernstein questioned the Marxist prediction that capitalism would collapse. Bernstein believed that capitalism could be tamed by the state to serve socialist ends. It took some time for this social democratic argument to become mainstream, but eventually most socialist parties came to accept it.

The last third of the 20th century opened another period of crisis and revisionism. Demographic changes and the intellectual and political triumph of the neoliberal right began to throw the electoral viability of social democratic parties into question. But the neo-revisionism of the 1990s,

as historian Donald Sassoon called it, did not simply revise the means of social democracy. It also revised its ends. And this is when the current crisis started.

The fact that the European project entered a neoliberal/ordoliberal phase added impetus to neo-revisionism. The European Union's single market was predicated on economic liberalisation and deregulation as well as on the erosion of social rights. Roughly a decade later, the launch of the single currency intensified this process further. The euro's convergence criteria and the Stability and Growth Pact put into practice the ideology of the small state. From then on social democratic parties no longer had the option of pursuing truly social democratic politics. At best, they could redistribute a little bit here and there but using the state to pursue egalitarian policies or to correct the excesses of the market was no longer possible.

It is worth stressing that social democrats were not passive observers of these developments. They were active contributors to the construction of this neoliberal – or, in its German social liberal incarnation, ordoliberal – Europe. With few exceptions, most European social democrats enthusiastically embraced the neo-revisionism so emblematically encapsulated in the 'third way' – and in particular the idea that globalisation was an uncontrollable force of nature which demanded unregulated markets and the erosion of the welfare state. The problem was that by abandoning a critical attitude towards capitalism – one of the distinctive features of social democracy – they renounced as well social democracy's egalitarian ends and accepted the hollowing out of democracy that such a shift would bring.

The socio-economic and political outcomes of the neoliberalisation of social democracy are well-documented, but its most dramatic consequence was the global financial crisis of 2008. It turns out that agreeing to deregulate financial markets, promoting the expansion of consumer credit as a way to address wage stagnation and going along with the small state agenda posed considerable risks to the global economy. But instead of taking advantage of this big crisis of capitalism to champion a social democratic agenda, the centre-left in Europe, utterly baffled by the intellectual collapse of its most recent belief system, ended up promoting a higher dose of neoliberalism in the shape of public spending cuts and welfare state retrenchment.

It did not take long to realise that this approach had disastrous electoral consequences. The traditionally varied coalition of voters that social democratic parties had relied upon to win elections started to look elsewhere. They either stopped voting altogether or started to support parties from the radical left (which incidentally had abandoned much of their radicalism to become the new vehicle of social democratic politics) and the populist right.

Timid signs of a social democratic revival

In the meantime, it has become clear that austerity is not a panacea to Europe's debt crisis. After seven years of

relentless public spending cuts, 'austerity-fatigue' has set in. This change of heart is understandable. As political economist Mark Blyth has pointed out, there is no evidence that austerity delivers what it says on the tin. Even the institutions associated with neoliberalism have started to admit that the euphemistically called 'fiscal consolidation strategies' had caused more harm than good.

Across Europe, some social democratic parties have started to wake up to this reality. In Germany, the new leader of the SPD Martin Schulz argues for an alternative to Angela Merkel's ordoliberalism. Opinion polls suggest that his promises to reform the labour market and invest in public services are galvanising voters. Further south, the Portuguese socialist prime minister António Costa has become the poster boy for progressive politics. His minority government, which is supported by the Communist party and by the radical Left Bloc, has managed to reverse austerity, albeit modestly, and to bring down the public deficit to EU-accepted levels.

But Costa's eventual success – and that of others like him – will depend on concerted action by all European social democratic parties. They need to challenge the ordoliberal principles governing the EU in order to develop a vision of Europe that asserts the primacy of politics over markets. In short, they need to rediscover their social democratic roots.

Labour faces similar intellectual and political challenges to its European sister parties but these are exacerbated by a very real leadership crisis and also by Brexit. The loss of the Copeland by-election – and the fall in the vote share in Stoke-on-Trent – may well support the view that the current leadership is a liability to the party. But a leadership change will not automatically transform Labour's electoral prospects, no matter how charismatic that hypothetical new leader may be. At best a more competent and credible leader will enthuse and unify the Labour benches in parliament, but these attributes will not be sufficient to

make Labour a party of power again.

Labour should stop reliving the arguments of 1983 and 1997 and break out of the nostalgia bubble where it has lived for the past few years. It needs to accept that it will take time to find social democratic answers for a crisis that has taken several decades to unfold. Former leader Ed Miliband did quite a lot of groundwork that should guide Labour in that mission. He put equality back at the centre of the party's agenda, he sought to rebalance the relationship between the state, market and society in a way that offers some answers to Brexit and to the hollowing out of democracy, and he started to develop a more robust concept of citizenship that can reassure and galvanise left-behind voters. Whilst leader, Miliband never had the necessary support either to develop his ideas fully or to find a compelling language to present them in. But a Labour party united in the will to renew social democratic politics should have no trouble in picking up from where he left off. ■

Instead of taking advantage of the crisis of capitalism, the centre-left in Europe ended up promoting a higher dose of neoliberalism

The dismembered state

It has been undermined by ideology and eroded by cuts. Yet, *Polly Toynbee* and *David Walker* argue, only the state can protect and provide for the common good



Polly Toynbee is a Guardian columnist and David Walker is contributing editor, Guardian Public

MORE THAN EVER, Labour needs to reclaim the state. For too long we have shied away from the very word. Now, with a cabinet set on its dismemberment, Labour should celebrate the state as protector, provider, regulator, encourager of wellbeing, distributor of fairness, taxing and spending for the collective good. Blindingly obvious, positively banal to say so – yet something has uncoupled Labour from its historical advocacy of public power mobilised through government. The disconnect is as apparent on the party's left as on the right; both mumble the 'S-word' as if it were an embarrassing old relative, somehow not quite 21st century enough. It's time to proclaim renewed pride in the state as the great symbol of our collective and patriotic identity.

Discussions about power and government have lately rung a despairing note. Social democracy, they say, ran into the sands in the 1970s, a victim of its own postwar success. Thatcherism pushed the doctrine of the individual and the small state, which only resulted in social turmoil but no upwards shift in UK economic capacity. New Labour promoted a hybrid version, but the 'third way' worked only until the crash – when the state had to intervene monumentally to rescue the very interests that had most kicked against state regulation. Reframed Thatcherism as delivered by Cameron and May serves only to emphasise disjunctions and dysfunctions in the UK economy and society, as they set their course towards downsizing the state to 36 per cent of GDP, far smaller than Thatcher herself dared contemplate.

For our new book, we travelled the country reporting on a threadbare public realm: disappearing rural buses, rationed

podiatry services, bursting A&E departments, sidelined and demoralised planners and understaffed and demoralised HMRC offices. The spring budget spelled out worse to come. Yet the battering goes back three decades; the state was undermined as much by New Labour's loss of intellectual confidence in it as by recent cuts and contracting. The centre-left equivocated. New Labour's state did great good, but hid beneath sheaves of 'reforms', creating competing marketised hospitals, academised schools and individualised budgets, as if collective and necessarily rationed services could pretend to be consumerised into shopping — a category error.

Cameron's "there is such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state", was a clever ruse, his Big Society a sham. The voluntary sector is a necessary partner for the activist state, never a substitute.

Go local, say some on left and right. Yes, local government is the state's most visible arm. It sweeps the streets, empties the bins, inspects kebab shops, looks after children and erects speed bumps. But localists have sometimes indulged themselves by allying with the political right in suggesting that locality can supplant strong central government. In a recent think piece in the *New Statesman*, Chuka Umunna caught the vital symbiosis between the state's two halves: only the authority of central government can reform the taxation and ownership of land, on which the capacity of local authorities to become active housebuilders depends. But looking at its own increasingly well-led city powerbases, Labour may forget that in England the local is majority Tory, tax-averse, mean and parochial. Devolving resource-gathering weakens the mechanism for evening

out regional inequalities. Taking power in 2010, the Tories, naively backed by localist Liberal Democrats, devolved the axe; by shifting blame for cuts, they weakened trust in councils too.

Our case for the state is both practical and political: there is no alternative engine for social and economic repair. There are always difficult trade-offs – between security and freedom, consumption and the social wage or choice and standardisation. But shake off fear of the right’s ‘Soviet’ jibes and you would see public opinion meet us half way, as they experience crumbling services and lose whatever faith they had in the benignity of markets.

Look around. The UK economic model – based on low productivity, low wages and excessive reliance on finance – leaves too many staff and firms struggling amid general underperformance. Markets are not interested in training or infrastructure investment, as they rarely enhance company balance sheets. Nor are they investing their considerable assets, preferring to buy back their own shares. Certain technologies – nuclear power generation, AI or gentech – have grown too big and complex to be left to private equity.

Since the Thatcher privatisations, the country has been subject to a giant experiment in the ability of firms and markets to sustain the common interest. They failed and her light-touch regulatory regime has been found wanting. Markets dashed for gas, paying no heed to security of supply; they ditched nuclear and only turned to wind and solar with hefty state incentives. However faltering, only the state can confront climate change – which is precisely why the right denies it.

Britain is ageing. Like the nurture of children, it is a shared experience in which only government can spread risk and cost across the life cycle, between those who can afford care and those who never earned enough to be able to provide for it. The state alone stands custodian of inter-generational justice. With vocational skills, obesity, lifestyle diseases, transport, housing or broadband, no invisible hand aligning private and public interest steps in to ensure provision – only government.

Yet many on the left resist this truth about our well-being: they say it’s old hat, Clement Attlee in his homburg. But forgetting the past is to guarantee screwing up the future. The Labour party was created by trade unions and working class societies to secure parliamentary power and use the state to rectify injustice, at work, in taxation and social policy, with the Fabian Society providing intellectual muscle. The 1945 government realised the founders’ ambition: the state mobilised for the common good, notably in the shape of the NHS but also in town and country planning, housing, education and the nationalised industries.

Its contours have since shifted and the balance between transfers and services, authority and accountability adjusted. Faults have been found. For example, Alison McGovern, in her Fabian pamphlet *The Real Life State*, rightly worries about its unfriendly face in benefits offices, police stations

or GP surgeries, where some jobsworth shrugs with take-it-or-leave-it indifference. Our argument for the state is undermined, she says, if the public don’t like the attitude of the official who greets them. She’s right: improvement must be Labour’s perpetual mission. But she might have pondered why Labour in the noughties was so unsuccessful in impressing and embedding the success of its spending increases in the public consciousness.

Doing good by stealth left worryingly large numbers open after 2010 to Osborne’s mendacious argument that the money had been wasted and austerity was justified.

Our new book is called *Dismembered* because the public sector has fragmented and much of what government does has become unintelligible – a mystery that’s taken for granted until it is not there. People think councils run the ambulance service; they’ve no idea (who does?) why civil servants are labelled differently from other public servants or, to take one example from many, why the Government Digital Service is separate from NHS Digital. No overarching brand makes sense of the plethora of agencies; ‘HM Government’ is an abstraction; spending the money is divorced from how it is raised in taxation. It hasn’t helped that in recent times some public servants

became true believers in the New Public Management doctrine that services should be split, competing and contracted out.

That’s not to say Veolia shouldn’t collect our household waste – the French company enjoys a good reputation – but public bodies need to work hard at emphasising their inalienable responsibility. The good society means both sides understanding

the symbiosis between state and markets, regulator and enterprise. A smart state can use the information from contracting and may choose to retain public provision in railways or energy. Smart is a word Tony Blair and Gordon Brown often used yet they never seemed as comfortable exercising state power as Nicola Sturgeon and Carwyn Jones do – or, remarkably, the now sacked Michael Heseltine did, intervening ‘at breakfast, lunch and tea’. How hard Brown tried to disguise his reluctant renationalisation of Network Rail.

Everyone – inside Labour included – will perennially argue about tax and spend ratios. There will never be a perfect answer but it’s increasingly obvious to most that the Osborne/Hammond plan falls alarmingly short. That should give Labour new confidence in reasserting the plain truth with renewed vigour: only the state can tax, plan, redistribute and remedy social weaknesses. Post Brexit, whichever path the UK and its constituent parts take, we are going to need more not less public intervention and provision.

Labour, said Harold Wilson, had become the natural party of government. It needs once again to be the natural party of the state. ■

Dismembered: How the attack on the state harms us all, will be published by Faber in May

The public sector has fragmented and much of what government does has become unintelligible – a mystery that’s taken for granted until it is not there



The *personal* touch

Angela Rayner has already made it from teenage mum to the shadow cabinet – and some are saying the leadership could be next. She talks to *Kate Murray* about values, factions and why she will always stand her ground

WHEN ANGELA RAYNER'S grandmother was dying and struggling to get the home care she needed, she used to say if she were a dog, she'd be put down. "If that's the sort of society we have, which makes older people feel like they're a burden, that's not a society I want to live in," Rayner says now.

This vignette is just one of many that pepper a conversation with Rayner and that, she says, shape her career in politics. Her struggle as a young single mum to afford nappies for her baby. The English teacher whose support influences her to this day. The people – 'from professors to people living in poverty' – she looked after at the end of their lives when she worked as a home carer. "They taught me the value of standing up for people and knowing what's really important in life – all those values that are in the labour movement," she says.

It is this brand of personal politics, rooted in a working class background now rare in parliament, which has seen Rayner tipped as a future Labour leader. Her performance in the eight months since she was appointed shadow education secretary has impressed many in Westminster and beyond, with her speech to last autumn's party conference seen as one of the few highlights in a downbeat week. Even those who have had her down as a fully paid-up 'Corbynista' since she joined the shadow cabinet – she supported Andy Burnham in the 2015 leadership race – have praised her for how she's taken the government to task over grammar schools.

Yet the self-proclaimed 'ginger kid from a council estate' still feels she has much to prove. "It feels strange when people look at me as the shadow secretary of state for education. I've always had to earn the respect to be around the table," she says. "One of the things that I think is a trait of the working class is we feel we're not quite good enough so we over-compensate for that. We work our tiny minds off trying to make sure we know everything."

It is a contrast with others she sees in her working life. "Some of the Conservatives, the really posh ones, think they own that chamber. It's like 'I have a right to be here, I was born to rule.' But when you scratch the surface, they

don't know what they're talking about and once you call them out they run scared. The secret is having the confidence to know you are just as good as they are."

Rayner got her chance to show what she could do after her two predecessors with the education brief walked away from Corbyn's shadow cabinet – the last, Pat Glass, after just two days in the job. But Rayner claims taking on the role, and sticking with it, is about doing her bit for the party rather than allegiance to any grouping. "I don't class myself as a Corbynista, a Blairite, a Bennite or anything else. I class myself as Labour through and through," she says.

"It frustrates me if we go into our little niches. Labour and the labour movement sort of cannibalise each other at times and it frustrates me."

Labour members, in parliament and outside, need to work together, she insists. "If there's one thing I admire about the Conservatives, it's that they are ruthless when it comes to discipline and power. Whereas I think we spend too much time fighting each other instead of actually looking at what unites us, our principles and what makes a Labour alternative to what we currently have. We need to be working for what makes a fairer society, which is what the Labour party is about, and that certainly isn't going to be found in a Momentum fringe or a Progress fringe – it's going to be found by us all working together."

Education, Rayner feels, is one of the areas where Labour can most successfully unite to take on the Conservatives. "It has been really heartening to see all wings of the labour movement working with me to highlight the damaging effect of the grammar school programme and working with me on what Labour's alternative will be and what will be in our manifesto," she says. "Our strength is in our numbers and in our broad church."

There's plenty for the party to go at, Rayner insists, not just on academic selection but on the funding pressures which have prompted headteachers to take the 'unprecedented' step of writing to parents telling them how much money is being lost.

"The sector is in chaos," she says. "The government is wasting money on vanity projects like the free schools

programme. The Department of Education have become land barons – they even bought a cemetery and then realised afterwards they can't build a school on a cemetery. It's a grotesque waste of finances at a time when schools are facing their first real-term cuts in over two decades. Most schools are really worried about the fact they are going to have to lay off teaching staff or support staff or narrow the curriculum. Some are even talking about shortening the working day."

Then there's the 'unravelling' of the government's free childcare pledges, the increasing burden of tuition fees and the failure to fund the technical and adult skills the country needs. But with all this to aim at, isn't it frustrating that not enough is cutting through to the country? Rayner admits it is, and although she partly blames Brexit for crowding out debate on everything else – "it's like cholesterol clogging up parliament" – she concedes that Labour's problems are not helping.

"We are not in a good place as a party, that's quite clear, and I think the general public are still not sure we're coherent about being united around a common aim."

So what is Rayner's vision of a Labour alternative? On education, she says, it's a "universal offer that's inclusive and talks about standards rather than structures". She's a fan of the 'national education service' Corbyn has talked about and wants it to be built on a 'cradle to grave' approach to lifelong learning. "The economy of the future will need people to be resilient and adapt and therefore you can't just learn in one place in one time in your life, learn for one job and that's it. We need to have an agile and resilient population that love learning and see value in all the different ways you can gain qualifications," she says.

More widely, if Labour is to provide a credible platform for government, it will need to build on its values – and its achievements. Rayner is unapologetic about highlighting the difference New Labour governments made to her life and those of others like her. "When I was a single mum at 16, living on a council estate I was feeling ashamed of myself, like there was no path out of my poverty," she says. "Just to know there was someone fighting for me and know somebody cared enough about me to put that effort in meant I was able to go back to adult education. That second chance was there for me and I was able to contribute to society, look after my son and change his life chances by being in work. I make no bones about it – it was a Labour government that did that. The tax credits were a revolution."

But while all this is evidence that Rayner is on the pragmatic side of the 'power vs principles' debate that so preoccupies the Labour party, she clearly feels the party could have done more for many parts of the country when it was in power. Indeed, she believes the anger many communities now feel at being left behind has its roots in the 'magnolia politics' of the pre-crash years.

"This has been building up for the past 10 or 15 years," she says. "Tinkering was OK. We knew that investing £1 in London would see a £4 return, rather than putting £1 into,

say, the midlands and getting a £2 return. We were happy to see that £4 return and then redistribute £2 to the midlands. That meant those communities felt they were getting handouts rather than hand-ups. They felt left behind – rather than building an economy that works for them we just allowed some people to be doing really well and others to be subsidised by them. And [taking handouts] is just not a working class trait – it's not what we like."

Whether Labour can successfully reconnect with those left behind communities will be the defining question for the country – and for Labour itself – over the next few years. Rayner accepts it will be tough, admitting that most people "don't know what our strategy is if I'm honest". But if Labour can get its act together, she feels there is hope.

"Not all is lost," she says. "The government is in disarray. We have to start pushing forward with what our alternative to that is and I think we can do it – we have got some great people across our movement."

"We have got to find a united position where we can talk to everyone about those values that we hold dear that are within the labour movement. If we are able to be a coherent united opposition then people will see us as coherent united government-in-waiting. It's within our grasp – it's up to us now."

But what about those who feel the divisions are now too deep and are tempted to walk away from the fight? "Instead of feeling downtrodden or upset or frustrated by the current situation you have to think 'what am I going to do today to move the party in the direction it needs to?' You have to think 'I can't deal with the big stuff I have no control over – so how do I do something that will help to move the movement forward?' That could be instilling our values through something you do in your community or it could be like I am, pushing the government on education policy. We all play a role."

For the moment, Rayner is content with that. Whether she will have a tilt at the leadership, she's not saying. "Who knows what the future holds but at the moment I'm just doing what I need to do to make sure I hold the government to account in the roles I'm doing. I'm a working class kid – I keep trying to prove I'm good enough and that I'm doing the right thing."

When it all gets too much, she takes a break with what she, using a phrase made popular in the world of motivational management courses, calls 'hippo time'. "Everyone's allowed a bit of hippo time – putting on a girlie movie, speaking to your friends, getting a take-out. Then you've got to come back fighting because the alternative is what – to give up?"

"I'm not giving up on the next Angela Rayners – I think they deserve someone to fight for them. I want to make my grandkids proud of what I do. I want them to look back and say 'at a time when things were tough did she stand her ground or did she run off?' I'm not going to run off." **F**

Kate Murray is editor of the Fabian Review

**Instead of feeling
downtrodden or upset
or frustrated you have to
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in the direction it needs to?'**

New dawn fades

It was 20 years ago next month, but Tony Blair's landslide election victory still shapes the left today. *Steven Fielding* reflects on New Labour's achievements – and the opportunities it wasted



Steven Fielding is professor of political history at the University of Nottingham. He is also curator for the 'New Dawn? The 1997 general election' exhibition

ON THE EARLY evening of Saturday 23 June 2007, BBC1 viewers settled down to watch another episode of *Dr Who*. 'The Sound of the Drums' has a young, charismatic politician promising a new kind of politics elected to Number 10 thanks to a stunning landslide victory. Everyone thinks Harold Saxon is a great guy but nobody can recall exactly why they voted for him, except that: 'He always sounded... good.' This is because the voters had been brainwashed. For Saxon is actually The Master and needed to become prime minister as part of his plan to destroy humanity.

The episode was broadcast during the week Tony Blair resigned as prime minister, 10 years after helping Labour win its biggest ever Commons majority and ending the party's 18 years in opposition. It is pretty obvious script-writer Russell T Davies intended to draw a parallel between Saxon and Blair. For in the decade between the start and end of Blair's premiership attitudes to the Labour leader had been transformed. Initially enjoying satisfaction ratings in the mid-70s, Blair left Number 10 with them languishing in the mid-20s. From the distance of just a decade Labour's 1997 landslide already appeared barely credible.

It is now 20 years since 1997 and the election looks even more like something dreamt up by one of our more imaginative science fiction writers. For since Blair's departure, the political scene has been transformed. Britain has endured an international financial crisis, which has provoked an apparently unending period of grim austerity, increasing poverty and, arguably, the 2016 vote to leave the EU. In the meantime support for the Labour party has reached a nadir. Did Blair really get elected in 1997 to the song 'Things Can Only Get Better'?

The election undoubtedly took place at a moment in important respects very different from our own times but for the Labour party many of the issues it raises remain relevant and controversial. It is not much of an exaggeration

to say that what Labour members think of 1997 shapes how many believe the party should face the future.

The equal dangers of nostalgia and hindsight bedevil those who want to look soberly at the past. And some certainly see 1997 as the moment when Labour discovered what John Rentoul has called 'the eternal verities of the Blairite truth'. Thinking the party's present troubles would be solved if it only returned to such principles overlooks how many of them were generated within a specific historical context. But it is just as disabling to regard the election through a lens shaped by what subsequently happened and to imagine the former was inevitably responsible for the latter. If nostalgia is a weakness of Blairite cultists, hindsight is something to which Corbynistas are largely prone, seeing as they do, the 2003 Iraq War and the 2008 financial crisis as inherent to the strategy that underpinned Labour's victory. Things might have turned out differently.

Like any historical event, the election was the product of a mix of structural forces over which Labour had no control as well as the party's agency, that is its ability to shape its own fortunes.

Undoubtedly the most important structural factor that made Labour's victory possible was the dire state of the Conservative party. Within months of winning a fourth election in row in 1992, the Conservatives were in chaos. After a struggle that cost the Treasury billions, Chancellor Norman Lamont devalued sterling and exited the exchange rate mechanism. This caused the Conservatives to lose their long-established lead over Labour for economic competence. Just as bad, backbench MPs revolted against John Major's implementation of the Maastricht treaty and the general direction of his EU policy. And when Major tried to reset his government's course, with a campaign to restore traditional values, he unwittingly gave the green light to a populist media keen to expose the moral and



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financial hypocrisy – or ‘sleaze’ – of leading Conservatives. Some political scientists believe that once a party has been in office for a considerable length of time its cohesion becomes unsustainable and defeat inevitable. By 1994 Major’s government certainly looked doomed.

But can we explain 1997 simply in terms of a Conservative collapse? Many in the Labour party believed that, such were Major’s troubles they needed to do little to actively improve their own electoral position. Leader John Smith figured that a further significant round of ‘modernisation’ would be unnecessarily divisive in light of the party’s healthy opinion poll lead. It was a view shared by the Labour left, which had opposed all of Neil Kinnock’s attempts to make the party more electable since 1983.

In contrast, Blair, Gordon Brown, Peter Mandelson and others believed that if Labour was to hold on to discontented Conservatives it could not stand still. As the Fabians’ three ‘Southern Comfort’ surveys revealed, there was a group of culturally conservative voters whose support the party needed if it were to win enough seats to form a government. These voters had considered supporting Labour in 1992 but doubts about the party’s ability to manage the economy and a belief that it would waste their taxes on undeserving causes meant they stayed loyal to Major. Blair et al feared these feelings would again reassert themselves when another general election came into view.

We will never know for sure if Smith’s approach would have worked because he died in May 1994. Opponents of what became New Labour however point to the European

Parliament elections held weeks after Smith’s death as evidence that he would have won back power. With Margaret Beckett as interim leader, Labour won 40 per cent of votes compared to the Conservatives’ 35 per cent. This, they claim, proves Blair was unnecessary. Against that supposition, however, we should remember that a second order election with a 37 per cent turnout is not necessarily an infallible guide to how Labour might have performed in a general election held three years in the future.

In his memoirs Blair cannot hide his belief that he was critical to the 1997 result. We should be cautious about unqualified claims for Blair’s agency. But it is doubtful that the scale of Labour’s victory – the 10.6 per cent swing from the Conservatives – could have been achieved without him. And without that, the party’s re-election in 2001 and 2005 become less likely.

Some Blair critics in any case concede that a Smith victory would have been less spectacular than the one Blair actually achieved. But they argue it would have been a more ‘Labour’ triumph. For to their eyes the price of the 1997 landslide was the party’s capture by a neo-liberal elite and it ceasing to be a vehicle for ‘socialism’.

There is no doubt Blair wanted to transform the party, thinking change necessary if Labour was to become a party of power rather than semi-permanent opposition. With that in view, Blair sought to clarify its ideological character, to reduce the scope of its ‘socialist’ ambition – which he in any case considered unrealistic – in order to make its more modest aims that much likelier to be achieved.

On this point it is worth quoting Blair's rationale for revising Clause IV, which he called for almost as soon as becoming leader.

"Of course, as opponents of the change immediately pointed out once it was announced, it was largely symbolic. No one except the far left ever really believed in Clause IV as it was written. In a sense, that was my point: no one believed in it, yet no one dared remove it. What this symbolised, therefore, was not just something redundant in our constitution, but a refusal to confront reality, to change profoundly, to embrace the modern world wholeheartedly. In other words, this symbol mattered. It was a graven image, an idol. Breaking it would also change the psychology in the party that was damaging and reactionary and which was precisely what had kept us in opposition for long periods. It had meant that although we were able erratically to do well against the Tories in response to their unpopularity, we could not govern consistently on our own merits."

These were the same reasons advanced by Hugh Gaitskell when he tried to revise Clause IV in 1959. Gaitskell wanted to turn Labour into an overtly social democratic party, a catch-all, people's party, one drawing strength from but not wholly dependent on the labour movement. Nor, in principle, would any other post-war Labour leader – with the possible exception of Michael Foot – have disagreed with Blair. But instead of obfuscating, as many of his predecessors were wont to do, Blair said out loud and shamelessly, exultantly even, that which they all had believed: to achieve its aims Labour had to make capitalism work and that Clause IV's 'socialism' was a fantasy.

By the 1990s, the capitalism with which Labour would need to work was defined by the globalised free market; and so it was that which Blair took to define the 'modern world', it was that 'reality' which he called on Labour to embrace. However, as Blair said, even while praising Thatcher, the free market could not do everything if the economy was to become more efficient and society fairer: government had a role.

Blair, then, pursued the classic social democratic strategy, but in a particular historical context. There were shouts of anguish in the party but members after nearly two decades of opposition, craved power and believed Blair would deliver it. The most obvious expression of Blair's blunt strategy of winning over wavering Conservatives was to promise to keep to Conservative tax and spending plans in his government's first two years and maintain the top rate of income tax at 40 pence throughout its life. And to make sure his message got through to these voters Blair pursued a frank realpolitik when it came to the media, most infamously making peace with Rupert Murdoch.

At the same time, this most cautious – but at the same time most audacious – of electoral strategies saw Blair bring the Liberal Democrats into Labour's orbit by agreeing a package of constitutional reforms, one that turned both parties against the Conservatives. And he continued to support moves, which began under Kinnock, for all-women shortlists if only because they promised to improve

Labour's standing with female voters, which they did on a spectacular scale.

If Major's troubles opened the door to a Labour victory, it was Blair who stuck a firm foot in the door so it could not be slammed back in the party's face. This meant that, while the economy had been doing well for most of Major's term, the Conservatives did not reap any political reward. Despite throwing everything they had at Labour, unlike in previous elections nothing seemed to stick. So having won the 1992 election in the midst of a recession Major lost five years later during a boom.

This is not the place for a detailed assessment of the record of the governments made possible by 1997. But before the 2008 financial crisis transformed the context for politics, even some close to Blair criticised him for acting in office with the same extreme caution that defined the 1997 campaign. Even so, during Labour's first term spending limits were loosened, and taxes other than for income were raised. Blair pledged to abolish childpoverty, while tax credits for those in work promised to improve the incomes of the poorest of employees, as did the minimum wage. By the time Labour went to the country in 2001 it had developed an 'invest and reform' agenda for the public services which would dramatically improve health and education provision and so, Blair argued, enhance everybody's potential. From Thatcher's tax-cutting agenda, Labour had used power to move politics on to different ground, such that when David Cameron became Conservative leader in 2005, he was forced to move on to it too.

As a result, relative poverty declined during the New Labour years even if inequality on some measures – thanks to the dramatic rise in incomes of the top 1 per cent – did not. But Labour's prolonged period in office won by the 1997 victory now looks like an opportunity wasted, one in which it failed to more fundamentally transform British politics and challenge the conservative attitudes of those voters who put it into office. Peter Hyman loyally worked for Blair as a speechwriter and strategist but in 2003 left Number 10 to become a teacher. Writing in 2005, Hyman argued Labour no longer needed to "reassure people we can be trusted with government. We have proved that. I believe passionately that you cannot create a modern social democratic country by stealth. You have to argue for higher taxes to pay for education and health, argue for greater tolerance for minorities, argue for greater opportunity for those denied it. We have to build a grass-roots movement that will sustain New Labour in the long term. We have to use our powers of persuasion."

Perhaps the most compelling criticism of Tony Blair is therefore that having developed and applied the right strategy to deliver the 1997 landslide victory, he remained a prisoner of it. ■

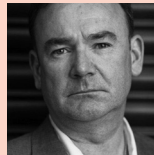
'New Dawn? The 1997 general election' exhibition runs at the People's History Museum in Manchester until 4 June. Associated with the exhibition is the @newdawn1997 Twitter feed which reconstructs the 1997 campaign day-by-day

If Major's troubles opened the door to a Labour victory, it was Blair who stuck a firm foot in the door so it could not be slammed back in the party's face

1997 election: 20 years on

Heart and soul

We should not deny the achievements of New Labour. But neither should we forget how it lost its moral purpose, argues *Jon Cruddas*



Jon Cruddas is the Labour MP for Dagenham and Rainham

ACROSS THE UK as a whole there has only been one electorally successful centre-left political leader in the last 35 years. Yet Tony Blair lives in domestic exile. For many he is the outcast we define ourselves against. This enduring hostility ensures that the party as a whole is unable to own its recent history; it denies its victories and achievements and plays into the hands of opponents who want precisely the same.

Maybe the time has come for a little more subtlety and nuance in considering the last quarter of a century; in contrast to the trite dismissal of New Labour by those who lead the party and by those who seek that responsibility. As we approach the twentieth anniversary of the 1997 landslide is this beyond our collective wit? If the answer is yes our crisis is far from over.

Yet Blair has hardly helped himself. History suggests recent politicians tend to be defined by supporters who were their last defenders; usually those present at the death. These are often the ultras; the most blinkered adherents of what that leader had become – rather than what they had once been – or had promised to be. It is as true of Thatcher as it is of Blair. Arguably Blair's supporters have narrowed what New Labour was – and indeed could have been. This diminishment is tragic for today's left yet considered functional for Blair and his opponents; they both collude in this historic backfill. *Cui bono?* The Conservatives.

The man who held the hand of Clement Attlee when he died, Alfred Laker, noted that he “had a depth of feeling he took care to keep hidden”. Attlee disguised his idealism, indeed romanticism, in the creation of a distinct political persona. The same might be said of Tony Blair. The 63-year-old ‘smiling public man’ (to borrow from Yeats) we see today has sought to obscure and redraw his own political history and character; to build a contemporary cosmopolitan identity – today's detached liberal actor.

Tony Blair had once been inspired by rather different philosophical – indeed spiritual – concerns. Through the work of thinkers such as John Macmurray he sought to build a specific appreciation of the common good. This distinct ethical approach can be detected throughout his

early career through to becoming prime minister. For example, on 6 July 1983 in his maiden speech to the House of Commons, Blair argued that: “British democracy rests ultimately on the shared perception by all the people that they participate in the benefits of the common weal.”

This reference to William Morris provides a public glimpse into the private philosophy that informed Blair. The notion of the common weal speaks to both individual fulfilment and mutual flourishing concerned with the dignity of the person and their mutual dependence on others. It anchors him within a specific strand of ethical thinking and a theory of justice with distinct ancient origins – and one with a long history on the left. Intellectually Blair was no fool.

Later, in 1995, as leader of the party Blair echoed Tawney when suggesting that “socialists have to be both moralists and empiricists”. A year earlier when accepting the leadership he told us that his was a “mission to lift the spirit of the nation... a country where we say, we are part of a community of people – we do owe a duty to more than ourselves... a country where there is no corner where we shield our eyes in shame... the power of all for the good of each... that is what socialism means to me.”

When writing *Why I am a Christian* in 1996 he explicitly disowned utilitarianism and demanded that we return to ethics and reclaim this ethical history of the party. Earlier it had been the anchor for a wider story of national renewal with the patriotism of the ‘Young Country’ speech of 1995. That same year he was embracing the ‘moral reformers’ of RHTawney and William Morris; William Cobbett and Robert Owen. It is revealed in the private handwritten note Blair sent to Basil Hume, then head of the Catholic Church in England, on 28 October 1996 following the publication of the Church's document on ‘The Common Good’. Here he talks of “the essential dignity of every person”, of modern solidarity and personal responsibility, and contrasts this with modern, individual, liberal economic rationality. Blair was quite consciously seeking to align Labour's approach to justice with deeper spiritual traditions.

In 1994 he argued for a new national mission: “A new spirit in the nation based on working together, unity,

solidarity, partnership. This is the patriotism of the future. Where your child in distress is my child, your parent ill and in pain is my parent, your friend unemployed or homeless is my friend; your neighbour my neighbour. That is the true patriotism of a nation."

This terrain lies beyond the reach of economic liberalism or remote cosmopolitanism – the territory of Blair's later reinvention. Back then his preoccupation was with questions of ethics and morality; his speeches read like modern parables refracted into stories of national renewal and shared sacrifice. It is a specific type of thinking that informed the radicalism of the first term: for example, in domestically confronting poverty pay, literacy and numeracy challenges and nurturing the notion of citizenship and the Sure Start agenda – before it was later shorn into a strict welfare to work scheme. Internationally this ethical approach was reflected in the pursuit of human rights and the establishment of the department for international development. Arguably, the ethical grounding lay behind the extraordinary emotional power, grip and reach of New Labour in that period; it created a genuine radical hope in the country – and consequently real loss when we retreated into questions of utility and calculus by the second term.

Tony Blair appears to have quite consciously buried this earlier political sentiment. The text that should provide insight, his own autobiography, is a deliberately elusive book. He barely mentions his earlier ethical concerns – apart from a few pages in chapter three. Here, and with great subtlety, Blair splits and reunites spiritual and political thinking through a consideration of his own ideas. First, he counterposes religion – which "starts with values that are born of a view of humankind" with politics "which starts with an examination of society and the means of changing it". He then argues that he has always seen the latter through the prism of the former: "I begin with an analysis of human beings as my compass; the politics is secondary." Yet such insight hardly appears again in the text. His autobiography underplays earlier ethical concerns – as if to hide what he had lost – the source of his emotional power and success.

Blair's ethical socialism challenged left economism; it rebuilt a sense of national endeavour around a renewed sense of the common good. But it wasn't to last. Blair abstracted himself into a defence of an international liberal order. At home it was gradually crowded out by the applied utilitarianism of the Treasury. Domestic politics tended toward the transactional, the allocative, the rational management of unending growth. Its language was cold yet it was functional – until the music stopped and the money ran out.

Unwittingly, the most telling description of what Blair lost had been contained within New Labour's own bible: Philip Gould's *The Unfinished Revolution*. Here Gould makes a revealing distinction when he described his parents as having "wanted to do what was right, not what was aspirational". The possibility that these two categories were not mutually exclusive was never entertained. It signals

how the pollsters reoriented Blair's earlier approach to human activity and aspiration.

In the pollsters' view, aspiration consists of the impulse to accumulate and consume without regard to the consequences for others or any sense of responsibility to society as a whole – over time it defeated Blair's early humanist fusion of spiritual and political thinking. In short, the economists and the pollsters defeated the ethics of the early Blair.

Over time Blair's key early insights were abandoned and in its place was constructed a politics that considered people as atomised and individualistic; as unsentimental and ruthlessly self-interested. It assumed that the electorate – or at least the section of it that counted – held fast to a rationality that verged on the misanthropic.

By 2001, New Labour's policies were essentially based on a mythical 'Middle England', drawn up by the pollsters and located somewhere in the south east, built around continuous growth and affluence and where politics always had to be individualised.

In the end we believed the electorate would only respond to a sour, illiberal politics about consuming more, rather than deeper ideas – of fraternity, of collective experience, and what it is we aspire to be as a nation. The territory that Blair had defined – from his maiden speech through the leadership election and that energised the first term – was gradually vacated. New Labour lost its soul.

Contrast the Blair of 1994 – his emphasis on nation building and the forging of a left patriotism – with where he ended up at the 2005 Labour party conference. Here he coldly described how "the character of this changing world is indifferent to tradition. Unforgiving of frailty. No respecter of past reputations. It has no custom and practice." Rather

than view this world as destructive and dehumanising, he celebrated those who are "swift to adapt" and, "open, willing and able to change."

The distance between these two speeches reflects his self-exile. Within a few years Blair's language had descended into a brutal liberalism. Blair's genius was that he had excavated and harvested a politics that forever exists deep within Labour's history. Yet tragically, the character of Blair – and of the governments he led – shifted from being anchored within ethical concerns towards rational economic exchange, derived utility and political calculus. By 2005 what worked for Blair was a "liberal economy, prepared constantly to change to remain competitive."

What developed was a dystopian 'winner takes all' vision of capitalist modernity in which the human values of commitment, fidelity and loyalty are subordinated to anonymous and unpredictable market forces with its 'creative destruction' of ethical values, social cohesion, and cultural identity.

By the end New Labour's utilitarianism cultivated an acquisitive, selfish individualism cut loose from social obligations. The early virtues disappeared as did the duties and obligations; the sense of community. Labour lost its moral purpose and language, its hope and optimism as it detached from the lives of the people. ■

**The territory that Blair
had defined was
gradually vacated.
New Labour lost its soul**

Kate Green (Labour MP for Stretford and Urmston and Fabian Society chair)

- **Scrap tax breaks for private schools** and reinvest the money saved in early years and Sure Start
- **Pass a new Clean Air Act** to cut pollution on our roads and leave a greener planet to our children and grandchildren
- **Create new graduate apprenticeships** to develop home-grown talent for the technical jobs of the future
- **Introduce modern healthcare bursaries** to boost recruitment of nurses, physiotherapists, carers and paramedics, and enable them to earn while they study
- **Build more affordable family homes**, and lifetime homes that enable elderly and disabled people to live at home independently

Donald Hirsch (director, Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University)

- **Create fairness at work** by requiring employers and others who contract labour to do so on stable terms at fair rates of pay
- **Create fairness in housing** by requiring landlords to rent on stable terms at fair levels of rent
- **Create fairness to consumers of essential services** by requiring utilities and financial services to charge best price
- **Create fair taxation** by preventing those on higher incomes from paying low rates of tax, first by abolishing higher rate relief on pension contributions
- **Create fair life chances** by funding schools in more deprived areas equitably, regardless of their status

1997 election: 20 years on

Taking the pledge

Tony Blair's famous pledge card was hailed as a crucial ingredient in the 1997 victory. Would a new pledge card help Labour reconnect with voters – and what would you put on it? We asked parliamentarians, Fabians, writers and academics for their ideas

Dawn Butler (Labour MP for Brent Central)

- **Implement a Diverse Communities manifesto**, and only do government business with companies which pay a living wage of £10 and have diversity on their boards
- **Cap energy prices**, introduce a state option in the energy market and increase investment in renewables and technology transfer
- **Abolish Employment Tribunal Fees** to ensure that everyone has equal access to justice
- **Ensure affordable rents**, through local authorities owning and running local homes of various sizes from family to 1-bed properties
- **Give British Sign Language full legal status** as is afforded to other officially recognised languages by introducing a BSL Act

Jonathan Reynolds (Labour MP for Stalybridge and Hyde)

- **Implement an ambitious industrial strategy** driven by green jobs and ending fuel poverty
- **Ground-breaking early years investment** to boost social mobility and educational attainment from birth
- **A universal basic income for all**, providing security whilst making work pay in all circumstances
- **Reform our electoral system**, making sure all votes count and allowing votes at 16
- **Rebalance our NHS** to put prevention and social care at its heart, creating a healthier nation and reducing hospital costs

SAVVY ELECTIONEERING OR bite-size politics? The 1997 pledge cards were a crucial part of Labour's successful campaign – and subsequent government. Between 1997 and 2001, then deputy prime minister John Prescott used to produce his pledge card at speeches to demonstrate how Labour was keeping its promises. A physical emblem of a pledge between political party and citizen, a contract by which the latter could hold the former responsible.

They were, in Peter Mandelson's words, to be short and catchy. Each relatively modest, pragmatic pledge – cutting class sizes to under 30 for five, six and seven-year-olds, for example – suggested a more radical break with 18 years of Conservative rule. The tactic has been trotted out again and again in election campaigns since, and not just by Labour, but over time the pledges have become woollier and their impact lessened.

As Labour looks again for political vision that resonates with voters, could revitalised pledge cards help it tap once more into the spirit of the times? Our contributors had a go – and we're also inviting readers to take part (see overleaf). It's not as easy as it seems: one contributor said the exercise gave them "a new found admiration for the authors of the original five pledges" while another said: "There is so much to cover it is quite a job getting it down to a few pledges. That for me just demonstrates what great pledges they were 20 years ago." **F**

Bryan Gould (former British diplomat, journalist and Labour politician)

- **Make sure that major corporations**, including those based abroad, pay their fair share of taxes
- **Establish a National Investment Bank** so that money created by qualitative easing is used to build houses and invest in new productive capacity
- **Establish full employment** and the full use of all our human resources as the primary goal of economic policy
- **Refocus the NHS** on serving the public rather than the private profit motive
- **Make sure that every school leaver has a job**, enters training or pursues higher or further education

Nick Donovan (campaign director at an anti-corruption NGO and Fabian report author)

- **Promote work by taxing unearned income effectively** and using the revenue to reduce taxes on earned income.
- **Reward contribution by using extra stamp duty revenues** to improve compensation for injured military veterans, contribution-based jobseekers' allowance, and carer's allowance
- **Improve public finances and reduce the deficit** with a one-off levy on assets greater than £10m
- **Grow the economy by staying in the single market**, reforming the bonus culture to increase private sector investment, and investing in the UK's infrastructure with money raised from a 25 per cent corporation tax rate

Charlotte Riley (lecturer in Labour party history, University of Southampton)

- **Protect the NHS:** support workers at all levels; provide patients with the best possible treatment
- **Invest in education:** support teaching at nursery, primary, secondary and university level; support research
- **Resist racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and ableism** in British society, culture and politics
- **Build generous and effective aid and development policies overseas**, combined with a progressive refugee and asylum policy to help provide safety and security for the world's poorest and most vulnerable
- Protect the most marginalised in society: because if not, who will?

Ian Murray (Labour MP for Edinburgh South)

- **Transform our economy** so that everyone has a proper stake in society and social mobility is promoted
- **Eradicate insecure employment** and invest in new technology and research and the high-skilled jobs of the future.
- **Build on the national minimum wage** by setting it at a real living wage level
- **Cut child poverty by 50% by 2025** and eradicate it by 2035
- **Transfer power and influence away from Westminster** so that decisions that affect local people are taken locally

Roy Kennedy (Labour peer)

- **Deliver full integration of NHS and social care provision**
- **A stable economy, low inflation, positive engagement with the EU** with a fair distribution of the proceeds of economic growth to all communities
- **All state schools to be good or outstanding** with an implementation plan in place within six months of the election
- **Begin building 300,000 homes a year** to deliver at least one million homes in this parliament, 50 per cent of which will be council homes on social rents
- **A crime plan** for all communities addressing local, national and cyber concerns and threats

Mike Hedges (National Assembly for Wales member)

- **Tie the minimum wage to the living wage** as defined by the Living Wage Foundation
- **Support councils to build council housing** and suspend the right to buy in areas with a shortage of social housing
- **Reduce class sizes to under 30** for 7 to 11 year-olds
- **Provide free prescriptions**
- **Outlaw zero hour** and other exploitative employment contracts

Ellie Groves (chair, Young Fabians)

- **Guarantee all existing employment rights** will be converted into British law post-Brexit
- **Build 300,000 homes each year**, ensuring that at least 40% of these are affordable to both buy and rent
- **Take international students out of net migration figure** to accurately reflect migration numbers and acknowledge positive contribution
- **Enact community sentencing** rather than prison for nonviolent short term sentences

Andrew Harrop (general secretary, Fabian Society)

- **Solve the housing and earnings crisis** by increasing the living wage by £500 a year and creating regional housebuilding funds
- **Rescue the NHS**, so everyone can see their GP within 2 days, and expand it to include care for older and disabled people
- **Invest in Britain's future** with free childcare, a £10 rise in child benefit and a new adult skills allowance
- **Take power over your life** with a say over how companies and public services are run and new rights for the self-employed
- **Reward responsibility** by requiring migrants to contribute to earn permanent residence and raise contribution-based payments for retirement, maternity and sick leave

Seema Malhotra (Labour MP for Feltham and Heston)

- **Build a dynamic economy** and shared prosperity through investment in infrastructure and skills
- **Set up a Small Business Agency to help firms flourish** so they can create jobs for local people
- **A skills guarantee for young people**, including a work experience scheme for all state schools
- **Limit class sizes to 30** by employing more teachers paid for by scrapping tax giveaways to rich
- **Firm and fair immigration controls** with regional work permits based on needs of local economy

John Woodcock (Labour MP for Barrow and Furness)

- **The school place of your choice** Place a duty on oversubscribed schools to expand so more parents get their first choice
- **Britain open for jobs and growth** Make continued membership of the single market the key aim of the UK's Brexit negotiations
- **Community work for the unemployed** Change job seekers' allowance so everyone gives back to the community each week
- **Security in old age** A binding royal commission on social care to forge cross-party way forward on new frontier for the welfare state
- **Britain strong beyond its borders** Equip Britain to face new threats by writing 2 per cent of GDP defence spending into law

John Rentoul (political commentator, The Independent)

- **Get 250,000 under 25 year-olds off benefits and into work** by using money from cancelling HS2 and Heathrow expansion
- **Spend the extra £350m a week on the NHS that people voted for** by raising national insurance on higher earners
- **Build beautiful cities of skyscrapers and traditional homes** by using the power of government to borrow cheaply
- **Reward prisons that keep inmates out of prison after release** by using money from capping public-sector salaries
- **No rise in income tax**, fair and efficient property taxes by abolishing stamp duty and revaluing council tax

Martin O'Neill (lecturer, University of York)

- **Free high-quality childcare for all pre-school children**, a better start for the next generation and a better deal for working parents
- **A cut in taxes for all ordinary working families**, paid for by fairer taxes for the wealthiest in our society
- **A national education service**, to unleash our potential throughout our lives, and to give us the most productive workforce in the global economy
- **A British sovereign wealth fund**, working with local development banks, to invest for the long-term future of our society
- **A stronger military**, with a better deal for Britain's servicemen and servicewomen

Catriona Munro (chair, Scottish Fabians)

- **Rejoin the EU**
- **Replace the House of Lords with an elected second chamber** which, with democratic legitimacy, can truly hold the House of Commons to account
- **Renew the relationship between the parts of the UK** to form a federal partnership
- **Make a career and parenthood a real possibility for all** with a wraparound care and full time holiday care place available for all who need it at reasonable cost
- **Overhaul education** to prepare our young people for a future where computers do much of the work we currently do

Ivana Bartoletti (chair, Fabian Women's Network)

- **Invest 3 per cent of GDP on research** to make Britain the global hub of innovation and tech and create the jobs that go with them
- **Invest in universal childcare** to increase tax revenue from additional earnings and reduce spending on social security benefits
- **Reverse the massive privatisation of the NHS**, reduce private contracts and costs of ad locum doctors and put savings into more GPs, nurses and services for the elderly
- **Drive a new collaborative foreign policy** together with European partners to increase our role in the world help and keep our country safe

Mari Williams (deputy head in a London secondary school and a Labour parliamentary candidate in 2015)

- **Boost small business** by cutting taxes for small businesses
- **Introduce a new golden oldies bonus** for keeping great teachers in teaching
- **Build 10 new outdoor pools across Britain** paid for with a tax on sugary drinks to improve public health
- **Improve the justice and mediation system** so that it is fair and free for those who need it most
- **Create more space in our towns and cities** for cycling

More pledge cards from our contributors can be seen on our website www.fabians.org.uk/pledge-cards where you can also submit one of your own

Books

A sense of solidarity

Harriet Harman's autobiography gives an insight into a sisterhood that has supported many and changed Britain for the better, writes *Alison McGovern*



Alison McGovern is MP for Wirral South

Ask any woman who has been senior in the Labour party in recent times – and many who were not senior at all – about Harriet Harman, and they will have a story to tell about the woman they know. I want in this review of Harriet Harman's memoirs, *A Woman's Work*, to share an anecdote of my own.

Harriet's book is full of great war stories: it is a true reflection of life in the Labour movement, some of which I have experienced myself. And of course, there is much of which, long before I entered political life, shaped the chances of success for those like me.

As a volume, it is less about Harriet herself, rather, it is a story of the massive collective of women and men who tried to set about changing Britain for the better, by making Labour capable of winning, and capable of government.

The Harriet that I know, though, is a special person. And as I served as a local councillor in Camberwell in her constituency, I got to know this ever more.

In fact, one of the best parts of Harriet's book is her early description of the party in Southwark, and the working class families that drove Labour forward in south London, despite the political chaos of the 1980s. Kennedy, Naish, Ellery, Prosser. All names that feature with as much importance as Smith, Blair, Brown, and rightly so. Although readers may be coming across these names for the first time, Harriet vividly describes people who deserve much more attention: those at the heart of the Labour movement, drawn from council estates of south London and focused on making sure our party delivered.

She also details the long march of the women's movement both inside and outside Labour. Again, she highlights women whose contributions are not always profiled – Deborah Mattinson, Joan Ruddock, Joyce Gould, Glenys Thornton. But they are women whom the close reader of Labour's past really should know more about. Women without whom my party would have never made it out of opposition.

But fast forward from the 1980s to 2009. The tail end of the Labour government which Harriet – as she describes – saw from both the back benches, after crashing out of government following the disastrous mismatching of herself and Frank Field at the Department for Social Security, and the front benches, rising up from her post as solicitor general to become elected deputy leader. The global economy was careering out of the global financial crisis,



A Woman's Work

Harriet Harman
Allen Lane,
2017, £20.00

and in the UK, Labour was heading for a general election against a backdrop internal strife.

The book explains the back story of those rocky years from Harriet's point of view. Students of history will be pleased that Harriet's account is recorded here, and feminists will recognise that it is the leading men's tales that are often told, so in that sense, this is a crucial addition.

But meanwhile, in Southwark, we were dealing with grim tragedy. A terrible fire in one of Southwark's own tower blocks which housed hundreds of residents had been started by a faulty television and broken safety mechanisms. And these were the circumstances surrounding my own story of Harriet, permanent in my memory, recalled by reading her book.

The enflamed tower block was in the middle of my council ward. I and the other two ward councillors were working night and day to try and help people who had literally run from the fire and were now scattered across the borough with only what they stood up in. Three women and three children were killed by the blaze. Devastated does not begin to come close to describe how we felt. And at a public meeting in Camberwell Town Hall, during which distressed residents from the estate could explain the terror they faced, and at which Harriet, I and other politicians could press officials to do more to respond, Harriet did a small thing, but one that I will never forget, and which represents to me the message of Harriet's memoirs. As my voice broke, and the tears came, whilst I was speaking, she silently poured me a glass of water, and without saying a word, put it in my hand, and finished my sentence for me.

She knew I could not go on; she took over, and seamlessly, as one movement, we did the job we were supposed to for the people we serve. I have never forgotten it: the unity of purpose, the solidarity in a moment of severe distress.

The idea of a sisterhood in politics is often mocked. I can only say that Harriet's memoirs – a must read for women and men alike – demonstrate the truth that it does exist. Women in the Labour movement might not habitually describe ourselves as Harmanites, but that is what we are. This book explains why.

What we do, we do together. That is Harriet's legacy to the Labour party, and it lives on. ■

Fabian Society 3.0: practical, local and proud

Michael Weatherburn argues that the thinking of the early Fabians could influence a renewal of social democracy today



WITH BRITISH POLITICS and intellectual life passing through a period of rapid, drastic, and mesmerising realignment, it is worth reflecting on the enormity of the situation progressives of every kind face. Across Europe and elsewhere, two-party systems have been breaking down, with social democrats on the losing side. In Britain, with Scotland captured by the SNP and the collapse of the Liberal Democrats, there are calls for progressive alliances, tactical voting, and vote swapping. Some commentators now even openly advocate abandoning parliamentary democracy altogether. This scenario would have been unthinkable even a few years ago.

With all bets now off, this is the perfect time to remind ourselves about the original purpose and practices of the Fabian Society. While some suggest we should renew social democracy by refreshing the postwar spirit of self-confidence, wide-ranging action and patriotism, it's perhaps in the early Fabian Society that we can find a way forward in the present day.



It initially seemed the society, which was founded in 1884, would be lucky to reach even its 30th birthday. In 1913 it reached an early membership peak of 2,804 in the main society and 500 in local societies, when its first secretary Edward Pease predicted that the society's outlook was 'gloomy'. And by the 1930s, between the Fabian Society, its membership ageing and far too optimistic about the Soviet Union, and the Labour party, split in two and in the electoral doldrums, it seemed like social democracy might be permanently on the way out.

Indeed, writing at the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Fabian Society in 1934, Spectator writer RK Ensor remarked that: "The Fabian Society, while it still goes on, wears now the aspect of a stranded vessel, past which the main tides of political interest have flowed."

From its outset in 1884 the Fabian Society was shaped by its context. Following the failure of the Social Democratic Federation and its "zealous propaganda and outdoor demonstrations" to actually win at elections, the Fabian Society avoided setting up another new political party and instead sought to 'permeate' existing ones, particularly elements of the Liberal party. Acting in a pluralistic, multi-party fashion by seeking to influence multiple political organisations like the Liberal party and the Independent Labour party was a useful tactic in uncertain times.

In some of the fascinating research into the early Fabian Society, the most-discussed issue is its influence. Did the Fabians, as Pease put it, "break the spell of Marxism in England"? Did

The early Fabian Society's pluralist, localist approach can be helpful in negotiating this atomised, fractured, yet energised world

they, as Margaret Cole later claimed, create the Labour party, the postwar welfare state, and the London County Council? Or, as critics like Eric Hobsbawm and AM McBriar have argued, should the Fabian Society be given little to no credit for any of these achievements?



Studying Pease's and Ensor's statements from many decades later, we know their pessimism was ill-founded: Fabian Society membership now stands at a far higher figure of more than 7,000 and it is still growing. In retrospect, therefore, the Fabian Society should certainly be given credit for its amazing adaptability and longevity.

Particularly in Westminster circles, the Fabian Society and Labour are now treated as almost interchangeable. Of course, the automatic Fabian-Labour connection has not always been the case – the Fabian Society predates the foundation of the Labour Representation Committee by 16 years, and Labour by 19 years.

An interesting thought experiment, therefore, is to consider the activities of the Fabian

Society in its first 16 years: from its foundation in 1884 to that of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900. What did the Fabians advocate and do long before Blair or even Attlee, when there was no Labour party to support?

Current debates on regionalism and even localism would have been familiar to the early Fabians and although our current Brexit scenario would have seemed very alien, some of the issues underlying the referendum outcome – in particular the desire to 'take back control' and challenge centralised authority in what Gordon Brown has called the 'revolt of the regions' – would not.

The original Fabians realised the importance of localism and the independence of their local membership. As the first history of the Fabian Society, delivered by George Bernard Shaw in 1892, remarked, in contrast to the doomed Social Democratic Federation, which controlled from the centre and practiced "pseudo-democratic slavery", the local Fabian societies were "perfectly independent of our control or dictation" and were not "slaves of a council here in London on which they could not be represented".

This early Fabian focus on local governance and municipal ownership extended to notions of how a socialist political system would function in daily life. In contrast to the later social democratic gravitation towards centralisation – what authors Jim Tomlinson and Nick Tiratsoo call 'managerial socialism' – as Pease put it in 1916: "Fabianism thus implied no central bureaucracy; what it demanded was partly, indeed, a more efficient and expert central government, but primarily an expert local civil service in close touch with and under the control of a really democratic municipal government."

This sentiment has recently been given a fresh lease of life through the society's interest in federalism and localism. It also sheds light on another interesting intellectual trend, which is the relative role theory should play in our activities.



Critics of the Fabian Society such as Hobsbawm and McBriar have argued that the early Fabians did not make particularly substantial contributions to theory. McBriar argued: "The Society as a whole, in its concentration on practical detailed reforms, virtually cut itself off from the higher ranges of theoretical speculation".

Writing in an age in which lived experience and authenticity are, for the time being, far more convincing than 'theoretical speculation', it seems that the early Fabians were actually quite sensible in focusing on, as McBriar put

it: "immediate and down-to-earth policies"; issues which tangibly touch everybody's lives.

This early Fabian approach will be particularly useful to us now. As Marc Stears recently pointed out at his 2017 Clement Attlee memorial lecture at University College, Oxford, the historic rise of theoreticians within social democracy has created challenges in engaging with voters unfamiliar with theory. And to go further than this, while social democracy remains frozen in the icy prison of postwar 'theory first' inductivism, social democrats will continue to face major problems engaging with voters who want to know how things will work in practice rather than on a flip chart organogram in a seminar room.



This will require a step-change in how Fabians think about our role in political and intellectual life, although this is a magnitude of transformation which the Fabian Society has previously undergone.

Writing in his 1956 classic, *The Future of Socialism*, Anthony Crosland argued that what was needed was a "reaction against the Fabian tradition" of stern Victorian values such as hard work, self-discipline, efficiency. "Posthumously", he wrote, "the Webbs have won their battle, and converted a generation to their standards... Now the time has come for a reaction: for a greater emphasis on private life, on freedom and dissent, on culture, beauty, leisure and even frivolity".

Thinking they'd won the important arguments with conservatives, post-war social democrats across Western Europe turned to theory and culture, often to compete with Marxists on their own territory, whereas conservatives turned to business, economics, and the military. We now know the important arguments were never fully won.

If 2016 and 2017 have taught us anything, it is that we live in a brave new era in which defiance is the new normal. Given that it was founded in conditions which were in some ways similar, the early Fabian Society's pluralist, localist approach can be helpful in negotiating this atomised, fractured, yet energised world. This said, we need neither act nor look like Victorians in order to harvest the best we can from their willpower, futurism and focus on the practical. Like social democracy, Fabianism needs refreshing and updating, and it is the early Fabians rather than the postwar Fabians usually cited, who can impart the most useful lessons for our similarly unequal, unfair, and increasingly dangerous age. **F**

Michael Weatherburn is chair of Oxford Fabian Society

Having your say

Survey gives an insight into our membership

WHO ARE FABIAN members? Where do they sit in the debate on Labour's future? And what are their key policy concerns? Our 2017 members' survey has given us an insight into this and more. The survey was distributed in the winter 2016 issue of the Fabian Review, with members encouraged to complete it online wherever possible. A total of 675 members, or around 9.5 per cent of our membership took part, compared with 538 in the last survey (2011/12)

It's only a snapshot then, but has given us useful feedback in shaping the society's work in the months and years to come.

A broad church

In the last leadership election, 64 per cent of participants voted for Owen Smith and 22 per cent for Jeremy Corbyn. The rest did not vote. But when asked who in the Labour party most represented their views, a big spread of names split the vote and Corbyn ended up as the second most popular choice, just behind Keir Starmer. Yvette Cooper, Hilary Benn, Lisa Nandy, Chuka Umunna and Clive Lewis all picked up a good number of votes. The two most recent Labour prime ministers, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, both scored well too, with names from further back in Labour history

including Harold Wilson, Clement Attlee and Nye Bevan also featuring.

Fabian members have a broad range of policy interests, the survey suggests. The most popular, in order, were the economy, education, health, Europe and housing.

And, not surprisingly, they like discussing these policy areas and reading about them. The majority of respondents had been to a Fabian event over the past year, whether a local society meeting a Labour conference fringe event or New Year or summer conference. They were also positive about the Fabian Review and our pamphlets and research reports, with around three-quarters rating them as good or very good. Suggestions for improvement will inform our work, including in the first instance our project to revamp the Fabian Society website. The survey is only one way of commenting on what we do: we welcome feedback and ideas at info@fabians.org.uk **F**

Why Fabians value being Fabians:

- Agreement with the politics and values of the society
- The quality and frequency of publications
- Supporting Fabian research and advocacy
- A pride in the history of the Fabian Society
- A way to have political influence

FABIAN QUIZ



FAMILIAR STRANGER: A LIFE BETWEEN TWO ISLANDS Stuart Hall

This is the story, in his own words, of the extraordinary life of Stuart Hall: writer, thinker and one of the leading intellectual lights of his age. Growing up in a middle-class family in 1930s Jamaica, then still a British colony, Hall found himself caught between two worlds: the stiflingly respectable middle class in Kingston, who, in their habits and ambitions, measured themselves against the white planter elite; and working-class and peasant Jamaica, neglected and grindingly poor, though rich in culture, music and history. But as colonial rule was challenged, things began to change in Jamaica and across the world.

When, in 1951, a scholarship took him across the Atlantic to Oxford University, Hall encountered

other Caribbean writers and thinkers, from Sam Selvon and George Lamming to VS Naipaul. He also forged friendships with the likes of Raymond Williams and EP Thompson, with whom he worked in the formidable political movement, the New Left, and developed his groundbreaking ideas on cultural theory. *Familiar Stranger* takes us to the heart of Hall's struggle in post-war England: that of building a home and a life in a country where, rapidly, radically, the social landscape was transforming, and urgent new questions of race, class and identity were coming to light.

Penguin has kindly given us five copies to give away. To win one, answer the following question: Which influential leftwing journal is widely credited with inventing the term 'Thatcherism'? Please email your answer and your address to review@fabian-society.org.uk Or send a postcard to: Fabian Society, Fabian Quiz, 61 Petty France, London SW1H 9EU

ANSWERS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 12 MAY 2017



Noticeboard

Amendments to Fabian Society byelaws

The executive committee has approved the following changes to the society's byelaws.

Byelaw 3. Local Societies

Clauses iii, vi and x are amended to read:

iii. No member shall be qualified to hold office in, or to serve on the executive committee of, a local society, or to represent the society, unless he or she is a full member of the local society eligible for individual membership of the national Fabian Society and the Labour party.

vi. After the inaugural meeting, at which a resolution shall be passed by a two-thirds majority setting up a society, it shall send to the national society the minimum fee plus £1 affiliation fee for each member over the first ten together with its proposed constitution and a list of members. Recognition shall not be given to the local society until its constitution has been approved by the executive committee or its appointed sub-committee. Local societies shall send notices of annual general meetings to the national society. The executive committee reserves the right to send an observer to local societies' annual general meetings.

x. Each year a local society shall pay its dues, meet regularly, complete an annual return, submit membership information, and hold a properly constituted AGM. It will at all times behave in a manner consistent with the rules, bye-laws and principles of the Society. The executive committee shall have the power to withdraw or suspend recognition if these conditions are not met subject to the right of the local society to appeal to the annual general meeting.

New clauses xi, xii and xiii are added:

xi. Local societies shall comply with data protection legislation at all times, with respect to the personal data of their own members, national members and the general public. Local societies provided access to the personal data of national members in order to undertake the functions of the society may only use the data for purposes associated with the society. Local societies shall provide personal data of their members to the national society for purposes associated with the society and this data shall only be used in ways that comply with data protection legislation. National and local members may request not to receive communications from the local society and/or the national society.

xii. Local Fabian societies are independent membership associations with their own legal obligations. Recognised local societies are covered under the national society's public liability insurance, in the case of bodily injury or damage to third party property.

xiii. The term Fabian Society is a registered trade mark of the national Fabian Society. Only recognised local Fabian societies have permission from the national society to use the term or any words or images associated with it.

Byelaw 8. Local affiliation to the Labour party

The byelaw is amended to read:

i. A new local society must obtain the agreement of the executive committee on the unit/s of the Labour party to which it may wish to affiliate.

ii. No local society may affiliate to any unit of the Labour party for a period of six months from the date of its recognition.

iii. The agreement of the executive committee must be obtained before a local society affiliates to any additional units of the Labour party.

iv. The executive committee shall have the power to withdraw its agreement to an affiliation subject to the right of the local society to appeal to the annual general meeting.

v. Delegates to units of the Labour party shall be elected either at a meeting or by ballot.

Byelaw 9. Selection of parliamentary candidates and Labour party officers

Byelaw 9 is deleted and replaced with two new byelaws (9 and 10), which read as follows:

9. Labour party elections, selections and nominations – the national society

The executive committee shall lay down procedures for the selection of candidates for public office and Labour party officers which shall be adhered to by the society and its constituent sections.

i. Full members of the national society and full members of local societies whose names have been received at the central office may participate in internal Labour Party ballots as Fabian members, in accordance with the rules of the party (eg 'affiliated supporter' status). The national society and local societies shall promote and facilitate members' ability to participate.

ii. Only the national society shall have the power to make nominations on behalf of the society in internal Labour party elections at region level and above. No nominations will be made for the positions of leader, deputy leader or treasurer of the Labour party, or for leader or deputy leader of Scottish Labour and Welsh Labour, and the candidate for Mayor of London.

iii. The executive committee may decide to nominate for the Socialist Societies seat on the national executive committee, for representatives to the National Policy Forum of the Labour party, or for officers of the Labour party socialist societies executive, in which case the society's vote will be cast for the nominee(s).

iv. Where there is a possibility of an active Fabian being elected to the socialist societies seat on a regional board of the Labour party, a nomination may be made by the executive committee in consultation with the relevant local societies. In the case of Scotland and Wales, the Fabian nominee for this seat will be nominated by the executive of the Scottish or Welsh Fabian groups respectively. In these cases, the society's vote will be cast for these nominees.

v. Should the Labour Party conduct any other process in which the society is eligible to cast votes on behalf of members vote, the executive committee shall decide whether the Fabian vote shall be cast in that process; and if so, shall conduct a ballot of all Fabian members.

10. Labour party elections, selections and nominations – local societies

The executive committee shall lay down procedures for the selection of candidates for public office and Labour Party officers which shall be adhered to by local societies.

i. Nominations for candidates for any elected office below nation/region level shall be made by local Fabian societies with an affiliation to a Labour party unit which entitles them to participate.

ii. Local societies shall send notice to the national society of their intention to make a nomination (whether selection or reselection) in a Labour selection process for public office. The executive committee reserves the right to provide directions or send an observer to oversee the process.

iii. In any contested election within the Labour party where a local society has a right to cast a vote on behalf of its members, the society will only cast a vote after a ballot of members.

iv. Local societies are entitled to nominate prospective candidates for public office (whether selection or re-selection) in any Labour party unit to which they are affiliated or entitled to make a nomination, provided that the number of members resident in the unit and paid up for the current year is seven or more. Only such members may vote on such a nomination, either at a meeting or by ballot. Members may only vote if their names have been supplied to the national society.

v. Voting by a Fabian delegate to a local Labour party unit on prospective candidates, or on any other matter, will be at the discretion of the delegate, in accordance with Rule 3 of the Fabian Society which prohibits mandatory instructions being given to Fabian delegates.

Fabian Fortune Fund

Winner: Diana Warwick, £100
Half the income from the Fabian Fortune Fund goes to support our research programme.

Forms and further information from
Giles Wright, giles.wright@fabians.org.uk

Listings

BIRMINGHAM

For details and information, please contact Andrew Coulson at birminghamfabiansociety@gmail.com

BOURNEMOUTH AND DISTRICT

26 May: Clare Moody MEP, 'BREXIT Update'.
30 June: Chris Evans, MP for Islwyn
The society celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2017 with activities and meetings. Meetings at The Friends Meeting House, Wharnclyffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30pm. Contact Ian Taylor: 01202 396634 for details or taylorbournemouth@gmail.com

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

All meetings at 8pm at the Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton. Please use Meeting House Lane entrance. Details from Ralph Bayley: ralphbayley@gmail.com

BRISTOL

Regular meetings. Contact Gers Rosenberg for details: rosenberg@churchside.me.uk or Arthur Massey: 0117 969 3608 arthur.massey@btinternet.com

CARDIFF

Society reforming. Please contact Jonathan Evans at wynneevans@phonecoop.coop if you are interested.

CENTRAL LONDON

19 April, 7.30pm: Andrew Harrop, General Secretary Fabian Society on 'How will Britain change over the next decade, and what should the Labour party do about it?' Fabian Society office, 61 Petty France, SW1H 9 EU. Details from Giles Wright on 0207 227 4904 or giles.wright@fabians.org.uk

CHISWICK AND WEST LONDON

27 April, 8pm, in the committee room, Chiswick Town Hall: Fiona Twycross, London Assembly Member
27 June: Alice Woudhuysen, London campaigns manager, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG). Details from the secretary, Alison Baker at a.m.baker@blueyonder.co.uk

COLCHESTER

18 May: AGM
29 June: Alex Mayer MEP. 7pm for 7.30pm, hexagonal room, Quaker Meeting House, 6 Church St, Colchester. Details of meetings from Maurice Austin: maurice.austin@phonecoop.coop

COUNTY DURHAM

13 May: Natalie Davison, principal, Bishop Auckland college on 'Further education: key issues and future scenarios'. 1 July: Professor Steve Fothergill, national director, Industrial Communities Alliance on 'English industrial rustbelts; does the government's new industrial strategy solve anything?' Meetings in alternate months at the Lionmouth rural centre, near Esh Winning, DH7 9QE, Saturday 12.15pm – 2pm £3 including soup and rolls. Annual local membership is £8 for waged, £4 for unwaged. No need to say you're coming. Membership not needed on first visit. Details from the secretary, Professor Alan Townsend, 62A Low Willington, Crook, Durham DL15 0BG, 01388 746479, Alan.Townsend@dur.ac.uk

CROYDON AND SUTTON

New society with regular meetings. Contact Paul Waddell on 07540 764596

CUMBRIA AND NORTH LANCASHIRE

Meetings, 6.30pm for 7pm at Castle Green hotel, Kendal. For information contact Robin Cope at robincope@waitrose.com

DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM

Regular meetings at 8pm in Dartford Working Men's Club, Essex Rd, Dartford. Details from Deborah Stoate on 0207 227 4904, or debstoate@hotmail.com

DERBY

Details for meetings from Alan Jones on 01283 217140 or alan.mandh@btinternet.com

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT

New society forming, for details and information contact Kevin Rodgers on 07962 019168 or k.t.rodgers@gmail.com

EAST LOTHIAN

7.30pm in the Buffet Room, the Town House, Haddington. Details of all meetings from Noel Foy on 01620 824386 or noelfoy@lewisk3.plus.com

FINCHLEY

25 May: Dr Yiannis Kitromilides on 'Populism, democracy and Brexit'. 29 June: Rabbi Danny Rich on 'The refugee crisis – moral and political issues'. All meetings at the Blue Beetle, 28 Hendon Lane N3 1TS. Enquiries to Mike Walsh on 07980 602122 or mike.walsh44@ntlworld.com

GLASGOW

Now holding regular meetings. Contact Martin Hutchinson on mail@liathach.net

GLOUCESTER

Regular meetings at TGWU, 1 Pullman Court, Great Western Rd, Gloucester. Details from Malcolm Perry at malcolmperry3@btinternet.com

GRIMSBY

Regular meetings. Details from Pat Holland, hollandpat@hotmail.com

HARROW

Details from Marilyn Devine on 0208 424 9034. Fabians from other areas where there are no local Fabian societies are very welcome to join us.

HASTINGS AND RYE

Meetings held on last Friday of each month. Please contact Valerie Threadgill at val.threadgill@gmail.com

HAVERING

26 April, 7.30pm: Darren Rodwell, leader, Barking and Dagenham Council. Old Chapel, St Mary's Lane, Upminster
24 May, 7.30pm: Vince Maple, Leader of Medway Council. Saffron House, 273 South St, Romford. 14 June. 7pm: Margaret Hodge MP. The Royal, Viking Way, Rainham. Details of all meetings from David Marshall email david.c.marshall@talk21.com, 01708 441189. For latest information, see the website haveringfabians.org.uk

ISLINGTON

13 April, 7.30pm: Andrew Harrop, general secretary, Fabian Society

Italian Trade Centre, 124 Canonbury Road, London N1 2UT. Details of this and future meetings from Adeline Au, email siewyin.au@gmail.com

IPSWICH

Details of all meetings from John Cook, contact@ipswich-labour.org.uk twitter: [suffolkfabians](https://twitter.com/suffolkfabians)

MERSEYSIDE

Please contact James Roberts at jamesroberts1986@gmail.com

NORTHUMBRIA AREA

For details and booking contact Pat Hobson, pat.hobson@hotmail.com

NORTH EAST LONDON

Contact Ibrahim Dogus at ibrahimdogus@gmail.com

NORFOLK

New society forming. Contact Stephen McNair for details, stephen.mcnaire@btinternet.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Details from Lee Garland, secretary@nottsfabians.org.uk, www.nottsfabians.org.uk, twitter @NottsFabians

OXFORD

Please contact Michael Weatherburn at michael.weatherburn@gmail.com

PETERBOROUGH

Meetings at 8pm at the Ramada Hotel, Thorpe Meadows, Peterborough. Details from Brian Keegan on 01733 265769, email brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk
New members very welcome. Meeting at 7.30 The Havenlock Community Centre, Fawcett Rd, Southsea PO4 0LQ. For details, contact Nita Cary at dewicary@yahoo.co.uk

READING AND DISTRICT

For details of all meetings, contact Tony Skuse at tony@skuse.net

SALISBURY

New Society Forming. If interested, please contact Dan Wright on 07763 307677 or at daniel.korbeywright@gmail.com

SHEFFIELD

Regular meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month at The Quaker Meeting House, 10, St James St, Sheffield.S1 2EW Details and information from Rob Murray on 0114 255 8341 or email robertljmurray@hotmail.com

SOUTH WEST LONDON

Contact Tony Eades on 0208487 9807 or tonyeades@hotmail.com

SOUTHEND ON SEA

New society forming. Contact John Hodgkins on 01702 334916

SOUTHAMPTON AREA

For details of venues and all meetings, contact Eliot Horn at eliot.horn@btinternet.com

SOUTH TYNESIDE

10 April: The Early Marine School by Alan Johnson
12 May: Annual Dinner
12 June: AGM
Contact Paul Freeman on 0191 5367 633 or at freemanpsmb@blueyonder.co.uk

SUFFOLK

Details from John Cook, ipswichlabour@gmail.com, www.twitter.cdom/suffolkfabians

SURREY

Regular meetings. Details from Warren Weertman at secretary@surreyfabians.org

THANET

New society with regular meetings. Contact Karen Constantine karenconstantine.co.uk. Website for details www.thanetfabians.org.uk

TONBRIDGE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS

22 April, 8pm: Louise Finer on 'The Role of the European Court of Human Rights in the UK'. Crabb Hall, Christ Church, Tunbridge Wells. Contact Martin Clay at martin.clay@btconnect.com or lorna.blackmore@btinternet.com

TOWER HAMLETS

Regular meetings. Contact: Chris Weavers – 07958 314846 E-mail – towerhamletsfabiansociety@googlemail.com

TYNEMOUTH

Monthly supper meetings, details from Brian Flood on 0191 258 3949

WIMBLEDON

Please contact Andy Ray on 07944 545161 or andyray@blueyonder.co.uk

YORK

31 March, 7.15: Mary Creagh MP on the environment.
21 April, 7.45pm: Becky Tunstall on housing.
19 May, 7.45pm: Katie Ghose on electoral reform. Regular meetings on 3rd or 4th Friday at 7.45pm at Jacob's Well, Off Micklegate, York. Details from Steve Burton on steve.burton688@mod.uk

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Fabian Society regional conference

Saturday 29 April, 9.15am – 4.30pm. The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW.

'Britain in an uncertain world'

Speakers include: Andrew Harrop, Dan Jarvis MP, Clive Betts MP, Louise Haigh MP, Lord Maurice Glasman, Kate Green MP, Gill Furniss MP, Professor Andrew Gamble, Leigh Bramall, Linda McAvan MEP, Bill Adams TUC Tickets: £10 from the Fabian website or ring 0207 227 4903.

House of Commons and Lords meeting and tea

Tuesday 11 July: 2pm 'Labour's vision for education: How can we combat social inequality?' Speakers include Angela Rayner MP, David Lammy MP and Baroness Estelle Morris, 3.30pm Tea in the Chalondeley room, House of Lords. Tickets, £22.50 will be available soon.

Only by winning the next General Election can Labour deliver the change that so many people want.

To Win, it is not enough just to have the support of Labour voters – it also requires earning the support and trust of people who do not normally vote Labour.



To join Usdaw visit: www.usdaw.org.uk or call: 0845 60 60 640



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