

# FABIAN REVIEW

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# ALL ABOARD



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# FABIAN REVIEW

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## A second chance?

Tory divisions are making a people's vote more likely, writes *Andrew Harrop*

IT SEEMS THERE are no bounds to the Conservatives' capacity for division and self-harm on Europe. But beyond the sound and fury, the fantasies of the Conservative Brexiters are slowly crumbling. A negotiated hard Brexit has been an impossibility ever since Theresa May's December agreement with Brussels. Now after the Chequers summit pro-Brexit ministers have been forced to accept that fact or go.

For the pro-European left, it is tempting to lie low and just allow the Conservative party to tear itself apart. But the newfound realism on the Conservative frontbench poses fresh challenges for Labour. For two years, the party has been able to act as the grown-ups on Brexit, with a line that's been appreciably softer and more plausible than the Tories'. With the Conservatives now backing a customs union in all but name, the divide is much less clear and the opposition needs to decide whether to soften its position again.

Shadow ministers always knew that their promise of a customs union was necessary but not sufficient for the economic partnership the country needs. But they have avoided being pinned down on the terms of access to the EU internal market, knowing that if Labour was in power it would face the same dilemmas as the Tories regarding what the public wants and what the EU will accept. This is a particular issue for those Labour MPs who believe that a change of tack on immigration is an essential response to the Brexit vote, because a retreat from full freedom of movement probably means less access to the single market than Britain really needs.

On migration Labour is divided. There are dozens of Labour figures with no personal animosity to the EU who fear what being too far from the cultural instincts of non-metropolitan working-class voters might mean. On the other hand, there are those – including senior frontbenchers – who are passionate about free movement irrespective of the wider relationship with Europe. To paper over the cracks Labour has been almost silent but that

cannot last. The party needs to scope, test and debate all the immigration options that lie between unreformed free movement and zero preferential treatment for EU citizens. It must seek out ideas that can bring the left together and that Brussels might entertain. Labour can continue to oppose Conservative positions without this heavy lifting but it will have nothing to propose of its own.

The Norway option which was the subject of a major backbench rebellion in June will not unite the party. For those worried about a migration backlash it offers almost no change from present policy. Bennite 'lexiters' fear erroneously that it would not permit a radical socialist agenda. And everyone concedes that permanent rule-taking will be very tough for the UK to swallow. Many of the 75 Labour MPs who defied the party whip know this all too. Some of them voted for the EEA because they hope they can stop Brexit altogether. Others have no warmth for rule-taking but see the EEA as the only non-calamitous Brexit deal that the EU will offer.

The call for a 'people's vote' is much more intellectually coherent than the EEA option and it is attracting strong support from both the right and left of Labour. Brexit is a long game and the frontbench will not endorse the idea until the shape of life outside the EU becomes clearer, but the scenarios in which a referendum could become party policy are growing more likely. For a start, almost everyone in Labour will be able to back a vote to stay if no deal is struck. And the same is probably true if all that is on offer is a Norway-style model that is close – but inferior – to the status quo.

By contrast Labour won't be able to press for a second referendum if May is able to get what she wants from the EU27 and strike a bespoke 'Goldilocks' deal. There is no sign yet that Brussels will let this happen, but Brexit has been a rollercoaster and the left must prepare for every eventuality. If May succeeds, unity within Labour will be very hard to sustain. But the odds are against her and the prospect of a fresh vote is growing. **F**

# Shortcuts



## OFFERING SANCTUARY

We have a moral, as well as a legal obligation to assist those caught up in the global migration crisis  
—*Thangam Debbonaire MP*

Many of us were shocked by the news last month of more than 600 migrants who were stranded in the Mediterranean. Refused entry by Italy and Malta, hungry, they waited in numbers far exceeding safe limits for their boat before Spain finally agreed to take them.

Meanwhile, as I write, somebody somewhere in the UK will have received notice from the Home Office confirming their refugee status. This should be a cause for celebration, but elation may turn to worry when they receive 28 days' notice from their landlord to quit their housing. They will probably have few possessions and their relatives may be far away. They'll have been prevented from working and are now concerned about getting a job. They need to find somewhere to live, without money for a deposit. For the many people in this situation, destitution quickly becomes a very real fear.

As I write, someone will be crossing national borders far away from the UK, travelling here to make their application to be reunited with a relative already in this country. Their journey will be difficult and possibly dangerous. If this means they miss their appointment for their case to be considered, they may have to wait weeks for another.

These are not exceptional cases because there is a global migration crisis. Sixty-five million people were forcibly displaced in 2016 through poverty, environmental disaster, war, conflict and persecution.

We have a moral, as well as a legal, obligation to assist. But we also represent people who say they are anxious about immigration's impact on their communities. Ignoring these concerns will not solve the problem.

In June this year, Refugee Week gave MPs the chance to discuss several areas of policy which I believe can address the concerns some people have on immigration, whilst also living up to our principles of supporting human rights, fulfilling our legal obligations and setting an example to the world.

Refugee family reunion is one such issue. Recently, MPs from across the country turned up in significant numbers for a second reading of a private members' bill on refugee family reunion and a right to legal aid. The high attendance was all the more remarkable since this happened on a Friday, which is usually a constituency day, indicating not only that MPs care about bringing refugee families together, but that their constituents are also concerned.

It seems the argument has cut through: someone with confirmed refugee status should be able to live with their family.

## Refugees should have the right to work. They often have the skills, and indeed want to work and contribute to the country

Coordinated lobbying by refugee organisations has made a difference to public and political opinion. We need to capitalise on this and push for the progress of this bill and a separate, similar bill from the House of Lords.

Refugees should also have the right to work. They often have the skills, and indeed want to work and contribute to the country. They don't want to depend on state benefits. But currently they are not allowed to work, except with specific permission, until they have been granted asylum by the Home Office.

The Home Office target to complete asylum decisions within six months is frequently missed, often by months or even years. Meanwhile people are left without opportunities to maintain their skills, support their families and contribute to the national and local economy. They even have restrictions on volunteering.

In contrast to the UK, Uganda not only allows refugees to work immediately, it provides them with land to grow food and start-up finance to set up their own businesses.

We should, at the very least, introduce a right to work after six months – which would also encourage the Home Office to end delays – but I would prefer us to move towards a system whereby they can work immediately. There is surely a left argument – a Labour argument – for supporting this. Other campaigning priorities include ending indefinite immigration detention, restoring legal aid, prioritising free, high-quality English teaching and doing more to create safe and legal routes to the UK with refugee schemes. If we made it easier for people to make in-country or border applications for asylum and resettlement, it could save lives.

Keeping people in refugee camps, at best, leaves people in limbo for years; at worst it creates a recruiting ground for traffickers and people who sexually exploit women.

The forthcoming immigration bill may give us scope to support amendments on many of these areas. We also need to create other opportunities to improve the treatment of those looking for sanctuary in this country.

This is a fundamental part of how we're seen in the world. And, as our place in the world is changing rapidly, we on the left should be leading this debate and these campaigns. **F**

*Thangam Debbonaire is Labour MP for Bristol West*



## FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Labour must build a schools system to bridge society's divides  
—*Richard Bell*

In December of 2006, during the last significant speech on multiculturalism and integration by a Labour leader, Tony Blair argued powerfully that renewing the ties that bind our nation together needn't require us to scrutinise 'what defines us as people' but would instead be achieved through 'integrating at the point of shared, common unifying British values'. Blair sought to make the

progressive, liberal and fair-minded case that no one should be expected to disavow or conceal their faith or cultural inheritance in order to define themselves as, and be viewed as, British. The manner in which he framed this argument, though, hinted at another, markedly less humanist belief: integration is a matter of how we relate to one another not as *people* – as neighbours and potential friends – but as *citizens*. As long as we all adhere to the rule of laws and ascribe to a set of vague but deeply held democratic values and social norms, he seemed to suggest, it shouldn't matter if we actually like one another or not.

Maybe Blair took it as read that proper integration would naturally follow – viewing some semblance of unity as a precondition for more cross-community friendships. But, over a decade later, having watched successive governments strain to pin down and promote the ever-nebulous notion of British values, it's difficult to conclude that his pursuit of this agenda wasn't motivated in part by an aversion to the opposite proposition – that the state should concern itself with who we're mates with.

The disinclination of politicians to be seen to be meddling in private relationships may be understandable; but bonds of attachment and trust matter. In fact, social psychologists have held since the 1950s that meeting and mixing with members of other social and cultural groups under positive conditions dispels prejudice and bolsters social solidarity. And a striking new study of the English school system by Professors Simon Burgess and Lucinda Platt demonstrates that teenagers feel significantly more positively towards peers of other ethnicities where they share a classroom.

We know that attitudes towards difference often form early in life, so it makes sense that schools should be ground zero in any effort to forge a more socially integrated Britain. Many on the left will argue – not unreasonably – that reforming the education system to better promote meaningful contact across social fault lines will require the restoration of councils' pre-academy era role in overseeing admissions to local schools. It's equally true, however, that innovative admissions approaches such as the University of Birmingham free school's 'nodal' system – through which it has adopted multiple demographically dissimilar and geographically distant catchment areas – could be championed by Labour councils and propagated through targeted funding offers without necessitating systems-level reform.

And in order to robustly challenge well-evidenced habits of self-segregation, we

must develop an agenda for improving social integration through schools which encompasses but extends beyond admissions.

The next Labour government must wrestle with the question of how opportunities to meet, mix and connect with young people from other backgrounds might be built into the school day. This will mean bringing forward measures to provide teachers and school leaders with the time, space and institutional support required to cultivate an inclusive school culture; and following the lead of School 21 in super-diverse Newham, which has consciously supported pupils to collaborate through project-based learning and cross-curricular assignments.

Reversing the impact of years of austerity on extra-curricular programmes will be an uphill battle. But leaning on one another to complete a physical challenge, leaving it all on the field for your team, putting on a show and singing your lungs out together are exactly the sort of intense common experience from which shared identities can spring. Not only does boosting participation in these schemes result in greater attainment and wellbeing, then, but these activities contain the raw ingredients of genuinely meaningful mixing experiences.

The task facing Labour is to slice, dice and sauté – to unlock the potential of these experiences to be levellers and to engender habits of solidarity. The party should launch a national drive to bring young people from different walks of life together to participate in sports and arts programmes specifically shaped to create powerful and positive encounters across cultural cleavages. It might



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**In building a school system to bridge our divides, Labour would be practicing a politics which captures the centrality of relationships and trust**

examine the example of the government's National Citizen Service initiative, which has been methodically designed to translate learnings drawn from social psychology into practical action.

In building a school system to bridge our divides, Labour would be practicing a politics which captures the centrality of relationships and trust to social outcomes. The national party might take its lead in this respect from Sadiq Khan's City Hall, which is blazing a trail with policies aimed at cultivating connection and belonging. Importantly, London's Mayor conceives of social integration not as a matter for particular communities, but has emphasised the need for all of us, in all our social, cultural and experiential diversity, to connect across those dimensions of difference. In his efforts to fortify the capital's social fabric, all Londoners are vital threads.

Labour's aim should be no less ambitious than to grow a new ecosystem of trust drawing together people of all backgrounds in communities across the country. This vital work must begin in our schools – the connection engines of globalised Britain. ■

*Richard Bell is head of public affairs, policy and research at the social integration charity The Challenge*



## FRESH LEADERSHIP

Peace is possible when reconciliation is placed at the top of the agenda  
—Catherine West MP

A wall of black smoke billows along the Gazan border. For most, peace in Israel and Palestine could not feel further away.

Over the past few months, tens of thousands of Palestinians have joined the 'great march of return'; a campaign composed of a series of marches which demand right of return for Palestinian refugees and their descendants to their homeland. Elderly men were seen holding banners with the names of the villages they were expelled from 70 years ago as young children. Organisers insisted that the march was for families and would be



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peaceful. However, media reports showed scores of protestors firing slingshots, hurling stones, launching Molotov cocktails and rolling burning tyres towards the Gazan border fence.

On 14 May, these protests became the scene of the deadliest day of violence since the 2014 Gaza War. The Israeli Defence Force launched rounds of tear gas and engaged in a deliberate policy to kill and maim protesters. Around 3,000 people were left injured and at least 58 Palestinians were killed, including an eight-month old baby who died from tear gas inhalation. Such scenes of violence are not isolated incidents; they have sadly characterised this conflict over the recent months and deepened the sense that peace is further away than ever. Israel's use of lethal force in these most recent incidents was not simply disproportionate, it was completely unjustified.

The Palestinian people have an undeniable right to self-determination, and with the emergence of an ever-stronger national identity for Palestinians, the international community must recognise this right and the urgent need for it to be realised with a viable and independent state of Palestine.

Equally, as we mark the centenary of the Balfour declaration, we reflect upon the history of the Israeli diaspora: from escaping the pogroms of the Russian Empire in the 1880s to fleeing the scourge of antisemitism in Eastern Europe in the 1920s, to surviving the Holocaust, where we saw the harrowing result of a violent and racist ideology that placed hatred at its core.

Labour supported the establishment of the state of Israel from the outset. Indeed, it was the first political party in Great Britain to declare its backing for the right of Jewish people to return and live in the region, as

outlined in the war aims memorandum from August 1917, published three months before the Balfour declaration.

History is all too often the story of suffering – the decades of conflict in the Middle East is a prime example of that. But history is also the story of hope, and shows what can be achieved when people – and especially leaders – not only put aside their differences but prioritise working through them. The end of apartheid in South Africa; the Good Friday agreement; the Colombian peace process and the recent de-escalation of tensions on the Korean peninsula have all shown that peace is possible when reconciliation is placed at the top of the agenda.

Both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples are in desperate need of fresh leadership. Hamas continues to incite violence and coordinate rocket attacks into Israel and that, combined with President Abbas' constant refusal to hold elections, failure to contain the military wing of Hamas and his recent speech at the Palestinian National Council in which were contained a series of vile antisemitic remarks, is indicative of how the authority is deepening tensions. On the other side, prime minister Netanyahu's hard-line policies force the political discourse ever further to the right and away from that ideal of reconciliation. Added to the backdrop of this woeful saga is President Trump's reckless decision to relocate the United States embassy to Jerusalem, which not only broke the international consensus but further fuelled the fury of the Palestinian people. A new generation of leaders who strive for peace, democracy and transparency is desperately needed.

The points of divergence remain clear: Israeli settlements, rights of refugees and of course the status of Jerusalem. At the

time of the Oslo Accords in 1993, there were approximately 250,000 settlers beyond the Green Line, today the figures stands close to 640,000, with roughly two-thirds of this population concentrated around East Jerusalem. With each year, this situation becomes more difficult to reverse or at the very least resolve. Whilst we are now seeing public support for a two-state solution from both the Israelis and the Palestinians beginning to decline, the largest roadblock for real progress on these issues is the political elite.

The competing and frequently mutually exclusive national narratives of leaders on both sides mean the only political solution to this conflict is a two-state solution. In the absence of a renewed commitment to the peace process, we face the appalling prospect of a third intifada and perpetual war, death and suffering.

The international community must use every tool available to help facilitate reconciliation between both peoples, and most importantly a lasting peace.

I believe in Israel. I believe in Palestine. It is time to consign the old adages of being 'pro-Palestinian' and 'pro-Israel' to history and adopt in full the approach of being pro-peace. **F**

*Catherine West is Labour MP for Hornsey and Wood Green*



## PRESERVING THE LEGACY

For its long-term health, the NHS needs more than a cash injection  
—*Claire Sewell*

"The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it" sounds just like the sort of thing Nye Bevan might have said. There is still a dispute about whether he actually did, as Jeremy Corbyn found out when he tweeted the quote in the run-up to last year's election only for journalists to write that it came from a TV play on Bevan's life. Either way, the NHS's post-war architect was a firm believer that for the NHS to work, and continue to work, everyone needed to be on board with the universal underpinnings of the service. The founding

principles of the NHS were three-fold: free at the point of delivery; a comprehensive service available to everyone; and primarily funded through taxation. From its first day, 5 July 1948, 94 per cent of the British public had enrolled with the NHS and were eligible to access free consultations with and treatment from doctors, nurses, pharmacists, opticians and dentists. It was not all plain sailing though. In a move which echoes anti-welfare sentiment today, concern over the 'feckless' poor taking advantage of the system, was one of the factors in Conservative opposition to the introduction of the NHS.

By 1951 the initial rush on the NHS and overspending – products of years of underprovision – were petering out, but with a Korean war-effort to fund, Labour still introduced prescription charges for false teeth and glasses. Bevan, who had recently been made minister of Labour, resigned from the government in protest of this first departure from a truly universal NHS. In his resignation speech on 23 April, Nye foreshadowed that "the health service will be like Lavinia – all the limbs cut off and eventually the tongue cut out, too".

Seventy years on from its creation, the NHS is under threat of being dismantled. After enduring eight years of austerity measures and cuts, the system is at breaking point with NHS England facing a 'funding black hole' of £22bn by 2020–21. Even the recently announced £20bn spending boost may not be enough, given that it translates into an annual budget increase that still falls below the average rise since the NHS was founded.

Regardless of headline-grabbing bed shortages, long waiting times and concerns over falling standards of care, the NHS remains totemic to the British identity. According to research by the King's Fund, 77 per cent of the public believe the NHS should be maintained in its current form, with even more – a whopping 90 per cent – supporting the founding principles of the service. A smaller majority of adults (66 per cent) are even willing to pay more of their own taxes to fund the NHS.

The public want the NHS to be revived, and it might look as if, with their injection of extra cash, the Conservatives are beginning to listen. But setting aside questions about how the increase will be paid for without an upfront commitment to higher taxation, there are persistent concerns about the NHS's long-term health. An injection of extra cash alone will not be enough to halt the creeping privatisation of the nation's health service and address the post code

lottery of access to treatment. Mental health is an area of particular concern. Despite May's pledge that mental health care would (finally) be given parity of esteem with physical health, the government has failed to introduce ring-fenced mental health funding. In 2016–17 some children waited as long as 22 months to see a mental health professional and children in Cambridge and Peterborough (one of only nine trusts to reply to a BBC freedom of information request) had to wait an average of 16 weeks. Despite this, half of clinical commissioning groups decided to cut their mental health budgets for 2018.

In his resignation speech back in 1951, Bevan urged: "There is only one hope for mankind and that is democratic Socialism. There is only one party in Great Britain which can do it and that is the Labour party."

While the Conservatives quietly chip away at the NHS, it is time for Labour to step up and galvanise public support for free at the point of delivery, universal health care the way Nye Bevan did 70 years ago. As Labour knuckles down to prepare its manifesto the party seems to be on the right track with shadow health secretary, Jon Ashworth, pledging a restructure of the NHS "where privatisation is banished and we restore a universal public NHS". Ahead of the next general election Labour needs to focus on delivering a fully costed plan for the NHS and continue to tap in to the groundswell of support for the service in its 70th year. **F**

*Claire Sewell works in communications for a charity and has a PhD in the history of medicine*



## MUNICIPAL MIGHT

Councils have been under sustained attack. It is time to champion their role

—Emma Burnell

There is nothing more annoying in politics that a bit of imagery that makes no actual sense but works really well to obfuscate the reality of a debate. The right are the absolute masters of this. It is why their line that Labour had 'maxed out the nation's

credit card' worked so well despite being economically illiterate nonsense. Over time this particular line has caused the kind of damage to the UK's infrastructure, investment, productivity, equality and economy that means we have lost a decade of potential improvement. Nowhere is this more felt than in local government.

The need for more of just about everything in local government is obvious now to most people. Local government has shed staff and services because it has had to. Its leaders – both political and bureaucratic – make difficult, sometimes heart-wrenching decisions about what they cannot now do on a daily, weekly, monthly basis. But regularly as clockwork, the right is now attacking the officers in some councils who earn more than the prime minister.

This is a very clever bit of sophistry. Not least because the prime minister – in the grand scheme of things – doesn't actually earn all that much. Not in pure salary terms. The massive free central London residence plus country house make up for that somewhat. As does the fact they won't incur a great deal of living costs. They will also, should they so choose, make a lot of money after they leave power. None of this is available to senior council officers who are sometimes, but not very often, paid more than the monetary value of the prime minister.

Good council officers are worth their weight in platinum. We don't have enough, partly because we don't offer enough in terms of decent pay and conditions, but the people I have met at the top of local government were – for the most part – incredibly dedicated public servants who even under the harshest of circumstances brought far, far more to the areas they service than they ever take out.

Some councils do fail and there must always be a way to make sure that they are well scrutinised and monitored so that local people can be confident they are delivering on their behalf. This scrutiny clearly fell down in Northamptonshire where a combination of poor politics and bad management led to the council effectively going bust earlier this year. But for every Northamptonshire there is a Preston.

Preston Council has done the extraordinary and brought municipal socialism back to radical life fit for the 21st century. The 'Preston model' is about keeping as much local investment local and grassroots as possible. This means the council getting involved in things we have long been told are not the business of local government, investing in small businesses and workers



co-ops, for example, and starting a credit union. It is also harnessing the employment and economic power of local public services. It is an ongoing good news story for a town which, just a few short years ago, thought there would be precious little good news to go around, and it is being unambiguously and unashamedly led by a council willing to flex some muscle along with some imagination.

The Labour leadership are very keen on the Preston model and keen to see it implemented elsewhere. As am I. But this must be led by localities. As we have seen with the government's stop/start approach to the Northern Powerhouse, localism can only work well when it is developed from towns and neighbourhoods upwards, not imposed and controlled by an overweening centre.

Which is not to say there isn't plenty the Labour party can do now to support its councils in their work. Ensuring that councillors are better represented at ever level of party decision-making would be a great way of embedding respect for local decisionmakers and the work they do into the culture of the party. Which would also ensure that when Labour does come to power, its ability, willingness and plans to give that power away to localities are shaped and understood by the very practitioners of municipal socialism that the next Labour government wishes to champion.

Labour should be a party that celebrates the good that can be done locally, not just in the delivery of vital public services, but in the embedding of a better way of life. It is this kind of grassroots-driven cultural change that could be at the heart of a quiet, Corbynite revolution. **F**

*Emma Burnell is a writer and commentator on politics*



## PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS

Domestically and internationally, we need to lead the way on inclusive growth —*Seema Malhotra MP*

There is a growing realisation that the economic development paradigm we have been so accustomed to for the past few decades

has disconnected wealth creation from social justice and this has delivered inequality alongside growth. Now, as policymakers grapple with huge challenges ahead, debate about how the international community better delivers inclusive growth is becoming increasingly mainstream. And it is a debate we need to lead from the centre-left.

Discontent around low growth and inequality in Britain was highlighted by the Brexit vote which, in its own stark way, crystallised the voice of the disenfranchised and the 'left behind'. The paradox however, as Yvette Cooper recently highlighted, is that people voted to come out of Europe, but not to lose out. But it isn't just in the UK that economic growth has left middle and lower incomes behind, with mistargeted austerity policies making the situation much worse. Worldwide, in response to global and domestic policy failures, we see nationalist movements gaining ground. Alongside them are alternative political voices from the radical left which people are turning to in hope of change and which are starting to shift the political centre of gravity.

The conference of the OECD global parliamentary network in Westminster back in April brought together 55 parliamentarians from across the world on the topic of inclusive growth. The conference highlighted how urban migration, demand on public services, traffic congestion, poor air quality, low incomes, housing costs, waste production and issues of community cohesion and loneliness are all shared challenges. One response has been the development of 'smart cities' that integrate technology and communication services into the operation of the city's infrastructure to enhance the efficiency of both public and private services.

The policy implications of smart cities are wide and would encompass almost all Whitehall departments on big data policy, privacy and ethics. It is also evident that 5G communications networks will be critical to supporting smart cities. This application of new technologies and how we govern in this space is an area where our politics and parliament need to catch up. Nonetheless, harnessing the power of big data and the internet of things is revolutionising the way cities are run – from public transport, to the water supply, to citizen participation – and is part of the new digital race that will increasingly define success and competitive advantage.

Smart cities are part of today's story of progress, but it is politicians who need to drive a vision of society that can deliver inclusion rather than greater inequality, and they must be measured on their achievement in doing so.

The idea that progress will be led solely by the market is therefore misleading; all the evidence points to the need for political and civic vision and leadership as enablers for new investment, entrepreneurship and shared prosperity.

In May, with Liam Byrne MP, the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on inclusive growth, I spoke at the OECD global forum in Paris which ran alongside the OECD ministerial council meeting. One key message at the event was that both developed and emerging economies are experiencing are strikingly similar social and economic challenges. Worldwide, countries are reaching similar crisis points whether in relation to jobs, public services, housing, migration or social integration – and tackling them requires a multilateral response.

There have been widening income disparities over the last three decades in most OECD countries, highlighting the need to measure beyond the 'average' individual or household when gauging the success of pro-growth policies. But OECD research shows that even in developed countries, redistribution schemes cannot be the only response to the rising poverty rates in certain segments of the population.

The OECD concludes that policies aimed at addressing the rising inequality of opportunities worldwide will fail unless they ensure more equal access to high-quality education, health care and infrastructure – all of which remain unevenly spread among social groups and across regions and places within many countries.

Economic growth cannot just be seen any more as an end in itself. Domestically and internationally, we need a firmer focus on wellbeing and policies that can create opportunities for all segments of the population and distribute the benefits of growth more fairly across society.

But with multilateral institutions themselves in some crisis, how we reinvent and reimagine intergovernmental politics working for a new age, with new economic and security challenges, has to be part of the national conversation. In the context of a growing population, climate change and resource scarcity, politics needs to reinvent itself to put us on a different trajectory to prosperity and progress, a healthier environment and human flourishing. Labour must grasp the opportunities and lead the way. **F**

*Seema Malhotra is Labour MP for Feltham and Heston and vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on inclusive growth*

# The Corbyn dilemma

The Labour leader's position seems unassailable.  
*Tom Quinn* considers what this might mean for the party's  
election chances – and for the succession



*Dr Tom Quinn is senior lecturer in the department of government at Essex University and author of *Electing and Ejecting Party Leaders in Britain**

IT CAN BE difficult to know what Labour party members see in their leader, Jeremy Corbyn. Here is a man who spent 32 years on parliament's backbenches before storming the Labour leadership contest of 2015. His career until then had been devoted entirely to his collection of causes, in particular relating to Western foreign policy. Consequently, Corbyn is not necessarily associated with most of the skills that leaders are reckoned to require. He lacks both the strategic vision of Tony Blair and the tactical cunning of Harold Wilson. He does not have the forensic abilities of John Smith or the attention for policy detail of Gordon Brown. Corbyn has neither the rhetorical flourishes nor the debating talents of Michael Foot. While he shares the ideological certainty – but not the ideological orientation – of Hugh Gaitskell, he possesses little of his predecessor's reputation for intellect. And as the sham-bolic response to Labour's anti-Semitism scandal showed, Corbyn is utterly devoid of Neil Kinnock's bruising party-management skills.

Yet Corbyn's position within the Labour party is unchallenged. He inspires not just support but adulation among his followers, the eponymous Corbynistas. This is sometimes characterised by critics as a personality cult, although it is not one directed by the leader himself. Corbyn is the figurehead for a grassroots movement, an inspiration to the idealistic young people who flocked to his two leadership campaigns and to returning veteran left-wingers who deserted the party under Blair. Their affection for the

leader is evident in the ubiquitous singing of 'Oh, Jeremy Corbyn!'. Their previous chant of 'Jez we can' mimicked the slogan of Barack Obama, another politician whose enthusiastic young followers created for their hero – a halo of moral superiority.

So, why does Corbyn elicit this reaction from his followers? The answer lies both in the personal and the political. After Labour's defeat in the 2015 general election, the left successfully pivoted away from Ed Miliband, whom it had previously supported, and blamed the election result on his failure to oppose austerity. Only a genuine alternative to 'Tory cuts' would entice voters back to Labour. Corbyn repeated this argument throughout the 2015 leadership contest and it found a receptive audience, especially among those who flooded into the party thanks to the new one-member-one-vote selection system. Despite three decades as an MP, Corbyn could present himself as the change candidate, promising to break with the hated Blairite past.

His victory was made easier by Corbyn's agreeable personality. There was no bombast or superficial charm. Instead, he appeared resolutely unspun, slightly unkempt (though smarter now), and most important, seemingly honest and principled. His gentle manner and grandfatherly appearance accentuated the effect. It helps explain why his supporters are so protective of Corbyn – some might say thin-skinned – when he is criticised.

Corbyn's leadership style makes for a passive approach to running the party. The vacuum is filled by others, some

of whom answer to Corbyn, such as communications director, Seumas Milne. Others use Corbyn as their inspiration, most obviously Momentum, the grassroots organisation that advances the Corbynite cause. Moderates see it as a party-within-a-party that seeks the deselection of centrist MPs and councillors. Corbyn himself has not called for deselections but neither has he moved to stop local pressure being applied. Beyond Momentum, thousands of Corbynistas push the narrative on social media. It is a frequent complaint of moderates that they face regular online abuse from Corbyn's supporters. Corbyn does not direct this abuse and whenever called upon he condemns it – but he does little to stamp it out.

Corbyn nevertheless holds an unassailable position. After exceeding expectations in the 2017 general election, he became the first major-party leader since Kinnock in 1987 to stay on (in a non-caretaker role) after leading his party to defeat. He utilised his campaigning abilities – his main political skill, honed over 30 years and road-tested in two leadership campaigns – to deprive the Conservatives of their majority. For many Labour activists it felt like a moral victory. Moderate MPs, already on the back foot after their failed coup in 2016, were in full retreat.

When a party loses a general election but retains its leader, it has decided its future strategy: one more heave. The conventional wisdom within Labour was that Theresa May's government was weak and liable to collapse. An early election looked likely and Corbyn would finish off the job he started. Labour just had to hold firm and wait for the government to tear itself apart over Brexit.

This year's local election results led to the first serious questioning of this wisdom. Labour expected major gains in its London strongholds and the capture of flagship Conservative councils. The government was there for the taking. Beset by incompetence over Grenfell and Windrush, divided over Brexit, and suffering regular cabinet departures, the Tories looked chaotic. But Labour came up short, failing to win its London targets and making minimal seat gains in a result that did not point to a future general election victory.

Evidence for Labour's weakness was already there. Despite the government's travails, the Conservatives were (and are) polling 4–5 points ahead of Labour. A clue to the reasons behind this lies in leader evaluations, where Corbyn trails May by 10–15 points in YouGov's polls on who would make the best prime minister. Swing voters do not share Labour activists' enthusiasm for their leader, it appears. That perception was reinforced in March after Russia was implicated in the Salisbury nerve-agent attack. May was lauded for her strong response but Corbyn's equivocal reaction evoked suspicion, echoing existing doubts about his patriotism.

Corbyn defied expectations in the last general election, but it might be asking too much to expect him to pull off the same trick twice. Conservatives want to force Corbyn to do the day job until the expected election in 2022. He does not think quickly on his feet, which is evident during Prime Minister's Questions. He makes unforced errors, such as his call for the immediate invoking of Article 50 after the EU

referendum. He will also have his hands full over Labour's divisions. By 2022, moreover, Corbyn will be 73 and have been leader for seven years, perhaps long enough for his appeal to have worn off.

Despite Corbyn's clear and persistent weaknesses, it is hard to identify immediate threats to his position. The PLP's moderate old guard is a busted flush. It failed to remove Corbyn in the coup of 2016 and any residual hopes of forcing him out were blown away by the general election. Some of its leading figures, such as Andy Burnham, Tristram Hunt and Heidi Alexander, saw no way back and left parliament. Others remained, including Hilary Benn, Yvette Cooper and Chuka Umunna, but they already look like yesterday's men and women.

The greatest threat the moderates pose to Corbyn is on Brexit, given the leader's Euroscepticism in a pro-EU party. Yet Labour's ambiguous Brexit strategy has served it well, attracting remainers while not alienating too many working-class leavers. Among the grassroots, discontent has been muted: as former Labour MP Tom Harris observed, party members love the EU, but they love Corbyn even more.

When Corbyn lagged in the polls before the 2017 election, some voices on the left, including the Unite leader, Len McCluskey, raised the leadership question. It could be revived if Labour's electoral prospects look anaemic in the coming months and years. However, a leadership contest raises the question of who replaces Corbyn. The left's preference would be for another true believer. John McDonnell, the shadow chancellor, could stand, as might someone from the younger generation, such as Rebecca Long-Bailey, the shadow business secretary. But Corbyn's authority derives from his adoration by the grassroots; it is hard to see the Glastonbury crowd singing the names of McDonnell or Long-Bailey with quite the same gusto. The safer option for the left might be to retain Corbyn, even if questions linger over his electability.

Moderates, meanwhile, hope that when he does step down, a unity candidate could emerge, perhaps a Corbyn loyalist from the shadow cabinet. Emily Thornberry, the shadow foreign secretary, and Keir Starmer, the Brexit spokesman, are both prominent and effective. Barry Gardiner, the international trade spokesman, has won respect for his punchy media performances. But the difficulty for all of them is that the left will be desperate to preserve Labour's radicalism and avoid a repeat of the Kinnock years, when a leftist leader abandoned his old principles and shifted to the centre.

Labour faces a dilemma. It confronts a weak and tired government that could be defeated provided that the opposition presented a credible alternative, but doubts remain that Labour under Corbyn fits that bill. Yet the leader is adored and protected by the grassroots. Criticism of his performance is met by retorts that the same complaints were made before the 2017 election. But 'one more heave' is rarely enough for opposition parties to win elections. If Labour loses again under Corbyn, the big question will be whether the party changes direction. As Labour's 2015 leadership contest showed, parties can do dramatic things in the wake of electoral defeat. ■

### The safer option for the left might be to retain Corbyn, even if questions linger over his electability

# Women's choices

Why do women vote Labour? And what does that mean for the party's chances in the next election?

*Rosalind Shorrocks and Anna Sanders take a look*



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Traditionally, women in the UK have been more likely than men to vote Conservative. Indeed, had women never won the right to vote in 1918, the outcome of an all-male electorate would have seen Labour win every election between 1945 and 1979. However, overall differences between men and women's voting behaviour have gradually narrowed over time – and in the 2017 general election, Labour was marginally more successful amongst women than men, whilst the Conservatives were slightly more successful amongst men than women. A closer look at voting patterns in the last two elections, however, shows that Labour is particularly successful amongst *young* women – especially those under the age of 35. In 2017 for example, 66 per cent of women in this age group voted Labour, compared to 55 per cent of men, according to the British Election Study. Conversely, 31 per cent of men in this age group voted Conservative, compared to just 22 per cent of women.

The propensity for young women to vote for parties on the left is a phenomenon witnessed in other European countries, but in the UK this pattern only emerged in the last two general elections. This suggests that it is related to the specific UK context in 2015 and 2017. Our research indicates that the economic crisis and especially austerity policies are crucial to understanding Labour's success with younger women voters in the UK and to determining what the party might need to build on that support in the next election.

Through their over-representation in caring roles, women are more likely to rely on welfare services and benefit payments than men: one-fifth of women's income comes from welfare payments compared to one-tenth of men's. Women also comprise two-thirds of the public sector workforce. As a result austerity has hit women hardest over the last eight years, as organisations such as the Women's Budget Group have found. Indeed, from 2010 to 2020 86 per cent of the

burden of austerity is estimated to have fallen on women. This has largely been due to the government's reliance on spending reductions, rather than tax increases.

Unsurprisingly, then, women do tend to express more pessimism than men when asked about the cost of living, their financial situation, and the NHS. Crucial to understanding recent elections however, is the fact that *young* women in particular are concerned about their financial prospects and living costs. According to data from the British Election Study, they are the most pessimistic group when compared both to men of their age and women of older ages.

This is consistent with what we know about the impact of austerity policies: namely, that numerous measures will have disproportionately hit younger women of working and childbearing age: cuts to child tax credits and child benefit; the abolition of child trust funds and the health in pregnancy grant (a one-off payment given to mothers); and reduced eligibility for the Sure Start maternity grant (a one-off lump payment of £500 for the cost of having a child). On top of this, cuts in local government budgets of up to 33 per cent, have led to widespread closure of services which support mothers and children. A survey by the Sutton Trust has estimated that up to 1,000 Sure Start centres have closed since 2009, and it is likely that this figure will increase as local government budgets continue to shrink.

Meanwhile, older voters, including older women, were largely protected from the harshest impacts of austerity thanks to measures taken by successive governments. This is especially seen with the 'triple lock' on pensions. Implemented in 2011, the triple lock was designed to see the basic state pension increase by average earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent – whichever is highest. This led to a significant increase in the value of pensions in comparison



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with earnings. Between 2010 and 2016, the basic state pension – upon which women are more likely than men to rely as a source of income – increased by 22.2 per cent, compared to a growth in earnings of 7.6 per cent and a growth in prices of 12.3 per cent. This was complemented by commitments to keep pensioner benefits, including free bus passes, free TV licenses and the winter fuel allowance. Finally, the ring-fencing of NHS budgets has benefited older generations as NHS spending on retired households is nearly double that for non-retired households.

We can see then that younger women have been disproportionately hit by austerity compared to men, whilst older women have been somewhat protected from it – and that this has made younger women less likely to support the Conservatives.

In contrast, Labour's policy offers to the electorate in the last two elections are likely to have appealed to younger women voters. Many of Labour's policies have sought to explicitly dismantle austerity measures implemented under the coalition and Conservative governments. In 2015, Labour promised to abolish the 'bedroom tax' and to review universal credit. The latter in particular has raised concern among gender equality advocates due to its payment into a single account. These anti-austerity pledges continued in 2017, with promises to end six-week delays in universal credit, prevent the closure of Sure Start centres, and abolish the two-child policy on child tax credits (otherwise known as the 'rape clause').

Data from the British Election Study confirms that Labour's alternative policy offer has played well with younger women: the pessimism of younger women about their living costs and financial situation is strongly associated with their higher relative vote choice for Labour in 2015 and 2017. Once younger women's greater economic pessimism is taken into account, they are no different to men in their vote choice.

Given that Labour's policy offers in the last two elections have resonated with younger women hit by spending cuts and rising levels of job insecurity, Labour should continue to offer a strong alternative to austerity

in order to retain them. In particular the party should eschew cuts to working-age benefits, including those to family welfare.

However, the last election showed that Labour is weak when it comes attracting the support of older voters. And in particular Labour has consistently been unsuccessful in attracting older women. In the 2017 context this is somewhat puzzling, as Labour offered a range of commitments which would particularly benefit older women: keeping the triple lock until 2025; maintaining pensioner benefits; and compensation for women born in the 1950s affected by increases in the state pension age. However, these policies garnered criticism over their cost. We know that older voters are much less likely than younger voters to trust Labour on the economy, so generous spending commitments may have little influence – or worse, a negative impact – on the votes of older generations already sceptical about Labour's ability to handle the economy. Future policy proposals from Labour should consider this demographic: properly costed pension commitments will surely help as the party attempts to present an image of economic competency to the electorate.

What about men? Labour used to have an electoral advantage amongst men, but in 2017 the Conservatives won a higher proportion of men's votes than Labour did. This is partly due to factors specific to the 'Brexit' election, such as the collapse of Ukip – a party which men are more likely to back. Of course, one way for Labour to win back the votes of older men would be to take a harder stance on Brexit, since this demographic was the group most supportive of leaving the EU. But this presents the party with a dilemma, as such an approach would risk alienating its younger voters who were more likely to have voted Remain.

In some ways this is emblematic of the party's wider electoral problem: the priorities and values of those most supportive of the party (young women) are very much at odds with the priorities and values of its traditional, but waning, support base (working class men). Labour will need to chart a course which speaks to the economic concerns of both groups, and plays down their value differences. ■

# Working together

Unions must work alongside Labour to make work the number one political issue and to deliver real change, writes Dave Ward



*Dave Ward is general secretary of the CWU*

**A**S WE THINK about the future for the labour movement, the starting point must be for us to reflect on where we are today – and the picture is not pretty.

Stagnating wages, plummeting investment, spiralling personal debt, entrenched inequality and insecure employment are not distant prospects, but have taken hold in our economy. While we may not yet think of the past eight years of Tory-led government as ideologically driven in the same way as the 1980s, under the guise of austerity they have delivered significant change.

In the world of work, zero-hours contracts, bogus self-employment and in-work poverty are the norm for millions of people. And the issues aren't confined to the margins of the labour market. When I say at rallies that I can't remember a time when workers felt under greater pressure to work harder for less, all I can see is a sea of heads nodding in agreement – teachers, nurses, doctors, transport workers, private and public sector workers are all coming under ever greater strain, as the workplace has become a more pressurised environment than at any time in living memory.

But do we yet truly grasp the scale of this challenge – and is the labour movement equal to the task of tackling it?

It's firstly the trade union movement that needs to face up to this crisis in the world of work – and there are some hard facts we cannot avoid. It's an uncomfortable truth that, at a time when in-work poverty is at a record high, the trade union movement has never spoken for fewer people in the workplace – and membership is lowest amongst those in insecure work. If we fail to attract more people to our ranks, we'll have let down not just this generation, but future generations too.

Together with the need to recruit more members we need a serious strategy to deal with insecure employment.

The first part of the union response was the demonstration for a New Deal for Workers that took place this May. We now need to build on this with a simple but effective four-point plan to promote unity, collectivism and some honest discussions about where we are and where we're going.

First, we are calling for unions to agree a common bargaining agenda to tackle insecure work – including zero-hours contracts, fixed-term contracts, contracts without holiday pay or sick pay, fake self-employment – and use that to challenge all employers where we have recognition and mobilise our members to fight for it. If all trade unions agreed to push a set of core issues in collective bargaining this would not just be a powerful message to employers, but a signal to workers everywhere that trade unions are on the march.

Second, we need to hold a summit where unions sit down and agree a charter, as we did with the Bridlington principles in 1939, which aimed to resolve disputes among unions. I believe the time has come for a new agreement for greater co-operation between unions, allowing us to better organise the millions who aren't already members. We often talk about the dangers of competition in society: we also have to act against it in our own movement. We must go further than having a disputes procedure between unions and work towards a strategy to recruit people who we aren't currently reaching.

Third, we need to publish our own manifesto explaining what constitutes a new deal for workers. There's fresh thinking going on in the Labour party, often working together with the Institute for Employment Rights and its manifesto for labour law. We can build on that with some fresh thinking of our own.

On pensions for instance, we need to halt the trend that is seeing the burden shifted onto workers while executive



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pay and dividends continue to increase. On trade unions we need a positive set of rights – from access to workplaces to changes to recognition rules – and a clear agenda on sectoral collective bargaining that can be rolled out on day one of a Labour government.

And fourth, unions should be coming together to determine the forms of action we can take in support of our agenda. This should be the most important issue at TUC Congress in September this year. From there, we should agree a day of action early in 2019 – and work out what action is deliverable.

In the past, mounting a radical challenge to the government and employers has focused on calls for a general strike, but too often the inability to get agreement on this makes it an excuse to do nothing. So we should focus on what is actually deliverable, with action backed up with the collective strength of the communications and social media expertise of different unions, to create a menu of options that workers can choose from on a given date.

I genuinely believe that there's now a different mood out there among workers. If we set out to work together like never before, we will deliver a bold new deal and workers will benefit from changes in the world of work rather than losing out.

Alongside this industrial agenda for the labour movement, we need to ensure unions are at the centre of political change too. On the political front there is no doubt in my mind that Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell understand the need for Labour to promise fundamental change if we

are going to address the structural inequality and imbalance of power in our economy.

For it is not just the legacy of the past 10 years that worries me, but what the future holds. We're at a crossroads where one route will lead to ever greater power for gigantic corporations like Amazon and Facebook, while most of us scramble for whatever short-term, low-pay work these companies have to offer us. The other road is one where we re-assert the importance of collectivism and shift the balance of power back to working people.

At such a crucial time, then, the role of trade unions must be to continue to support the Labour leadership and work to ensure we can get a Labour government that is in a position to deliver. And given the current political turmoil, that means being ready for an election at any time.

Equally, we have to make the world of work the number one political issue in this country to connect with working-class voters across the UK. Obviously we need to fight for a Brexit that puts workers' rights and jobs first, but too often in this debate it sounds like we're just arguing to keep what we have. Given the scale of the problems we face, there would be no greater gift

to the populist right than the labour movement being seen as the defender of the status quo.

On all fronts, I'm clear, then, that the labour movement must be pushing a radical agenda for change. Industrially and politically, there has rarely been a more important time for this and unions should be leading the wider labour movement to re-assert trade union values and secure a new deal for all workers in the UK. **F**

**Corbyn and McDonnell understand the need for Labour to promise fundamental change to address the structural inequality in our economy**

# Confessions of a Blairite

As he spearheads the fight to stop Brexit, Andrew Adonis talks to *Kate Murray* about his leftwards journey and the need for a radical agenda to transform the country

**A**NDREW ADONIS HAS confounded a fair few expectations in his time, not least his own. He had not foreseen that he would remain a career politician after his first stint as a minister under Tony Blair. And, more recently, he had not bargained on becoming the standard-bearer for the remain cause. But over the last few months, he's been criss-crossing the country, speaking to those who voted to leave the European Union, as well as leading the fight against Brexit in the House of Lords and in the media. It's an unexpected transformation into a frontline campaigner for a man often perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a thinker not a doer.

But Lord Adonis still has some surprises to spring. For this ex-New Labour minister seems to have been on an unexpected political journey. "It probably is true to say that I've moved to the left as I've got older, curiously, which isn't usual in politics," he says. "It is partly that times are different and it is also that I've become much more persuaded of the need for bold state action."

Coming as it does from a man who still calls himself a Blairite, his description in his new book of Blair – along with Nigel Farage – as one of the 'midwives of Brexit' feels startling. But Adonis believes it is important to be honest about the mistakes that were made when Labour was in government. "I'm proud of having worked with Tony. It doesn't mean to say that Tony got everything right," he says.

He identifies three key reasons why Blair and New Labour must shoulder some of the blame for Brexit. First, he claims, allowing unrestricted immigration after 2004 was 'clearly a big mistake'.

"We should have aligned our approach to migration from central and eastern Europe much more closely with our European partners," he says. "We thought we were stealing a march on them. It looks grimly ironic in retrospect. I don't think for a moment that if Tony could take that decision again he'd take the same decision."

Second, New Labour pandered too much to the right-wing media, he believes. "We never made a strong pro-European case while we were in government apart from, ironically, on the issue of migration, where we did stand up for unrestricted right to work after 2004." And then Blair himself, in coming out for the idea of a vote on the European constitution, allowed the idea of a referendum on Europe to take hold.

Adonis says: "Although the first order mistakes were made by Cameron – and the populism which drove it was clearly Farage – we did play a part, through immigration and through not making a strong enough pro-European case, and through ourselves paving the way for Euro-referendums, in what has happened. It is only by recognising that that we can get things right for the future."

While he's in confessional mode, Adonis is repentant

**We never made a strong pro-European case while we were in government apart from, ironically, on migration**





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about his lack of involvement in the Euro-referendum campaign back, an absence which was partly due to his belief that there was ‘no chance’ that people would vote to leave the EU.

“I’ve learned the hard way and that’s partly why I’ve run at this in such a determined fashion,” he says. “I’m absolutely determined for my generation not to repeat the mistake that we made two years. I feel a really big sense of duty about that, and I feel a big sense of duty to my kids as well about it too.”

His new book *Saving Britain*, co-authored with journalist Will Hutton, sets out the economic argument for abandoning Brexit. But it also makes a powerful emotional case for remaining in the EU. Adonis says our EU membership is, for him, both a ‘head and heart’ issue.

“Two years ago there wasn’t enough heart. David Cameron was incapable of making a speech about the European ideal because he didn’t believe in it,” Adonis says. “Whereas most of us on the left do actually feel this is an idealistic issue and not just a practical economic issue.”

So how then can Brexit be stopped? In practical terms, Adonis says, the breakthrough will need to come in the House of Commons when the prime minister presents the withdrawal treaty this autumn. The ‘absolute requirement’,

he stresses, is that Labour has to vote against the treaty and force a ‘people’s vote’.

“That’s why I’m campaigning so hard at the moment. It is to persuade the Labour leadership, because it is not a problem with Labour members, who are overwhelmingly in favour of staying in the European Union. If you did a poll among Young Fabians I would imagine you would get something like 95 per cent in favour. And if you did it for the Fabian membership as a whole, I would be surprised if it was less than two-thirds and I suspect it would be higher than that.”

“The issue we have got is to get the Labour leadership in that place and that involves a big ongoing discussion inside the party.”

Yet many on the left have argued that Labour’s current balancing act on Brexit is the only feasible strategy for the party given how many of its constituencies voted to leave. Adonis says that argument, if it ever held true, is no longer relevant now the withdrawal treaty is ‘hurtling down the track’.

He stresses, though, that rejecting Brexit is not in itself enough. Those who felt alienated from the establishment and voted to leave the EU need an alternative – and bold – vision for change. Beyond the tactical issues in parliament, then, Adonis sees a radical programme as key to winning the battle for hearts and minds over Brexit.

So while he has little time for those on the left who think ‘that we can somehow let the Tories worry about Brexit while we worry about the big social challenges facing the country’, he is equally concerned by those in Labour who fail to grasp the need for real change. “I’m struck by some of my colleagues who constantly go on about Europe and nothing else and who don’t appreciate the importance of having a reform plan,” he says.

His plan to transform Britain is, he explains, a three-pronged one, based around the kind of priorities adopted by Labour’s great post-war government. “What I want is ‘Attlee mark 2’ on the welfare state, plus radical decentralisation, minus a fetishisation of public ownership,” he says. “It is as much about changing Britain as stopping Brexit – and it is essentially a Fabian agenda.”

But will a reform plan that sets out a ‘great charter’ for a new constitutional settlement really appeal to the people who were, as Adonis concedes, so turned off by the Westminster establishment? He believes so – and says his experiences on his anti-Brexit tour bear that view out.

“If the question in Mansfield and Gateshead and Knowsley had been: ‘Do you want a radical new settlement with Westminster?’ they would definitely have voted yes to that with a big majority. There is a massive discontent with the status quo, but most of that isn’t about Europe, it’s about what’s going on in terms of the government of England. That’s the big issue for them.”

Here again he comes back to the New Labour record, where devolution was just one of the problems left unresolved.

“The problem with New Labour is that there were big agendas that it simply didn’t address at all,” he says. “For example housing and what’s happening with living conditions, we didn’t do enough with that. We didn’t do enough on stakeholder capitalism. We barely addressed issues to do with the structure and responsibilities of companies. We didn’t do nearly enough on devolution. We didn’t address this issue of the government of England at all beyond London. And we didn’t do enough about inequality. Part of the reason is that we had a strongly growing economy at time. So a rising-tide-lifts-all-boats philosophy made a lot more sense then. But since growth has stopped we have to be much more robust about redistribution.”

Aside from Brexit, Adonis’ highest profile interventions in recent times have been on universities, where he has attacked higher tuition fees and the ‘obscene’ salaries of vice-chancellors. As the man behind the university funding reforms of 2004 under Blair, he believes tuition fees are a classic case of how the Conservatives ‘elaborated’ New Labour ideas and made them unacceptable. “A perfectly good idea, which was essentially having public private partnership funding with students making a contribution but the state making the major contribution, was bastardised and turned into a radical free-market project to slash virtually all state funding of teaching in universities.”

But although he defends New Labour’s record in government, Adonis accepts that the Blair years were partly responsible for the party’s shift leftwards. “It was partly because of that. I think it was also because of Iraq. And it was also because of the failure to renew,” he says. “Always

in politics you have got to renew and after Tony Blair, to be blunt, Labour didn’t do that. There was no attempt to do that until you got to Jeremy [Corbyn]. Jeremy is the only new agenda that there’s been in Labour since Blairism.”

Under Corbyn, Europe has become an increasingly fraught issue. But Adonis says the issue is still not as toxic for the party as it has been for decades for the Conservatives – although he warns that the party must unite around opposing Brexit if divisions are not to become more bitter.

“It is not an issue of principle – it is essentially an issue of tactics for Labour,” he says. “The only issue of principle is that some people think that it is not possible to revisit the referendum of two years ago, but there are not many who think that. We have very few anti-Europeans. It is literally Kate Hoey and Frank Field and Graham Stringer and I think that’s it. So we don’t face the issue that the Conservatives face, which is not just pragmatic but a principled debate about hating Europe. It is difficult for Labour but it isn’t animated by deep anti-Europeanism, which is the problem the Conservatives have got.”

The rumblings about Labour splitting, with pro-remain members heading off to form a new centrist party, hold no appeal for Adonis. His time in the SDP, which he joined on his 18th birthday, and then the Liberal Democrats, made sure of that. “If you are going to effect a big change you have got to be part of a big coalition not a small coalition. And Labour is a big coalition. It also has behind it the Labour movement. It is not just a group of likeminded party members,” he says.

“The SDP and Liberal Democrats were essentially a talking shop. Labour even at its lowest fortune has been an aspirant for government.”

Adonis is optimistic that if Labour unites, it can stop Brexit – but there is a warning of problems ahead if the party does not pick the right path.

If [Jeremy] leads us to a referendum, to supporting a people’s vote on the Brexit treaty, then there will only be a tiny number who would be opposed to that, literally a handful of MPs would be opposed to it,” he says. “The real danger is if the leadership tries to lead us towards supporting Brexit, because it looks to me as if there are about two-thirds of MPs and peers and an even larger proportion of party members who simply won’t put up with that.”. Problematic it may be, but stopping Brexit is a fight he believes the party can’t duck: “There is no get out of jail free option in respect of Brexit. If the Tories get us out of Europe next March we are going to be the ones who will inherit that mess in due course. So it is very much in our interests as a party and a movement to avoid getting deeper into this crisis.

“If we do have another referendum, which I hope we will in the next year, to give us an opportunity to reject the Brexit treaty, then we have got to campaign heart and soul and mind for Europe.” **F**

*Saving Britain, by Will Hutton and Andrew Adonis, is published by Abacus*

*Kate Murray is the editor of the Fabian Review*

**Jeremy is the only  
new agenda that  
there’s been in Labour  
since Blairism**

# Crisis point

Brexit should not mean Britain opts out of the debate over the EU's future, writes *Ian Kearns*

**A**FTER THE BREXIT vote, many supporters of the Leave campaign argued that Britain would be just the first to exit the EU, claiming that other departures would not only follow but would be a good thing. The first of these claims is looking more likely by the day. The second is a dangerous myth which, if not demolished, will make more EU exits likely.

Supporters of the EU need to wake up to its weakness and vulnerability. Recent elections in Germany, Italy, Austria and Hungary have shown that Eurosceptic sentiment has far from run its course. The election of a Eurosceptic government in Italy in particular may yet trigger a huge crisis, possibly leading to an Italian exit from the single currency. If a crisis does come however, it will demonstrate not just something about the character of the Italian government but a number of the dangerous failings and weaknesses in the management of the single currency to date.

Some of these are ideological. The eurozone is currently run according to economic rules designed largely to manage German opinion, with other northern European economies, such as that of the Netherlands, being vocal in support. These rules are characterised by a commitment to austerity, a drive for structural reforms, and a refusal to consider fiscal expansion or sovereign debt write-downs to help get economies like that in Italy moving. The many credible economic voices calling for a different approach, such as that of Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman, are dismissed as dreamers or dangerous rebels.

At the same time, since the last euro crisis in 2010–12 eurozone leaders have failed to carry out the kinds of reforms that would put the stability of the single currency beyond doubt.

It is this combination of rigidity and failure inherent in the current approach of the eurozone policy-making elite, rather than the strictures of being in a single currency itself, that an incoming Italian government may clash with. And if the clash comes it will provoke a crisis the eurozone itself is not ready for and cannot control.

A decision by one of the major European countries, such as Italy, Spain or France to leave the single currency would trigger economic chaos and recession across the continent. Contagion to other members of the euro, irrespective of whether they wished to stay in the single currency or not, would be inevitable. The 'doom loop' between governments and banks would kick in. Banks that own large numbers of their own government's bonds would start to go bust as investors fled and the value of those bonds collapsed. Governments already highly indebted after the last crisis would not have the money to bail them out. The EU's flawed crisis management tools would also be overwhelmed. And neither the public appetite in the wealthier parts of Europe

for providing bail-outs, nor the appetite for further austerity in those that might need help, still exists.

The political and economic effects of this unravelling across Europe would be highly divisive. Those leaving the single currency would introduce new currencies that would immediately be devalued. This would increase their export competitiveness and might be good for their own workers but that would come at the expense of workers elsewhere in the eurozone. We would see, inside Europe, the kinds of accusations of currency manipulation that President Trump has been levelling at China for some time now. Just imagine what the leaders of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland or Marine Le Pen could do with plausible claims that unemployment at home was due to the behaviour of others elsewhere in Europe.

The European single market would also begin to disintegrate. At micro level, companies with integrated supply chains across Europe would begin to retrench to home territories to avoid the uncertainties and insurance costs associated with reintroduced exchange rate risk. At macro level, politicians blaming foreigners for the chaos would strengthen the trend by implementing trade barriers and protectionism as the solution.

Much of the scapegoating dynamic we could expect to see has already been in evidence. Orban just won an election in Hungary by focusing all the blame for Hungary's ills on Muslim immigrants. The election in Italy was about little else. Europe is littered with historical animosities that the EU has been able to suppress but not eliminate. Amid the chaos of eurozone break-up, there will be plenty of politicians around who see advantage in raking them up.

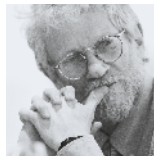
Crucially, an even bigger winner than the nationalist politicians peddling this politics of illiberal scapegoating will be Vladimir Putin. Russia has for many years wished to see the US decoupled from Europe. Trump now appears to be helping him. If the EU disintegrates there must be a major question mark over NATO's ability to survive or be credible. Would European countries engaged in trade wars with one another and in blaming each other for their woes really be interested in coming to each other's defence? And if not, why should an already sceptical US administration do so? Putin already uses disinformation, cyber-attacks, corrupt financial flows and outright aggression in places like Ukraine to get his way and we are at serious loggerheads with him over Syria. If the EU collapses and NATO is diminished he will be massively emboldened in both Europe and the Middle East. Inside a post-EU Europe, only Germany would be strong enough in principle to contest Putin's power, but to do so, it might need to acquire its own nuclear weapons. Far more likely is that it would accept a Russian sphere of influence in central and eastern Europe.

Those of a Eurosceptic persuasion can dream of the EU's break-up and their dreams may yet come true. But they should be careful what they wish for. For pro-European progressives facing this prospect the challenge is clear: To be honest about the weaknesses and flaws in the EU as is and to lead the argument for change. Brexit may have sidelined Britain from much of this debate for now, but we cannot and should not sit it out. **F**

*Ian Kearns is the author of Collapse: Europe after the European Union, published by Biteback Publishing*

# The five giants

As we celebrate 70 years of the NHS, *Nicholas Timmins* considers which health ministers have had the greatest impact. His picks might surprise you



*Nicholas Timmins is the author of *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*, published by William Collins. He is a senior fellow at the Institute for Government and the King's Fund and a visiting professor in social policy at the London School of Economics*

WHEN COMPLETING RECENTLY my history on the *Five Giants* of the welfare state it felt natural to ask, for each of its key areas: "Who have been the five giant ministers?" In other words, who in education, housing employment, social security and – of course – health had found their part of that world one thing, and left it as another. On the 70th anniversary of the NHS, that feels like a question worthy of a moment's contemplation.

Now, it should be said at the outset that this can only be something of a parlour game. There have been 30 ministers at the top level of health. Their titles have ranged from minister of health, to secretary of state for social services, to secretary of state for health, to Jeremy Hunt's recent appellation of secretary of state for health and social care: although in practice, throughout its history, health has been responsible in policy terms for all social services.

These ministers all operated in very different times and often very different circumstances: so comparison can be invidious. Time needs to pass to make a rounded judgement. And one needs a definition of 'great'. In this case, it is they found the NHS as one thing and left it as another – and, for the rules of this game, you don't have to approve of the changes they made. Just recognise their significance.

Where do we start? Well, obviously, Aneurin Bevan. That doesn't need spelling out. He founded the service in the teeth of opposition from the British Medical Association, and much opposition, less to the principle than the means, from the Conservatives who, foolishly, allowed themselves

to be tempted into voting against it at third reading. The Parliamentary convention being that oppositions only oppose at third reading when they disapprove of the entire bill, not elements of it.

Then Enoch Powell in the 1960s. "Powell ... ?!?" I can hear some say. Well, this was before the 'rivers of blood' speech. And he was a deeply unpopular health minister at the time. A 'set and hold' obituary of him that I came across in the Press Association's cuttings library, written in 1963, painted him almost entirely as a butcher of health and care services. He got embroiled in a bitter year-long dispute over nurses' pay. He doubled the prescription charge. And he switched more of the funding to national insurance and away from general taxation – the twin effect of the charges and national insurance switch being that the less well-off paid more towards the cost of the service, and the better off proportionately less. Richard Titmuss, the great welfare state guru at the London School of Economics, in a moment of hyperbole, described those decisions as "the final charge of dynamite under the welfare state."

But it was those changes that persuaded the Treasury to allow him to launch the great Hospital Plan of 1962. It promised 90 new hospitals, the drastic remodelling of 134 more, plus 356 improvement schemes, when not a single brand-new hospital had been built since 1948. It was a 10-year programme that was later to slip badly. But it gave us the model of the district general hospital with which, broadly speaking, we still live today.



© Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy

And then there was Powell's famous 'water towers' speech. If that means nothing to you (and why should it?), this will explain.

The first effective drugs to treat mental illness had been developed in the 1950s and as a result the number of patients in the old Victorian lunatic asylums – a mighty 150,000 of them – were starting to decline. Powell seized on the trend. And he did so in the language of the apocalypse.

"There they stand," he declared in 1961, "isolated, majestic, imperious, brooded over the gigantic water tower and chimney combined, rising unmistakable and daunting out of the countryside – the asylums our forefathers built with such great solidity."

These he said, "were the defences we have to storm ... setting their torch to the funeral pyre." They needed to be replaced by care in the community he said, and – in an aside that would have horrified his former Treasury colleagues, they should be left "derelict or demolished" rather than put to another use. "If we err," he said, "it is our duty to err on the side of ruthlessness". You don't get rhetoric like that anymore.

In practice it was to take 25 years for the first of the big asylums fully to close and more than 35 years to close them all. But both the hospital plan and the water towers speech reshaped the NHS.

Next comes Barbara Castle in the 1970s. Not for the terrible near two-year dispute to remove private patients' beds – the so-called 'pay beds' – from the NHS. A dispute that ironically turned her into the patron saint of private medicine as many more private hospitals got built in the face of their threatened removal. Nor for the dispute with junior hospital doctors that saw doctors go on strike for the first time in the service's history. Rather for what sound like somewhat technical decisions but which had profound effects.

These include the introduction of RAWP, which may be the ugliest acronym in the service's history, but was the first proper attempt to equalise health spending around the country (it stands for resource allocation working party). Then dealing with something called the 'revenue consequences of capital schemes' which had been further distorting health spending geographically, and also for introducing

the service's first proper programme budget. That gave it a clearer idea of what was being spent where on what, and therefore how that could be changed. All of that, plus the first serious attempt to put more money into what were dubbed 'the Cinderella services' – mental health, care of the elderly and children.

Then it is Ken Clarke. End of the 80s, very start of the 1990s. It was Clarke who rescued Margaret Thatcher's mighty review of the NHS. It started out looking for ways to change the way the service was funded – switching it to subsidised private insurance and/or much higher charges, for example. Once Clarke got involved, almost all of that fell away, and in his hands the review ended up redesigning the way the service functioned, along with a big dollop of money to make sure that did not go amiss. Clarke also ensured that in the foreword to his white paper the prime minister delivered her warmest of endorsements of the NHS model.

Clarke's white paper introduced the purchaser/provider split and the 'quasi-market' approach to running the NHS – even if that is currently being diluted. Undeniably, Clarke found the NHS as one thing, and left it as another.

And finally of the five, Alan Milburn in the 2000s. First of all, after a period of stagnation, for reintroducing the purchaser/provider split in a much more sophisticated form. But chiefly for persuading Tony Blair that the service quite simply had to have more money – with Blair going on Breakfast with Frost in what has been dubbed 'the most expensive breakfast in history', where he pledged to get NHS expenditure levels up to the European average. That money, those reforms, plus 'targets and terror' – the imposition of targets for cutting waiting times that were known by hospital chief executives as P45 targets (you got fired if you failed to meet them) – hugely improved the service across the 2000s: even if not enough of the money was spent on making the changes that were already clearly needed to integrate hospital, primary and community services better alongside social care.

So those are the five. Three Labour, two Conservative.

There are, of course, other candidates. Most persuasively, Kenneth Robinson for Labour in the 1960s. He negotiated the 'family doctor's charter' which rescued general practice from the truly awful decline into which it had fallen after 1948. That gave us the group general practice model that still exists today but which is now badly in need of modernisation. Another candidate would be – and not just in the interests of political balance – Norman Fowler.

Until Jeremy Hunt overtook him this year, Fowler, the Conservative secretary of state for social services in the 1980s, was the longest serving health secretary – a time of tight budgets, the first serious out-sourcing of non-clinical services and the Griffiths report on NHS management. Fowler's finest hour was when he combined with Donald Acheson, the chief medical officer, Tony Newton his health minister, and Willie Whitelaw, who was de facto deputy prime minister, to bypass Margaret Thatcher in launching the great campaign to tackle AIDS. A huge achievement at the time, given prevailing social attitudes to homosexuality and drug abuse.

Fowler, however, does not quite pass the test of 'finding

the NHS as one thing and leaving it as another', even though the Griffiths management changes aside have in fact been one of the service's most enduring reforms. Indeed, he holds an accolade for almost the opposite of finding it as one thing and leaving it as another. Because Fowler was one of the relatively few health secretaries since 1980 not to launch a legislative restructuring of the NHS – a lack of action for which he deserves credit. And looking back, his ability to hold the service just about together over the better part of six tough years, and in the face of ideological hostility from part of his party, looks like a much greater achievement now than it did when he left the job. So Fowler counts as a great, but not a giant.

That fact that his tenure now looks rather different underlines the need – as is the case with Powell – for time to pass in order to make a rounded judgement.

Which leads to the toughest part of this assessment. If there were to be more than five giants, and if the test is found it as one thing, left it as another, then Andrew Lansley clearly qualifies. But that sticks in the craw.

His monumental piece of legislation, aimed at ensuring that the *only* way to run the NHS was as a quasi-market – rather it being, as in Labour's day, just *one* of the tools – clearly left the NHS as something distinctly different from the service he found.

The problem is that almost everyone – including almost everyone on the Conservative benches – recognises that it was a mess. "Our biggest mistake in government" as both an anonymous Cabinet minister, and the former health secretary and later chair of the Commons health select committee – Stephen Dorrell – have put it. Even as you read this, Lansley's act is progressively being unpicked. Jeremy Hunt recently said that 'the one thing I would not have done differently' in Lansley's act, is the creation of NHS England. Which, by implication, says he would happily dump much of the rest of the act – including the extent to which it sought to embed quasi-market imperatives.

So, if the list of 'giants' were to be extended beyond five, despite the test for this parlour game I don't want Lansley included. Which leaves us with Jeremy Hunt, who has just proved, like Ken Clarke before him, that being secretary of state for health can be the springboard to better things, not the political deathbed appointment that some in the past feared it to be.

I am going to duck a verdict. As this piece makes plain, time is needed to make a rounded judgement. Plenty of people can assemble a charge sheet against Hunt's tenure. Waiting times rising, big provider deficits, too little cash, that dire dispute with the junior doctors, etc.

But if the newly appointed Matt Hancock ensures that the longer-term settlement for NHS funding that has been promised is delivered in full – along with a reform of social care (a much tougher nut to crack, but one which Hunt has helped put back on the agenda) – then Hunt's tenure, over a period of prolonged austerity, might come to be seen as a triumph. Not the verdict most Fabians would settle for now. Or even predict. But you never know. **F**

**His ability to hold the service just about together in the face of ideological hostility looks like a much greater achievement now**

# Warning signs

Changes to voting arrangements represent the first step on a slippery slope, argues *Cat Smith*



*Cat Smith is the Labour MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood and the shadow minister for voter engagement and youth affairs*

**T**HE SIGNIFICANCE OF the local elections this year was largely downplayed by political commentators. The Observer described it as a poll where “everyone won something but nothing changed”.

In fact, Labour achieved a solid set of results. We consolidated and built on the advances we made at last year’s general election and won seats across England in places we have never held before. We also recognise that locally the picture was more mixed with big variations.

But the biggest change was perhaps not in the result, but in the election process. For the first time ever, voters in Bromley, Gosport, Swindon, Watford and Woking were required to show identification to cast their vote at the polling station. Those without the required ID on polling day were turned away and denied their right to vote.

We cannot overlook the significance of these voter ID pilots. Figures released by the returning officers show that at least 340 people were unable to vote in the five pilot areas because of the new requirements, which the government has described as ‘a great success’.

Before unpicking the numbers, we should first reflect on this extremely disturbing position. The Windrush scandal has demonstrated that it can be difficult for some communities to provide official documentation. And now the government has celebrated a policy that disenfranchised hundreds of legitimate voters. This included people who have voted their entire lives.

It is also very misleading for the government to claim that the 340 voters disenfranchised by the pilot scheme represent only a small and insignificant group, when they plan to roll it out on a national scale.

According to Dr John Ault, director of Democracy Volunteers: “If we applied the percentage of those recorded by local councils as being turned away in the five pilot boroughs to the 2017 general election, this could have affected the outcome of nine parliamentary constituencies.”

In that case, with the Tories in a precarious minority administration, voter ID could alter the impact of the next election.

We know that there is a significant financial barrier involved. Many people cannot afford a holiday abroad, or indeed a passport, particularly now that the government has pushed through unpopular proposals to increase the cost of adult passports from £72.50 to a whopping £85.

The government was warned time and time again that restrictive voter ID requirements would make it harder for people to vote. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has said voter ID will have a disproportionate impact on voters with protected characteristics, particularly ethnic

minority communities, older people, trans people, and people with disabilities.

This significant intervention echoes concerns raised by a coalition of more than 40 leading charities and academics who earlier this year the government to abandon the pilots. In a letter to the Cabinet Office, the group said the voter ID pilots presented “a significant barrier to democratic engagement and risk compromising a basic human right for some of the most marginalised groups in society”. Despite these warning signs, the government decided to pilot discriminatory measures in the full knowledge that voters could be disenfranchised.

The changes have been presented as a solution to tackle the specific issue of voter impersonation – where someone votes at a polling station pretending to be someone else. Electoral fraud is a serious crime and every allegation needs to be investigated fully. Isolated incidents of electoral fraud have indeed taken place and it is vital that the police have the resources they need to bring about prosecution.

However, the government’s response is clearly disproportionate. In 2017 there were 28 allegations of impersonation out of nearly 45 million votes cast – or just one case for every 1.6 million votes. Of these 28 allegations, only one case resulted in a conviction.

None of the five English boroughs that took part in the voter ID pilots have experienced a single instance of polling station impersonation in the past decade. Trust in our democratic system is vital, which is why strategies to tackle fraud should be based on facts.

Manipulating people’s concerns about voter fraud in order to build support for repressive voter ID laws is a tactic too often used by right-wing politicians in the United States. Research by the Brennan Centre indicates that strict voter ID requirements in the United States are a deliberate and well-established method of conservative US states to depress voter turnout amongst minority groups. According to a recent report by Professor Hajnal from the University of California San Diego, strict identification laws caused voter turnout in US general election to drop by five per cent among individuals from minority groups. We cannot allow this Conservative government to take lessons from the US Republican Party and follow a similar path of voter suppression.

The Labour party believes democracy is for everyone. We want everyone’s voice to be heard, no matter their background. And, in the year when we mark 100 years of women over 30 achieving the right to vote, we should challenge ourselves to further build and strengthen our democracy and resist the efforts of those who would turn back the clock. **F**

# The iron lady generation

The millennials are the true heirs of Thatcher and we need to harness their drive in the progressive cause, argues *Michael Weatherburn*



*Michael Weatherburn is a historian and field leader of science, culture and society at Imperial College. He is also secretary of the Oxford Fabian Society and on the steering committee of the Fabian Society's new economic and business policy group*

THE TERM 'THATCHER'S children' has most often been used to refer to the generation born in the later 1960s and 1970s, otherwise known as Generation X. They came of age in the 1980s, and, living through the Falklands War and the miners' strike, were deeply marked by Thatcher's governance style and industrial policies. For those from working class backgrounds, their families may have become homeowners for the first time. For everyone, the country in which 'there is no such thing as society' left its mark.

These deep memories last, even scar, to this day. New Yorker writer Rebecca Mead, for example, recalled unexpectedly meeting her nemesis at a yacht party years after Thatcher had left office. She remembered how Thatcher unexpectedly "drew within a foot or two of where we were standing. Perhaps it was the effect of the champagne, but I felt an impulse to throw myself at her feet – to tell her that she had made me, had made all of us who had spent half our lives under her domination. Instead, I stood silent, more dumbfounded than I have ever been before or since, until she moved smiling on to the next guest."

Watching the biographical movie *The Iron Lady*, one is struck by the young Thatcher, then Margaret Roberts, who remarks early on that: "One's life must matter, Denis. Beyond all the cooking and the cleaning and the children. One's life must mean more than that. I cannot die washing up a teacup! I mean it, Denis. Say you understand."

This singular phrase – that 'one's life must matter' – could make us reappraise who we mean by Thatcher's children. If we view the generational divide through this lens of a life which matters, surely the true children of Thatcher are not those who came of age in the 1980s but those who were born in the 1980s and grew up in the 1990s and early 2000s. In short, the millennial generation. During this period, hundreds of thousands of people were told that the ultimate goal was to 'make a difference'.

These children of Thatcher – or millennials, or Gen Y – have attracted substantial attention from journalists, policymakers, academics, and business commentators in recent years. Now in their mid-20s to mid-30s, they are starting to enter into positions of influence and responsibility in many walks of life. And what has really captured so

much attention is their approach to the workplace. Charlie Caruso's *Understanding Y* argues that while millennials have a reputation for fickleness and 18-month employment spans, they are actually hugely results-focused. "While other generations have been sold the story on job security, we've been brought up in an ever-changing world that values bravado," Caruso and her co-authors write. These days, they argue, to win millennials over, 'the focus must be on capacity and results. GenY is eager to deliver'.

Famously, having been brought up in the 'politics-is-uncool' 1990s, these Thatcher's children have not been particularly politicised until recently. They voted Labour, or for the Cameron Conservatives, or Lib Dem, or Green. Or not at all. One millennial, born in 1984, recently told me that she doesn't vote as the 'global north is more powerful than the global south so my energies are better focused there' and anyway, 'my parents' generation have more experience with politics than I have'.

Yet this scenario changed dramatically two years ago. The one largely unexpected event which had the power to jolt Thatcher's children into life was the result of the European Union referendum on 24 June 2016. Most of Thatcher's children are horrified by not only the result but the direction of travel after it. Thatcher – despite her famous condemnations of a number of European leaders – played a huge role in European integration and the single market. And like Thatcher, the millennials see Britain's future firmly within the European Union. Unlike, say, UKIP's Nigel Farage, who left the Conservative Party after John Major signed the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, Thatcher's children have little interest in the nation state, or blue passports, or the specificities of legislative process, or the House of Lords (or frankly the House of Commons). What the old-right is trying to resuscitate in its vision of a post-Brexit Britain are just the things that Thatcher's children would like to dispatch with altogether. This is one reason for the deeply polarising nature of current political debate.

While nobody doubts that Thatcher's children want to, and probably do make a difference in campaigns they support, there is a problem engaging them in politics, particularly that of a progressivist hue. They focus on causes close to their hearts and personally-defined outcomes





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rather than faraway parliamentary politics where others control the agenda. While she was a dyed-in-the-wool individualist, both Thatcher and the neoliberals who so powerfully influenced her realised that collectivism of one kind or another is the only force which wins elections. It is therefore from collectivism which we derive political, moral and legal authority to get things done.

But generally speaking millennials are not collectivists. Unlike Thatcher herself and Generation X (and perhaps 'Gen Z' – more on this later), Thatcher's children look at large, structured organisations, including the nation state, askance. As some researchers have been revealing, the relation between Thatcher's children and attitudes to authority, especially workplace authority and the centrality of the workplace to life, is one of the most fascinating sociological questions of our time. But it also impinges on our ability to tap this highly motivated, skilled, idealistic group of people to create collectivist change.

As Understanding Y observes, Thatcher's children are goal-orientated and like to innovate both with products (ie outcomes) but also processes (ie management structures and the organisation of work). They unconsciously view government and the state as a kind of creaking bureaucratic megacorp of old, soon to be replaced by nimbler, more authentic start-ups. If we want to fix poverty, say, then why wait for the glacial speed of legislation, which can demonstrably be undone by future governments, when we can directly intervene right now by creating a bespoke charity or social enterprise?

In the world of businesses – charities, even – speedy intervention is certainly a very real possibility. But in relation

to the state, and particularly the legal system (which 'small-state' Thatcher used to great effect), one cannot innovate with new processes when the state is the one entity which defines what processes count or even exist. And to refashion the state and its processes one has to be in a government.

As Georgia Gould put it in *Wasted*, the long-term decline of young people's engagement with formal, national politics has created a relative strengthening of the influence of the older vote. Suspicion of the hostile nature of centralised politics, in part created by the hangover of the Thatcher period, is no doubt a powerful driver here. But as Gould also points out, younger people do care about matters which affect their daily lives, hence the high younger voter turnout at in the 2014 Scottish referendum and the keen focus on localism, particularly in England; the least devolved part of the UK.

To conclude, a note to any of Thatcher's millennial children who may be reading. The literature has sometimes been harsh but at least you've been a key focus of debate. The focus is shifting to your younger cousins, 'Gen Z', who have been graduating from university for the past three years, and, who, having been raised in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, are more likely to seek stable employment than Gen Y. And as Oscar Wilde once said: 'There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about'. This is a crucial period in British political history, and history more generally, and the best way to make a difference right now is to get involved in collectivist projects. To return to Thatcher's quote. One's life must matter, yes, but one must also agree that: together, we are stronger. **F**

**Thatcher's children regard government as a creaking bureaucratic megacorp, soon to be replaced by nimbler start-ups**

# A new ethos

People want politics to be different – but not necessarily in the way that politicians think, as *Kate Dommett* and *Luke Temple* explain



*Dr Kate Dommett and Dr Luke Temple are academics at the department for politics, University of Sheffield. They are currently working on the project Renewing Party Politics, supported by an ESRC grant*

**T**HE HANSARD SOCIETY'S most recent Audit of Political Engagement paints a bleak and all-too-familiar picture of how the public feel about politics. Only 29 per cent of the UK population think our system of governing works well, down slightly from 31 per cent in 2017. Countless surveys demonstrate that politicians and the political class are held in startlingly poor esteem. High levels of distrust and cynicism prevail.

The establishment's reaction to these views has tended to focus on institutional changes such as electoral reform or opening up political institutions to greater levels of citizen engagement. Less attention has been paid to the potential for reforming political parties. Traditionally, parties have been the route for political education and engagement, linking citizens to the state and potentially allowing ordinary members' ideas to inform policy-making and political decisions.

Unfortunately, our own recently collected data shows that the parties are currently viewed in poorer light than the system more widely. Whilst 47 per cent of people are dissatisfied with democracy, nearly 70 per cent are unhappy with the parties themselves. This makes it important to diagnose what is causing such negativity towards parties, and what kinds of reform (if any) might help address citizens' concerns. Asking these questions is particularly important because, over recent years, parties themselves have begun to experiment with change. Whether it is by creating supporters' networks, opening up candidate selection procedures or embracing community organising techniques, parties are altering how they connect with the public. The incentive for these changes is, in part, to stimulate greater levels of political engagement and public confidence. But because we don't fully know what citizens think is wrong with parties, we have little idea if these shifts bring about positive change.

Our current research is designed to identify how citizens feel about parties, and what they actually want from them. Using focus groups and survey data, we are exploring in more detail than ever before just what expectations the public have about political parties, where they are currently seen to be failing, and where there might be opportunities for reform. Specifically, we look at three different avenues for reform by considering changes to how parties represent, what opportunities for participation they provide, and, how

they govern. When we dig beneath the headline figures, what we find is that whilst the public are quick to criticise parties on representation and participation, for large parts of the public what ultimately matters more are views of parties' competence and behaviour.

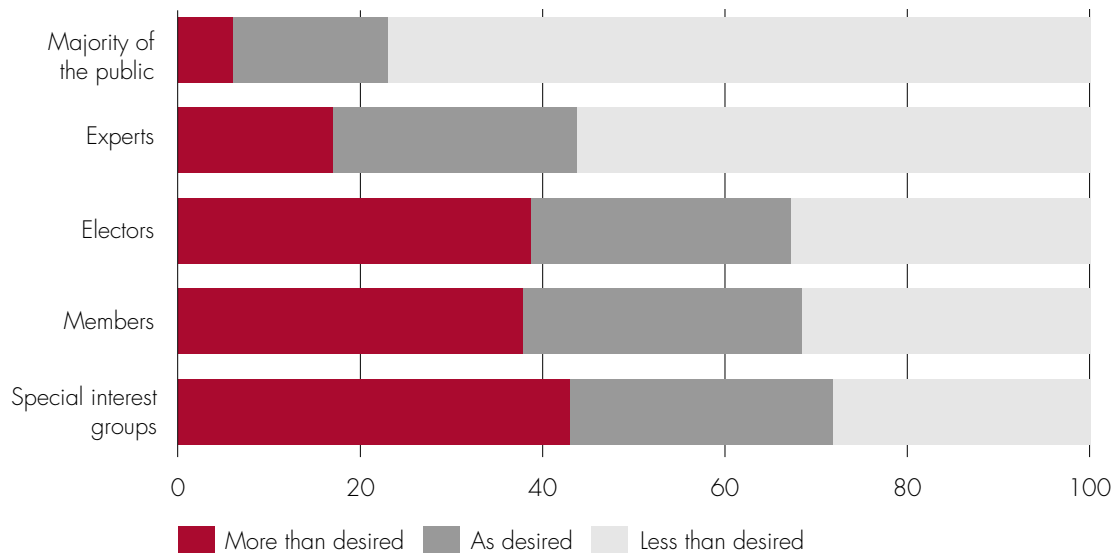
## **Getting the public back on board with parties – three strategies for how it might be done**

In thinking about what might be producing negative views of parties and developing ideas for reform, we begin with the idea of changing how – or who – parties represent. Our survey responses suggest that whilst part of the public does worry about having a real choice between parties and being able to find a party that shares their views, these concerns are not as acute as their worries about parties breaking promises, bickering too much with each other, and focusing on winning elections rather than getting things done. In our survey, we asked who parties should listen to, and who they actually listened to, and we were able to calculate whether people were having their expectations met. The graph shows that sizeable numbers of those surveyed thought that party members and special interest groups are listened to *too much* (or are currently at a level which is acceptable). In contrast, a large proportion of respondents think the public as a whole are not listened to enough and that experts are also not given a large enough role. What people appear to want then is parties that are not self-serving organisations that promote the views of a few favoured groups, but rather parties that weigh the needs of society and the available evidence to promote the public good. There was strong support for the notion that parties should focus on the national interest and the public good (even whilst focus group discussions showed that people recognised there is no obvious agreement on what these ideas mean).

So what can parties do to be seen in more favourable terms? Do they need to shift their representative focus away from party members to focus on the majority of the public and experts? Clearly parties have to strike a balance here – and there is no quick fix. A sudden shift in focus is likely to fuel more cynicism than engender long-term changes in views. But, there does appear to be a case for parties.

But, there does appear to be a case for parties to tell a clearer story about the ways in which they engage the wider

## Public perceptions of how much parties listen to different sections of society



public, draw on expertise and balance competing demands to determine the best outcome for the country.

When parties are seen to be dominated by narrow agendas or specific groups of people, we argue they are unlikely to be viewed in positive terms. Parties could benefit from rethinking who they focus on and, perhaps just as importantly, how this is conveyed to the wider public. This does not amount to simple re-branding, but reviewing party processes and communication strategies may be a key way in which citizens' desires for greater levels of public and expert involvement could be met.

A second possible avenue for reform focuses on participation. For decades, political parties have been worried about falling membership and activist numbers (although Labour has recently bucked this trend) as well as increasing numbers of floating voters. This has inspired reforms designed to 'open up' party structures and make it easier for people to get involved. Such actions are based on the idea that providing more opportunities to get involved will not only help parties but will also improve levels of citizen satisfaction. Despite the popularity of these sorts of reforms in party and activist circles, our study generally finds little evidence that the wider public are all that bothered. In the abstract people support the idea of more opportunities for participation, but in practice they do not see themselves doing it, offline, online, or even in less demanding 'supporter' roles. There may be some low-hanging fruit here, but it looks to be overall a rather small crop. Those who do want improved access tend to be existing members. Far from clamouring for new participatory opportunities, most other people are sceptical about the virtues of getting involved. Reforms in this area are therefore unlikely to make a long-term difference to most people's views of parties.

A final route to improving public perceptions of parties relates to perceived party behaviour, image, and competence. Our research underlines the extent to which political parties' actions and performance make an important impact on how they are viewed. The capacity to deliver desirable outcomes, to realise promised policies and to deliver long and short-term positive results is critical. Many people are not driven

by a desire to see particular party agendas or objectives implemented, they simply want to see competent and effective government that advances (their idea of) the public good. Parties are not expected to abandon their ideologies as such, but they might consider that most people judge them on their behaviour and performance. Our focus group discussions suggested that straying from manifestos and breaking promises were very bad news for a party's image, but being frank and honest with the public about why these things might happen would go a long way to help fix these inevitable shortcomings. Being more transparent about how policies and objectives are designed, implemented, and communicated really resonates. So, parties being seen to be 'more open' matters, but it is being open to the public about how policy is decided that seems to matter, not being open to signing up members and getting people more involved.

Of course, these findings rest on the idea that public views actually reflect what parties are doing, and that the people in our study are providing an accurate picture of what they desire. Both these claims should be questioned, as people often have a skewed or uninformed sense of how parties behave. Both social and traditional media might partly fuel this, but parties don't help themselves. Our focus groups suggested that people are quick to draw on sceptical and negative takes. This default response takes a while to break down. And even after a lot of consideration, people frequently still wish for parties to reform themselves in ways that are often somewhat contradictory. This, together with an era of 140-character and soundbites, suggests the odds are stacked against political parties seeking to improve their image. However, our findings suggest that it might be worth the effort. Parties should therefore rethink the idea of opening up and inviting more citizen participation, and instead focus their energies on how they behave both in government and opposition and how they might show the public that they care about the greater good. There is a lot of desire for parties that listen, communicate, are not dogmatic and are transparent. Parties wanting to change citizens' views and be seen in more positive terms need to change their *ethos*, not necessarily their ideas. ■

# Books

## Keep the red flag flying

George Orwell's relationship with the left was a complicated one – and it is still throwing up questions today, writes *Jason Brock*

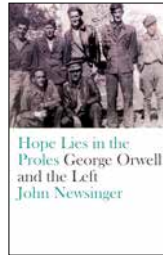


*Jason Brock is senior researcher at the Fabian Society*

George Orwell – and more particularly his literary writings – continue to capture public attention and imagination. His enduring fame as arguably the British left's most penetrating popular writer of the 20th century rests especially on his dystopian *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – as much, in my view, a reflection of his view of possible direction of British society as of totalitarianism per se – and his novella *Animal Farm*. Both of these works have contributed ideas and phrases to popular culture and Orwell belongs to the select few authors who can claim the honour of an eponymous adjective.

I cannot claim to be a particular fan of Orwell's prose style, but I find the way his writings allow for multiple interpretations refreshing in a world of increasingly polarised and closed-off viewpoints. John Newsinger's study of Orwell's relationship with the British left is part of this tradition of critical interpretation, and a very welcome addition to the (fairly voluminous) body of writings on the man and his work. Newsinger avoids the obvious pitfall of accidentally writing an ersatz biography (which is genuinely a greater risk than it sounds) and instead focuses on Orwell's ideas and his relationship with left-wing movements and, most particularly, the Labour party. The book is engaging throughout and Newsinger's determined mission to redeem Orwell from the charge that he moved to the right in his later years is executed clearly. At the same time, this is no uncritical paean to a great figure – there is a clear critique of the less wonderful and sometimes deplorable side of Orwell's character (especially his involvement with the anti-Communist Information Research Department to which he passed a list of those he believed to be Communists and 'fellow travellers', including details on personal matters such as sexuality).

The most fluent and passionate section of the book is Newsinger's discussion of Orwell and the left in the 1930s. Here we learn about Orwell's disenchantment with the Communist party in Britain, Comintern and the notion of a popular front. His experience in the Spanish Civil War, where he fought with the POUM against Franco's forces, led Orwell to see Comintern's member parties as having no genuine interest in a workers' revolution since their primary concern had become the advancement of the Soviet Union's foreign policy. For Newsinger this experience ensured that anti-totalitarianism would be central to Orwell's intellectual outlook and project for the rest of his



**Hope Lies in the Proles: George Orwell and the Left**  
John Newsinger,  
Pluto Press, £16.99

life. His dissatisfaction with the concept of a popular front, moreover, was a rejection of the idea that the interests of the workers and capitalists could be aligned in the fight against fascism without causing enduring harm to the workers' interests. For Orwell, such an 'alliance of enemies' would eventually lead to 'fixing the capitalist-class more firmly in the saddle'. By the outbreak of the second world war, then, Orwell had become a member of the disaffiliated Independent Labour Party but still distrusted the mainstream labour movement.

It is Newsinger's discussion of Orwell's embrace of Labour that is of most interest to me (since the party is always on my mind – I cannot sleep a wink without reading a chapter of the rule book with a glass of milk). Previous scholars, most notably Bernard Crick, have tended to herald Orwell's move to *Tribune* as literary editor to be a pivotal moment at which he came to his senses and recognised Labour as the only practical way forward. Newsinger, by contrast, is keen to depict Orwell's reluctance to go along with Labour's reformism and his ongoing commitment to radical socialist ideas. Although he now thought that Labour offered the best possible option in the foreseeable future, he remained sceptical about its long-term potential to secure meaningful change. After the 1945 election swept Labour to power, Orwell was even willing to set aside his critique that it was not socialist enough since the greatest challenge was national survival in a world of economic uncertainty. Newsinger acknowledges this as a temporary shift to the right in Orwell's politics, but I do not find his argument that the late 1940s witnessed another shift back to the left to be fully borne out. Indeed, this view hinges very much on the interpretation one takes of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Newsinger uses a very straightforward interpretation of Orwell's preface to make his case. Authorial intention is never easy to apprehend, and the debate is unlikely to be settled soon.

Overall, Newsinger's book is a fascinating and vivid account that warrants attention. His concluding chapter rather wonderfully captures the ongoing use of Orwell in political debate and considers his continued relevance. I'd happily recommend the work to anyone interested in the man himself, his work, or the left in the inter-war and immediate post-war years. I don't agree fully with Newsinger's interpretation – but that's the fun of discussing Orwell. ■

## The miserabilist tendency

Mark Perryman finds a new history of the Labour left overlooks the art of the possible



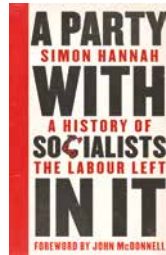
Mark Perryman is the author of *The Corbyn Effect*, published by Lawrence & Wishart

Simon Hannah's history of the Labour left is unashamedly partisan. Nothing wrong with that, and as the latest book from the admirable 21st century reincarnation of The Left Book Club, most readers will guess that is its intention before turning too many pages.

But this also creates a problem. The account Hannah provides of Labour's foundation is relatively uncontroversial and few are going to be motivated enough to have a row over just how good a socialist the party's patron saint, Keir Hardie, may or may not have been. And as for Ramsay MacDonald, such is the contempt for that sorry period in the party's history that MacDonald's name is pretty much only ever used as a historically correct insult in Labour circles.

Yet, even all these yesterdays produce interpretations shaped by the politics of the historian. Stafford Cripps is for some a hero, for others a traitor. What, however, is most interesting about Cripps is his immersion outside the confines of Labourism in the popular front of the 1930s, most particularly against fascism. This was one of those rare examples of a break with Labour's inherent tradition of what Neal Lawson has rather waggishly labelled 'monopoly socialism'. It was made all the more special because it reached its high point at Cable Street and in the International Brigades of the Spanish civil war. Along with the hunger marches of the National Unemployed Workers Movement, these moments in history stand in stark contrast to the go-it-alone mentality that frames not just Labour's right but too often its left too. On this subject, Hannah does not have enough to say.

The reputation of a second key figure of Hannah's history – Aneurin Bevan – was framed by a similar, if different, challenge to 'monopoly socialism'. His role in creating the NHS, unarguably Britain's most cherished public institution, is told very well. However, the original vision behind it belonged to a Liberal, Beveridge. When Bevan brilliantly described what the spirit of '45 was about to become: "We have been the dreamers. We have been the sufferers. And now we are the builders," he was speaking as a Labour man of course, but his 'we' wasn't just Labour, crucially it was the people. Bevan's politics were no less radical for their popularity, the enduring support for the NHS is testament to this. But that ability to reach beyond the party's activist base remains all too rare. Hence most of the episodes Hannah recounts in the history of



**A Party with Socialists in It**  
Simon Hannah,  
Pluto Press, £12.99

Labour's left are moments of defeat and reversal. Party chauvinism, what some now call tribalism, is a fatal flaw almost all sections of the party suffer from. It needs to be recognised as our collective responsibility.

Bevan rose once more as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament grew in the late 1950s, yet, as Hannah recounts eventually he was to betray the cause of unilateralism. What was more interesting is how he, and other figures of Labour's 1950s left, related to this emergent mass movement.

CND, like almost every mass movement led by the left, has been staffed, organised and led by groups and figures outside of Labour. For the most part these campaigns recognised Labour as a crucial ally but the effort and imagination to generate them came from the non-Labour left. There's quite possibly a sociological explanation for this: as new members are discovering, Labour membership is time-consuming with an endless round of meetings, motions, elections, party-run campaigns and the like. While the inclination might be towards the extra-parliamentary, is there the time to fit it all in?

More than any single individual it was Tony Benn who sought to break this activist logjam. In the 1980s Bennism framed a politics of resistance in and against Westminster. Until Corbyn, British politics had never seen the like of this. And like Corbyn, Benn spoke over the heads of his party to reach, engage and inspire a wider public. But unlike Benn – and it is admittedly harsh to say this – Jeremy is a winner, not a loser. He stood for the leadership and won, and when he was challenged to run again he did so and won for a second time. When a snap general election was called, every professional political commentator, without exception, predicted Labour would be wiped out. Corbyn didn't do enough to win but he did so much better than expected, justifying a belief that he could win next time.

And this is the point that Hannah's occasional miserabilism misses. His pervasive certainty that almost anybody we put faith in will disappoint obscures the 'art and craft' of the possible. Corbyn has created a moment of possibility. He's done it from the left, and his keenest supporters came from there too, mostly disorganised, many more movementist than Labourist. But most important of all there is a much broader swathe of Labour opinion who simply want to be on a broadly progressive winning side. Victory, more than anything else will determine Corbyn's legacy. And so that, for now, is all that matters. **F**

## Murder at the Fabians

GDH and Margaret Cole were not only formidable Fabians but prolific crime writers, as *Deborah Stoa* discovers

As a good Fabian, you will doubtless be familiar with garage rock band Thee Faction's 'Don't Call on Rock and Roll, Call on GDH Cole'. GDH, (Douglas) – described on Thee Faction's website as 'a Bolshevik soul in a Fabian muzzle' – and his wife Margaret were powerful intellectual influences on British socialism and leading members of the Fabian Society. Douglas was chair between 1937 and 1959 and president from 1952–59 and after his death he was succeeded by Margaret.

Their joint influence and impressive bibliography, many books written together, include the series 'The Intelligent Man's Guide to ...' – complicated subjects tackled in a popular but non-patronising style which succeed in informing yet entertaining the reader. As a couple they were handsome and redoubtable, although reading Margaret's 1971 biography of Douglas it seems they were also devoted and humorous together. Margaret was described to me by a person who knew her in her later years from her weekly attendance at Central London Fabian meetings as the 'most formidable woman I have ever met. She was difficult, eccentric and rather terrifying. She would sit in the front row, fix the speaker with an unflinching glare and, if bored, would ostentatiously remove her extremely large and whistling hearing aid, thus alarming the speaker even more'.

Given their intellectual reputation, it came as a surprise to discover that between 1925 and 1946 the Coles were also jointly the authors of 29 works of detective fiction, described by Margaret

as 'the lighter side'. I already knew that Douglas's other 'line of country' was light verse and parody – extremely popular at Fabian summer schools, and a great feature of 'the Movement' in its heyday.

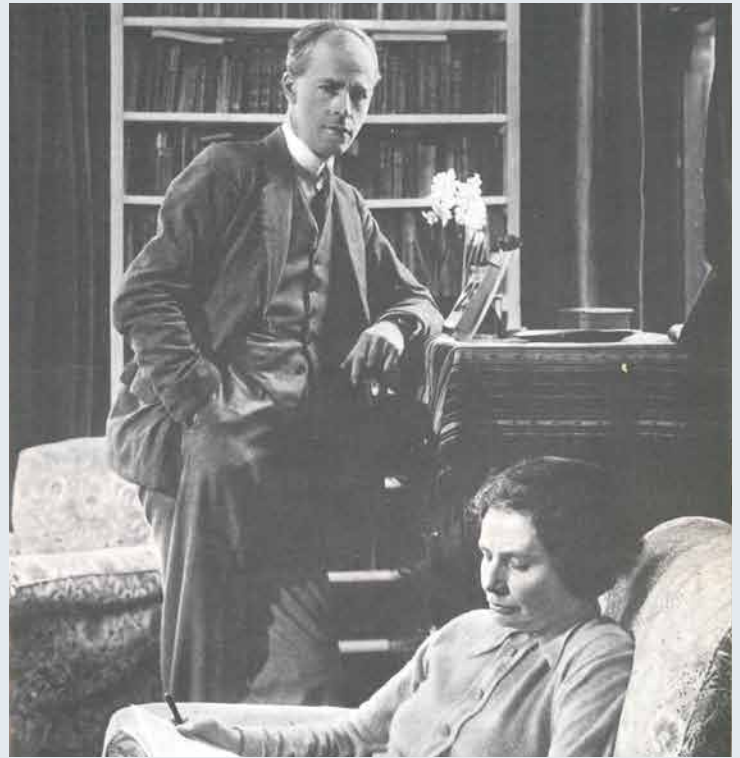
Incidentally and still on 'the lighter side', as the uncle of the Bagpuss creator Oliver Postgate, Douglas was apparently the model for the woodpecker Professor Yaffle.

So why detective fiction? Well, to quote Margaret, in the 20s and 30s, "for no particular reason that I can see, the writing and discussion of detective fiction became a serious study in the intellectual world... The essentials were... that the writer must conform to certain well-understood rules of the game: he must play fair and provide sufficient clues to enable the discerning reader to solve the problem for himself – but not too soon."

It is interesting that Ellen Wilkinson – who was an MP for 20 years from 1924 and was known as Red Ellen – also wrote a detective novel *The Division Bell Mystery* in 1932. Its similarity to the Coles' work is that in both, there is a tacit understanding that the British ruling classes are packed with eccentrics who shouldn't be allowed to run a small business, let alone a great country and also that they are allowed to cover up their outrageous messes.

By far the most interesting explanation of the how, why and whodunnit of the Coles output, was given in a *Classic Crime* fiction article from the 50s entitled 'GDH and M Cole Meet Superintendent Wilson', their eponymous and highly admirable, if somewhat dull, police inspector who features in most of the books. The scene is a railway compartment where sit three people – Mrs Cole, Reader and a silent man who turns out to be Wilson himself. The good old Reader solves our first mystery – did they write the books together – a chapter each or what?

"Oh no," Mrs Cole replies. "That would make a frightful



© Humphrey Cole

muddle We should get all the clues and the times mixed up and they'd never sort out again. We settle on a plot, and I might do a first draft, then the fun begins. My husband says: 'Look here, this and this won't do you know: you've made the man be in two places 400 miles apart at the same time etc.' Then I say: 'Well if you feel like that there's no use in going on: in fact I might as well throw it in the fire at once' And so on and on. And so it's altered and eventually turns up as a book".

So are the books any good? Mrs Cole describes them as 'competent, but no more'. The interest lies in the complexity of plotting and the political parallels are obvious. Crimes are solved by doggedness and thoroughness and following up on clues, however improbable and one mystery follows another, sometimes quite confusingly.

The earlier work tends to focus on corruption among the upper classes reflecting their beliefs, and the characterisation can seem dated and stereotypical to a 21st century reader. As I ploughed through *The Death of a Millionaire* (1925) I had to ask myself

would I be reading this if it hadn't been written by Coles – was it a curiosity or a gem?

They are essentially of their time. The working classes are prone to converse with a 'H'evenin' H'inspector. 'Orrible wevver ain't it', type of speech and the hero, after infiltrating a Russian spy ring, by whistling the *Volga Boat Song*, says:

'All Russians are liars you know. It's the national vice'.

The charm for me was trying to picture them writing all these unlikely books together. The clue is, I think in the character of Supt Wilson who maybe Douglas would have liked to be and Margaret would have wished him to be. When Wilson, in *The Death of a Millionaire* is asked how he solves all his mysteries so successfully he says:

'I never get flurried. I just think', adding:

"I shall only get a wrong idea if I start theorising without some foolproof data,"

How very Fabian. **F**

*Deborah Stoa* is local societies officer at the Fabian Society

# Listings

## BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

Details and information from Luke John Davies at bhamfabians@gmail.com

## BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

20–22 July, Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival. For details of the coach to the event, please contact Ian Taylor on 01202 396634 or taylorbournemouth@gmail

## BRIGHTON & HOVE

Regular meetings at Friends Meeting House, Ship St, BN1 1AF. Contact secretary Ralph Bayley at ralphfbayley@gmail.com

## CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

Details from Alison Baker at a.m.baker@blueyonder.co.uk

## COLCHESTER

Details from Maurice Austin at maurice.austin@phonecoop.coop

## COUNTY DURHAM

7 July: Harry Cross on 'The Role of Momentum and the Youth Vote'.  
15 September: John Ashby, (descendent of Charles Booth) on 'What Would Charles Booth make of the Social Morphology of County Durham?'  
17 November: Professor Joyce Liddle on 'Brexit and Local Government leadership'.  
All meetings, 12.15–2pm at Lionmouth Rural Centre near Esh Winning DH7 9QE.  
£4 including lunch. Details from Prof Alan Townsend 01388 746479

## DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

10 July: Tour of the House of Lords. Details of this and all meetings contact Deborah Stoate at deborah.stoate@fabians.org.uk

## EAST LOTHIAN

Details of meetings from Mark Davidson at m.d.davidson@me.com

## FINCHLEY

Regular meetings. Contact Mike Walsh on mike.walsh44@ntlworld.com

## GRIMSBY

Regular meetings. Contact Pat Holland at hollandpat@hotmail.com

## HARTLEPOOL

New society forming. Details from Gary Wootton at gary.wootton@teachfirst.org.uk

## HAVERING

10 July, 2pm Paul Embery on 'Growing Discontent between Labour and its Heartlands and how to address it'  
12 July, 8pm. Contact David Marshall for details at haveringfabians@outlook.com

## ISLINGTON

Regular meetings. Contact Adeline Au at siewyin.au@gmail.com

## LEEDS

For details contact Luke Hurst at luke.will.h@gmail.com

## NORTH EAST LONDON

Details of speakers and venues, contact Nathan Ashley at NELondonFabians@outlook.com

## NEWHAM

For details of regular meetings, please contact Rohit Dasgupta at rhit\_svu@hotmail.com

## NORTHUMBRIA AREA

6 October  
For details of this and all meetings, please contact Pat Hobson at pathobson@hotmail.com

## OXFORD

regular meetings and events. Contact Michael Weatherburn at admin@oxfordfabians.org.uk

## PETERBOROUGH

Morning conference on education. Details of speakers, including Lord Andrew Adonis, venue and tickets from Brian Keegan at brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk

## PORTSMOUTH

details of meetings from Nita Cary at dewicary@yahoo.com

## READING & DISTRICT

Details from Tony Skuse at tony@skuse.net

## SOUTHAMPTON AREA

Day conference on 27 October. Regular meetings. Details from Eliot Horn at eliot.horn@btinternet.com

## TONBRIDGE & TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Regular meetings. Contact Martin Clay at martin.clay@btinternet.com

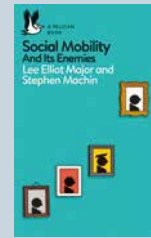
## YORK and DISTRICT

Details from Cynthia Collier at mike.collier@talktalk.net

## FABIAN QUIZ

### SOCIAL MOBILITY AND ITS ENEMIES

Lee Elliot Major, Stephen Machin



What are the effects of decreasing social mobility? How does education help – and hinder – us in improving our life chances? Why are so many of us stuck on the same social rung as our parents?

Apart from the USA, Britain has the lowest social mobility in the Western world. The lack of movement in society – particularly when people are stuck at the bottom and the top – costs the nation dear, both in the unfulfilled talents of those left behind and in an increasingly detached elite, disinterested in improvements that benefit the rest of society.

This book analyses cutting-edge research on how social mobility has changed in Britain over the years, the shifting role of schools and universities in creating a fairer future, and the reasons why some countries and regions are so much richer in opportunities than others.

**Penguin has kindly given us five copies to give away. To win one, answer the following question:**

*In the UK, how many generations would it take for a low-income family to reach the average income?*

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 17 AUGUST 2018.**



### Young Fabian elections

Nominations are now open for the annual election to the Young Fabian executive, open to any member under the age of 31 on 17 November 2018. In order to be nominated for the executive, candidates must have joined before 12 May 2018. Nominations should be sent to Fabian Society elections, 61 Petty France, London SW1H 9EU or emailed to shehana.udat@fabians.org.uk The deadline is Friday 10 August.

### Fabian AGM and Manchester conference

The AGM will take place on Saturday 17 November 2018 at the People's History Museum in Manchester. Any full member, national or local, may submit a motion by 10 August. Motions will be included in the autumn issue of the Fabian Review and amendments will be invited, to be submitted five weeks before the AGM. Contact Shehana Udat shehana.udat@fabians.org.uk

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