

Fabian Review

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Autumn 2010



CONGRATULATIONS MR MILIBAND (...BUT NOW WHAT?)

**Charting the
new leader's
tricky year
ahead**

With Tim Horton,
Richard Grayson, Nick
Pearce, Gavin Kelly,
Wendy Alexander, Ed
Wallis, Kirsty McNeill

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Miligram *n.* a short message of advice to the new leader of the Labour Party, especially across the September 2010 conference season.

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Image: Adrian Teal

If you want to learn from Tony, don't listen to him now

Tony Blair was Labour's most electorally successful leader because he knew that it takes a broad electoral coalition to govern Britain. That 'big tent' contained multitudes; his talent for creative alliances eventually stretching beyond rational comprehension. How strange then that the ex-Prime Ministerial memoir now takes such pride in shrinking it almost to a defiant minority of one.

Tony wanted Paddy's Lib Dems in his government; now he fears their "old Labour" instincts, suggesting the Coalition may be boldest and best when the Tories get their way. Jon Cruddas, a Downing Street staffer in Blair's first term, offers a beguiling "reheated Bennism". Even Alastair Campbell is "old Labour on policy", especially education. At this rate, Blair may prove to be the man to find a winning coalition for old Labour after all.

Blair's advice to "move not a millimetre from New Labour" is a 'stop all the clocks' political recipe which the early moderniser himself would have rejected. New Labour won two landslides, before squeaking home a third time thanks to Michael Howard's unelectability. In 2010, we ran as New Labour and we lost as New Labour, as Peter Mandelson could testify.

Labour's new leader could learn rather more from Blair's success in

opposition and his strong first term in office than what he writes about it with hindsight.

The original New Labour coalition united most Labour opinion and reached beyond it. Though very cautious, Labour '97 did not run from *popular* causes when these might sound leftist. Being emphatically pro-business did not stop New Labour voicing much greater anger about unearned rewards from 'fat cat' pay in privatised utilities than could be heard over the financial crash a decade later. Nor about putting a windfall tax on privatised utilities, or facing down vociferous political, press and business opposition to the minimum wage; or, at least once, making a transparent case that more NHS spending had to be paid for from tax. Establishment opinion opposed devolution and freedom of information. Each of those fights did shift the political centre leftwards, in ways which endure in 2010, even as other issues shift right.

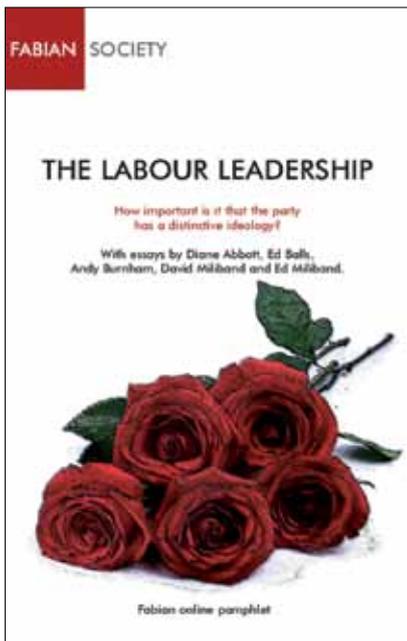
These reflected an argument about what was wrong with Britain: too divided, not enough responsibility (including at the top), too little sense of what we shared in common. It was (all too quickly) after 1997 that values-based arguments took second place to a narrower appeal to specific electoral segments, where

mythologised caricatures of Mondeo Man and Worcester Woman represented life in the 'middle'.

Labour's new leader would do well to look at how Blair – just as Cameron has – introduced himself to the public in broad brushstrokes, resisting demands to flesh out policy detail to early. (It is necessary later, as Cameron rather neglected.) Gordon Brown's speeches were always 'policy rich' from his first days yet never articulated what his overall argument for 'change' was about. This lesson applies now to deficit reduction as much as any other area: Labour must first argue why it would make different choices, then present credible alternatives. That requires signposts and symbolic examples, but not a shadow spending review.

The new leader must now address the country – yet must act urgently in the party too. David Miliband has argued that "party reform stopped on May 2nd 1997". Labour needs a deep cultural overhaul of how we do politics if members and supporters are to again believe their voices count, and be mobilised as a campaigning force. If that doesn't happen before 12 months are up, it will never happen at all.

SK



Over the summer, the Fabian Society published essays from the five candidates for the Labour leadership. Each was asked to discuss the importance of distinctive ideology to the party and address a selection of questions submitted by Fabian members and contributors online.

Ed Miliband's essay received widespread coverage, with his contention that "old fashioned New Labour is now an obstacle to winning the next election". The *Guardian* reported YouGov polling for the Ed Miliband campaign that showed that "Labour lost six votes from lower-income voters for every vote it lost among the professional middle classes". His suggestion that the loss of votes represented a crisis of working class representation for Labour was echoed in Andy Burnham's critique of Labour's flirtation with "power, glamour and big business". Burnham advocated a new collectivism, believing that society cannot be fair when some are "filthy rich". David Miliband meanwhile argued that the party's real problem was that voters were unclear what Labour really stood for, and that in difficult times a shared creed must be instrumental in uniting the party. Ed Balls admitted too that voters were unclear about the values of a Labour Party that seemed out of touch, lamenting a past failure of communication and courage. Diane

Abbott wrote that without ideology Labour ministers are effectively reduced to freelance management consultants. Read all the essays at www.fabians.org.uk

The Fabian Society hosted its inaugural Summer Gala dinner in July, with a keynote speech from Harriet Harman. Labour's acting leader commended the Society for its key role in shaping 'progressive' politics over the last 125 years, and emphasised how central this would continue to be as Labour rebuilds in opposition. Other special guests included Fabian Society Chair Sadiq Khan MP, TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber, Shadow International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander, and newly elected MPs Tristram Hunt and Chuka Umunna. The Gala was organised to raise funds to support the Society's work over the coming months.

Pat McFadden told the Fabian Society that in order to regain public attention, Labour must challenge the coalition's cuts agenda by offering credible alternatives. The shadow business secretary criticised the Government's 'no alternative' view of spending cuts but stressed that Labour must move on from evaluating their past record to refocusing on future growth and a rebalanced UK economy. The speech called for "neither Thatcherism nor denial", with the *Guardian* reporting

that McFadden "warned Labour they were in danger of being 'tuned out' over the deficit". You can read the full speech at www.fabians.org.uk/events

A major education report was published as part of the Fabian Society's research programme *Fighting Poverty and Inequality in an Age of Affluence*, in association with the Webb Memorial Trust. In What's fair? Applying the fairness test to education, Louise Bamfield and Tim Horton said the coalition Government's plans for increased funding for disadvantaged pupils, whilst welcome, we not enough deal with the problem of segregation in schools. The *Guardian* said that the report "also blames Labour for not doing enough to narrow the gap between the achievements of poor and better-off children".

Fabian research was published by the TUC which revealed the true impact of the Government's spending cuts on households. The report, *Where the Money Goes: How we benefit from public services*, by Fabian Research Director Tim Horton and Howard Reed of Landman Economics, was launched at the TUC Conference and found that that the impact of cuts in public spending will be severe, with the UK's poorest tenth of households hit 13 times harder than the richest tenth. Read the full report at www.fabians.org.uk



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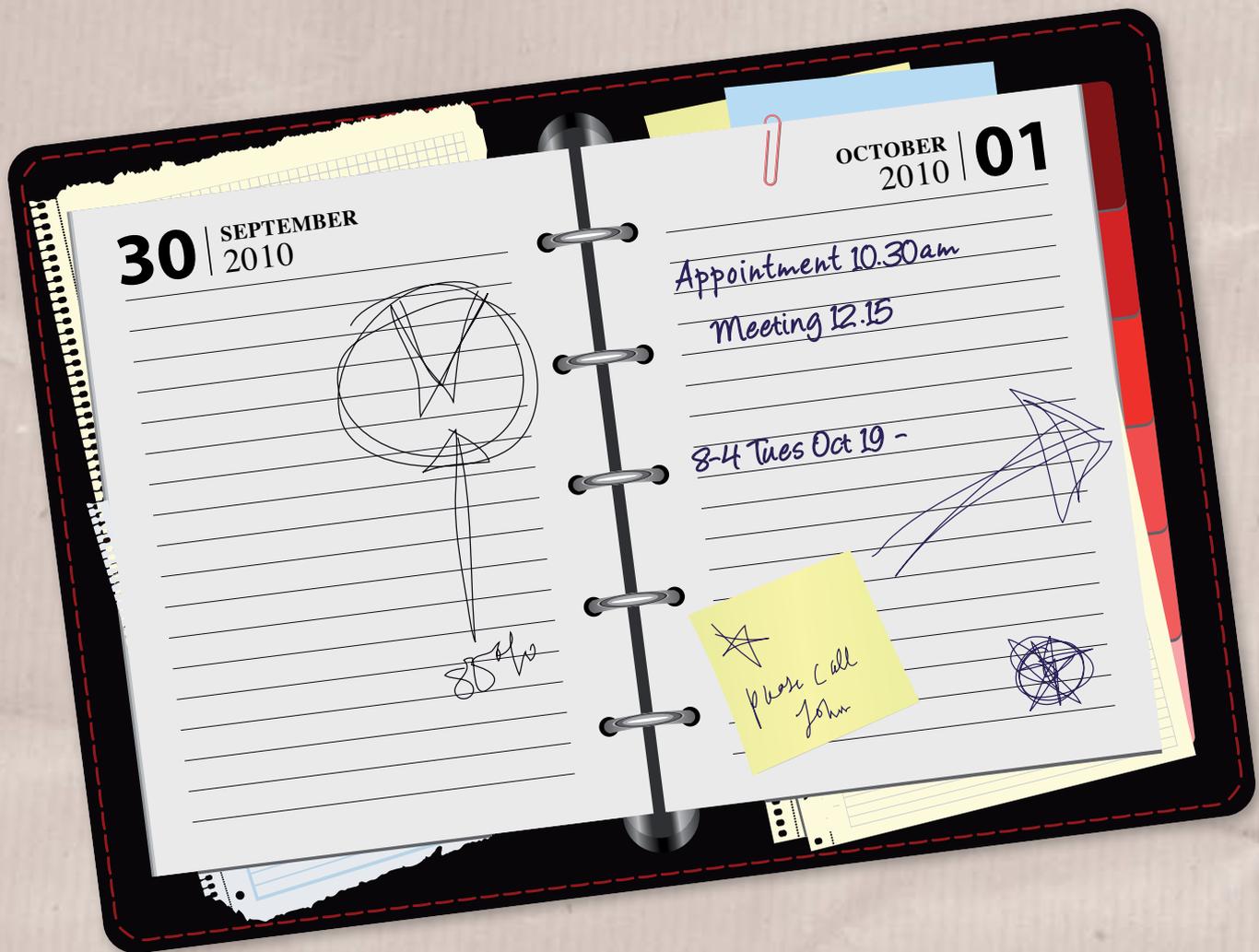
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Congratulations Mr Miliband (...But now what?)

It will not be an easy year. As Labour heads out of the leadership campaign and into its first Conference in opposition since 1996, the new leader will barely have time to catch his breath before a set of challenges – and opportunities – lands on his desk.

Over the next twelve months there will be the Comprehensive Spending Review in October, the opportunities for some Lib Dem rapprochement as parliament returns in the new year, the Scottish and Welsh elections and the referendum on electoral reform, both in May, and of course Labour Party Conference 2011 next September.

Over the next few pages, the Fabian Review charts these key moments across the leader's first year, beginning with Tim Horton who argues that Labour really can appeal to so-called core and swing voters at the same time.

SEPTEMBER

2010

How to win on values

This conference is the time for the Labour leader to consign arguments about core voters and swing voters to the past. They all think the same way about the key issues, says **Tim Horton**



Tim Horton
is Research Director at
the Fabian Society

Perhaps the least surprising thing about the Labour leadership contest was how quickly it degenerated into an argument about whether to focus on the concerns of Middle England or those of the many voters Labour has hemorrhaged off its left flank. One of the first challenges the new leader now faces will be to get debates about Labour's electoral strategy out of this cul-de-sac.

This isn't just because it's silly for a party to devote so much energy to arguing about which voters it doesn't want. What is so toxic about the 'core voters v. swing voters' argument is that it's based on a false premise: the idea that there are two types of voters who are completely different animals, with different concerns. And that you can't appeal to both at once.

Of course, there are many 'touchstone' issues that have split the Labour Party internally over the last few years – how to deal with immigration, benefit fraud, the super-rich and public service reform. But in fact on none of them could you get a cigarette paper between your average *Mail* and *Mirror* reader.

On all of these issues the sentiments involved extend far across the political spectrum. They are all topics where polling questions get numbers of 70-80 per cent. For example, a recent MORI study shone a light on public queasiness about

diversity in service provision; it found that "Two-thirds of the public think that standards of public services should be the same everywhere in Britain, with just one-in-five preferring greater local decision-making. This commitment to uniformity in standards cuts across party political affiliation...and is not altered by deliberation. Fairness and uniformity appear to be indistinguishable for many members of the public." Similarly, when we polled people on tax avoidance last year, 88 per cent of Labour voters wanted the Government to act on it. The equivalent figure for Tory voters was 82 per cent. Far from playing to either core or swing voters, getting this politics right scoops both.

The new politics of social fairness

The really interesting thing about all of these issues is that they are *all the same issue*: they are all about fairness in how institutions treat people – and, specifically, anger that a basic norm of 'equality of treatment' is being breached. Underpinning this is a deep-seated sense of social equality – an ideal that all citizens should stand equal in the eyes of our social and economic institutions.

Importantly, the fairness and integrity of procedures is as important here as the fairness of outcomes. With high pay, it's not just the amounts concerned, but the sense of different rules: most of us are on salary scales,

whereas the perception is that much of what goes on at the top is determined by bogus remuneration committees where people set their own pay. (As one focus group participant put it to me in 2009: “If I do my job well, I get my salary, not a bonus”.) And the reason lotteries are so unpopular for allocating services is that, even though they are unbiased, they are blind to the strength or legitimacy of individuals’ claims on those services – and there is a certain disrespect in this.

Incidentally, these fairness concerns apply especially to placing service provision in the domain of private markets. If fairness is about desert and equality of treatment, then a golden truth for the left is that, in many contexts, people don’t think markets are fair for allocating services. The Swiss economist Bruno Frey’s studies show why people think price-based market allocation is procedurally unfair: being sensitive only to purchasing power they do not treat consumers equally and are insensitive to desert.

How should Labour approach these welfare dilemmas? The difficult challenge for the Labour left is to accept when fairness demands that government must ensure institutions treat people of different status differently, whether on the basis of residence or citizenship status, or effort or contribution record. That means, on welfare, revitalising social insurance and retaining conditionality – something that the founders of our welfare state, from Tawney to Beveridge to Marshall, all believed in. Such differentiation can seem painful. But fair systems also give everyone a pathway to achieving the same status as everyone else – as fully participating members of society. This is the great prize of systems of earned entitlement: they legitimise welfare provision and diffuse the political angst. (That’s also why right-wing Conservatives, who wish to exploit public tensions around welfare to support retrenchment, tend not to like earned entitlement very much.)

For the Labour right, the challenge is the opposite: to accept when fairness demands that government must ensure institutions treat people of

equal status equally. That often means intervening in free markets. It means regulating governance more tightly to ensure fair processes in corporate remuneration. It means ending non-dom status, something that no other country in the world has. And it means ensuring people pay the level of tax they’re supposed to. Blair’s silence on these issues didn’t somehow keep the New Labour coalition together; it lost us voters – not just core voters,

The truth is that a concern with procedural fairness and equality of treatment (‘fair play’) is deeply embedded in British psychology

but Middle England swing voters. The paper that’s been most angry about bonuses over the last five years hasn’t been the *Guardian*, but the *Daily Mail*. This is why we saw Cameron desperately leap-frogging Labour to criticise the banks and why we had to witness the unedifying spectacle circa 2007 of Labour timidly following the Tories into doing something about non-doms.

Perhaps more controversially, it will mean recognising just how much more important uniform national standards are to people than localism. Of course, that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t pursue public service reform if we think it’s right; it may well be that localism and choice are the best way to improve standards in the long run. But its advocates should stop pretending it’s some magic bullet to win back seats in the south east and start worrying about how to offset the political damage it might cause.

Dismissing the Blairite critique

The Blairite critique of Labour under Brown is that it lost Middle England because it was too attached to tax-funded, centralised service provision. This was argued with passion, but at times was dangerously detached from reality. In 2008, Blair’s former speechwriter Phil Collins set out

this critique in a *Prospect* article that argued the party should instead adopt a ‘liberal’ agenda of public service localism, combined with a greater emphasis on wealth taxes and green taxes. Personally, I support the idea of fair wealth taxes, green taxes and public service reform. But I also genuinely struggle to think of a *less* attractive headline package for Middle England.

In August, the think tank Demos did some helpful polling of the voters Labour lost at the last election. Whereas 19 per cent of Labour’s lost voters said central government “interferes too much in local services”, 35 per cent agreed instead that “the whole point of government is to make sure that there are decent standards across the board and everyone gets a fair deal”. And while 27 per cent of them thought government is “part of the problem not the solution”, 33 per cent thought the opposite. An agenda aimed at winning back the largest number of these voters will clearly need to be a pro-government one.

The Labour left can be fairly accused of not interrogating seriously enough why Labour didn’t win a majority. But the Labour right can arguably be accused of not interrogating seriously enough why the *Conservatives* didn’t win a majority. If people were really that queasy about the state, Cameron would have swept to power by a landslide (and that’s before you take into account the financial crisis, deep recession, a tired 13-year-old Government and an unpopular leader). He didn’t.

Harnessing social fairness

The challenge for the new Labour leader will be not simply to diffuse these political challenges, but to do so by harnessing people’s deeply entrenched beliefs about institutional fairness and social equality in order to drive a popular collectivism.

Among other things, this will mean promoting universalism, understanding why universal benefits and services are extremely popular while targeted ones aren’t. It will mean extending rights and responsibilities to the top of society as well as the bottom. It will mean looking at how to revitalise the contributory

system (though in a way that values carers and others doing important unpaid work). On immigration, it will mean continuing to develop the concept of 'earned citizenship', the first steps of which were laid in Labour's last years in government (by which time no-one was listening anymore). It will also mean looking again at areas of welfare where the market is failing to treat households equally – like home contents insurance and flood insurance.

The truth is that a concern with procedural fairness and equality of treatment ('fair play') is deeply

embedded in British psychology. Pro-market reformers often regard sentiments such as a desire for uniformity in services as slightly irrational – brakes on reform that need to be overcome. In fact, they are gold-dust: a concern for fairness that cuts across, and trumps, narrow individualism.

These attitudes could be the driving force of a social democratic agenda (though they could drive other, less savoury agendas too, including on the right). But it is a race to colonise this ground. The party that best embeds

these widely-shared instincts within its politics and shapes them to its values will be the party that dominates our politics in the coming decades.

A large part of Tony Blair's original insight was that Labour values could appeal to both voters on the left *and* in the centre if they weren't encumbered by policy formulas dreamt up 80 years ago. Between 1994 and 2003, the Labour Party thrived because its leader could do politics in a way that spoke to both constituencies at the same time. It is something we badly need to get back. ■

The difficult welfare challenges

- **IMMIGRATION.** For only a minority of people is disquiet about immigration actually driven by their attitudes towards race and ethnicity. Rather, people don't feel that the right conditions are in place to ensure that those who have recently arrived in the UK contribute fairly to society. They feel that entitlement to public services should not be automatic but earned. Not putting universally-applicable conditions on receipt of benefits and services breaches a very important sense of equality of treatment.
- **BENEFIT 'FRAUD'.** There is obviously deep unease that many claiming benefits are not properly entitled to them and are not contributing sufficiently. Invocations of fraud are not about deliberate and actual fraud, but simply the sense that not everyone is pulling their weight. It is, if you want, simply the immigration issue transferred to a domestic setting.
- **BONUSES AND THE SUPER-RICH.** Anger here is not so much about earnings inequality, but rather about rewards that are undeserved – and not just in the banking sector, but at the top of society more generally. Fabian focus groups in 2009 showed that people feel that large bonuses have not been deserved on the basis of performance and also that jobs at the top haven't been acquired by fair competition in the first place. This is also linked to a deep anger about the super-rich unfairly avoiding taxes, which breaches an ideal of 'same-rules-for-everyone'; it is the benefit fraud issue transferred to the top of society.
- **LOCALISM AND DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC SERVICES.** Since around 2003, many on the Labour right have been increasingly convinced there is some aspirational slice of swing voters for whom increasing diversity and choice in public services is a political panacea. Choice certainly isn't unpopular – though perhaps of more interest here is why people want choice: not especially, it turns out, because they value choice in itself, but rather because they see it as a possible route to securing a good service (they would be equally happy with the guarantee of a good service and no choice). But if meaningful choice requires diversity, then it's important to stress just how unpopular diversity and localism are. By and large, most people want uniformity in public services. The two words most likely to make the steam billow from your average Mail reader's ears are not 'asylum seeker' or 'benefit cheat' (or even 'Lisbon Treaty'), but 'postcode lottery'. Here, offence is caused not by people with different claims on services being treated equally, but by people with equal claims on services being treated differently.

OCTOBER
2010

The credibility test

Setting out a compelling and credible position on tax rises, spending cuts and the future of public services is the key task for Labour's new leader write **Gavin Kelly** and **Nick Pearce**



Gavin Kelly was a senior adviser in government from 2000–10, including deputy chief of staff at No 10 Downing Street from 2007–10, and is now Chief Executive of the Resolution Foundation



Nick Pearce was head of the No 10 policy unit from 2008–10 and is now director of the Institute for Public Policy Research

“Talk about ‘re-balancing’ the economy is for the birds until the ‘bubble economy’ is tackled #MILIGRAMS”

At the recent election, Labour leaders were clear that they didn't want to return to 'business as usual' on the economy, but they were less sure about what new policies they wanted to propose. The reason for this was that, two years after the financial crisis first struck, there has still to be a proper reckoning on what it means for our key economic and political institutions. In no country have the forces driving contemporary capitalism towards instability and greater inequality been met with an equally powerful countervailing agenda of progressive economic reform.

Of all the intellectual risks the centre-left currently faces, the biggest one would be to judge that the 2008/9 crisis was a once-in-a-century occurrence that is now behind us. A clear implication is that we can no longer view the task as being to deal with specific market-failures, rather than preventing the consequences of what at first sight appear as 'market-successes'.

As a rash of post-crisis books by leading economists has argued, this means restoring finance to a more subservient position in the UK economy through implementing the proposed prudential regulatory regime and the new banking levy, whilst also enacting structural reform to the banking sector. But financial reform, the dominant

focus of the debate to date, needs to be seen as just one element of a larger agenda for tackling the UK's so-called bubble-economy: debt-driven speculative investment in the housing and the stock market, in part a function of wide income inequalities, which fuels unsustainable levels of personal consumption, inhibits saving, and distorts private investment. Talk about 're-balancing' the economy is for the birds until the causes of this cycle are properly tackled.

The implications are wide ranging. They start with monetary policy, where the guiding assumption of the last two decades – that price stability will give rise to macro-stability – lies in tatters. We now need a new framework which starts from the belief that it is the job of monetary policy to avoid asset bubbles occurring in the first place, rather than waiting to deal with the after effects.

A more daunting consequence will be how to get to grips with the structure of the UK's housing market. This is a third-rail issue in Westminster – very few politicians want to have a candid conversation with the British public about it. But now is the time to start one. After the economic crisis it is more widely recognised that our housing market is a blockage to social and geographical mobility, a motor of intergenerational inequity, and a barrier to efficient credit allocation.

The silent victims of all this – the poor, the aspiring home-owner, the family stuck on a social housing waiting list, the capital-starved entrepreneur – need someone to speak up for them. The outlines of a new agenda are coming into focus. House building – both to buy and rent – needs to be a top priority for capital investment. Over the longer-term our model of social assistance for housing needs to rebalance from rent subsidies (Housing Benefit) into bricks and mortar, and more intrusive mortgage regulation is required to restrict the exposure of borrowers and insure them against the risk of repossession. A fully fledged property tax is needed to deal with escalating housing property wealth at the top which distorts the rest of the market. And, given the tax-scarce environment that we will inhabit for the next decade, there needs to be a

willingness to tap into the stored up property wealth of the baby-boomer generation to help fund the costs of social care in an ageing society.

Alongside measures to lift the earnings of low and middle income families, a new agenda for stability and growth will also require the restoration of high and stable levels of capital investment in the productive economy – what might be termed authentic Keynesianism. For over a decade Labour was rightly proud of the priority it placed on public investment to renew Britain's emasculated infrastructure – with annual investment rising to 2 per cent of GDP, a significant increase on the Major administration. It was therefore a strategic error in 2009 – which nobody (ourselves included) pointed out at the time – to tarnish this record by agreeing to swingeing cuts to capital investment, such that it would fall from around £70bn today to £46bn by the middle of the decade (a reduction path to which the Coalition has now stuck). A different trade-off should have been made even if it meant more pain for current expenditure.

Whilst it is sensible to argue for steep cuts in capital investment in areas like the NHS, following a once-in-a-generation hospital building programme, this freed up resource should be shifted into the country's core 21st century growth and infrastructure needs such as new housing, renewable energy, and major transport infrastructure. A pro-stability, growth, and full employment agenda must put productive investment first.

This is a core argument that needs to be made when the Coalition's Spending Review conclusions are announced in October. It will require some hard choices elsewhere. New Labour was completely right in its judgement that a public perception of fiscal incontinence leads inescapably to political irrelevance; nothing about the last 13 years has changed that. With this in mind, a key test for the next Labour leader will be to achieve credibility on deficit reduction and public spending at the same time as highlighting that the scale of the Coalition's cuts is unnecessary, unjust and incredibly risky – with low income groups bearing a disproportionate amount of the pain, and there being no 'Plan B' if the economy fails to return to steady growth.

There are two big questions at stake here for Labour: should it stick to its deficit reduction trajectory at broadly the pace set out in 2009/10? And what blend of tax rises, cuts to departmental budgets and reductions in benefit expenditure is right to fulfil that path, given that very few people on the centre-left believe that taxes should bear all the strain of deficit reduction?

New Labour was completely right in its judgement that a public perception of fiscal incontinence leads inescapably to political irrelevance; nothing about the last 13 years has changed that

On the first, it is clear that Labour should maintain the broad goal of halving the deficit over four years, as originally set out by Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling. This is emphatically not because we are currently in the perilous fiscal state claimed by alarmist commentators and right wing campaigners; but because it is essential over the medium-term that the public finances return to a prudent level which puts debt repayments on a stable footing, enables another Keynesian response should we be hit by more macro-instability later in the decade, and, crucially, strengthens our longer term fiscal position before the impact of an ageing society really starts to bite. This trajectory does not require cuts to take effect before growth is firmly rooted – the strategic error of the Coalition's economic policy.

Nor, handled well, should it require cuts to public spending that damage life chances, although some measure of pain is unavoidable. But the structural pressures on state spending generated by an ageing society, together with the fact that relatively low-growth, high-deficit politics will prevail for most of the decade ahead in advanced Western

countries, means that any party wanting to win a mandate to govern must engage in a hard-headed and open way about broadening the tax-base, and re-drawing the boundaries of the state, rather than simply storing up more demands for public expenditure on the assumption that the good times will soon come round again.

Some of these difficult strategic choices can already be made, ahead of the Coalition's spending review, even if a full prospectus should await more detailed work. The centre-left should support faster rises in the state pension age, wealth taxes on the baby boomer generation, and moves to a new and broad-based carbon-tax. Whilst vigorously defending the huge improvement in public services after 1997, it should also be prepared to acknowledge that not all the increases in public sector staffing have contributed to better services (there is no evidence, for example, to suggest that we need ever more teaching assistants to raise educational standards). It should give its backing to cuts to spending on prison places, even if these are made explicitly for deficit reduction purposes. And – even though it is contentious – it should support reforms to poorly targeted benefits that are not meeting the needs for which they were originally designed, like Disability Living Allowance or the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Just as it is vital to be clear about where some of the cuts should fall, it is also essential that progressives are focussed on the services that should be prioritised and fought for. In the decade ahead, the extension of universal services like childcare and care of the elderly will help uphold family living standards and support the achievement of full employment. They should take precedence over further increases in investment in schools and the NHS or increases in tax credits, all of which were major winners of the last decade. A new majoritarian agenda – of the kind championed by the Fabian Society – needs to prioritise policies that will help meet the costs of an ageing society, increase fairness in life chances, and directly translate into tangible benefits for the great majority of families. A new generation of care services fulfils all these goals. ■

JANUARY
2011

Next Labour leader must engage with Liberal Democrats

There is far more that unites Labour and the Lib
Dems than divides them writes **Richard Grayson**



Richard Grayson is Professor of Twentieth Century History at Goldsmiths. He is one of three vice chairs of the Lib Dem federal policy committee (writing in a personal capacity)

Whoever the next Labour leader is, they will be sorely tempted to harangue the Liberal Democrats. The party is a soft target, doing so much in government against which Liberal Democrats campaigned. Despite that, most Liberal Democrats (with a few exceptions such as myself) seem broadly happy with the Government, arguing that it has already unpicked the worst excess of the Labour Government on civil liberties, and will implement progressive policies such as the 'pupil premium'.

Faced with Lib Dem enthusiasm for the coalition, and a growing public perception that the party is losing its identity, there will be a temptation for the Labour leader to see easy pickings in the polls through knee-jerk opposition. Perhaps surprisingly, I hope the Labour leader will be strongly critical of the Liberals Democrats where ministers act in contravention of the party's manifesto. Frankly, this should also be a task for Liberal Democrat members.

However, I believe it would be profoundly mistaken for the Labour leader to adopt a tribal and hostile approach to all Liberal Democrats on every issue, for two reasons.

One is simply practical. If there is to be electoral reform – and Labour

MPs who oppose it should remember their own manifesto – then Labour is highly unlikely to govern alone very often, if ever. Coalitions will become the norm. Parliamentary mathematics dictates that the largest potential partners for Labour are likely to be the Liberal Democrats. We saw in May 2010 how personal chemistry can affect coalition negotiations – if Labour simply bashes the Lib Dems for the next five years, that chemistry will be highly toxic. In a hung Parliament in 2015, Lib Dems may well find it easier to continue a coalition with Conservatives with whom they are used to working, than to forge new relationships with people who have spent five years slating them.

The second reason for not bashing the Lib Dems constantly is that time and time again over the last 13 years, the party consistently made arguments which are accepted by many in the Labour Party as being the right ones. That was most obviously the case on Iraq, and also on civil liberties. There were other cases, for example in 1999-2000, when Charles Kennedy called for more investment in the NHS, and was denounced by Tony Blair, only for that investment to be made soon after. Some in the Labour leadership election, most notably David Miliband, recognise that Labour did not adequately (indeed at all) democratise public services in England and now appears interested in the democratic localism agenda proposed by Liberal Democrats. The green thread which ran through all Liberal Democrat policies from the 2001 manifesto onwards was only

adopted belatedly by Labour, with both Milibands doing good but late work on the environment.

It is my strong belief that there is much space for a sustained engagement between the new Labour leadership and Liberal Democrats on a wide range of issues to lay the foundations for a future centre-left government. These include areas where Lib Dems have got it right in the past, and from which Labour might learn, such as civil liberties, the environment, democratisation, and redistribution. On these issues the hearts and souls of Liberal Democrat and Labour activists are similarly stirred, something that cannot be said of Conservatives. There are other areas where the Liberal Democrats have probably got it wrong and need to rethink. The scrapping of the Child Trust Fund and the Savings Gateway has torn up the entire agenda of asset-based welfare. Stuart White of Oxford University has made important challenges to Liberal Democrats on this issue which need to be taken up.

There are also wider questions about the 'good society' and the eco-crisis which neither party has even begun to address adequately, other than through the work of Jon Cruddas, Neal Lawson and Compass more widely. Challenging markets, ensuring that they work for people and the environment rather than the other way round, is crucial. Doing so seriously will take all the intellectual energy of the centre-left, which means social democrats, social liberals, greens and socialists working together.

There is a simple reason why people have talked for so long about the realignment of the centre-left, and seldom of such a regrouping of the centre-right. It is that members of the Liberal Democrats (and their predecessors) have at heart far more in common with Labour members than with Conservatives, and a different electoral system would have delivered a Lib-Lab coalition in 2010 (and probably earlier). The current coalition may turn out to be a realignment of the centre-right, or it may be an aberration. That partly depends on whether the new Labour leader is willing to engage constructively with Liberal Democrats. There is a chance to do so if that leader does not retreat into tribalism. ■

How to bounce back

The Scottish and Welsh elections can catalyse Labour across the UK says **Wendy Alexander**



Wendy Alexander
is MSP for Paisley
North

Labour heads into conference season with the economy enduring shock therapy and public services being slashed – and it's the most vulnerable who are paying the price. But the 1980's taught us that a doctrinaire Tory Government is no guarantee that voters will return to Labour.

One source of future strength for Labour, though, are the powerful new democratic institutions we created when in power. Whereas Mrs Thatcher abolished the Greater London Council to silence opposition, Labour created a Scottish Parliament, the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies and a London Assembly.

The elections to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, due in May 2011, could prove a vital milestone on Labour's return to power and Labour's new leader should devote real energy and resources into the campaigns. Three years ago the SNP took power in Holyrood with just a single seat's advantage over Labour. The SNP's minority Government has survived due to sustained Tory support in the Scottish Parliament.

Although there has been no a formal 'confidence and supply' arrangement, the Tories' determination to inflict maximum damage on Labour means they have effectively propped up the SNP in power since 2007.

But after the financial crisis it all started to go wrong for Alex Salmond. Scotland's First Minister rarely wishes to be reminded that he advocated lighter touch financial regulation, put HBOS's problems down to 'spivs and speculators', and offered RBS Scottish Government assistance with the disastrous ABN-Ambo takeover.

You will search Alex Salmond's speeches in vain for a mention of the 'bank bailout' – the words never knowingly cross his lips. Yet the sheer scale of government support received by HBOS and RBS meant Scotland was potentially even more exposed to the international banking crisis than either Iceland or Ireland.

The First Minister is also strangely quiet these days about his Arc of Prosperity – Ireland, Iceland and Norway – those nations surrounding Scotland that the SNP typically lauded. The SNP's world view that Scotland will float to prosperity on oil, sustained by financial services, and emulating its northern neighbours has collapsed.

Meanwhile, most Scots concluded the crisis demonstrated the Union's strength, that we are better off together; proof that sharing risks, revenues and resources is right in an interdependent world.

So the SNP's problems go far beyond the well-publicised Megrabi release decision. In 2007 the SNP were all things to the Scottish electorate. Their promises were simply undeliverable, and Labour said so at the time. Now the nation knows it and the SNP are firmly on the defensive.

And whilst the SNP are increasingly out of steam, out of ideas and out of touch, Scottish Labour in Westminster, Holyrood and Council Chamber is focused on protecting those services which Scots rely on.

Under Iain Gray's strong leadership, Scottish Labour has both exposed SNP failures and set its course for 2011. The polls look very encouraging, although no-one is taking anything for granted.

The excellent Scottish General Election results are a strong platform for Holyrood. Local 'Team Labour' efforts bringing together MPs, MSPs, councillors, trade unions and party activists are setting the campaigning pace.

Having Labour in government in both Wales and Scotland next May would signal the party's ongoing renewal and readiness for a return to power in Westminster

Labour's new UK leader can help the drive for victory in May: by supporting the Labour campaigns in Wales and Scotland; making clear the Scottish and Welsh Labour leaders are in charge; and by building better links on the NEC, and between parliamentary parties and shadow cabinets. Having Labour in government in both Wales and Scotland next May would signal the party's ongoing renewal and readiness for a return to power in Westminster.

But Holyrood, with its additional member voting system has always been a 'parliament of minorities'. Typically deals have had to be done – tacit or formal. There is no easy way to make links between what is happening in Westminster and in Holyrood

Yet the Coalition is already an embarrassment to many Scottish Liberals; their electoral fortunes in 2011 are likely to be hit as cuts bite. Iain Gray has made clear he has no interest in working with the Conservatives or the SNP – but beyond that all parties will be expected to work with the electorate's verdict.

As in the General Election, no one can predict the outcome, and so we work for every vote. Scottish Labour is working for a majority of Holyrood seats in 2011. If we can do that, the opportunity to serve again in Scotland will offer a beacon to Labour supporters everywhere in the UK, and give a boost to the fortunes of the new Labour Party leader. ■

MAY
2011

Just say yes

The decisions of the next Labour leader will be crucial to the fate of the referendum on electoral reform, reports **Ed Wallis**

“Labour needs to decide where it stands. Campaigning for ‘yes’ would help you show the party is capable of re-engaging with a plural liberal-left #MILIGRAMS”



Ed Wallis
is Editorial Manager
at the Fabian Society

Wasn't this supposed to be what Britain's electoral reformers were waiting for? Parliament is voting for a referendum to change how we vote. The bill is being steered through by a Liberal Democrat, a party that has electoral reform in its DNA – despite Nick Clegg's protestations that his party is not “a glorified form of the Electoral Reform Society”. Britain has even found that a coalition government can be formed without the sky falling in. With Labour's manifesto commitment to the alternative vote marking an official conversion to the cause of reform, and the broader anti-politics mood to surf, then really reformers should be cock-a-hoop.

But instead there is talk of a moment being missed, and the case for reform being set back a generation. The politics of the referendum have become a mess and, for the reformers, excruciatingly difficult. When the Government decided to include the redrawing and reducing of parliamentary constituencies along with the alternative vote (AV) referendum legislation, it may have seemed like a clever bit of coalition management at the time, but it has had toxic consequences. Labour's opposition was realistically the only option but leaves it fending off charges of opportunism, and now relations between Labour and Liberal Democrats risk dissolving entirely in mutual recrimination. The current fear and loathing makes it hard to envisage the two parties coming together to mount an effective ‘yes’ campaign.

Another problem is that even people who care about the referendum don't

really care about it very much. A long-standing supporter of AV told me: “even I don't see this as the most important issue in the world, so it's hard to see where the enthusiasm will come from. If it's lost, life goes on”. And AV is very few people's preferred system, especially among the electoral reform lobby who should be providing the energy for the campaign. A recent survey on the blog Lib Dem Voice reported that 52 per cent of Lib Dem activists had “no real enthusiasm” for the referendum.

This leaves the campaign running up the down escalator from the start, particularly in comparison to the ‘no’ campaign who know clearly what they want – no change – and when they want it – never. The appointment of Matthew Elliott, chief executive of the Tax Payers' Alliance, to head up the ‘no’ operation confirmed reformers' worst fears: the campaign against reform will be well-funded and ruthlessly efficient.

Despite the gloom though, the referendum is not a lost cause. When I spoke to Peter Kellner, President of the pollsters YouGov, he said there was still hope: “It's difficult, but it's still fluid and it's still all to play for. The numbers are soft and people are persuadable, because it's an issue that people don't really care about. When you get referendums on issues that people don't see as central to their daily lives, what tends to happen is you get two questions: the one on the ballot paper and the unspoken question.” This battle over this ‘unspoken question’ will be crucial. If the debate is seen as being about party political advantages

The Fabian Society is running a fringe event in association with CentreForum and the Electoral Reform Society called ‘Is the Lib-Lab coalition gone for ever?’ See the Fringe guide on page 28 for details.

– particularly to help out the Lib Dems – then voters will be reluctant to throw them a bone. But if it is about reform of a political system that is out of date, then it can be won. Kellner says that “this is where Labour voters come in. Will they see it as a chance to punish the Lib Dems for siding with the Tories, or as an opportunity for political reform?”

The ‘yes’ campaign are confident of winning the ‘anti-politics’ unspoken question, and are much more concerned with this than which way the Labour Party swings.

Yet while the ‘anti-politics’ current is a powerful one, most analysts agree that the referendum can only be won if Labour’s campaigning organisation kicks into gear. Opinion polls show 85 per cent of Lib Dems are pro-reform and two-thirds of Tories against. Labour voters are likely to decide the outcome.

But Labour is split on the issue, with different polls putting supporters either mildly in favour or mildly against. Many in the party think the opportunity to inflict damage on the coalition Government matters more than the electoral system. Daniel Zeichner, Labour’s parliamentary candidate for Cambridge in 2010 and long-term supporter of voting reform, tells me that the current lack of enthusiasm is symptomatic of “the failure of Labour’s internal party policy-making process. AV is only party policy in the sense that the leader announced it in his Conference speech last year. There are numerous other examples – the Child Trust Fund in 2001– when it just appeared in the manifesto. Good ideas in themselves, but because they were never properly discussed by party members, it is hardly surprising that members then failed to argue the case persuasively, either through formal canvassing or informal conversations with family, friends, and work colleagues.” Very few people joined the Labour Party to fight for electoral reform; consequently this lack of ownership of the issue makes it more likely to be framed by the trench warfare of opposition politics rather than as a matter of party principle. Ironically, given that supporting electoral reform is regarded by some as a key practical and symbolic plank in creating a more pluralist Labour Party, the internal politics of the issue have become emblematic of a top-down approach to

party management that dictates to, rather than engages with, party members.

What Labour’s new leader does could prove the last, best chance for a ‘yes’ victory. A victorious Miliband will personally support the alternative vote but not make much of it, even allowing Shadow Cabinet members to campaign for different sides. Why spend too much early capital on what looks like an uphill struggle, when the ‘yes’ campaign’s failure could destabilise the coalition and perhaps bring Labour nearer to power?

Preferential voting systems are much more in tune with a society that has nuanced opinions, where simply marking either/or with an ‘x’ no longer does us justice

But it would be bad tactics to play tactics with this issue. Attempts to wreck the coalition by blocking the referendum are likely to fail. Principle and self-interest should combine as reasons for the new leader to put Labour clearly on the side of reform.

Tribal politics, as well as being outmoded and unpopular, is self-defeating here: it fails to recognise Labour’s route back to power. With or without electoral reform, coalitions may well be here to stay. A recent Institute for Government analysis concluded that “the classic era of two-party politics lies behind us”. Since the two party system’s peak in 1951 when Labour and the Conservatives took 97 per cent of the vote, rising support for the Liberals along with the SNP, Plaid Cymru, UKIP and the Greens has shattered the old certainties and created “a long-term trend towards a more pluralistic if not fragmented party system, which makes hung parliaments more and more likely”, even if the current electoral system remains. So any future Labour majority depends on appealing to voters who are not part of a party tribe. And how ‘coalitionable’ the party is may often decide who governs.

If the referendum is lost, the Lib Dems will not leave the coalition. Nor are they

likely to fall gratefully into the arms of a party which helped scupper their lifelong dream. Labour is in danger of becoming a scapegoat for disappointed Lib Dems and other reformers, blamed for its half-hearted commitment, and hiding the fact that the main political energy – and hard cash – for defeating reform comes from the right. Instead, win or lose, making this an argument about reform versus reaction would do much more to expose the coalition’s underlying faultlines, and help to establish a new public identity for Labour.

Labour’s leader should make backing AV part of a broader democratic reform agenda, inside and outside the party. Preferential voting systems are much more in tune with a society that has nuanced opinions, where simply marking either/or with an ‘x’ no longer does us justice. It is this – rather than amorphous arguments about whether winning 50 per cent of a constituency vote is inherently ‘fairer’ than winning a simple plurality – that is the real strength of AV. But it is also crucial to the renewal of the Labour Party, and not just because it will allow the party to continue to argue it is a reforming one. By loosening the culture of ‘safe seats’ and better reflecting the true preferences of the electorate, it will open up the possibility of Labour finding new coalitions of support beyond the quest for ‘swing’ voters and the Murdoch press.

The Lib Dems could do much more to bring Labour on board, and the bill in particular has been a disaster. One Labour reformer tells me “pluralism is a two-way street, and the unwillingness of the Lib Dems to give anything or take Labour’s concerns about the boundaries seriously shows that they are not serious about linking up with Labour reformers”. Non-party reformers will have an important role in helping to build these bridges.

But once the dust has settled and the wrangling over the bill has run its course, Labour will need to decide where it stands. Campaigning for ‘yes’ would help Labour’s new leader show the party is psychologically capable of re-engaging with a plural liberal-left – and set out their public pitch as a champion of change. As the public votes on political reform, they should not lead the red team off the pitch to sit in the stands. ■

SEPTEMBER

2011

Showtime

Kirsty McNeill argues that Labour Conference 2011 is the key moment to demonstrate that the party has changed



Kirsty McNeill is a former Labour special advisor, councillor and PPC. She has spent most of her career working for campaigning organisations

**“Train activists not simply in winning votes, but in winning arguments
#MILIGRAMS”**

Labour’s leadership contenders have spent much of the last four months positing ideas for party reform. Most of the suggestions are things we should pursue (and many are things we should have pursued long ago) but they fail to address the most fundamental barrier to Labour’s renewal; it’s not about structure, it’s about culture. The transition from machine to movement will happen not because we introduce primaries, a gender quota for the shadow cabinet, or even a cohort of well-trained community organisers, but because we each take responsibility for our own role in creating a pluralist party-wide culture that embodies the Labour values of solidarity, tolerance and respect.

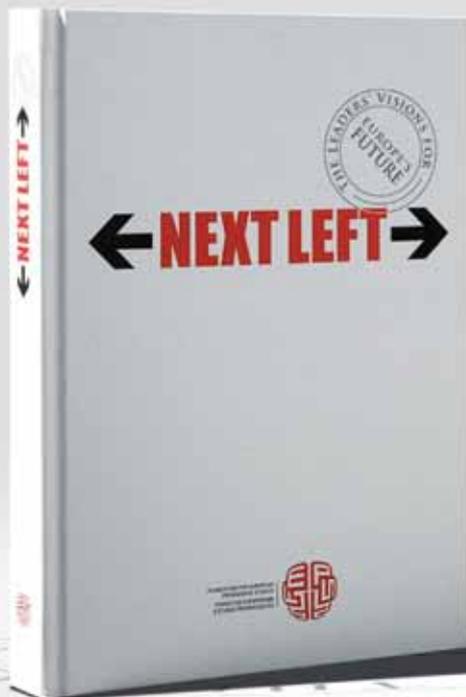
Conference is Labour’s clan gathering – and it exposes our family dynamic more than any other event in our calendar. So it is here that the next Labour leader can make their most powerful contribution to a new organisational culture.

Useful lessons can be learned from other successful movements. Think of any big charity or pressure group you’ve ever joined or given a donation to. Did any of them ever ask why you came to sainthood so late, why you had given so little time or cash, or whether your partner and parents shared your commitment? I suspect not; most successful voluntary sector

organisations recruit and retain supporters by thanking each and every person for any contribution they can make. So if it’s ridiculous to imagine attending an Oxfam function and overhearing “well it’s all very well Tim being here now, but do you know he used to wear Nike at school?”, why have we come to expect it that Labour colleagues will sniff of one another: “Charlotte’s mum’s a Tory” or “Abdul was a Lib Dem at university”, as if that diminishes rather than enhances the fact they’ve joined our struggle now? So next conference and in our party communications, let’s celebrate not just those new members we’ve been hearing so much about, ‘who joined because they had always been Labour and now knew that voting wasn’t enough’ – let’s hear about all those who used to support other parties or didn’t care about politics at all. Of course we should always respect and thank the members of several decades standing – but if we want to increase our ground war capacity to election-winning standards, it is to our newest members that we owe the warmest welcome.

Continued on page 17...

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Saturday 18 September 2010, 12.15 – 2.00pm, 11a ACC Hall, Kings Dock, Liverpool, L3 4FP*

Labour

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Chukka Umunna MP; Peter Kellner, *President, YouGov*; Sunder Katwala, *General Secretary, Fabian Society*
Mary Riddell, *Columnist, the Telegraph (Chair)*

Monday 27 September, 8.00 – 9.30 pm, Conference Hall, Manchester Town Hall, 2 Albert Square, Manchester, M60 2JT

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Dr Mary Harris, *Director of the Young Offender Programme, led by National Grid*; Peter Osborne, *Columnist (TBC)*
Neil O'Brien, *Director, Policy Exchange (Chair)*

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The Prison Reform Trust works to create a fair, humane and effective justice system. Sign up to our newsletter at www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/newsletter

...Continued from page 15

The second lesson of successful charities is they tend to be grateful to, rather than suspicious of, their donor base. Of course the interaction between big money and political parties can be corrosive if it involves real or perceived attempts to influence policy – but it does not follow that those who give because they share our values should be treated as some sort of squalid liability. This leadership election has seen the bizarre spectacle of some members seeming to suggest the ability to generate income for the party is a disqualification from leading it. Activism incurs costs and helping to pay the bills is a progressive responsibility; even the Freedom Riders had to buy the tickets. So just as each conference we celebrate those activists and CLPs whose successes should inspire us all, let's also remember to thank those whose generosity makes it possible (and those party fundraising staff, whose jobs are among the most difficult). That doesn't mean big bucks should equal special treatment, simply that the leader should be clear that people who donate to Labour's campaigns are an integral part of 'Team Labour' just as surely as Labour's brilliant staff, gutsy activists and tireless elected representatives.

The third lesson from the great social movements is that a politics of community organising is not the same as communitarian politics. Indeed many of the most effective social movements which are so much a part of Labour's heritage (including those focussed on anti-racism, gay rights and gender justice) saw their role as primarily evangelical; not simply to mobilise people but to change individual minds. By contrast the community organising movement which has so beguiled Labour's best and brightest practises a much more orthodox communitarianism.

Citizens UK's stated goal is "to increase the power of communities to participate in public life" – communities, not people.

The Citizens movement has already done a great service by challenging Labour to rediscover its roots as a party of reciprocity, solidarity and mutualism, where a healthy public square exists beyond the reaches of either the market or the state. But its theory and practice

We are called to train activists not simply in winning votes, but in winning arguments

cannot be imported wholesale into Labour; not simply because it has no answer to questions like war and peace and development which extend beyond immediate localities, but because it is predicated on recruiting powerful 'leaders' who bring flocks, rather than on empowering individuals to exert ever more control over their lives.

The question is whether the best of these traditions can be reconciled to enable Labour in opposition to achieve social change on the heroic scale of Citizens UK (whose claims to have secured £40 million of living wages show self-organisation as its inspirational best), while retaining the social liberalism and respect for individual aspiration which were the best of New Labour.

When Labour introduced civil partnerships we didn't respond to public opinion, we led it – but it was leadership from the top and centre. In retrospect, it is clear we could have changed minds at the same time as changing legislation – but for most of our time in government we regarded the former as somebody else's job, and the latter

as the only weapon at our disposal. So organising inside communities (and campaigning for goals beyond new laws or statist solutions) can help achieve progressive objectives, but is not synonymous with them. Any Labour councillor can tell you the tensions between being a good local representative and a good progressive, and community organising doesn't help you resolve them; what is the communitarian answer to the well organised residents' association who don't want any affordable housing built in the area?

So I believe that in reconciling these two traditions we are called to train activists not simply in winning votes, but in winning arguments. That means a massive and renewed focus not just on campaign training for our members, but for political education in its widest sense. People need to be equipped properly for doorstep, shop-floor and school gate arguments about everything from the progressive alternatives to coalition cuts to why Labour women fought so hard against coalition plans for anonymity for rape defendants. If our members are to be Labour's ambassadors, and their community's organisers, they need also to be able to access the best possible resources about Labour's policies, positions, heritage and history. Not just 'what the line is' but 'why the line is as it is' and 'who do we speak to in order to get it changed?'

Labour has much to learn from other social movements, but we should not forget that we have much to teach. The Britain we have built together is a fairer, stronger, greener, more tolerant, more democratic, more liberal and more progressive country than in 1997. We have already changed our country and our world – at next year's conference we can prove we've changed our party too. ■

MILIGRAMS

Recovering from a comprehensive election defeat would always be difficult. But faced with ongoing economic woes, battles over spending and cuts, and the unknown quantity of a Liberal Conservative coalition, Labour's new leader faces a tough task to reconnect with voters and rebuild the party. We asked politicians, political commentators, musicians, thinkers and activists for short messages of advice – Miligrams – to help them through the difficult year ahead.

Miligram *n.* a short message of advice to the new leader of the Labour Party, especially across the September 2010 conference season.

"As Ronald Reagan (sorry) might put it, stay the course. Learn from your overall electoral success of the last 13 years and the good you did; don't throw it all away"

Stryker McGuire (Newsweek)

Neil Kinnock Achieve the impossible – don't let the bastards ever grind you down

"Make my vote count"
Billy Bragg

Polly Toynbee (The Guardian) Defy the Tory press. Restore pre-Thatcher media ownership laws to break up Murdoch's empire, let all media owners be UK taxpayers. Don't be afraid!

Denis Macshane MP

"Go, do, be international. Labour fails when it does inbred, navel-gazing, national stuff. Tories will always out-nasty us on Europe. Be EU-relaxed"

"'We can't spend money we don't have', 'National debt will burden future generations': demolish these economically illiterate Osbornisms"

Robert Skidelsky (Labour peer and Keynes biographer)

"Rebuild trust – in politics, in society, in business. Let's start by acting as though we genuinely LIKE the people we are elected to serve"

Karen Buck MP

"Own up to, and apologise for, the economic catastrophe for which the last Labour government was responsible"

Simon Heffer (Daily Telegraph)

"Fight on the progressive centre and target inequality. Woo unhappy LibDems and adopt daylight saving. Most importantly, pace yourself"

Ben Bradshaw MP

"We acted in good faith and prevented a recession becoming a depression: we should stand up and say so"

Dave Anderson MP

"Beware of the 'Yes People'. If you want to build an enduring social democracy in the UK, do not hear only what you want to hear"

Angela Smith MP

Iain Dale (Blogger) No one will be interested in Labour for a couple of years. Get used to that as you think and plan for the long term.

"The poor need more: let's be bold, radical and proud of a fiscal policy that redistributes income and wealth"

Kate Green MP

"If you do want a second chamber please hurry up and reform us – we are too big, too unwieldy and not democratic. Stick to your decision and go for it!"

Glenys Thornton (Labour peer)

"Move on from the old pro-EU/anti-EU debate. Treat the EU as your practical ally in achieving your goals on human rights, climate change, development and foreign policy"

Catherine Ashton (EU High Representative)

"Accept you lost. Accept that you will need to be different in future. Accept that the state grew too big. Precisely and calmly make your case. Wait for the moment"

Ben Page (Ipsos Mori)

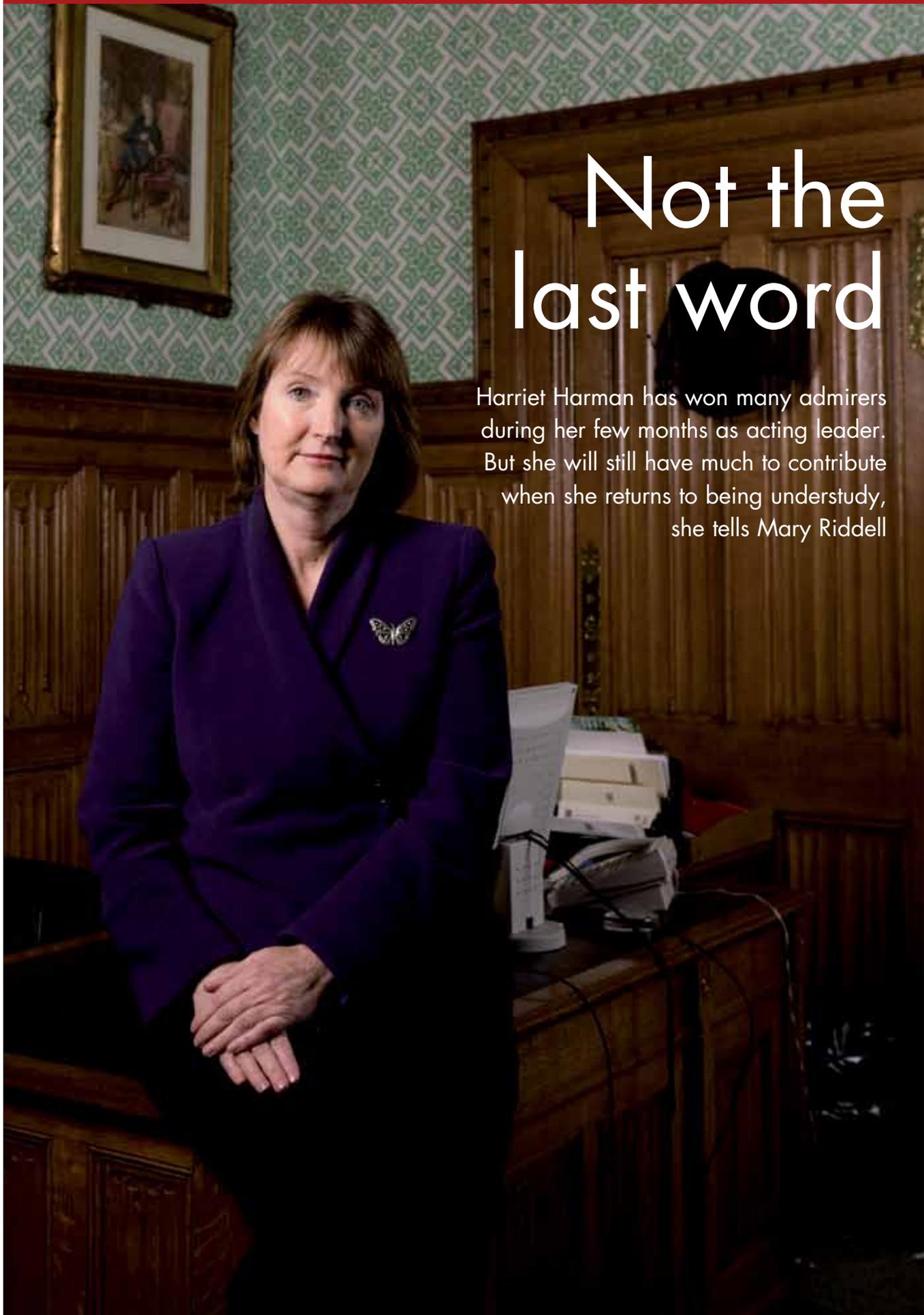
Chi Onwurah MP For both party and leader: debate and controversy weaken the weak and strengthen the strong. Be strong!



Tweet your own Miligrams, using the #Miligrams hashtag. Over conference season we will be relaying these to the new leader online at www.fabians.org.uk.

Not the last word

Harriet Harman has won many admirers during her few months as acting leader. But she will still have much to contribute when she returns to being understudy, she tells Mary Riddell





Mary Riddell
is a columnist for the
Daily Telegraph

While Harriet Harman is as dismissive as you might expect of David Cameron, she does have cause to bless his robust sense of “entitlement”. As leader of the Opposition, Cameron relinquished the post-holder’s cubbyhole and procured the austere splendid suite of offices in which Harman is now installed. We stand on the balcony and look out on the Thames view that she is about to bequeath, almost certainly to one or other Miliband. The ballot papers have gone out, and Harman’s short lease is almost up.

She has, she says, no regrets about not standing in the leadership race. “I think sometimes you know a decision. You don’t decide it. You just know it. I just knew after I had three children that I wasn’t having any more. I always wanted to be deputy leader, and that was a great challenge for me. I had a very clear view of what I wanted to hand on to the new leader – a growing party. Having been seven points behind the Tories in the election campaign, we’ve closed the gap in council election votes. Nobody thinks ‘Oh God, I can’t go out on the doorstep because we’re the losers.’ I wanted for us to be united and an effective opposition. To have handed that over to a new leader is a big task.”

Harman claims to have no clue as to who will be the beneficiary of her legacy. “It won’t be knowable until it’s happened because people choose in so many ways. Nearly four million ballot papers have gone out, and you can’t possibly know the different dynamics.” Nor, naturally, would she presume to express any preferences.

But, as the “cliff-hanging finale” approaches, she will be the first to know the identity of the next leader of the Labour Party. When exactly will she find out? “I don’t know. It’s all being handled by the Electoral Reform Society. But I shall be poker-faced. It didn’t leak last time, and it won’t leak this time.” The candidates themselves will be in

the dark until the moment when each is summoned to get the result in the presence of his or her campaign manager before being ushered straight out to hear the news delivered to conference.

Harman does not say, or probably even know, how she will feel in the moment when the mantle of acting leader is lifted from her shoulders. Nor does she complain, though she might have cause, that she has received rather little credit for keeping a badly-defeated party afloat. In particular, she has coped with aplomb at PMQs – an ordeal dreaded by all party leaders.

I was never involved in any undermining of Tony or Gordon. My relationship with both of them predates them growing apart, so I never felt I should accept the choice between one and the other”

“So many people predicted I’d be a mega-flop. I knew that the party would have felt very knocked back if the person they’d elected deputy leader was trashed. I didn’t want them to be embarrassed. Besides, it would have been unthinkable that my destiny was to be trashed by William Hague,” she says with scorn.

Long after the event, other questions about her election have not gone away. In his memoir, Tony Blair covers the showdown, in 2005, when Gordon Brown allegedly threatened to call for an inquiry into cash for honours unless Blair abandoned Adair Turner’s pensions reforms. Although a fudge was arrived at, Jack Dromey – the then party treasurer and Harman’s husband – subsequently demanded the investigation, so escalating the scandal just as Blair had feared. When I interviewed Blair recently about his book, I asked him whether he thought that Harman was implicated in the events that so destabilised him, and he replied: “I just don’t know”.

“I know,” she says. “I saw that he had said that.” And was she involved? “No absolutely not. I could take [what

he said] as a terrible judgment on me. Why wouldn’t he [Blair] believe what I said absolutely clearly: that there was no way I discussed the issue of the loans with Gordon? I didn’t have any discussion with him [Brown] about that, and nor did Jack. It just did not happen. Believing people were involved when they weren’t just tells you the level of mistrust between Tony and Gordon. It’s totally, totally not true. I’ve said that to Tony. I’ve been absolutely clear. The fact that he can still say that shows me how deep the mistrust was.

“It’s sad, really. It contaminates wider relationships. I was never involved in any undermining of Tony or Gordon. My relationship with both of them predates them growing apart, so I never felt I should accept the choice between one and the other.”

In the past, there has been an even more damaging suggestion that, in return for helping to destabilise Blair, Brown’s supporters backed her for the deputy leadership. While Blair told me that he gives no credence to that story, he writes in his book that, if only his campaign had taken off, Alan Johnson should have won “by rights”.

“I won it. People knew who I was; I’d worked with them. Alan Johnson was an excellent candidate and would have been an excellent deputy, and it was neck and neck. But I won. The idea that there was somehow a payback for my earlier skulduggery is wrong on both counts. One, that I was involved in any skulduggery, and secondly that I was a pawn moved into place. Bugger that. Life is much harder than being a pawn moved around. I’ve never been the recipient of anybody’s moves or waited to be moved into place. Everything I have done has been hard fought for – not the result of any plot.”

Harman is, without a doubt, indomitable. Does she think it will be tricky for her, as acting leader, to go back to understudying the new incumbent? And should he have the right to pick his own deputy? “The party elects the leader and deputy, so they don’t have the right. I don’t feel that whoever gets elected will lack confidence, and I will be an active and supportive deputy. I don’t think they will be looking over their shoulder at all.”

The euphemistic plural – “they” – masks the very obvious truth that the next Labour leader will be a man. While Harman was instrumental in ensuring that Diane Abbott’s name was on the ballot paper, the sole female candidate has not campaigned on an overtly feminist platform. I ask whether she has been a disappointment to Harman. It’s important, she says, that the party is not presenting “a men-only team.”

Should Abbott be in the Shadow Cabinet? “It’s up to her whether she stands,” she says. “When somebody’s running, you can’t say: ‘When you lose, what have you decided to do?’ I don’t at all regret nominating her. I’m very pleased she’s been in the campaign. It’s all been a step forward for her, whatever happens.”

On the evening before we meet, Harman was defeated in one of her most heartfelt crusades. The Parliamentary Labour Party went against her wish to see 50 per cent of women in a Shadow Cabinet, opting instead for the modest quota of one-third. “Six [women] is the minimum we’ll be aiming for. I think we’ll probably be aiming for eight.” But six is only two more than the Coalition’s male-dominated front bench. Harman must, I suggest, be furious at the dinosaur stance of some of her PLP colleagues. “I think it’s a missed opportunity to change the rules. But we will just build on that.”

Much as she hopes that women may break through in more junior posts, does she not wish that an established high-flier, such as Yvette Copper, had stood for the leadership? “People have to make their own choice. Yvette is absolutely brilliant... but what we’ve had is a rather small pool. We need a critical mass of women in the ministerial team.”

She declines to be drawn on the absence of women, Sarah Brown apart, in a disastrous election campaign, beyond saying: “We are not there yet in terms of Labour’s politics, which is committed to equality in principle. The practice is a bit behind. We’ve got to make more progress.” But how, I wonder, when MPs are fast-tracked in through the mainly male domain of special advisers? Though vague as to the mechanism for change, Harman is hopeful.

Besides, she can point to the Equality Act – a genuine milestone

of progress, unless you are the Pope, whom Harman is slated to meet a few days after our interview during his state visit to Britain. One imagines this could be a sticky encounter, since his Holiness took the almost unprecedented step of criticising UK domestic law by saying Harman’s Equality Act imposed “unjust limitations on the freedoms of religious communities to act in accordance with their beliefs.” In a further reference to the onus placed on Catholic adoption agencies to accept gay couples – an obligation since upheld in the courts – the Pope claimed the legislation “violates natural law.”

“I’m gratified that it’s actually ahead of where people are. It’s a lever for progress rather than waiting to see where public opinion is”

Is she expecting the subject to be raised during their meeting? “Well, it is a formal meeting, and the Act has gone through the House of Commons and the House of Lords,” she says, adding that the legislation is a “basis for further progress. Although it’s been controversial with some elements of the Catholic Church, it ultimately went through with all-party support.”

So the Pope is wrong? “Well, he’s not in the House of Commons or the House of Lords,” Harman says pointedly. “There are many views expressed all around ... but I’m gratified that it’s actually ahead of where people are. It’s a lever for progress rather than waiting to see where public opinion is.”

Does she consider it extraordinary for the Pope, as a head of state as well as the Catholic Church, to criticise laws passed by another legislature? “Well, I think Popes have done that all the way through. But we passed the legislation, the courts will adjudicate on it, and we get on with our task and with our arguments. Obviously, people are entitled to their opinions, but we’re entitled to put forward our beliefs, and that is what we do.”

Though she does not put it so bluntly, Harman’s message to the Pope appears to be: you ain’t seen nothing yet. A major women’s convocation is planned as part of conference to set down future requirements. “It may be that we come up with legislation for 50/50 [representation] on the boards of companies. We’ve got to look at what the next stage demands. I acknowledge the massive importance to five million Catholics in this country of having their religious leader doing the first ever state visit. We will get on with setting the goals for the next steps to equality.”

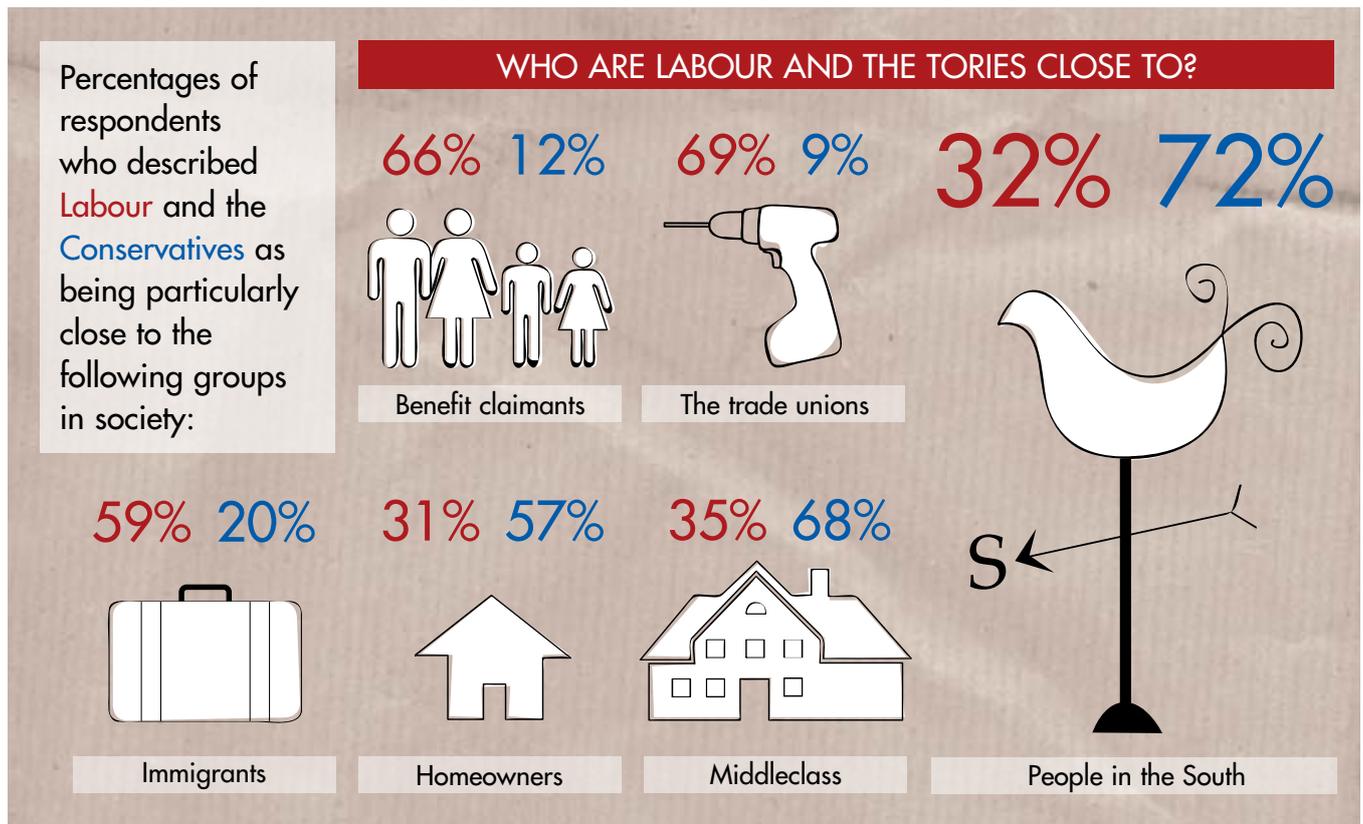
In other words, she is right and the Pope wrong? “We need to move forward. The Equality Act is not the last word,” she says, pointing to examples of progress that have caught her eye. She commends Spain for blazing a trail “on domestic violence, but also on family friendly working. They got [the equivalent of] Ofsted, where they send inspectors round companies to see if they are family friendly. On domestic violence, if a man hits a woman in a supermarket, that person can be arrested [on the basis of a third party report]. It’s happened to British tourists.”

The minister responsible for this measure “says it’s not a private matter between husband and wife. When a man raises his hand to his wife in Spain, he raises it to the Spanish state. The state is there taking a view and taking action.”

If socially conservative Spain can take such steps, Harman foresees many openings in Britain, from obliging firms to pay equal bonuses, to fairly dividing child care and labour in the home. Her work, she implies, is just beginning as the Labour succession passes on. She does not know what role, if any, Gordon Brown, will play in formally anointing his successor, but she is clear that he – and she – will be the sideshow.

“I’m sure the party will want to thank Gordon for all he’s done and that he will want to thank them. But Saturday will not be about me or Gordon. It will be about the party choosing its new leader.” In private, Harriet Harman is likely to be content that she has done all within her means to decontaminate what could have been – and may still prove – a poisoned chalice. ■

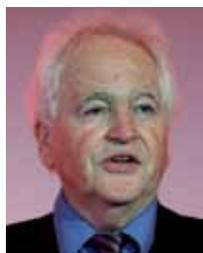
From aspiration to insecurity: The new story of the south



In 1992, the seminal Fabian pamphlet *Southern Discomfort* influenced a generation of New Labour thinking about how to win elections. **Patrick Diamond** and **Giles Radice** have revisited the work to re-examine the southern effect after Labour's defeat at the 2010 election. Here they outline their findings.



Patrick Diamond is Senior Research Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford and Policy Network. He is formerly Head of Policy Planning in No 10.



Giles Radice is a Labour peer, former chairman of the Treasury Select Committee and author of the New Labour biography *Trio* (published by IB Tauris, 2010)

Tories are trusted more than Labour on every major economic competence question:

44% 16%

Run the economy

51% 12%

Reduce the deficit

31% 12%

Get value for money on behalf of taxpayers

Any party seeking to recover quickly from electoral defeat has to develop a coherent and compelling analysis of why it lost and what ought to be done to put it right. For a decade, the Conservative Party refused to listen to voters. Its reward was the worst sequence of election defeats since 1832. Labour must not repeat the error, as it did in the 1950s and the 1980s. It needs to shape a credible strategy that will enable the party to win next time, escaping the sterility of opposition.

Our analysis, based on new You Gov polling and drawing on the Southern Discomfort public attitudes work carried out for the Fabian Society in the early 1990s, examines the crippling weakness that Labour faces in southern England outside London, and the steep electoral mountain it has to climb. In the south and the Midlands, where British general elections are determined, Labour holds just 49 out of 302 seats, and the swing against it was over 9 per cent in many seats. We need to understand why the party performed so disastrously, and why the 1997 coalition unravelled in such spectacular fashion.

Only on the basis of listening carefully will Labour find a path back to power. This does not mean replacing policymaking with focus groups or slavishly pursuing the opinions of key voters, but until we listen to what the electorate are saying, the party will never assemble a successful election-winning coalition.

Our decision to focus on the south and the Midlands might seem misplaced given that Labour performed poorly in other regions in 2010, notably Lancashire, Cumbria, Yorkshire and Humberside. Yet this misunderstands Labour's strategic weakness. For one thing, the party already has a dominant position in northern and Celtic Britain. Even if it does better at the next election, there are not enough seats in Wales, Scotland and Northern England for Labour to secure a convincing parliamentary majority. The key to recovery lies in the marginal constituencies of the south and the Midlands, in Harlow, Stevenage, Loughborough, Gravesham, Northampton, and so on.

It is true that Labour lost ground among unskilled (DE) voters – and we need to confront that fact. But it is also the case that the party will only restore its electoral fortunes when it performs better among white collar (C1) and skilled (C2) voters – those most strongly represented in the southern and Midlands marginals. Arguing that Labour should concentrate on mobilising its traditional

support ignores the reality that the DEs now amount to no more than a quarter of the electorate, while the C2s and C1s make up nearly half. As the polling expert Peter Kellner recently argued, "The figures do not support the argument that Labour paid a heavy price this year for neglecting its core voters; rather they tell us something far bigger about long-term trends and what Labour needs to do to regain power".

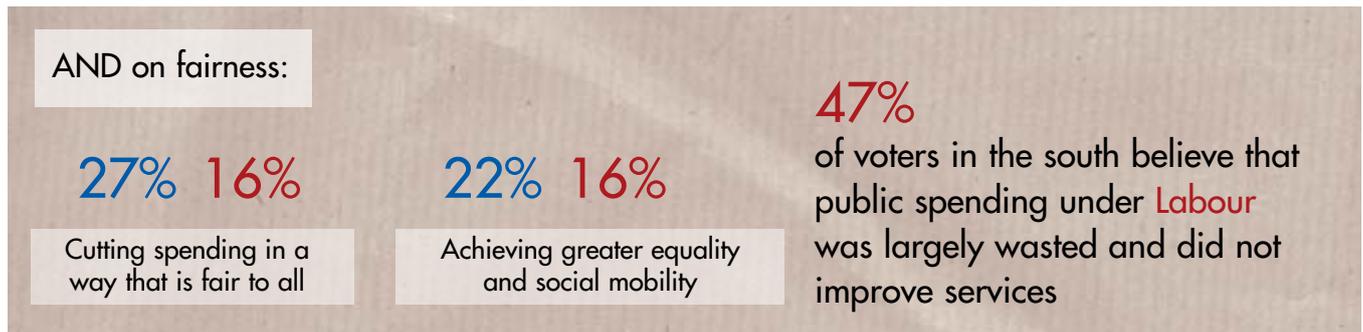
At present, however, Labour appears far removed from the political centre-ground

The party needs to recover in the south for political principle, not just electoral advantage. Labour should aspire to be a national party with roots in every geographical and social constituency. The radical, reforming Labour Governments of 1945, 1964-66 and 1997 were the product of broad-based progressive coalitions that united a range of constituencies and classes. Of course, our research findings are relevant to Labour throughout Britain, but they have particular resonance for recapturing marginal voters in the south.

Labour should appraise its strategy with a sense of cautious optimism about the future, rather than despair. For sure, the 2010 result was among the worst in its history. But in 1992 the party had just suffered its fourth consecutive defeat. Today, Clause Four has been rewritten. Memories of the winter of discontent and trade union extremism have been banished. For all their frustrations, and despite Cameron and Clegg's attempts to project it as the party of economic incompetence and big government, voters no longer reject Labour as a matter of course. There are, nonetheless, significant lessons to learn as it seeks to frame an election winning strategy for the next decade.

The age of insecurity

Wavering voters are hard-headed and sceptical about politicians' promises. In 1992, floating voters were aspirant and upwardly mobile. Today, they are far more cautious about their own prospects, prioritising security and a better future for their children. In our poll, 59 per cent of respondents felt that the next generation would be the same or worse off than them. Just 15 per cent were confident that their children would be able to buy their own home, and fulfil their educational potential without



building up large debts (17 per cent). Only 37 per cent were confident of a good standard of living in retirement.

This group of voters feel more insecure and vulnerable than ever. Typically, the men we interviewed were employed as builders, salesman, engineers, and junior managers. Most women worked in retail, hairdressing, and clerical and secretarial jobs. Wage rises over the last five years have been small or non-existent. Several had been made redundant, forced to accept lower paid work. Many had to work harder for the same, or even less money, leading to record levels of consumer debt. For many voters in the south, life is now far more financially insecure than it was during the previous decade.

People must know what Labour stands for

Labour should appeal to these insecure voters but, according to our survey, wavering Labour voters in the south are now confused about what the party really stands for. Only 32 per cent of southern voters in the poll were clear about what 'Labour stood for these days', against 60 per cent who were not. In contrast, 66 per cent felt they understood what the Conservative Party now represented following Cameron's drive for brand detoxification. Remarkably, these voters are actually clearer about the Liberal Democrats than they are about Labour. The party must speak in clear and simple language, and show that it understands the concerns of the 'squeezed middle' on tax, law and order, public spending and welfare, conveying a realistic and coherent sense of how Labour would govern Britain.

Labour has to become the party of fairness again

At the same time, voters in the south no longer regard Labour as the party of fairness. They say they 'get nothing' from government, in spite of improving public services; in contrast, they believe that groups who worked less hard, or who did not deserve help, are in receipt of a host of benefits. This was highlighted by findings in our poll about the proximity of political parties to particular groups in society.

As Table 1 shows, among these voters Labour is perceived to be close to benefit claimants, trade unions, and immigrants, but distant from homeowners, the middle class, and people in the south. In contrast, the Tories are the party of southern England, the middle class, and homeowners, far removed from immigrants and benefit claimants. The debate about fairness is complex; after the financial crash voters are as resentful about the very rich as they are about benefit cheats. At

present, however, Labour appears far removed from the political centre-ground.

Labour has to deal with the threat of Cameron's new politics

The Conservatives have succeeded in winning back southern voters who grew hostile to John Major's Government in the mid-1990s. They now trust the Tories to manage the country, and fear that Labour will damage the economy, raise their taxes, and spend profligately. More generally, they worry that Labour has little to offer ordinary, 'hard-working' families. In our poll, the Conservatives are trusted more on every major competence question: to run the economy by 44 per cent to 16 per cent; to reduce the deficit by 51 per cent to 12 per cent; and to get value for money on behalf of taxpayers by a margin of 31 per cent to 12 per cent. Even where Labour ought to perform strongly, it still trails behind the Tories: Cameron's party is preferred by 27 per cent to 16 per cent on cutting spending in a way that is fair to all, and on achieving greater equality and social mobility by 22 per cent to 16 per cent.

Shockingly, nearly half of voters (47 per cent) in the south believe that public spending under Labour was largely wasted and did not improve services; they live in fear of profligacy and waste, not least because they themselves often manage tight family budgets. If Labour does not restore its reputation on the key issue of economic competence, it will not earn the right to be heard on its wider aspirations for a better society.

Conclusion

In 2015, it will be eighteen years since the 1997 victory. The basic character of Britain has changed and southern voters' perceptions of their economic prospects have altered sharply: the economy is a source of insecurity and fear as much as a ladder through which aspirations can be fulfilled. That presents major challenges and Labour cannot simply return to the strategy of the 1990s. But if the party learns key lessons it can regain support, seizing victory next time and becoming once again the natural party of government. ■

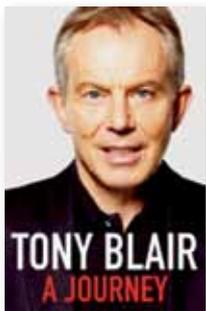
The polling referred to in this article was carried out by You Gov on 26-27th August 2010. The pamphlet Southern Discomfort Again will be published by Policy Network in association with the Fabian Society on 11th October with a launch event in Westminster. For more details visit www.policy-network.net/events.

Bookend of an era

.....
Shamik Das assesses some notable additions to
New Labour's swelling bibliography



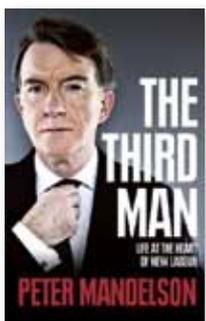
Shamik Das
is Assistant Editor
of Left Foot Forward



A Journey
Tony Blair
Hutchinson
£25



Trio: Inside
the Blair, Brown,
Mandelson
Project
Giles Radice
I B Tauris
£20



The Third Man:
Life at the Heart
of New Labour
Peter Mandelson
HarperPress
£25

A steady stream of books assessing the trials and tribulations of New Labour flowed out of Britain's publishing houses during the party's time in power. From Andrew Rawnsley's brilliant *Servants of the People* a decade ago and his explosive recent follow up, to diaries from Alastair Campbell and Chris Mullin in the last year, there was never a shortage of politicians, academics and journalists offering their two cents on a fascinating and often dysfunctional government.

Books on Tony Blair alone could have kept the political anorak in bedtime reading, including biographies by the excellent John Rentoul and Anthony Seldon, and a chronicle of "Tony Blair's Wars" from John Kampfner.

Now that Labour is out of power, the deluge: updated Campbell and Mullin diaries, Peter Mandelson's memoirs, and of course, Blair himself.

Acres of rainforest have already been plundered for analysis, commentary and waffle about *A Journey* and its reception. In the melee though, his insights about the Fabian Society have escaped the notice of the commentariat: he is generous in describing "the intellectual Fabian way of the Labour Party" as having "deep roots and a venerable history", but scathing about Orwell, Dalton, Cripps, Benn and Crosland as being "too altruistic" for their own good. Fabians like Ed Balls simply "didn't 'get' aspiration", though Sidney Webb's 1917 drafting of Clause IV receives some grudging praise in its "attempt to avoid [even] more Bolshevik language from the further left".

Blair's 'getting' of aspiration and his disdain for privilege and fecklessness seem to be a running

theme throughout the book; note his remarks that, while at the bar, he "got on well with the risk-takers, those who didn't mope around, who had 'get-up-and-go'". He adds that he hates class, loves aspiration, and loves America and the "notion of coming from nothing and making something of yourself" – which would explain his six-page hymn to the land of the free in the US edition.

Nothing greatly new is added to the tittle-tattle about his relationship with Gordon Brown, with little divulged that wasn't already known in and around the 'Westminster Village'. If anything, it's a relief to have it all out in the open, though it does raise some nagging 'what-if' questions about whether different decisions surrounding the leadership in 2007 would have brought a different result in 2010.

No, to get a more rounded picture of the Blair-Brown relationship, try *Trio* for size, Giles Radice's own journey to the centre of "the Blair, Brown, Mandelson project".

Take, for example, the question of Bank of England independence, where Radice quashes Blair's claims that it was a policy "set by me", saying it was "designed in [Geoffrey] Robinson's flat" by Ed Balls, Charlie Whelan and Sue Nye. Or on the subject of Brown's alleged blackmailing of Blair over pensions reform with threats to expose the 'cash for honours' scandal, Radice helpfully reminds everyone of the Downing Street spin at the time which claimed that "at some level Blair and Brown still retained this capacity to do business and come up with a reasonably sane conclusion".

On the Brown-Mandelson relationship, Radice recalls how, not

long after Mandelson's 1994 'betrayal' of Brown, temperatures between the two began to plummet: "At meetings, Brown often refused to speak directly to Mandelson, addressing his remarks to Blair, while Mandelson would make acid and contemptuous asides." To hear Brown's side of the story, we'll have to wait – the final piece in the jigsaw of the past 16 years of Labour history.

Radice delves into Blair's own "psychological vulnerability" when discussing the "Blair-Brown wars"; when he was weak, he was distinctly Brown-esque and "tended to prevaricate". Radice also queries the nature of the Blair-Brown split on the euro. It was not, as has been claimed, a high-minded decision on the part of Brown to put the interests of the country ahead of his own (it was reported that Blair would hand over the keys to Number 10 sooner if Brown gave the green light to the euro). Rather, Brown was "motivated by a shrewd assessment of his personal interest", as

he would not risk the potential damage to his economic inheritance as PM that joining the Euro might bring. Indeed, Radice records Blair's reaction to Brown's verdict on the five tests: "This is all fine, but I don't accept it.

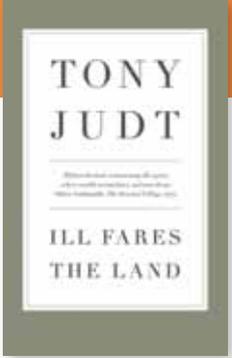
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Mandelson himself doesn't go so far as to say "there were three of us in this marriage, it was a bit crowded" (to quote his old friend Princess Di) but he does reveal in graphic detail what it was like to be in the middle of the trio. He writes that by mid-1995, "Tony too was feeling the effects of Gordon's bitterness" and that, in

Tony's view, "Gordon would require 'massive therapy'. He did not mean that Gordon belonged on Dr Freud's couch, but that we had to cuddle and cosset him." Mandelson also backs up Blair's claim to have taken the lead on the economy: "He complained that Gordon's engagement with developing new economic policies had been skin deep: 'He's been too preoccupied with all his personal and political baggage. He simply hates the world.'"

Fast forward 15 years and Mandelson ends with a glance into the future, saying that whoever becomes the next leader "will require intelligence, reflectiveness, a readiness to take tough decisions on both policy and politics, an ability to speak and inspire, and a capacity to engage at an emotional level with the British public, and not just the party faithful... to be New Labour".

There are many, however, who will be praying for the opposite, hoping, in the words of Tony Blair at his last PMQs, that "that is that. The end." ■



TONY
JUDT

ILL FARES
THE LAND

FABIAN QUIZ



Something has gone profoundly amiss in our public affairs over the past thirty years. In the West we are wealthy and secure enough to allow ourselves to drift very far off course before anything has to be done. But we have forgotten how to think about the life we live together: its goals and purposes. We have lost touch with the old questions that have defined politics since the Greeks: is it good? Is it fair? Is it just? Is it right? Will it help bring about a better society? A better world?

If we are to replace fear with confidence then we need a different story to tell, about state and society alike: a story that carries moral and political conviction. Providing that story is the purpose of Tony Judt final book before his recent death, *Ill Fares the Land*.

PENGUIN HAS KINDLY GIVEN US FIVE COPIES TO GIVE AWAY – TO WIN ONE, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

When did the French socialists first win a presidential election?

Please email your answers and your address to review@fabian-society.org.uk or send a postcard to: Fabian Society, Fabian Quiz, 11 Dartmouth Street, London. SW1H 9BN. Answers must be received no later than Friday 17th December 2010.

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FABIAN SOCIETY

All our public events will take place in the Conference Hall in Manchester Town Hall

HOW TO WIN WITH LABOUR VALUES

FABIAN SOCIETY PUBLIC FRINGE MEETINGS. See our full listings at fabians.org.uk. We'll be blogging at nextleft.org and Twittering from @nextleft and @thefabians.

Democracy Den: Change or no change?

What do we ditch from New Labour?

1pm, Sunday

David Lammy MP, Sadiq Khan MP, Deborah Mattinson, Mehdi Hasan and others

Can Labour speak for England?

6pm, Sunday

Jon Cruddas MP, Kwame Kwei-Armah (playwright), Gisela Stuart MP, John Denham MP, Yvette Cooper MP and Patrick Diamond

Fabian Question Time

How must Labour change?

8pm, Sunday

Sunder Katwala, Toby Helm (Observer), Fraser Nelson (Spectator), Douglas Alexander MP

TheObserver

The poverty challenge

Is the coalition delivering on fairness?

1pm, Monday

Phillip Blond (ResPublica), Kate Green MP and others

CENTREFORUM

CHILD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP

ResPublica

Is the Lib-Lab coalition gone forever?

CENTREFORUM

- Electoral
- Reform
- Society

6pm, Monday

David Blunkett MP, Dr. Evan Harris and others

Inside out

Should there be fewer people in prison?

8pm, Monday

Jack Straw MP, Sunder Katwala (Fabians), Peter Kellner (YouGov), Juliet Lyon CBE (PRT), Mary Riddell (Telegraph) and Chuka Umunna MP.

PRISON
REFORM
TRUST

CENTREFORUM

Policy
Exchange

Criminal
Justice
Alliance

Where did all the women go?

6pm, Tuesday

Fiona Mactaggart MP,
Bonnie Greer,
Dame Julie Mellor and others

FABIAN WOMEN'S NETWORK

DON'T MISS!

The Young Fabians reception
1 Central Street, 7-10pm, Sunday



FAIRNESS TESTS

FABIAN POLICY SEMINARS. Our roundtable programme examines key progressive policy challenges in more depth. Attendance is by invitation only.

Low Carbon 2050: what's stopping us?

Malcolm Wicks MP, Alan Whitehead MP, Janine Freeman (National Grid) and Dax Lovegrove (WWF, TBC) 

Do we need a state education system?

David Blunkett MP, Geoff Whitty (IoE) Christine Blower (NUT), and others  Leading education and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

Skills and social mobility: next steps for access to professions

David Lammy MP, Michael Izza (ICAEW), Martin Bright and others 

Next Left: insecurity, fairness and the new social democracy

John Denham MP, Dr Alfred Gusenbauer (Former Chancellor of Austria), Catherine Fieschi (Counterpoint) and Sunder Katwala  

Road to recovery: the role of UK manufacturing and competitiveness

Adrian Bailey MP, Adam Lent (TUC), Juergen Maier (Siemens UK Industry Sector) and others   **The manufacturers' organisation**

Who are skills for? Can we meet the fairness test in an age of austerity?

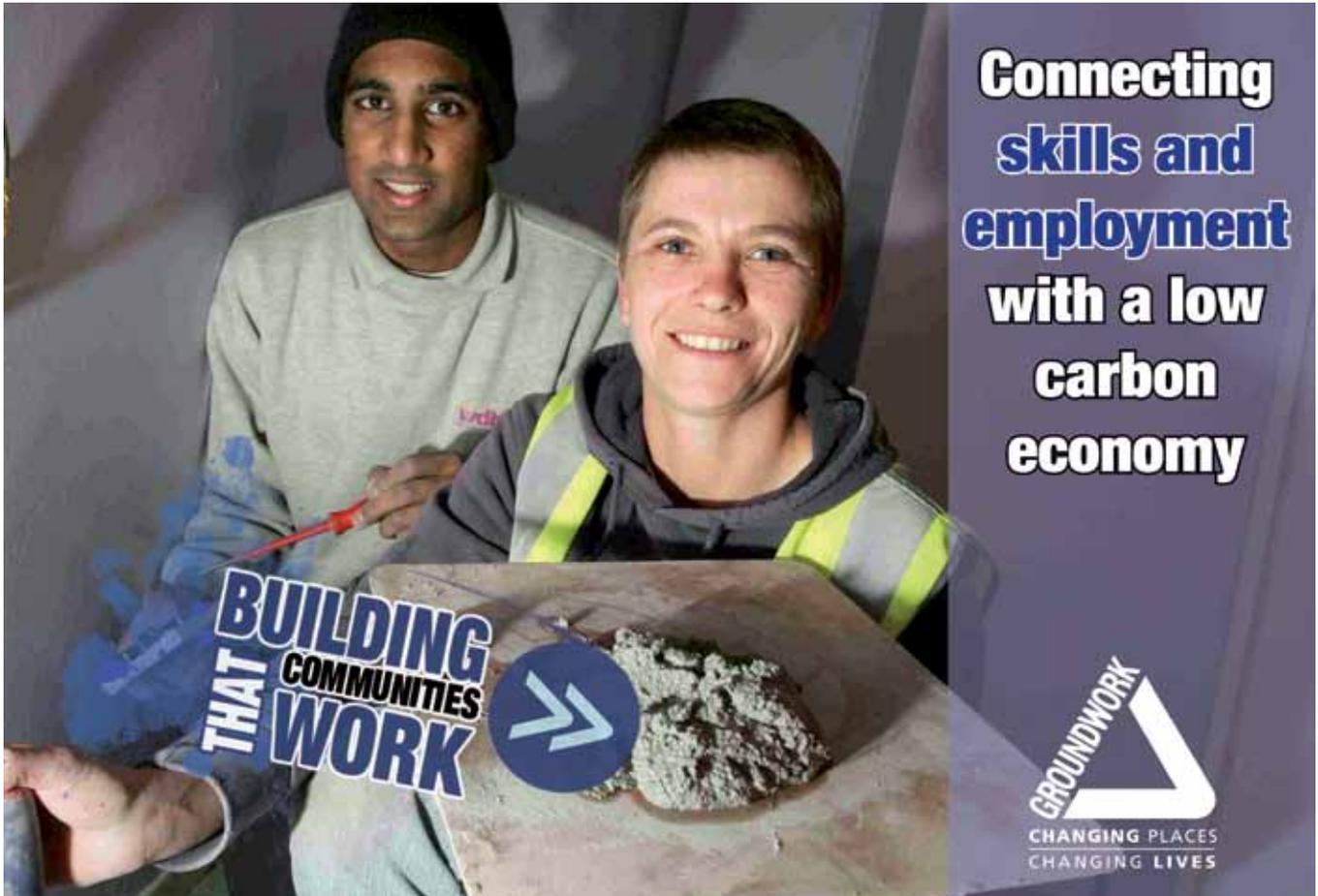
Pat McFadden MP, Andrew Sich (City & Guilds), Frances O'Grady (TUC), David Coats, Alessandra Buonfino (Tesco Plc)  

The work programme: learning lessons from Labour or condemning the hardest to reach?

Anne Begg MP, Jannette Faherty CBE (Avanta), Tom Hampson (Fabians) and Gavin Poole (CSJ) 

Jump Starting Green Jobs

Emily Thornberry MP, Tony Hawkhead (Groundwork UK), Tim Horton (Fabians) and others   



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skills and
employment
with a low
carbon
economy**

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BUILDING
COMMUNITIES
WORK** ➔



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Annual Report 2010

MUCH MORE ONLINE

See www.fabians.org.uk for an extended annual report online, with reports on the Fabian year, including research, events and publications; Young Fabians, Fabian Women's Network and voluntary activity.



Rt Hon Sadiq Khan MP, Chair of the Fabian Society

To say the last year has been eventful would be an understatement. The Fabian Society can be proud of the role we have played. It is worth reminding ourselves that we have just over a dozen staff working tirelessly in Dartmouth Street and yet we have once again punched well above our weight.

Despite serious financial constraints, we have continued to publish books, pamphlets and website articles bursting with new policy ideas that have sometimes been taken up by Labour and Liberal Democrats (up until becoming part of the Coalition Government, in any event!). We have also been active at Labour and Liberal Democrat Party Conferences, often having the most well attended Fringe events. At other times we have begun a debate or played a central part in shaping a policy discussion taken up in the mainstream media.

Our USP comes not just from the fact that we are the only democratically run membership think tank but in the quality of input we have from our members. We have nearly 7000 members (which is in itself a record) and have had huge input from the Fabian family of local societies, Women's Network and Young Fabians. This plus the ever improving online presence of the Fabians means we are in good stead for the future challenges we face.

This will be my final year as Chair and I want to use this report as an opportunity to thank our General Secretary Sunder Katwala and the staff at the Fabians for the enormous amount they do over and above the call of duty, the Executive Committee who have continued to play a crucial role in the successful running of our Society, and to members for the generosity of their time and ideas to the Fabians.

Fabian Executive 2009-10

Peter Archer, Fabian Society President

Sadiq Khan, Chair of the Society, MP for Tooting
Jessica Asato, Vice-chair of the Society, Islington Councillor
Suresh Pushpanathan, Vice-chair of the Society, surgeon
Nick Butler, Treasurer

Duncan Bowie, Local Societies Representative

Martin Brown, Convenor for Scotland

Anne Campbell

David Chaplin, Chair of the Young Fabians

John Denham, MP for Southampton

Alf Dubs, Member of the House of Lords

Kate Groucutt, Former Young Fabian Chair

Brian Keegan, Secretary of Peterborough Fabian Society

Ellie Levenson, Lecturer at Goldsmiths College, London

Denis MacShane, MP for Rotherham

Seema Malhotra, Director of Fabian Women's Network

Sandy Martin, Local Societies Representative

Austin Mitchell, MP for Grimsby

Geraint Owens, Convenor for Wales

Paul Richards

Mark Rusling, Former Young Fabian Chair

Nigel Sinden, Local Societies Representative

Dan Whittle, Young Fabian

Mari Williams, Head of History in a South London Secondary School

Fabian Staff 2009-10

Sunder Katwala, General Secretary

Tim Horton, Research Director

Tom Hampson, Editorial Director

Fatima Hassan, Events Director

James Gregory, Senior Research Fellow

Richard Lane, Events Manager

Phil Muter, Finance Manager

Genna Stawski, Events Manager

Deborah Stoute, Local Societies Officer

Ed Wallis, Editorial Manager

Giles Wright, Membership Officer

Katharina Klebba, Events and Office Assistant

Young Fabian Executive Committee 2009-10

David Chaplin, Chair

Adrian Prandle, Vice Chair

Preth Rao, Secretary

Rebecca Rennison, Treasurer

James Green, Anticipations Editor

Alex Baker, Publications and Platform Development Officer

Steve Race, Fundraising Officer

Claire Leigh, Reform Officer

Sara Ibrahim, Embassies Officer

Marie-Noelle Loewe, Equalities Officer

Brian Duggan, International Officer

Anna-Joy Rickard, Web Officer

Nick Maxwell, Network and Schools Officer

Richard Lane, Officer Without Portfolio

Shamik Das, Social and Membership Officer

Vincenzo Rampulla, Membership Development Officer

Pamela Nash MP, Parliamentary Officer

Fabian Women's Network

Seema Malhotra, Director

Treasurer's Report

This has been a difficult year for the Society and the final result – a deficit of just over £10,000 on a turnover which is down year on year by 20 per cent would have been much worse but for the sustained dedicated efforts of all the Fabian staff, who have worked particularly hard in the last few months.

Income from conferences and events fell sharply, as did the funding available for new research work. Fortunately membership numbers have grown with a further increase coming after the election. This is very encouraging.

The Society continues to be very tightly managed and we all owe great thanks not just to our staff, including our excellent new Finance Manager Phil Mutero, but also to the volunteers whose work through local societies and in Dartmouth Street helps sustain our activity. I would like to thank them all and my colleagues on the Executive.

Our sources of income remain diverse – which is a particular source of strength in these tough times. As well as subscription income we have sponsorship of events and publications, support for research and individual donations, some of them anonymous. All are indispensable.

One really encouraging strand of the Society's activities is the strength of the Young Fabians. For several years now their energy has added to membership numbers. They represent the future of the Society and I hope they will now lift us out of the doldrums which are inevitable after an electoral defeat. Although the numbers reflect the difficulties of a tough year, the Society is fundamentally stronger financially than any other think tank on the left – and therefore ready for the next generation to inject the ideas and energy which will put us back into government.

NICK BUTLER
Treasurer
September 2010

An extended Fabian annual report 2010 is available at www.fabians.org.uk Hard copies of this will be circulated at the AGM. Any member who does not have internet access can request a printed copy of the extended report from the Fabian office.

In Memoriam

Joan Abrams
Mark Ackary
Syed Ala-Ud-Din
R.P. Almand
H. (Bill) Baker
Frank Bamford
John H. Cheshire
Derek Chesters
James A.T. Corke
Clare Cozens
Constance Cotton
Colin Dall
Nora Ratcliff David (Baroness David)
R.J. Deering
Joan Dillon
Brian Fargher
Frank Foster
Lillian French
Betty Grace Game
Charles Hall
Stuart H.J. Hercock
Ashok Kumar
Alan McGregor
Andrew McIntosh (Lord McIntosh
of Haringey)
Frances Morrell
John W. Rippin
Sheila Schaffer
L.J. (Jim) Sharpe
Dorothy Smith
Brian Stratford
David Taylor
Ernest Tear
A. Leslie Turner
Robert White
Tom Wise
Ruth Wright
John Kevin Wright
Arthur Wynn

Research and Publications

Age UK, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Dartmouth Street Trust, Gulbenkian foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Sir Ronald Cohen, Runnymede, TU Fund Managers, Unison, Unite, Webb Memorial Trust

Fabian Policy Networks

Barclays, London Stock Exchange, Provident Financial, Creative Environment Networks, National Grid, UKBCSE

Conferences, Receptions, Lectures & Seminars

European Commission, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Hyde Housing, Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp, sanofi-aventis, RICS, SERCO, ICAEW, FEPS, TU Fund Managers, Amnesty International, Clinks, Drugscope, Homeless Link, Mind (Making Every Adult Matter Coalition), Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Party Conference 2009

Action Aid, Amnesty, Alliance Boots, Avanta, Asda, Burson-Marsteller/Danone Baby, Christian Aid, Cambridge Assessment, Circle Anglia, Dr Foster Intelligence, ICAEW, Insight Public Affairs, FEPS, National Grid, Nesta, Unions 21, Electoral Reform Society, CentreForum, Centre for Social Justice, million+

Trade Union Affiliates

Amicus, Community, CWU, FBU, GMB, PCS, TGWU, TSSA, UNISON, USDAW

Partner Organisations

Compass, Institute of Education, the Guardian, the Independent, the Observer, E Sharp, Left Foot Forward, Progress, LabourList, CentreForum, JPPR, Centre for Social Justice, Webb Memorial Trust, Young Fabians, The New Statesman, TUC

Annual Accounts

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year ended 30 June 2010

	2010	2009
INCOME		
Individual members	163,148	156,557
Institutional affiliations & subscriptions	49,390	78,410
Donations	9,497	2,567
Publication sales	2,896	6,335
Conferences & Events	265,822	340,968
Publication Sponsorship & Advertising	57,051	39,561
Research Projects	84,980	177,016
Rents	29,807	30,312
Bank Interest, Royalties & Miscellaneous	808	3,144
TOTAL INCOME	663,399	834,870
EXPENDITURE		
Research Projects	19,040	48,395
Staff costs	393,766	465,997
Printing & Distribution	62,780	58,791
Conferences & Events	116,839	157,474
Promotion	2,958	8,344
Affiliation Fees	4,817	4,605
Postage, Phone & Fax	10,035	13,624
Depreciation	2,914	5,243
Travel	240	2,298
Other	5,371	7,035
Stationery & Copying	11,072	22,689
Legal & Professional	8,706	8,470
Irrecoverable VAT	2,342	2,572
Premises Costs	24,821	30,032
Website & Database	8,445	2,966
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	674,146	838,535
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) before Tax & Transfers	(10,747)	(3,665)
Transfer from reserves		
DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	(10,747)	(3,665)

The Fabian financial year runs from July 1st 2009 to June 30th 2010 and the financial information in this report covers that period. This report is presented to the Society's AGM, which takes place on November 13th 2010.

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2010

	2010	2009
Fixed Assets	44,047	46,725
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	999	172
Trade Debtors and Prepayments	213,590	209,913
Bank & Cash	810	0
	215,399	210,085
CREDITORS – AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN 1 YEAR		
Creditors and Accruals	190,317	176,934
Net Current Assets	25,082	33,151
Net Assets	69,129	79,876
General Fund	62,854	73,601
Restricted Fund	6,275	6,275
TOTAL FUNDS	69,129	79,876

Financial Statements

These accounts are an extract from the financial statements and may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the society. For further information the full financial statements and auditors report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from the Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN. The full financial statements were approved on 17 September 2010.

Auditors Statement

We have audited the financial statements of The Fabian Society for the year ended 30th June 2010 which consists of a balance sheet, income and expenditure account and notes to the accounts. In our opinion the Financial Statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of The Fabian Society's affairs at 30th June 2010 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

Knox Cropper
Chartered Accountants
8/9 Well Court
London
EC4M 9DN

Registered Auditors

Listings



A note from Local Societies Officer, Deborah Stoaite

With the election of a new Government both the Labour Party and the Fabian Society have experienced a surge in membership. When new members join the Fabian Society, they are given the details of their nearest local society, where one exists. I have high hopes therefore of a rise in Local Society membership! However there are large geographical gaps where there is no local Society, so I would like to encourage anyone who feels like setting one up, to get in touch with me at Dartmouth Street to discuss how to do it.

Local Societies are what distinguishes the Fabian Society from other think tanks who may indeed have national members but not a local membership. Local Societies are autonomous bodies, affiliated to the National Society and have been in existence since 1886. It's interesting however to read in the Annual Report of 1902 that, 'The Bangor Society has renounced allegiance to us, for the typically Fabian reason that its members think they can wield a wider influence if they are not officially associated with our name'. How wrong could they have been?

BIRMINGHAM

15 October. Sir Dexter Hutt and Professor Rick Hatcher on 'Secondary Education'
4 November. Susan Nash and Professor Kathryn Ecclestone on 'Higher and Further Education'.
6 December. Mike Maiden on 'The Probation Service'
All meetings at 7.00 in the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham.
Details from Claire Spencer on virginiaisawitch@gmail.com

BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

29 October. Sharon Carr-Brown, Chair NHS Hospital Foundation Trusts
26 November. Baroness Joyce Gould on 'Labour's Road to Revival'
9 December – Christmas Party
All meetings at The Friends Meeting House, Wharnclyffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30. **Contact Ian Taylor on 01202 396634 for details or taylori@bpc.ac.uk**

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Details of all meetings from Maire McQueeney on 01273 607910 email mairemcqueeney@waitrose.com

BRISTOL

New Society formed. **Contact Ges Rosenberg for details on crosenberg@tiscali.com**

CANTERBURY

Please contact **Ian Leslie on 01227 265570 or 07973 681 451 or email i.leslie@btinternet.com**

CARDIFF AND THE VALE

Details of all meetings from Jonathan Wynne Evans on 02920 594 065 or wynneevans@phonecoop.coop

CENTRAL LONDON

Regular meetings at 7.30 in the Cole Room, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1A 9BN. **Details from Ian Leslie on 01227 265570 or 07973 681451**

CHESHIRE

New Society forming in Northwich area. **Contact Mandy Griffiths on mgriffiths@valeroyal.gov.uk**

CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

30 September. Karen Monaghan QC on 'The Equality Act 2010 – more or less equal?'
28 October. David Chaplin, Chair Young Fabians.
8.00 in the Committee room at Chiswick Town Hall. **Details from Monty Bogard on 0208 994 1780, email mb014fl362@blueyonder.co.uk**

COLCHESTER

Details from John Wood on 01206 212100 or woodj@madasafish.com Or 01206 212100

CORNWALL

Helston area. New Society forming. **For details contact Maria Tierney at maria@disabilitycornwall.org.uk**

DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

Regular meetings at 8.00 in the Ship, Green Street Green Rd at 8.00. **Details from Deborah Stoaite on 0207 227 4904 email debstoate@hotmail.com**

DERBY

Regular monthly meetings. **Details from Rosemary Key on 01332 573169**

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT

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

EAST LOTHIAN

Details of all meetings from Noel Foy on 01620 824386 email noel.foy@tesco.net

FINCHLEY

Enquiries to Mike Walsh on 07980 602122

GLASGOW

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

GLOUCESTER

Regular meetings at TGWU, 1 Pullman Court, Great Western Rd, Gloucester. **Details from Roy Ansley on 01452 713094 email roybrendachd@yahoo.co.uk**

GREENWICH

New Society forming. If you are interested in becoming a member of this local Society, **please contact Chris Kirby on ccakirby@hotmail.co.uk**

GRIMSBY

Regular meetings. **Details from Maureen Freeman on m.freeman871@btinternet.com**

HARROW

Details from June Solomon on 0208 428 2623. Fabians from other areas where there are no local Fabian Societies are very welcome to join us.

HAVERING

Details of all meetings from David Marshall email david.c.marshall.t21@btinternet.com tel 01708 441189

HERTFORDSHIRE

Regular meetings. **Details from Robin Cherney at RCher24@aol.com**

ISLINGTON

For details of all meetings contact Jessica Asato at jessica@jessicaasato.co.uk or 07939 594 634

LEEDS

The first meeting of this new society: Saturday 23rd October from 18:00, upstairs room at The Brewery Tap, 18 New Station Street, Leeds, LS1 5DL with Rachel Reeves MP. If you would like to become a member **please contact Bryony King on bryonyvictoriaking@hotmail.co.uk**

LEICESTER

New Society forming. **Please contact Vijay Riyait, vijay.riyait@gmail.com**

MANCHESTER

Details from Graham Whitham on 079176 44435 email manchesterfabians@googlemail.com and a blog at http://gtrmancfabians.blogspot.com

MARCHES

New Society formed in Shrewsbury area. **Details on www.MarchesFabians.org.uk or contact Kay Thornton on Secretary@marchesfabians.org.uk**

MIDDLESBOROUGH

New Society hoping to get established. **Please contact Andrew Maloney on 07757 952784 or email andrewmaloney@hotmail.co.uk for details**

NEWHAM

For details of this and all other meetings Ellie Robinson on marieellie@aol.com

NORTHUMBRIA AREA

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

NORTHAMPTON AREA

New Society forming. If you are interested in becoming a member of this new society, **please contact Dave Brede on davidbrede@yahoo.com**

NORWICH

Anyone interested in helping to reform Norwich Fabian Society, **please contact Andreas Paterson andreas@headswitch.co.uk**

PETERBOROUGH

Meetings at 8.00 at the Ramada Hotel, Thorpe Meadows, Peterborough. **Details from Brian Keegan on 01733 265769, email brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk**

PORTSMOUTH

Regular monthly meetings, **details from June Clarkson on 02392 874293 email jclarkson1006@hotmail.com**

READING & DISTRICT

For details of all meetings, contact Tony Skuse on 0118 978 5829 email tony@skuse.net

SHEFFIELD

8 October 7.30. Check Local press for details
Details and information from Rob Murray on 0114 255 8341 or email robertjmurray@hotmail.com

SOUTH EAST LONDON

29 September. speaker tbc
27 October. Lord Alf Dubs
For details of all future meetings, please visit our website at http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/

selves/. Regular meetings; contact **Duncan Bowie** on 020 8693 2709 or email duncanbowie@yahoo.co.uk

SOUTHAMPTON AREA

For details of venues and all meetings, contact **Andrew Pope** on 07801 284758

SOUTH TYNESIDE

For information about this Society please contact **Paul Freeman** on 0191 5367 633 or at freemanpsmb@blueyonder.co.uk

SUFFOLK

For details of all meetings, contact **Peter Coghill** on 01986 873203

SURREY

Regular meetings at Guildford

Cathedral Education Centre
Details from **Maureen Swage** on 01252 733481 or maureen.swage@btinternet.com

TONBRIDGE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS

All meetings at 8.00 at 71a St Johns Rd. Details from **John Champneys** on 01892 523429

TYNEMOUTH

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

WARWICKSHIRE

New Society forming. AGM to be held on Thursday 30 September at 7.30, Friends Meeting House, 28 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PN. Details from **Ben Ferrett** on ben_ferrett@hotmail.com

WEST DURHAM

The West Durham Fabian Society welcomes new members from all areas of the North East not served by other Fabian Societies. It has a regular programme of speakers from the public, community and voluntary sectors. It meets normally on the last Saturday of alternate months at the Joiners Arms, Hunwick between 12.15 and 2.00pm – light lunch £2.00
Contact the Secretary Cllr Professor **Alan Townsend**, 62A Low Willington, Crook, Durham DL15 0BG, tel, 01388 746479 email alan.townsend@wearvalley.gov.uk

WEST YORKSHIRE

Details from **Jo Coles** on Jocoles@yahoo.com

WIMBLEDON

New Society forming. Please contact **Andy Ray** on 07944 545161 or andyray@blueyonder.co.uk if you are interested.

WIRRAL

If anyone is interested in helping to form a new Local Society in the Wirral area, please contact **Alan Milne** at alan@milne280864.fsnet.co.uk or 0151 632 6283

YORK

Regular meetings on 3rd or 4th Fridays at 7.45 at Jacob's Well, Off Miklegate, York. Details from **Steve Burton** on steve.burton688@mod.uk

NOTICEBOARD

AGM

Saturday 13th November 2010

VENUE

Conference hall, The Mary Sumner House (Mother's Union), 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB

AGENDA

- 13.00 Doors open
- 13.15 Debate: Fabian Values and Labour's Renewal
- 14.15 Tea, coffee and cakes
- 14.45 Annual General Meeting
 - 1. Apologies
 - 2. Minutes of 2009 AGM
 - 3. Matters Arising
 - 4. In Memoriam
 - 5. Election results
 - 6. Annual Report 2009-10
 - 7. Forward programme and General Secretary's Report
 - 8. Appointment of Auditor
 - 9. Treasurer's Report
 - 10. Date of next AGM
 - 11. Jenny Jeger Prize
 - 12. AOB
- 16.00 Close of meeting followed by an informal social at the Westminster Arms, 9 Storeys Gate, Westminster.

FABIAN FORTUNE FUND

WINNER: Diana Warwick, £100

Half the income from the Fabian Fortune Fund goes to support our research programme. Forms available from **Giles Wright**, giles.wright@fabian-society.org.uk

These pages are your forum and we're open to your ideas. Please email **Tom Hampson**, Editorial Director of the Fabian Society at tom.hampson@fabians.org.uk

SAVE THE DATE: FABIAN NEW YEAR CONFERENCE 2011

Next Left: A movement for change
Saturday 15th January 2011

Tickets available now at www.fabians.org.uk

'Labour's London victory' in the summer issue of the Fabian Review inadvertently inaccurately described the nature of the 2006 'foreign national prisoners' crisis' – and greatly exaggerated its scale. Serious though the matter was, it did not involve the "early release of several hundred murderers and rapists" as the article suggested and we are happy to make that clear.

Andrew McIntosh 1933-2010

We were sorry to hear, shortly before Fabian Review was going to press, of the death of Andrew McIntosh on August 27th, after a long illness with cancer. Andrew was most famous for being the moderate Labour leader at the GLC elections in 1980, deposed by a Ken Livingstone coup immediately after the results. He made a much broader contribution to Labour politics, including as a minister in the Lords. A committed Fabian, Andrew was chair of the Society from 1985-86, and continued to take a close interest in the Society, including as a trustee of the Dartmouth Street Trust charitable trust, which supported a number of major Fabian research projects, particularly exploring issues of social inequality and life chances. As a staunch humanist, Andrew faced the final stages of his illness with remarkable stoicism. He remained, this summer, engaged with the politics of the day, urging the Society to do serious work to inform debate on public spending choices and the impact of spending cuts on inequality.

Skills for the future

Unionlearn is the education and skills organisation of the TUC. We work with unions and employers to develop lifelong learning in the workplace. Our message is simple: it is never too late to learn, and you can change your life by upgrading your skills.

Around two-thirds of UK employers provide training for their staff, but often those who need it most lose out. How can we raise skills within the workplace and meet the challenge of equipping workers with the high skills and qualifications necessary to compete on the world stage?

At this year's political party conferences, unionlearn is teaming up with City & Guilds. Together we are holding meetings at all three main party conferences, looking at the future of skills with a range of high-profile speakers from business and politics, as well as TUC representatives.

Liberal Democrats

No let up on skills! How to ensure a skilled workforce for a prosperous future

Wed 22 Sept 1pm

Jury's Inn, Albert Dock
(no pass needed)
Liverpool

Labour

Who are skills for? Can we meet the fairness test in an age of austerity?

Tues 28 Sept 8.30am

Manchester Town Hall (invite event, please contact for more info)
Speakers include Pat McFadden MP, Shadow Business Secretary

Conservatives

Where next for the skills agenda?

Mon 4 Oct 5.45pm

International Convention Centre
(conference pass needed)
Birmingham
Speakers include John Hayes MP, Minister for Lifelong Learning

Find out more about unionlearn at www.unionlearn.org.uk / 020 7079 6920

See our recent publication **Leaders in Learning**
(www.unionlearn.org.uk/publications) to find out what other businesses think of the difference learning reps have made to their organisation



unionlearn
with the TUC

unison.org.uk/million



a million
voices
for
public
services



UNISON

campaigning for public services

UNISON, the UK's leading union, is at the forefront of the campaign for a fairer society.

We want to see a fair society, based on social justice, good jobs and quality public services.

To join online today visit unison.org.uk/join or call 0845 355 0845.

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the public service union