

FABIAN REVIEW

The quarterly magazine of the Fabian Society

Spring 2016 / fabians.org.uk / £4.95

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FABIAN REVIEW

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FABIAN REVIEW

Fabian Review is the quarterly journal of the Fabian Society. Like all publications of the Fabian Society, it represents not the collective view of the Society, but only the views of the individual writers. The responsibility of the Society is limited to approving its publications as worthy of consideration within the Labour movement.

Editor, Ed Wallis

Cover illustration © Kenn Goodall / bykenn.com

Printed by DG3, London E14 9TE

Designed by Soapbox, www.soapbox.co.uk

ISSN 1356 1812

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Decision time

With the campaign finely poised, who wins the EU referendum will determine Britain's path for decades to come, writes *Andrew Harrop*

THE EUROPEAN UNION referendum will be an unusual time for the Fabian Society. Normally at major electoral events the Fabians are on the pitch as partisan players, thanks to our historic affiliation to Labour. But in the EU vote, while the party will campaign vigorously for Remain, the Society will be neutral: our rules bar us from taking organisational positions on policy questions.

In the next three months the Fabians will therefore be presenting voices on both sides of the argument and providing analysis and insight on the campaign, not least at our summer conference in London on 21st May.

And new polling, commissioned by the Society, suggests it could be a pretty grim campaign to observe. In our age of political mistrust, no one in the debate is held in high regard by the public. People feel unfavourable towards the EU, but equally so towards all the political parties, campaigning organisations and protagonists.

The most powerful messages on each side also make depressing reading for those who hoped for a big national conversation rather than 'Project Fear'. Fear of migration is by far the most persuasive argument for Brexit, while fear of change and uncertainty are the most resonant reasons to Remain.

Our research shows that a close race could get tighter still. So what could swing it either way in the coming months? The polling indicates that the messages and arguments of the Leave campaign are more popular and persuasive than those of Remain – which suggests people may become more Eurosceptic as the debate progresses and they become more engaged and informed.

If this is true, then the referendum will not be a question of 'head' versus 'heart', as is sometimes said, but of 'leadership' versus 'detail'. In other words, if people sit down and scrutinise the arguments, without the cues from politicians, parties and campaigners, Leave will win.

This explains why the full throated support of the Labour party will be vital if Remain is to prevail, with around 3 in 10 Labour supporters currently backing Leave and 1 in 10 undecided. Figures including Jeremy Corbyn, Alan Johnson, Gordon Brown and the trade union leaders will all need to pile in, to reach different parts of the Labour family, and they must look like they mean it.

Our poll also disproves the idea that voters are going to get bored and tune out. 8 in 10 adults told us that the stakes were high and the referendum is one of the most important decisions for decades. This may play to the advantage of Remain, because Leave – who lead among those most likely to vote and among the over-55s – will win a low turn-out referendum. Remain leads narrowly among all those who voted at the 2015 election and is well ahead among the under-55s. This means that the Labour party's still formidable election turn-out operation could decide the fate of the nation.

So as campaigning steps up a gear, the challenge for Leave is to win over floating voters by unhooking popular arguments from unpopular personalities. For Remain the task is to drive turnout with a high-stakes narrative, keep the story simple and promote campaigners who can reach out to every part of our diverse electorate. Who wins will determine the path of Britain, not for one parliament, but for decades to come. **F**

Shortcuts



BEFORE AND AGAIN

Labour can forge new immigration policies that build on its past achievements—*Thom Brooks*

No single issue cost Labour the general election. But a failure to convince the public on immigration is at the heart of Labour's continuing headaches.

Margaret Beckett's official report into the party's defeat found immigration one of four key issues that stopped Labour from reclaiming 10 Downing Street. It's easy to see why. Emblazing 'controls on immigration' on mugs was as empty a slogan as it was a pledge. The question is not whether Labour supports border controls, but rather whether the public believed the party was able to do it.

And the commitment to ensure all customer-facing staff in public authorities speak fluent English – now pinched by the Tories – was hardly worth making. Almost all do already – it simply confirms what is already the case, rather than proposing a significant change that will get noticed.

Finding new policies consistent with Labour's fundamental values is no easy task, and a root and branch review of Labour's immigration policies is long overdue. But we need not start from scratch. In the 2005 white paper 'Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain', then home secretary Charles Clarke set out an ambitious programme of reforms such as: a new points-based system, English language tests, fixed penalty fines for employers found to hire illegal workers, pre-boarding electronic checks at airports, increased residency requirements for permanent settlement, the citizenship test, and new measures tackling abuses of the asylum system.

Most of Clarke's reforms became law – and form the bedrock of our current immigration system. It is no overstatement to say that Labour substantively rebuilt immigration rules for the better. Standards were

raised and new tests introduced, but the rules became far more transparent than they had been, leading to much greater consistency.

This is not to say Labour got everything right. There were factual inaccuracies in the citizenship tests. And government after government have failed to review how well the test meets its purposes of ensuring new long-term residents acknowledge and respect widely shared British values. Healthy economic growth during the New Labour years was a pull factor increasing migration to the UK in numbers greater than anyone had predicted, as was opening the labour market before many other EU countries to new member states. Labour continues to pay the price for it – as net migration reaches new heights seven years into David Cameron's time in office.

So a new approach can improve on Labour's fundamental reforms of immigration to get the system working again – and go some way towards winning back public confidence.

Government can and should do more to help local communities manage pressures on public services caused by immigration. Home Secretary Jacqui Smith introduced a migration impacts fund – a pot of money paid into by migrants through a surcharge on immigration applications. This was used to help support integration and provide relief where needed in schools, housing, health care and housing.

Don't worry if you have never heard about it – the fund was scrapped within weeks of the coalition taking office in 2010. Labour should bring this policy back in a bolder form through something like an EU migration impact fund. This could be funded through immigration application surcharges across member states and distributed across the EU to relieve the impact of immigration on public services.

A second proposal is to take contribution more seriously. Migrants bring economic benefits like job creation, new investment and much needed skills. The problem is the benefits are distributed unevenly, leaving some feeling worse off.

We should have a new contribution test. Migrants seeking permanent residency or citizenship should make a contribution through education or training in places like colleges or jobcentres. This would allow the public to see and to benefit from the skills

and experiences migrants bring to Britain. What's more, migrants would improve their employability through such opportunities, and interact positively in their local communities in ways that can make a difference.

We can also do more on improving the advice ministers receive. The Migration Advisory Committee is a small group composed exclusively of economists. They make recommendations on salary thresholds for sponsoring family visas and advise on jobs exempt from standard immigration controls for example.

But immigration is about more than economics. The committee should be expanded to include experts in law, social policy and other related areas. An expanded expert panel could provide more robust advice in these and more areas and better assist government in achieving policy aims.

These are only a few ideas about how Labour can build on its past achievements and forge new policies consistent with its values. Immigration is no mere area of academic study for me. I am an immigrant. I sat and passed the citizenship test. I paid into the migration impacts fund. I became a British citizen. I'm not alone – and I strongly recommend that whatever immigration policies we defend take some account of the voices of those like me that are immigrants. For too long policies have been created by people of good intention and little personal experience. If we want things to improve, we must listen to the voices of both the public at large and immigrants themselves. **F**

Thom Brooks is professor of law and government at Durham University and tweets @thom_brooks





NEW MODEL MUSEUMS

Museums must become part of the community to survive—*Charlie Tims and Lois Stonock*

There was much celebrating when last year's spending review unexpectedly spared the Arts Council a further round of difficult cuts. While this was undoubtedly great news for many of our iconic national institutions and big museums, it was considerably less promising for the 397 museums across England that are funded by local authorities.

Direct grants to local government had already fallen by 27 per cent in real terms since the start of 2015 and the spending review announced the phasing out of the £18bn central government grant to councils by 2020. The Local Government Association (LGA) claims this will create an annual £4.1bn funding gap for local authorities by the end of the decade, although the government hopes they can offset this by allowing councils to keep all their business rates receipts and raising council tax. Either way, it looks bad for museums, as councils have no statutory obligation to support them.

A few days before the spending review, Lancashire county council announced plans to close five museums by 1 April this year. A month later Derby council began consulting on plans which could see the vast majority of local authority funding removed from the city's museums by 2020. Councils have also proposed cuts and reduced opening times for museums in Kirklees, Nottinghamshire and Shrewsbury. In early February, Bede's World in Jarrow closed for good.

Sir Merrick Cockell, chair of the LGA, says that these cuts force us to "address what are probably the most important political questions for a generation – what should public services in post-austerity Britain look like".

Our local museums can survive in this tough new terrain – but only if they work with communities to develop new operational models and new types of museum that work for their particular place.

One option is to reduce opening hours. Understanding what your community wants and when they want it is paramount. In 2012

Kirklees council in West Yorkshire proposed changes to its museum opening hours based on being open more during peak periods and closing for three months over winter. Many cultural attractions and historic buildings can get by on only being open a few days a week. In this digital age with its emphasis on pop-ups, meet-ups, festivals and so on, perhaps museums simply don't need to be open as much.

The cuts are also encouraging museums to work together. Battersea Arts Centre has recently taken on the running of the local Wandsworth Museum; the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums manage 11 museums in north-east England. Consolidating management structures allow for more efficient management and a sharing of resources across sites. Having a consolidated management can also make more room for volunteer provision, bringing expertise and leadership when required, but otherwise allowing the volunteers to run the day to day.

Volunteering is on the rise. While museums are already reliant on the support of volunteers to both initiate and run projects, the 2013 the Museums Association's *Cuts Survey* showed a 47 per cent increase in the number of volunteers and interns while showing a 37 per cent increase in staff cuts over the year. Local authority museums have significantly fewer volunteers than those run independently – especially those operated as charitable trusts. As museums start to feel the impact of the cuts it will pave the way for further job losses and more volunteers.

We are also seeing the emergence of 'helpful museums', where museums work more closely with their local authorities and try to find more ways to align themselves with council priorities. For example, according to Arts Council England, there are almost 500 museums across the UK working on health related issues, 80 per cent of which work on dementia.

Health is not the only area in which museums play an important role. In Derby, the new Silk Mill museum dedicated to 'making', has engaged the community in every aspect of its renovation. The museum aims to play a civic role, working and responding creatively to issues that affect those who live in the city and visit the museum. In a time of crisis for museums in Derby, moving towards the community for energy and ideas seems like a smart move. Not just because it is the best way museums can serve their communities, but also because it is surely the best route to what the cultural commentator John Holden calls "the kind of solid public support that makes cuts politically dangerous or, even better, unthinkable".

In 2020 our museums won't be what they are today. We could have significantly fewer but for those that will remain, a new way of operating focussed on community input, action and funding will be of growing importance. This might mean being minimal in management, charging sometimes, being savvier with volunteers or making museums indispensable in the delivery of local health and educational outcomes. If museums are to survive answers will need to come from local communities who appreciate and understand the value of the collections, especially where local authorities are struggling for solutions and money. ■

Charlie Tims is an independent researcher, Lois Stonock is a curator and the founder of L R Stonock Consultancy



CONFRONTING THE AFRICAN EXODUS

Europe's attempts to tackle African migration are floundering—*Martin Plaut*

In 2015 more than a million migrants arrived on European shores and there is every indication that even larger numbers will arrive this year. Politicians across the continent have greeted this prospect with anxiety bordering on hysteria. Even Angela Merkel has seen her popularity waning as her own citizens question why she has been so welcoming.

Most attention has been focussed on the arrivals in Greece, where 850,000 people arrived in 2015 alone, according to the International Organisation for Migration. Some 150,000 landed in Italy, mostly from Africa. But these figures don't account for those that lost their lives making the crossings: 2892 died attempting to reach Italy; 806 drowned on the crossing to Greece.

While efforts to halt the Syrian civil war have dominated the headlines, far less attention has focussed on European attempts to halt the African exodus by using European navies.

Based in Rome, the naval response is codenamed 'Operation Sophia.' Its mandate is to "board, search, seize, and divert vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking on the high seas." Operation Sophia has had the UN's blessing since October 2015.

By the end of January 2016 some 8,500 people had been rescued, but just 46 people traffickers had been arrested

But this mandate only applies to the smugglers' boats once they have left Libyan coastal waters. This means that European navies cannot go ashore and destroy the boats of the people smugglers operating from the harbours along the Libyan coast.

The result? By the end of January 2016 some 8,500 people had been rescued, but just 46 people traffickers had been arrested.

The EU envisaged much tougher action when they sanctioned this operation last May. This talked of either getting a UN resolution or permission from the Libyans to operate inside their coastal waters to "... take all necessary measures against a vessel and related assets, including through disposing of them or rendering them inoperable".

The difficulty with this approach – assuming it received Libyan or UN approval – is that no-one is currently prepared to take the kind of forceful measures this might require, including storming ashore to destroy boats and arrest the smuggling gangs.

With these avenues blocked what other cards might the EU play?

One answer came last November, when European leaders met with their African counterparts in the Maltese capital, Valletta. Their two-day summit agreed a wide range of measures aimed at ending Africa's crises, on the assumption that they were driving migration. Most were platitudes: more aid, support for agriculture and work on good governance – all remedies that have been attempted for decades. Even if they were to work they are long-term solutions which will do little to solve today's problems.

What this approach assumes is that young Africans come to Europe to escape disasters. Of course many do, but others simply come to find a better life.

Some of the recommendations were plain daft. The large African diaspora settled across Europe was encouraged to 'engage' with their countries of origin. If the EU leaders had bothered to read their own documents, they would know this was

unlikely to discourage Africans from leaving home. As a young Malian quoted by another EU report put it: 'Some of my friends went to Europe and when they came back, they had money and bought cars for their family. One day I thought, "I am the same as these people, I should do the same".'

Far more sinister were the recommendations tucked away towards the end of the Valletta declaration. Here are details of how European institutions will co-operate with the African partners to fight "irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings".

This aim is laudable enough. But consider the implications through the eyes of a young refugee struggling to get past Eritrea's border force, who have strict instructions to shoot to kill, or someone trying to escape from the clutches of the dictatorship of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

Europe is offering "improved intelligence gathering and sharing" with these regimes. This includes enhanced co-operation between Interpol and regional African bureaux to share intelligence between African states. The idea of European institutions openly aiding and abetting some of Africa's more notorious regimes in keeping their peoples caged within their borders is nauseating, yet this is clearly spelled out in the Valletta Summit Action Plan.

The final strand in the European response is to try to persuade migrants to turn back half way across the Sahara. The attractions of making the journey are simply too great for young migrants to admit defeat and go home.

The reality is that in attempting to end the African exodus the EU is between a rock and a hard place. Its own electorates demand an immediate resolution to the issue, but all options are far too slow or frankly immoral. Developing Africa will take decades, while destroying Libya's fishing fleet or abandoning people in the Mediterranean or the Sahara is unthinkable.

As news that the route via Greece is almost closed reaches Africans they will redouble their efforts to reach Europe via Libya. This is why resolving the Libyan crisis is so vital. A legitimate Libyan government might work with the EU to reduce migration to Italy to a manageable level. At the same time European politicians need to accept that refugees must still be given safe haven. The distinction between refugees and economic migrants must be defended. **F**

Martin Plaut is senior research fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies



POLICING IN A TIME OF AUSTERITY

How police and crime commissioners are responding to limited funds and growing centralisation—*Vera Baird*

The 13 Labour police and crime commissioners are experiencing strong support from the Labour party for this May's elections. This is part acknowledgement, in the aftermath of last May's general election results, that they are here to stay, and part recognition of the valuable work they have done.

Labour PCCs have worked closely with the shadow home affairs team, supplying most of the budget information Andy Burnham used to stop George Osborne's police cuts in November's comprehensive spending review. PCCs' experience makes them invaluable allies for Labour's home affairs team in standing against a home secretary whom the National Audit Office have said too little understands the demands on police to appreciate when cuts will push forces over the brink.

Labour PCCs are putting Labour ethics into practice. Many are living wage employers. Business apprentices have been appointed to Labour offices and the police encouraged to recruit cadets from hard to reach communities. As trade unionists, Labour PCCs work hand in hand with Unison and the GMB. In Northumbria, expert domestic abuse workers go out every weekend with police on relevant 999 calls so they can offer two kinds of help to victims from one call. Arrested military veterans are diverted into support. Young people are being taught to guard themselves against sexual grooming.

Despite this work, crime is not decreasing. It is changing. The Conservatives cite the *Crime Survey for England and Wales*, but it uses an interview process and as such does not delve into people's experience of homicide, rape or sexual abuse, exploitation, female genital mutilation or 'honour' based crime. What's more, it does not count fraud or cyber-crime and nor does it count business-related offences. In fact, it counts only an estimated 68 per cent of all offences. Yet, on the strength of this partial reporting,

Northumbria police, for example, has lost a quarter of its funding – over 800 officers and nearly 1000 staff since 2010.

Driven back from major reductions, George Osborne nonetheless “failed to make himself clear”, according to the UK Statistics Authority, when declaring that he was making no further cuts to police funding last November. In practice, most forces in the north of England and the midlands have lost out; despite a £5 a year rise in council tax bills, police spending in Northumbria is down a further £1.2 million, for example.

And still more underhand cuts are coming. After the terrorist attacks in Paris, the government announced a boost to armed response funding, providing more armed response vehicles (ARVs) around the country. But the staffing costs will fall on local authorities. In Northumbria alone, four ARVs will be paid for centrally, but the chief constable calculates that he will need either 72 new trained officers at a cost of £3 million, or 72 serving police officers ousted from neighbourhoods, investigations or response teams. Hidden cuts that stop us tackling hidden crimes.

As part of the government’s austerity measures, police forces have been directed to implement ‘rationalisation’. Perhaps it would be better described as rationing – of specialist services such as firearms, organised crime squads, counter-terrorism, sexual exploitation work and the use of dogs and horses. All or any of these are likely to be reallocated from local to regional or national level away from local commissioner governance and the chief constable’s reach, leaving serious questions unanswered. How will they be accessed in times of need? Who will decide priorities? Who will be held accountable for any service removed from local policing? Local communities expect PCCs to be able to equip local forces with the resources needed to defend public order, but will far-removed chief constables working different hours in a different part of the country now determine what local communities need? It looks increasingly like PCCs have been appointed to take the fall for funding cuts while being robbed of power and control over their community’s fundamental policing services.

Labour has to stand up for properly funded local policing, accountable to the public it serves and fully equipped to protect it. Labour are already finding support for their manifesto on the doorstep and can expect to build on the party’s 13 existing PCCs. The coming elections could not be more important. **F**

Vera Baird QC is police and crime commissioner for Northumbria



WORKING IT OUT

As the world of work changes, so must the left—*Lise Butler*

In February, Yvette Cooper launched the Changing Work Centre, a new Fabian Society and Community Union initiative to explore the ways in which the left and the labour movement should respond to changes in the world of work. Launching the centre, Cooper cited increased economic insecurity, decreasing trade union membership, global competition for even the most highly skilled jobs, and the disruptive potential of digital technologies. She warned that policymakers and politicians were “analogue in a digital age. Task rabbits in the headlights”. Acknowledging the limitations of the Labour party’s historic identity as the party of the worker, Cooper called for Labour to renew itself “around a strong vision of the future of work, common purpose, empowerment and equality in a digital age”.

Cooper’s concern with the disruptive potential of new technology and the left’s relationship to work resonates with recent statements by Labour MPs including Tristram Hunt, Lisa Nandy, Chuka Umunna and John McDonnell. Progressive policymakers, it is increasingly clear, are taking the future of work seriously. With this in mind, the Oxford Fabian Society recently brought together two of the leading lights in this emerging debate to discuss ‘technology and the future of work’: Joanna Biggs, a writer and editor at the *London Review of Books* and the author of *All Day Long: A Portrait of Britain at Work*; and Nick Srnicek, co-author with Alex Williams of *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*.

Srnicek and Biggs are an intriguing matchup. Biggs’ *All Day Long* is a rich and varied reflection on the experience of work in the 21st century. Consciously emulating the American broadcaster Studs Terkel’s 1974 study *Working: People talk about what they do and how they feel about what they do*, Biggs’ book elegantly weaves interviews and accounts of the daily lives of dozens of workers throughout Britain into an account that gestures at the personal, political, and

social dimensions of work in Britain today. Srnicek and Williams, in contrast, offer a sharp diagnosis of corrosive effects of automation on employment, the limitations of a left-wing politics oriented around organised labour and the workplace, and a radical blueprint for a fully automated, post-work future. While Biggs and Srnicek take dramatically different approaches to the changing world of work, they both speak to a profound need to reformulate and rethink its economic and social centrality to people’s lives.

All Day Long is not a prescriptive book. It asks a lot of questions, but neither offers nor promises to offer easy answers. But it is a political one: its sustained target is the social and psychological damage of an exploitative service economy in which working conditions have become less stable, and the distinction between work and leisure has become more nebulous. Biggs takes a sympathetic or at least neutral eye to most professions. She finds job satisfaction amongst those who work manual trades, work for themselves, and do creative work, while the unhappiest people in her account are perhaps service-workers, like the Pret-a-Manger barista and the call-center worker. But *All Day Long* also seeks to disrupt the neat categories of work and non-work: turning her eye to the essential tasks of parenting and domestic labour, Biggs asks why it is that writing an email is work, while feeding a baby is not, and gestures at, though falls short of explicitly endorsing, the ultimate goal of basic or guaranteed minimum income.

Srnicek and Williams’ *Inventing the Future*, on the other hand, explicitly demands that we think beyond work. Citing lower quality jobs, jobless recoveries, and the growth of a global economic underclass confined to a marginal economic position, Srnicek suggested in Oxford that the left should see this global crisis of work as an opportunity to radically reformulate its politics. This should coalesce around full automation, a universal basic income, a reduction of the working week, and a rejection of the hegemonic ‘work ethic’ that underpins capitalism. For Srnicek, automation and digital disruption are not a threat to full employment that can be addressed through education and public policy, but a call to arms for the left to challenge the central role of work to people’s lives, the economy and left-wing politics.

In his response to Biggs and Srnicek Michael Weatherburn – chair of the Oxford Fabians and a lecturer at Imperial College London – welcomed the resurgence of debates about the nature and purpose of

work that had also galvanised industry and policy makers in the 1960s and 1970s. But Weatherburn noted that while prior discussion of the effects of mechanisation and automation had focused on blue-collar jobs, globalisation and digitisation now threaten white-collar workers too. Work is not a straightforward category of human activity: it is a controversial, complex and constantly evolving set of ideas and practices with profound implications for progressive politics. The world of work is changing, and the Fabian Society is right to try to understand it. **F**

Lise Butler is a lecturer in modern British history at Pembroke College Oxford, and vice-chair of the Oxford Fabian Society



EXTENDING POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

A new independent body could help close the gap between people and politics—*Wayne David*

In our political climate voters are less inclined to vote according to 'class' and the family tradition of affiliation to a political party is less important. The philosophy and policies of a political party are therefore becoming more important in determining how an individual will cast their vote. This presents new challenges for democracy, but it is also an opportunity to promote democratic debate and understanding.

But at the same time as traditional voting habits are declining there is an unprecedented level of distrust and cynicism about what politicians say and promise. Increasingly, voters are indicating that they do not believe political parties or their spokespeople.

One way to tackle this growing disconnect would be to consider the creation of an independent body, along the lines of the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission was established by the last Labour government. Although it is a relatively new organisation, it has quickly become an accepted and indeed indispensable



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part of our electoral landscape. The Electoral Commission has responsibility for the smooth running of elections, referendums and electoral registration. The Commission also ensures transparency in political party finance and election finance.

This new body I am recommending would be not dissimilar to the Electoral Commission and would have the express responsibility of ensuring that all electors are provided with basic information about political parties, including an 'objective summary' of the electoral offer of each party at a given election.

In the first police and crime commissioner elections in November 2012 households received detailed information about the supplementary vote electoral system and the role of PCCs. There was also a central website containing information from individual candidates and a phone line that members of the public could use to order printed material about the candidates. The government, however, decided not to provide candidates with a free mailshot. For the PCC elections this year, there will again be a website. But the booklet that was sent out for the last elections will not be sent out to households for May.

What I am suggesting is in part an extension and adaption of what has occurred with the PCC elections. Although the government has not allowed PCC candidates to have a mailshot, the creation and operation of an independent website is of significance. It is

worth considering the creation of a permanent website which would objectively and clearly set out the central political platforms for each party for all elections. The website could also provide information about the relevant electoral systems and how our system of democracy works. This should not be done in place of mailshots to electors, but in addition to them.

To operate such a website and to oversee the dissemination of electoral material from and about the political parties and their policies an independent body could be created. This would enable electors to compare and contrast the various stances of political parties. In terms of composition and accountability, this body could operate in a similar way to the Electoral Commission, but would focus specifically on increasing the electorate's awareness and knowledge of the political parties and what they stand for. This would be in addition to what the parties themselves do to promote themselves. It would, however, have the benefit of ensuring that each political party is able to convey its basic message irrespective of what resources it may or may not have at its disposal. In short, I believe that such a body would help to create a new interface with the electorate and make a significant contribution to increasing political trust and engagement. **F**

Wayne David MP is shadow minister for political and constitutional reform



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All in this together

In recent weeks, choices between tax and benefit cuts have rocked the cabinet. Now, new Fabian analysis shows that the government gives as much money to rich as poor families, once the 'shadow welfare' of tax reliefs are taken into account. *Andrew Harrop* argues that this presents an opportunity to transform attitudes to welfare and bring people together



Andrew Harrop is general secretary of the Fabian Society

How would you like £3,166 a year of free money from the government? Sounds too good to be true? Well if you're in a reasonably paid job that's exactly what you'll be getting when the new financial year starts in April. This sum is the cash value of two huge tax breaks, the income tax personal allowance, which will exempt £11,000 of taxable earnings, and its equivalent in the national insurance system.

Now, not everyone likes to think about tax reliefs as handouts from the state. On the face of it, there's a big difference between money you've earned, which the government chooses not to tax, and money that's already come from someone's taxes, which the government chooses to give to you.

HM Revenue and Customs doesn't necessarily see it that way, however. Each year it publishes estimates of tax reliefs and expenditures, reporting the cost of the foregone revenue as if it were public spending. And from the perspective of your family's disposable income, it makes no difference whether you receive an extra pound through a higher tax allowance or a cash payment.

So, welcome to the world of 'shadow welfare', where each year the nation spends (or doesn't raise) hundreds of billions of pounds in tax reliefs, mostly in pursuit of policy goals we normally associate with social security. Fabian Society research due out later in the year will show that, in all, the tax breaks households receive add up to more than £200bn annually, roughly the same amount we spend on welfare. That £3,166 starting allowance alone costs around £100bn.

These findings suggests that politicians should start analysing 'spending' on shadow welfare, just as robustly as on real welfare. Not only is each just as real when it comes to closing the deficit, but the way ministers choose between tax reliefs and social security has consequences. That's because when we increase tax breaks only people paying sufficient tax can benefit, while benefit spending can help us all.

Take the example of those basic income tax and national insurance allowances. Each time they rise in value it is only

people earning above the previous allowance who gain. Yet, George Osborne has said he will increase their cash value by over 80 per cent between 2010 and 2020, from £1,921 to more than £3,500 a year. Over the same period the value of the basic out-of-work benefit for an adult will rise just 12 per cent. The result, other things being equal, is that mid and high incomes will grow faster than low incomes, and income inequality and poverty will rise.

Even this difference in percentage growth only tells half the story. It's the cash values of the entitlements that really raises questions. By the time of the next election the safety-net payment for a single adult without work will be £3,800 per year (excluding support for rent and council tax). That's not even £300 more than the value of the tax allowances which most workers will receive by then, even though the former is intended to meet all subsistence costs.

For couples the picture is even more striking as we've already reached the point of cross-over. If you and your partner both work, in 2016/17 your basic allowances will amount to £6,331 of 'shadow welfare' spending. But if you are both out of work, your safety-net entitlement will be £5,972 (because couples receive less in benefits than two single people). As figure 1 shows, 2015/16 was the year when partners started to receive more if both were working than if both were not. That this has been allowed to happen says a lot about the political priorities of David Cameron, George Osborne and Iain Duncan Smith over the last six years. That it has happened with no one even noticing, is a reflection on our whole political debate.

The story gets a little more complicated if you consider social security and 'shadow welfare' beyond the basic allowances. Most people who are out of work and receiving benefits get more than the safety-net payment of £73 per week: they receive money to take account of children, disability, rent and council tax. But many workers also receive more than the basic tax breaks, not least through pension tax relief, where the more you earn, the more you get. And that's just thinking about direct taxes. Middle and high

Figure 1: Cash value of the basic support for couples from social security (both not working) and 'shadow welfare' (both working)

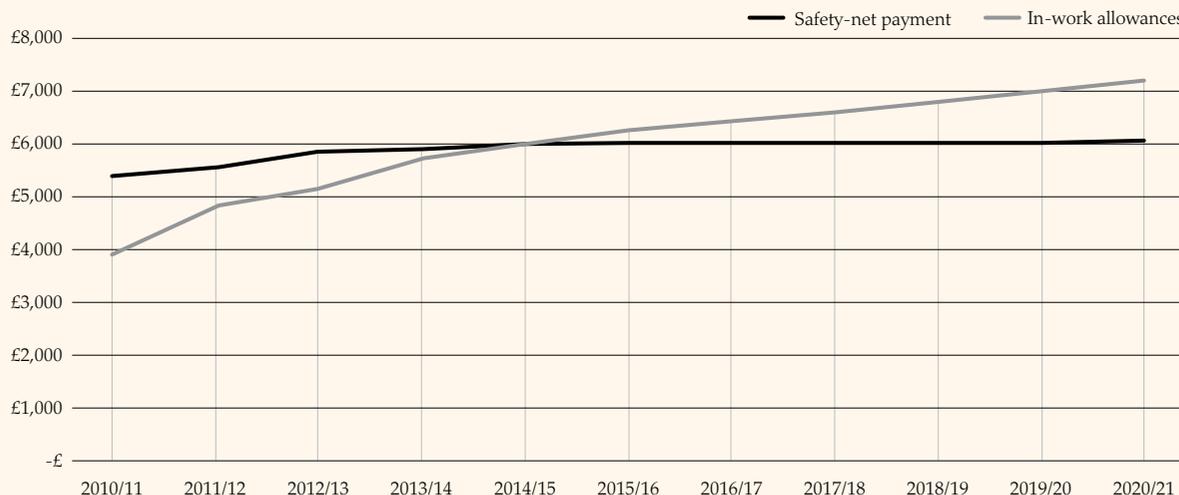
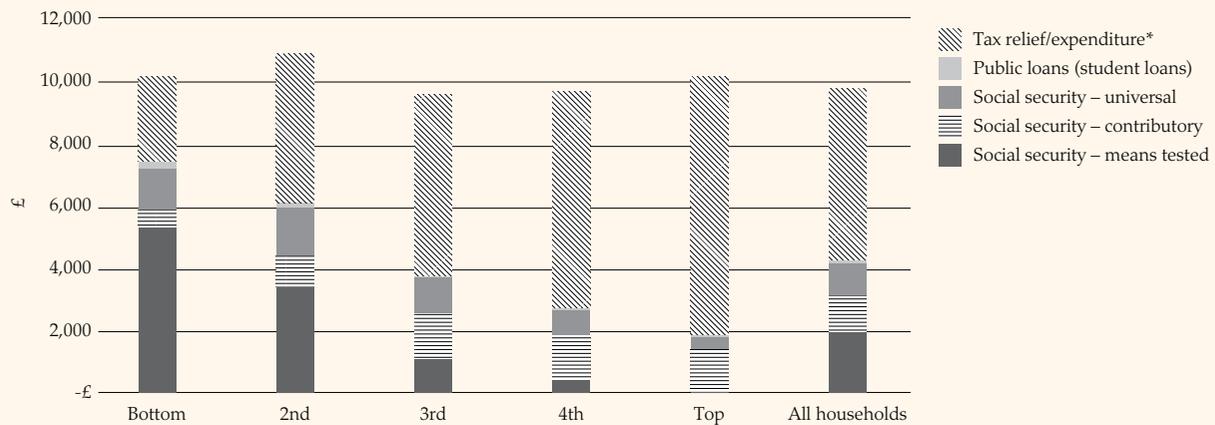


Figure 2: Income from social security and shadow welfare for non-retired households in 2013/14, by quintiles of the income distribution (adjusted for family size)



income households also consume more, so they gain more from VAT exemptions, even though we think of these reliefs (for basics such as food, children's clothes and energy) as being there to help low spending families.

Figure 2 presents new Fabian analysis which brings together all the major sources of social security and shadow welfare for non-retired households.¹ Astonishingly, these calculations reveal that the UK already has a near flat system of public income support for households, once tax reliefs are taken into account. In 2013/14, on average, the poorest fifth of households received £10,200 in cash support and the richest fifth £9,400. The latter number is likely to be an under-estimate (in the calculations we ignored the higher marginal rates paid on higher earnings). It will also climb over the rest of the decade as tax breaks rise so, with safety-net benefits frozen, we could end up giving more to the top quintile than the bottom. Meanwhile, the particularly high spending on the second quintile will decline because this group mainly comprises low paid working households; for them universal credit will be much less generous than the previous tax credit system (the higher personal allowance is insufficient to bridge the gap).

Drawing lessons

These findings suggest that, by 2020, we will have something approaching a flat-rate system of cash support, at least when you look at the averages for large groups. No matter how much households earn (or don't), on average, they will receive the same income top-up from the government.

So how should the left react? Perhaps our instinctive response should be one of moral indignation. At a time of huge financial pressure, a Conservative government has covertly targeted resources towards mid and high income groups, at the expense of those with greatest need. That would suggest that the first task for any Labour government should be to unwind this new flat-rate world: money should be diverted to boost the incomes of families without work or with low earnings, so people have the support they need to lead an acceptable life.

But pause a moment and you can see that the 2020 regime could also bring opportunities. If social security and shadow welfare could be presented as a combined entity,

which provides different households with broadly similar levels of support, then it might be possible to initiate a shift in public attitudes to welfare. And since public attitudes are a key determinant of the long-term generosity of any welfare state, reducing resentment regarding spending might eventually do more to boost low incomes than an immediate uplift in the safety-net.

The aim would be to persuade the public that people without work, or with very low earnings, are not making a special claim on society, but are receiving support on similar terms to everyone else. In other words, that 'we are all in this together'. A future Labour government could seek to ingrain this idea, using the pulpit of ministerial office and some cosmetic changes to tax and benefits. If universal credit has been successfully introduced by 2020, there will already be a single system of payments uniting people with work and without. Building on this, the main tax allowances could then be badged as 'universal credit' too, or as a complementary 'universal tax credit'. Even if more than one system continued in operational terms, all the elements of support could be listed together, as cash entitlements, in a single annual statement.

There are other more radical possibilities too. The spending parity could create the conditions for a genuine integration of taxes and benefits. This is an intriguing thought in the context of the growing debate about whether Britain and other advanced economies should introduce a basic income (also called a citizen's income). The idea is that every individual should receive a single flat-rate payment from the government, in place of tax allowances and means-tested benefits. The payment would then be gradually offset by taxation, using a single marginal rate of withdrawal.

For purists, these schemes entail actually handing over cash to every citizen, but the same financial effect can be achieved through the pay packet by redesigning the tax code. Money is then paid out only when people's entitlements are greater than their total income tax and NI liabilities (this approach is usually referred to as 'negative income tax' and is popular on the libertarian right).

A basic income becomes a more practical proposition if it is conceived, not as vast new spending, but a process

of integrating and rationalising existing entitlements of broadly similar generosity. For people of working-age, the task would essentially be to combine the basic tax allowances, universal credit and child benefit in a way that was broadly revenue neutral. There would be formidable obstacles, and inevitably many ‘losers’ as well as ‘winners’. For example, the RSA recently proposed a scheme which would entail tax rises for people earning over £75,000 and also a cut in the safety-net payment for children of school age (it justified this on the basis that, without means-testing, their parents would no longer face financial barriers to work).

For and against a basic income

Introducing a basic income would bring political pain and the usual risks of any huge administrative reform, so years of debate are needed to determine whether the benefits really outweigh the costs. In particular, those of us on the left would need to ask whether the effort was all worthwhile, if the end result is a system where the overall income distribution and the incidence of poverty remain broadly unchanged. After all, people in the deepest poverty – those out of work for long periods of time – would be no better off after the changes.

The proponents of basic income counter that the reform would have powerful behavioural effects, by greatly improving and simplifying the incentives to enter work and earn more. But a basic income could also lead some people to reduce the hours they work, perhaps to care for children, and it might lead to more long-term unemployment, if work-search conditions were removed from recipients without a job. Ultimately these dynamic effects on employment, earnings and therefore poverty are empirical questions, which can only be determined by experimentation.

With these drawbacks in mind, some commentators have suggested that the basic income concept should be treated as the platonic ideal for a tax-benefit system, not a real-life plan of reform. They say it should be used as a thought experiment to generate principles, which should then inform gradual improvements to our messy, path-bound reality.

For now, I think the left should try and ride two horses. It should engage seriously with the idea that a basic income might be the eventual end-point after a whole series of changes. That is essentially the history of state pension reform over recent decades, with the pension morphing gradually into a flat-rate, near-universal payment. But in the meantime it should focus on practical, incremental policy changes which embody something of the spirit of the basic income idea, but make sense as reforms in themselves.

The Solidarity Society

When it comes to the future of the tax-free allowances, a good place to start is *The Solidarity Society*, a major Fabian report published in 2009. It proposed that tax allowances should gradually be transformed into a something akin to a small basic income, which the authors called a ‘universal tax credit’. They had at least two steps of reform in mind.

First, the allowances should be turned into credits, meaning they would be paid in full to all workers earning above some minimal amount. People working a modest number of hours would qualify for the £3,000-plus entitlement, which would instantly make the transition to low hours work pay much better. The credit would then be withdrawn through tax and NI (paid on all earnings, under this system) and higher paid workers would see no change in income. Of course, implementing this reform without leaving anyone worse off would cost money, but it would be in the same ballpark as the amount the government has spent on its personal allowance policy. It could also be introduced gradually by progressively lowering the earnings threshold that triggered eligibility.

The second, more radical step would be to extend the new tax credit to every adult below 65, in or out of work, to symbolically unify the tax and benefit systems. Public attitudes to welfare could be transformed if the new tax credit was badged as part of universal credit (in practice it could still be ‘paid’ through PAYE for those in work). This is not a conventional basic income, because it would be paid on top

of means-tested universal credit. But, as a result, it would bring a huge boost in incomes for the very poorest households (as we saw earlier, tax breaks are worth almost as much as the basic universal credit payment for a single adult).

Lots of detailed work would be needed on this second phase of reform, as it would be very expensive to achieve without reducing the level of the tax credit and/or existing universal credit payments. But even if the basic adult rate of universal credit was cut in half, people out of work would still see their living standards leap, with poverty falling as a consequence. Alternatively, if the value of the existing tax credit was cut, higher income groups would see a modest fall in take-home pay and it would be necessary to compensate low and mid earners by tweaking the universal credit rules.

Pouring over the minutiae is for another day. However, as *The Solidarity Society* showed eight years ago, and this analysis of shadow welfare proves again, when you look at benefits and tax reliefs side by side there are plenty of promising routes forward. The left must start on a journey towards a simpler, fairer, less stigmatising system, which ultimately will change how people think and feel. It is time to reimagine a tax and welfare world where we all walk side by side. ■

The analysis for this article was carried out as part of a research project ‘Social security in the 2020s’ kindly supported by Shelter.

1. The graph is derived from the ONS publication *The Effects of Taxes and Benefits on Household Income 2013/14*. We’ve estimated the additional value of the shadow welfare that each quintile receives by comparing the amount of income tax and national insurance that was actually paid with the amount that would have been, if all earnings and other similar income had been charged at the headline rate. We ignored the higher marginal rate paid on high earnings, so the calculation for the top quintile is a cautious underestimate. The calculation for shadow welfare spending also includes an estimate of the value of VAT exemptions for households in each quintile, drawing on previous IFS research prepared for the 2011 Mirrlees Review.

“The left must start on a journey towards a simpler, fairer, less stigmatising system, which ultimately will change how people think and feel”



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Bread and roses

With a Conservative government committed to radically reshaping the state over the course of the parliament, the very basis of our welfare settlement stands on the brink. If it is to be saved, the left needs a new approach to poverty that drops the piety and starts from where the public are, argues *Olivia Bailey*



*Olivia Bailey is
research director at the
Fabian Society*

THE HISTORY OF poverty in the UK is a history of the well-off and well-intentioned looking down their noses. Today's moralising about those in poverty, and the 'poverty porn' that fills our TV screens, is an extension of this. These stereotypes of the undeserving poor are at the heart of the failing public support for the welfare state.

Beatrice Webb and then William Beveridge successfully made the argument that the root causes of poverty are structural, rather than the result of individual moral failings. Their welfare state would help to level the playing field, to "provide a minimum standard of civilised life". But their vision was based on reciprocity and earned entitlement. By focusing too closely on income, and by allowing their narrative to echo the paternalism of the past, the left shares the blame for undermining the welfare state.

At the end of the last Labour government the Fabian Society published *The Solidarity Society*. It warned of a crisis in public support for the welfare state, and argued for a new universalism in welfare provision. But since then, the Conservative party have controlled the narrative, as well as the levers of power.

With a Conservative government committed to radically reshaping the state over the course of the parliament, the very basis of our welfare settlement stands on the brink. If it is to be saved, the left must adopt a new political approach to poverty. Instead of dividing Britain by focusing on the top and the bottom, it must speak to the whole country and resist the 'othering' of poor people. The welfare state must once again become a springboard for all and not just a safety net for some.

Poverty today

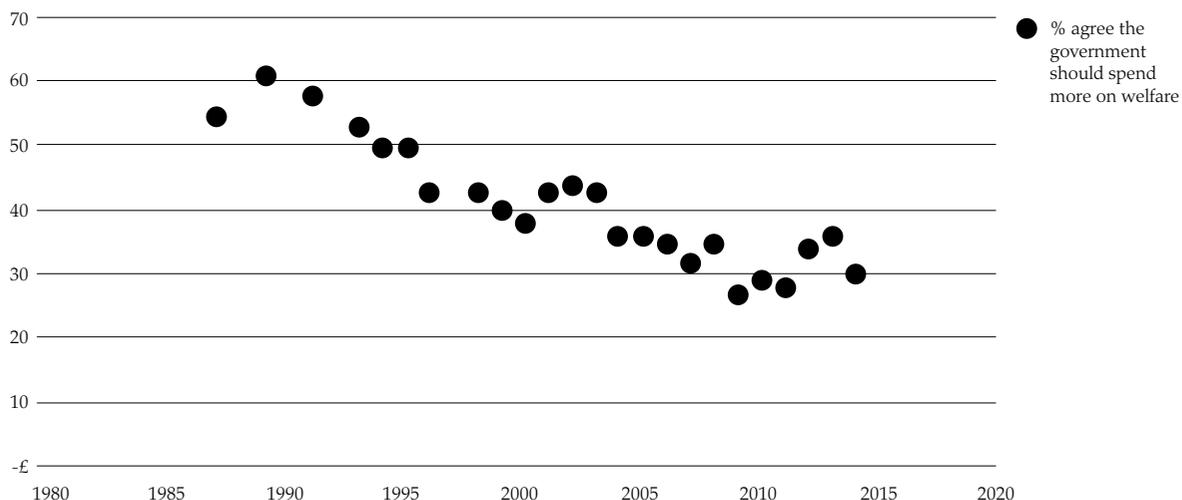
The Solidarity Society warned that poverty in Britain was at a tipping point, at risk of falling back to Victorian levels of poverty and segregation. While Labour was in government child and pensioner poverty fell, but by 2009 poverty was rising amongst working age adults and support for the welfare state looked set to continue on a downward trajectory.

It is clear today that those warnings should have been heeded. While the number of people in poverty has remained relatively static, because everyone else's incomes have grown so little, the nature of poverty has changed. According to the JRF, for the first time, more than half of the people in poverty in Britain are in work or in a working household. Housing costs have soared for the poorest and for the middle. Inequality has widened, and the 'cost of living crisis' emerged as incomes failed to keep up with increases in the cost of food, fuel and rent.

The latest IFS forecasts suggest that much of this will get worse, particularly for children. According to their analysis, in the next five years there will be no growth at all in real incomes for the poorest, due in part to planned cuts to benefits. Absolute child poverty, which measures the number below an unchanging income threshold, is expected to increase by 3 percentage points by 2020–21. This is caused by the impact of tax and benefit reforms on families with more than three children. Relative poverty is also expected to increase, with nearly 26 per cent of children forecast to be in relative poverty by 2020–21, up from just under 18 per cent. This chimes with recent Fabian research, which has projected that by 2030, 1.9 million more children will be in poverty.

The importance of inequality as the core challenge of the left has also emerged even more clearly. As Stewart Lansley and Joanna Mack argued in *Breadline Britain*, where sustained economic growth used to signal a narrowing of the income gap and decreased poverty, since the 1970s the rich have been getting richer while the number of poor has doubled. In Britain today, the richest 10 per cent of households hold 45 per cent of all wealth, and the average income of the top 10 per cent of earners is nearly 10 times greater than the lowest earning 10 per cent. Fabian research projects that this is a problem that will only get worse, with the incomes of high income households due to rise 11 times faster than the incomes of low income households by 2030.

Figure 1: % agree the government should spend more on welfare



Beyond the numbers, the biggest shift since 2009 has been rhetorical, worsening significantly since Labour's time in office. The language of shirkers and strivers, and policies such as sanctions and incapacity benefits tests have re-embedded a wedge between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor.

This rhetorical shift is in danger of degrading even further public support for the welfare state. Figure 1 shows that public attitudes have been hardening since the 1980s, and new research from Neil Lunt and John Hudson at the University of York will suggest that the 1980s were a high point rather than the norm. Having examined public attitudes across the twentieth century, they will argue that the welfare state has never consistently had high levels of support, and has fluctuated based on the political climate.

The importance of public opinion cannot be overstated. As *The Solidarity Society* pointed out, there is a strong correlation between public support for welfare spending and the size of welfare spending in subsequent years. Brooks and Manza estimated that public attitudes account for nearly two thirds of the difference in spending between Christian Democratic regimes like Germany and liberal regimes like the US. The reason Margaret Thatcher was able to freeze welfare entitlements in the 1980s was because public opinion allowed it.

At the last election, the Conservative party successfully painted Labour as insufficiently tough on welfare claimants, and they managed to successfully tie their deficit reduction agenda to public frustration with the lack of reciprocity in the welfare state. To tackle poverty today, the left desperately needs to regain control of the debate.

Reframing our understanding of poverty

To control the political narrative, the left must first broaden its understanding of what poverty is, moving away from what Jon Cruddas has called "monetary transfer social justice". The government are wrong to remove the income target from the Child Poverty Act, but they are right that poverty is about more than just income. It also about social exclusion and life chances. As Professor Peter Townsend has argued, poverty occurs when "resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual" that people are "excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities".

In government, Labour recognised the need for a dual approach to poverty, spending money both on income redistribution and on schemes like the New Deal and Sure Start. But the balance slipped, and in the last parliament Labour spent too much time talking about pounds and pence and not enough time talking about paucity of opportunity. Both Conservative and Labour approaches to tackling poverty have failed. Increased benefits and tax credits didn't do enough to address the root causes of poverty, and nor did tougher sanctions and lower benefits to 'make work pay'.

By focusing too closely on income based measures of poverty, the left has also fallen into a strategic trap. It has talked too much about the very poorest in society, and it

has lost the interest of the vast majority of society who do not believe they will ever be in that situation. By focusing, with good intentions, on the poorest, the left has actually contributed to the 'othering' of poor people, and the undermining of any sense of common endeavor in the fight against poverty. As Drew Westen argues in *The Political Brain*, any political narrative that cuts through must bridge networks and create a sense of partnership, rather than attempt to appeal to a sense of charity for the other.

This is underlined by research undertaken by those working in the poverty sector. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have shown that for many the very term and concept of 'poverty in the uk' is a barrier. When the public hear it, they

think one of three things. That poverty doesn't really exist in the UK; that poverty is inevitable; or they think of negative stereotypes about poor people. This has been underlined by the Webb Memorial Trust who have also demonstrated the lack of traction 'poverty' has as an electoral issue. As the chief executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Julia Unwin, has

argued: "The fight against poverty has become both angry and fruitless. Despite an historic and continuing concern, there is no shared understanding or perspective on poverty, its causes or its solutions. Interventions to reduce poverty have been piecemeal, poorly understood, and have rarely had the sense of shared endeavour and commitment that are central to success."

To rebuild public support, the left must begin by broadening what they mean when they talk about poverty, and perhaps even stop using the word altogether. If poverty is always about low pay, then only very few will identify with the conversation. If poverty is about a lack of time with family, poorly performing schools, or the lack of a voice at work, then it speaks to everyone. The welfare state provides support for someone on hard times between jobs, it helps new Mums give the best care for their children and provides security in old age. In the words of William Beveridge, it provides "a national minimum" that leaves "room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family".

There is also a need to 're-universalise' the welfare state, as *The Solidarity Society* argued. By describing it as a form of social insurance against the risks that all of us face in our lifetimes, the left can find a wider appeal and increase a sense of social solidarity. The value of this approach can be seen in the huge public support for the National Health Service versus public support for government spending on unemployment benefits.

Thirdly, the left should grow more confident about making the economic case for tackling poverty. In their influential book *The Spirit Level*, Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson argue that inequality of opportunity doesn't just limit the disadvantaged, but holds back the whole country, and the IMF now argue that reducing inequality can boost growth. The left should talk more about poverty as a waste of potential human resources, undermining Britain's productivity and performance on the world stage.

If poverty is about a lack of time with family, poorly performing schools, or the lack of a voice at work, then it speaks to everyone



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Capitalism has created a universal sense of neediness, what Jeremy Seabrook has called a “global iconography of plenty”. This means that for the majority of people in Britain, a sense of want is almost an everyday occurrence, but the link between material goods and quality of life has been broken. This has combined with individualist Thatcherite dogma to undermine understandings of what poverty really is and it has fueled the tabloid accusations that just because someone has a TV, or fashionable clothes, that they are not deserving of state support. By broadening our understanding of poverty to something we can all identify with, perhaps we can start to rebuild a sense of solidarity.

Bread and Roses

As Beatrice Webb demonstrated with her tireless campaign to promote her Minority Report, a reliance on being right will not suffice. Once the left has broadened its understanding of poverty, it then needs to build a new political strategy to win over the public. That means losing its piety and starting from where the public are. And, it means recognising that everyone in Britain lives for a hope of something better, rather than just the alleviation of a current ill. As the song goes: ‘Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!’

To develop this new political strategy, the left should start by remembering that the principle of fairness must sit at the heart of the welfare state. As Beveridge wrote in his 1942 report: “Benefit in return for contributions, rather than free allowances from the state, is what the people of Britain desire”, or in other words *‘something for something’*. While Beveridge did not envisage the increasing need for support for groups like lone parents and low paid workers, the left should have done more to prevent the erosion of the contributory principle, recognising that there is much greater public support for the principle of contribution than there is for means testing. Labour took steps in the right direction in the last parliament, for example with their manifesto commitment to higher job seeker’s allowance payments for people who had paid in longer. But they ultimately failed to get their message heard, and they allowed the Conservatives to own the welfare fairness debate, despite Conservative policies being profoundly damaging.

The left must learn once again to become comfortable with the concept of aspiration, reduced to the point of mockery over the Labour leadership contest. It has to sound like it wants people to succeed and do better for their families, rather than focusing so intently on those worst off. It also must resist attacking the well-off, because most of the public like to believe that they might have money one day. Analysis of the last election has shown this was a decisive factor in Labour’s loss. For example, Jon Cruddas’ independent review found that the ‘prospectors’ group of voters, who are acquisitive and aspirational, swung the election by opting for the Conservatives.

The left must also remember that when trying to win public support for tackling poverty, language matters. Inequality is absolutely the defining challenge of our age. But talking about inequality describes a problem, it doesn’t generate enthusiasm for a solution. The same applies to the ‘cost of living crisis’, the ‘squeezed middle’ and most of the soundbites generated by the last Labour leadership team. The left must resist the urge to sound like the diligent student with the right analysis, and it must try and become the popular kid with the ability to lead.

In trying to find a new political narrative that combines fairness with aspiration, the left can draw some inspiration from the American Dream; a powerful idea that speaks to an innate human desire to want to believe that you can achieve anything. But the level of poverty and deprivation across in America should also remind us what happens when you talk about hope but don’t provide a safety net.

To rebuild public support for the welfare state, the left must develop a new narrative that ties aspiration, solidarity and security together. It must ensure tackling poverty is a collective endeavour by emphasising the collective benefits. And it must sound optimistic for individuals and their families. The Americans can dream, but in the UK the welfare state provides a promise: help there when you need it, a spring-board to help you get on and the social solidarity that makes it possible.

By finding a new political narrative to talk about poverty, the left can end the scandal not just of people living on the breadline, but people living, in the words of President Lyndon B Johnson, “on the outskirts of hope”. ■

Child poverty: what now?

Universal childcare could transform the waning mission to end child poverty, writes *Alison McGovern*



Alison McGovern is MP for Wirral South

SO THE HOUSE OF LORDS did the job that the Commons could not. Without our undemocratic, unelected friends in ermine, the Conservatives would have succeeded in their stated aim to rip up the statutory commitment to end child poverty within a generation. Never mind that the Child Poverty Act received cross-party backing when it was passed – including from the Conservatives in opposition. The Conservatives in government changed their mind. But consistent argument from the Lords proved too tough a nut to crack, and our country's national goal to end child poverty is preserved for now.

Yet whilst we know the commitment remains in theory, in practice, you can't help but wonder how much Tory ministers plan to do to actually meet that goal? George Osborne was forced to back down on cuts to tax credits, but unless these cuts are also reversed for the introduction of universal credit, child poverty will rise, as the Institute for Fiscal Studies have forecast.

That is why Labour must take on the challenge – and think hard about how to achieve its mission of ending child poverty. Over a million children escaped poverty when my party was last in power, but we cannot imagine that simply retracing these steps will have a similar impact today. The world is changing, so our ideas must too.

Not least because ordinary British family incomes having taken a battering with a huge wages squeeze since the global financial crisis, now look set to stagnate. Over the coming parliament, the Resolution Foundation say that the richer half of our country looks set to do better than the less wealthy half. Inequality, which largely flat-lined after a big jump in the 1980s, is set to resume its inexorable rise.

The Resolution Foundation's prediction would come as a surprise if we were just listening to the rhetoric of the current chancellor. 30 years after British Gas was sold off,

Osborne is clearly hoping for his own 'tell Sid' moment, with adverts for the so-called 'national living wage' now being broadcast.

But there is a simple problem with the government strategy of appearing to raise wages, and therefore income, at the bottom. Wages can never discriminate between family type. They can never take account of the extra costs of having children. And they especially cannot respond to the circumstances of lone parents, who have limited ability to increase hours in order to improve their income. Beveridge understood this. That's why family benefits were included in his plan, which was designed not to transfer money from one group in society to another, but rather, to smooth incomes over a person or family's lifetime.

This is why, whatever mess George Osborne and Iain Duncan Smith get into, the next Labour government will have to make universal credit work for families.

Universal credit should bring more simplicity in the system, but we do not know how effective it will be in lifting family incomes. When the government reversed its cuts to tax credits, these cuts in the fiscal transfer mechanism were in fact maintained, so families will feel the pinch once the switch to universal credit has filtered through the system.

If a future Labour government could drop these cuts, whilst also overseeing a lowering of the cost of the transfer due to wage increases, it would improve matters.

But even if we were able to make this change, I don't think this would get us far enough in taking on the challenges ahead. Financial support for families is still too complicated. Whilst there has long been help with income – from family allowance and child benefit, to working families tax credits – there are also a number of ways in which the state supports families with the cost of childcare. Childcare tax credits, vouchers and tax-free

childcare all perform this function, along with an allocation of free hours.

It's a complicated system that's easy to misunderstand, and puts much responsibility on the shoulders of working parents to get right. Figures released by the National Audit Office show that only 58 per cent of parents of disadvantaged 2 year-olds are using their entitlement to free childcare and poorer areas continue to lag behind in uptake.

We must be able to do better than this. Universal childcare – where parents would have access to free, good quality care for children during working hours – would make a seriously radical change to the choices available to families, and remove many barriers to work.

During the last election Labour and the Conservatives competed over who could offer parents the most free hours of childcare.

From November 2014, I had the job of selling our policy of 25 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4 years olds to voters. What initially seemed like a good dividing line between us and the Tories, was then quickly done for when they topped our offer, saying they would provide 30 free hours.

But worse, when even in my own constituency I saw our contact data say that we were struggling to get the attention of voting parents, I knew that the policy wasn't radical enough. It offered no support to parents until their child was three. And said little about our vision for the life of working parents. All it told them was that we would help them with 10 more hours than they were currently getting for two years of their child's life.

But universal access to childcare could powerfully open up choice for parents, and be a huge boost to business and our economy. What's more, because it removes a huge cost from working parents, it's a powerful tool in the fight against poverty and inequality, providing support for everyone, but with greatest value to those who might otherwise struggle to make work pay.

And finally, if we decide to reshape childcare it will give us a new chance to help parents give their child a good start in life. We know that the earliest years are crucial in terms of learning. Early years professionals are now more skilled than ever, thanks to the early years foundation stage framework, in working with parents to help children learn through play, and get the crucial building blocks for learning. If implemented with care to maintain those skills in the childcare workforce, universal childcare could therefore also change future life chances for thousands of British kids.

For those disadvantaged families, whilst they may be able to access some free childcare when their child is two, a universal entitlement would help them get support earlier, helping them financially and improving access to support to help their child get on. But the challenge of helping a child learn can be daunting for everyone, not just the less fortunate. Many parents find the support of a childcare professional is indispensable. Opening up this opportunity and investing more at an earlier stage in children's lives could be a boon to our nation's educational attainment.

Devolution offers an opportunity to start afresh with

childcare. As I found out when touring the country to talk about our 25-hours proposal, childcare needs vary greatly across the country. What's more, the service needs to respond to local economies. So our current system of a complex range of financial support for parents could be replaced with one, accessible service that supported working parents. Plus, as one in three families with childcare needs get help from grandparents, this is a policy for the whole family from young to old.

Building institutions is hard work, but ultimately it is by far the best way to achieve radical and durable change. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, institutions (such as a school or a hospital) can have a more visible, personal relationship with a community of people than a funding programme to provide fiscal transfers to the same group.

I have written before about the administrative problems with tax credits. HMRC failed to respond to public concerns about their processes, or the 'real life' experience of receiving government help. But a childcare organisation can genuinely have a personal relationship via its staff with families that need the service. Like a GP's surgery, or a primary school, an institution can be locally focussed in a way that responds to the context of the people served. This surely means more sustainable public support, alongside a better life experience for families.

Secondly, where institutions do have public support, they are then less vulnerable to Conservative governments and any desire to cut back. All too often, the parliamentary process has failed to protect Labour's legacy for families. A childcare strategy and service that was owned more widely across local governments may be more robust in the face of Tory cuts.

I am not convinced that newly fashionable ideas such as the universal basic income would prove to be as progressive, practical or ultimately as popular with the public as a childcare system that truly worked for all families in our country. Leave aside the objections about whether it is right in principle to remove the conditionality attached to social security payments, a change which the public would take a dim view of, especially coming from a party already viewed as addicted to high welfare spending. I have yet to see a proposal for a basic income that could possibly provide the current level of support to people who need it, especially the long term sick and disabled, without recreating the bureaucracy it is trying to replace and bankrupting the country in the process.

Universal childcare is a big idea and will take a great deal of work to bring about. Not as expensive as basic income, but still a hefty price tag in a cold fiscal climate, and with complex questions to answer about how it is delivered locally, how to get the right staff and big set up costs. Ideally, there would be a seamless link between post-natal and other medical services and this new childcare, again a complicated organisational challenge. But the prize is worth it. I believe it is an idea worth making real, and something Labour should be fighting for. ■

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Learning to change

At the heart of the left's answer to a changing world of work must be a new approach to education, writes *Jim Knight*



Jim Knight is a Labour peer and former employment and schools minister

WHEN THE LABOUR Representation Committee was formed by the Fabians, the trade unions and others in 1900, it set out to use democratic politics to tackle the inequalities thrown up by the industrial age. Exploitation and social decay were exploding in the new cities, as new combinations of technology and labour bred a new generation of wealthy industrial capitalists. The political establishment of the Whigs and Tories struggled to keep up with the pace of social change and inequity, making the formation of the Labour party essential to prevent bloody revolution.

It was a very different world to the one we find now. Then life expectancy in the UK was 48 years and the average working week was 54 hours. Thanks to technology and progressive politics, those have changed to 77 and 38 respectively.

This change continues apace. Professor Lynda Gratton's Future of Work centre argues that we are now at the dawn of the 100 year life. Digital technology is redefining geography and combining with labour to redefine work and jobs.

The growing corporations of our age are known as GAFAs: Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple. The combined annual revenue of these four corporations is around \$500bn, generated by around 500,000 employees. Walmart may be still the biggest company, with annual revenues of \$485bn and 2.2 million employees, but the drivers of change all seem to be coming from Silicon Valley.

What are the inequities of the post-industrial age? And is the Labour movement likely to go the way of the Whigs, as part of an out-moded political establishment? Or is it agile enough to offer hope and security in this new reality?

Questioning the taxes paid by the GAFAs companies is just a start. The inadequacies of individual nation states to provide a proper regulatory framework for these super powers is an important part of the nationality debate.

But what is the deeper effect of digital business on wealth creation and work?

In business, the internet is "evaporating the middle", as the American entrepreneur Gary Bolles puts it. Inspired by John Hagel's formative Harvard Business Review article of 1999, Bolles describes how the old vertical integrations are being 'unbundled' into horizontal networks, allowing new internet businesses to emerge. At the same time investment finance is pouring into start ups who never quite make it to middle-sized companies because the successful ones, like WhatsApp and Instagram, get acquired by the big boys if they look like they might become a threat. In this new world, the rich still get richer.

However, there are signs that they are also moving to a more enlightened motivation, focusing less on maximising shareholder value and more on customer value. This is the basis of the new digital companies: put customers first and through that deliver for the business owners. Indeed, for the new form of platform businesses, their very business model is dependent on it. Robin Chase, the founder of ZipCar, explains it clearly in her book *Peers Inc*. An abundance is identified, like spare rooms in our houses, the platform then takes care of complicated things like payment and insurance, and then connects people with spare rooms to those who want to use them. Airbnb now dwarfs even the largest hotel chain, but has 800 employees compared with Hilton's 152,000.

Chase predicts that this will be the dominant business model of the future, in a new collaborative economy. The Government Digital Service is actively pursuing the vision of government as a platform.

This sharing economy is characterised by powerful platform businesses empowering individuals to use their spare assets. It is more environmentally efficient and enables top up sources of income, but creates few jobs. It offers little for those with few assets – either physical or human skill – to share.

It seems that business in the digital economy has both become more unequal whilst being more customer focused. What does this mean for people?

As capital became more mobile with the globalisation of the 80s, so labour is doing the same. Work is no longer just a job, but a set of jobs. The growth of the ‘gig economy’ has created new opportunity and new uncertainty. It is possible to register as an Uber driver and rent a Zipcar by the hour to earn top up cash – until Uber’s investment in driverless cars removes that new source of income.

The numbers of freelancers in the gig economy is growing and disrupting jobs in new sectors. At the same time technology is hollowing out the labour market to replace jobs of brain as well as brawn. As John Hagel writes:

“Robotics is increasingly making inroads into manual labor while artificial intelligence and deep learning technologies are targeting a growing array of white collar, ‘knowledge worker’ jobs.”

Not everyone agrees that the dystopian future of technology stealing our jobs will come true. As Rick Wartzman points out there is a credible argument that a more utopian future awaits as long as we can match the demand with the supply of skills. This would necessitate a transformation of our whole education system.

England has a moderately good school system and some of the best universities in the world. The school system is designed around the needs of our elite academic institutions, with the assumption that the best possible preparation for a successful career is a good degree from one of our great research based universities.

This assumption is increasingly false. The unwritten contract when I was at school said that if you work hard at school you will get in to a good university, get a good degree, then a job for life. That job would allow you to live comfortably, buy your own house and contribute to a final salary pension that would allow you to live in secure retirement until your likely demise aged about 75. Current levels of graduate debt and unemployment, high house prices, the abandonment of final salary pensions, and now life expectancies well beyond 80, have exploded that contract.

The prospect of life to 100, in a very different labour market of simultaneous jobs and multiple careers, demands a very different education system. Why would you spend your investment in higher education all in your early 20s if you are working to 80? Why would you specialise in one academic discipline when employers value how you connect a breadth of knowledge creatively rather than just your depth of knowledge?

We need a different school system. The basis of a great school will remain great teachers and supportive parents.

But I think that the content of learning needs to change, especially after the age of 14.

For children up to around 14 we should have a curriculum and seek to embed some core skills and a framework of knowledge. Core skills would be reading, writing, mathematics, coding, collaborating, and emotional expression. A framework of knowledge gives a context to reference online knowledge against, to build resilience, to allow the filtering of online nonsense and to differentiate truth from opinion.

But post-14 schooling should be much more research based, collaborative, knowledge making, and self directed; it should be relating to real world challenges and collaborating with those outside education. This better equips learners for what they need in adulthood, whatever direction they choose. For those born into families with few physical assets for the sharing economy, we should at least give them the chance of social mobility by ensuring they can keep up with the skills demanded in the economy.

The new digital economy is throwing up new inequalities. There are still 10 million people in the UK without the skills and confidence to transact online, and yet you can’t apply for work or benefits without those skills.

Beyond that starting point there is plenty for a refocused modern progressive left to focus on.

In a world of mushrooming nano-sized businesses, self-employment and freelancers, what next for rights at work and job security? Do we need a new employment status for freelancers?

Trade unions are at risk of disruption from the online guilds identified by former US labour secretary Robert Reich. Co-Worker – an online workplace campaigns platform – is now having huge traction in Walmart, the world’s largest company. The pincer movement of government attacks and new ways of peer-to-peer collective action create urgency around trade union modernisation.

If we accept a 50, and then 60, year working life, can we develop new longer-term mortgages to improve housing affordability? Should we base our fiscal projections of the cost of an ageing society on maintaining an affordable gap between life expectancy and retirement?

The heart of this conundrum, however, is whether there will be enough work.

Work may be a mix of jobs and sharing. There is no shortage of things to do – care, climate change, leisure, education – all big challenges creating work if we can find the economic model to fund them. Rather than eroding the NHS we should keep innovating and investing so that we are healthier workers, and taxpayers, for longer.

There are signs that around the world the left is waking up to this century’s challenges and new politics. The Changing Work Centre – a new project launched by the Fabians and the Community union – can lead the change in the left here in the UK. And I was encouraged last year to meet Grant Robertson MP, New Zealand’s shadow chancellor, who is leading a Future of Work Commission for the New Zealand Labour party.

These new initiatives must be honest about the problems and recognise we don’t have all the answers. They must forge a new collaborative politics and be honest that some vested interests need to change. Then we can re-model the Labour movement and be relevant once again to people’s struggle. **F**



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Kezia Dugdale is under no illusions about the scale of her task in leading Labour's revival in Scotland. With tricky elections and an EU referendum to navigate, she talks to *Mary Riddell* about what it's like to have the toughest job in politics



Mary Riddell is a journalist and writer

HANGING ON KEZIA Dugdale's office wall is a stencilled portrait of Barack Obama. The poster, which came to symbolise the outgoing president's first victory, is emblazoned with a single word: Hope. For Dugdale, who worked to mobilise Scots behind Obama in 2008, the caption has a particular resonance. Once again, this time in less auspicious circumstances, she must cling to hope.

When Dugdale stood as the leader of a pulverized Scottish Labour party, she did so with no illusions. "It's said that I have the toughest job in politics. That's closely followed by people tilting their heads and asking me if I'm OK. That really amuses me. I had a choice whether to step up and do this job, and I made that choice in the midst of

our worst general election defeat ever. I wasn't going into this with my eyes closed."

Almost a year on, the scale of her party's rout is still startling. The SNP won 56 constituencies out of 59 in Scotland, gaining 50, while Labour lost 40 seats and the scalps of several of its Westminster grandees, including the then Scottish leader, Jim Murphy. Dugdale, the former deputy who grasped the most lethal of poisoned chalices, described the task that faced her as "Mission Impossible." Reminded of that epithet, she replies: "But I said that Mission Impossible has a happy ending."

Whether or not that optimism is ultimately justified, it seems certain that the May elections to the Scottish parliament will supply no benign conclusion. All polls show that

Nicola Sturgeon's party is on course for a handsome victory, and some suggest that Labour could be humiliatingly beaten by the Tories into third place.

Labour's prospects in its one-time heartland are grim enough to daunt the most seasoned of leaders, let alone a newcomer of 34 who came so late to politics that she did not vote until she was 23, shortly after joining the party she now leads. If Dugdale is rattled, she gives little sign of it. We meet in a recess week at a Holyrood Parliament whose deserted corridors could stand as a metaphor for a vanished party.

Dugdale, no doubt wisely, has excised all thought of quick revival. "I have a very clear plan, and as long as I stick to [its] principles, then it's relatively easy to make the decisions I need to take for the long-term future of the party." Though she never says so, a culture of low expectations may benefit her. Whatever Kezia Dugdale has to offer does not include the illusion of short-term marvels.

"I was very loyal to Jim [Murphy]. He was a good friend, and I guess he did step up thinking he could come in and miraculously turn things round. I supported him, and he gave it everything – and it didn't work. I'm not going to repeat the same strategy [or] scream into the faces of angry people. That approach has been exhausted. We tried it, and it didn't work.

"Every decision I make isn't taken with May in mind. It's [based on] the long-term future of the party. That doesn't mean I've written off May. I'm going to give it everything we've got. But my priority is not polling day but the months after." As she recently pointed out to Jeremy Corbyn's shadow cabinet (who were said to have been highly impressed by her performance), annihilation in the coming election is an English myth. "There's [an element of] proportional representation, so we could have a very, very bad election and still have dozens of MSPs. I really haven't put a metric or a number of seats as a measure of success."

Others are less reticent, predicting that Labour will lose all 15 of its constituency seats, leaving it reliant on the 25 seats provided by a top-up list. Whatever happens, Dugdale – the sixth leader of her party in eight years – is adamant that she is going nowhere. "When I went for the job, one of my concerns was that I was just being asked to hold the coats until May, and then there would be another leadership contest. I told my supporters then I would only do it for the long haul. So 20 of the colleagues sent a letter [confirming the job would last for] five years."

Despite the promise of durability, even natural allies worry that Scottish Labour is now engaged in a form of necro-politics offering little prospect of resurrection. Dugdale, who accepts no such fate, put down a bold and early marker by promising to use devolved powers to add 1p to all the main rates of Scottish income tax.

In the four decades since Denis Healey raised the basic rate of tax from 33 to 35 pence, no Labour chancellor has wished or dared to emulate his gamble. Analysts were agreed that Dugdale's proposed hike, designed to raise £475 million to offset cuts to public services, would be generally progressive, with all taxpayers earning less than £20,000 receiving £100 compensation. The question was whether voters would buy it.

Early indications are that Scots favour Dugdale's fiscal candour, with one Survation poll for the *Daily Record*

suggesting that 42 per cent of voters support the move, against 31 per cent who are opposed. For Dugdale, such findings are the vindication of a lonely decision. "I took a week over Christmas to think about this. I had [commissioned] no polls or focus groups. I knew it would be huge, and I had to weigh up the consequences. I believe in it. It's what my politics are. As a young leader with a strong mandate, I knew I could take the party in that direction. I just had to be sure the right people would follow me."

Where Dugdale alludes to her youth, others prefer to stress the untested nature of a leader who once referred to herself as "an accidental politician." The charge of inexperience is the one topic that reduces her to exasperation. "What can I do about it? It's stating the bleeding obvious. How much more experience do you want me to have? You can't do this job at my age and arrive with 30 years' experience. I have a huge mandate – bigger than Jeremy Corbyn's ... since I got 70 per cent of the vote.

"So the party believes I can do it. I did take my time over standing because I wanted to be sure I wasn't just flattered. I wanted to be sure that if I became leader, I would know what to with [the job]. I have that plan and that sense of purpose. So what would decades of experience add to that?"

It seems possible that her cleanskin status is an advantage. Where battle-scarred veterans settle for grubby deals, she is uncompromising about her agenda for a fairer country. Nor is she in thrall to Labour's vanquished Scottish titans. With the single exception of Alistair Darling and his wife Maggie, whom she counts as friends, she has no contact with any former grandees.

"I don't have relationships with Gordon Brown or [people like] Douglas Alexander. Of course I've met them and shared platforms with them, but I don't pick up the phone to those figures, and I would be most unlikely to do so in any moment of crisis. I'm acutely aware that I have a lot to prove as a young female. The minute it looks like I've phoned the big boys to help, I'm in trouble. It's not arrogance on my part. I'd lose credibility."

Hers is a life seemingly without much hinterland. "Some sacrifices have been made, but they're hardly huge. I can't do what other people my age do – such as go to a nice bar midweek and drink a bottle of wine with friends." Instead she goes back to her flat near Holyrood late in the evening and watches a box set. She supports Hibernian, likes the Stereophonics, and has never until now discussed her private life.

"I have a female partner. I don't talk about it very much because I don't feel I need to. And there's something too about how meteoric my career has been. I am generally calm, almost serene. I don't get easily stressed or battered. But I need a bit of stability to do that, and that means my private life is my private life. That's the thing I just have to have that nobody gets to touch, and that gives me the strength to be calm elsewhere."

Dugdale's equanimity and self-reliance may stem, in part, from her background. The daughter of a head teacher and a local government officer, she read law at Aberdeen University and subsequently worked as a waitress, spent time on the dole and became a student welfare officer before getting a post as an aide to a Labour MSP.

According to Dugdale, her parents were so startled by her entry into politics that they “sometimes look at me like a zoo exhibit.” Her father, Jeff, a one-time Tory who became an ardent supporter of the SNP, has called the bond between Scotland and England “a zombie union” and chastised his daughter on Twitter. “My dad’s line would be: ‘I’m so incredibly proud of you, but you’re wrong’”, she says, pointing out that their divisions are emblematic of wider divisions. “The referendum was scarring. Relationships, families and communities have been affected by it.”

With the EU referendum approaching, Scottish rifts are being prised open yet again. From the right, Dugdale is under challenge from the Tory leader, Ruth Davidson. “I just don’t buy that the Tories are going to come second [in the May elections]. Their core message seems to be that you can only trust the Tories with the Union, but that trust was broken with [the introduction of] EVEL [English Votes for English Laws].”

Dugdale’s more pressing threat comes from a rampant SNP. As Nicola Sturgeon has made clear, if Scotland were to back EU membership – an outcome which looks certain – while the UK as whole voted for Brexit, then another independence referendum might be inevitable. Were that to happen, then would Dugdale do all she could to hold the Union together, or might she campaign to stay in the EU and so protect the advantages that membership brings to Scotland?

“I just don’t see an issue with that. You can argue for two unions at the same time.” But not, I suggest, if the referendum is lost and Scotland wishes independently to rejoin the EU. “Yes ... complicated. I see tremendous benefits from the EU to Scotland, so I would do whatever I could to preserve and promote that. The same argument applies to the UK. I would very much like both those unions to stay.” But would her first loyalty be keeping the UK together?

“I’ve never contemplated that. I really wouldn’t like to choose, because what I want to do is the best possible thing for Scotland. [I would be] putting Scotland first,” she says, pointing out that some have argued that a solo Scottish re-entry to the EU might prove too difficult. But if such claims (decried by Sturgeon as “nonsense”) proved unfounded, might Dugdale argue, for Scotland’s sake, against the UK Union? “Possibly. It’s not inconceivable,” she says, so offering an unprecedented hint that the Union might not long survive a vote for Brexit.

Critical though she is of Sturgeon, Dugdale has also professed respect for the most seasoned of Scotland’s triumvirate of female leaders. “Absolutely. How could you not? Women owe it to other women to say: ‘Look at that. Isn’t it fabulous?’ It would be completely ridiculous if I wasn’t to recognise how talented she is.”

Aside from the hostile sparring ground of the Scottish equivalent of PMQs, the two women rarely meet. “But when I was a Labour researcher and she was health minister, we did cross paths more regularly, in the canteen. She was very, very kind to me then and encouraged me a lot.”

Neither admiration nor nostalgia has blunted Dugdale’s criticisms of the first minister. “If Nicola Sturgeon is really on the left, as she says she is and I believe she is, she’s going to have to do some pretty bold, radical, difficult things. If she fails to do that, I fear that will be the moment she will be found out. She’s spent the last eight years kicking the can down the road. None of the big things that need to happen have happened yet. I find that really disappointing and disheartening, because what is power for if not for that?”

Dugdale does not need reminding that, on both sides of the border, Labour has rarely seemed more estranged from power. She denies that she has ever sounded scathing of Corbyn, claiming that questioning whether he wants to become prime minister was “perfectly rational”. What is her answer now? “I’ve got to know him a whole lot better, and I really, really like him. He’s incredibly affable and principled – someone who is desperately trying to get the party to go in his direction. I’ll be completely and utterly loyal to him because I would expect the same loyalty. And yes, he does want to be PM. He wants to change the country.”

Corbyn (and his opponents within Labour) could do worse than note

Dugdale’s example of how to take the heat out of one of the key issues dividing the Labour party. A multilateralist, she bowed gracefully to a vote by Scottish party members opposing the renewal of Trident in Scotland. “We had an incredibly healthy, democratic experience at the party conference [debate], and the party is much better for it.”

Policy decisions, as Dugdale knows, can only take her so far. The politics of identity and emotion sweeping Europe have played a defining role in Scotland’s destiny. “The biggest mistake people make is thinking Scottish politics are rational and that any SNP argument can be debunked by facts. We’ve tried that for nine years.”

Thus the charge that a crashing oil price has destroyed the SNP economic prospectus has little traction? “Exactly. There has to be a mention every now and then, but it takes people back to the referendum. So we have to talk about how about emotion and how things feel. Identity politics doesn’t need to be about nationalism. It can be about who we think we are as Scots.”

The perception, to many erstwhile Labour voters, was that the Scots were the pawns of a Westminster elite who manipulated the Scottish referendum to their own ends. Dugdale has been at pains to dispel that curse. “One of the first things I had to do was to have very clear autonomy from the UK party. I am the leader of the Scottish Labour party. All these accusations of a branch office are completely dissipated. Nobody’s tried to chuck that at me for months now, because they know fine well that it’s not true. I have to stand first and foremost for Scotland.”

Whether that independence will be enough to sustain her and her beleaguered party in the hard months and years ahead is unknowable. What seems beyond doubt is that Kezia Dugdale, more impressive than many dared to imagine, does not lack what her icon, Barack Obama, would call the audacity of hope. **F**

“The biggest mistake people make is thinking Scottish politics are rational and that any SNP argument can be debunked by facts. We’ve tried that for nine years.”

Winning for Wales

To kick off a special *Fabian Review* preview of the Welsh assembly elections, *Carwyn Jones* writes that Labour faces a tough test – but its record of delivery can see it through

Wales is on the up. Whichever way you look at it – employment stats, GCSE results, cancer survival rates – the important measurements are heading the right way. There's also a new found confidence in the country, which we see expressed on the sports field and in our ability to bring the biggest events to our doorstep – the Champions League final, Ashes cricket and World Cup rugby to name but three. There's a sense of optimism and a can-do attitude amongst the younger generation in particular that is simply remarkable given the record-breaking cuts we've had to weather from the Conservatives in Westminster.

Just last month we attracted Aston Martin to set up its new factory in Wales, securing 750 new skilled jobs and beating off competition from 20 other locations across the globe. The company's CEO couldn't have been clearer about the reason why – it wasn't the financial package on offer, he said, they had better offers on that front, it was the passion of the Welsh to make something happen. We have found a way to deliver in an age of austerity and without a generous Scottish-style settlement. In 2011 we promised to stand up for the people of Wales against the Conservative cuts – and we've done just that.

Things have not been easy, however. During the first decade of devolution, with a Labour government in Westminster, we saw our budget almost double. The Conservatives, by contrast, have cut our funding to the bone. We have had to make tough choices to fund our priority areas of health, social services and schools. We know for example that adult further education has had to take a hit – other areas have seen stand-still budgets, or cuts, that have made tough times even tougher. In areas where we need the UK government to step up – rail electrification in north and south Wales; the Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay; a fair funding settlement and a stable devolution settlement – the Conservatives have dawdled or rowed back.

Approaching the election, the political situation is tough as well. We are in no doubt that this will be Welsh Labour's toughest election since devolution. The lazy time



for a change' charge from the opposition is finding fertile ground in the media. The Conservatives are better funded than ever before, and UKIP provides a new dimension of uncertainty in constituencies and a real challenge on the lists. It will be tough, but we are ready for the fight. And our biggest weapon is a record of delivery.

After the 2011 election I promised the people of Wales a decade of delivery. We are now half way through that process, and we are delivering on the promises we made. 15,000 extra jobs for young people through our Jobs Growth Wales programme; extra childcare support in our poorest communities through Flying Start; 500 extra community support officers keeping our streets safe; and, of course, protection for our students from paying £9000 fees. In addition, we passed an ambitious range of legislation

including a pioneering organ donation bill that will save lives.

We are not content to rest on what we have done thus far, however. The measure of any government – and any Labour government in particular – is our ambition for the future. Radicalism is in the DNA of the Welsh Labour party and in the next term of the assembly we want to go further. So we will create 100,000 all-age apprenticeships and cut business rates for small businesses. We will offer the UK's most ambitious childcare package – 30 hours free for working parents of three and four year-olds. Crucially, this will be funded for 48 weeks of the year, not 38 as it is in England.

We are going to build on the best ever GCSE results in Wales through a new £100 million school standards fund. We have committed to protecting health spending and free prescriptions, and we will introduce a new treatments fund that will give patients for all life-threatening illnesses access to the latest medicines and treatments. Finally, we believe that people in old age who need extra help – those who have played fair and paid in – deserve a fairer deal. So we will double the capital limit people will be allowed to keep on the sale of their home should they need to go into care. That's £26,000 extra for thousands of older people in Wales. We want to see responsibility rewarded, and that is why we have also committed to no income tax rises in the next assembly – times are still tough, and people need a government that recognises that.

Wales wins when Welsh Labour wins – we know that communities up and down our country cannot afford a Conservative government in the assembly in addition to the one at Westminster. Their cuts driven agenda, allied with Plaid Cymru's fantasy economics, would undo all the work we have done to bring Wales through the post-recession period. That is what is at stake – we'll take nothing for granted, but we'll take no backwards step in our attempt to secure a vital Labour win in May. **F**

Carwyn Jones is first minister of Wales



The Welsh electoral landscape

Wales has its own internal political and electoral dynamic, quite separate to that of Scotland or England. *Roger Scully* investigates what this might mean for Labour in Wales in 2016



Roger Scully is Professor of Political Science in the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. He writes regularly about elections and public attitudes in Wales, including in his Elections in Wales blog (blogs.cardiff.ac.uk/electionsinwales)

Although one would hardly know it from the media obsession with the June EU referendum, several major elections are occurring in May 2016. One of those will be the fifth such contest for the Welsh Assembly. With new powers given to the assembly under the 2014 Wales Act and further powers – including over income tax – likely to follow before long, this will be the most important devolved Welsh election yet.

But 2016 may also be the most important assembly election yet for Wales' long-dominant political party, Labour. To understand why, it is helpful to understand some things about the Welsh electoral landscape, its history, and how it is changing. Many of those details can be summarised under two simple truisms: that Wales is not Scotland, and Wales is not England either.

Wales is not Scotland

One extraordinary statistic which emerged from the 2015 general election concerned UKIP. In Scotland, UKIP stood candidates in 41 of the 59 seats and all 41 failed to get the 5 per cent vote share needed to retain their £500 electoral deposit; in Wales, UKIP stood candidates in all 40 seats and all 40 retained their deposit. Wales and Scotland were very different electoral places in 2015. But these differences pertained to much more than just UKIP. While Labour were crushed in Scotland, in Wales they retained their leading position. Though a disappointment for Labour, who made a small net loss in seats when they had been expecting to advance, 2015 was still the 20th successive general election (in a run stretching from 1935) where Labour won the most votes *and* a majority of seats in Wales. Indeed, subsequent to the Lloyd George 'Coupon' election of 1918, Labour have come first in vote share in 36 of the 37 Wales-wide electoral contests.

Table 1: General Election 2015, Wales

Party	Votes	Vote Share (Change on 2010)	MPs (change on 2010)
Labour	552,473	36.9 (+0.6)	25 (-1)
Conservative	407,813	27.2 (+1.1)	11 (+3)
UKIP	204,330	13.6 (+11.2)	0
Plaid Cymru	181,704	12.1 (+0.9)	3
Liberal Democrats	97,783	6.5 (-13.6)	1 (-2)
Greens	38,344	2.6 (+2.1)	0
Others	15,616	1.0 (-0.2)	0
<i>Turnout 65.6% (+0.7)</i>			

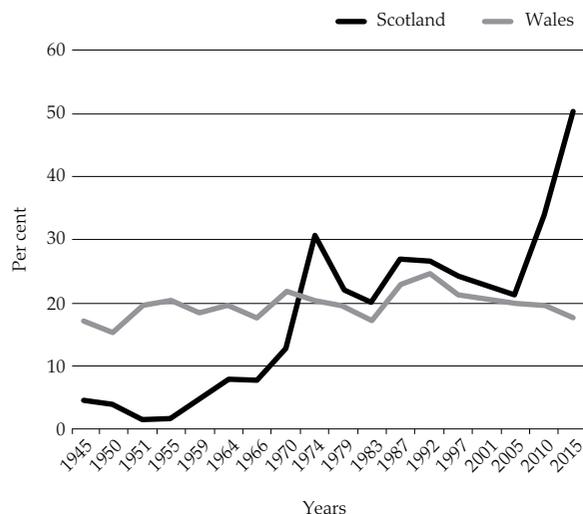
Alongside continuing Labour success, another persisting theme in Wales has been the electoral weakness of Plaid Cymru. Unlike their sister party in Scotland, the SNP, Plaid made little progress in 2015. This reflects not only differences between the two parties but also broader contrasts in the two nations' political landscape. Wales has had no independence referendum, nor the broader surge in political engagement and consciousness that came with it in Scotland. For whatever reason – strong social links with England, an awareness of Wales' relative economic weakness and dependence on UK subsidies, or simply the fact that no significant political force expends much energy advocating the idea – support for independence in Wales remains low, at or below 10 per cent in most polls. However, the Welsh people have come to support significant autonomy within the UK. After rejecting the idea overwhelmingly in a 1979 referendum, and then

only endorsing it very narrowly in a second vote in 1997, people in Wales rapidly came to accept devolution in the years after 1997. For more than a decade devolution has been the clear 'settled will' of a substantial majority of people in Wales, with some public desire to extend it into currently un-devolved policy areas, such as policing. But there is little desire for an independent Welsh state.

Wales is not England, either

But nor is Wales electorally the same place as England. The advances of the Conservatives and UKIP in 2015 did make Wales look superficially rather similar to England. Writing in the *London Review of Books*, Ross McKibbin suggested that "The Tories did well in Wales... part of a process by which Wales is becoming assimilated into English politics". However, this interpretation doesn't stand up to much scrutiny. The figure below shows the extent to which voting patterns in Scotland and Wales have differed from England in all post-war general elections. Welsh electoral distinctiveness edged only very marginally downwards in 2015, and towards the long term average. Scotland has diverged sharply from England in the two most recent general elections, and become a very different electoral space. Wales in 2015 remained about as electorally distinct from England as it has been since 1945.

Figure: Index of Dissimilarity, Scotland and Wales (compared to England), 1945–2015 General Elections



Labour hegemony under challenge?

If there has been so much continuity in Welsh electoral politics, why should anything change in 2016? Labour have come first in all four previous Welsh Assembly elections – what reason is there to expect anything different this time around? There are two main sources of Labour vulnerability in Wales. One is longer-term and socio-economic in nature: the decline in public sector employment. This heavily unionised section of the workforce increasingly became Labour's core vote in Wales after the decline of the heavy industries that had provided Labour's socio-economic base for most of the twentieth century. But continuing public sector austerity is steadily eroding this core, and will likely continue to do so for some years to come.

The second factor is more immediate and political. In 2011, Labour had their best ever result in a Welsh devolved election. But they did this largely by running as an opposition party. Instead of foregrounding their own achievements during their (then) 12 years of governing Wales, Labour positioned itself in opposition to the Conservative-led government in London. Of course in 2016 we still have a Conservative government in London. But in other respects the UK-wide political context looks less helpful for Labour than five years ago. A brief 'Corbyn bounce' in the Welsh polls after the Labour leader's election had already evaporated by the end of 2015. While Jeremy Corbyn's election boosted Labour membership in Wales, as elsewhere, he appears a much more mixed blessing for the party in trying to appeal to the electorate as a whole.

Table 2: The 2011 Welsh Assembly Election

Party	Constituency Vote	Regional Vote	Seats
Labour	42.3%	36.9%	30
Conservative	25.0%	22.5%	14
Lib-Dems	10.6%	8.0%	5
Plaid Cymru	19.3%	17.9%	11
Others	2.8%	14.7%	0

Turnout = 42.2%

If Welsh Labour are to be successful in 2016, they will likely have to do so by campaigning much more on their merits and record in Wales. They have some advantages here: first minister Carwyn Jones remains quite popular with the Welsh people. But public evaluations of Labour's record in office in Wales are far from glowing, with particular negative sentiment surrounding the performance of the Welsh NHS. Labour's saving grace in Wales might be the divided opposition to them. Rather than facing a single mighty adversary like the SNP in Scotland, opposition to Labour in Wales is divided between Plaid Cymru on the left and the Conservatives and UKIP on the right.

It is quite possible that both Plaid and the Tories may gain constituency seats from Labour in May. Yet both may also find themselves losing regional list seats to UKIP. Indeed, it is very plausible that Labour could lose significant ground in Wales yet still have twice as many seats of any other party. And with the opposition parties sharply divided ideologically, no alternative non-Labour government currently looks viable.

For Labour as a whole, Wales in 2016 will provide an important benchmark of their performance and progress under Jeremy Corbyn. In Scotland a poor result already appears to be priced in. Losing ground in the English local elections, and failing to win the London mayoralty, would be very disappointing but not unprecedented. Wales is a different matter. Losing Wales really would be something of historic significance for the Labour party. At present this still looks unlikely: while Labour is running well below its support levels in 2011, all polls still give the party a comfortable lead. But in such interesting political times, we should probably rule nothing out. **F**

In the spotlight

Mark Drakeford, Nia Griffith, Mike Hedges and Jenny Rathbone focus on the political and policy challenges facing Wales in the run up to May's crucial assembly elections

From Past to Present

Mike Hedges looks at the future direction of the Welsh economy

Historically, the Welsh economy was built on coal mining and the metal industries, along with agriculture. We saw a gradual shift as manufacturing became the main source of employment in the post-war period, with Hoover setting up shop in Merthyr (1948), Ford in Swansea (1965) and Sony in Bridgend (1973). All subsequently closed in more recent times, the Welsh economy has come to rely on the public sector.

In this increasingly fractured economy, Wales needs to concentrate its support in key growth areas – the life sciences, information and communications technology (ICT), creative industries, advanced manufacturing and professional services – with grants, incentives and other government help.

With around 10,000 people employed in the life sciences sector, the £100m Wales Life Sciences Investment Fund plays a key role in our economy – boosting business growth, attracting new companies to Wales, supporting job creation and encouraging graduates to enter the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors.

Professional and financial services, however, are sectors where Wales, particularly outside Cardiff, remains weak. We have a major and well-respected insurance company in Admiral (one of the biggest private sector employers in Wales), but we desperately need to attract and support more high-value and high-wage employment – initiatives like the Enterprise Zone in central Cardiff are steps in the right direction.

Despite its decline, Wales still has a number of advanced manufacturing industries – from the Airbus plant at Broughton to the Ford engine plant in Bridgend. We have seen Welsh government invest in the sector with the Materials and Manufacturing Education Training and Learning scheme, which aims to increase the number of people gaining technical skills throughout Wales.

One key industry that is not geographically constrained and has the ability to generate huge wealth is ICT. In Wales, medium sized enterprises in the sector have performed strongly with a 92.8 per cent increase in turnover between 2005 and 2013. As superfast broadband rolls out across Wales, there is a need to turn some of these medium sized ICT companies into large ICT companies.

We need a national strategy for each high-value economic sector. We will not develop a successful economy on low pay and seasonal work. Thanks to the Labour government in Wales, progress has already been made, but the level of commitment and investment needs to continue if we are to realise our ambition of a high wage and high skill economy.



Mike Hedges is AM for Swansea East

A greener Wales

Wales needs greater devolved powers to continue to lead the way on climate change, writes Jenny Rathbone

After the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986 two women in southern Germany asked their energy company to provide the city's 2,000 inhabitants with only renewable energy. They were told it couldn't be done.

Inspired by this rebuff the two women went on to create their own renewable energy company; and the village of Shonau in Baden Wurtenburg now supplies 150,000 customers with its array of solar, wind, hydro and biomass systems.

Wales is endowed with abundant supplies of renewable energy. Every historic village has a river or stream running through it. Wales has at least four times the amount of wind as Germany.

So what is holding Wales back? We are proud to have taken a lead where we can, but must continue to do so while winning back powers from Westminster and in spite of the ongoing shortage of funding.

Wales is the pioneer of a 5p levy on carrier bags. The hedgerows and streets of Wales as well as sea life across the world have benefited enormously from the 70 per cent reduction in single use carrier bags it has brought about.

Likewise, Wrexham council was quick off the mark to take advantage of the feed-in tariffs (FITs) for solar energy introduced by the last UK Labour government. It now has 4.5 megawatts of installed energy proudly adorning up to 3,000 of its council houses and public buildings, keeping tenants warm and bills low.

But most local authorities were left behind once George Osborne started dismantling the FIT, and are yet to seize the opportunity to rediscover their roots as municipal energy suppliers.

Wales needs greater devolved powers to prevent the monopoly of energy distributors from blocking new entrants into the energy market.

Huge advances in storage technology make it perfectly possible for individuals and communities to generate enough energy to meet most of their needs; smart meters, for example, enable us to track exactly how much energy we use at different times of the day.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the design of new homes. The Low Carbon Research Institute at Cardiff University has designed a house that is effectively its own power station, within the budget for social house building.

We in Wales already produce more electricity than we use. We already have many of the powers needed to generate energy that will benefit the Welsh economy and the rest of the UK in a way that is clean, sustainable and mindful of our climate change obligations to future generations. We need to use them – and then go further to ensure Wales continues to lead the way in the fight against climate change.



Jenny Rathbone is AM for Cardiff Central

Labour's challenge

Nia Griffith surveys the political and economic circumstances Labour faces in Wales

Returning a Labour government in the Welsh assembly elections in May is first and foremost about securing the best outcomes for the people of Wales. But it is also important for Labour across the UK, as it demonstrates the difference a Labour government can make.

Like Labour-controlled councils in England, Labour must defend its record against a background of Conservative cuts and a shrinking future budget. The fact that cuts are a result of the UK government's policies does not stop local Conservatives – the second party in Wales – from blaming Labour, adding their voices to those of UKIP and Plaid Cymru.

As Wales is the only UK country with a Labour government, it is a real target for Conservative attacks on its record – as we saw last year with David Cameron's attacks on the Welsh NHS, principally aimed at shoring up Conservative electoral chances in England. His claims about the Welsh NHS have been refuted by both the Nuffield Trust and the OECD. What's more, the Welsh government is not in dispute with its junior doctors: Wales has the same resource constraints, but also a Labour health minister who sits down with the professionals to find a way forward.

In spite of cuts of some £1.5bn over the last five years, Labour has delivered on all its 2011 election pledges. In contrast to Conservative policy in England, Labour has maintained a modernising school building programme, kept the education maintenance allowance, pegged student fees at £3,800 and is not chopping up the NHS for privatisation.

At this election, Labour are offering voters six deliverable pledges on apprenticeships, childcare, small business rate relief, fast-track access to new drugs and treatments, improving education standards and doubling the amount of capital that you can keep if you need to go into a care home.

Although Labour holds 28 out of 40 constituency seats, it has only two out of 20 regional list seats. Seats on regional lists are elected by a system weighted towards parties which do not win constituency seats, which is why UKIP think they are in with a chance.

So whilst Labour in Wales has its challenges, it goes into May's elections with good spirit and determination to return Carwyn Jones as first minister.



Nia Griffith is MP for Llanelli and shadow secretary of state for Wales.

Wales in prudent health

Mark Drakeford explains the principles behind the Welsh NHS

The Welsh NHS goes into the assembly elections in good heart.

It does so despite the very real stresses and strains it faces, a result of cuts imposed by the UK government. It does so despite the sustained campaign of vilification of the Welsh health service, led by the prime minister. It does so despite rising demand, the result of serving a population which, in the conclusion of a recent OECD report, is "older, sicker and poorer" than any of the other UK nations.

The OECD was unequivocal in its assessment that every part of the UK produces leading services in some areas; all have things to learn from services provided elsewhere. Wales provides an NHS every bit as good as any other UK nation.

Central to our approach is the idea of prudent healthcare – a set of four principles developed in Wales but which draw on a wider international movement.

Firstly, prudent healthcare begins from the premise that up to a quarter of activity in any modern, advanced healthcare system is of low or no clinical value. Much of that rests in the well-tested phenomenon of over-treatment – the ordering of tests of no predictive value; the reordering of tests already carried out; the prescription of medicines which do no good and, as a consequence, expose people to the risk of harm. Prudent healthcare shines a light on these practices and focuses on their reduction and eradication.

The second principle is de-escalation. The healthcare system operates according to a particular internal dynamic in which people are always being passed up the hierarchy of professional importance and therapeutic intensity. Once they are in the healthcare system, patients quickly find themselves on an escalator towards ever-greater intervention. The de-escalation principle offers a necessary corrective to this way of working, emphasising the simplest and least intrusive forms of treatment.

A third core principle of a prudent healthcare system focuses on the workforce. Far too often the activities carried out by the most highly-skilled, and scarcest, members of the NHS workforce simply do not require that level of expertise. A prudent healthcare system insists that no NHS worker should routinely spend their time doing things that do not require the level of skill and expertise they possess.

Finally, for all its astonishing strengths, in the almost 70 years since its inception the NHS has rested on a relationship in which patients were the passive objects of the benign attention of healthcare professionals. The fourth prudent healthcare principle recasts that relationship and strikes a new bargain between user and provider. Instead of entering the consulting room and being asked, "what can I do you for today?", the new bargain asks the question "what can we do together today?"

These ideas lie at the heart of the new co-productive prudent healthcare system we are creating in Wales. ■



Mark Drakeford is AM for Cardiff West and minister for health and social services

You can read longer versions of these articles at www.fabians.org.uk/fabianreview

Fabians versus Farage

Karen Constantine reports on a tumultuous year in Thanet which has seen Farage defeated and a new Fabian group founded



It's been an exciting year in Thanet for the Fabians, Labour and the left. In the spring of 2015, South Thanet was rocked when Nigel Farage's charabanc rolled into town. Most residents would not have anticipated the ambition of UKIP's leader, nor the ways in which the people of the Kent constituency would unite in solidarity against him.

Months earlier in the Newark by-election, where UKIP spent an estimated £1.2m on their campaign, Farage expertly used the media, building up expectations about whether he would choose to stand there. Unfortunately for him, he ultimately chose South Thanet instead.

The Georgian towns of Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate were rudely awakened as a global avalanche of media, bloggers, filmmakers, comedians and others fought for centre stage. Hotels and Airbnb-ers were delighted with the influx. British and European TV news crews could be seen on every street corner. The restaurant trade boomed. UKIP certainly knew how to splash the cash, with more than twice the Newark budget estimated to have been spent in South Thanet.

South Thanet was a strategic choice for Farage. It's a community marred by coastal poverty and despair containing the poorest and most deprived wards in the south east. Sowing the seeds of hatred, despair and racism in such a desperate community might, UKIP imagined, have been an easy undertaking. With wage rates well below the regional and national average, diminishing access to decent social housing and a stagnant labour market, Farage must have thought his simple vitriol would work. But it didn't.

UKIP founder turned Tory, Craig MacKinlay, won. It's fair to acknowledge that those tactical voters absolutely desperate not to allow Farage a foothold significantly bolstered MacKinlay's votes.

The energy created in the campaign to keep Farage out clearly demonstrated a need and opportunity for debate and discussion on the centre-left. Out of this came the Thanet Fabians. We had already held a series of public events – setting up and constituting a branch was a natural progression. Despite its relative youth, it has already proved popular. Following our inaugural meeting in November 2015 which saw over 80 people brave the wind and cold, the group has grown to over 100 members.

It was a relief to see Farage lose, but UKIP had invested heavily in hastily building a new community of local politicians. And so while Farage stormed off stage defeated at the election count, Labour lost the district council to UKIP. Only four councillors from 56 remained, replaced by an almost entirely novice array of UKIP councillors. Elected as they were on a highly divisive and much ridiculed Save Manston Airport platform, UKIP had sold themselves to the voting public on a highly simplistic solution to a complex economic problem.

Their plan was to issue a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to save a financially unviable, privately owned and closed airport. Working for Labour I had fought and lost our previously strong ward of Newington. After the election came frustration as the issues associated with the CPO became widely apparent and cracks in the UKIP camp started to show.

Then UKIP's councillor in Newington, Vince Munday, resigned. Perhaps the offence that Janice Atkinson MEP had caused by describing Munday's wife, Fa, as a "ting tong from somewhere" played its part in his decision to emigrate to Thailand. A by-election was called for January 2016.

Newington was important. Labour needed to reconnect with an impoverished, isolated and cynical community. Labour, with Fabian support, did this through a doorstep campaign, demonstrating Labour values and emphasising Labour as a realistic, hopeful option. UKIP proved themselves to be fatally disorganised and highly factional. Within weeks of election UKIP councillors were breaking away to form an independent group, the 'Diggers'. Others joined the Tories. Ineffectual at 'case work', nothing was getting done at a local level.

Despite campaigning during bitter cold, Labour pulled together a strong strategy and ran a tight ship. Many said it was the most enjoyable and friendly campaign they'd been involved with. Labour members of all stripes – Fabians, hardworking stalwarts, new

members, Momentum activists, trade unionists, and neighbouring constituents – came together, fuelled on bread-based snacks and team spirit in freezing conditions, to secure votes on the doorstep. UKIP in Thanet are in terminal decline, with no UKIP MP and no UKIP controlled council. Their politics of division is in tatters, as people realise that simply blaming others is futile. For now, the calm and reasoned approach exemplified in the Fabians holds strong.

Today South Thanet is again in the spotlight, this time over election expenses. It remains to be seen how Labour will fare should investigations result in election re-runs, but for now, with Thanet Fabians established and UKIP defeated, the centre-left are hopeful and energised. ■

Karen Constantine is Labour councillor for Newington Thanet and interim chair of Thanet Fabians

FABIAN QUIZ



**THE GREAT
BRITISH DREAM
FACTORY**
Dominic Sandbrook

Class remains resolutely with us, as strongly present as it was fifty years ago. In this empathic, wry and passionate exploration of class in Britain today, Lynsey Hanley looks at how people are kept apart, and keep themselves apart – and the costs involved in the journey from 'there' to 'here'.

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

What percentage of MPs were privately educated?

Please email your answer and your address to review@fabian-society.org.uk

Or send a postcard to: Fabian Society, Fabian Quiz, 61 Petty France, London, SW1H 9EU.



ANSWERS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 3 JUNE 2016

Listings

BIRMINGHAM

For details and information, please contact Andrew Coulson at Andrew@CoulsonBirmingham.co.uk

BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

25 March. Lord Roger Liddle on 'The E.U. Referendum'. Meetings at The Friends Meeting House, Wharnclyffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30. Contact Ian Taylor on 01202 396634 for details or taylorbournemouth@gmail.com

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Details of all meetings from Ralph Bayley: ralphbayley@gmail.com

BRISTOL

Regular meetings. Contact Ges Rosenberg for details on grosenberg@churchside.me.uk or Arthur Massey 0117 9573330

CARDIFF

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

CENTRAL LONDON

Details from Giles Wright on 0207 227 4904 or giles.wright@fabians.org.uk

CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

All meetings at 8.00 in Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall Details from the secretary, Alison Baker at a.m.baker@blueyonder.co.uk

COLCHESTER

17 March. Alex Mayer on 'Europe'. 14 July AGM and meeting on 'Democratic Reform'. Hexagonal Room, Quaker Meeting House, 6 Church St, Colchester. Details of meetings from Maurice Austin – maurice.austin@phonecoop.coop

CROYDON AND SUTTON

New Society with regular meetings

CUMBRIA & NORTH LANCASHIRE

Meetings, 6.30 for 7.00 at Castle Green Hotel, Kendal. For information contact Robin Cope at robincope@waitrose.com

DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

Regular meetings at 8.00 in Dartford Working Men's Club, Essex Rd, Dartford Details from Deborah Stoate on 0207 227 4904 email debstoate@hotmail.com

DERBY

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

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT

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

EAST LOTHIAN

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

EDINBURGH

Regular Brain Cell meetings. Details of these and all other meetings from Daniel Johnson at daniel@scottishfabians.org.uk

EPSOM and EWELL

New Society forming. If you are interested, please contact Carl Dawson at carldawson@gmail.com

FINCHLEY

Enquiries to Mike Walsh on 07980 602122 or mike.walsh44@ntlworld.com

GLASGOW

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

GLOUCESTER

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

GRIMSBY

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

HARROW

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

HASTINGS and RYE

Meetings held on last Friday of each month. Please contact Valerie Threadgill c/o the Fabian Society, 61 Petty France

HAVERING

21 March, 'Democratic Reform', 7.30 in Saffron House. 9 May, Speaker tbc. Havering Museum, 7.30. 4 July, Matthew Hopkins, CEO of Local NHS Trust. Details of all meetings from David Marshall email david.c.marshall@talk21.com tel 01708 441189. For latest information, see the website haveringfabians.org.uk

IPSWICH

Details of all meetings from John Cook: contact@ipswich-labour.org.uk twitter: twitter.com/suffolkfabians

ISLINGTON

Details from Ed Rennie at islingtonfabians@hotmail.co.uk

LEEDS

Details of all meetings from John Bracken at leedsfabians@gmail.com

MERSEYSIDE

Please contact James Roberts at jamesroberts1986@gmail.com

NORTHUMBRIA AREA

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

NORTHAMPTON AREA

Please contact Dave Brede on davidbrede@yahoo.com

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

Please contact Richard Gorton on r.gorton748@btinternet.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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

OXFORD

25 May, 5.00–7.00, Alan Rusbridger (former Guardian editor-in-chief) on 'Politics and the Media'. New College.

Sponsored by Reuters Institute of Journalism. 7 June, 5.00–7.00. 'Democratic Reform', with Ann Black (Labour Party NEC) and Mary Southcott (Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform). New College. Sponsored by the Fabian Society. Please contact Michael Weatherburn at michael.weatherburn@gmail.com

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

READING & DISTRICT

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

SALISBURY

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

SHEFFIELD

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

SOUTH EAST LONDON

Contact sally.prentice@btinternet.com

SOUTH WEST LONDON

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

SOUTHEND ON SEA

New Society forming. Contact John Hodgkins on 01702 334916

SOUTHAMPTON AREA

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

SOUTH TYNESIDE

March (date tbc) John Levy of Friends of Israel. Contact Paul Freeman on 0191 5367 633 or at freemanpmb@blueyonder.co.uk

STOCKPORT AREA

New Society forming. Please contact Mike Roddy at roddy175@btinternet.com

SUFFOLK

Tuesday 22 March. 'Democratic Reform' meeting. All welcome. 7.30. Co-operative Education Centre, 11 Fore St, Ipswich. Details from John Cook – ipswichlabour@gmail.com, www.twitter.cdom/suffolkfabians

SURREY

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

THANET

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

TONBRIDGE and TUNBRIDGE WELLS

8 April, Mike Dearn from War on Want on TTIP, 8.00 in Len Fagg Hall, St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells. 13 May, Cameron Tait from the Fabian Society on 'Hungry

for Change', 8.00 in Len Fagg Hall. Contact John Champneys on 01892 523429 or email Lorna.Blackmore@btinternet.com

TOWER HAMLETS

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

TYNEMOUTH

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

WARWICKSHIRE

All meetings 7.30 at the Friends Meeting House, 28 Regent Place, Rugby Details from Ben Ferrett on ben_ferrett@hotmail.com or warwickshirefabians.blogspot.com

WEST DURHAM

Welcomes new members from all areas of the North East not served by other Fabian Societies. Regular meeting 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@dur.ac.uk

WIMBLEDON

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

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

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J.A. Allan £100

Half the income from the Fabian Fortune Fund goes to support our research programme. Forms and further information from Giles Wright, giles.wright@fabians.org.uk.

SAVE THE DATE

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