

# Fabian Review

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Autumn 2008



# MUST LABOUR LOSE?

THE **PROGRESSIVE FIGHT BACK**

**PETER KELLNER:** Labour's glimmers of hope | **DAVID LAMMY:** Britain is not broken  
**STELLA CREASY:** Connect like Obama | **JON TRICKETT:** Rebuild the coalition  
**JAMES PURNELL:** Rediscover redistribution | **FIONA MACTAGGART:** Tax like we mean it  
**TIM HORTON:** Why Cameron is a Thatcherite

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# There is still time

A fairness fight back could be undermined by the fractious factions. But the minority extremes on both the left and right can't start a civil war when neither has any troops.

**What a difference a year makes.** After the hubris of Bournemouth, Labour arrives in Manchester in the slough of despond. Is there hope amidst such volatility? There is still time, but only if Conference week becomes a turning point where the Party confronts the difficult questions Britain faces and shows the country how Labour's vision can answer them.

How? First, articulate the Labour case. We believe in a fairer Britain, where life chances are more equal. But we know that fairness doesn't happen by chance.

The key political challenge now is to animate the belief that what governments do matters in a way that resonates with the public. Sometimes change takes more than an imperceptible nudge.

Whether it's the NHS insuring us all against the risks of ill health, government providing protection from an impact of a downturn, or even making success at the Olympics possible, it is that belief in fairness which divides the major parties. An autumn fight back must involve popular, progressive policy tests of the warm words of political opponents,

above all on finding the means to entrench the commitment to end child poverty as the progressive cause of this generation.

Second, we must call off the faction fight. Labour should never be frightened of robust discussion of its values, record, ambitions and policy platform. But the Party is not ideologically divided – certainly not compared to a generation ago.

The uber-Blairite and the left oppositionist flanks need the echo chamber the other provides. But only a tiny minority in the Party wants to libel the Government's quietly social democratic record as 'market fundamentalist' or, alternatively, believes this has tested the state to destruction so that Labour must ditch its defining commitments to redistribution and equality. Strangely, both often seem to take the opposition's progressive rhetoric at face value. So the message to both factions should be the same: you might conduct a battle of the airwaves, but you can't start a civil war if neither of you have any troops.

The Labour mainstream, which knew why the Party needed to modernise but

never forgot what it was for, needs to reassert its claim on this debate. The truth is that any social democratic party should be proud, but never satisfied, with its record in power, and focused on the future ambition to make change happen. Everybody, from the leader down, is frustrated at the party's standing in the polls, and almost everybody knows that the party must rebuild a broad electoral coalition, not decide which voters it does or doesn't want.

Thirdly, that must mean looking outwards too. There is no sign of any progressive governing project for Britain which does not involve Labour, but nor should Labour claim a monopoly on progressive wisdom. The sad truth is that some significant progressive constituencies are barely on speaking terms with Labour. Restarting those conversations will be difficult, and must begin with the ability to disagree with respect. Then progressives of different parties and of none should demonstrate a willingness to change the way we do politics, and identify where we can find common causes – on ending child poverty, dealing with climate change,

campaigning to keep the Union, making the case for our full engagement in Europe, and challenging the new Tory administration in London.

Labour's belief in collective responsibility will be tested by the way

the Party conducts its own affairs this autumn. There must be a shared mission to put its public case for a fairer Britain. Otherwise, if a party which spent its last two conferences discussing the timing of a leadership transition and the possibility

of an election is seen to engage only in personality politics and factional navel-gazing, it may just find it has reached the end of a long parliament without ever quite telling the voters what it wants another term for. SK



## THE REVIEW

email your views to: [debate@fabian-society.org.uk](mailto:debate@fabian-society.org.uk)



Alan Johnson

### JOHNSON ON OBESITY

On 23rd July Health Secretary Alan Johnson MP gave the Fabian Society Speech on public health. In his speech the Secretary of State set out the role of government in supporting people to take control of their own health. "There is a very real danger that today's children will be the first to live shorter lives than their parents and spend more of their years in poor health," said Mr Johnson. The Secretary of State called for a more sympathetic approach to tackling the obesity problem, as well as appealing to major supermarkets to engage in campaigns to address obesity: "Just as the Government has a moral duty to tackle poverty and exclusion, so it also has a duty to address obesity. But this is not a license to hector and lecture people on how they should spend their lives – not least because this simply won't work."

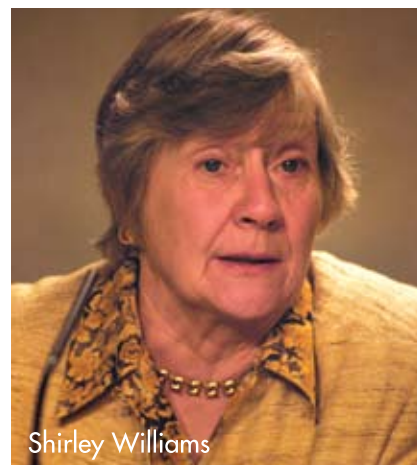
### FABIANS IN THE PRESS

Last quarter the Fabian Publications team achieved widespread news

coverage and public engagement with the Summer Review. Tom Hampson's and Jemima Olchawski's article on the offensiveness of the word 'chav' featured on *The Guardian's* Comment Is Free section online, and this sparked off a series of debates on the article across national media. The blanket coverage included interviews, commentary, and follow-up pieces in *The Evening Standard*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Independent*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Morning Star*, *The Mail on Sunday*, *The New Statesman*, and in broadcast media BBC News 24, BBC 9 O'Clock News, Radio Five, Radio Four on "The World Tonight", and Independent Radio News Network. Elsewhere the summer Fabian Review agenda-setting articles by Chris Leslie and by Danny Dorling, and the interview with David Blunkett, were followed-up by *The Independent*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The New Statesman*. This month we are publishing Sadiq Khan MP's hard-hitting and eagerly anticipated pamphlet *Fairness Not Favours: How To Reconnect With British Muslims*. Look out for it in the news.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Next quarter sees an array of exciting Fabian events with leading commentators, experts, and politicians tackling some of the biggest and most controversial issues of our time. In October Baroness Shirley Williams leads a debate on "How liberal is Labour?", looking at Labour and human rights. In November, straight after the American elections, our panel of internationally renowned politicians, academics, and journalists will convene for "America Votes, Europe Responds". This is the first opportunity for leading European figures to discuss the prospects for transatlantic relations, climate change, trade, international development and security under the new American President. January 2009 sees the flagship Fabian Society New Year Conference on Equality, and in February the Fabians and the Webb Memorial Trust will hold a one-day conference on "Fighting Poverty and Inequality In An Age



Shirley Williams

of Affluence". Not to be missed. For more information, see the Noticeboard (page 46) or <http://fabians.org.uk/events/events-news> or contact the Fabian office on 020 7227 4900.



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**NEW IDEAS NEEDED!**  
 If you're not at Conference, keep up with the Fabian Fringe on our new 'Next Left' blog at [www.nextleft.org](http://www.nextleft.org)

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# Protecting the Innocent



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

**Last year's Labour Conference:  
Ed Balls announces creation of independent exams regulator**

**This year's Labour Conference:  
The question of intelligent regulation - how to manage risk and secure trust - still rumbles on...**

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Must Labour lose the next election? No, says YouGov's **Peter Kellner** – electoral fortunes can go up as well as down. Just don't bet your house on it.



Peter Kellner  
is President of YouGov

It's not much fun these days being a Labour-supporting pollster. Sometimes I feel I am being blamed personally for producing YouGov figures that show the Tories miles ahead. So let me try and redress things by pointing out, in best mixed-metaphor mode, some fragments of silver lining at the end of the tunnel. Here are six reasons why Labour could (note that I say 'could' – I'm not foolhardy enough to say 'will') win the next general election.

**1** Britain's political geography is tilted strongly Labour's way. On conventional assumptions of a uniform swing, Labour can win up to two million fewer votes than the Conservatives and still end up with more MPs. This means that if the two parties win the same number of votes, Labour will retain, or come very close to, an overall majority in the Commons, and have up to 80 more MPs than the Tories. For the Tories to draw level in the number of seats, they will need a lead of 6 per cent in the popular vote. For David Cameron to secure an overall majority, his party needs a lead of at least 10 per cent.

Those are guideline numbers. If the Tories achieve a bigger swing in the marginal constituencies, they might need slightly lower leads over Labour to draw level

in individual seats or to win an outright majority. But even so, on any plausible scenario, Labour needs fewer votes than the Tories to secure the election of any given number of MPs.

**2** For those who are spooked by Labour's performance in recent opinion polls and by-elections, a quick look at political history should soothe frayed nerves. Leaving aside the short parliaments of 1964-66 and 1974, every government from the mid-fifties to the mid-nineties suffered severe mid-term blues; and every government in that period achieved a significant recovery in public support as the following election approached. Sometimes the recovery was big enough to secure re-election and sometimes it wasn't, but the overall pattern held good for every parliament.

The 1997 and 2001 parliaments broke this pattern, but the chances are that normal mid-term service has resumed. Labour should do substantially better at the next election than today's polls indicate, providing that it takes steps to revive its reputation for unity and competence.

**3** Some people look at Labour's by-election record and say the party is in as much trouble as the doomed Tories in the mid-90s. Not so. When we lost Crewe & Nantwich, and then Glasgow East, our vote fell by around 40 per cent (from 21,240 to 12,679 in Crewe and from 18,775 to 10,912 in Glasgow). When the Tories lost Dudley West in 1994, their vote collapsed by almost 80% – from 34,729 to 7,706.

That's not to say our recent by-election record is anything to crow about. It's certainly worrying that former Labour supporters in Crewe switched straight to the Tories rather than staying at home or indulging in the more active version of abstention by voting Lib Dem. But the figures show that Labour is not facing the kind of meltdown that afflicted the Tories in the nineties.

**4** The proximate cause of Labour's recent decline is fundamentally different from that which poleaxed the Tories in the nineties. The event that triggered the Tories' collapse was Black Wednesday: the day in September 1992 when Britain crashed out of Europe's exchange-rate mechanism. This was what tennis commentators describe as an 'unforced error'. The Tories took Britain into the ERM in 1990 at the wrong rate (and were, arguably, wrong to take Britain in at all). Black Wednesday represented a catastrophic failure of the policy that John Major had boasted was the heart of his economic strategy. Voters knew this and millions of them never forgave him.

In contrast, today's credit crunch, and the recent rises in food and fuel prices, are not Gordon Brown's fault. Voters feel the pinch and use polls and by-elections to express their frustration. They think the Government should do more to protect them from these economic

gales. But what if – and it's plainly an huge 'if' – the Government takes steps this autumn to protect the most vulnerable, and can then preside next year over a recovery in economic growth, the stabilisation of house prices, and a fall in inflation? Then Labour has at least a sporting chance of persuading voters at the next election that it has steered Britain successfully through this period of turbulence.

**5** As a British version of the former American senator, Lloyd Bentsen, might say: 'I knew Tony Blair. Tony Blair was a friend of mine. Mr Cameron: you are no Tony Blair'. Blair's ratings in the run-up to the 1997 general election were stratospheric. He could do no wrong. According to Gallup's surveys for *The Daily Telegraph*, his approval ratings in 1995 and 1996 at times approached 70 per cent. YouGov (which took over the *Telegraph* contract in 2002, and has continued a number of Gallup's tracker questions), has shown that Cameron's ratings have only occasionally reached 50 per cent.

In late July YouGov explored Cameron's image in more detail. We found that he is widely seen as shallow, out-of-touch and lightweight. Slightly more people (35 per cent) say he can't be trusted than say he can be trusted (32 per cent). The news is not all bad for the Tory leader: he is also seen as likeable, caring, competent and decisive. The pluses outnumber the minuses. The point is not that he is a vote-loser – it would be ridiculous to pretend that he is unpopular – but that he could be vulnerable to a well-led, united Labour Party presiding over economic recovery.

**6** The Conservative Party is still a tainted brand. Whereas a clear majority thinks Cameron is caring, most people think his party is not. On balance, voters say that Cameron – but not his party – has a clear sense of direction. And while Cameron's reputation for being trustworthy and in touch is poor, his party's reputation on the same attributes is terrible. Cameron has persuaded millions of voters that he is moderate, but the Tory party is still widely seen as unacceptably right wing.

It is one of the safer bets that the Conservative Party will build its next election campaign round the personality of its leader. One of Labour's tasks is to persuade voters to think of a possible change of government in terms of a return to the horrors of Tory rule, rather than a bright new dawn with David Cameron.

Take all these factors into account and the next general election could be more open than it now appears. But, by the same token, a big swing to the Tories is also perfectly possible. At the time of writing this article, the bookies are offering odds of three-to-one against Labour emerging as the largest party at the next general election. If you are persuaded by the above analysis that those are attractive odds, and you bet your mortgage on Labour winning, I must warn you: I offer no guarantees if you end up losing your home.



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**Oil & Gas UK**  
the voice of the offshore industry





Image: Adrian Teal

# Heir to Keir

It is redistribution and the belief in the state that makes us Labour, James Purnell, the Work and Pensions Secretary, tells **Sunder Katwala**.





Sunder Katwala  
is General Secretary  
of the Fabian Society

**Why are voters finding it increasingly difficult to tell the major parties apart?** “We need to step back and ask ourselves why it looks that way. It’s a deliberate part of the ‘hugging’ strategy by the Conservatives”, James Purnell tells *The Fabian Review* ahead of the autumn Conference season.

Purnell should know. He has been hugged rather harder than most. The opposition has offered to bolster the Government if it has problems convincing its own troops on welfare reform. And *The Spectator* magazine devoted an eye-catching cover to championing Purnell as “Labour’s next leader”, combining admiration for his talents with more than a pinch of political mischief-making in an endorsement hardly likely to win the Work and Pensions Secretary any friends in Labour’s ranks.

Yet he is very clear as to what defines the differences between the two parties: redistribution and the role of the state. That should disappoint his right-wing advocates. Some in his own party may be surprised too to hear this archetypal new Labour politician locate his welfare reforms in the proud tradition of Keir Hardie.

“The combination of believing in the redistribution of power and income, and having the effective state necessary for that objective, divides us from the Tories, who are on an undercover mission to destroy people’s confidence in the state. The biggest difference is that they don’t believe in redistribution or in eradicating child poverty”. Oliver Letwin and David Cameron may have flirted with redistribution but “they are now saying that we have reached the end of redistribution and of transferring money from rich to poor. They are now, under the radar, trying to denigrate tax credits as a way of unravelling them if they ever get into power”.

“I think Cameron’s ‘hugging’ policy is a tribute to new Labour. The challenge for us isn’t to pretend that isn’t happening. We should be confident about it: it shows our ideas are right. What we need to do now is set a policy agenda which tests what the Tories actually believe and what they simply feel that they need to say”.

But the R-word has hardly been prominent in the new Labour lexicon. “If you look at the way we’ve changed tax and spending policies, they meet a good Institute of Fiscal Studies definition of redistribution”, says Purnell. But this sidesteps the ‘social democracy by stealth’ critique. By muting the public argument and quietly redistributing, Labour has left space for the Conservatives to offer a mirror-image strategy of progressive-sounding language without requiring policies to back it up.

“We need to be clear that this isn’t something we’re doing for an electoral advantage, but because it’s absolutely key to people’s realisation of their aspirations”, says Purnell. But this is also the public argument on which Labour’s political fortunes depend.

Ending child poverty could be Labour’s cause. But having taken 600,000 children out of poverty, the government has fallen off track. Purnell thinks that falling public support for redistribution reflects the starker inequalities of the 1980s, but he warns that “it is possible to talk yourself into an unnecessary gloominess” about fears that an economic downturn will further erode public support. (We are speaking before Alastair Darling’s ‘you’ve never had it so bad’ interview).

“I don’t think we should be timid about thinking we can win the argument on child poverty”, says Purnell. He notes that support for tackling child poverty and for the disabled has remained solid. “53 per cent of people think that there are children who live in poverty in Britain”, suggesting that slim majority offers a “basis for consensus”. He acknowledges that the ambition to end child poverty “has probably seemed further away” from the centre of Labour’s political script during the last two elections. “The challenge for us all is to make sure it does feature”, saying he wants to work with the Fabians and the End Child Poverty campaign, which holds a major ‘Keep the

Promise’ rally on Saturday 4th October in London. But how can arguments about poverty statistics be translated into the language of the doorstep?

“It’s about fairness – and what’s fair. I think people do have a sense that children are growing up not able to take part as the equals of their peers. We are a rich enough society that everybody, wherever they come from, should have the chance to excel themselves. I think that people know that income is part of that answer, although it’s not the whole answer.”

“Conservatives say, ‘Oh, it’s not just about money’. Of course it’s not just about money, but it’s partly about money! They’re trying to leave that whole debate out of the picture. All parties are interested in family policy, drugs and alcohol, but if you don’t have a significant investment in lifting people out of poverty then only one thing’s going to happen: poverty will go up”.

#### Conditionality and social justice

Welfare reform must be part of that argument “to give people the confidence that they’re not putting their money into the equivalent of a leaky bucket” but also substantively “so that more people take up the support which is going to work for them”.

“My argument has always been that conditionality is the ally of social justice, not its opponent. We know how support works. We know that loads of people who could benefit from it and have their lives improved don’t take it up. There is no intention or reality of stigmatising anybody”.

But fears that welfare reform is a US import skew the debate. Purnell says his agenda of ‘support and responsibility’ draws most from the “ultimate social democratic countries” in Europe: “We shouldn’t over-obsess about America: there are things that they have done that we have learnt from, but we have an employment rate which is much higher than theirs. Really, the countries we should be looking to are those like the Netherlands and Denmark, with higher employment rates than ours. That model of the more generous but more demanding welfare system is exactly the one we’re pursuing – a system which eliminates child poverty, but which asks more of people in return”.

He believes that welfare reform could help Labour win the argument for redistribution too. "I think our style of redistribution was seen as very passive – just transferring wealth from one person to another and not in accordance with people's view of what was fair. If you combine it with an active vision of empowering people, giving them the chance to take up opportunities, then redistribution becomes a way of ensuring that people have a fair chance in life. A redistribution of power makes redistribution of income chime much more with people's sense of natural justice".

Having argued that responsibility was central to Beveridge's vision, in launching his Green Paper, Purnell now reaches further back to trace the Labour pedigree of arguments for the dignity of work: "It's in the very name of the party: the origins of the movement were about the demand for jobs. Go back to Keir Hardie and his maiden speech in the House of Commons in 1893 was about people working in return for their benefits. This has always been at the heart of what the Labour movement believes in".

### The forces of conservatism

That may seem an audacious bid to be heir to Keir Hardie, but Purnell believes David Cameron owes less to Blairism than Harold Macmillan's paternalistic Toryism.

"I think it's that kind of conservatism, one which hasn't invented the status quo but which realises it can't turn the clock back, so it has to defend the new status quo rather than the old one. David Cameron's problem is that he's a small-c conservative as well as a big-C Conservative. If we look back in ten or twenty years we won't be saying that what we needed to do was protect the status quo".

"I think that is a recipe for decline. That was the sort of mistake that was made in the fifties and sixties – a failure to realise the way the world was changing, whether it was trade union law on our side or the attitude to the empire on their side".

Half a century on, Purnell believes the Conservatives are failing again to find Britain's role in the world: "On Europe, they have not been prepared

to do what they know they would need to do to be a proper international player: they are trumped by ideology. The most likely consequence would be short term missed opportunities and medium-term decline".

Purnell believes that "Tony Blair's 'forces of conservatism' speech was his best conference speech" capturing "a very important argument about the difference between a conservative nation and a radical nation". The part of British character which has always been "open to new ideas, to change, to invention, to taking risks" is "the part of Britain which is ideally suited to the 21st century", he says. "Being able to adapt to and lead change rather than become its victim is fundamental to what makes societies successful." But people may not feel so itchy for the new? It might feel comfortable for a couple of years, and then gradually you'd start to realise that you were falling behind", says Purnell.

That was the former premier's most partisan speech to his own party, though he seemed to retreat quickly from it. The new Labour big tent made defining what the party was against difficult. "I don't think you should go out and create false enemies. That would be synthetic and unnecessary". But Labour must win public arguments: 'If you end up not doing something because it's hard to win the argument, you create political problems for yourself further down the line anyway'.

If conservatives adapt to a new status quo, shouldn't Labour do more to entrench and institutionalise its legacy? "The best way to Tory-proof what you're trying to do is not to have a Tory government!" he retorts. His metaphor is of two trains which start off running on parallel train tracks. "The Tories want to make people focus on the first few miles rather than on the fact that, after a few years, they want to end up at a completely different destination". Labour must convince people "that there is a very big future policy agenda that they will not get from a Conservative government".

### Next generation Labour?

"The thing that people forget about new Labour is that it was Labour as well

as new", Purnell told the Fabians in May. This may capture a key difference between the Blairites of the fifty-something generation and the younger politicians usually defined as their heirs. "Ideas that used to be new can turn into mantras", Purnell acknowledges.

Being confident about new Labour also means "being confident and candid about areas we could have done better or whether mistakes were made". He regrets the sense that public service reform looked like "something new Labour wanted to do to public service professionals". "Public services depend on the people who run them. We need to win the case that we want to devolve power to them precisely so they can serve the person across the desk from them rather than their masters in Whitehall."

Seven members of Gordon Brown's Cabinet are younger than the 43-year old Foreign Secretary David Miliband. James Purnell is the youngest of these young Turks – just a matter of months younger than Andy Burnham and Ed Miliband who follow Yvette Cooper, Ruth Kelly, Ed Balls and Douglas Alexander. A Blairite/Brownite head count of this group and rising stars outside Cabinet such as Liam Byrne, Sadiq Khan, David Lammy and Kitty Ussher would be pretty even. So this generation bears a heavy political responsibility.

They can ensure that Labour avoids the futility of a Blairite/Brownite split cascading down the generations in a pastiche of the Bevan/Gaitskell factions of the fifties and sixties only as long as they show that they are willing to revise Labour politics on their own terms, rather than believing the work was done a generation ago.

Setting new Labour in stone as the party of 1997 would inevitably make it a new establishment party. "Clearly, when you are in government, you look like your life is defined by Whitehall and ministerial cars, so you have to keep showing that you're insurgent by your policies and your ambitions. You have to show that the power of the state is still there to achieve radical causes", says Purnell. That's why he's Labour.

\* For details of the End Child Poverty campaign's Keep the Promise rally (Saturday October 4th), see [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)





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Fairness doesn't happen by chance

# Standing on the shoulders of old and new Labour

Our society isn't broken. But Labour must rediscover the lost traditions with ethical socialism in our search for the good society, argues **David Lammy**.

Photo: Richard Gardner/Rex Features



David Lammy  
is Member of Parliament for Tottenham  
and Minister for Skills

Britain is not broken. Anyone who saw British children celebrate the best ever school results last month understands that. Anyone who sees British employment figures remain stubbornly high despite a global downturn recognises it. Anyone who grew up in a Britain with the worst poverty record in the developed world remembers what a troubled society really looks like. On almost any measure David Cameron's rhetoric is overblown. Boris Johnson knows it and seeks to distance himself. The public senses it and is not yet sold on 'compassionate conservatism'.

But while the Tories offer only a negative picture of Britain, the question for the Labour Party must be how ambitious we are for Britain. Huge steps forward have been made over the last decade, not least in the renewal of public services that had been badly neglected. But the next agenda beckons. A vision of the good society is required to win the next election. Our challenge is to provide it.

David Cameron's difficulty in giving a positive vision for Britain stems from two major problems. The first is stubbornness: a refusal to accept that Britain is a fairer, more prosperous and more inclusive country than it was ten years ago. Opposition parties must find a rationale for change and Cameron's approach has been to decide that Britain is broken – a very negative message. His second problem, though, is much more profound. He leads a party that shed its 'one nation' tradition nearly thirty years ago, losing with it anything to say about society. With the election of Margaret Thatcher, the party of Disraeli became the party of Hayek and Milton Friedman. Her premiership marks the moment at which the Conservative Party adopted the work of Chicago school economists as its political creed. The legacy, which successive leaders have ultimately failed to escape from, is an unthinking commitment to market outcomes and an insurmountable hostility to the state.

While Cameron's Conservatives may have discovered 'society', therefore, they find themselves in an ideological straightjacket: keen to talk about social issues, but deeply confused about what to do about them. If the dead hand of the state only gets in the way of the invisible hand of the market than what is there left? The result is that David Cameron is reduced to speeches and symbolism, arguing both that society is broken and that government – any government – cannot fix it. The rhetoric becomes more strident, as the poor and the overweight are lectured for their troubles. But the basic analysis does not change. Echoing Margaret Thatcher, George Osborne dismisses redistribution by the state, arguing that "the free market economy is the fairest way of rewarding people for their efforts". In doing so he betrays the basic assumption at the heart of Conservatism: that the size of your pay packet reflects your value to society. For everyone else, the market is a *starting point* for rewarding people, not the end of the story.

However, as the Tories will learn, a critique is not enough. As Labour points out the flaws and contradictions in the Cameron project, we must offer our own agenda for change. And just as the Tories have lost an important tradition in their party, we must rediscover one in ours: the values that underpinned

ethical socialism in its search for the good society. Britain in the twenty-first century requires an ethical stance that favours the social above the economic, which takes relationships seriously – both in families and in civic society – and which asserts that the sum of our individual decisions does not always add up to the kind of society that we want to live in. This means neither a retreat back to old Labour or new Labour, but rather a forward agenda that stands on the shoulders of both.

A decade ago it was necessary to reconcile the left with the market economy. Only in 1995 – almost forty years after Anthony Crosland had published *The Future of Socialism* – did we amend Clause 4. Never before had our country faced the huge challenges and opportunities promised by the global movement of people, goods and capital. Britain needed a centre-left government that would assert the common good, but which was comfortable with a modern economy after eighteen long years in opposition. Faced with that challenge, new economic frameworks were applied, which explained where and when intervention in the market was necessary. ‘Market failure’ became the stock explanation for a role for government, whether that meant addressing carbon emissions among businesses, or providing employees with the skills they needed to survive in an increasingly competitive world economy.

In the nineties, economics conspired against the Tories. Globalisation changed the rules of the game. No longer was there the option of a ‘race to the bottom’, paying workers less and less – we were now in a global economy where there was always a lower-paid worker available on the other side of the world. Good government would now become a source of competitive advantage, equipping people with the skills they needed to compete and providing important infrastructure for businesses. Yet for all this, interventions still tended to be justified on technical, not ethical grounds. Tax credits would make work pay, altering incentives. Childcare would help mothers back to work, tackling poverty. Adult

learning would boost productivity, enhancing competitiveness.

So economics conspired in Labour’s favour but we have been at our best when we have made bold commitments based on ethical principles. The minimum wage was based on principles of decency, not just economics. Ending poverty in a generation became a moral crusade that even the Tories now pay lip service to. When Gordon Brown declared that there are better forms of regeneration than Supercasinos he took an unashamedly ethical stance.

Over the next decade, the party that is able to help people overcome the pressures of modern life will be the one that is willing to take these ethical positions and stand by them. Whether it is preventing advertising being targeted at young children, providing spaces for them to play, or ensuring families have time together, people need a government that is willing to assert social ambitions and see them

through. As the Tories launch an assault on ‘statist’ redistribution in an age where the global markets are breeding growing inequality, Labour must make the ethical case for a Britain where no child grows up in poverty. Thatcher ignored a working class that went to work down mine shafts; today we must speak up for people who serve you coffee, who look after your parents in old age, who you see coming home from their shift early in the morning. An ethical view demands that people invest in society and society invests in them in return.

The challenge for the left, above all, is to make the case for the democratic governance of markets. We must be confident enough to govern and steer them in the public interest. This must include ways to take collective decisions which extend beyond greater contestability and the breaking up of monopolies. Most people start with values, not economic frameworks, when asked about their lives, their families and communities. We must do the same.





# How to tax in a downturn

**Fiona Mactaggart** says that we must return to the argument about hypothecation if Labour is going to give voters the answers they need on tax.



Fiona Mactaggart  
is MP for Slough



*Fairness doesn't happen by chance*

Tax has always been a toxic issue for Labour and there are reasons why it has become more toxic in recent years.

First, a series of botched attempts to outflank the Tories including the abolition of the 10p band to fund main rate tax cuts confused people because they neither matched Labour values nor were they fully thought-through and had damaging unintended consequences.

Second, we failed to follow through the lessons of the national insurance increase to pay for increased NHS spending. This won the confidence of the public because it followed an independent report by a banker who said the money was needed, but he should have been tasked to report on the value for money we have achieved, in order to sustain that support.

Third, we have failed to develop a comprehensive, thought-through programme of hypothecated taxes which could make a real contribution to confidence in the tax system.

Above all, Labour has been reluctant to make the case for taxation: it is our subscription to civilisation and a crucial tool to make a better

society. This failure has contributed to a reverse in the direction of travel of public opinion. People have moved away from support for higher spending, even if it means higher taxes which has been crucial to our success. Indeed, polling now shows that more people would favour tax cuts but less spending.

Even in a downturn, when we might need to consider tax cuts rather than increases we need to win the argument on taxation. The Fabian Tax Commission report *Paying for Progress* concluded that a key reason why voters said they would pay more for services yet would vote against that prospect at the ballot box, was 'disconnection'. The public believe in investment in good services – but they fear that public money will be chucked into some black hole.

So when in 2002 Labour put one penny on national insurance to raise £8 billion for the NHS, the discretionary tax rise seemed a gamble. Yet it was Labour's most popular budget. And the investment in schools and hospitals helped make

tax and spending cuts a liability for the Tories in 2001 and 2005.

But, gradually over the last few years many people have lost confidence that their money's well spent. We have not produced audits of what spending has achieved or if it has been good value for money and we compounded the problem when we responded to the Tory agenda instead of fostering the public's support we had so carefully won for investment in public services in return for taxes.

Our message should be simple: Labour does what it promises on tax. We said we wouldn't raise income tax and we haven't. We said we'd plough money from the national insurance increase into the NHS and we did. But in one fell swoop – with the abolition of the 10p rate – Gordon threw away his strongest card: his belief in social justice and the elimination of poverty which is as much part of the Labour package as specific tax promises.

The reaction showed that there is support for fair taxes, which include progressive income tax. But we need to do more to show the value of



taxation. That is one reason why Labour must return to the argument about hypothecation – the ring fencing of particular taxes for particular purposes.

Hypothecation doesn't give you all the answers. It works best on areas where individuals can't solve a problem themselves – only the wider community can. This is why we have seen it most often applied to areas such as the environment. But for it to work there needs to be a very clear connection between the money and the results (if you drive into London you know that the money from your congestion charge will go directly into London's public transport system, about £123m last year).

**Our message should be simple: Labour does what it promises on tax.**

Taxes will never be popular, but if we do not make the case for them and build confidence in what they do then the services we invest them in will suffer. We also need to make the arguments for taxation in new and creative ways. In particular, we should raise taxes on more of what you might call 'commonly accepted bads'. This means we should increase taxation on cheap alcohol. We should put very high taxes on private jet travel.

Another example of this, on which we have nearly – but not quite – missed the boat, is taxing shopping bags and ploughing the money into cleaning up our neighbourhoods. It's now more than six months since *The Daily Mail* campaigned on this and we have heard next to nothing from government – we are apparently relying on supermarkets to do all the work. While Marks and Spencer expects customers to bring their own bags or pay, many shops have done nothing. This year Tesco – for example – has installed many new check outs where the customer scans their own purchases and has no choice but to use a plastic bag to weigh them. Labour should be publicly attacking these stores rather than acting as if they hold all the answers.

In a downturn especially, we need to reveal more clearly how money

is spent. We should publish what's happened to traffic movements since the Congestion Charge. We should publish accident rate reductions near speed cameras. The more sophisticated branding of Sure Start and of the NHS – on everything from hospitals to motorcycle paramedics – have shown that unobtrusive logos can give citizens a much better idea of where

their money is going. We could take this further – museums and art galleries should have posters at the entrances saying 'Free entry thanks to the British taxpayer!'

In short, taxation without transparency is always going to cause resentment. Taxation with transparency connects taxpayers with the services they pay for and benefits us all.



Sketch for Essex Road, by Banksy. Stephan Rousseau/PA Wire.

**NIACE**, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, is currently sponsoring the independent Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (IFLL). A key part of the Inquiry's work concerns the role adult learning plays in fostering active and informed citizens.

To that end, NIACE is sponsoring an invitation-only Fabian Society Roundtable Meeting at the Labour Party Conference

### **Teaching Citizenship: Should it be learned as well as earned?**

Speakers include:

Michael Wills MP, Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice

Dawn Butler MP, Chair of the All-Party Youth Affairs Group

Bob Fryer, Chief Learning Advisor, Department of Health, and Commissioner for IFLL

Chaired by Sadiq Khan MP, member of the Fabian Society Executive Committee

1.00 p.m.–2.00 p.m. on Monday 22 September 2008 at Manchester Town Hall.

*This event is invitation only*

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NIACE is also holding an open joint Fringe event with the Industry Forum

### **Rising to the Skills Challenge**

Speakers include:

David Lammy MP, Minister for Skills,

Tom Schuller, Director of the Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning,

David Thomson, Chartered Institute of Insurers

12.45 p.m.–1.45 p.m. on Tuesday 23 September 2008 at

The Palace Hotel, Oxford Rd, Manchester, M60 7HA.

Refreshments provided

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The Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning welcomes comment and advice on learning, citizenship, identity and belonging; and on learning, prosperity, employment and work.

More details available at: [www.lifelonglearning.org.uk](http://www.lifelonglearning.org.uk)

NIACE is the leading non-governmental organisation for adult learning in the UK.

Our agenda is straightforward. We want:

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More information at: [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

# How to connect

Labour must be braver in asking how best to use the time and motivations of all members and supporters if it is serious about party renewal says **Stella Creasy**



Stella Creasy  
is Labour's Candidate for Walthamstow  
at the next election.



## *Fairness doesn't happen by chance*

The problem with socialism, according to Oscar Wilde, was that it takes too many evenings. For too many, even today, such a view is not satirical, but descriptive. If we are to avoid stagnating as a political movement we should focus on connections, not committees, as the way to support our people, our policymaking – and our political fortunes.

Making party renewal the preserve of internal hierarchies alone implies that the way we, as members, act isn't important to encouraging participation in our movement. Too often bad volunteer management goes unchecked at a local level. People with families, jobs and their own opinions join us to find others who want to change the world. They can end up with bureaucratic obligations, endless leaflet rounds and scant gratitude.

We can learn from the success others have had in creating and keeping political activists. Whether these are community campaigns or large NGOs like Oxfam and Greenpeace, those that are growing in number do so because they concentrate

on empowering individual supporters rather than bickering over positions and tradition. Across Britain there are faith groups, charities, community organisations and volunteers whose everyday efforts help tackle poverty and inequality. Behaving as though politics and such social activism are mutually exclusive misrepresents the roots of our Party – and the work many members do outside their GC. Our structures are parallel to – rather than part of – these activities. So people who should be part of our movement are expected to find energy for us as well as – or instead of – their community. Consequently, where we could collaborate on common agendas and actions, we can end up competing – to the detriment of our Party, our politics and ultimately the people whom we profess to serve.

Valuing the limited time anyone has to give to social change means recognising their reasons for participating – either as members or supporters. Most do so not to service

party infrastructures but to champion ideals. GCs matter as forums for co-ordination, but ensuring we are a vehicle for those ideals means shifting from debating whether meetings can be open to all members and start discussing how to work with others to act on poverty.

The Obama campaign shows peer-to-peer advocacy can help build networks of party activists and liberal supporters for common cause. The Democrats are using a mix of new technologies and old-fashioned footwork to bring together coalitions for change state-by-state and issue-by-issue. Typing a zip code into their website shows the smorgasbord of activities organised by officials, members – and ordinary supporters.

In Walthamstow we have been trying to learn from this philosophy with some success. It has led us to fight together with churches and mosques against the BNP and work alongside the Toy Library and Sure Start to run a consultation on services for families.





Young Obama supporters in Lima, Ohio. AP Photo/Alex Brandon.

Political activism within the community is not about PR exercises, but directly taking Labour's case to those who share our concern for social mobility if not our membership cards. The Sure Start event

The Obama campaign shows peer-to-peer advocacy can help build networks of party activists and liberal supporters for common cause.

mixed a James Purnell visit with cake and face painting – and attracted over 200 parents. The discussions on welfare were as challenging as anything we ever achieved at member-only events and being part of local networks made the afternoon easier to organise as word of mouth spread awareness and encouraged attendance. Parents and community groups deliberated with the local party in a way neither before experienced – but that many wish to do so again.

We are also using modern technology. But low-tech. And cheap. Our Working

for Walthamstow e-newsletter goes to nearly 1,500 residents and subscriptions are rising. It is not the technology that makes it popular. It is the content that connects us with our community. Rather

than a one-way communiqué about Labour, the newsletter is open to all to advertise issues of progressive interest to our neighbours. Topics as diverse as GP extended opening hours, saving Walthamstow Dog Track, school fairs, and jazz evenings reflect our shared role in the life of E17.

And we're attempting to build connections between individuals as well as on issues. We don't ask everyone to do everything or to act alone. Instead we mentor activists in the community and in the Party, asking them to work together to find ways of helping the

other play a role in our locality. Doing this has revealed that not everything that helps someone participate is rocket science. Solidarity sometimes means a lift to an event, making sure there are refreshments there, or they happen at child-friendly times.

Feedback from those involved shows they appreciate our activities are becoming less of a chore and more about the causes that made them Labour in the first place. And working within and with the wider community is winning us new partners and insights for our policymaking and our Party. That does not mean we don't argue with residents, or each other, or have somehow conquered Britain's culture of political cynicism. But the evidence from America shows decline in political activism is not inevitable. And our experience in Walthamstow suggests if we are willing to challenge ourselves and the inherited wisdom that egalitarianism rests on quorate meetings alone, party renewal can still be tangible – and worthwhile.



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# Bloc party

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Nobody doubts that Labour needs a broad coalition in order to win. But this means realising that we need a new language that understands the concerns of core voters says **Jon Trickett MP**.



Jon Trickett  
is MP for Hemsworth



*Fairness doesn't happen by chance*

New Labour's election in 1997 brought together a wide-ranging coalition – what Gramsci might have called an historic bloc – winning majorities across almost every social group and class. This was a tremendous achievement. And our parliamentary majorities in the subsequent two general elections rested on the same historic bloc.

If you look beyond the headline number of parliamentary seats gained, however, it is clear that these later victories were based on a bloc which had begun to atrophy. Indeed, Labour's 2005 election victory was achieved with four million fewer votes than in 1997.

Labour was able to win because under successive leaders the Tories had a 'core vote' strategy which meant that they were incapable of building their own election-winning bloc. David

Cameron, however, now appears to have understood this and is attempting to reach beyond the old, intolerant, right-wing Tory electoral base.

So now the Government faces a battle on two fronts: the diminution of the New Labour historic bloc together with a more sophisticated Tory strategy. How should Labour react to the most serious threat that it has faced since 1997? The preoccupation with personalities needs to be put to one side; we must focus on the construction of a bloc of social groups capable of winning in 2010.

Our policies need to be carefully modulated to cater for the needs of many different groups. But I believe that we particularly need to speak more directly to working class voters – specifically unskilled manual workers – so that our policies on housing, on education and

the world of work all resonate better with them. Labour needs to rebuild itself from the grass roots up, especially on the big estates and in communities where we are barely present any more. Indeed in the most marginal constituencies these groups will be critical for us to win over.

It's clear that the answer is not to go for a 'core vote' strategy alone. We know this from our own history in the 1980's and we know it too from the failure of the Tory strategy before Cameron. It has been argued that Labour's focus on what are called 'swing voters' in the southern marginal constituencies has skewed our politics and the government's policies. We must recognise that Labour cannot win without these voters.

We know lots about who these swing voters are, what their views are and how they react to particular

initiatives. In particular, Labour has put huge effort into studying the C1 and C2 socio-economic groups. These are usually defined as lower middle class – supervisory or clerical, junior managerial or professional – and skilled manual workers. These groups had swung behind Thatcher in 1979 and subsequently voted for Blair in 1997. This is why, for example, new Labour has made much of the ‘politics of aspiration’ – a narrative that was successfully directed at swing voters in the marginals. We are right to be trying to hold their loyalty in the face of the social and economic changes we are now facing.

However, we have focused less on the social groups D and E. These people include semiskilled and unskilled manual workers as well as those at the lowest levels of subsistence such as state pensioners, widows and casual workers. They have normally voted Labour overwhelmingly.

Reflecting on all this it is possible to discern several points underpinning the assumptions made by some within the new Labour leadership. Firstly, little work was carried out for much of the first phase of new Labour, in terms of detailed analysis with the D’s and E’s. Frankly we assumed we could rely on

them to vote Labour. But underlying this, and maybe more disturbingly, it has been assumed that they tend to follow trends set amongst the C1 and C2 social groups and, that the D and E groups are in long term historical decline and have a low propensity to vote at all.

All of this is a mistake. We need an historic bloc which both mobilises swing voters and simultaneously retains the loyalty of core voters. We urgently need to work with the D and E groups as much as with the C1 and C2’s.

There is a very political urgency to this. Every constituency has a large number of voters within the ‘core vote’ categories. In the table below it is possible to see that the D and E groups easily outnumber the C2’s even in the ten most marginal seats in the 2005 UK general election. It is quite evident that even tiny percentage movements among the core vote is capable of winning or losing seats for Labour.

This table reveals two facts. First that a ‘core vote’ strategy based principally on groups D and E could not win us these super-marginal seats and equally that a coalition which ignored these same groups could not lead to a parliamentary majority.

Even the briefest of encounters with recent opinion polling, as well as the voting in by-elections and council elections, demonstrates that Labour needs to work hard at recovering its support amongst the poorest.

This can be done before the next election. The clearest evidence is what happened in the period immediately after the departure of Tony Blair. In the early months of the new Prime Minister, support for Labour rallied across all social groups, according to Populus polling. But the extent of this early bounce amongst classes D and E was remarkable: these groups showed an increase that was four times greater than the average increase amongst all other social groups. Our traditional voters have a strong desire to ‘come home’ to Labour.

There is amazingly little published work analysing the political views and attitudes amongst this group. It is remarkable that there is no substantial body of work available in connection with the values, opinions, hopes and fears of the poorest in our country. This lacuna should be remedied immediately.

But it is clear anecdotally, and from looking at what evidence does exist, that there is a danger of a cultural gap opening up between the Government

Table: D’s and E’s in the super-marginals

CONSTITUENCY	WINNER	SECOND	MAJORITY	TOTAL VOTE	C2	D	E
Crawley	Lab	C	37	77,918	12,077	14,009	11,051
Croydon Central	Con	L	75	88,250	11,173	11,777	12,177
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Lab	C	79	69,999	13,515	13,433	10,975
Harlow	Lab	C	97	69,796	11,679	13,151	11,702
Romsey	LD	C	125	70,561	8,497	7,856	8,678
Clywd West	Con	L	133	54,406	8,632	9,102	9,863
Battersea	Lab	C	163	73,523	4,997	7,897	8,713
Medway	Lab	C	213	68,676	12,774	12,652	9,836
Ceredigion	LD	PC	219	59,664	10,760	9,666	9,811
Gillingham	Lab	C	254	75,441	13,846	13,095	9,537

Note: Socio-economic classifications are approximations. The latest data available is from the 2001 census and boundary changes will change some figures. The figures for totals shows the electorate in 2005.



and the poorest in our country. In the absence of detailed analysis, it is possible to arrive at only provisional conclusions as to how the Government and the Labour Party can address this gap. Nonetheless a number of recommendations can be made.

Firstly, the Labour Party needs to recognise that this gap opening up between the Government and our core supporters is partly a function of the changing composition of MPs of the Cabinet and of the wider Party. The number of leading politicians who come from poorer backgrounds and who reach the highest offices of state is at a post-war low. There are now fewer than 40 MPs who have worked in manual occupations and that number is set to decline drastically in the next parliament. I would argue that selecting candidates ought not to be reduced to a process of social engineering, but nevertheless it is odd that the public voices and faces of the Party so little resemble a substantial part of our electoral base. The Party needs to take the class profiles of new MPs as seriously as we have taken our gender and racial make up.

We can avoid an identity politics of 'competitive grievances' by deputy leader Harriet Harman heading a commission to explore how financial assistance, training and support could be offered to potential candidates from all under-represented groups - on grounds of gender, race and class. The trade unions, who created Labour to pioneer working representation in parliament, should have a crucial role but need to ensure they again become a route for new working-class political talent and not just white-collar union officials.

Secondly, the Government needs to get its narrative right. For starters, we need to reflect with great care on the nature of 'aspiration'. This has been one of the key organising concepts for new Labour. It is evident that the nature of aspiration differs between social groups and their expectations of life. Aspiration for many in our country means being persuaded that you should defer immediate gratification for longer-term goals. This means saving for a pension, buying an expensive house or spending time and effort securing education for yourself

and your children. But there is a huge group of people for whom life is much more marginal and for whom there is a collision between 'aspiration' on the one hand and financial necessity on the other and for whom New Labour talk of aspiration inevitably has less significance.

Sometimes we have got this very wrong. One of the defining statements

*But it is clear ... that there is a danger of a cultural gap opening up between the Government and the poorest in our country.*

of new Labour housing policy came from Tony Blair's selection co-ordinator, Alan Milburn in 2004. Arguing that the way to lift the poorest is not simply to focus on low incomes but enhance their ownership of wealth, Milburn said that the poor should own their own houses. Incredibly, in the light of what we know about sub-prime mortgages, he said "I hope we can encourage mortgage-lenders to learn the lessons from the USA where more flexible forms of borrowing have helped millions more from low and moderate income families onto the housing ladder."

The problem with this policy, as we now know, is that if people have insufficient income to service their mortgage when interest rates rise then they will finish up in serious trouble. Equally, an economy which allows its finance sector to increase the debt of the poorest without enhancing their income will eventually descend into difficulty. Acting as if 'aspiration' is the answer for everyone solved nothing.

Thirdly, we must show these groups what they have got from a Labour Government. Labour's anti-poverty policy has attempted both to increase welfare payments for those who are not in work or are unable to work (Group E, welfare and benefits dependent) and at the same time to structure the system so as to reduce dependency and to mobilise people

back into work. There has been a noticeable reluctance to speak publicly about the extent to which welfare payments have gone up - maybe out of fear that some taxpayers will revolt at the idea of their money being used to aid the poor.

This has meant that those who have been helped the most by the Government and who ought to be most predisposed to support the Labour Party often have little idea that the benefits and services they receive come from the political actions of Labour politicians. We need much more sophisticated messaging on the doorstep, but this will only work if it is not contradicted at a national level - these groups do not respond well to politicians seeking to vilify welfare dependency.

Finally, we need to offer better routes to more secure jobs for unskilled manual workers. This group has been told that technological change in a global economy means they face the bleakest possible future. According to the Leitch report there are currently over 3.2 million such jobs in the UK. Within 12 years there will only be 600,000. These people are being offered a declining number of insecure and poor quality jobs. Labour's response has been to offer substantial investment in education and training, but many such people did not do well at school and have no desire to go to college for training. Bearing in mind that these are groups who have traditionally had a high propensity to vote Labour, we need to find better employment solutions and support for these groups.

The problems facing core elements of the 1997 new Labour historic bloc have transformed, and in some ways intensified, as a result of economic and social changes which have taken place over the last 12 years. Many people in groups D and E no longer feel that we are speaking to them or for them.

We saw the way the level of support for Labour amongst the D's and E's dramatically recovered a year ago with Gordon Brown's promise of change. What will no longer work is a recycling of New Labour's 1997 policies.

There is much work to do.

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Chancellor Alistair Darling in Westminster after giving his statement to the Commons during the Northern Rock crisis/PA



# The protective state

When a third of us have savings that would last us just 11 days or less, why are policy makers surprised that people don't feel more resilient in the credit crunch? **William Higham** argues that a reinvented welfare state could provide that security to us all.

The credit crunch first loomed out of the business pages into daily life in those now iconic queues outside Northern Rock branches. We saw how the downturn sundered the national interest as seen by policy-makers, and individuals' own judgement of their own best interests. At the time, commentators railed: why were these people feeding the panic and escalating the situation – even paying penalties to release their cash early, when their savings were guaranteed?

But the perception of the economic outlook from Britain's households is not simply a sample of the national view. Households across Britain are going into this downturn very exposed, frightened and angry. The change in economic circumstances (and even the prospect of the change) has revealed an atomised nation of households who do not seem to have the comfort of economic resilience, or trust in the mechanisms to help them. Household economic risk is now an issue that a political party must address to be taken seriously.

The political riddle of this downturn is why the opinion polls have been so far ahead of the economic indicators. The Government's unpopularity arrived pretty much wholesale, in April. It was not gradually fed by successive quarters of rising unemployment and slower growth; it immediately stampeded at the prospect of a downturn, at a time when there could have been only a limited immediate effect on much of the population. People didn't just lose confidence because they had less money that month. They lost confidence because they were already feeling in a precarious position – over-extended and under-supported.

This understanding must inform any economic rescue package. Parcels of cash bundled out around the nation would not hurt, but they will not touch the root causes of the sudden cocktail of fear and anger that now dominates politics. Any package should be based on an analysis of how things have changed for household finances over the last decades: it should express a clear settlement for the future, designed to increase resilience as well as to get people through the winter.

So what is going on? A flurry of recent figures paints the picture. In July, the Yorkshire Building Society released a poll saying that 36 per cent of people have less than £500 in savings, meaning that they could only survive for 11 days before running out of money. Also in July, Ernst and Young's discretionary income survey found that an average family now has less than 20 per cent of its gross income left after bills and tax, against 28 per cent in 2003. In June the National Statistics' National Accounts revealed that UK families now owe 173 per cent of their incomes in debts. This is a record, the highest in the G7 and higher than the 129 per cent in 2003. In August, Aon Consulting released research suggesting that only 17 per cent of final-salary pension schemes were open to new applicants, down from 28 per cent in 2007 and half in 2003.

So it's no surprise that, according to the Yorkshire Building Society survey: 'one in five people had 'no idea' how they would cope if they were suddenly unable to work'. In an article for *The Spectator* in April, George Bridges (a former Cameron aide), called on credit agency sources to estimate that 'sub-prime status' now extended to "5.1 million households". A typical such household would be working, but perhaps with a history of difficulty in keeping up payments and little provision against worsening circumstances. On the other end of the scale, but seemingly on the same spectrum, the *Telegraph* has spent much of the year talking about the 'coping classes'. As Judith Woods put it in an article in January, which tacked in and out of self-parody: "Yes, a dual-income middle-class family can easily earn £88,000 a year, and our houses are routinely worth £390,000, but we shop at Matalan, discreetly buy our prosciutto in Lidl and, at the end of a month, our bank accounts echo so empty that an unexpected car repair or a school trip to Belgium can plunge us into Chekhovian despair."

Household squeeze has been running as an issue in the US for a while. In 2004, Peter Gosselin of the *LA Times* wrote a brilliant series of articles under the question: 'if America is so much richer, why are its families so much less secure?' It found the answer in the massive shift of risk from the state and the employer to the individual and the volatility of income in a fluid employment market. It found that people in the middle of the economic spectrum, who were earning then \$50,000, saw up to \$13,500 in fluctuation from year to year, up from \$6,500 in the 1970s. The poorest could expect up to 50 per cent fluctuation. Worse, income fluctuations of over 50 per cent for all families were strongly and increasingly linked to disability, illness, bereavement or the birth of a child. The business of living had become a risky one. Similarly, the DWP Low Income Dynamics series found that, while 60 per cent of families ended the period from 1991 to 2005 in the same or adjacent income bracket, only 5 per cent stayed put for each of those years, and much of that was accounted for by the very wealthy.

If households are feeling more flux and greater risk, what can the state do to provide greater resilience? Can the welfare system offer any significant smoothing of the risks for people who find themselves suddenly jobless, or with a radically reduced income?

Welfare is rarely discussed in politics as anything other than a drain on the state, and a safety net. But it could be reinvented as relevant across the whole population – this is,

after all, an age when everyone can expect more employment and income shocks.

One way would be to offer security between jobs. It is clearly not possible for the welfare system to pick up people's salaries indefinitely when their employers evaporates overnight, but could it fill the gaps temporarily for people who don't get a decent redundancy package. The Pensions Protection Fund protects against pension scheme insolvency. What is out there for working people who get financially derailed without warning? The average payout of Job Seeker's Allowance for people who had contributed their earnings through NI and had dependants was £84 in 2005. That will not offer much reassurance to those who are just coping and fearing for the future. It harks back to a time when your salary was more like a stipend for spending than the multi-tasking engine it is now, maybe simultaneously paying the mortgage, university costs for children, childcare, the costs of elderly parents, the cost of career-long training and retraining, debt repayment and pension contributions. Just one or two months of these costs, and the penalties for failing to meet them could break many families.

We can argue over the details, but these solutions must spring from a simple, shared statement of the acceptable level of risk for working households. The NHS may be administered by the government, but it is essentially a moral settlement born out of the nation saying that illness and injury should be treated without reference to a person's current finances. What is our position on the level of risk households should bear in

a downturn or financial shock? What is the duty we owe to each other then? Perhaps it is simply this: that no one should find their circumstances radically changed without the time to make arrangements and seek alternatives. Not a welfare state in the old sense, but an insuring state that provides a smoother transition between income levels. That would reduce people's fear in juggling commitments and living from month to month, days away from derailing.

Any plan would almost certainly go places that other parties would fear to tread: smart regulation of consumer-facing financial products that actually builds confidence; a national insurance scheme that provides a back-up redundancy package; a greater horizon on rising utility costs where the company press release is replaced by a detailed and disseminated advance programme; a rebirth of co-operative, mutual and benevolent schemes that allow people to pool risk; and international action to stop predatory corporate and individual tax competition, so that the tax burden doesn't fall ever heavier on the middle class payroll (a sitting duck for the revenue).

The key to it all is providing resilience. Just as fear of crime is an evil in itself which keeps people at home after dark, so fear of economic change, in an era of constant flux, inhibits and terrifies people. The counterpart to the demand we are making of people to be flexible and accept risk in an age of globalisation must be greater solidarity in enduring the pain of transitions. An economic rescue package should not just distribute money, but peace of mind and shared security.

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# Comeback kids

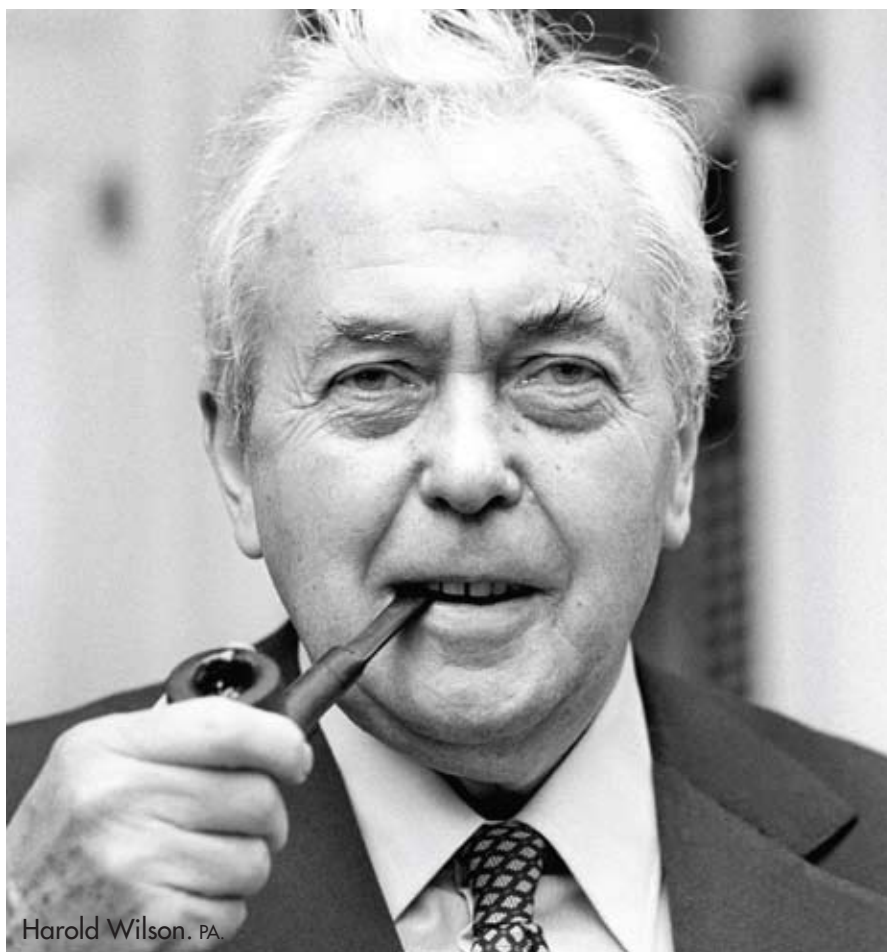
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As Labour has found to its cost in the polls, a lot can change in a year of British politics. But, as **Laurie Penny** shows, the Party can look to plenty of dramatic – and sometimes bloody – political resurrections in the history books.

## Harold Wilson

Wilson's story showed how quickly politicians' fortunes can rise and fall and rise again. In 1947, Harold Wilson became the youngest member of the cabinet in the 20th century, but his sudden and prodigious power was not to last. In fact, Wilson spent the Labour opposition years of the 1950s and 1960 in relative political purdah, fully trusted by neither the right nor the left of his own party. Despite his earlier support for Aneurin Bevan, he backed the right-of-centre Hugh Gaitskell for party leadership in 1955. To make matters worse, in a rapid aboutface, he then challenged Gaitskell himself after the latter's attempts to ditch Clause Four.

Wilson was far from the favourite candidate for leader of the opposition after Gaitskell's death, but managed to scrape a victory by a slim margin in the second ballot. And that might have been that, were it not for the Profumo Affair. The scandal savaged the Macmillan government in 1963. Wilson seized the chance to make himself known as a new breed of Labour politician: a technocrat and a political visionary. He won a narrow victory in the hasty general election of 1964, which was followed by a much larger majority for the now-popular incumbent Prime Minister Wilson in 1966. He led the country through the rest of the swinging sixties, until being briefly routed by Heath's Tory government in 1970. The economic stagnation of the late sixties and early seventies cast the same shadow over the Heath government as it had over the last years of Wilson's cabinet. Heath lasted only one term, and Wilson was welcomed back yet again by a country still harbouring egalitarian hopes for its future.



Harold Wilson. PA.

## Richard Nixon

As the television age roared into overdrive, Vice-President Richard Nixon was the wrong man at the wrong time. He failed abysmally to adapt to a new age of media-driven politics, appearing on televised debates looking ill and drawn, hunching and sweating profusely from his upper lip. With a stagnant economy and a tired decade-old administration struggling to deliver change, Nixon struggled in the US presidential elections of 1960 against charismatic young blood John F Kennedy. Following his

inevitable defeat, Nixon and his family returned to California where, in 1962, he was persuaded to launch a disastrous campaign for governorship of the state. On his defeat it was widely accepted that Nixon's career was over. He blamed the media for once again favouring his opponent, saying 'you won't have Nixon to kick around anymore because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference.'

After the California fiasco, Nixon spent several years in the wilderness, writing articles and political treatises. In

1968, however, he surprised his critics by running for President one more time, this time on a platform of conservatism, appealing to a 'Silent Majority' of US citizens who disliked the counterculture movements of the 1960s. Having dealt with his on-set perspiration problems and promising to end the unpopular war in Vietnam, Nixon was finally elected 37th president of the United States by nearly 500,000 popular votes.

### William Cecil Lord Burghley

You might remember Cecil from Richard Attenborough's portrayal in the 1998 film *Elizabeth*, which showed him as a great cautious reformer, unswayed by religious or personal passions. In fact his life was one of great reversals in fortune. Cecil was Secretary of State under the Protestant boy-king Edward VI, but was stripped of his positions and titles and left fighting for his life when the mercilessly Catholic Mary Tudor acceded to the throne. All seemed lost. But in a dramatic twist, his political support for Elizabeth I led to his re-institution as Secretary of State in 1558, just five years later, and his later creation as Lord Burghley. Economically cautious and famously incorruptible, his tireless devotion to royal succession as a strategy for stabilising the realm was one of the most important political contributions to the British Renaissance. And his legacy lives on – Cecil has gone down in history as one of the great British reformers. He was succeeded by his son Robert, another born stabiliser, who successfully kept the bloodthirsty Northumberlands out of power on Elizabeth's death.

### Mary Wollstonecraft

One of the greatest thinkers of her generation, Mary Wollstonecraft – activist, scholar, author of political treatises and *enfant terrible* – was reviled before and after her untimely death for daring to believe that women were rational human beings and for bearing a child out of wedlock. Her devoted widower, Charles Godwin, wrote a memoir of her life which remains one of the most popular political biographies, and its reception marred Wollstonecraft's reputation for centuries.

However, all that was to change as the nascent suffragette movement

reclaimed Wollstonecraft's life and thought for its own. Much maligned in her own generation, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' became one of the key textbooks of the women's liberation movement. Her work is now published in every major world language and admired by scholars across the world, and students, feminists and young women everywhere turn to Mary Wollstonecraft for inspiration. Despite the innovations of Wollstonecraft's political feminism, however, the dubious triumph of posthumous admiration is one which many great political women still have to settle for.

### Charles II

On a cold January day in 1649, the English parliamentarians put on a pageant for their new citizens, the climax of which was the killing of a King. The show turned British politics around to face the populace, and with a single stroke of the executioner's axe it seemed to

many that the English monarchy was ended forever. After the execution of his father, the young Charles Stuart was declared King of Scots and crowned by the Scottish parliament at Scone in 1651. Backed by a Scots army, Charles suffered a humiliating defeat by parliamentary forces at the Battle of Worcester and fled to France, where he remained in exile for the next nine years during the English Interregnum. When Oliver Cromwell died, passing the mantle of Lord Protector to his son, Charles' hopes of regaining the throne seemed as slim as ever. However, his fortunes were to change dramatically – the protectorate did not last long under the vacillating Richard Cromwell, and parliament, led by General George Monck, invited Charles to return to his homeland and claim its thrones. He was crowned King of England and Ireland in April 1661, hailing a period of far greater co-operation between the monarchy and parliament.



Charles II



## Peter Mandelson

Mandelson has been New Labour's ultimate comeback kid. A key architect of the party's golden years, he has been forced to resign from government on two separate occasions following corruption charges. Undeterred by rampant press hatred that has edged towards homophobia, Mandelson returned to power again in the coveted role of European Commissioner for Trade, a post he has held for five years.

Mandelson's gift for organising election campaigns and co-ordinating political public relations has carried him through a career of pandemic press ridicule and consequent public mistrust. His tireless enthusiasm for Europe, dedication to the smooth running of the New Labour machine and fundamental understanding of the new politics of personality have brought him back to positions of influence long after less flexible political beasts would have slunk into permanent hibernation.



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Image: Adrian Teal

# The truth about the Tories and tax

Fabian Research Director **Tim Horton** explains that David Cameron and George Osborne have left themselves more wiggle room to slash the state than even Margaret Thatcher needed – and shows just why Labour has found it so hard to expose them.

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If there's a glimmer of hope amidst the gloom this autumn, it's this: at least Labour are in trouble for failing to do Labour things. Anger over the 10p rate reflected strong public instincts about fairness in taxation. Voters don't want markets to determine the fate of post office branches. And they want government to protect them when economic forces push the cost of living up.

It's certainly been galling to see Labour gazumped by the Tories on issues like this. To see the party that advocates flat taxes campaigning on tax fairness for the poor, and the party that privatised electricity arguing the state should 'share people's pain' on energy prices.

But you've got to hand it to Tory strategists. They're spot on in identifying where the public are: on the Labour side of the argument about the role of the state. The main issues of public concern are nearly always those which require government to step up to the plate and act, not to withdraw.

So Labour's belief in collective solutions should provide a large electoral edge over a Tory party which remains fundamentally anti-state.

But the words Labour would have to utter to claim this prize still come too difficult for a party that remains in the shadow of the 1992 election defeat. When it came to Northern Rock, the media and opposition obsessed over whether Labour would use the n-word. But why be so worried when polls have shown even a majority of Tory voters want to re-nationalise the railways? While the Tories were touting the prospect of unregulated financial products, it turned out the public wanted more regulatory protection. Yet an important opportunity was missed to make an argument for the protective role of government – and to communicate to voters the pathological inability of a minimal-state Conservative party to discharge it.

### Thatcher's children

The persistence of a strong public belief in the legitimate role of the state as guarantor, distributor and protector is a standing testament to Thatcher's failure to change the attitudes of the British public on the most fundamental of political issues – or even those of her own party. In 1994, the academics Paul Whiteley and Patrick Seyd surveyed Conservative Party members and found huge majorities in favour of spending more on tackling poverty (81%) and the NHS (80%). The exception was the youngest section of the party, the generation drawn to the Conservatism by Thatcher, who were much more anti-tax and pro-privatisation.

It is this generation – the young advisers and wonks of the 1990's – that now finds itself in charge of the Conservative Party. And from time-limiting benefits to proposing ever deeper cuts in inheritance tax, they are as far to the right as their predecessors ever were.

In many ways, what hasn't changed about the Tories is of more significance than what has. David Cameron is now offering the same marriage tax break that John Major did in 1997 and William Hague did in 2001. The next Tory manifesto will propose Michael Howard's policy of a crude cap on immigration. The whole point of 'brand decontamination' is that the Tories thought they had the

right policies all along, but simply needed to fix the party image that was driving voters away.

But the real article of faith for this Tory generation is shrinking the size of the state – the share of national income taken in public expenditure. The Tories' latest formula is that they will "share the proceeds of growth" between public spending and tax cuts so that public spending is reduced as a share of national income.

We've heard this before too. It was Thatcher's radical 1987 manifesto that declared "*our aim is to ensure that public expenditure takes a steadily smaller share of our national income*". And, hang on, what's this in the 1992 Tory manifesto? "*We believe that government should not gobble up all the proceeds of growth...Our policy is therefore to reduce the share of national income taken by the public sector*". On tax and spending, nothing's changed.

### What does it all mean?

'Sharing the proceeds of growth' could mean many things. Households primarily share in growth not through government transfers and tax cuts, but directly from sources like earnings growth. In fact, the income of the typical household has grown slightly faster under Blair and Brown (1.9% annually above inflation) than under Thatcher and Major (1.6%).

But for the Tories, it means two things in particular. First, it means cutting tax. This betrays a disturbingly libertarian view of taxation and public spending – the idea that tax cuts are 'for you', whilst public services somehow aren't. A party which doesn't think that spending revenue on public services is sharing it with people is probably a party that shouldn't be allowed to get its hands on public services.

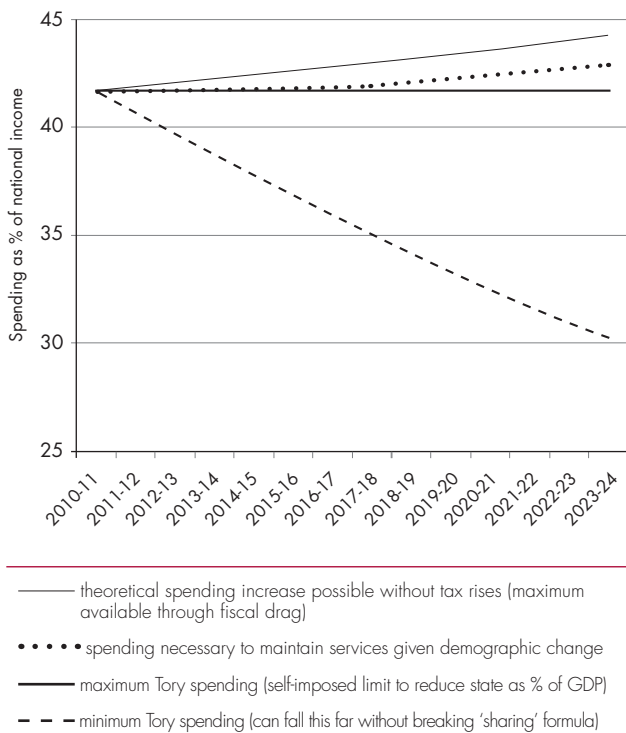
Second, for the Tories, it means shrinking public spending as a proportion of national income. Again, this is a highly selective interpretation, to say the least. In a progressive tax system, as the economy grows, tax revenues will increase naturally as a proportion of national income because people move into higher tax brackets as their incomes increase. This 'fiscal drag' yields about 0.2% of national income extra per year to the Exchequer. If 'sharing' means transferring some of this to the taxpayer, then it's perfectly possible to do it without shrinking the state.

So 'sharing the proceeds of growth' is perfectly compatible with holding public spending constant as a proportion of GDP, or even increasing it. What is distinctive about Tory policy is not 'sharing the proceeds' at all, but reducing public spending as an end in itself.

Should the public be reassured by the Conservative formula? All that 'sharing the proceeds of growth' commits them to is increasing public spending by at least £1 in real terms each year. Assuming trend economic growth of 2.5%, this would allow them to shrink spending as a share of national income by an average of around one percentage point of GDP each year – say, from 41.7% of GDP in 2010 to 37.7% in 2014 (see Figure 1). Compared to simply maintaining expenditure as a share of national income, this would represent a cut of around £70 billion in public spending by year five of a Conservative government.

The Conservatives will no doubt trumpet above-inflation expenditure increases as proof of their love of public services. But real terms increases aren't necessarily enough to maintain services – not for those services that will need to expand to provide for a growing and ageing population, and certainly not for the salary costs of the workers that provide them. That is why the level of public spending as a proportion of national income matters too.

**Figure 1: Sharing the proceeds of growth?  
WHAT THE TORY FORMULA MEANS**



Calculations assume trend economic growth of 2.5%. Figures show trends averaged over economic cycle.

This mustn't be a hypothetical debate. No-one has to take anyone's word for it. Through the 1980's and 1990's we saw the results of a government continually striving to reduce public spending as a share of GDP: crumbling schools and two-year waits for hospital operations. In the past, Labour has made a mistake in presenting this as the result of Conservative incompetence. In fact, it was a direct result of Conservative policy – the very same one they have today. It wasn't that investment in any service collapsed; it just failed to keep pace with what was required to uphold it. The truth is that a mentality which says tax and public spending are morally suspect will exert a constant, ever-downwards pressure on necessary extra investment in public services.

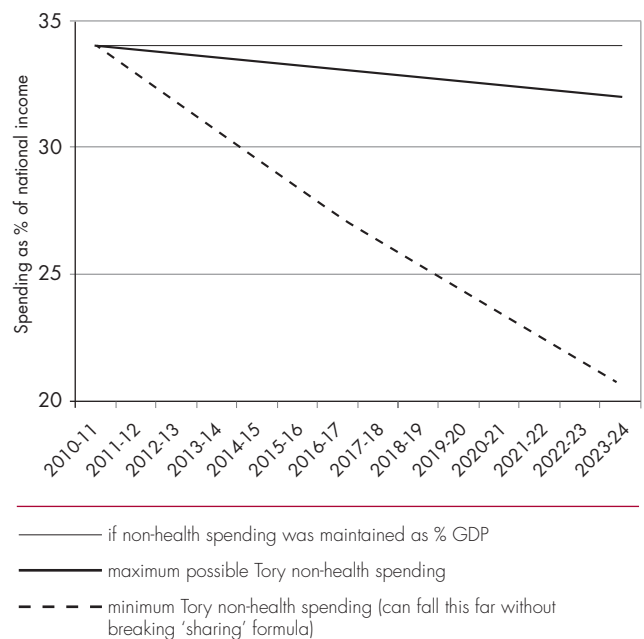
The simple demographic fact is this: over the coming decades, with an ageing society and now increasing numbers of children, unless we want a serious deterioration in service provision we're going to have to *increase* public expenditure as a share of national income. The Treasury estimate that simply

maintaining the status quo in the face of demographic change will require spending on health, long-term care, education and pensions increasing by 3.3% of GDP over the coming twenty years (though this would still leave spending below that of many EU countries today). And more bad news for Conservatives: restricting immigration, which produces a larger economy and a younger population, only makes these totals higher.

The precise magnitude of spending increases will depend on policy decisions. No-one is saying we require an ever-enlarging state. But what we do need to do is make responsible decisions about public expenditure in the light of evidence about Britain's future service needs – something the Tories' libertarian philosophy seems utterly detached from. And the sums involved will be well beyond the realms of efficiency savings. These decisions represent policy choices.

That's why Tory health spokesman Andrew Lansley got into trouble when he promised to increase spending on health by two per cent of GDP by 2023. Lansley only spoke an inconvenient truth (one that every health expert knows). But acknowledging that expenditure as a share of national income was what mattered, and that it had to go up, undermined the whole philosophy of Tory spending plans. No wonder Cameron promptly overruled it.

**Figure 2: The inconvenient truth:  
WHAT LANSLEY'S PLEDGE ON HEALTH  
WOULD MEAN FOR CUTS ELSEWHERE**



Calculations assume trend economic growth of 2.5%. Figures show trends averaged over economic cycle. Figures for non-health spending based on average annual health spending increase to deliver Lansley pledge by 2023-24

What might happen if the Conservatives tried to deliver Lansley's pledge in tandem with their commitment to shrink the state? As Figure 2 shows, even in their highest-spending



scenario, non-health spending still has to undergo some very severe cuts compared to maintaining its share of GDP. As Lansley himself put it, “*there are places where public expenditure will decline as a proportion of GDP or in some cases in absolute terms*”.

So when Cameron tries to sell the message that ‘services cost less with the Conservatives’, it should be clear that he has no alternative: services are going to have to cost less with the Conservatives. Their spending formula simply hasn’t been chosen with the needs of public services in mind; it’s driven by their ideology.

### Labour’s dilemma

It might seem strange to suggest that public spending can provide political ammunition for Labour right now. Don’t tight public finances mean the Government is already reducing spending as a share of national income? Yes. But there’s a world of difference between putting public services on a diet after a feast and wanting to shrink the size of the public sector year after year as a matter of principle. It’s the difference between two opposing philosophies and two contrasting visions for the country: a social democratic one that takes decisions about public spending based on the needs of public services and a libertarian one which sees the reduction of public spending as a moral end in itself.

George Osborne himself drew this distinction recently. “*I wouldn’t just do it for three years after a boom in spending,*” he boasted, critiquing Labour’s own spending reductions; “*I would do it on a more consistent basis*”. Howard Flight was sacked for admitting that in 2005. But it’s still his party’s policy.

Yet, unfortunately for the Right, cutting public expenditure as a share of GDP is not where most of the public are. When ICM last asked voters in February, only a third opted for tax cuts. If challenged effectively, the Tories’ spending formula should be an electoral straightjacket.

But the sad fact is that Labour may well lose this battle by refusing to join it.

How can Labour rise to the challenge? The next spending review won’t be enough. There’s not enough money left in the bank as the government reins spending back in after years of welcome growth. Making the Conservatives sign up to spending plans for two further years won’t be much of a test if those plans are simply reductions they were going to be making anyway. In any case, election analysis of whether Mr Average will be better off after year one of the next government won’t expose ideological differences.

The answer is to raise sights beyond one Parliament and talk about the type of country we want to live in in ten or twenty years time. Labour should set out long-term expenditure frameworks across all the central service areas, similar to the ten-year plans for science (to increase it as a share of GDP) and international development (to raise it to 0.7% of GDP) that were set out in 2004. These plans should be flexible enough to respond to changes in circumstances or revised projections, whilst nevertheless putting on the table the political debates we need – and which go to the heart of the main divide between Left and Right.

Let’s make clear that over the next decade increasing childcare support will be prioritised over tax cuts. Or how about a ‘Wanless-style’ review to look at the resources the police and the security services will need to give us the protection we want in future? Let’s see if the Right will put money where their mouth is on law and order.

Second, Labour will have to speak over the anti-government narrative continually emanating from its uber-Blairite flank. The Conservatives want to harness public dissatisfaction with the ‘agencies’ of the state – politicians, officials and public bodies (who are unpopular) – to drive dissatisfaction with the idea of statutory collective provision itself (which is popular). Part of this is about exploiting confusion between the concept of the state as service deliverer and the state as guarantor (of rights and services funded through taxation). Those on Labour’s right walk straight into the trap when perfectly sensible arguments about public service reform are couched in anti-state rhetoric, irritatingly providing cover for the Tories in their altogether more radical plans to roll back statutory provision.

But Labour’s greatest test is to find the confidence to assert a pro-public message. It would break a New Labour taboo. But the case for confidence is that, on the role of the state, they have the public on their side. And the proof is this. No-one on the Right feels able to sell the true consequence of a smaller state: fewer services. Even the right-wing Taxpayers’ Alliance – an anti-tax campaign – still only feels able to make the case for lower taxes on the basis of ‘government waste’. At least Thatcher was honest about the deal: less ‘public’ means you go private. In her vision, this enhanced freedom.

No leading Tory would dare make this argument today. But is Labour prepared to tell the public why?





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# Tackling poverty with ideas

**Robert Cooper** reviews Mark Leonard's guide to the new politics of China and argues that we might learn something about ourselves



Photo: PA



**Robert Cooper**

is Director General for External and Politico-Military Affairs in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. He writes in a purely personal capacity and the views expressed are his own and not those of the EU.

China's explosive economic growth is matched by an explosion of ideas. This is not the first time we see such things together. The House of Wisdom, for a period the greatest library of translations in the world, was founded in Baghdad in 830 AD marking the start of the Islamic flourishing. When it closed in the 12th century it was a sign that the horizons of the Islamic world were narrowing. Perhaps coincidentally it was one year later that Bologna gave Europe its first university preparing the way for the Italian Renaissance. In Britain and France

in the 17th and 18th centuries, and in Germany in the 19th century there were similar explosions of ideas. In Japan before World War I twice as many books were published as in the United States. Development is an intellectual process more than an economic one. Money does not cure poverty; ideas do.

Mark Leonard's short and readable book is a guide to what is going on behind the Gee Whiz statistics. Economic growth is a surface phenomenon. It happens because of decisions made by governments. Consciously or

unconsciously those decisions reflect a political philosophy and if we want to understand China we have first to understand how people think.

Each of the debates described in *What Does China Think?* is both familiar and different. The economists are divided between the new right and the new left. "Some must get rich first" say the new right, arguing that the Government should get out of the way and let the dynamic forces of entrepreneurship take over. This alliance of convenience between the new rich and the Communist party (though it is the rich who are most in favour of the withering away of the state) was one of the objects of protest in Tiananmen Square twenty years ago. Those who protested may have been locked up but their intellectual successors are finding their voice and becoming the dominant stream of thought. The Party's current goal of a 'harmonious society' reflects the concerns of the new left about the social costs of inequality. It sounds like the debate between the Thatcherite right and new Labour, but with Chinese characteristics. To put the question another way: should the state's priority be protecting private property or public property? The problem for China is that as a developing country it may not yet be very good at either: with tax revenues declining its ability to control provincial governments is notoriously weak.

In the world of politics the question of who has the right to govern is the one forbidden subject. But instead of talk there is a good deal of interesting experiment with local democracy, inner party democracy, and citizen juries. The questions which sometimes trouble many established democracies represent larger threats for China. We wonder about how to deal with Scottish Nationalists: China worries that democracy could lead to nationalist movements in Taiwan, Xingjian or Tibet. We are concerned about radical parties of right or left: they worry about a return to the chaos of the Cultural Revolution.

We who believe that democracy is the best system ought to be more ready to discuss its problems and costs. These may include secession or civil war; many democracies have suffered one or other. You do not have to be an evil self-interested dictator to be concerned at



dangers that a sudden change of political system might bring. Democracy is not easy. We should remember that until the late 18th century the common wisdom was that democracy was possible only in a city-state. That problem was solved by the invention of representative democracy. But even with representative democracy there may be problems of scale. Federalism is one answer, but that brings us back to secession. And do we have answers to the questions of media and money? Difficulties in both areas are likely to become worse in a state on the scale of China. The Party in China is resilient because unlike most authoritarian regimes it listens to the people just as leaders in democracies do. And it needs to: China is a consumer society and political freedom is also a consumer good.

It is not just China that is changing. Once, foreign policy experts would have argued that democracy hampered a country's ability to act decisively and was therefore bad for national power. In today's world, power has to be conceived differently. Recognising this, some in China argue that to have influence a country needs to be attractive; and that a closed authoritarian system will not deliver the respect and influence that China deserves. Meanwhile a subtle debate about the nature of power is going on: can China use international law to restrain the US or should it concentrate on establishing a soft hegemony in Asia (something it seems

to be well on the way to doing)? But the method by which it has done this is the strange one of allowing others to tie it down into multilateral structures – copying, one might say, what Germany has done in Europe. But the ties on China are still loose – matching its power, which is not yet fully grown. To reassure its neighbours a stronger China will need stronger self imposed constraints. The confidence that can be built by military transparency is part of this; but in the end what will count is political transparency. Is there any way to provide this without an open and accountable system? The debate about democracy may one day be between domestic and foreign policy concerns.

Leonard sometimes suggests that there is a Chinese model in the making: 'Yellow River Capitalism', 'Deliberative Dictatorship', 'Comprehensive National Power'. It is natural that the Chinese, proud of their ancient history and their modern achievements, should want to assert that they are inventing something new and unique. Certainly they are; but that is not the same as having a model. What is most impressive in China is its willingness to experiment and change. One of the advantages of a large and diverse country is that it gives you much scope for experimentation. But a part of being modern today is to be connected to the world, able to copy, adapt, and change continuously. The moment we start thinking in terms of fixed models sclerosis sets in.

My personal concern is not that China is developing a new model that will somehow threaten ours. As someone once remarked, "Let a hundred flowers bloom". It is rather that this wonderful intellectual ferment might at some point get out of control. Ideas are not dangerous in themselves but people who believe them unreservedly can be. So long as the debate goes on, so long as there is pluralism and scepticism, we should admire and even join in. We might learn something ourselves.

There may be scholars who could write a more profound book, drawing on a deeper knowledge of China's culture and history, but *What Does China Think?* has the merit of energy and accessibility. And the debates it describes are themselves profound. Instead of lecturing the Chinese on human rights and democracy we should try to find ways into their debates ourselves. It should not be too difficult. If Chinese thinkers are quoting Aristotle and Machiavelli there is clearly an openness to outside ideas. Should we send Bernard Crick in a sealed railway carriage?

What Does  
China Think?

Mark Leonard

中国  
怎么想？

WHAT DOES CHINA THINK? MARK LEONARD

## FABIAN QUIZ

Globalisation, energy, international crime, Weapons of Mass Destruction, nuclear proliferation, small arms proliferation, international drugs trafficking, climate change, water shortage, migration, epidemic disease, the fraying of the nation state: the list of challenges facing our world is growing rapidly, and nobody seems to have much of a grip on what is going on. In *What Next? Surviving The Twenty-First Century*, Chris Patten draws on his experience at the highest levels of national and international politics to analyse what we know in each of these areas. Very little, he says, has turned out as we might have expected twenty years ago, but there is plenty we can still do.

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In 1966, Labour secured another term in office with a Manifesto that led with the following message: "There is no easy road ahead - and only the dishonest would pretend that there is." What was the name of the winning Manifesto?



Please email your answers to [review@fabian-society.org.uk](mailto:review@fabian-society.org.uk) or send a postcard, postmarked no later than the 15th October 2008, to: Fabian Society, Publications, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN



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# When nudge comes to shove

How do our brains affect the political choices we make? **Catherine Fieschi** reviews Thaler and Sunstein's 'Nudge' and Westen's 'The Political Brain' and amongst the fashionable arguments finds some very different analyses.



Catherine Fieschi  
is a visiting scholar at St Antony's College Oxford  
and a Senior Demos Associate.

On a superficial level, these two books share a set of concerns. Both explore how human beings make choices, why we so often make bad ones and how we could improve the likelihood of making good ones. Both capture the *zeitgeist* by questioning the dominance of classical economics and instead harnessing the findings of social and clinical psychology, behavioural economics and neuroscience and applying them to problems of collective and individual choice. We are beginning to understand how human 'hard wiring' creates constraints and opportunities when it comes to shaping behaviour.

The fact that such ideas have gained mainstream currency is heartening – policy-makers are increasingly willing to use new, alternative tools that are inspired by evidence in the so-called 'hard' sciences, such as new knowledge about how the brain works. This is not a no-brainer: on the left, criticism of this sort of work has been needlessly harsh and paranoid. A fear of determinism has led many to bury their heads in the sand rather than question our views of difference, equality and progress. Personally, I am only too thrilled that we have moved beyond this stage. But while

Westen's work raises a cheer, *Nudge* leaves me with a niggle.

Westen's is by far the better read. Despite the author's serious pedigree as a clinical psychologist and political strategist, the writing is highly entertaining. His overarching question, "Why do Democrats consistently lose elections despite the fact that most Americans hold positions that map very closely onto theirs?" is a serious one. His answer is that they lose because they are obsessed with showcasing facts and ideas rather than with using these to appeal to the emotions of voters. This is where the entertainment kicks in: in Westen's near apoplectic frustration with his own side and in the wryly morose obsession with which he describes the American Democrats' slow-motion rhetorical train crash. Some of the best bits are his feverish descriptions of legions of Republicans chortling with disbelief as one Democratic candidate after another takes yet another perfectly helpful tid-bit of accurate information and turns it into the kind of leaden rhetoric that opens the door to devastatingly effective Republican rebuttals. You can almost hear Westen banging his head against the wall in frustration.

There is more than a whiff of the hokey in Westen's prose – *viz* his own script for how Gore should have responded to Bush when called a liar in the first of the Presidential debates in 2001. Westen's imagined rebuttal is part *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*, part good ol' boy rabble-rousing. And it sort of makes you want to cheer – though the repeated use of the phrase 'Where I come from, we call that...' made me think that where *I* come from we call that cheesy. But Westen's conceit is effective and my own unease proves his thesis: we progressives do shy away from this sort of appeal because it makes us uncomfortable, because we fear accusations of manipulation, because we have difficulty accepting that voters might not be as swayed by facts as they are by emotion and that this goes against everything that we have believed in since the eighteenth century. Westen is right: we ignore the role of emotions at our peril.

Westen builds on our new understanding of the various neurological systems that help us sift through information and make decisions (something pioneered by George Marcus in his 2002 book *The Sentimental Citizen*), and draws two key lessons. The first is that Democrats shouldn't worry about offending the 30 per cent of the population that is simply beyond their ideological pale. They should give up now – these people are unmoveable. Instead, they should concentrate, he says, on the 10 to 20 per cent with 'changeable minds'. These people have interests that match closely to the Democrats' principles. But, as Westen points out, only extraordinary circumstances (think war or the Great Depression) lead people to vote according to their interests without compelling appeals. So, the lesson is that in most contexts you need to construct an appeal. Facts don't speak for themselves. Which segues neatly to the second lesson: people, as Westen puts it (and as Carville and Beagal have put it before him), vote with their guts – so craft your appeal accordingly.

Most interesting and comforting in all this, however, is Westen's point (as illustrated by his and others' research) that far from being a bad thing, emotions are actually quite a good guide to reasoning. This is in part what should spare the



author from accusations of élitism (many Democratic critics predictably saw nothing in his book but a 'how to' guide for voter manipulation). In fact, his defence of emotions as inherent to reason results in a healthy respect for voters.

The same can't quite be said for *Nudge*. Whereas in Westen's book the people who come under the most severe criticism are those who refuse to learn to speak to voters or who misunderstand citizens' motivations. In *Nudge*, the overwhelming impression is that of an élitist conspiracy to wrestle our inner Homer Simpsons to the ground. You could argue that there is nothing inherently wrong with élitist conspiracies if they aim for the good of the greater number but *Nudge*, with its combination of simplicity, sleights of policy hands and 'Solutions R Us' appeal, sets off alarm bells.

Much has been made of the authors' claim to reconcile libertarianism and paternalism. Based on a combination of behavioural economics and psychology, Thaler and Sunstein construct an argument that goes something like this: given that our propensity to conform moves us to make some very poor decisions in everyday life, why not harness this propensity and turn it to everyone's advantage by creating a 'choice architecture' that nudges us all in the right direction? In other words, without restricting anyone's freedom of choice (which would go against their libertarianism) we can help people do what is best for them (which is where the paternalism comes in). From helpful signs ('Look right!') and cleverly designed urinals, to energy-use monitors, the authors come up with a host of ways in which we can be 'nudged' into being good, safe, and less stupid. The cornerstone of the argument is indisputable: policies must be designed. Car parks, school curricula, road signs, energy meters and water provision systems – none of these things emerge without planning. In which case why not build the nudge into the design? Why not design for good?

It's a hard argument to resist and it seems so innocuous. One can see why such a 'having your cake and eating it too' kind of argument might appeal to a vast cross-section of policy-makers. And in particular to conservatives looking to overcome the tension between freedom of choice and the greater good of all. All you have to do

is nudge, and – poof! – tension resolved. Questions – as to the sort of rationality operating in Thaler and Sunstein's world, or regarding the nature of a paternalism that seeks to protect the individual *and* the group, or whether the authors really mean 'libertarianism' given the emphasis on collective well-being – abound. But beyond theoretical nit-picking there are some bigger political concerns.

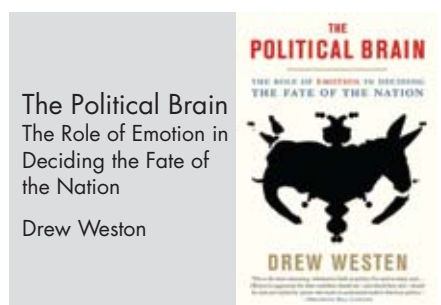
In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville warned that "Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power ... The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. *Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannise, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.*" As progressives, our duty (and perhaps the way to tell us apart from others who appropriate our terms) is to demand transparency from the 'immense and tutelary power', to demand accountability of process even in the face of complexity, and expect this tutelary power, in turn, to be exacting of us and bring out the best in us. To appeal, as Lincoln put it, to 'the better angels of our nature' – not simply to cater permanently to the Homer Simpson in all of us as a way of saving us from ourselves or saving money. You could argue that Thaler and Sunstein pick up where Westen leaves off (Westen: you're going to vote with your guts and be somewhat impermeable to facts unless they come properly wrapped, [cue Thaler and Sunstein], then someone's got to rig the game for your own good). But there is a world of difference in the conception of human nature and of progress that lies beneath each of the arguments. Westen argues in favour of a 'perfectible' and open political élite that learns to persuade (equally perfectible) voters in order to make them aware of where their interests lie. While, Thaler and Sunstein advocate giving up on our constitutive complexity and resulting contradictions by resorting to superficial choice mechanisms to avoid the fall out of humanity.

It's clear that we need to learn the hard lessons of hard wiring, but how policy élites learn them (as an open and

engaged process or as a well-meaning but well-kept secret) makes all the difference. Westen's words resonate hopefully (if seen through the lens of the current American presidential race) or painfully (if seen through the lens of current UK politics). His encouragement to concentrate on 'changeable minds' is one that, possibly because of the very different role and status of political parties in the UK, we seem to have learnt in spades. Some would argue we've learnt this too well. But his haranguing of progressive leaders to put forward their ideas in accessible and persuasive form and to craft an appeal that can trigger the kind of reasoning and support in voters that can only come from their emotional commitment, rings sadly, desperately true and seems to continue to fall on deaf ears.

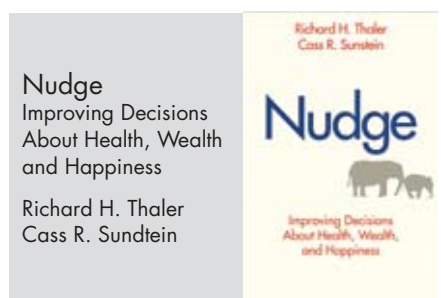
I write as we progressives have just allowed the Conservatives to rubbish Labour's record on fairness AND appropriate the rhetorical territory, and where each passing week throws up its share of disillusionment, thwarted hopes and frustration – a time at which Westen's analysis feels burningly, urgently relevant.

Time for our leaders to take a leaf from the book of Adlai Stevenson who ran as Democratic candidate against Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956: after one of his speeches a woman came up to him and gushed "Every thinking person will be voting for you", to which Stevenson allegedly replied "Madam, that is not enough, I need a majority".



The Political Brain  
The Role of Emotion in  
Deciding the Fate of  
the Nation

Drew Weston



Nudge  
Improving Decisions  
About Health, Wealth  
and Happiness

Richard H. Thaler  
Cass R. Sunstein



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***'An inconvenient truth: can Labour save the environment and win the election?'***

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Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP  
Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP  
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Julia Clark, IPSOS MORI**



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## WE STILL HAVE TIME

But only if we answer some difficult questions this week...

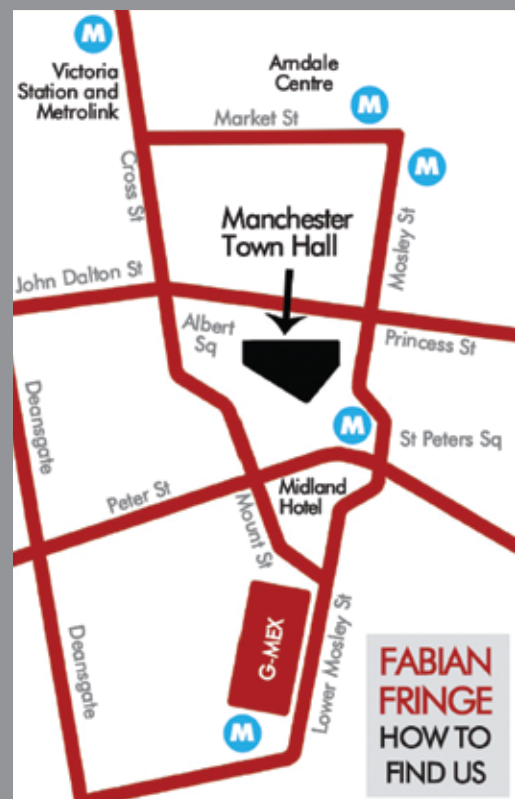
Can Labour fight back with a campaign for a fairer Britain? Do progressives have the confidence to win the public arguments?

If we want the 2010 election to reflect our hopes and not our fears, this week must be a turning point, where we ask the difficult questions and show how our vision can answer them.

23 to 27 September 2008 [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk)

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### HOW TO FIND US

All Fabian Society public Fringe events are in the Conference Hall in Manchester Town Hall unless otherwise indicated

# FABIAN FRINGE MEETINGS 2008

Join us as we begin the big debates about the ideas that can shape the next generation of progressive politics.

## FABIAN QUESTION TIME

### The Election Starts Here

With Ed Balls, Jon Cruddas, Gaby Hinsliff, Fraser Nelson and Zoe Williams.

Sunday 7.30pm **TheObserver**



### Can Middle England care about equality?

Liam Byrne, Polly Toynbee, Martin Narey, Iain Duncan Smith and others

With the tabloids and the Tories talking about a broken Britain and rising concern about child poverty, has the issue of inequality finally caught the eye of the middle classes? All the parties now talk the talk but will they find a way to make fairness a real vote winner?

Saturday 6pm



Webb Memorial Trust

### Can Foreign Policy be a Labour Strength?

David Milliband Fabian Lecture

Each year the Fabians bring you the top speakers on the most challenging questions. This year foreign policy will be hotly debated across the fringe. Join us to put your questions to the Foreign Secretary, David Miliband.

In association with:

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Date and venue to be announced.

For more info on our Bournemouth Fringe events and to join the Fabians go to [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk)



### Lessons From America: Can Hope Win?

Bill Barnard, Peter Kellner, David Lammy, Stryker McGuire and Rushanara Ali

Barack Obama's Presidential campaign has mobilised and inspired people across the US and the world. In the UK, politicians have looked on enviously as his campaign has taken politics to a whole new set of voters. But how would we need to change the way we do politics in Britain if we want to create this same buzz and excitement? Does the success of Obama's optimistic campaign message mean that hope really can win?

Sunday 6pm

**Labour and Blogging:** An informal Fringe gathering Sunday 3.30pm

## Can politicians save the planet and get re-elected?

Hilary Benn,  
Julia Clark,  
Charles Clarke,  
Ruth Davis,  
John Sauven  
and Lucy Siegle



Tuesday at  
12.45pm

## LABOUR AND THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS:



### Allies or enemies?

With James Purnell,  
Peter Hain,  
Menzies Campbell,  
and Norman Lamb

Monday at 6pm with  
**CENTREFORUM**

## CAN WE GIVE THE WHITE WORKING CLASS WHAT THEY WANT?

Saturday at 12.45pm

Hazel Blears, Jon Cruddas, Brendan Barber, John Denham and Sunny Hundal



# FABIAN POLICY ROUND TABLES

Our round table programme examines key progressive policy challenges in more depth. As space is limited, attendance is by invitation. See [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk) for more information and post-conference reports.

**Energy Futures 2030: Sustainable and Secure Supplies?** with Malcolm Wicks MP (Minister for Energy), Maria McCaffery (British Wind Energy Association), Nicola Pitts (National Grid)

**nationalgrid**

**What are standards for? Can we ensure educational rigour and inclusivity?** with Lord Andrew Adonis (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools) (tbc), Greg Watson (Cambridge Assessment), Professor Alan Dyson (Manchester University)



**A Public Health Service: How can preventive strategies narrow the gap?** with Dawn Primarolo MP (Minister for Public Health), David Taylor (School of Pharmacy), Professor Alan Marjory Davis (Faculty of Public Health), Saranjit Sihota (Diabetes UK)



**Fairer and More Accountable Global Markets: How do we get the corporate accountability we need?** with Baroness Shrii Vadera (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Business) (invited)



**Tackling Inactivity: How can worklessness be overcome amongst the hardest to reach?** with Stephen Timms MP (Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform), David Coats (The Work Foundation), Jeanette Faherty (Avanta)



**On Demand? How can we best match skills to the needs of the economy?** with David Lammy MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills), Annette Thomas (Oil and Gas UK)



**Building Sustainable Communities: Can housing policy tackle worklessness?** with Caroline Flint MP (Minister of State for Housing and Planning), Robin Lawler (Northwards Housing), Fran Parry (Employment Related Services Association)



**Growth and Global Poverty: Can business and civil society work together?** with Douglas Alexander MP (Secretary of State for International Development) (tbc), Michael Izza (ICAEW)



**Health Inequalities to 2020: The Manifesto Challenge** with Alan Johnson MP (Secretary of State for Health), Julian Le Grand (LSE), Dr Howard Stootie MP



**Teaching Citizenship: Should it be learned as well as earned?** with Michael Wills MP (Minister for Justice), Prof. Bob Fryer (Dept of Health)



**Beyond the North-South Divide: Where next for regional governance?** with Hazel Blears MP (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government), Chris Leslie (New Local Government Network), Steven Broomhead (Northwest Development Agency)



**The Future of Public Services: Can they be local, responsive and fair?** with John Healey MP (Minister for Local Government), Patrick Diamond (EHRC)



**Lifelong Learning: The Next Decade Agenda** with John Denham MP (Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills) James Rees (USDAW), Les Ebdon (Million+)



**Building Sustainable Regions: The Next Decade Agenda** with Rosie Winterton MP (Minister for Yorkshire and the Humber)



**Excellence for all: Can primary care reach those at risk?** with Ben Bradshaw MP (Minister for Health Services), Dr John Reville (Heart UK)



**Community Responses to Climate Change** with Phil Woolas MP (Minister for the Environment) (invited), Jonathan Kestenbaum (Nesta), Stuart Housden (RSPB)



This is a draft programme and is subject to change. Chatham House rule reports of these sessions will be circulated to Fabian members, parliamentarians, policy stakeholders and our broader membership, and published online. Attendance at our Policy Round Tables is by invitation only. For further details please contact [jemima.olchawski@fabian-society.org.uk](mailto:jemima.olchawski@fabian-society.org.uk).



# NOTICEBOARD

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

## FABIAN FRINGE EVENTS

### YOUNG FABIAN RECEPTION

Sunday 21st September, 7:30pm until 11pm

One Central Street  
open to all

#### SPEAKERS:

- Hazel Blears MP
- Yvette Cooper MP

Young Fabians and Unison Labour Link

### NOTHING TO LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS? DO LABOUR AND TRADE UNIONS SHARE A VISION OF THE FUTURE?

Monday 22nd September, 6pm - 7:30pm

Crystal Room, Britannia Hotel, Portland Street, Manchester

#### SPEAKERS:

- Ed Miliband MP
- Rachel Reeves, PPC for Leeds West
- Rachel Voller, Vice Chair of Unison Labour Link and PPC for Romford
- James Anthony, Young Members' Representative on Unison NEC

#### CHAIR:

- Mark Rusling, Young Fabian Chair

### MUM'S THE WORD

#### IS ENDING WOMEN'S POVERTY THE KEY TO ENDING CHILD POVERTY?

Tuesday 23rd September, 6.30-8.30 pm

Fabian Women's Network / Oxfam / Fawcett Society  
Dickens Thackeray Suite, Radisson Hotel, Manchester

#### SPEAKERS:

- Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP (Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform),
- Katherine Rake (Fawcett Society),
- Kate Wareing (Director, UK Poverty Programme, Oxfam).

#### CHAIR:

- Seema Malhotra (Director, Fabian Women's Network)



## FABIAN AUTUMN EVENTS

### AMERICA VOTES; EUROPE RESPONDS

Saturday 8th November, 10am – 4pm

Central Hall Westminster

#### With:

- Ben Brandzel, former Director of Online Engagement for the John Edwards campaign
- Sir Menzies Campbell MP
- David Lammy MP, Minister for Skills
- Dr. Timothy J. Lynch, co-author of *After Bush*
- Catherine Mayer, *Time* magazine
- Roger Liddle, former advisor to the President of the European Commission and Tony Blair
- Dr Rolf Mützenich MdB
- Catherine Fieschi

*and many more!*

For more information, tickets, and more speaker information, please visit: <http://fabians.org.uk/events/events/america-votes>

### A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY HOW LIBERAL IS LABOUR?

Is Labour a friend or foe of human rights: a debate with Baroness Shirley Williams

Tuesday 14th October, 6.30pm

A public, ticketed event at a central London venue.

For further information see [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk). Details will be sent to the Fabian members' email list.

## EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday 18th October, 10.30

at the Alex Wood Labour Hall, Cambridge

'The Politics of Equality'

### Speakers include:

- David Lammy MP
- Anne Campbell
- Richard Howitt MEP
- Daniel Zeichner

£10 including lunch and all refreshments.

Details from Deborah Stoute at [debstoute@hotmail.com](mailto:debstoute@hotmail.com) or Norman Rimmell on 01502 573 482 or [normanrimmell@hotmail.com](mailto:normanrimmell@hotmail.com)

## FABIAN SOCIETY AGM 2008

Saturday 29th November 2008, 13:30 – 17:00

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

### AGENDA

- 13.30** Debate: A Return to Victorian Inequality? The Rise of the Super-rich. (Speakers tbc)
- 14.30** Tea, coffee and cakes
- 15.00** Annual General Meeting
1. Apologies
  2. Minutes of 2007 AGM
  3. Matters Arising
  4. In Memoriam
  5. Election results
  6. Annual Report 2007-08
  7. Forward programme and General Secretary's Report
  8. Appointment of Auditor
  9. Treasurer's Report
  10. Resolutions (below)
  11. Date of next AGM
  12. AOB
- 17.00** Close of meeting.

### AGM RESOLUTIONS

"In view of the increasing complexity of world conditions, this AGM urges the Executive Committee to initiate a wide-ranging debate, involving all sections of the Society, to discuss its future and the ways to make it fit-for-purpose in the 21st century." **Peter Stern**

## FABIAN FUTURE EVENTS

### FABIAN SOCIETY NEW YEAR CONFERENCE 2009

#### ON EQUALITY

Saturday 17th January 2009, 10am – 4pm

Speakers and venue TBA

Details to be announced on [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk) or contact the Fabian Society office on 020 7227 4900

### FABIAN SOCIETY AND WEBB MEMORIAL TRUST

#### FIGHTING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN AN AGE OF AFFLUENCE

Saturday 21st February 2009, 10am – 4pm

The Fabians and the Webb Memorial Trust will hold a 1-day conference marking the centenary of Beatrice Webb's "Minority Report on the Poor Law". We will ask: what can we learn from welfare history, and what are the Report's lessons for today's anti-poverty campaigners and policy-makers?

Details to be announced on [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk) or contact the Fabian Society office on 020 7227 4900

### FABIAN WOMEN'S NETWORK: AUTUMN WALK

*Join us for a fascinating walk around Bloomsbury!*

THE WEBBS & FELLOW FABIANs  
A Twentieth Century Walk guided by Maire McQueeney

Tuesday 30th September, 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Meet at 6pm outside Russell Square Underground (Piccadilly Line). The walk will be a circular 2-3 mile level route at a moderate to brisk pace, and finish at a location close to Russell Square Station where we will stop for a drink!

To confirm your place please email [Fabianwomen@fabian-society.org.uk](mailto:Fabianwomen@fabian-society.org.uk) as places are limited.

# Listings

## BATH

Regular meetings – new members welcome. **Details and information from Paul Thomas on 0176138924 email twmthomas@hotmail.co.uk**

## BIRMINGHAM

**3 October.** Phil Davis on 'Local Ideas and Initiatives: What does 'local' mean for the West Midlands?'  
**17 October.** Joint meeting with the SHA. Dr Neil Goldbourne GP and Dr Gilles de Wildt GP on 'The Future of General Practice under Labour'  
All meetings at 7.00 in the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham.  
**For details and information contact Andrew Coulson on 0121 414 4966 email a.c.coulson@bham.ac.uk or Rosa Birch on 0121 426 4505 or rosabirch@hotmail.co.uk**

## BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

**31 October.** Barbara Follett MP on "Fairness"  
**28 November.** Janice Hurne PPC for New Forest West on 'Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change; Are Community Driven Local Initiatives the Answer?'

**11 December.** Christmas Party: details from Chris Hampton on 01202 874 601  
**30 January 2009.** Fiona MacTaggart MP on "Democracy: how it is changing and the lessons we should learn."  
**27 February 2009.** Baroness Estelle Morris on "How can the Labour Party re-engage with the public?"  
All meetings at The Friends Meeting House, Wharncliffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30. **Contact Ian Taylor on 01202 396634 for details.**

## BRIGHTON & HOVE

Regular meetings 8.00 at Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton. **Details from Maire McQueeney on 01273 607910 email mairemcqueeney@waitrose.com**

## BRISTOL

Society re-forming. **For details contact Dave Johnson on tessandave2004@aol.com**

## CANTERBURY

New Society forming. **Please contact Ian Leslie on 01227 265570 or 07973 681451 or email i.leslie@btinternet.com**

## CARDIFF

**Details of all meetings from Steve Tarbet on 02920 591 458 or stevetarbet@talktalk.net**

## CENTRAL LONDON

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

## CHELMSFORD AND MID ESSEX

New Society forming, for details of membership and future events, please **contact Barrie Wickerson on 01277 824452 email barrieew@laterre.wanadoo.co.uk**

## CHESHIRE

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

## CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

**30 October.** Ruth Waterman will speak on her recent book 'When Swan Lake Comes to Sarajevo' 8.00 in the Committee room at Chiswick Town Hall **Details from Monty Bogard on 0208 994 1780, email mb014fl362@blueyonder.co.uk**

## CITY OF LONDON

**For details contact Alan Millington on amillington@orrick.com**

## COLCHESTER

**Details from John Wood on 01206 212100 or woodj@fish.co.uk**

## CORNWALL

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

## DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

Regular meetings at the Chequers, Darenth Road South at 8.00. **Details from Deborah Stoate on 0207 227 4904 email debstoate@hotmail.com**

## DERBY

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

## DONCASTER AND DISTRICT

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

## EAST LOTHIAN

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

## FINCHLEY

New Society forming. If you're interested in joining please **contact Brian Watkins on 0208 346 6922 email brian.watkins60@ntlworld.com**

## GLASGOW

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

## GLOUCESTER

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

## HARROW

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

## HAVERING

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

## HERTFORDSHIRE

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

## HUDDERSFIELD AREA

New Society forming. **Contact Jo Coles at jcoles@yahoo.com if you are interested**

## ISLINGTON

**24 September.** 'Party Conference' 8.00 at Islington Town Hall,  
**14 November.** Annual Dinner with guest speaker Lord Alf Dubs. 7.30 at The Resource Centre.  
**10 December.** Christmas Social  
**For details of all meetings contact Pat Haynes on 0207 249 3679**

## MANCHESTER

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

## MARCHES

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

## MIDDLESBOROUGH

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

## NEWHAM

**For details of meetings, contact Anita Pollack on 0208 471 1637 or Anita.Pollack@btpenworld.com**

## NORTH EAST WALES

**Further details from Joe Wilson on 01978 352820**

## NORTHUMBRIA AREA

**3 October.** Sir Jeremy Beecham on 'Whither Labour?' followed by supper at Close House Country Club, Wylam.

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

## NORWICH

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

## PETERBOROUGH

**3 October.** Mark Rusling, Chair of The Young Fabians on "US Elections: Are The Electorate Up To It?"  
**7 November.** Professor Clyde Chitty, Goldsmiths' College University of London, on "How Can An Equitable Education System Be Achieved?"  
**5 December** "Question Time" with a panel of local experts.  
All meetings at 8.00 at the Ramada Hotel, Thorpe Meadows, Peterborough. **Details from Brian Keegan on 01733 265769, email brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk**  
**8 November.** Special event: Alison Steadman in "Enjoy" by Alan Bennett at the Cambridge Arts Theatre. Matinee 2.30 followed by discussion over dinner at 8 Glamis Gardens. Theatre tickets direct from Cambridge Arts Theatre on 01223 503333 or <http://www.cambridgeartstheatre.com/> **Contact Brian Keegan**

## PORTSMOUTH

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

## READING & DISTRICT

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

## SHEFFIELD

Regular meetings on the 4th Thursday of the month, 7.30 at the Quaker Meeting Room, 10 St James Street, Sheffield S1. **Details and information from Rob Murray on 0114 2558341or Tony Ellingham on 0114 274 5814 email tony.ellingham@virgin.net**

## SOUTH EAST LONDON

Meet at 8.00 at 105 Court Lane, Dulwich London SE21 7EE. For details of all future meetings, please visit our website at <http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/selfs/> Regular meetings; **contact Duncan Bowie on 020 8693 2709**

## SOUTHAMPTON AREA

**9 October.** Dr Bryan Jones 'Iran and the Nuclear Issue'  
For details of venues and all meetings, **contact Frank Billett on 023 8077 9536**

## SOUTH TYNESIDE

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

## SUFFOLK

**4 September.** Anne Campbell, Chair of the Fabian Society  
**23 October.** Rt Hon Denis MacShane MP on 'Labour in Europe and the World'  
**13 November.** Susan Mason and David Chapman on 'Fabian Policy and Electoral Reform'  
**19 February 2009.** Sunder Katwala  
**For details of venues and times contact Sally Cook at mikeck@onetel.com**

## SURREY

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

## TONBRIDGE and TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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

## TYNEMOUTH

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

## WATERSHED

A new Local Society in the Rugby area, **details from Mike Howkins email mgh@dnu.ac.uk or J David Morgan on 07789 485621 email jdavidmorgan@excite.com.** All meetings at 7.30 at the Indian Centre, Edward Street Rugby CV21 2EZ. For further information **contact David Morgan on 01788 553277 email jdavidmorgan@excite.com**

## WEST DURHAM

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

## WEST WALES

Regular meetings at Swansea Guildhall, **details from Roger Warren Evans on roger@warrenevans.net**

## WIMBLEDON

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





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email: [info@teamredlaces.org.uk](mailto:info@teamredlaces.org.uk)

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