

Fabian Review

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Summer 2010

The morning after



LABOUR'S RECOVERY BEGINS

How not to be an opposition: what Labour can learn from the Tories, by Tim Bale

John Denham talks to Mary Riddell about the Lib Dems, Gordon Brown, and where Labour went wrong

Lessons from the election with Ken Livingstone, Gisela Stuart, David Lammy and Rachel Reeves

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I love the Labour Party. I love it because it embodies the values I believe in: equality, cooperation, compassion.
But to make Labour stronger we need to change the way we do politics. I want Labour to win again. I believe we can. And I want to do it with you, together.

David Miliband bringing Labour together
leading Labour to power

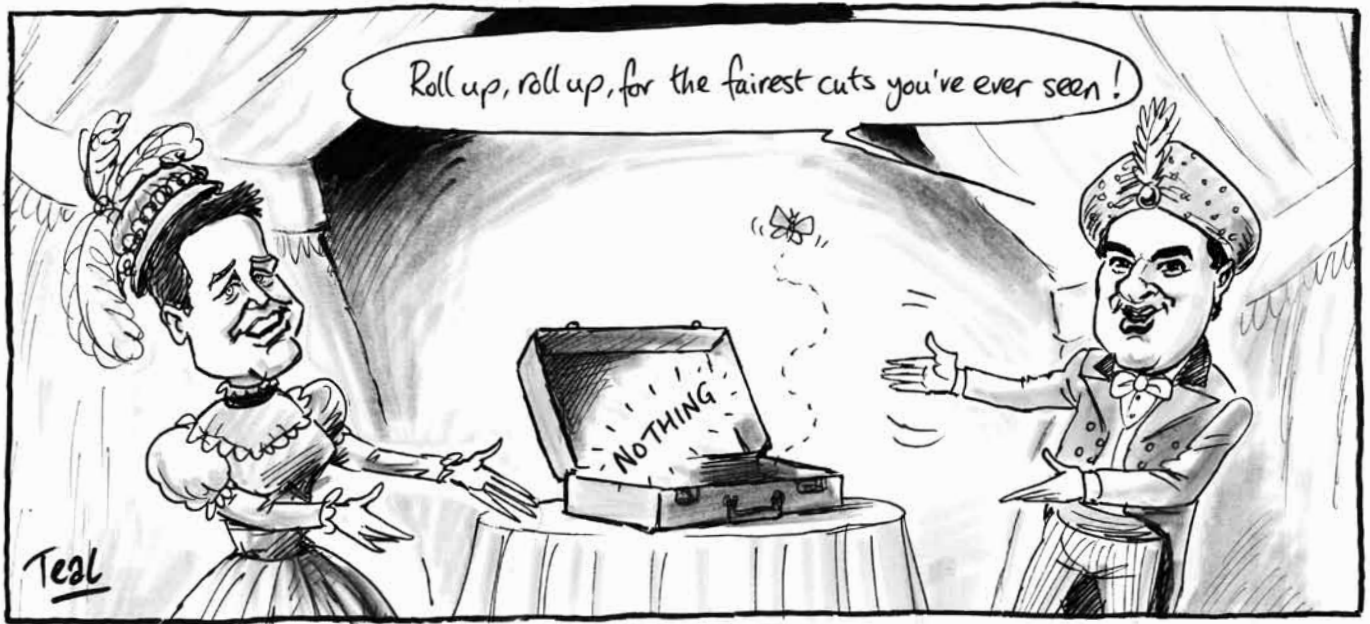


Image: Adrian Teal

There is an alternative

The coalition's first budget was born of political choice not necessity, and it will make it very difficult for the Government to meet its self-imposed fairness tests

2010 was the mandate-less election. Labour's pitch focused so heavily on the risks of change that Gordon Brown offered voters 'more of the same' when they had had enough. David Cameron's right wing blames him for not winning a majority when he had the political wind at his back, though much of the electorate's hesitation reflected scepticism about whether his party had really changed. Nick Clegg's poll bounce evaporated, and his consolation prize of Deputy Prime Minister required him to switch from his anti-political attacks on the two main parties during the campaign, to a 'we can work it out' call for a new politics.

There was no clear winner – but Labour definitely lost. For the Lib Dems, every response was perilous, though the full-throated nature of Nick Clegg's embrace of Cameronism presents particular existential risks. The Lib Dems are now public guarantors of Cameron's central, untested, proposition: that a smaller state can and will reduce inequality. Nick Clegg has guaranteed party and country that deficit reduction will not hit the poor harder.

This is the fairness test. Unlike in the 1980s, when the Government rejected distributional analysis as irrelevant, this test is not just an external challenge from Fabians and others on the left. It is the defining test that both coalition partners have set for themselves.

The budget was a bad start. Nick Clegg proudly proclaimed George Osborne's efforts "fair"; a claim authoritatively shredded by the Institute of Fiscal Studies overnight, even before considering the impact of £32 billion of extra spending cuts.

Any government begins with goodwill and the coalition seeks to exploit this with the familiar argument: 'there is no alternative'. But this isn't true. If it were, the Lib Dem's role in government would be pointless, as there would be no way for them to make it more fair. The decision to eliminate the structural deficit in one Parliament, and to pursue an 80-20 ratio of cuts to tax rises, are political and ideological choices of the coalition. Osborne's post-election frankness effectively admits that Cameron's promise to reject all cuts

to frontline services was a campaign fairytale.

Labour should offer both robust and constructive opposition, building broad alliances in society to propose alternatives. Greater clarity about the cuts and taxes the opposition would support in order to halve the deficit would still help it to more credibly oppose those deeper cuts that are driven by ideology not necessity. We should keep talking to those more reluctant coalition supporters the socially liberal wing of the Lib Dems, and to progressive Conservatives who are prepared to acknowledge what the independent analysis shows: that the Government must change course if it is to take its own inequality commitments seriously.

This government's fairness test matters, even though it has seemingly set out to fail it already. The fairness rhetoric did change the terms of political trade. Now the coalition dangerously claim that it can do no other – but politics matters only because there are always alternative choices.

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Membership of the Fabian Society has reached an all time high. 440 new members joined in May following the General Election – a record for any single month – and membership continues to expand. As a result, the Society had 6606 national members at the end of May, and 6786 at the end of June: a record in the Society’s 126 year history. The previous national membership peaks were 6474 in June 2009, and before that 6332 in 1972.

As an affiliated socialist society, the Fabians have been very involved in the ongoing contest for the Labour leadership. Ed Miliband (above) was booked to speak at the post-election Next Left Conference long before there was a vacancy, but used his keynote speech to announce his candidacy. Then the Fabians teamed up with Progress, Left Foot Forward, the Young Fabians, LabourList and Compass to host a leadership hustings in London. The five candidates answered questions on Iraq, equality, gender balance in the party, political reform, socialism and their regrets from Labour’s time in government. To read reports from the event and the results of our exit poll, visit www.nextleft.org

Lord Kinnock delivered a barnstorming speech at the Fabian Society Summer Reception in the House of Commons, complete with anecdotes about Nye Bevan in the 1950s and the general election of 1983. He said that the future success of the Labour Party rests on its ability to deliver care, opportunity, security, justice and liberty. You can read the full speech or listen to the podcast at www.fabians.org.uk



Shadow Communities Secretary John Denham responded to Labour’s dismal election showing in England – and particularly the south – with a thoughtful speech to the Fabian Society which asked

“Can Labour speak for England?” As the Guardian reported, Denham argued “Labour needs to regain voters’ trust by rebuilding the welfare state around its original social insurance model so benefits are more directly linked to what a worker has contributed.”

In our pre-election Fabian Review, we asked high-profile experts to set key “progressive benchmarks” against which the new Government could be judged. These included reducing income and health inequalities, bringing children out of poverty and empowering citizens. Six weeks into the new coalition government, Ed Wallis made a preliminary investigation into its performance relative to the benchmarks and found it wanting. You can read his analysis at www.leftfootward.org

You can now read the Fabian Review in full online at www.fabians.org.uk/publications/fabian-review. Magazines will be put up online around six weeks after publication. Please do let us know what you think by emailing review@fabian-society.org.uk

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The twelve steps

How not to be an opposition: lessons from the Tories

Tim Bale is author of *The Conservative Party from Thatcher to Cameron*, the definitive guide to the Tories' slow slide out of power and then their sojourn in the wilderness between 1990 and 2010. Here he draws some practical lessons for Labour from their often painful experience.



Tim Bale is a senior lecturer in Politics at Sussex University and the author of *The Conservative Party from Thatcher to Cameron*

ONE:

Don't put your rejection by the electorate down to the swing of the political pendulum or a passing fad.

Don't assume it was evanescent and only ever partial. Regard it instead as long-lasting and comprehensive. Only then will you do something about it sufficiently quickly to make a difference by the time of the next election. Moreover, don't, whatever you do, take comfort from the fact that your seat share held up better than your vote share. Seat share is a quirk – albeit a merciful one – of the electoral system. Vote share is the indicator you need to pay attention to. You had your butts kicked. The fact that your pants didn't fall down as well may have preserved your modesty but that means very little.

TWO:

Even if you have to spend more money than you've got in order to do so, try to find out as soon as possible why voters thought you were so rubbish – and listen to what you're told rather than simply stopping up your ears or, almost as bad, only hearing what you want to hear. Survey research and focus groups aren't everyone's cup of tea. But those methods are pretty much all you've got if you want to go beyond opinion columns in the broadsheets and your own experience 'on the doorstep', neither of which, however eloquent and/or forceful they may be, are likely to tell you anything of any great use. Paying through the nose to be told you're in a hole might not seem like an investment, but if it helps you stop digging and decide how best to climb out of it, then it's money well spent.

THREE:

It's too late to advise against rushing into a leadership contest that might prevent you from conducting a proper postmortem on your defeat. But you have to be aware of the risks. Contests can push candidates into making hasty diagnoses and recommending prescriptions that are partial or even just plain wrong. And the right solutions can end up being rejected simply because they're suggested by the wrong candidate. Most of all, leadership contests can encourage the inevitable tendency to pin the blame for the party's woes on the salesman not the product. Obviously, the salesman matters – academic research suggests that leaders do make more of a difference now that ideology, social class, and partisan loyalty are less important drivers of voting behaviour. But don't forget that even the most consummate marketing man finds it hard to sell the electorate damaged goods.



FOUR:

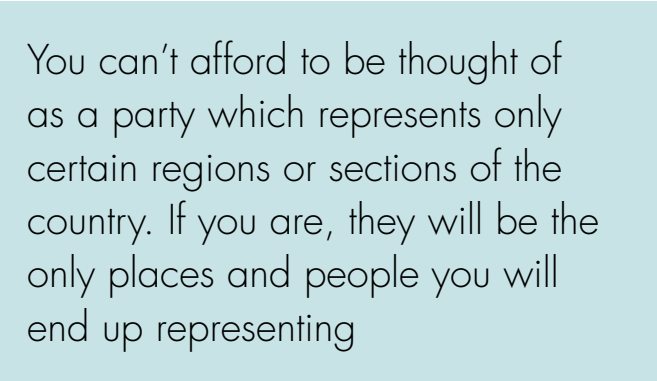
If the leader you do end up picking bombs badly right from the beginning, don't rely on them to do the decent thing and step down. They won't, meaning you have to have the guts to ditch them, rulebook or no rulebook, as soon as you possibly can. First impressions count. A bad start is almost impossible to overcome, especially if it involves anything which means the public find it difficult to take your leader seriously; if anything, derision is even more damaging than being despised. The ability to project competence, strength and decisiveness matters more than looking like someone whom people wouldn't mind their daughter marrying. That said, a beard is simply out of the question and a full head of hair is something of a sine qua non. Whatever the new leader's like, though, make sure they have plenty of opportunity to talk direct to pollsters who will hopefully tell it like it is. By the same token, the leader has to ensure that they extend discussion beyond a narrow circle of advisors. This also means there has to be some mechanism through which people who disagree with them can express their doubts without being thought of as dumb, disloyal or planning to launch a leadership bid.

FIVE:**Don't underestimate your opponents.**

You might be able to see right through them, but don't assume the electorate will get wise to them anytime soon. You might be confident that they'll fall apart in months if not weeks, but – if history is anything to go by – they won't. Avoid the comforting (but ultimately illusory) complacency into which the Conservatives fell back in 1997, when, as one of their advisors put it, they "behaved like a disappointed middle-aged wife whose husband's just run off with his PA and thinks, 'Well, give it three or four months and when he needs his socks darned and a home-cooked meal, he'll come crawling back, begging for forgiveness'." Obviously, your opponents, just like you, are going to have some tough decisions to make; but they, just like you, won't get all of them wrong. And don't, whatever you do, assume that any economic success they have can't last forever. It won't, but they will probably manage to make it last until after the next election.

SIX:**Whatever the economy does or doesn't throw up, you will have to fight on it – it is almost certain to remain the number one issue.**

Even in the (incredibly unlikely) event that you manage to ensure that the next election is fought on your issues rather than on those which traditionally favour the other side, that won't be enough for you to win. You probably won't be able to turn your weaknesses into strengths. But you will have to try to shrink whatever gap exists between your ratings and the ratings enjoyed by your opponents on such issues. Aim, then, for a draw but expect no more than to be able to keep them putting too many past you; who knows you may even nick an away goal or two. Likewise, you can't win by piling up votes where you already enjoy home advantage: whether we're talking geography or demographics, you can't afford to be thought of as a party which represents only certain regions or sections of the country. If you are, they will be the only places and people you will end up representing.



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SEVEN:

Whether you shift left or right, or whether you believe they're both old hat and you should move beyond them, do so in the direction of the electorate – and, while you're doing it, stress you're setting up camp on the centre ground, which after all, is where (like it or not) the vast majority of voters think they are. If you like your politics a little more complicated and think of competition as having two dimensions – a state-market one and a libertarian-authoritarian one – do bear in mind that most voters, while they tend slightly toward the state end of the spectrum, are even more firmly persuaded (whatever the evidence) that authoritarian solutions to, say, crime and immigration, are the way to go. Given the obvious electoral importance of the so-called C2s, for whom this is mostly the case, one shouldn't really need to spell out the implications of this. But politicians have some pretty heroic, and therefore unrealistic, assumptions about how persuasive they can be. Clearly people are influenced by what politicians say – underlying preferences like these are endogenous as well as exogenous, if you're into the jargon. But it is probably better to admit sooner rather than later that they will have to be accommodated rather than believe that you can do much to shape them.

EIGHT:

Don't get tempted into doing anything and everything to get noticed. Face the fact that you might be consumed both by the challenges facing you and the leadership contest you are already embarked on, but that the public (and quite a few formerly friendly journalists) won't, for the most part, give a toss. Trying too hard to make them notice you, particularly by adopting headline-grabbing populist positions is not only pointless but positively counterproductive: it's all too obvious what you're trying to do and you end up adopting stances that you can't row back on and even have to ramp up. That said, there's nothing wrong with a few carefully-considered, counter-intuitive initiatives – indeed, there's nothing like them (if used sparingly) to encourage the electorate to reassess you.

NINE:

Do everything you can to show you realise you got some pretty fundamental things wrong, to reassure people that you've listened, and to show them that you're changing. This means fighting the very understandable temptation to look back on, and feel pride in, your record in government, as well as the related temptation to think you have nothing whatsoever to apologise for. If Philip Gould's classic 'concede and move on' New Labour mantra was good enough (eventually) for the Tories, then it should certainly be good enough for you.

TWELVE:

Finally, avoid the cardinal error of thinking that success in referendums and second order elections – by-elections, local authority, European – means that you must be doing something right. This is hugely important. Winning them is helpful in so far as it maintains the morale of your troops. Indeed, given the extent to which the activist-base of British political parties is composed of councillors (and their friends and families) and wannabe MPs, they may actually provide you with troops. But such contests, not least because they are affected by protest voting and poor turnout, are unreliable guides to how you are really doing, especially when compared to opinion polls. If you let them, second-order elections will flatter to deceive – snares and delusions all. By all means take pleasure in them, but not comfort. The only contest you should be thinking of is the general election, so keep your eyes on the prize.

ELEVEN:

While you should pay little or no attention to parties and pressure groups that might steal an ultimately marginal share of your more radically-inclined voters, don't forget – and how could you after all that's happened – the Lib Dems. Don't assume that, even as you read this, their voters are flocking to you. Behavioural psychology suggests that most of us are strongly inclined to fool ourselves into thinking that whatever we did turned out for the best: even some of the beard and sandals brigade, assuming for the moment that you want them in your big tent, will be prepared to give Clegg and co. the benefit of the doubt for quite some time. 'Love-bombing the Lib Dems' – telling their voters that, unlike the leaders they trusted, you really are on their supposedly progressive, fresh-thinking wavelength and that you genuinely care about their concerns – is vital, as long as it doesn't lead you to start talking about amnesties for illegal immigrants or scrapping the nuclear deterrent. I'd advise, too, against picking up and running with a campaign against university tuition fees – not because it'll drive universities into penury and prioritises a middle-class rite of passage over the majority who never have been nor ever will go to university, but because it will be a transparent attempt to jump on a bandwagon. Opportunism is one of the few upsides of being in opposition, of course, but like most privileges it is easy to abuse – a weapon that one should use both sparingly and stealthily.

TEN:

Don't let anyone – especially the big beasts (presuming for the moment that you have any) – turn down a place on the front bench, whatever their excuse. You need absolutely everyone you've got on deck, manning the guns, hoisting the sails, and repelling borders. Anyone who declines to serve – especially if they're talented and/or highly regarded (or just recognised) by the public – will simply convey the impression that there's something wrong with the leadership and direction you've decided on. Or they'll look lazy. Worse still, they're wasting a Commons seat that might otherwise go to someone who gives a damn – someone with a future rather than a past.

The choice

This summer's contest isn't just about picking a Labour leader – it's about debating the state of the party, its vision and values, its record in office, and its future direction. **Sunder Katwala** assesses the race so far.



Sunder Katwala
is General Secretary
of the Fabian Society

It was important for Labour to hold an extended leadership contest. A snap contest would suggest the party had learnt nothing from the 2007 coronation of Gordon Brown. The early stages have engaged party members (including 25000 new members) but have inevitably received less attention beyond the party in a World Cup summer where the media classes remain fascinated by the new politics of coalition.

The contest has shown there are no great ideological fissures in the party. Jack Straw – on the right of the party – was among those to nominate Diane Abbott to ensure the Campaign Group candidate made the ballot. The absurdly exhaustive series of 59 hustings debates have been good humoured, and demonstrated much common ground.

On these points, the candidates agree: Labour is a party defined by its values – and its core commitment to narrowing inequalities in opportunity, income, wealth and power. Labour should be proud of much of its record, but it lost touch over time by becoming too managerial in office. The Iraq war would not have happened if the Government had known Saddam did not have WMD. It should have done

more, earlier to challenge unearned rewards at the top of society, and was too timid in pursuing an elected Lords and having more faith in local democracy. The party should pursue equality in representation, and must shift its internal culture to become a movement campaigning in communities for change.

If every candidate can agree on all of that, the question remains what they distinctively offer, beyond differing in their personal approaches to leadership.

Party members have thought it important to debate what New Labour got right and wrong, though some have found the debate too retrospective. David Miliband told the Fabian hustings and several later events that “we have spent a lot of time debating a better yesterday, and I want to debate a better tomorrow”. But the record matters – and the point of interrogating it should be to inform the future. The question is less how far 13 years in power left the glass half-full or half-empty but how Labour now ‘defines the break’ with its recent past. The failure of Labour’s attempts at ‘renewal’ in office was to talk about ‘change’ yet to fail to define it clearly.

The candidates – and next leader – will also need a response to several questions which have yet to figure significantly in the campaign:

1 What is Labour’s response to economic insecurity?

The main point of contention in the contest has been over immigration. It is unconvincing to say this is the primary cause of Labour’s electoral defeat, and more so if the suggestion is that the failure was simply to communicate a good policy effectively. Social democrats should believe in managing immigration, with concern for how the impacts of gains and losses are distributed across society. This is part of a broader gap in Labour’s agenda, which did too little to speak to lower and middle-earners for whom the age of affluence brought increased economic insecurity.

2 How do we pay for our social goals?

The UK is currently taxing at 37 per cent of GDP and spending at 47 per cent. Cyclical factors are unlikely to close more than half of this gap but

the rest remains. So how does Labour think we should pay for public services – and how should this be reflected in challenges to spending cuts? Which is a credible strategy to win public support for defending universal provision given tight fiscal pressures? Do we need to think more about hypothecated taxes, as on social care? When is charging users a legitimate option for some services, and where should that line be drawn?

3 Where do environmental choices place limits?

A credible red-green social democracy would need a stronger environmental agenda than New Labour had. Assuming that this rejects the proposition of zero growth, the credibility of an agenda for green growth depends on being clear about where there are real trade-offs. Where does this place limits on particular types of consumption or sources of growth? And how would Labour mobilise effective political coalitions to defend those choices from affected interests?

4 What does ‘movement politics’ mean for party democracy?

Every candidate wants Labour to be a political movement. But there is a lack of clarity about what this means for the future model of democracy within the party, with some tendency to see that as a navel-gazing alternative to reaching out. If there is frustration, but an acknowledgement that new structures lack transparency or credibility as ways in which members’ voices can count, how does a party empower its own members as part of a broader advocacy movement?

5 The future of the unions.

The candidates have tended to stick to platitudes while seeking the votes of trade unionists. But taking movement politics seriously should mean turning the link with unions into a source of political strength, rather than of potential vulnerability, sometimes on both sides. How can industrial and political leadership reinvent the public face, and perceived legitimacy, of unions to make the relationship a source of political strength for the left? ■

The Fabian Society has been taking soundings from members and others about the questions you want to see addressed in the leadership race. Here is a selection of contributions from the Fabian blog, www.nextleft.org, and some of the candidates' answers at the Fabian hustings.

“If you become Labour party leader, what will you do to ensure Labour becomes more open and democratic in party structure, to ensure Labour never becomes out of touch with members, movement, and the public while in office?”



“There is no contradiction between movement politics and power politics”

“How should we cut the deficit over the next few years?”



“I would tackle the deficit by coming out of Afghanistan, slashing the defence budget and scrapping Trident”



“For too long, we have said we have decided and then we ask the members to agree”

“One hundred years on from the height of the Suffragette movement, it remains nothing short of scandalous that we have such unequal representation of women at the top of business and the top of politics. How will the leadership candidates address this once and for all and in what timeframe?”

“What steps would the candidates take to rebalance the British economy so that manufacturing and the regions become as important to the economy as the City of London's financial sector?”

“In light of overwhelming evidence of the social harm done by income inequality, do you agree that promoting greater 'equality of outcome' (rather than merely 'equality of opportunity') should now move to the very top of Labour's agenda? And how do you think greater income equality could best be achieved with public support?”



“The gap does matter: it is not just about the floor, it is about inequality too”



“We still live in a country where life chances are unevenly distributed”

“Which should take priority under the law: the civil liberties of the individual, or the right of the state to maintain its own security?”

“The Labour Party is now the only party with a significant presence in each of England, Scotland and Wales. What creative ideas do the leadership candidates have for the future development of the Union?”

“Do you support the UK joining the euro?”

Fabian members will receive ballot papers in the affiliated societies section of the Labour leadership contest. Before you cast your vote, log on to www.fabians.org.uk to read new essays from the candidates.

Photos of the candidates at the Fabian Hustings by Mousetrap Media Ltd.



Picking up the pieces

John Denham's quiet independence may have cost him the odd promotion in government, but it makes him invaluable in opposition. He talks to [Mary Riddell](#) about electoral defeat and recovery, and how Labour could never now work with Nick Clegg.



Mary Riddell
is a columnist for the
Daily Telegraph

One of the few adornments in John Denham's sparse new office is a policeman's helmet. This, he says, is a gift from officers during his time as a Home Office minister. "I didn't nick it on Boat Race night," he explains. While no one would suspect the former Communities Secretary of such unruly conduct, nor is he the most biddable of politicians.

Mr Denham is a quiet rebel. Or, more accurately, he declined, through Labour's 13 years in power, ever to become a follower of any leader's camp. That independence carried a price. Is there any truth, I ask him, to a rumour that he was once given the post of Chief Secretary to the Treasury by Tony Blair, only to have the offer countermanded by Gordon Brown, who wanted his own appointee?

"I was certainly told that Tony Blair was minded me to offer the job and that Gordon vetoed it. I have to add that Gordon denied [intervening], so I'll never know the truth." Subsequently, Denham was offered a "not very exciting" ministerial post, which he turned down, preferring to remain chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee. That episode, in 2006, did not much trouble Denham, who went on to become Secretary of State, first at Innovation, Universities and Skills and then at Communities and Local Government.

He does, however, acknowledge the downside of rejecting patronage. "The cost of independence of mind is that you tend to exclude yourself from influencing policy. If I have a frustration, it is that fairness, in general and [specifically] in the labour market have been themes of mine for many years. The price of independence is you don't have traction in those debates. I'm by no means the only person to have those reflections. Others had a contribution to make that wasn't recognised or engaged. The lesson to learn for the future is that sort of factionalism is enormously damaging to the intellectual health of a political party."

There could be no more damning indictment of the cabalistic style of Labour's last two leaders, or of its cost. With the party still stunned by its worst defeat since the universal franchise, senior figures are assessing what went so wrong and what Labour must do to make itself electable again. Denham, unburdened by Blairite or Brownite

baggage, is central to that process. As part of his contribution, he is helping Ed Miliband develop policy, but he stresses that the issues we discuss bear his imprint alone.

“I think people do understand that we lost very, very badly. It’s less clear that they realise how much we have to change to win again”

Has the party even understood the catastrophic nature of the defeat? “I think people do understand that we lost very, very badly. It’s less clear that they realise how much we have to change to win again and how big the challenge is. There’s pretty much a consensus on who didn’t vote for us.” Denham means the C2 unskilled workers or, as he prefers, “the Mosaic groups, hard-working families who play by the rules and pay their taxes. They didn’t get a great deal back, their pay hadn’t increased much, and they thought there was a fundamental unfairness about the welfare system.”

Denham’s analysis revolves round the “south question”. In his argument, Labour can never recover without regaining its lost sway in the more affluent regions of England. To that end, he has suggested compensating for the greater cost of living with higher tax credits and allowing the south to keep more of the revenue it generates. “There are some specific things, but we have to rethink the last 13 years. We achieved a great deal, but it was built on a model of economic and social change that can’t be repeated – that you run a free market economy with a very flexible labour market that runs efficiently enough to provide growth and fund redistribution.”

The result, as he says, was an “unbalanced economy with far too much dependence on the financial sector”, plus a disenfranchised core vote. “And thirdly, the type of redistribution we did, mainly through tax credits, magnified the cliff edge between those who were getting support and those

who weren’t. We’re going to have to look much more carefully at fairness at work and at looking at support when things go wrong. That involves reviving the idea of the contributory system.”

In other words, you get out what you put in? “Yes, there should be fairer rewards for what you’ve paid in. The principle of ‘I’ve paid in all my life’ still runs very deep, not just among people who bought stamps but a younger generation.”

The discontent of voters who deserted Labour has been crystallised, in the minds of the leadership candidates, into unease on immigration, with Ed Balls going so far as to suggest that the EU directive on the free movement of labour should be reworked. Where does Denham stand? “It’s quite difficult to explain why you pay benefits to children who don’t live in this country and never will. I don’t believe for a moment that Poles came to my constituency [Southampton Itchen] to claim benefits. But they did claim, and it was a source of resentment. We’ve lived through a decade in which numerous centre left parties have suffered because of immigration. In principle it would be ridiculous to say that the rules of migration, from within the EU as well as outside, shouldn’t be an issue for the European left.”

“It’s not a Little Britain thing, but I’m not opposed to saying: let’s look at how this thing operates and [whether] rules designed many years ago still work today.” So he’s with Ed Balls? “You can’t rule out in principle opening up the debate,” he repeats. “But it would be wrong to think it the only issue that needs to be addressed.”

He cites the Labour government’s slowness in signing up to the EU directive that allows local wage rates to dominate and the lack of British companies “capable of winning prime contracts in oil refineries and so on. You can open up a debate about whether the rules of migration are fair, particularly when you have disparities in welfare systems. But unless you have British companies capable of winning contracts, you can rewrite the rules as much as you want and it won’t make a difference. Even so it’s patently unfair to much of the electorate that this [undermining the indigenous workforce] happens at all... So we need to deal with it.”

National identity is a central part of Denham’s bid to make the south love Labour again. And so, before the election, he compiled a “modest proposal” for local celebrations of St George’s Day. This scheme, accepted across government, finally reached No 10, where it was instantly canned, presumably by Gordon Brown, on the grounds that it might cause trouble in Scotland.

“Whether it was Gordon... It was a staff position, rather than Gordon personally. I think,” he says tactfully. Irrespective of who imposed the veto, Denham reacted with what sounds like uncustomary fury. “Was I put out?” he calls to his aide, as if this euphemism cannot begin to describe his rage. “I was driving when I found out, so I didn’t actually break anything.”

“We didn’t lose the election for lack of St George’s flags, but it [the Brown ban] illustrated the gap between [No 10] and the popular culture which was illustrative of a wider lack of contact.” In other words, the Brown team was completely cut off? He does not deny this suggestion, saying: “The emergence of English identity has been steady for some time. It’s not the old, narrow, race-based thing, but it’s contested territory. This festival for all who feel English was seen as running up against the idea that we’re all British – which had been promoted by Gordon. You could be Scots or Welsh Labour, but not English.”

Given the disconnect Denham alleges with the public mood, does he think Brown was ever the right leader? Despite the usual caveat that no one could have handled the economic crisis better, he does not sound enthusiastic. “Of course the leadership was an issue, and of course he wasn’t suited to the modern media world. As you saw in the Gillian Duffy [affair], it was not so much [his] words as his incomprehension. Hers wasn’t an extreme or a bigoted view [on immigration].”

“I and others were regularly pilloried [by commentators] for failing to get rid of Gordon. If you ask whether there was ever on offer an alternative leader who would have done better, there were no candidates.”

Now, with no shortage of contestants, those involved in the leadership race

agree (without providing a convincing explanation) that Labour's initial verve degenerated into the technocratic language and managerial style that estranged voters. I wonder whether the Blair/ Brown feuding meant that each hard-fought agreement was expressed in the strangulated language of dissent, but he says: "I was never close enough to them to say: 'Yes, that's the reason.' I would point to a few others. Quite soon after 1997, we stopped presenting New Labour's case as values-based. We started to segment the message – something for the Mail, something for the Mirror, with things hung around notions of what Mail readers wanted to hear.

"The values diminished, and we found [for example] it was hard to rethink our relationship with business. It was so set that we mustn't be unfriendly that we found it hard to see where we should be critical. Also, we never had a consensus on public service reform." Although he argues that services are "immeasurably" better, the dithering over reform was, in his view, "debilitating."

On the Iraq war, the single most damaging venture of the Labour years, Denham played an exemplary role, resigning his ministerial post at the same time as Robin Cook. Denham struck no poses and claimed no virtue, either at the time or in the intervening years. But now Iraq is back at the forefront of the leadership debate, with Ed Balls declaring the invasion wrong and Ed Miliband acknowledging its catastrophic consequences for the party.

Does Denham recall any whisper of dissent at the time from these two influential if still unelected figures? "I don't think it would be fair [to comment]. These weren't conversations I had with them at the time, so I'm quite prepared to take what they say as the record. I have no reason to believe that either is saying something untrue about their views at the time. Everyone was in a difficult position.

"One reason I haven't dined out on it is that I respected the position [of those who voted for the war.] Lots of people had deep reservations." Some, he implies, voted for an invasion they did not support. "They took a wider position about what the Government was trying to achieve and all that was at stake. It's very important we don't divide the

party now, so many years on, [on] who was right and who was wrong ... What worried me was where the point was where we could have stopped it. There was no such moment. There must never again be policy by drift."

Although he thought the Afghan war wholly justified, he is more circumspect than former colleagues, the candidates included, about the prospects of a good outcome. "I don't at the moment see an alternative [to the current policy.] The trouble is that it is not a strategy you can pursue with confidence. No one thought we'd lose the Iraq war."

With so much at stake, from foreign policy to the economy, is Labour simply a self-indulgent sideshow, engaging in the navel-gazing of a protracted leadership fight? "No. We're staking out our positions for where we need to be in 2014 or 2015. I think the Coalition is more likely than not to last ... for a considerable time, if not the whole five years. We will have to have a very compelling story to tell, which requires a long leadership race. By the way, I also think Harriet is doing a very good job. It's not as if there's a vacuum."

There is however, a gaping hole where the prospect of a centre-left alliance promoted by Denham and others once resided. Is there any chance now of resurrecting such a dream? "The Lib Dems have ceded all right to say they are a progressive party. If we use the next months and years to address the parlous state of the Labour Party, and if, as a result, the Lib Dems change, that might open up possibilities.

Does he mean that the Lib Dems would first have to ditch Nick Clegg? "It would require a new leader and a new politics. The idea that the Lib Dems can do this now and then, in a few years, say they'd like to be friends with Labour when they are fundamentally unchanged is out of the question. Many people, including electoral reformers like me who always thought there could be a centre left coalition with the Lib Dems, have to understand they have taken a historic position which puts them outside that game until they change profoundly."

But Denham also has stinging criticism for Labour's post-election role, and in particular for David Blunkett and John Reid, who talked down the

chances of a Labour/Lib Dem deal. "Others wanted to do that deal. The Clegg part of the Lib Dems didn't. But we weren't in a psychological or emotional state to do it. [The issue wasn't] what David Blunkett or John Reid said. The reality of that weekend was that the Tories and the Lib Dems were disciplined and Labour were all over the media. What that told you was that this was a party that couldn't, however much it wanted it, pull it together and make that deal work."

It sounds as if he lays heavy blame on his two old Cabinet colleagues for the failure of a Lab Lib deal. Was their conduct indefensible? "It wasn't necessary. The cabinet had taken a unanimous decision to go into negotiations, and it was a shame we couldn't rely on people in the wider party to respect that."

Does Denham think his fissiparous party will rally behind the alternative vote that many regard as being an essential element in Labour's revival? He discloses that, during a fierce battle between senior figures who favoured keeping first past the post and others advocating PR, Gordon Brown turned to him for advice in the middle of an electoral reform committee.

"Gordon said: 'What do you think, John?' and I told him some change was better than none. Labour duly settled on holding the referendum on AV that is now a point of Lib Dem dogma and the key goal holding the Coalition together." For all his animus, Denham will be backing Clegg on an issue he sees as Labour's "triumph" and urging Labour MPs to do likewise. This, he hints, may not be easy. "I wish the party was united, but that was not what the manifesto said. I will be working for a Yes vote."

Early on in the election campaign, Denham warned Lord Mandelson of the discontent among the voters who ordained Labour's defeat. "His reaction was very positive, but then the leaders' debates started and the whole dynamic changed. Those issues about fairness should have been addressed years before." Though not a self-promoter, John Denham believes that his prophecies on Labour's follies went unheeded by his party's leaders and all those in their thrall. It is too soon, in his view, to think of resurrection. The post mortem is only just beginning. ■

Living on the edge

Labour's remarkable victory in Birmingham Edgbaston wasn't supposed to happen – **Gisela Stuart** explains how she did it and what it means for the future.



Gisela Stuart
is MP for Edgbaston

Edgbaston was won in Labour's landslide in 1997. In 2010 it was widely predicted the Tories would retake the seat as people turned against Labour nationally. Edgbaston was number 38 on the Tory target list. The Tories needed only a 2 per cent swing to win the seat.

On election night in May the list of Tory target seats which did turn blue was a long one, but Edgbaston stood out as one of the few little blobs of red. We were among a handful of seats, including Westminster North and Hammersmith, to buck the trend on swings of less than 1 per cent. So how did we do it and can other constituencies do something similar?

The party and the candidate both have to offer something distinct to the voters

Our slogan was "Gisela Stuart. I'm Labour, my values are Labour, but I think for myself". Most people vote for the party first and foremost. All candidates love to think that there is a massive personal vote out there, but that's rarely true.

We focused on the constituency work, the odd occasions when I thought the party had got it wrong – like 10p tax

and the referendum on the European Constitution – and we decided that basic constituency interests will always come first.

So whatever 'personal vote' there is needs to add to the overall vote, without taking away from the Labour vote.

The future is much more important than the past

We did tell people about what we'd achieved locally, from the new hospital to the new school crossing, but they were used to illustrate my ability to deliver and keep promises.

Almost two years before the election we had began a process of pulling together what would eventually become 'Gisela's local manifesto'. Surveys and meetings on subjects including immigration, how much MPs should be paid, and new tax proposals enabled us to articulate what local people wanted.

Run the best campaign possible rather than focus on winning

It was not about winning, but about running the best possible campaign. This may sound counterintuitive: , but the best campaign is one that involves people, motivates them and gives them a reason to vote. The message is important, but there must be content to what you say.

Perceived wisdom is that you should identify those who are for you. We turned this on its head and only excluded those who were against us – the rest were part of the pool of people we talked to.

And we spent considerable time recruiting and motivating local volunteers – they are voters, ambassadors, spreaders of the message and helpers.

The candidate should only do what only the candidate can do

I focused on talking to those who thought that I'd done a good job as an MP, but weren't sure whether they'd vote for me. Their reasons varied, but we had proper conversations which involved really listening.

I would talk to the press, attend hustings, go to two school gates every day – but would let the team get on with the rest.

Quick response and flexibility

The leadership debates introduced a new dimension and changed the political landscape from one week to the next. We didn't finalise the text for our leaflets and direct mail letters until the last moment. Page 1 would be printed in one room whilst we were still writing the text for page 2 in the other room. On several occasions the night shift would run the printing press, with the morning shift taking over to get letters folded and stuffed for the afternoon shift to take them to deliverers. The sleeping bag on the floor upstairs started to acquire an iconic status.

People make the difference

It's not so much a question of 'how many' volunteers, but a question of whether the volunteers are a part of the team, are able to make decisions, deal with problems and motivate others.

The 'Team GS' website was a useful tool to pull people together and alert the ever-widening volunteer base to when there would be a street stall, when we needed people to come in and stuff envelopes, deliver letters, make calls or join door knocking sessions. But it was the individual approach and personal commitment which made the difference.

Is that how we will fight the next election? Well, I doubt it. The key lesson is that trained and empowered local volunteers who have a deep understanding of campaigning and the local area need to be able to adapt to circumstances which change around them. 2010 will never happen again: Facebook, Twitter, emails and automated calls will play a greater role. But at the same time we'd anticipate that having a local message and community engagement will increase in significance.

We learnt a lot in 2010. We fought it as if it had been our own by-election – which coincided with a national election.

So personalities matter, there is no room for prima donnas (even if they are the candidate) and consultations have to be genuine endeavours to find out what people think as well as offering leadership and your own values. ■

After defeat

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In a brutally honest look at where Labour went wrong, David Lammy outlines the changes the party needs to make so that “we can be ready to serve our country again”.



David Lammy is Labour MP for Tottenham and the former higher education minister

We lost the election and we could be out of power for a generation. What will determine our future now is how deeply we rethink and how quickly we regroup.

The new political reality is this: the new coalition government has done more to modernise and rebrand the Conservative Party than anything since Margaret Thatcher. Cameron is no longer the prisoner of his party's right flank. He has the chance to earn the trust of the British people in government.

We must also recognise the significance of our own defeat. We lost nearly one hundred seats. We dropped to third place in a further eighty-one. We lost vast swathes of the south. Nationally it was our worst result since Michael Foot. The Tories need a swing of just 2 per cent more to gain an overall majority. It wasn't the armageddon that some expected but let's not kid ourselves: this was a resounding defeat.

There are a number of temptations for our party now. Blame the Lib Dems. Blame our party's leadership. Blame the electoral system. Blame the electorate. If only it were that simple. Instead we need to ask ourselves some searching questions about who and what we stand for in the twenty-first century. Only then will we earn the right to govern again.

Democratising our party

The first lesson must be that when parties act undemocratically it comes back to haunt them. This is one of the great lessons of New Labour: a project that hung on to a command-and-control style of politics until the last.

A deal in an Islington restaurant in 1994 led to the creation of two different tribes at the top of the party. It damaged our government and we cannot let it haunt us in opposition. In 1998 the same mistakes were made, this time to prevent Ken Livingstone from becoming the Labour candidate for London mayor. He ran as an independent and won.

In 2008 when the party needed renewing we had a coronation rather than an open debate. I was one of the people who was part of that. I share the blame with the other 300 MPs who made the same decision.

Even now some will argue about whether we should have changed the leadership of our party last year. The truth is that no-one really knows. We

should have had a leadership election in the first place. Within a year we had the election-that-never-was. We were left with a government that lacked popular legitimacy.

Even in our dying days in government, there was no sense that MPs, let alone party members would be consulted on what kind of deal could be offered to the Liberal Democrats. I supported talks over electoral reform – but we are a democratic party and yet again we forgot that.

This political culture hasn't just stifled our electoral prospects, it is suffocating our party. Before the election, membership had reached rock-bottom. Members feel disempowered. The Parliamentary Labour Party feels its voice is not heard. Our volunteers are wonderful but our candidates are still selected by fewer than a hundred people sitting in a room.

We need to renew our trust in democracy itself. In the leadership election we should introduce a fourth electoral college: the public. One fourth of the votes, alongside members, MPs and affiliated groups, should go to the people who will elect the next government of this country. We should not fear enfranchising them. In the longer-term we need a new democratic culture within our party. We must put the long shadow of the 1980s behind us and give our members a proper voice in their own party. Members should be balloted over policy for our next manifesto, for a start. If we think this is just about leadership, we have big problems.

Beyond managerialism

The election itself proved that we stopped listening not just to our own members but also to the country. Going into the election 80 per cent of the public said that they wanted 'change'. Our message: more of the same.

We warned people not to risk what they had, but forgot to offer hope of something better. We spoke about the economic recovery but never reform. The implicit message was that we would go back to the status quo. But people wanted more than this. The financial crisis revealed that markets are amoral. People wanted ethics, not just economics. For the campaign we should have run,



Diane Abbot and David Miliband speak to over 900 people at the Fabian Leadership Hustings

anyone should watch Gordon Brown's speech to Citizens UK: passionate, idealistic and reformist. This should have been our message throughout.

Similarly, we allowed Cameron and Clegg to claim the mantle of political reform. This despite the fact the Tories had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into a referendum on a new electoral system – which, of course, they will oppose. Why did this happen? Because we had already passed up the opportunity in government. The debate we are now having illustrates how important our government's modernising mission was – and how damaging it is that it was never seen through.

The tragedy is that we even had some decent policy in the manifesto. A levy on the banks. A cap on interest rates for loans. Electoral reform. Tough, mandatory regulation of lobbyists. But rather than offering a story about Britain's future, our manifesto read more like a telephone directory. It was a long list of disconnected proposals.

Those of us who have been ministers have swallowed too much of the language and culture of the civil service. We have become too managerialist and technocratic. For Labour's next generation this is the moment of reckoning. We cannot simply offer the public shopping lists of carefully targeted policies. Policy must be underpinned by a wider vision of social justice that people can buy into, whatever their circumstances.

Rebuilding our coalition

With the Lib Dems propping up the Tories there will be a great temptation to

simply wait for the coalition to collapse. Some will think we should just oppose Tory cuts and wait for the electorate to return to us with open arms. That would be a colossal mistake. Instead we need to focus on reconnecting with the ideas and values that are authentically Labour.

We need to renew our trust in democracy itself

The precondition for that is to drop some of the old labels that are no guide to our political future. Most obviously 'New Labour' has become a meaningless term and should be confined to history. No-one in the party wants to re-write Clause 4. And no-one seriously wants to reheat the policies, the language and the political methods of the last decade. We must move on. Similarly, there can no longer be 'Blairites' and 'Brownites'. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown both served our party, but neither is now active in British politics. We must not collapse into old factions and infighting.

The truth is that our party is itself a coalition – of trade unionists, Christian socialists, NGOs and local community activists, human rights campaigners, environmentalists, feminists and anti-racists. We are at our best when we draw from all these traditions. Of course there will be disagreements but renewal must take place in that spirit.

We should revive an ethical socialist tradition that asserts moral limits to markets: the idea that there are some ways of making money that societies should not accept. That means stopping speculators in the city from rigging

takeover deals for their own gain; a cap on the interest charged by lenders; tougher licensing of betting shops and casinos; measures to stop the commercialisation of childhood; mutuals and cooperatives that bring together workers and consumers to stand for the common good.

We should revive a labour tradition that speaks to the idea that workers are people who must be respected, not merely commodities to be exploited. That means a place for employees on the boards of companies; policies for a living wage; and taxes that focus more on wealth and less on work.

We should revive a communitarian tradition that speaks a language of obligation as well as entitlement. That means more policy focus on parenting; having something to say about fatherhood and family breakdown; a benefits system that does not entangle people in welfare; a character-building national civic service; and, on migration, clarity that people are joining a community not just a job market.

These lost traditions must sit alongside Labour restoring our claim to a proud place in the liberal tradition, committed to human rights and pluralism. We pioneered this country's liberalisation on race, gender and gay rights to which others have now adapted, but we must now demonstrate ourselves to be less casual with civil liberties too.

If we do that we can rediscover a vocabulary and set of ideas that we lost. We can begin talking not just about the 'empowerment' of the individual to do as we please but also of love, obligation, cooperation and compromise.

Conclusion

All is not lost. We are not in government but we need not enter the electoral wilderness. To avoid this fate we must not fear change.

It is time to start to imagine a new governing project. We need to become a more open, democratic party, not centralised and controlling. We must become a more forward looking party that offers vision and reform rather than defence of the establishment. And above all we will only rebuild our governing coalition by rediscovering our own unique identity. Achieve this and come the next election we can be ready to serve our country again. ■

Labour's London victory

Despite widespread gloom for Labour on election night, it was different story in London. **Ken Livingstone** explains why.



To say that the London Labour Party was ecstatic with its results in the general election is only the mildest exaggeration. The last time the Tories had a seven per cent lead over Labour nationally – in John Major's surprise 1992 upset – they had an eight per cent lead in London. But at the 2010 general election, where once again the Tories had a national lead of seven per cent, they were two per cent behind Labour in London, and Labour won a clear majority of parliamentary seats.

The media has largely ignored this story, but the fact is that if Britain had swung like London, Labour would still be in government with a working majority.

On the day of the general election, all 32 London borough councils were also up for re-election. Labour had expected to win three or four boroughs back simply because the elections in 2006 were fought under terrible political conditions for Labour: John Prescott's affair, Charles Clarke's mistaken early release of several hundred murderers and rapists, and the imminent bankruptcy of a large part of the NHS. So as the results came through with Labour winning a clear majority of London boroughs – including Enfield and Harrow and, of particular interest, all those boroughs run by Tory/Liberal coalitions – no-one could really believe it. Just a few weeks ago many were nervous that the BNP might even win a narrow majority of seats on Barking

and Dagenham council, but they went down to a crushing defeat which will most probably mean Nick Griffin being challenged for the BNP leadership.

All my political life London has tended to be broadly in line with the national swing, occasionally a little bit more Tory but, significantly, often prefiguring the swing at the following general election. Ever since the present London boroughs were established in 1964, the party that won control of Ealing has gone on to win the subsequent general election, which is good news for all the Eds and all the Milibands. It also means that when Labour and trade union members cast their votes to elect the next leader of the Labour Party they need to be sure the person they are voting for is ready to be prime minister, as they may not have much time to grow into the role in opposition.

So what, if anything, can the Labour Party learn from London's success? It may simply be that like the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the establishment of the Greater London Authority has allowed Londoners to develop a distinct political culture. Alternatively it could be that as Londoners have had two years of experience of Tory government under Boris Johnson, they had a clear warning about what would befall them if Cameron got in to Number 10. Savage fare increases, which have been concentrated on the poorest who use the buses, were only to be expected. But even Boris's admirers were shocked to discover he was cutting the police budget, reducing the number of police officers by over 400, and refusing to guarantee the future of the dedicated beat police teams in every ward.

Even worse for London's long term prosperity, Johnson has followed the classic pattern of political cowardice – which disfigured so many previous governments – by concentrating his cuts in the investment programme where there is no immediate voter kickback. Literally every capital project under development at City Hall which was not contractually committed has been scrapped. Not just the smaller projects which made the city a nicer place to live, like improving 100 city squares, but the transport investment which is crucial to London's continuing competitiveness against other great world cities – the DLR extension to Dagenham Dock, a new bridge linking Newham with south east London, the cross London tram, high speed bus routes in the Thames Gateway and – just to show that voting for Boris brings no rewards – he scrapped the proposal to extend the Croydon tram to Bromley (the borough that gave him his biggest majority).

Like so many in the new Con-Dem cabinet, Johnson's personal wealth insulates him from the daily struggles that define the lives of the majority. London is a city where half the population live on under £25,000 a year (in one of the most expensive cities on earth) and a third of children live below the poverty line. Johnson himself does understand the struggle to make ends meet. Facing what must be at least £25,000 a year for his children's school fees and the mortgage on a new £2 million Islington home there was no way he could survive on his take home pay of just £100,000 a year, so he's been forced to moonlight at the Daily Telegraph who pay him a quarter of a million pounds for the onerous task of writing one column a week.

It will be tempting to believe that Labour's excellent showing in London is merely a backlash against the excesses of Boris but we would be fools to assume that the mayoralty will just drop into Labour's hands in two years time. With uncritical coverage from the majority of the media, Johnson will spend much of the next two years posing as a defender of London whilst surreptitiously passing on the cuts. The mayoralty is a sufficiently high profile post that many judge it on the merits of the candidates rather than simply voting the party line. Two years ago, whilst Labour nationally was winning only 24 per cent of the vote in the local elections, in London I managed to get 47 per cent of the vote to Johnson's 53 per cent.

It's never possible to prove there is one main reason to explain an election outcome but my instinct is, whatever the impact of Boris's administration on the voting figures, the biggest factor was the distinctly more radical and socialist image that has been built up by the London Labour party over the last

decade. As well as running well ahead of the national party two years ago, London did dramatically better than anywhere else in England except for the north east in last year's Euro elections.

Londoners look at the Labour Party and see MPs and local councillors who have taken positions well to the left of the party nationally, not just on Blair's ill-judged wars but on the key issues of class and redistribution of wealth. Labour's internal and private analysis of voting trends over the last decade show that the big collapse in the Labour vote was in 2001, where Labour got three million fewer votes than in the 1997 election. A further million votes were lost in 2005 and again in 2010 but the trend over this decade has been that we have haemorrhaged votes amongst poorer families.

It's important to spell out that we are not simply talking about the traditional working class but also those lower middle class families whose income has been painfully squeezed in recent years. When Thatcher came to power

the top ten per cent earned four times the income of the bottom ten per cent. Today that figure has risen to eight times and many middle class families only sustained their quality of life by borrowing heavily.

Over the last 30 years the proportion of GDP paid in wages has been cut from 67 per cent to 54 whilst income from dividends has soared. While the new government plans £6 billion of extra cuts this year, the Guardian reports that bankers' pay and bonuses in the four months to April has climbed back to £20.5 billion, just £4 billion less than at the height of the boom in 2007. Over the next few months and years this government will make savage cuts in the wages, pensions and services that sustain the vast majority of the population whilst the financiers who landed us in this mess are going to continue in the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed. Whoever becomes the next Labour leader needs to rediscover the politics of class, not just because it is right but because it is the only route back to power. ■

LABOUR PARTY LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS AND ANIMAL WELFARE

**If you are interested in the candidates views on Animal Welfare then contact
Wally Burley Chair Labour Animal Welfare Society.
E.Mail walter@burley57.wanadoo.co.uk and you will be sent a copy of the
"Impact" magazine which contains the candidates views on Animal Welfare.**

Labour Animal Welfare Society was set up on 30th September 1992 as an organisation for those who are Labour Party members and supporters of the Labour Party.

The objectives of the society are to:

- ***Give support to the Labour Party on animal welfare issues.***
- ***Educate, promote and organise discussion on matters concerning animal welfare.***
- ***Influence policy and decision making at all levels of the Labour movement to improve the welfare of animals.***
- ***Promote our beliefs that human beings have obligations towards other animals.***

I wish to join the Labour Animal Welfare Society(LAWS)

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Membership £6. Unwaged, Pensioner, and Students £3.

Please find enclosed my subscription and or a

Donation of £.....

Please make cheques and PO's payable to "LAWS" and return to Wally Burley, LAWS, 13 Camborne Court, Camborne Road, Walsall WS5 3JE.

Phone: 07833664032

The opposition opportunity

Steve Munby looks at how Labour has rebuilt itself locally after defeats and explains there is power in opposition if you know how to use it.



Councillor Steve Munby is Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Liverpool City Council

In May, Labour won back control of Liverpool council from the Lib Dems after 12 years in opposition. This was a remarkable achievement given the national political context – the unpopularity of the Labour Government and the supposed ‘surge’ in Lib Dem support. Much has been made of the importance of ‘the local’ in providing this election’s surprising swing, and here in Liverpool you see it in full effect: Labour reversed its electoral decline by virtue of hard work, knowing your area, and earning voters’ trust.

This election in Liverpool has provided a testing ground for the ways in which Labour needs to reconnect nationally and how to use this period in opposition. One of the things we’ve learnt is that being out of office does not make you powerless. You can achieve results at a ward level that matter to people. For example, in some areas where the Lib Dems cut the youth service, we’ve used the ward councillors’ neighbourhood fund to put youth workers on the streets at evenings and weekends, who can talk to young people hanging around on street corners or in parks. We’ve done this in partnership with housing associations and the police, and in the process have slashed rates of anti-social behaviour. Where the council’s private contractors failed to keep the place clean, we’ve used local social enterprises to

clean up wards. Labour Councillors have worked with leaseholders to form networks of residents’ groups and eventually the largest federation of leaseholders in the country. All of these are experiences we can build on now we are running the city.

We were out of office for twelve years so perhaps others can learn as much from our mistakes as our successes. But there are certain obvious things we did that should be basic for any local party wishing to win elections. The leader, Joe Anderson, has been like fish and chips – never out of the papers. Not just on party political issues – but most memorably in the brave campaign to free Liverpool fan Michael Shields from jail in Bulgaria. We used other publicity tools to reconnect

Labour in opposition needs to find ways of providing better services for less that can convince the public we’ve learnt from our mistakes

with the voters. Every councillor is allowed to send a certain number of free letters to constituents every week, as long as they are not political in nature. So we write to them about licensing and planning applications, drug-dealing and anti-social behaviour, bins, dogs, buses, landlords, leaf fall, quad bikes, and parking. It’s far more effective than leaflets and a lot less work, but it needs to be kept up month after month.

For much of the time the party in the city was fairly moribund. Our big campaigning resource was our councillors and we were expected to

work, not just in our own ward but across the city. Councillors were all assigned to target wards well before elections and in safe wards we were expected to do the minimum at election time: we should have done enough in the other nine months of the year to keep our seats safe. Candidates were increasingly recruited from local community activists and we won back wards by a clear focus on local issues. Telling voters the Labour government was doing a good job didn’t work, convincing voters the Labour candidate would do a good job for their ward did.

One of Labour’s biggest failings in government was to focus too much on hard power – legislation, command and control through targets and contracts. We didn’t spend enough time on delivery through soft power – building relationships with residents, partners, and members to solve local problems. This is even more vital in opposition. MPs, councillors and the party have to use their time and skills to deliver in opposition.

This will require MPs and councillors putting politics first, ahead of legislation and administration. I don’t mean simply negative campaigning – though this will be vital – but political organising to solve problems facing our communities. Large tracts of our major cities could become wastelands as regeneration projects grind to a halt. We can’t just leave them to become tips while complaining about the cuts; we need to work with local communities to find interim or cheaper solutions, like food gardens, allotments, and play areas. We can be proud of Labour’s record in government in investing in public services. But our record of managing them was not so good. Labour in opposition needs to find ways of providing better services for less that can convince the public we’ve learnt from our mistakes and prove we have a better model for public services under a future Labour government.

We need to take Cameron and Clegg at their word on the ‘Big Society’ and devolving power, and come up with local solutions like Lambeth’s model of ‘mutualism’ that show Labour can do better. That’s a big shift for the party – but we need to do it to win back the confidence of voters and protect our people from the tough times ahead. ■

Labour needs to become a 50:50 party

With disappointment about the low visibility of Labour women on the campaign trail becoming an increasing factor in the current leadership race, the party now needs to work much harder to become more representative says **Julie Mellor**.



Julie Mellor was Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission between 1999 and 2005

Labour can't win elections without women's votes. The party won power in 1997 by turning around a post-war, pro-Tory bias among women that had strengthened during the Thatcher years and maintaining this advantage was key to Labour's electoral success in 2001 and 2005. Indeed, in 2005, if men had been the only voters we would have had a hung parliament and if women had been the only voters Labour would have had a majority of more than 100 seats.

All of which makes the decline in support for Labour amongst

women particularly worrying. At the last election Labour haemorrhaged support everywhere, but it was the loss of women voters of all ages that was most striking and will prove most parlous to Labour's long term electoral health. If we don't take radical action to become more representative and show we understand the reality of the lives that many women lead, it will be a long time before Labour emerges from opposition.

This is an important moment: Labour must capitalise on the growing desire for constitutional and electoral reform, and respond with radical and imaginative ideas to build a representative party capable of winning women's votes again.

The last Government did much to tackle inequality and to support families, and made significant improvements to parental leave and in childcare provision, to take just two examples. Yet Labour lost votes in the election because we had collective amnesia about those achievements and failed to show we understood what matters to many women.

We know that many women say they want to see more 'people like me' in politics. So it was deeply frustrating to see women relegated to the sidelines during the general election campaign. Many people across progressive politics were left angry and confused – had we learnt nothing from the last century of campaigning for greater representation and visibility? In addition, while I was aware that only 31 per cent of Labour MPs are women, I was shocked to learn that only one in three party members are women. We are unrepresentative from top to bottom.

This is why women activists are challenging leadership candidates to produce their own plans for building that representative party. The quality of their plans will help us judge their ability to renew the party and make us electable again.

We will be looking for urgent and comprehensive plans for action on local campaigning and party membership, on ensuring priorities for women voters are Labour's priorities too and on achieving parity in our parliamentary representation.

On local campaigning we can build on the constituency campaigns that

bucked national trends and increased Labour's majority. We can learn from the magnificent campaign of Margaret Hodge to boot out the BNP in Barking. She listened to people's local concerns and followed through with action so voters saw real improvements on issues they had raised. Gisela Stuart's campaigners in Birmingham Edgbaston listened to voters, and drew up a local manifesto in response to what they heard, as she reports in this edition of the Fabian Review. These campaigns can attract more women to become involved on local issues that matter to them, and can turn them into Labour supporters and party members.

Labour faces real challenges to its parliamentary representation if the number of seats is reduced. But let's not allow that to be an excuse for a brake on the very gradual increase in women MPs that we have seen. It is easy to see how turnover could be reduced as current MPs compete for fewer seats, creating less room for new and diverse candidates. Instead we can call for informed debate on how to avoid such a negative effect. For example, if we had mandatory open selections and twinning of seats (with the selection of one man and one woman to each) we could transform our parliamentary representation overnight.

In her new book, *Talking to a Brick Wall*, Labour pollster Deborah Mattinson says many voters would welcome electronic voting in the Commons so MPs can spend more time in the constituency; add to this job sharing for MPs and you would have a package that makes the job more family friendly for all MPs and makes it easier for more women to enter and stay in politics.

Failure to act now would be a travesty. At a time when the voters are demanding reform and the coalition Government is planning sizable constitutional and electoral change, we would be throwing away a golden opportunity to make a step change towards becoming a 50:50 party. A party which better understands the reality of women's lives is better able to respond to the issues that matter to them and better able to win women's votes. ■

Recovery road

With an unprecedentedly austere budget not only threatening economic growth but a double-dip recession, **Rachel Reeves** says the Government needs to take the regional route to rebuilding the economy.



Rachel Reeves
is MP for Leeds West

George Osborne is right to make reducing the deficit a priority. He is wrong, though, to think spending cuts and tax increases are sufficient to achieve this goal. The surest way to reduce the budget deficit is to help the economy return to growth, with the lower benefit payments and higher tax revenues that would ensue.

Just look at the evidence from around the world: the debt burden in Japan at 190 per cent of GDP, for example, reflects a recession that continued, on and off, for over a decade. Unless we ensure a sustainable recovery, the budget deficit will inevitably grow. The greatest risk we face right now is a double dip recession – with the job losses and higher budget deficits this would bring. A hands-off approach to the recovery will put Britain in the slow lane in the world economy.

In short, the Government must have a clear and coherent vision for tomorrow's economy.

At its best this new economy will be built on our strengths in high-end manufacturing, creative industries, our great university and research traditions, and green technologies. It will require investment in skills, infrastructure, science and technology and in order to be strong and sustainable it should be regionally and industrially diverse. It will require a responsible banking sector to provide finance and stability, and a

supportive government that works with business to realise this vision.

But this new economy will not happen by chance. It will need investment – in skills, training, research, infrastructure, and finance. And it is this that not only justifies, but necessitates, a strategic role for government.

Where the market fails to provide finance for innovative companies, the Government must assist. The new Government's decision to overturn a loan to Sheffield Forgemasters which would have produced key components for the nuclear industry is a depressing example of this *laissez-faire* approach, and is a decision which will mean Britain losing out on an opportunity to develop high quality jobs and investment. While the Government talks about a more diverse economy, they will not back up their aspirations with policies to achieve them.

While we have faced a global recession, the routes out of it will be local and regional. For this to happen, every part of Britain must have a strategy for re-building our economy, based on local strengths. Although national policies for supporting the economy are critical, jobs and industries need a local framework.

In Yorkshire we have huge pride in our industrial past: the Victorian buildings which adorn our towns and cities are a testimony to the riches and the confidence of that era. Our purpose now must be as bold and as permanent – to put Yorkshire back in charge of its own economic destiny. One of the most invidious effects of the recessions of the 1980s and 1990s was to rob communities of the sense that they could build a better future for themselves. The true test of the success of our local economic strategies today will be whether they can return to

local people a true sense of control over their own economic future.

Critical to this are the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). An independent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers showed that, on average, every £1 spent by the RDAs generates an extra £4.50 for their regional economies. RDAs can lead rejuvenation in a way that Whitehall simply can't. They are closer to the businesses and people they are supporting, and can be far more targeted. In Yorkshire and the Humber, for example, there is the clean coal experiment in coal fields in South Yorkshire, and wind technology development on the Humber Estuary. These investments could have gone anywhere in the world. The fact that they have come to Yorkshire shows what can be achieved when business works together with central and local government. Other regions will have other ambitions that they pursue, linking a regionally and sectorally diverse economy that is good for the regions and good for Britain. But the new government are now scrapping the RDAs and the support they provided for jobs and growth.

Re-balancing the economy must also include a bold approach on skills. The outgoing Labour Government made substantial investment in workplace skills, vocational diplomas in schools and colleges, and in the successful apprenticeship schemes. In Leeds and across West Yorkshire, the impact is clear. At Leeds College of Building, 400 people have started an apprenticeship in this year alone, while in my constituency of Leeds West more than 200 people graduated last year (three times more than a decade ago) with apprenticeships in a range of industries including engineering, electronics, printing, catering and design. Scrapping the RDAs, abolishing the Future Jobs Fund and cutting funding for universities and colleges risks our long-term competitiveness.

We must seek to ensure that while the coalition focuses on bringing down the budget deficit, this is not at the expense of rebuilding the economy. Labour must hold the new Government to account – to ensure it embeds the fragile economic recovery that the last Government achieved. ■

Drowning in detail

Obscure facts and questionable judgements mar Martin Pugh's major new history of the Labour Party, says **Dianne Hayter**.



Dianne Hayter is a former General Secretary and Chair of the Fabian Society



Speak for Britain! A New History of the Labour Party

Martin Pugh

Bodley Head
£20

Pugh's book was never likely to receive a friendly review from this former General Secretary of the Fabian Society, saying as it does that the "Fabian Society was once thought to occupy a major role in the emergence of the Labour Party... this reputation now seems greatly exaggerated".

More problematic is that the book never decides what its audience is – new party members, Labour MPs or perhaps Lib Dems now in the Coalition Government. It is certainly not for novices to history, introducing unexplained names, little context and too much detail. Yet for us anoraks, who love the detail, there is little new analysis.

What there is by way of thesis – that Labour usually chooses the wrong leader and keeps them too long – is deeply questionable, whilst the book offers little assistance to whoever will emerge as Labour's next leader.

Pugh considers that Labour "for once" picked the right leader with MacDonald in 1922, whereas in re-electing Attlee in 1935 "the party chose a mediocrity in preference to the talented Morrison, though the consequences of this error were not to be fully apparent until 1950". Attlee "suffered some crippling defects... He became too absorbed by government and too detached from rank and file", misjudged the timing of elections and ministerial appointments, ignored party morale, and was a lousy campaigner (never mind that he won a higher share of the vote, albeit fewer seats, than the Conservatives in 1951). Quite an indictment of the man many regard to have been Labour's most successful leader. Meanwhile, Gaitskill brought "poor judgement... to the party leadership", made grand mistakes over Clause IV and defence, failed to take advice and had a poor grasp of tactics.

Labour "made a shrewd choice" in selecting Harold Wilson, an outstanding Leader of the Opposition and vigorous Prime Minister, before his own insecurity, and desire for control, led to fatal mistakes. His wish "to win a reputation for respectability and competence by conforming to existing practice" took over. Callaghan was "tired and bereft of ideas", Foot unequipped to handle Labour's internal problems or appeal to the electorate, Kinnock failed to achieve One Member One Vote

(Pugh never recognises his courage in facing down Militant) and John Smith is condemned for his "innate caution and even complacency". Mr Pugh is a hard man to please.

But despite the book's shortcomings, there are snippets of relevance today.

Pugh recalls the importance of religion to the party development, and to the emergence of socialist pioneers – in skills as well as the concern for others. Ethics were central, as Ramsay MacDonald said: "If [socialists] are to be unscrupulous, where are we to look for scruples?" Yet it was his award of a baronetcy to a personal financier which presaged the end of his government. The role of temperance in the growth of working class "respectability", political outlook and living standards is well documented. Working men needed freedom from alcohol in order to have the money to sponsor the friendly societies, trade unions and co-ops that sustained labour politics. Keir Hardie, Arthur Henderson, George Lansbury and Herbert Morrison were all prominent abstainers – some having witnessed the effect of men's drinking on their mothers, which also made them sympathetic to women's equality and their vote.

An ongoing issue for Labour that Pugh details is the party's various struggles with reform of the House of Lords, which began in 1884 when the Lords tried to block the extension of the vote to manual labourers. Richard Pankhurst campaigned for its abolition in 1895 and by 1922 Labour was committed to ending hereditary peerages. In 1923 Arthur Ponsonby MP introduced a bill to abolish all hereditary titles. But Labour dropped the pledge to abolish the Lords in 1928 and after Attlee created 82 hereditary peerages in 1945, pressure for reform declined. This perhaps provides some solace for those in the last Labour government who failed to finish the job.

Voting reform has had a similarly long and checkered history within the labour movement. The TUC voted in favour of proportional representation in 1911, but the wider movement was suspicious of this middle class preoccupation whilst others feared its challenge for party management, and it was defeated at the 1914 Conference. In 1930, MacDonald rejected the

Alternative Vote, fearing it would allow anti-Tories to vote Liberal as first choice, destroying Labour's chance of winning a majority and forcing it into governing in coalition.

The party's ambivalence over defence is continuous throughout Pugh's telling of history. From the First World War onwards, Labour faced division – between pacifists, those who objected to the alliance with the czarist regime, and supporters such as J.R. Clynes, who opined that the choice was “no longer between peace and war, but between peace and submission to the war-maker”. (After the war, MacDonald advocated a levy on fortunes above £5,000 – £500,000 in today's money – to pay off the national debt.)

Relations between – or distance from – other parties feature in the book, starting with the Independent Labour Party using “independent” to signify its separation from those who took the Liberal whip. Unions increasingly wanted their own parliamentary

representation, particularly after the 1901 Taff Vale judgement which ended union immunity to damages due to the actions of their members. However, it was partly the costly misjudgement of the Southampton Liberals not to back MacDonald in 1894, leading to his brilliant 1903 electoral pact with the Liberals, which effectively killed off the Liberal party and allowed Labour to blossom.

Decisions and political horse-trading around coalition and minority governments were not, however, solely a matter for the Parliamentary Labour Party. In 1915, Labour only entered Cabinet for the first time after the NEC overturned its initial 9:8 rejection. When MacDonald formed a minority administration – the first ever Labour government – in 1924, this required the support of the NEC, though Bevin unsuccessfully tried to commit Labour never to take office as a minority again at the 1925 Conference.

When Germany overran the Low Countries in May 1940, the NEC met in the Highcliffe Hotel, Bournemouth (during Conference) and agreed by 17:1 that Labour should join a coalition provided it was not led by Chamberlain, who thus stepped aside. In 1944, the NEC decided the post-war election would be fought as an independent party and in May 1945 pulled out of the coalition before the Japanese surrender. One can only ponder whether the NEC would have had any role in a Lib-Lab pact in May 2010.

But despite touching on these fascinating areas, the book fails to address the constant – and unresolved – tension that exists between leadership, party members and electorate. Sometimes ahead of their voters or leader, sometimes behind, the labour movement has yet to decide where the balance lies between vision, programme and propaganda; how to rank the achievements of Labour governments; and, vitally, how to secure their re-election. ■



FABIAN QUIZ



At the beginning of the 1970s, Britain seemed to be tottering on the brink of the abyss. Under the ungainly figure of Edward Heath, the optimism and prosperity of the Sixties had become a distant memory. In *State of Emergency The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974*, Dominic Sandbrook recreates the gaudy, schizophrenic atmosphere of the early Seventies: the world of Enoch Powell and Tony Benn, David Bowie and Brian Clough, Germaine Greer and Mary Whitehouse. He takes us back to an age when the unions were on the march and the socialist revolution seemed at hand, but also when feminism, permissiveness, pornography and environmentalism were transforming the lives of millions.

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

Under what slogan did Ted Heath fight the 1974 election?

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

Listings

BIRMINGHAM

All meetings at 7.00 in the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham. **Details from Claire Spencer** on virginiaisawithc@gmail.com

BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

25 July. Gordon Marsden MP on 'The Politics of Connection: Thoughts for a New Parliament?' All meetings at The Friends Meeting House, Wharnclyffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30. **Contact Ian Taylor** on 01202 396634 for details.

BRADFORD

New Group forming. If anyone is interested in joining, **please contact Celia Waller** on celiawaller@blueyonder.co.uk

BRIGHTON & HOVE

18 July. Annual Garden Party hosted by Baroness Joyce Gould. Guests of honour are Mr David Lepper, Dr Des Turner and Ms Celia Barlow. **Details and tickets at £7.50 from Maire McQueeney** on 01273 607910 email maircqueeney@waitrose.com

BRISTOL

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

CANTERBURY

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

CARDIFF AND THE VALE

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

CENTRAL LONDON

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

CHESHIRE

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

CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

8.00 in the Committee room at Chiswick Town Hall. **Details from Monty Bogard** on 0208 994 1780, email mb014f1362@blueyonder.co.uk

COLCHESTER

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

COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE

New Society forming. **For details contact Ben Ferrett** on ben_ferrett@hotmail.com

DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

Regular meetings at 8.00 in the Ship, Green Street Green Rd at 8.00. **Details from Deborah Stoa** on 0207 227 4904 email debstaote@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.rogers@gmail.com

EAST LOTHIAN

1 August. 10th Annual East Lothian Garden Party. **For details of this and all other meetings contact Noel Foy** on 01620 824386 email noel.foy@tesco.net

FINCHLEY

Enquiries to Mike Walsh on 07980 602122

GLASGOW

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

GLOUCESTER

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

GRIMSBY

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

HARROW

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

HAVERING

Friday 10th September @ 7.30pm, Stephen Timms, MP for East Ham discusses the election results. Venue tbc. John Cryer MP will speak in October – details tbc. **Contact David Marshall** for further information: email david.c.marshall.t21@btinternet.com tel 01708 441189

HERTFORDSHIRE

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

ISLINGTON

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

MANCHESTER

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

MARCHES

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

MIDDLESBOROUGH

New Society hoping to get established. **Please contact Andrew**

Maloney on 07757 952784 or email andrewmaloney@hotmail.co.uk for details

NEWHAM

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

NORTHUMBRIA AREA

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

NORTHAMPTON AREA

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

NORWICH

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

PETERBOROUGH

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

PORTSMOUTH

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

READING & DISTRICT

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

SHEFFIELD

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 2558341 or **Tony Ellingham** on 0114 274 5814 email tony.ellingham@virgin.net

SOUTH EAST LONDON

28 July. Speaker from Stop the War Campaign. 29 September. Speaker tbc 27 October. Lord Alf Dubs **For details of all future meetings, please visit our website at <http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/selfs/>**. Regular meetings; **contact Duncan Bowie** on 020 8693 2709 or email duncanbowie@yahoo.co.uk


SOUTHAMPTON AREA

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

SOUTH TYNESIDE

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


Scientists for Labour



The socialist society representing:
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www.scientists-for-labour.org.uk

Read the statements on the importance of STEM for a recovering economy and jobs on our website.

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Patrons include: Prof. Sir Tom Blundell,
Sir Paul Nurse, Lord Rees,
Lord David Sainsbury



SUFFOLK

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

SURREY

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

TONBRIDGE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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

TYNEMOUTH

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

WEST DURHAM

The West Durham Fabian Society welcomes new members from all areas of the North East not served by other Fabian Societies. It has a regular programme of speakers from the public, community and voluntary sectors. It meets normally on the last Saturday of alternate months at the Joiners Arms, Hunwick between 12.15 and 2.00pm – light lunch £2.00

Contact the Secretary Cllr Professor

Alan Townsend, 62A Low Willington, Crook, Durham DL15 0BG, tel, 01388 746479 email alan.townsend@wearvalley.gov.uk

WEST YORKSHIRE

Details from Jo Coles on Jocoles@yahoo.com

WIMBLEDON

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

WIRRAL

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

YORK

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

NOTICEBOARD

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

FABIAN EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

Call for nominations.
Closing date 16th August 2010

Nominations are now invited for:

- 15 Executive Committee places
- 4 Local Society places on the Executive
- Honorary Treasurer
- Scottish Convenor
- Welsh Convenor
- 12 Young Fabian Executive places

Election will be by postal ballot of all full national members and local society members. Nominations should be in writing and individuals can nominate themselves. Local society nominations should be made by local societies. At least two of the 15 national members and one of the four local society members elected must be under the age of 31 at the AGM on 13th November 2010. Nominees for both national and Young Fabian elections should submit a statement in support of their nomination, including information about themselves, of not more than 70 words.

Nominations should be sent to: Fabian Society Elections, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN. Or they can be faxed to 020 7976 7153 or emailed to phil.mutero@fabian-society.org.uk. Please write the position nominated for at the top of the envelope, fax or subject line of the email. The closing date for nominations is 16th August 2010.

AGM RESOLUTIONS

Any full member, national or local, may submit a resolution to the AGM.
The deadline for resolutions is 16th August 2010.

They should be addressed to the General Secretary at the Fabian Society or emailed to phil.mutero@fabian-society.org.uk.

Resolutions will be circulated in the Autumn issue of Fabian Review and amendments will be invited.

Please contact Phil Mutero at phil.mutero@fabian-society.org or phone 020 7227 4911 for more information about the above.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

On 14 November 2009 the Annual General Meeting of the Society agreed an increase of £2.00 in annual subscriptions to help fund our programme of events and publications. The annual rates are now:

	Cheque/Standing Order	Direct Debit
Ordinary	£37.00	£35.00
Reduced	£19.00	£18.00

Retired members, students, unwaged and unemployed members may pay at the reduced rate.

The six-month introductory offer remains at £9.95 (£5.00 for students).

FABIAN FORTUNE FUND

WINNERS:
Mark Abbott, £100 & C.J.D. Walsh, £100

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

FABIAN FRINGE

Join us at the Fabian fringe at Labour Party Conference 2010.

To read our full up-to-date conference programme visit <http://www.fabians.org.uk/events/events-news>

RECONNECTING LABOUR PUTTING THE HEART BACK INTO THE PEOPLE'S PARTY



I am proud of what Labour achieved in Government and the part I played. But after 16 years of New Labour we need a new start not more of the same. I will lead the change Labour desperately needs.

I recognise where we went wrong: allowing our pro-business stance to be misconstrued as anti-union; appearing to be more on the side of banks than people; courting elites, rather than making it our business to level the playing field.

Ordinary people need to know that Labour is on their side. As your leader, I will help kids without connections get on in life, support families who are doing the right thing but still feel the odds are stacked against them, and take the fear out of getting older.

And I will fight the Tories' attack on frontline services every step of the way.

As your leader, I will reconnect Labour with its roots. I will end the London-centric approach within our party and I will start by running my campaign from Manchester.

I will fight for you on the issues that matter to you: on education, on health, on housing. I will be a leader who can inspire, who speaks your language and gets things done.

I will be a leader that you – and Britain – can believe in.



Promoted by Kevin Lee on behalf of Andy Burnham MP both at 58 Port Street, Manchester M1 2EQ

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Labour

Defending our values. Fighting for fairness.

"We need a leader who is rooted in the values of the Labour, co-op and trade union movements – who understands that to win again we must be a tough opposition, develop a credible and radical programme for government and root our politics in the communities we serve."

Get in touch with Ed Balls

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"I was impressed that, more than any other Minister, Ed was in command of his civil servants and was able to drive through the sort of infrastructure projects that we need to avoid a double dip recession." – Ken Livingstone, Former Mayor of London



"Ed doesn't just talk about his values – he does so with real passion and he fights for them too. Whether it's getting more funding to tackle child poverty or being the first and only cabinet minister to pay the living wage in his department, Ed gets things done." – Kate Green, MP for Stretford & Urmston



"Ed is a determined and principled politician. He is also a loyal and honest friend of the co-operative movement – his record as a Minister promoting the co-operative agenda is unparalleled. Co-operative members should seize this opportunity to support Ed." – Peter Hunt, Co-op Party General Secretary, 98-08

