

# Fabian Review

A large, dark silhouette of a man in a suit is centered on the cover, set against a solid red background. The man is shown from the chest up, in profile, facing left. The silhouette is solid black, contrasting sharply with the red background.

NEW YEAR  
CONFERENCE  
SPECIAL ISSUE

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Winter 2010/11

## HIS TEST AND OURS

Liam Byrne, Maurice Glasman, Kate Green,  
Tom Hampson and Bryony Worthington  
set the big questions Labour's  
rethink must answer

# Independent thinking from Polity

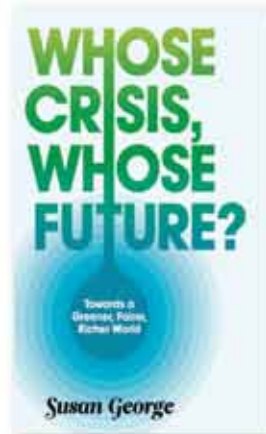
## Whose Crisis, Whose Future? Towards a Greener, Fairer, Richer World

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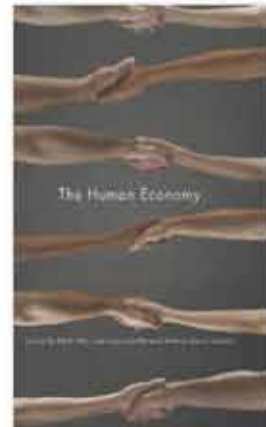
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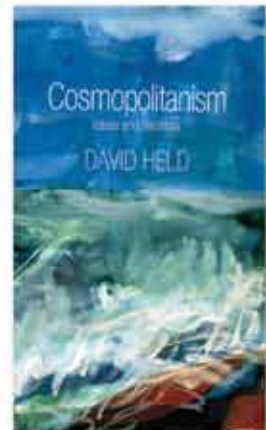
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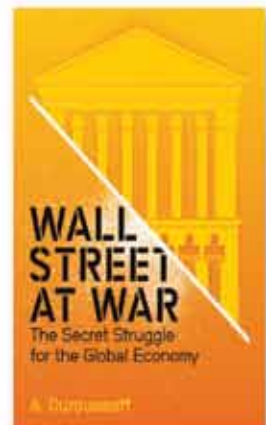




Image: Adrian Teal

# Listening and leading

There is no shortage of models for Ed Miliband's leadership. He must go his own way.

Party leaders will never be in want of unsolicited advice. Ed Miliband rightly argues that a party which polled just 29 per cent of the vote after 13 years in office should open everything to scrutiny, and begin a policy review from a "blank page". He should welcome more open debate, and disagreement too, wherever that is constructive.

The leader must persuade his party to embark on a journey of change. The initial contours of his thinking make strategic sense but require public animation: the need to regain economic credibility, while developing a post-crash political economy; drawing on Labour's own mutualist traditions to develop a less statist agenda, while defending the necessary role of government from reckless retreat; a party which is secure about its own mission of a fairer and more equal society, and so is able to operate more confidently in a more plural political environment.

There is no off-the-peg model of party leadership for Miliband to emulate which fits Labour's challenge today.

Tony Blair, between 1994 and 1997, was the most successful post-war opposition leader. Miliband can learn much from how the early Blair made a resonant public case that Britain was too divided and fractured. But much of the heavy lifting had already been done

for Blair before 1994: the Kinnock policy review that ditched the 1983 platform; John Smith's One Member One Vote victory, which was a bigger risk than replacing Clause IV; and the emergence of a new generation of Labour women.

After four successive defeats in 1992, most Labour opinion shared an analysis of the barriers to the party's electability. In 2010, after three victories and a heavy loss, there is not yet any shared analysis of what needs to change.

Ed Miliband's position rather more resembles that of Margaret Thatcher on becoming Tory leader in February 1975, inheriting a shadow cabinet which had overwhelmingly supported Ted Heath. She did not define Thatcherism within 100 days: her most important public engagement in her first months was to campaign for a Yes vote in the referendum which kept Britain in Europe. Thatcherism took shape much later, especially after the 1981 purge of the 'wets' from the Cabinet. Ed Miliband's instinctively collegiate approach to leadership should be welcomed by a party disfigured by factional conflict.

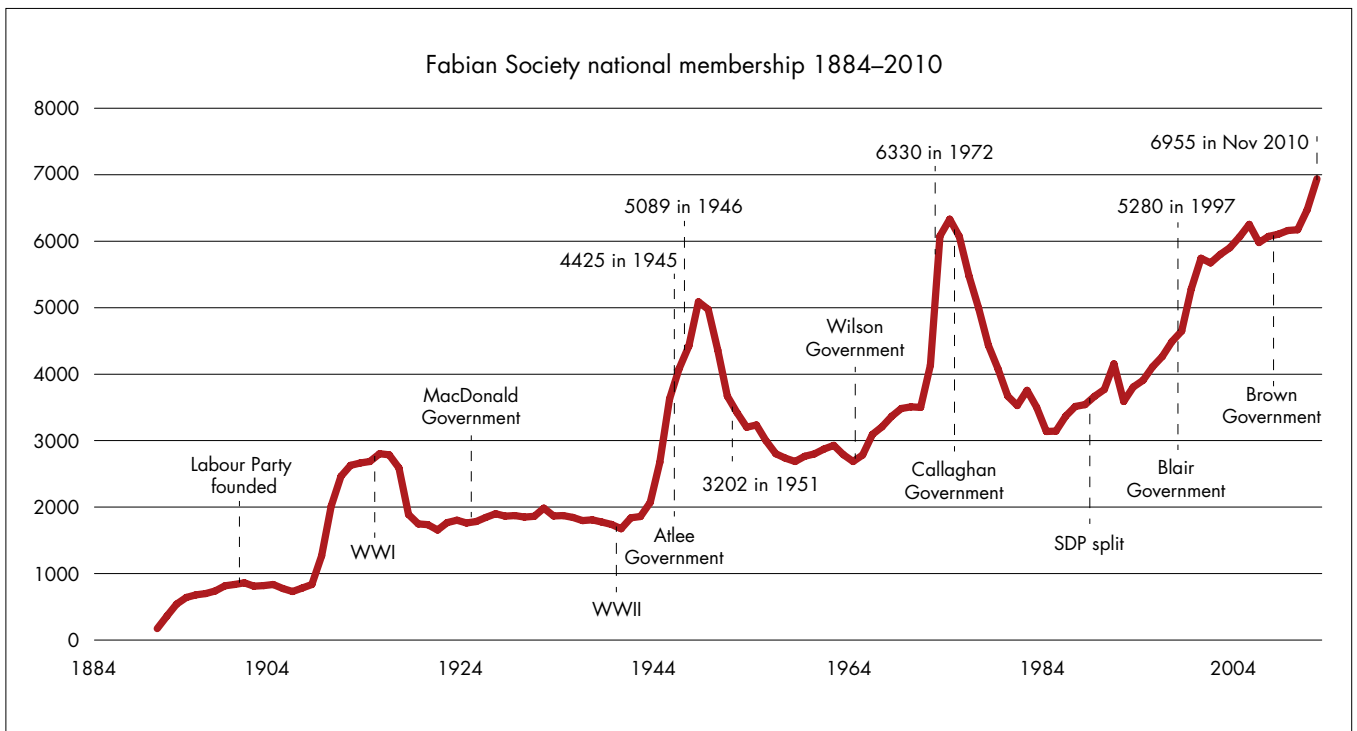
David Cameron's party leadership offers Miliband as many lessons in failure as in success. Cameron's bold first hundred days, which focused on photo opportunities designed to change the Tory brand, helped to get his party a

hearing. But four years later, the public remained unclear as to whether the Tory leader had anything to say. 74 per cent of voters in 2010 agreed it was time for a change of government, yet only 34 per cent thought Cameron had made his case. At the election – in circumstances more favourable to the opposition than those that produced the landslide of 1997 – Cameron won only 3 per cent more of the vote than Michael Howard had in 2005. He squeezed into Downing Street by default.

Tory commentators who say that the next election is in the bag for Cameron have never explained why he failed to win the last one. The Tory leader was kept awake at night by the consistent focus group findings that the Tories, in a crisis, would stick up for the rich. For all of the coalition sunshine of May, the Government's austerity agenda has probably done more to reinforce that perception than challenge it.

So there is all to play for in 2011. Labour begins the year slightly ahead in the polls, with one-third of Lib Dem voters having switched in six months. Labour's challenge – to construct an alternative and persuade people to choose it – remains great. It is not a challenge for the party leader alone.

SK



The aftermath of a dismal election result; the culmination of a long leadership contest; conference season 2010 was always going to be an interesting moment for the Labour tribe. So it proved, and the Fabian Fringe in Manchester Town Hall was packed out for debates on where Labour – under a new leadership – should go next. The Fabians ran more events than anyone else, and highlights included: Jack Straw defending New Labour’s justice policies; David Blunkett warning of the possibility of an enduring Tory-Lib Dem electoral alliance; Emily Thornberry sparring with Sunder Katwala over electoral reform; John Denham and Jon Cruddas issuing calls for the development of a distinctly English identity for Labour. The Fabian Fringe continues to extend its reach to the other party conference: at the Liberal Democrats in Liverpool David Lammy discussed the possibility of a broad realignment on the British left with Nick Clegg’s PPS Norman Lamb; whilst the Conservative conference in Birmingham played host to a lively roundtable discussion about creating green jobs in the midst of recession.

Membership of the Fabian Society continues to grow, hitting another new record high of over 6950 – the

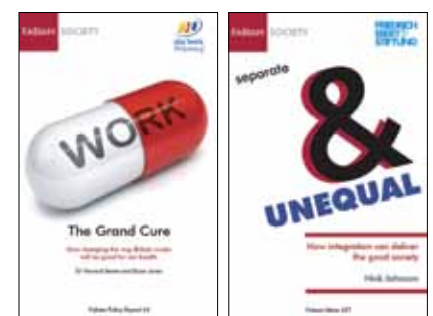
highest at any time since we were founded in 1884, as Giles Wright’s graph above shows. This means the Society is now twice as large as it was at the end of the Attlee Government. Not only does this ongoing fillip refute claims that people are no longer as politically engaged as they were in the good old days, it confirms the Fabian Society retains its place at the centre of Labour renewal.

Lib Dem Business Secretary Vince Cable joined a Fabian round table to discuss building a more cohesive European economic policy. As part of a series of seminars focusing on Europe’s role in an increasingly “G2” global economic order – dominated by the US and China – the session warned that Britain should work to place itself at the very centre of Europe; sidelining ourselves within the EU could damage our global positioning in the future.

The Fabian Society’s blog Next Left was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> most popular Labour blog and 15<sup>th</sup> overall in Total Politics top 50 political blogs poll. Go to [www.nextleft.org](http://www.nextleft.org) for topical political commentary and analysis, including why Nick Clegg is wrong

on social mobility, and interview with Charles Clarke on lessons for Labour’s policy review.

Two new Fabian pamphlets were published in October and November. In *Separate and Unequal: How integration can deliver the good society*, Nick Johnson warned Ed Miliband that neither the left’s focus on multiculturalism nor New Labour’s uncritical acceptance of individualism and consumerism will chime with the public’s yearning for a strong and shared society. This was followed by *Work, the Grand Cure: How changing the way Britain works will be good for our health*, by Howard Stoate and Bryan Jones which argued that the Government must make ‘good work’ central to its health inequalities and jobs strategies.



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

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## Out of the shadows

The Labour Party knows it was roundly rejected at the last election and that opposition is a tricky business. For now, though, the issue is not whether Labour has all the right answers, it's whether it is asking the right questions. The party's policy review is an opportunity to attempt two contradictory things: listening humbly to the public while being clear about the kind of society Labour wants to build. **Liam Byrne** is the man tasked with this by Ed Miliband, and here he kicks off the Fabian Review's guide to the big challenges the party needs to overcome on its route back to power.



Liam Byrne MP is shadow minister for the Cabinet Office and is leading Labour's policy review

**How does Labour bounce back?** The leadership debates gave us all a good, long chance to think about the reasons we lost – and lost so badly – at the last election. It is now the task of the policy review that the party has

embarked on to patiently, carefully put together a programme that will take us back to power.

We find ourselves in a very different position to recently-defeated parties of the past. We've emerged from the last few months with a sense of pride in our record and unity in the ranks. If anything, most of us feel we should have been a bit prouder and louder about our record. And there is no great ideological fissure dividing our movement and our thoughts about the future.

But there is one inescapable fact that sets the context for the policy

review. And that is the degree to which swathes of the public feel our party is out of touch. If you press voters, most will tell you that politicians of all parties are out of touch, but almost 60 per cent of the electorate say that Labour is seriously out of touch with the views of ordinary working people. That tells us that the policy review has to start with a major exercise tuning in – and being seen to tune in – to the realities of life in modern Britain and the ambitions of Britain's people.

Hence the need to spend much of the next year talking to voters

about how they see the future – and ask too where the public feels our current campaign priorities should lie. And we need to send a powerful message that we are not giving up on changing Britain just because we're not in government. There is much we can do now, through the force and power of local elected office and the power of community action.

We need to reconnect that debate to the swathe of experts and organisations across the breadth of civil society, and that is why Ed Miliband and I have asked every member of the shadow cabinet to set up working parties to review in an open-minded way, a range of big questions. Crucially, Ed and I want to make sure that Labour is an expert in all the relevant perspectives when we make policy: 'what's it like to live on low pay?'; 'what's it like to start a business?'; 'what's it like to live in fear of crime?'; 'what's it like to run a charity?'. I hope too that we will be able to draw on a range of independent commissions and expert studies here in Britain and internationally.

What is the kind of stuff we need to get into? Naturally I don't want to second guess what is said to us, but there are a few big picture issues that strike me as important.

The first is how Britain is going to make its fortune in the world that is coming. As globalisation accelerated over the last decade, we grew wealth per head faster than any other country in the G7. But in the years to come, globalisation is going to change speed and direction: it may speed up, and become far more geared to Asia and new markets. The American consumer – once 25 per cent of US GDP – isn't going to be the same force he or she once was: \$8 trillion of US wealth has been destroyed and returning to sustainable levels of debt after a financial crash takes a good six or seven years. You can't write off an American recovery, but you can't bet on it either.

Global growth will be increasingly about the 'rise of the rest'. Brazil, Russia, India and China will be four out of the five largest economies by 2050. They can go it alone now, whether we like it or not: trade within Asia is already \$1 trillion; China is Lamborghini's second

market. But Asian competition will be different in the future – currently \$7 trillion rests in foreign exchange reserves and some \$2-3 trillion rests in sovereign wealth funds, money which is now moving into industrial production. Our competitors are about to be transformed.

That means we have to have a view about how we bend global growth so it works for us. Surely that means leading on debates about global economic



reform? Yes, but it also means matching a growth strategy abroad with a new political economy at home. If \$3-4 trillion is about to get invested in foreign competitors, then we urgently need institutions and ideas that will unlock investment in the UK, rebalancing our economy and creating good new jobs. Today, some £685 billion in cash is sitting on UK corporate balance sheets – yet small business can't get working capital, never mind expansion capital. Something is going wrong.

Equally, we can't all ride on the back of a few global winners as perhaps we did a little too much in the past. We do need a new 'bargain with business' where we help business succeed but, in return, if workers make businesses more profitable they need to get a pay rise.

This is very important. We need to show how globalisation can help finance a rising quality of life and not be a constant worry. Britain helped invent globalisation – globalisation defined our national story – but where 10 years ago we were aspirational and go-getting, now we're anxious. That's why finding answers for the 'squeezed middle' is so important. We have to

construct a political economy in which everyone can prosper in an increasingly interdependent Britain where people, migration and capital move ever faster.

But I hope we hear a lot about how we strengthen family and community life as well. We can't be half-hearted about community building. Few of us want to go back to the certainties of the 1950s and the deferential, class-bound Britain of before but change demands we are more inventive about renewing community for the 21st century. The 'Big Society' was, in many ways, our idea. The Tories say society is not the same as the state – well, we know society is also very different to the market. We must own this agenda again: 'society' is the place where our communities came together to organise a better life.

It's also incredibly important that the policy review is a process for the whole of the Labour Party – that everyone has ownership of it. Before I was elected, I used to spend my weekends organising policy forums for Labour activists across the West Midlands. I never thought that either Tony or Gordon really put enough into them. Over time the result was that the party grew weaker rather than stronger. When we did these debates well, we created a huge amount of passion and energy. That is the kind of approach we've deployed in Hodge Hill these last five years and I'm convinced it is why my majority doubled at the last election.

The lesson is simple: debate with the public is not a one-off. These days a natural, constant, intelligent rapport needs to be a permanent part of the way we do business.

In this way I hope the policy review will be used by local parties to renew the connections so many of us forged on doorsteps during the election. We should use this process to rebuild our organisational strength, especially in those constituencies where we've lost councillors and MPs, and where we hope to win again. The policy review is not a single moment in time and it's not just about creating a powerful manifesto in 2015. It's about renewing our party, not as a collection of dry policies and press releases, but as a movement strong and deep enough to change this country for the better once again. ■



Kay Tang/Rex Features

# The blank sheet isn't blank at all

.....

Labour starts with the right principles of fairness and equality – it now needs to explain them in a way the public can relate to argues **Tom Hampson**



Tom Hampson is Editorial Director of the Fabian Society. He co-edited the Fabian collection *Is Equality Fair?*

Who'd have thought it could be this easy? The speed with which the new Government has scrapped many of Labour's proudest achievements has stunned much of the left into dazed inaction. How wasted do those long, agonised years of policy debates – about exactly how to implement public service reform, about the efficacy of SureStart and lifelong learning, about how successful we were in meeting our child poverty targets – look now?

By the autumn, after the first 100 days of the coalition, the TUC was highlighting government cuts to free school meals, to the Every Child a Reader programme, the City Challenge Fund, Building Schools for the Future; to Housing Benefit, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Young Person's Guarantee, the Working Neighbourhood Fund; all gone in a blaze of rhetoric against government spending.

In November, the Home Secretary Theresa May scrapped the duty to reduce inequality in Harriet Harman's landmark 2010 Equality Act, calling it "ridiculous... They thought they could make people's lives better by simply passing a law saying that they should be made better."

She explained: "Equality has come to be seen by a lot of people as something that is available to others, and not to them... the majority of the British people will now start to see [fairness] as something that is about everybody, not something that is just available to specific groups of people."

May is, of course, right in this respect: there is a set of prevailing attitudes that the work Labour did on equality was for the few not the many – worries the Government now use as an excuse to dismantle legislation put there to protect all citizens.

But while response to this regressive policy bonfire has been muted by a Labour Party focused on its leadership election and then a leadership focused on long-term policy reviews, campaigners now need to make a greater fuss about what's been going on. Outrage has been left largely to the trade unions to voice. And to students – too young to retain the folk memory of the Thatcher years – who are now discovering what the alternative really looks like. Many



campaigners in the voluntary sector who have understandably put their recent lobbying energies into chummying up to their new Conservative and Lib Dem ministers, would do well to think hard about how they campaign in 2011 – they should not plan to leave it to those active in party politics to make all the running.

### Restarting the campaign

Rhetorically at least the coalition is pretending to be all over the territory of ‘fairness’, but while Labour was often guilty of signalling right while turning left, the Government is turning sharp right, doing U turns, tyres screaming. For its part, Ed Miliband’s Labour needs to echo the no-nonsense fairness code that is at the heart of the beliefs and fears of middle England – indeed of much of the electorate.

We know that part of the problem with the Labour Government’s public stance on equality was a lack of clarity at best – and more often a complete failure to tell any story about why redistributive or anti-discriminatory measures were being taken. Equality remained something of a dirty word, and bold, redistributive measures like the minimum wage and the Child Tax Credit were kept quiet and seldom put in the context of a coherent agenda for fairness and equality.

But too many people within the Labour Party are saying that we need a long, hard, considered look at our core principles. In fact the blank sheet isn’t blank at all – our principles of fairness and equality are consistent and should have a central role in Labour’s identity. The task is to explain them in a way that echoes people’s own views.

One of the lessons of the New Labour years is that common sense concepts of fairness are actually rather popular, especially when coupled with a sense of reciprocity. Fabian work across the last few years has consistently shown an appetite for fairness – but that not everything which makes us more equal is necessarily seen as fair. YouGov polling for the *Fabian Review* back in August 2007 showed that 85 per cent thought that a better Britain would include a smaller gap between the rich and poor. But only 34 per cent thought Labour had made Britain fairer.

Tim Horton and Louise Bamfield’s work with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation last year bore this out: people increasingly question whether high salaries are deserved, and there is strong support for targeted interventions to improve life chances for the disadvantaged. But people prefer arguments for greater equality framed in terms of fairer rewards for effort and contribution.



Labour failed to take this on board – Labour also failed to win more than ten seats in the south outside London. But equality campaigners should recognise their own role in the failures of the last decade: there was a lethargic lack of urgency amongst campaigners about finding ways to engage with middle England and to help Tory-proof Labour’s changes.

### A popular fairness code

So what can Ed do? In the context of the recession and with a Government hell bent on passing the effects of rich men’s gambling directly to the shoulders of the most deprived, Labour needs to speak directly to middle England about how we’re stronger when we act together – something we already know they believe.

A popular fairness code that enshrines reciprocity has been talked about for a few years now. As long ago as 2004, John Denham MP was outlining just such a code in *Prospect* magazine: “Fairness at work, reward for good behaviour and greater independence based on owned entitlements: all follow from my constituents’ fairness code. This

may represent a less unconditional, less idealistic notion of fairness than some on the left have championed over the past 30 years... But at the core of the fairness code remains the social democratic idea that we can construct our society around the values that bind us together.”

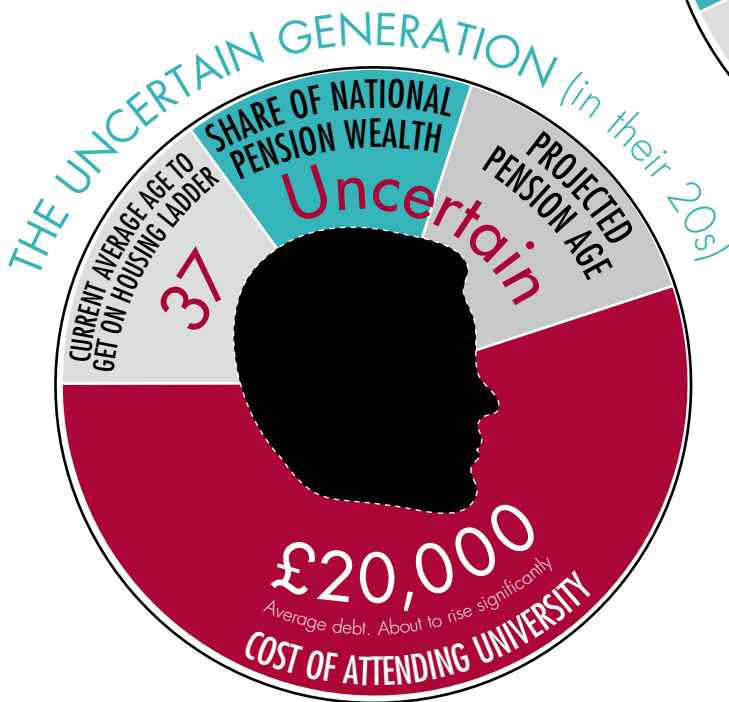
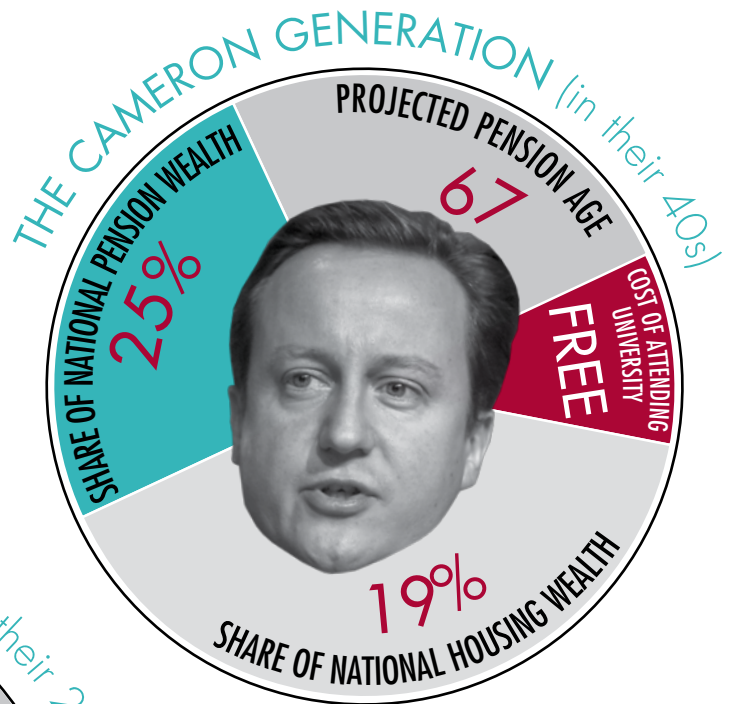
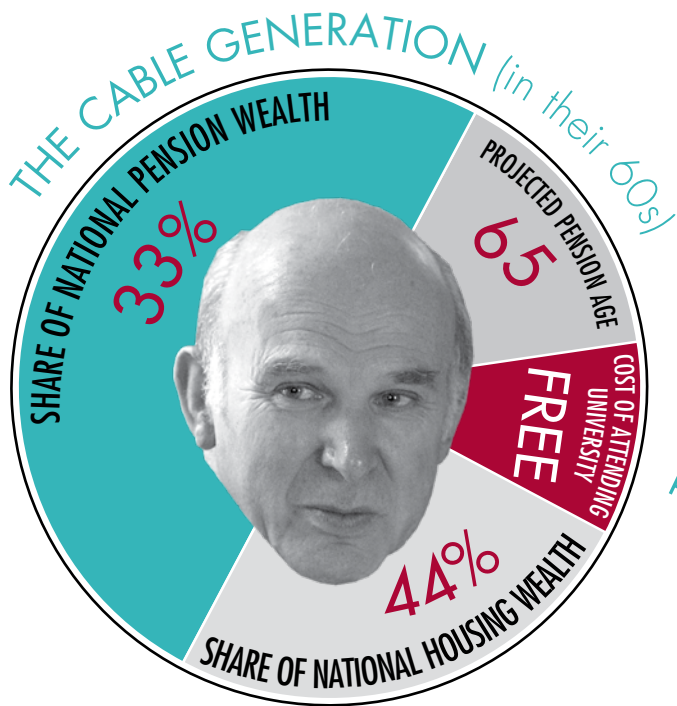
Earlier this year Denham told the Fabians: “The genuine effort to tackle poverty created sharp fault lines that cut across the common sense of British fairness. Many could not see why they got little support for hard work, when others apparently received much more for less. The deep conflict between our strategy and the fundamental fairness code of the British people was apparent before the global recession.”

As the Labour Policy Review gets going, Ed Miliband and Labour should set out a short, clear text that encapsulates this code. If Labour started focusing its campaigning, its public and media messaging, its by-election and local election campaigning, its work in parliament and at PMQs around the principles of a popular fairness code, the party would be tapping into a majority strain of public opinion. But the fairness code must be seen to spring from a wide range of actors across civil society. It must be both radical and explicitly demotic.

In the early New Year, the Labour leadership will need to move fast to own this space – it should not wait for the policy review to crank into action. Just as Blair’s Clause IV speech was only two months into his leadership, clear decisions taken early are not always ones that will be regretted.

But opposition is not government and you do not win battles fought on policy terrain – instead you do well when you engage with what people already know is true and if you have one clear, strategic message which everything else you say relates to.

The Government will be hoping that after a winter of strikes and discord, come March, with a Royal wedding looming, the country will have a spring in its step. But the Tories and the Lib Dems will more likely already be tarred with their role in viciously cutting public services. By then the public will rightly be angry – and we need to be there ready and waiting for them. ■



## The generation gap

The 'lucky generation' of baby boomers benefited from free education and a generous welfare state, whereas today's young people face futures that are much more insecure. Fairness between the generations needs to be a central goal for Labour writes **Kate Green**.

Data derived from PPI using ELSA figures for 2007, and the ONS Wealth and Asset Survey 2006/08



Kate Green  
is MP for Stretford  
and Urmston

The charge most painful to the left is that Britain became less equal under Labour – that social mobility stalled. While it’s an over-simplification, it contains elements of truth. Income inequality hit a record high in 2008, though without the measures Labour took it would have been much worse. And while Labour did much to improve educational attainment and children’s life chances, it remains the case that the poorest children are least likely to make it into higher education or enter one of the professions – with a knock-on effect on their lifelong earning power.

Children who grew up since 1997 should nonetheless have better outcomes as a result of Labour’s reforms, and those should feed through into adulthood. Efforts to reduce child poverty – through investment in Sure Start, in family incomes, and in raising school standards – should have had a lasting impact. But still these measures did not go far enough in reducing inequality. And their long-term positive effect is being undermined as the Conservative-led coalition Government picks apart the welfare state.

Two important criticisms can therefore be laid at Labour’s door. First, that we didn’t redistribute enough, in terms of income, opportunity or wealth. And, crucially, that we failed to embed popular support for the not immodest scale of redistribution that we did achieve. That has enabled the present Government drastically and rapidly to undo the progress made – when it thinks it can get away with it.

We see this particularly starkly when we compare the attack that’s being mounted on support for children and young people compared with the protection being giving to pensioners. Freezing child benefit and removing it from higher-income families, reducing working-age benefits that parents rely on, halting the spread of free school meals, a creeping segregation of our schools system, swingeing increases in university

fees, ending the Education Maintenance Allowance and the Child Trust Fund – all these things serve to damage family incomes and children’s prospects as they’re growing up and entering adulthood. At the other end of the spectrum, meanwhile, pensioners’ winter fuel payments and free TV licences have rightly been protected, the ‘triple lock’ on the value of the state pension contrasts with the linking of working-age benefits to the less generous consumer price index, and proposals are being developed for a foundation pension that guarantees



a minimum, non-means tested payment for all. For this Government, it seems universalism is a good thing when it comes to the welfare of older people, but attacked as unaffordable when it’s for families and kids.

None of this is to deny the unacceptable level of pensioner poverty that continues to exist. And under the present Government, the poorest pensioners will lose out even more: changes to housing benefit and council tax benefit, for example, will hit them very hard. But the present generation of young people already have it harder in some ways than their parents and grandparents. And that will only become more pronounced as a result of the measures the Government is taking.

Look at today’s middle-aged people and pensioners (at least those who are middle classes), who are enjoying the benefits of the post-war welfare settlement that has invested in their wellbeing since their early childhood and throughout their lives. Stripping back support for today’s children will, by contrast, make those children poorer adults, and poorer in old age.

Policy must therefore explicitly address not only inequality not only *within* but also *between* the generations, and over the whole life course. Such an approach must avoid the pitfalls of pitting one generation against another, and meet public demands for ‘fairness’.

Labour already had many of the elements of this in place under Blair and Brown. Investment in families and children, in early years, in education, and in apprenticeships and training, helped to distribute spending directly to young people while at the same time improving their prospects in adult life. This helped to build the foundation for greater equality and society’s long-term prosperity. Increases in the state pension and the minimum income guarantee for pensioners substantially reduced poverty among today’s pensioners, though at the price of some complexity and a take-up rate that was lower than hoped for. Investment in public services benefited families across the generations, especially the elderly and families with children.

But Labour also made mistakes and headed in the wrong direction – and sometimes our policies were too weak. We gave insufficient attention to income redistribution, to the entitlement of everyone to an adequate income, or to in-work poverty. Crucially, in terms of redistributing assets we took only limited steps. The Child Trust Fund represented a relatively limited attempt to build assets for young people from poorer backgrounds, shared ownership schemes tried but failed to unlock the housing market, and the cutting of inheritance tax was a truly retrograde step.

The result is that many of today’s generation of young people will grow up in poorer families, pay more for their education, struggle to buy a house, and face an uncertain and delayed retirement. So we must develop policies that explicitly and assertively redistribute over the whole of someone’s lifetime. This must not be seen as a zero sum game, simply taking from the old to redistribute to the young. But it’s clear that investment in young people is important now, to reduce inequality as they age. Labour needs a shift in its policy agenda to achieve this.

In Labour's current policy review, I'll be arguing that universal benefits have an important role to play at every stage of the life course. Reinstating universal child benefit at the same rate for every child, and supporting the creation of a universal pension – based on participation, not just financial contribution – should form the bedrock of our approach. And more universalism should be accompanied by a more progressive tax system, building on the 50p top tax rate.

While education's role in reducing inequality is universally acknowledged, the importance of having an adequate income to educational achievement has been underplayed. Increasing support for families with children to guarantee this for every family will ensure that every young person can participate fully in their education, and fulfil their potential in adult life.

Access to higher education is recognised to improve long-term earning prospects, and we should commit to introducing a graduate tax. That's the fairest way of sharing the cost of higher education between the student and society – both of whom derive the benefits – while being least likely to deter those from low income families from going to university.

But these redistributive income policies must be accompanied by a more determined approach to redistributing wealth. We must be much more aggressive on inherited wealth, in order to unlock the assets accrued by the lucky 'boomer' generation who benefited from the free education, universal welfare state and who now hoard most of the nation's wealth – at a time when the young are struggling to find work, fund further or higher education, and worry they may never get on the housing ladder.

We must explore the options for a wealth tax on wealth that is simply passed from generation to generation, while rewarding wealth creation where it's used for investment in the community or in enterprise.

We must say we would guarantee every young person a capital sum as they embark on adult life. The Child Trust Fund sought to do this, with a savings plan attached. We should reinstate the trust fund model, but let's not force today's young people to wait for those plans to mature. We should pay a lump sum to all 18 year olds immediately, and without a savings clause.

Home ownership remains the goal of many young people – and a distant dream. So more must be done to help young people buy their first home. We

need to develop financial structures that avoid complex shared-ownership models while looking at ways of attributing regular rent payments towards building up housing capital. That must be accompanied by house building programmes which increase availability and choice of affordable homes.

People must be able to keep their homes throughout their lifetimes, but not their locked-in value: Andy Burnham as health secretary opened up the right debate on using housing wealth to pay for long-term care. Annuitising and releasing housing wealth must explicitly play a role in the funding model for support in retirement.

Finally, we'll need to secure popular support for fairer distribution between the generations and for more pro-poor investment. We've been too fearful of doing this, not least because it's seemed as if we expect the older generation to be hostile to investment in the prospects of the young. But today's parents and grandparents are exceptionally anxious about the future of the next generation, and Britain wants to be persuaded of the benefits of a fairer society. Labour should be confident that steps that boldly address those concerns will resonate with the public. ■

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## Low carbon Labour

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**Bryony Worthington** challenges Labour to make this the moment that it finally puts the environment centre stage.

Labour has an environmental track record it can be proud of. When in power, it introduced the world's first comprehensive legal framework for cutting carbon emissions; signed up to ambitious renewable energy targets and introduced policies to achieve them; and, at a global level, fully committed itself to a successful outcome in UN climate negotiations and made climate change a central issue at high level meetings such as the G8.

However, there is still much to be done before the party can claim to have

fully integrated the environment into its core thinking. Climate change is still by far the most pressing challenge we face today and political action to date has been too cautious and slow; we have simply not done enough. As the birthplace of the industrial revolution, with all the advantages that this has brought us, the UK must take centre stage in presenting solutions and the Labour Party must be the political force that offers genuine leadership on climate change.

After Labour's policy review, a renewed party must emerge with



**Bryony Worthington**  
founder and director of the carbon trading thinktank and campaign group Sandbag, and is now a Labour peer

sustainability at its heart. The party needs to champion a range of new transformational climate policies that go beyond completing the task it began in government of making our energy systems less dependent on carbon and more efficient. If we want to make the change to a low-carbon, sustainable future we will need to take action at a more fundamental level to shift society's values and embrace new definitions of progress.

This modern, green Labour Party will need to focus on five things:

# Sustainability

## Can Labour be green at heart?

1. Measure progress in new ways  
If we wish to create a safer, fairer, more cohesive and sustainable society then we need a system of governance that measures progress against those parameters. Focusing on achieving never-ending increases in GDP as the over-riding objective of government will not get us there. Unqualified growth does not equate with prosperity, nor does it guarantee high living standards and happiness. And growth as currently defined, which sacrifices the future for present gain, is not sustainable.

The coalition Government have acknowledged this and begun a consultation on a national happiness index. Cynics may argue that this is just a clever ruse to distract attention from the very real economic crisis that is likely to follow the swingeing cutbacks they have implemented; but it is nevertheless an important admission that we currently do not have the right tools to measure what is valuable. The party's response will be an early test case of Labour's stated desire to not be a knee-jerk opposition. The Labour Party must track this policy carefully, ensuring it delivers what is needed and is not used as a political exercise in obfuscation. But it must also go further and tackle the root causes of societal ill health through effective policy.

### 2. Reign in corporate power

The powerhouse of commercial capitalism now drives much of our economy. The scale and influence of our modern corporations is considerable and yet they have been created with one overriding legally binding remit: to maximise shareholder profit above all else. Our legal system grants corporations the same rights as individuals, quarterly financial reporting cycles force short-term thinking, and the most successful companies, profiting from the status quo, are able to expend considerable energies and resources lobbying. This powerful cocktail creates a force in society which is at best neutral, and at worst positively antagonistic towards the changes that are necessary to deliver a more sustainable, cohesive and equal society. This makes the Governments' job more difficult and increases disaffection in the general public. Labour must therefore open up a new debate about corporate power and responsibility, and corporate

law reform. Policies must be developed to ensure powerful forces at work in society are all harnessed and pulling in the same, sustainable direction.

### 3. Regulate markets better

Challenging corporate power does not mean a green Labour party should be anti-business or anti-market. On the contrary, we must forge relationships with those companies who have already embraced sustainability and brought it into their corporate policymaking. We must support the commercialisation of innovative ideas emerging from our world class universities and research centres. We must also unlock the efficiencies and innovation that well-regulated markets can deliver, including those markets that are created artificially to regulate and trade carbon emissions, impacts on biodiversity or access to landfill space.

In the race against time to decarbonise our energy systems, Labour must make it a priority to reassess our current regulation of energy markets. Sustainability and protection of the most vulnerable must be made the primary goals of the energy market regulator OFGEM. We must also extend the scope of regulation to include oversight of markets in heating and transport fuels, alongside electricity and gas.

### 4. Promote citizenship not consumption

Another powerful engine of unsustainable economic growth is the drive to consume that currently grips our society. Its influence is such that we often unthinkingly consider and describe ourselves as consumers rather than citizens, a societal direction of travel sustained by ever more sophisticated, intrusive and widely distributed marketing and advertising techniques. The overall effect on the wellbeing of society is difficult to quantify but, for many, the continual exhortation to consume breeds dissatisfaction and

unhappiness. It also generates vast quantities of waste. Labour should champion a comprehensive review of the impact of advertising on society. Ultimately the industry should become subject to a tax to take into account the negative externalities and VAT should be reformed to include differentiated rates according to environmental impact. The revenues generated should be used to fund education programmes and public information campaigns that help to contextualise and rebalance the advertisers' messages.

### 5. Build voter support for a low carbon world

A final important test for a green Labour party is the ability to win support for change amongst the constituencies most likely to be affected by rapid decarbonisation of our economy. Labour must pay particular attention to managing this transition in Britain's industrial heartlands, where people rely on the party to represent their interests and protect their jobs. Similarly, Labour will need to win support for its environmental vision in urban constituencies, by emphasising co-benefits such as improved air quality, better housing standards, improved public transport infrastructure and more community green spaces. Those at risk from rising energy bills, as investment in alternatives increases, must also be protected with targeted support programmes that focus on increasing efficiency and supplementing incomes.

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We live in a special time in history: our generation enjoys increased life expectancy, access to medical expertise, education, mobility, higher levels of disposable income and leisure time, all underpinned by cheap, abundant and reliable energy supplies. But we haven't yet been presented with the bill for all this good fortune and we know that the period of grace will come to an end sooner or later. A truly green Labour Party must embrace this fact and construct bold policies now, while we have the time and resources to afford it. We must be the party that ensures the good times can continue; but sustainable good times that are enjoyed by all. ■

# Heart-broken Britain

What is Labour's identity? For **Maurice Glasman**, it was lost during Labour's Fabian high water mark in 1945 – but can be found again in the real relationships and traditions of the Labour movement



Maurice Glasman is director of the faith and citizenship programme at London Metropolitan University. He was recently appointed a Labour peer

The pursuit of a more equal society through welfare and tax policy has dominated the central agenda of each of the three post-war Labour Governments. But this no longer provides the basis of a coherent or stable identity for Labour. Proposing the idea that the party would have gained a less estranged place in the affections of the people of England if only we had spent more money and pursued egalitarian objectives more explicitly is to confuse the issue. Labour is now identified with authoritarian public sector management, a contempt for Britain's workforce, economic profligacy and an elitist morality that failed to recognise the fears, hopes and concerns of Labour voters as much more than a sullen reaction to progress and globalisation.

Labour's identity was threatened throughout the New Labour years as the brittle rationality of its managerialism grated against the instincts and practices of the Labour movement, but at least we could say that the party was reasonable and quite sensible. Labour pursued a policy that led to the renewal of the welfare state and to devolution of power within the Kingdom, combined with greater freedom and protection for minorities. It was very Fabian and progressive in orientation, working within the constraints of globalisation and class fragmentation, and holding its own in terms of redistribution with any other government in the world. The Labour Party thought it had a record to be proud of: Sure Start, family tax credits, civil partnerships. You see how easy it is to sound like Gordon Brown: to sound like we're boasting when in fact we're heart-broken.

One cause of that grief is that while we were rational and sensible, capitalism was volatile and wild and we couldn't understand it or talk about it. We believed that we had a reciprocal relation with the City of London based upon growth and redistribution, but it turned out to be an abusive relationship in which the benefits and burdens were not equitable. This became very clear in the financial crash of 2008, the subsequent bailout and the terms of deficit reduction. The politics of the next ten years will be defined by the

consequences of this event in terms of the deficit it generated and our reliance on the City of London for economic growth. That is why Labour's fate is in many ways in the Fabians' hands, and the question of Labour's identity requires a strong revisionism from the Fabians. In the development of the Fabian tradition, a great deal of the technocratic rationalism that proved to be so brittle is to be found: a reliance on administrative methods to achieve virtuous ends and the ultimate abandonment of economic rationality to the market once nationalisation had failed.



Labour has become identified with an over-reliance on the state, a naivety about the market, and a hostility to democracy in the name of a justice defined as the equal treatment of each citizen irrespective of their identity and history. This is important because the coalition Government is explicitly progressive in form, and goes further by laying claim to traditions of the Labour movement such as the mutuals, co-operative groups and organised citizens, whom they claim to be the basis of the 'big society'.

Recapturing Labour's identity must begin with a re-evaluation of the 1945 Government, held so long as the high water mark of Fabian and Labour achievement. Their list of achievements would put even Gordon Brown to shame. It was the scale of this achievement however that wreaked havoc on the democratic practices of the Labour movement, which was left without power or function in the new political settlement. In the nationalised industries, worker participation was ditched in favour

of a managerial nationalisation in which trade unions had a necessarily antagonistic and subordinate role. The idea of a socialist commonwealth – in which organised workers had power in the governance of the firm and the city – was subordinated to a statist conception of fairness combined with a scientific conception of management. The triumph of Labour in 1945 was based upon the defeat of the Labour movement. It placed all hope in its continuing control of the state and moved from organisation to mobilisation at elections, from the good to the right, from democracy to justice, from reciprocity to fairness.

And then it got worse. The Labour revisionists of the 1950s, most notably Tony Crosland in *The Future of Socialism*, argued that the most important single value in the Labour tradition was equality. And so equality ceased to take its place in a cluster of concepts such as democracy, solidarity, reciprocity, liberty and courage and became the ultimate end. And further, the ends were everything and the means were nothing. The movement became meaningless and from then on all the Labour Party's energies were exerted in cranking up the efficiency of the state to deal with the whole range of human needs. This led those committed to equality and fairness to adopt an almost Maoist managerialism, in which permanent restructuring would make the fat thin, the feckless faithful and the degenerate capable.

James Purnell wrote that New Labour was "too hands off with the market and too hands on with the state". It is a crucial insight. When the financial markets collapsed, the bailout in September 2008 was the biggest single-payment transfer of wealth from poor to rich since the Norman Conquest, when King William laid claim to the freehold of the entire country. Labour identified the financial sector with progress and growth and its lack of an alternative driver, or of any significant growth in the real economy, meant that it could do no other than underwrite their debts and pay them off.

It was left to the Conservatives to point out that the state was too big, too bossy, too managerial; that



Peter Howard/Daily Mail/Rex Features

### Clement Attlee – part of the problem?

the workers should run services, that the co-operative tradition should be revived, that civic participation was a skill that required energy and training. When it comes to the big political argument – the financial crash and the deficit – Labour is adrift and hollowed out. The two are connected. The lack of a powerful, engaged labour movement in the running of the economy is linked to the exclusive reliance on the state, or the market, for the fundamental principles of economic governance. Mediating institutions played no role in New Labour's response to globalisation. Society played no role. The social played no role. That is a bad place for a socialist party to be.

But there is a great Labour tradition to draw upon, that has roots within the Fabian tradition before it was nationalised and then privatised, and within the Labour movement more widely. It has a richer language of place and loyalty, it places a stronger emphasis on work and skilled work as worthy of recognition and respect, it puts more emphasis on the democratic corporate governance of firms and the balance of interests than on state regulation. In short it rediscovers the truth about capitalism, which is that only organised people, people who have built relationships and are capable of sustained common action, can resist the domination of capital. In our pursuit of abstract ends that ceased to have

any clear meaning – equality, fairness, justice, rights – we lost our emphasis on relationships and practices that domesticated capital at source.

There is a fundamental choice before the Labour Party and it concerns the political economy. It needs to rediscover and then embrace the meaning of the Labour movement as the democratic resistance of organised working people to the commodification of their lives and environment. And it must do so without resorting to the state as the exclusive instrument of regulation but also turn towards a balance of power in corporate governance through the democratic representation of the workforce. It is about building a common good with others. It is about conserving as much as it is about changing. It is about regional banking; the extension of the City of London to all the citizens of London; democratic representation of the vocational life of the country in the House of Lords.

Labour can engage in one of its endless arguments about the priority of equality to liberty, of the priority of the right over the good, means and ends, of liberalism and communitarianism. Or it can view socialism as an ideology that strengthens society, in which equality is an active practice not an administrative goal. Labour's identity, as Tawney put it, must be that of the best hope of the people to live a life proper for a human being. ■



Geoffrey Robinson / Rex Features

# How to fund a real pupil premium

Charging VAT on private school fees isn't just a way to fund the Government's flagship fairness policy, it would make it a genuine driver of social mobility argues [Sunder Katwala](#).



Sunder Katwala  
is General Secretary  
of the Fabian Society

The 'pupil premium' is a good idea about to be sacrificed on the altar of austerity.

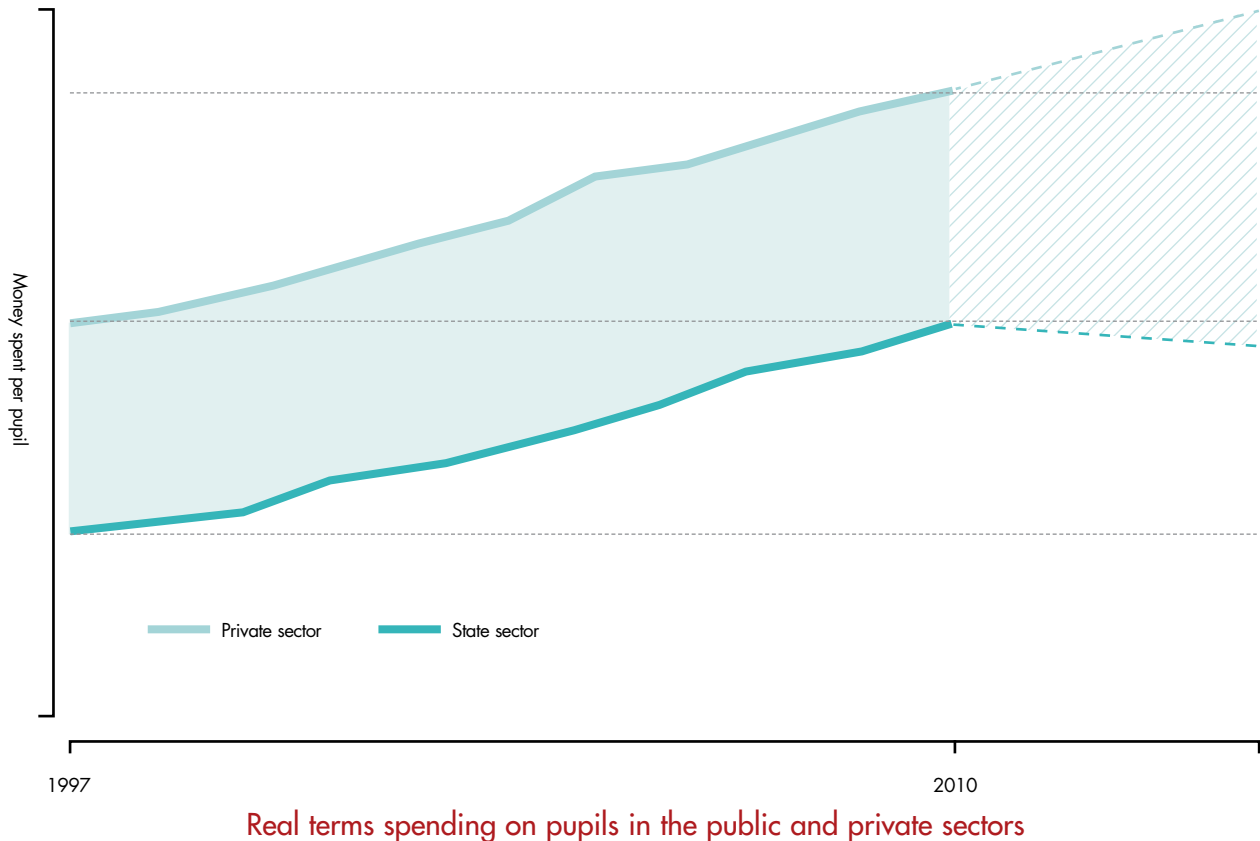
The Government has failed to keep the promise in the Coalition Agreement that this pledge – intended to spend more money on disadvantaged pupils – would be funded “from outside the schools budget”. Instead, the Education Secretary Michael Gove has acknowledged that the 'premium' will be funded by redistributing money within a shrinking schools budget, which means that most schools will see their funding cut.

Financing a pupil premium by cutting school budgets is politically dangerous. It risks turning a popular cause into a source of resentment, breaking up support for reducing inequality. Ministers face an unenviable choice: do they risk a backlash from most parents, unhappy at seeing less money spent on their children, or do they let down the worst-off children, whom they pledged to help? Under this pressure, the Government is reforming school funding in a way which threatens to defeat the central purpose of the pupil premium: perversely, a policy designed to tackle educational disadvantage will in practice shift cash away from schools that need it most and towards more affluent areas.



## Will the state/private funding gap widen again?

The Labour Government increased the amount spent per pupil in the state sector, by an average of 4% per year. By the time it left office, spending per pupil in state schools had finally caught up with what private schools had been spending in 1997. This narrowed the spending gap modestly. The coalition's plans for cuts in real terms now mean this gap is likely to widen again.



(Graph adapted from data in *Level playing field? The implications of school funding* by Luke Sibieta, Haroon Chowdry and Alastair Muriel for the CfBT Education Trust, 2008)

But there is a fair way to keep the promise of new money, without cutting funding for most schools. A real pupil premium could be funded by putting VAT on private school fees, and dedicating the resources to an educational mobility fund. It could raise £1.5 billion per year for the pupil premium – and would also help to stop the funding gap between state and private schools widening sharply, and setting social mobility back.

Addressing the gaps in educational opportunity across society would also close the gap between the Government's rhetoric and its policy. Both David Cameron and Nick Clegg decry stalled social mobility, acknowledging the great advantages that were conferred on them by the luckiest of starts in life. But though they paint a stark picture of the scale of

unequal opportunity between the bottom and top in education, they propose only to address the gap between the bottom and the middle. Improving the life chances of the worst-off is the right goal, but it is not fair to seek to achieve that by asking only those in the middle to sacrifice their chances to close the gap above them, putting an increasingly entrenched elite further out of reach.

### How the pupil premium disappeared

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg talks of having secured a “£7 billion fund” for the pupil premium. This is the old, discredited practice of triple-counting the money: the £7 billion is a cumulative total accrued over three years, rising to £2.5 billion per year by 2015. What's more, this money is not really new.

The deputy PM did fight hard inside government for genuinely new money for the pupil premium. He even tried to settle the Whitehall battle by publicly declaring victory, stressing he had secured “additional” money when announcing the policy just before the spending review. “This is real new money from elsewhere in Whitehall, from outside the education budget. We are not just rearranging the furniture”, a Downing Street spokesman told the *Guardian*.

Within days, the Comprehensive Spending Review contradicted this claim. If you exclude the deep cuts of around 60 per cent in capital spending on schools, and cuts to ‘non-essential’ activities such as sport and music, there is an increase in real terms of ‘current’ schools spending of 0.1 per cent a year,

but only once the pupil premium money is counted. But rising pupil numbers easily outstrip this: when this is factored in, Luke Sibieta of the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) calculates that spending per pupil will in fact fall by 2.25 per cent in real terms across the parliament. (The premium cash softens this blow: spending per pupil would fall 10 per cent in real terms without it).

Education Secretary Michael Gove is candid that some schools will lose out. The Government is consulting on how the premium will work – “whether or not we allow the pupil premium to go to slightly more children or we target it very narrowly on the very poorest... you can then make a calculation about which schools will find that they’re actually losing funding, and which schools will find that they’re gaining funding.”

This brings us to the worst problem with the pupil premium: a flawed policy design that could well lead to many of the least affluent schools getting less money than they do now. The Government has said that its concern is that the current focus of funding on poorer areas does too little for those poor children who live in better-off areas. But its policy over-compensates for this. IFS modelling shows that an eligible pupil in Wokingham – England’s most affluent constituency, represented by John Redwood – could receive double the premium value of a pupil in the most deprived, Tower Hamlets. (And, because the coalition disapproves of targets, there will be no rules to ensure schools spend the money on the pupils it was intended for).

So why doesn’t the Government adopt the idea outlined by the IFS that a flat rate premium, worth as much in Tower Hamlets as in Wokingham, would be “simpler and more consistent with the Government’s stated objectives”? The answer is that these are deeply political choices, not just technical questions about policy design. Taking the advice of the IFS would depend on Tory backbenchers, who mostly represent affluent areas, being willing to advocate deeper cuts for schools in their constituencies to help poor children elsewhere. The Government’s formula seems to undermine the purpose of the premium; it does more to protect

the constituencies of its backbenchers. This is the price of introducing the premium without funding it properly: political pressure causing unintended consequences in the pattern of winners and losers.

### Inequality at top and bottom

The different, fair way to fund a pupil premium is clear, as long as we are prepared to bring private education into the picture. The Government’s own rhetoric suggests that we must, and that addressing entrenched advantages at the top should be a very urgent concern.

“There is lots of anger about higher education at the moment and I understand it. I am angry too. Here’s what makes me angry. Oxford and Cambridge take more students each year from just two schools — Eton and Westminster — than from among the 80,000 pupils who are eligible for free school meals... These are the things that make me angry: these are the facts that would make me take to the streets; these are the injustices that our policy will remedy”.

So said Nick Clegg in explaining why he believes social mobility should be the mission of his Government in his Hugo Young lecture at the Guardian in November. Clegg’s aides thought it smart politics to single out the schools which he and Cameron had attended. Clegg had gone to Westminster himself; nobody could accuse him of the politics of envy, they said. “I want everybody to have the chances I had”, David Cameron told the Tory party conference in 2009. (Political commentator John Rentoul thought this unwise: “As someone was bound to comment, that is going to cost a fortune in tailcoats”). Cameron had already told his first party conference as leader that going to Eton left him better equipped to sort out state schools than those who had not: “I went to a fantastic school. I’m not embarrassed about that because I had a great education and I know what a great education means. And knowing what a great education means, means there’s a better chance of getting it for all of our children, which is absolutely what I want in this country”.

But the “better chance” which Cameron wants for all is becoming more expensive: in the private system, several

boarding schools have now broken the £30,000 a year per pupil barrier. The Daily Telegraph reported that this was thought “unthinkable” just five years ago, but average fees have increased 40 per cent in that time.

Gordon Brown argued that closing the state-private spending gap was important. That gap did gradually narrow under Labour, despite sharp rises in spending in private schools, because increased school funding managed to keep pace, rising by an average 4% a year in real terms. A research study *Level Playing Field?*, published by the CfBT Education Trust, found state spending per pupil had been 50 per cent of private spending in 1997, rising to 58 per cent by 2009/10. In real terms, what state schools were spending per pupil by 2010 had caught up with what private schools had been spending in 1997, though of course the private schools had by then raced further ahead. Maintaining this ‘12 year time-lag’ required state school spending increases in real terms of 3 per cent per year, if the gap was to neither widen nor narrow.

But now we know that state school funding will fall in real terms and the spending gap will widen. There is some pressure to constrain the sharp increases in private fees – the Independent Schools Council says the 4 per cent increase in 2010, just above inflation, was their lowest for 16 years – but no reason to think they will also fall.

Having argued that a pupil premium is the key policy to lift social mobility, ministers would surely contradict themselves if they then claimed that a growing gulf in education spending between private and state schools would not set social mobility back. (“The risk now, given the new constraints on public spending, is that the gap between public and private sectors will be come a chasm”, warned David Laws a year ago, then the Lib Dem education spokesman, before his party went into government).

### How to fund a pupil premium

That widening gap creates a natural route for genuinely additional funding of a pupil premium – by levying VAT on private school fees. With 628,000

children in the independent sector, this could raise around £1.5 billion per year, with the money dedicated to a Pupil Premium Mobility Fund.

The fairness case is this: whenever £10,000 is spent on private school fees, £2000 would go towards narrowing the gaps in opportunity and mobility. Every parent paying £30,000 per year at Eton would be contributing £6000 to the pupil premium, still leaving a hefty £24,000 to be spent on the best schooling that money can buy.

But this does more than just provide an important source of funding. It is unlikely that private schools would raise their fees by 20 per cent in response, as the market would not sustain that. Say increases were kept to between 5 and 10 per cent instead, the shortfall would be made up by private schools spending less per pupil. The move would therefore provide a one-off narrowing of the spending gap, which is otherwise about to accelerate sharply, and constrain the chances of a runaway widening of the gap over time.

Would this be fair? It would be absurd to label such a tax as an 'attack on aspiration', when the money is exclusively for the purpose of supporting aspiration and spreading opportunity to all. The coalition often argues that more spending is not always the answer. That is correct. But money matters too – presumably that is why a 'pupil premium' is their own flagship policy, and perhaps why the private schools spend so much to ensure high quality education.

It is sometimes said that parents who educate their children privately are 'paying twice'. This misunderstands the basis of taxation: there are no tax rebates for the childless. It is also argued that those who choose to go private are doing the state a favour, as if everybody in private education returned to the state sector an extra £3 billion a year of school spending would need to be found. Some – perhaps agreeing with Nick Clegg about how much educational segregation damages British society – may think that a price worth paying, especially as it would bring yet more articulate parents behind the cause of state education. Whoever is right though, the point is largely rhetorical: levying

VAT to support educational mobility is not going to lead to the dissolution of private education.

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This policy proposal is almost certainly too radical for every party. Ed Miliband is likely to be very wary of it: the new Labour leader did not even support his brother's very modest policy in the leadership campaign to restrict the charitable status of private schools. (A forgotten secret is that New Labour seriously considered levying VAT on private education in 1997, with David

*If not everybody will support the proposal, the challenge is simple: what will they do instead?*

Blunkett strongly in favour, as Alastair Campbell's diaries recount. The case is considerably stronger now given fiscal constraints.)

The political parties may not want to touch it, but the public would be more sympathetic. Significant minorities are either strong opponents or strong supporters of private education in principle, but attitudes to fairness and private education split three ways. A Fabian/YouGov poll back in 2007 found 39 per cent are against, because they think it leads to unfair opportunities, with 29 per cent in favour of what is seen as an important freedom that should be open to anyone who can afford it. So the middle ground (25 per cent) is held by those who believe both that parents should have the right to choose private education and also that it is the responsibility of government to ensure their children do not gain an unfair advantage from their doing so. That moderate goal should be reflected in the policy of all three major parties.

If not everybody will support the proposal, the challenge is simple: what will they do instead? The first challenge for all who support increased funding on disadvantaged pupils is to show how to fund it when budgets are tight – and whether they can avoid cutting spending on most pupils. A tougher challenge –

for a government making social mobility its central mission – is what it will do to prevent educational segregation choking off equal opportunities.

The Commons Education Select Committee should examine whether an increasing gap between private and state spending is likely, and take expert evidence on whether closing this should matter to champions of greater social mobility.

Could all parties at least commit to the modest goal that the gap between state and private spending should not be allowed to widen sharply in these straitened times, perhaps identifying different means to hold or narrow it?

Might centre-right politicians, wary of the tax proposal, want to investigate voluntary agreement with the independent sector over keeping private spending increases in check? (The independent sector must balance market opportunities with political legitimacy: it must strike the balance between persuading prospective parents that the expense of private education is money well spent, while persuading the rest of society that it is not a route to securing unfair advantages.)

Yet if we take seriously Clegg's anger about the hoarding of chances for the pupils of Eton and Westminster, and Cameron's commitment to every child sharing the chances he had, then they must yearn to be more radical. Their Downing Street advisers will want to show that this was not just clever reverse spin. They point out that the Eton and Westminster duo may be uniquely placed to address the privileges of private education in the interests of fairness and mobility. The strategists and spinners call that a 'Nixon to China' strategy. Could someone tell Cameron and Clegg that Nixon actually got on the plane in the end? ■



For more on the pupil premium, read *What's Fair: Applying the fairness test to education* by Louise Bamfield and Tim Horton at [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk)

# Backbench drivers

Reforms to Parliament have given real power to backbenchers. It's now time to take the power outside Westminster argues Natascha Engel.



Natascha Engel is MP for North East Derbyshire and Chair of the Backbench Business Committee

Shortly before the General Election, everyone in Parliament who wanted to be re-elected called themselves a parliamentary reformer. After the expenses scandal, it was in our collective interest to show a weary and suspicious nation that we had 'got it'.

But now, seven months into the new Parliament, can we really say that much has changed? Have we genuinely listened to people and shifted our focus, or have we simply reformed Parliament to suit ourselves? Are people more engaged with what we do? Are they any less cynical about what motivates us?

And most importantly, if there has been a transfer of power, has it allowed the voice of the people we represent to be heard?

In the last Parliament I was a member of the Parliamentary Reform Select Committee (now known as the Wright Committee). It was set up in response to the expenses scandal. This was our opportunity to start with a blank sheet of paper on which we could begin sketching out what we wanted from our parliamentary

democracy, and how we could conduct our business better.

The Wright Committee's flagship proposals, now implemented, were the election of chairs and members of select committees as well as the establishment of a Backbench Business Committee – which I now chair.

At the time I worried that we were letting a good crisis go to waste. I was concerned that we were falling into the trap of merely shifting power from one elite to another: from the whips to senior backbenchers. But I was wrong.

The election of chairs and members of select committees has been a great success, bringing to the committees a mixture of experience and age. And the Backbench Business Committee is breathing new life into Parliament too. The shift in power has resulted in a fresh culture, a different and better way of doing things. It has set in train a virtuous cycle of better scrutiny of the Government which will, we hope, force government to raise its game. When we do our jobs better as backbenchers, governments make better laws.

Our Backbench Business Committee has the power to schedule debates and votes in the Chamber. That is a real power. And like all real power, it is seductive.

That means that some of my concerns remain. To guard against the Backbench Business Committee merely being absorbed into the management of House business – simply widening out the membership of the people who make deals in the backrooms – we decided to meet in public to hear representations from our backbench colleagues and their bids for time for debates.

And whilst this innovation is important, and whilst it has strengthened backbenchers and allowed us to hold the government to account better, select committee elections and the Backbench Business Committee are, possibly, not what they are talking about in the Shipley Pride on a Saturday night.

Parliament has certainly shifted some power from the frontbench to the backbench. But has this improved our engagement with normal people? Can a voter better influence the parliamentary agenda? Is their voice

louder and do they have a bigger say? Well, the answer to that is no.

And the reason for this, I think, is simply because we lack the imagination for real reform.

When we look at what John Bercow has done with the role of Speaker, we begin to see the possibilities. He has

If we are serious about engagement, if we want to be more constructive in the way we work with people between elections, we should look to widen out the role of select committees

shifted the focus of the Speakership from being exclusively within Parliament to recognising the importance of being an ambassador for Parliament.

Now, our select committees are our great success story. They can and do engage with the expert world, those people who are interested in a subject. Select Committee inquiries call for evidence and views. They are open to the public to attend. But only a handful of MPs sit on them and they tend, apart from a few visits, to sit in Westminster.

If we are serious about engagement, if we want to be more constructive in the way we work with people between elections, we should look to widen out the role of select committees. We should encourage every Member of Parliament to specialise in a subject area and go out and meet with campaign groups and individuals across the country to hear their ideas, explain to them how best to influence the parliamentary agenda. Backbenchers, like the Speaker, should become ambassadors for parliament, and not just in their own constituencies.

That way, what we do and how we do it will be better understood and, by extension, better scrutinised. It will force us, as backbenchers, to raise our game.

And perhaps then we will win the greatest prize of all: what happens in Parliament will be discussed in the Shipley Pride on a Saturday night. ■

# The special relationship



With nothing more important for Labour than restoring its economic credibility, there is nothing more important for Ed Miliband than his relationship with his shadow chancellor. **Mary Riddell** talks to Alan Johnson about how it's shaping up.



Mary Riddell is a columnist for the Daily Telegraph

**Alan Johnson's office looks more** like a Boy Scout's bedroom than the nerve centre of opposition fiscal strategy. Model aircraft jostle for space with family photos and Queen's Park Rangers memorabilia, and bookshelves stuffed with fiction hold little promise for students of neo-endogenous growth theory.

If Mr Johnson's lair is cluttered, his mind is anything but. So when Ed Miliband called him in before the shadow cabinet election results were declared, his instincts told him which

job might be on offer. "He asked to see me on the Thursday, and the results were not out until Friday. Why would he want to meet me? I decided it must be something quite dramatic.

"He cut straight to the chase and said: 'I want you to be my shadow chancellor.' He didn't ask if I fancied the job or how I felt about it. When I made the obvious point that I been in a lot of departments but never done that, he said it was about politics, not economics, and communication. How do you turn it down? I was

standing for shadow cabinet, and the leader was offering me the biggest job. You'd have to be a bit silly or strange to say no."

It is true that Mr Johnson is an expert political communicator. Whether the message he has been delivering on 50p tax and student funding is to the leader's liking is quite another matter. Policy differences apart, the appointment was always going to be a leap of faith for both men. Mr Johnson, one of David Miliband's most prominent backers

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for the leadership, does not dispute that the older Miliband would have been offered the shadow chancellorship if he had agreed to serve in his younger sibling's team.

Is Mr Johnson keeping the seat warm for him? "I'd be delighted if David served in the shadow cabinet, and I have no better person to keep the seat warm for. I don't get the impression that's what I'm doing. Ed wants to work closely with me and for us to be very intertwined. It's about a message on unity, and about the [signal] he gave about the new generation. People thought if you were over 40 you weren't part of it. He's made clear that's not the case.

"In two years there will be another shadow cabinet election. I'd be delighted if David was in a position to stand – but I think this is a serious appointment for the next five years to get us back into government." The "intertwined" relationship of the leader and his shadow chancellor was first called into question over differences of opinion that surfaced during Mr Miliband's paternity leave, prompting media speculation on divisions.

When I ask how easy it was to switch allegiance, Mr Johnson says: "If David hadn't been in the field, I would have supported Ed... Miliband," he adds quickly, presumably lest anyone should think him a closet Ballsite. Does he think that Mr Miliband's shift from command-and-control tactics to a more collegiate style constitutes effective leadership? Some might say that the Opposition has yet to land a blow.

"I think that is a harsh judgement," he says. The specific example he produces is Ed Miliband's focus on David Cameron's "vanity photographer", added to and subsequently erased from the Civil Service payroll. "It was a small thing, but it showed the sheen coming off Cameron."

More generally, he suggests that, in reservedly backing some coalition measures, such as welfare reform, Mr Miliband is preserving Labour's legacy. "Because we worked so hard on reforming welfare benefits... the Government has inherited a lot of the good work we did. The public like consensus. One of the reasons the Government got off to a good start is that people like to see political parties

working together. I think Ed's approach is right."

Mr Johnson, a former postman with not an O level, let alone an economics degree, to his name, is nonetheless almost a one-man Cabinet. The former Secretary of State for Health, Education, Home Affairs, Work and Pensions, and Trade and Industry could perhaps have been leader had he not ruled himself out.

Where Mr Miliband came to the pinnacle of his party with a clean slate, Mr Johnson has more baggage than a touring rock band. The experience

Mr Johnson, a former postman with not an O level, let alone an economics degree, to his name, is nonetheless almost a one-man Cabinet

he brings to the job may be counter-balanced by long-held ideas which contradict the leader's. Take 50p tax, which he has suggested should be temporary, despite Mr Miliband's insistence that it's there to stay. Does he stick by his assertion?

"We all come into this position having said what we said in a debate that has been going on since May. There will be differences of opinion that you can magnify over and over again."

Was he slapped down by Mr Miliband for his comments? "No. That is the mark of the man... There is no edict from the centre that says you now have to disbelieve everything you believed in... Ed is the leader, and I will support him... But we've not really got into our policy process yet."

Higher education fees are expected to be prominent in the policy review launched by Mr Miliband. While Mr Johnson rejects the coalition's plan to cut state spending on universities, impoverishing humanities and social sciences in particular, he is a long-time supporter of tuition fees. Mr Miliband, meanwhile, has not deviated from his support for a graduate tax. How are they going to resolve that difference?

"Ed's position will be that, having seen what's happened with the Browne review [on higher education

funding], you can never trust that the system won't be taken over by HM Treasury... What we'll be looking for is something that is Treasury-proof and that will guarantee a level of funding from the state. You guarantee the student contribution through whatever mechanisms are worth looking at. The fact that no one's introduced a graduate tax doesn't mean it can't be done."

But he doesn't think it possible? "Well, I don't think it could [work] on the basis of what we were dealing with before and what we're dealing with now. Frankly, there's a difference of view." Although he acknowledges that Labour is looking ahead to a "different period", he says: "I feel it's going to be very difficult to make a graduate tax a workable proposition". This statement, the clearest indication yet of the depth of division, suggests that conducting the policy review on this and other contentious areas will be far from easy.

Mr Johnson, it is fair to say, will be no pushover. His languid air – he is always impeccably dressed and coiffed – and self-deprecating wit belie the toughness he brings to his new role as Mr Miliband's "Enforcer", vetting every departmental plan with cost implications before authorising it for release. "It's not a title I use myself, but it is essential. In government, you have a very, very stringent system. You have to get a proper discipline in opposition."

It is easy to see why, firm hand notwithstanding, he is popular with colleagues. He is quick to defend Phil Woolas, the MP found guilty under election law of illegal practices after an election leaflet accused his opponent of courting Muslim extremists. When we speak, it is not yet known whether Mr Woolas will be allowed to appeal the judgment, but Mr Johnson's stance seems clear. "I get very, very nervous when I see judges deciding who should be a Member of Parliament... It's a leaflet, and we've all seen leaflets that are a bit near the mark."

Is he accusing the judges of getting it wrong? "I wouldn't go that far. I've got a lot of sympathy for Phil being in that position. Many of us, having seen the leaflets put around by all parties, particularly the Lib Dems, think that there would be an awful lot of other MPs who [could be] asked to stand down."

Mr Johnson is, however, not especially tribal. While Gordon Brown could barely bring himself to speak to George Osborne, the shadow chancellor speaks of his opposite number in quasi-affectionate terms. "I've known worse. When he first came in [to parliament], I was at the DTL, and I got to know him then. There are more arrogant and pompous people than George around, but unfortunately he looks hard."

While Mr Johnson would undoubtedly outscore the Chancellor in terms of public charisma, experience is a different question. Conscious perhaps of his early joke about studying an economics primer, Mr Johnson makes reference to the Tories' "playground economics" and "Janet and John" analyses.

He is, however, quick to agree that Labour's economic credibility is in pieces. "We lost it. That's the truth of the matter. We've lost it to such an extent that when we do polling, the 13 years of what we did – low interest rates, inflation under control, the highest level of employment in our history, paying down debt – all that's been turned into 13 years of overspending and debt. The Conservatives have been so effective at getting out this mantra that when we poll the public we're back to where we were in the tortuous days pre-1997. On economic credibility, we are in a really worrying position."

While this admission could hardly be franker, it is much less clear how Labour plans to change the mood. Alistair Darling and his deficit reduction plan, though now enshrined in new era orthodoxy as Labour's Moses and the tablets of stone, have not impressed the public. What can Mr Johnson do to sell it? Again, he lists the Government's accusations. "No mention of the global financial crisis, no mention of Lehman brothers and the sub-prime mortgages. The message that it all started here is feeding on Gordon's unpopularity. No one is speaking up for Gordon. You'd think he was a pariah," he complains.

"You have to say what you got wrong. But the message for the public has to be pretty remorseless from our side," he says, rehearsing the arguments for graduate deficit reduction. In other words, the formula is: more of the same.

Alan Johnson's acumen is not in doubt. No one absorbs a brief more quickly, and his early keynote speech, at the Royal Society of Arts, presented a polished denunciation of coalition myths about Labour's record, as well as admitting that the Brown government became over-dependent on City tax revenues, allowing the economy to become unbalanced and too narrowly focused.

Our meeting takes place as the Ireland crisis is appearing to make Mr Johnson's case about the perils of cutting deficits too quickly for him. "The lesson on Ireland is really important. We are not Ireland, just as we are not Greece. But they cut really fast, and the OECD and the IMF loved it. Now they're into double dip recession, and it's getting worse. That's what cutting so quickly and deeply before there's any private sector momentum can do to you.

"We export more to Ireland than to India, China and America put together. What [the coalition] needs is a level of exports and business investment the like of which we've only seen once since England won the World Cup – and it's got to happen in each of the next three years. An awful lot is happening to suggest they have really miscalculated this."

For all his enthusiasm, Mr Johnson cannot quite match – for now at least – the verve and depth of Ed Balls, who was never in the running for the shadow chancellor job he wanted. Fears that Mr Balls might carve out his own economic fiefdom no doubt played a part in the decision to offer Mr Johnson a job he calls "a big challenge". While the shadow chancellor is no one's Yes Man, he and the leader are indeed "intertwined" on economic calls. In other areas, unity is less assured. Although Blairite Al would be as big a misnomer as Red Ed, Mr Johnson has firm views that will not always accord with the leader's.

On the referendum on AV, he is a supporter of AV Plus, a proportional system, and thus out of line with the policies of all major parties, his own included. Asked if a Yes vote can be won, he says: "I think it's weird that you have a referendum and don't tell the [British people] they're grown up enough to have a proportional alternative as well. [Nick] Clegg has been remarkably weak on this." When I ask a second

time if the referendum will be lost, he seems pessimistic. "I hope not... [But] I think a referendum on May 5 doesn't sound all that sensible now." Will he be devastated should the No vote win? "I won't be heartbroken," he says. "If it goes through, I'll support AV, but my heart won't be in it in the same way as if it was the proper thing."

Win or lose, he foresees a future in which "you cannot guarantee a big majority government." With that in mind, he does not subscribe to what seems to be a deepening hostility between Labour and Lib Dems. "I am absolutely open, and so is Ed, to forging a centre-left coalition in the future. We'd like to win elections outright, but we've got a lot in common with many Lib Dems and others on the left, like the Greens, and we should nurture those links."

On unity, the big question for now is how tractable, or influential, Mr Johnson's history and instincts lead him to become. Once he said that he could not think of a "single time" Labour got the balance wrong on liberty and security. Now, with Ed Balls endorsing 14 days (as opposed to Gordon Brown's hope of 42) as the maximum period to hold a terror suspect without charge, I ask him again about civil liberties and get no answer. Where, as a former Home Secretary, does he stand on control orders? Again, he refuses, politely but point blank, to offer a reply.

Whatever Mr Johnson's current views, this uncharacteristic silence implies that he may take a more authoritarian approach than some colleagues. The shadow chancellor is not consumed by ego. If he is driven by ambition, he hides it well. But he is rightly proud of a back story that chronicles his rise from Tesco shelf-stacker to the highest offices of state. Mr Johnson, I would guess, has no wish to revise his own history to make it fit more neatly with the as-yet unformed policy of the Miliband years. That does not make him any less loyal, but it doesn't suggest that he will be unduly biddable either.

The relationship between the leader and his shadow chancellor, a politician with everything and nothing to lose, may define whether or not Labour can avoid the wilderness and become a government-in-waiting. ■

# Meeting of minds

Andrew Adonis finds Dennis Kavanagh and Philip Cowley's account of the general election as authoritative as expected, but says it was the ideological background of senior Lib Dems rather than Labour failure that led to the coalition.



Lord Adonis is Director of the Institute for Government and was Transport Secretary in the last Government



The British General Election of 2010

Denis Kavanagh and Philip Cowley

Palgrave  
£22.99

The Nuffield election studies began in 1945, an election fonder in Labour affections than the depressing 2010 poll. But the quality of the analysis is as sharp as ever, and Dennis Kavanagh is a worthy successor to David Butler as the master of ceremonies on this long running series.

Kavanagh and co-author Philip Cowley hail the TV debates as the path-breaking feature of the 2010 campaign, to the benefit of Nick Clegg. They quote an aide to Clegg: "We were like that mousy girl who goes to the proms in films, takes off her glasses, and shakes her hair, and suddenly everyone realises how beautiful she is."

Up to a point, Lord Copper. In fact, the mousy girl came back from the proms in a worse state than she left – but Prince Charming Cameron was still short of a majority and so she got a marriage proposal on the rebound in the post-election manoeuvring. In retrospect, the debates were less significant than they seemed at the time, but they are here to stay and they will dominate the media coverage of election campaigns hereafter.

However, it is results that matter. And they were a disaster for Labour – under 30 per cent of the vote, on a par with 1983, and saved from obliteration only by the electoral system and a distribution of seats and votes that is beneficial to Labour. The authors' analysis shows Labour support falling disproportionately in working class seats which had suffered above average rises in unemployment and across much of middle England. More than a quarter of Labour MPs are now drawn from Scotland and Wales. Until Labour can renew its appeal in middle and southern England, it is going nowhere.

The analysis shows the recession, immigration and Gordon Brown as key factors in voter disenchantment with Labour. With a new Labour leader now in place, the key to the future will be jobs and growth – whether the coalition's public sector slash-and-burn policies can generate a lot more of both, and if not whether Labour has a more credible economic policy to offer. For Labour to prevail,

a new industrial policy is required just as urgently as a new approach to social justice was needed in the mid-1990s, or a modernisation strategy for public services was after 2001 when we had so much to invest in them.

Two other features of the 2010 result stand out. First was the absence of any uniform national electoral swing. Regional patterns were starkly at variance, with Scotland actually swinging towards Labour and London much more favourable than the wider south-east. Second, local campaigning mattered hugely. This is seen most starkly in the benefit of incumbency within individual seats, despite the evisceration of a small number of MPs by the expenses scandal. The authors' analysis shows that Labour support fell by an average of 7.4 points in those of its seats not defended by an incumbent MP, which is more than two points higher than in seats where the incumbent stood again. In Tory seats, the party's vote increased by an average of only 2.9 points in previously Tory seats not defended by an incumbent, compared to 4.1 per cent where an incumbent was in place.

So more than ever in recent times, politics is local, and candidates and constituency campaigning matters. The national leaders' TV debates are no excuse for Fabian members to be sitting on the sofa when they need to be campaigning behind popular local candidates determined to maximise their vote, taking on the coalition street by street.

The 2010 election was also unusual in not producing a clear-cut result in terms of seats in the Commons. The story of the formation of the Tory-Lib Dem coalition is also well told by Kavanagh and Cowley. However, it needs to be read in tandem with the books which have since appeared on the post-election negotiations, particularly the account by David Laws which emphasises the degree to which this was a matter of ideological choice rather than necessity.

Laws himself was crucial to the Lib Dem shift rightwards. An economic liberal in sympathy with the Tory deficit reduction strategy, he had no



difficulty accommodating himself to Osborne and Cameron. In his book he highlights Nick Clegg's election as Lib Dem leader in 2007 as "of particular importance" in paving the way to a Tory coalition. "Nick was the first leader for decades who felt genuinely equidistant in his attitude to the other two parties." Clegg's continental liberal pedigree, ambiguous in its positioning before he had to make straight left/right choices, led him decisively rightwards with Laws on the crucial economic agenda, where continental liberals of the Dutch and German FDP variety also veer right. This sets him apart from the previous generation of progressive left SDP and Lib Dem leaders from Roy Jenkins and David Steel to Paddy Ashdown, Charles Kennedy and Ming Campbell.

Without this neo-liberal context, it is hard to fathom the five days of post-election negotiations and why the Lib Dem negotiators plumped for a Tory rather than a Labour coalition, or standing apart from a Tory minority Government.

For economic policy was the essential dividing line between Labour and the Tories, once Cameron conceded a referendum on electoral reform. And the key point to emerge from Laws's account is that the

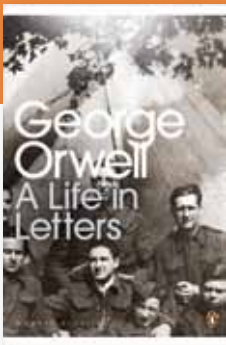
For Clegg and Laws, it was important to have Labour in play until the Tories had given sufficient ground on these constitutional issues

Lib Dem negotiators did not seek to negotiate with the Conservatives on the central issue of economic policy – the pace of deficit reduction. They simply accepted Osborne's policy of eliminating the structural deficit within a single parliament, in preference to Alistair Darling's – and their own – policy of halving the overall deficit within a parliament.

They negotiated instead on other issues, particularly constitutional reforms of totemic importance to Lib Dem activists although of marginal concern to the wider public.

For Clegg and Laws, it was important to have Labour in play until the Tories had given sufficient ground on these constitutional issues. Once this was achieved then a Lab-Lib coalition became a redundant option. However, Clegg and his team thought it critical at the time – and useful in retrospect – to be able to tell the Lib Dem mainstream and left that Labour was not serious about a deal in any event. Hence the attempt to blame the failure of the Lab-Lib negotiations on Labour's negotiators and negotiating style.

All now turns on the effectiveness of Labour's critique of the coalition's economic strategy. Labour needs to be the party of growth, jobs, fairness, and a credible but balanced approach to deficit reduction. Ed Miliband and Alan Johnson have made a good start, but this will be a marathon not a sprint. ■



## FABIAN QUIZ



Personal as well as political, Orwell's letters offer a fascinating window into the mind of a phenomenal man. We are privy to snatched glimpses of his family life, candid portraits of Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War, and letters to friends and his publisher. Edited by Peter Davidson, *A Life in Letters* features previously unpublished material, including letters which shed new light on a love that would haunt him for his whole life, as well as revealing the inspiration for some of his most famous characters. Presented for the first time in a dedicated volume, this selection of Orwell's letters is an indispensable companion to his diaries.

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

*What did George Orwell famously say good prose was like?*

Please email your answers and your address to [review@fabian-society.org.uk](mailto: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 11 March 2011.

# Listings



## A note from Local Societies Officer, Deborah Stoate

I am encouraged that there are about ten new Local Societies forming and many other expressions of interest. A mood of optimism is reflected in the titles of the meetings which Local Groups are holding, such as 'Labour's Road to Revival' which the Bournemouth Group discussed in November with Baroness Joyce Gould, and 'Labour's Fight Back' with Andy Slaughter MP in Chiswick.

The beauty of Local Society meetings is that there is the opportunity to discuss political matters in a deeper way than perhaps is possible in Labour Party meetings. Harrow Society, for instance, have Jon Cruddas MP addressing them on 'How and When Can We Retrieve a Progressive Social Democracy – if we ever had one?' I am confident that all these meetings will

be very well attended by Fabian members old and new.

I note with interest from the 1883 Annual Report that the Society had a special committee devoted to procuring lantern slides, for a series of 'Lantern Lectures'. A so-called magic lantern – an early type of projector – was placed at the disposal of the Society for deployment round the country for Local Society use, along with a sketch lecture with accompanying slides. The lectures attracted audiences of up to 500 and it was felt that "something has been done to give a better opinion of Socialism and its propaganda among those who have hitherto looked upon it with contempt".

Result! Forget the Powerpoint and get a magic lantern. It obviously works.

### BIRMINGHAM

**6 December.** Mike Maiden on 'The Probation Service'  
All meetings at 7.00 in the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham.  
**Details from Claire Spencer on virginiaisawithc@gmail.com**

### BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

**26 November.** Baroness Joyce Gould on 'Labour's Road to Revival'  
**9 December.** Christmas Party  
**31 January.** Austin Mitchell MP on 'Electoral Reform'  
**25 February.** Jon Cruddas MP on 'The Future!'  
**25 March.** Lord Knight of Weymouth  
All meetings at The Friends Meeting House, Wharncliffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30. **Contact Ian Taylor on 01202 396634 for details or taylori@bpc.ac.uk**

### BRADFORD

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

### BRIGHTON & HOVE

**26 November.** Shrini Heerah on 'Gender Based Domestic Violence'. 8.00 at Community Base South Wing, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton  
**Details of all meetings from Maire McQueeney on 01273 607910 email mairemcqueeney@waitrose.com**

### BRISTOL

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

### CANTERBURY

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

### CARDIFF AND THE VALE

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

### CENTRAL LONDON

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

### CHESHIRE

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

### CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

**2 December.** AGM and speaker Andy Slaughter MP on 'The Labour Fight Back' 8.00 in the Committee room at Chiswick Town Hall  
**Details from Monty Bogard on 0208 994 1780, email mb014fl362@blueyonder.co.uk**

### COLCHESTER

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

### CORNWALL

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

### DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

**10 February.** Lord Alf Dubs on 'The Labour Revival'  
Regular meetings at 8.00 in the Ship, Green Street Green Rd at 8.00.  
**Details from Deborah Stoate on 0207 227 4904 email debstoate@hotmail.com**

### DERBY

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

### DONCASTER AND DISTRICT

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

### EAST LOTHIAN

**13 December.** Visit to the Scottish Parliament. 12.00 noon.  
**Details of this and all other meetings**

### from Noel Foy on 01620 824386

**email noel.foy@tesco.net**

### FINCHLEY

**25 November.** Claude Moraes MEP on 'The Future of the Labour Party and Socialism in the European Union'. 8.00 in The Blue Beetle, Hendon Lane.  
**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**

### GREENWICH

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

### GRIMSBY

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

### HARROW

**2 December.** Jon Cruddas MP on 'How and When Can We Retrieve a Progressive Social Democracy – If We Ever Had One?' 7.30 at Hatch End 1, Harrow Arts Centre, Uxbridge Rd, Hatch End, HA5 4EA.  
**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

**13 January.** Alison Seabeck MP, Shadow Housing Minister on @Housing' St George's Centra, Hilldean Shopping Centre, Harold Hill  
**Details of all meetings from David Marshall email david.c.marshall.**

**t21@btinternet.com tel 01708 441189**

### HERTFORDSHIRE

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

### ISLINGTON

**26 November.** Annual Dinner with Baroness Dianne Hayter.  
**For details of all meetings and tickets contact Conor McGinn on mcginn@gmail.com**

### LEEDS

New Society forming. If you would like to become a member of this new Local Society, **please contact Bryony King on bryonyvictoriaking@hotmail.co.uk**

### LEICESTER

New Society forming. Please contact Vijay Singh Riyait. **Details on http://leicesterfabians.wordpress.com**

### MANCHESTER

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

### MARCHES

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

### MIDDLESBOROUGH

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

### NEWHAM

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

### NORTHUMBRIA AREA

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

**NORTHAMPTON AREA**

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

**NORWICH**

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

**PETERBOROUGH**

26 November. Mark Rusling on 'Immigration' Meetings at 8.00 at the Ramada Hotel, Thorpe Meadows, Peterborough. Details from Brian Keegan on 01733 265769, email brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk

**PORTSMOUTH**

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

**READING & DISTRICT**

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

**SHEFFIELD**

8 October 7.30. Check Local press

for details

Details and information from Rob Murray on 0114 255 8341 or email robertljmurray@hotmail.com

**SOUTH EAST LONDON**

24 November. Dennis MacShane MP on 'Labour and International Policy' 26 January. Jenny Jones of the Green Party on 'Green Politics and London' 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 freemansmb@blueyonder.co.uk

**SUFFOLK**

Regular monthly meetings, details from John Cook on 01473 255131, email contact@ipswich-labour.org.uk

**SURREY**

Regular meetings at Guildford Cathedral Education Centre

Details from Maureen Swage on 01252 733481 or maureen.swage@btinternet.com

**TONBRIDGE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

10 December. AGM and Social For details of this and other meetings contact John Champneys on 01892 523429

**TYNEMOUTH**

10 December. Sunder Katwala, General Secretary, Fabian Society Monthly supper meetings, details from Brian Flood on 0191 258 3949

**WARWICKSHIRE**

New Society forming. Details from Ben Ferrett on ben\_ferrett@hotmail.com

**WEST DURHAM**

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

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

**WEST YORKSHIRE**

Details from Jo Coles on Jocolos@yahoo.com

**WIMBLEDON**

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

**WIRRAL**

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

**YORK**

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

**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

'Next Left – Creating an Alternative' Saturday 5 March, Alex Wood Hall, Cambridge. Details tba.

# NOTICEBOARD

## FABIAN NEW YEAR CONFERENCE 2011

Next Left: What is the alternative?

Saturday 15th January 2011 – Institute of Education

The Coalition Government has set out its stall. How do we create an effective alternative? We kick off the political year seeking to connect Labour and a broader pluralist movement to map out the new political terrain.

Ed Miliband MP, the Leader of the Labour Party will give the morning's keynote speech. Other confirmed participants include Douglas Alexander MP, Sadiq Khan MP, Chuka Umunna MP, Angela Eagle MP, David Lammy MP, Jon Cruddas MP, Jason Cowley (New Statesman), Sian Berry (Green Party), Will Straw (Left Foot Forward).

Tickets cost £30 or £15 for a concession ticket; there are also conference tickets with six months introductory membership, which cost £35. A concession ticket with six months introductory membership is £20.

For any further details please visit [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk)  
Held in media partnership with the Guardian, the New Statesman and Left Foot Forward.

Kindly supported by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies

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

## FABIAN FORTUNE FUND

**WINNERS:** J.A, Allen £100  
Robert Barclay £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](mailto:giles.wright@fabian-society.org.uk)

## Britain and Europe: In, Out or Somewhere In Between

A one day Fabian Conference

Saturday 19th February 2011, Amnesty International UK

The argument for British engagement in the European Union finds itself at a crossroads once again. Join the Fabian Society as we explore and scrutinise the emerging British debate about the EU with leading voices from across the political spectrum.

The conference will take place on Saturday, 19 February 2011. Tickets will be available at [www.fabians.org.uk](http://www.fabians.org.uk) in the New Year

Held in partnership with the European Commission and Amnesty International

Media partner: E!Sharp



# LABOUR SAYS YES!

**Labour Yes!** is the new campaign organisation dedicated to mobilising Labour members and supporters to back the call for Fairer Votes when the nation goes to the polls for the referendum in May 2011. It brings together all wings of the Party who want a fairer voting system and want to defeat the Conservatives on this crucial issue.

Headed by Ben Bradshaw MP, Labour Yes is working with the Labour leadership, members of the Shadow Cabinet, scores of Labour MPs, MEPs, MSPs London and Welsh Assembly members, trade unionists and centre-left think tanks and campaign organisations to win the argument for change and to say **Yes to Fairer Votes**. Join us.

**[www.labouryes.org.uk](http://www.labouryes.org.uk)**