

FABIAN REVIEW

The quarterly magazine of the Fabian Society

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THE PATRIOTIC LEFT

*How a British patriotic vision is needed to bring the country together again
by Ben Jackson **p8** and Tom Kelsey and Jon Wilson on rediscovering English socialism **p3** /
Neil Kinnock talks leadership with Mary Riddell **p14** / Making the case for democratic reform **p20***

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**FABIAN
SOCIETY**

FABIAN REVIEW

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

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Resowing the seeds

It's been a barren year for new political ideas.
That needs to change, writes *Andrew Harrop*

THE 1993 FILM *Groundhog Day*, which has just been turned into a West End musical, is the story of a man who re-lives the same day again and again, and finds that it is torture. Could this be the fate of the left in Britain – except that it is one year that is to be repeated, over and over again? After all, it seems we face another year where a leader and a parliamentary party uneasily cohabit, like a couple trying to discover how to make a broken marriage work. And then another year after that?

The political fundamentals are as they were this time last September, only still more pronounced. A majority of the Labour selectorate stand even further from their MPs in their vision for the party. And the thread that connects Labour to millions of working class voters, which was already badly fraying in 2015, now feels so fragile that it calls into question whether Labour can govern again.

But what is saddest, looking backwards, is how barren the last year has been from the perspective of political ideas. When it comes to new analysis, policy proposals or political narrative, it has been a wasteland for the left. Distracted by civil war, neither the party's new leadership nor Corbyn's fiercest critics have found the headspace to grapple with the deep, structural challenges facing the nation and the left. Both camps give the impression of harking backwards, not facing the future, seeking guidance from their rival historical lodestars. And that left-conservatism defined the way in which Labour sought to defend Britain's EU membership.

This year must not be the same. Fresh thinking has always been the starting point for the left's renewal, but it might also be where a divided party can start to find some common ground. For, as things stand today, Labour peo-

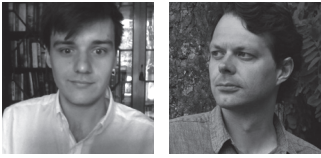
ple seem to disagree less when they are talking about how to tackle the dimly-defined challenges of the future, than when discussing the party's internal workings or defending the totems and shibboleths of the past.

During the last 12 months, the Fabian Society has sought to lay the ground for the intellectual revival Labour so badly needs. We completed a programme on the future of taxation, with proposals for a tax on worldwide wealth which would have looked impossible a few years ago. We published a book on the long-term challenges which will face the left in the 2020s. And, with the union Community, we launched a new research initiative, the Changing Work Centre, to examine how the labour movement should respond to the changing world of work.

This September we continue, first by publishing the only comprehensive proposals for reforming social security to emerge from a think tank in years; and then by launching a new call for the left to rediscover its appetite for radical political reform, which defined our politics in the early 1990s. And the society is also working on the issues which will present the toughest test for Labour in the year ahead – the interlocking questions of the UK's future European partnership, constitutional settlement and national identity.

So far Labour is saying nothing on these matters, or is at best picking holes in the inconsistencies of its opponents. We will know that it has not been another wasted year if, in 12 months' time, the competing strands of our divided left have started to tell stories of Britain's future – and ones which have the capacity to connect with the voters Labour needs if it is to win again. **F**

Shortcuts



A RADICAL ENGLAND

Rediscovering an authentic English socialism could heal divisions

—Tom Kelsey and Jon Wilson

Regardless of where you sit in the Labour party, it is difficult to look back on the leadership contest and feel a sense of pride. No one can say that this debate has constructively healed bitter divisions. In fact, we have managed to become more divided and it remains unclear where exactly the party is heading.

But Labour's problems go far beyond the current debate and relate to issues that have beset for the left for decades. Politics on the left has become ever more dominated by abstract discussion, vague promises and meaningless categories. Saying that we are anti-austerity is not a coherent political platform and yet the chanting goes on. We need to create ideas and plans that open the prospect of practical action so that people across the country can work together to bring about the change they desire. Rediscovering an authentic English socialism is one way to guide the future of progressive politics in this country.

Until the last quarter of the 20th century, four key themes ran through a distinctly English tradition of socialist thinking. *Freedom* was celebrated so individuals could choose their own course in life against the 'dull uniformity' all too often produced by modern capitalism; it was their freedom which socialists thought allowed people to work together to create a jointly-recognised common good. *Democracy* emerged out of England's vigorous forms of dissent and offered a radical challenge to elites monopolising power. It then provided the means for people to coordinate their actions in contrast to the chaos produced by competitive individualism. *Tradition* – local and national – rooted the politics of socialism within the lives of particular communities. It also offered a sense of what needed protecting

and a guide to future action. *Empiricism* was the national idiom of our socialism, a vernacular that spoke of everyday life in terms accessible to all.

From communists to pro-American cold warriors, figures across the left evoked these themes. The Marxist historian EP Thompson notably defended an "English idiom" against the suggestion from some on the academic left that "paltry English empiricism" and "distrust of reason" deprived the country of progressive thought. Thompson was fiercely critical of the idea – still rife on the academic left today – that politics could only be radical if it spoke the flash language of abstract theory. His most famous work *The Making of the English Working Class* unearthed traditions of radicalism that merged working class consciousness and an older critique of 'old corruption', the combined power of a state run by the rich and the big capitalists of their day. Instead of bemoaning the narrow-mindedness of their compatriots, Thompson thought socialists should recover rich radical languages from their past, to help identify the specific networks of power that linked government and business in their own times.

For much of the 20th century, socialism aimed to direct the productive forces of the national economy in the interests of the community at large. But it did so with a non-revolutionary form of politics that emphasised the reconciliation of groups and interests who otherwise would have been rivals. In practice, as Thompson puts it, "each assertion of working-class influence ... involved them as partners (even if antagonistic partners) in the running of the machine". Our problem now is that too many do not feel they are partners within the machine. The demise of a national political conversation has something to do with that. The rediscovery of the themes from England's socialist idiom might help restore a sense of involvement within our polity and economy. It wouldn't provide a simple blueprint. But mining its varied seams would provide examples and language to help rebuild a left that can appeal across the divisions in our party, but more importantly also talk to the people outside of it.

Too often on the left the solutions we offer are abstract, yet muddled. Dogmatic, but unclear. Complex without speaking to the complexities of everyday life. We, in

England, have forgotten ways of thinking and doing politics which are rich, radical and potentially very useful now. Rediscovering English socialism is not an effort to mobilise nostalgia or merely engage the cultural proclivities of those 'left behind' by globalisation. It offers the outline of a political project suited for a time when elites are questioned and people are demanding greater participation in political action. Bourgeois or working class, metropolitan or rural, Corbyn or Smith, rediscovering the vernacular idioms of the English left offers a path over the seemingly unbridgeable gulfs that have opened up within our society, never mind our party. ■

Tom Kelsey (@tomKelsey) and Jon Wilson (@jonewilson) are historians at King's College London. Tom's PhD is on science in postwar British politics; Jon's book *India Conquered. Britain's Raj and the Chaos of Empire* was published by Simon and Schuster in August.



KEEPING IT GREEN

Climate change and the environment must not be allowed to slip off the agenda—Sarah Sackman

Day one in the job and Theresa May wasted no time in resetting the direction of the UK's environmental policy. Whether her decisions to abolish the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and to install her former leadership rival Andrea Leadsom at Environment, Food and Rural Affairs were taken for reasons of political expediency or on principle, it sent out an inauspicious signal to environmentalists. With a majority in parliament and a Labour party consumed by internal divisions, will this finally be the moment when the Conservatives succeed in ditching "the green crap" as a frustrated David Cameron is alleged to have instructed his advisors as PM?

The Brexit negotiations will dominate this parliament. While the political focus is likely to be on free movement and the UK's access to the single market, the impact on environmental policy on everything from climate change to waste management could prove even more significant in the long term.

It is no accident that environmentalists were overwhelmingly in favour of remaining in the European Union. The likes of Friends of the Earth, Green party MP Caroline Lucas and even Boris Johnson's own father joined under the umbrella of Environmentalists for Europe. Their support for remain recognised not only that many of the thorniest environmental questions are best tackled at a transnational level but also the EU's particular contribution to addressing successfully those questions over previous decades. It is the EU which established the world's first and largest international carbon trading system and which has imposed exacting standards on clean beaches, habitat protection, the disposal of hazardous waste as well as the hard wiring of environmental impact assessment into decisions about planning and infrastructure. These EU rules and norms, which were automatically incorporated into UK law, embedded a culture of environmental protection and awareness into our domestic decision-making.

It is this culture of environmental thinking which is threatened by Brexit and a possible rightward shift under the new government. Brexit has the potential to unravel regulatory standards, as the UK will no longer be bound by EU environmental laws. More broadly, the worrying denigration of expertise during the referendum campaign is at odds with the scientific, evidence-based approach generally adopted towards environmental policy within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and formerly within DECC.

In this context it is difficult to see May's abolition of DECC, just months after the signing of the Paris climate deal, as anything other than a downgrading of climate change as a political priority. DECC's functions, which included responsibility for meeting carbon targets, participating in international climate talks and administering green energy subsidies have been transferred to the business department. Such symbolic gestures matter in politics. If the establishment of DECC by the previous Labour government sent a message to the civil service, industry and society at large that the country was serious about tackling the problem, then its abolition achieves the opposite.

Against this worrying background, how should Labour respond? First, Labour must signal that it considers the environment

and tackling climate change a priority. Defending environmental protections and advocating greater government intervention is not only a moral imperative, it makes electoral sense too; appealing to greens, liberals and more Conservative-minded conservationists. One means of doing this might be to create a specific shadow brief for climate change. Like the creation of a shadow portfolio for mental health (where no specific position exists within the cabinet), this would draw attention to Labour's focus on the issue and could be useful in holding the relevant government ministers within the new department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to account.

Second, even when Labour is in opposition in Westminster it should use its local government power bases to make an environmental difference and demonstrate the party's green credentials. Cities and devolved administrations are increasingly becoming sites for environmental innovation. Examples of good practice already exist – such as Sadiq Khan's latest commitment to an ultra-low emission zone in London or Labour-controlled Bristol's innovative programme of energy reduction and green investment. These should be used as models to put pressure on the government and explain what Labour could do if in power nationally.

Environmental problems can seem to the public to be remote, or otherwise unsolvable. By demonstrating that Labour in local government is committed to finding practical solutions – congestion schemes, air quality improvements and protection of public green space – the party may engender positive behavioural shifts whilst establishing a reputation for competence.

Thirdly, Labour needs to engage directly in the detailed work of the Brexit negotiations and planning for what environmental regulation will look like after withdrawal. Holding the government to account will mean insisting that European environmental standards are treated as a floor rather than a ceiling. For a start, European directives incorporated into domestic regulation should be retained.

Above all, Labour should seize the opportunity to draw a clear dividing line between its approach and the government's likely regulatory race to the bottom. In its place it should construct a political narrative around environmental policy that is both internationalist and locally relevant. ■

Sarah Sackman is a barrister and chair of the Society of Labour Lawyers environment and local communities group.



PEACE PROCESSES

We cannot afford to ignore Northern Ireland post-Brexit—*David Kitching*

The public debate leading up to the EU referendum showed an alarming disregard for the potential of Brexit to disrupt the peace agreement in Northern Ireland. Several commentators have indicated that triggering Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty could precipitate a poll on Irish unification. The situation in the Republic is currently precarious, with a minority government facing an uncertain future, while politics within Northern Ireland has been contradictory at best: the largest party campaigned for Brexit but has sought reassurances from Brussels that EU subsidies will stay in place. Replace this sentence with: Post-conflict Northern Ireland was built through a process whereby actors outside the province became vital to sustaining peace, and this will become an important consideration during Brexit negotiations.

Successive efforts at peacebuilding since the 1973 Sunningdale Agreement faltered due to a failure to acknowledge key elements of the conflict. The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) embraced a wider understanding, establishing mutually reinforcing internal and external elements of conflict regulation. It emerged as an exemplar of cross-jurisdictional constitutional creativity, relying on a delicate balance of interests, all of which could be jeopardised should there be any significant disruption to the agreement. Research by AudienceNet indicates that a slight majority of UK voters felt that Brexit would either have no effect on the GFA or would have a positive effect on Northern Ireland. But insufficient attention was paid to Northern Ireland in the overall debate, and the evidence suggests that Brexit has disruptive potential on several counts.

The GFA is composed of three broad strands: the internal settlement, the North-South dimension and the British-Irish dimension. The first strand stipulates that internal institutions in Northern Ireland should be run through a system of 'consociational democracy', with cross-community executive power-sharing; proportionality between communities in the allocation of positions throughout the government and

public sector; and veto rights for minority groupings within government. The UK government has, since 1998, adopted a position of “benign disinterest”, ie it has no preference for a particular political or constitutional outcome. Brexit precipitates a stark change in the UK’s constitutional landscape, with potentially serious ramifications. The GFA enshrined both a protection of parallel consent, whereby decisions require the consent of a majority of both unionists and nationalists, and qualified majority voting. While such a settlement does not contain a particular legal impediment to Britain taking Northern Ireland out of the EU, the political risks Brexit brings have the capacity to undermine both parallel consent and the spirit of bilateralism on which the deal was based, because while a majority of Northern Irish voters opted to stay in the EU, they were outvoted by the UK as a whole.

The internal institutions are supported through the workings of strands two and three of the GFA. The cause of the conflict lay in the competing claims to sovereignty over Northern Ireland between the UK and Ireland and the GFA endeavoured to balance the relationship between them. Strand two allowed for an all-Ireland component in the form of the North-South Ministerial Council and a post-Brexit hard border could undermine this portion of the accord. Strand three is grounded in the East-West axis with the establishment of the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. Constitutionally and legally, the British-Irish bodies hold no hierarchy over the North-South bodies. The UK cannot unilaterally revoke the powers of the North-South bodies without violating the terms of the GFA treaty. Until negotiations begin, the impact of Brexit on this balance will remain

unclear. At the very least, it undermines the UK’s claim of “benign disinterest”.

The experience of EU membership was pivotal in softening Westphalian conceptions of statehood, normalising ideas like pooled sovereignty which had been absent from mainstream opinion pre-1973. EU legislative processes and the GFA are both grounded in consensual politics. When Brexit negotiations begin in earnest, EU leaders would do well to maintain this ethos. AudienceNet research has found that 52 per cent of German and 45 per cent of French voters think their governments should make the border between Ireland and the UK a “special case” to preserve stability. The same body of research found that a quarter in each country would like for their government to push for the toughest position during Brexit negotiations, ie the WTO rules. The next highest support was for the less disruptive Norwegian option. For the UK to uphold its treaty obligations under the GFA, Norway will be the most favourable model. By contrast, the WTO option could create serious difficulties for people in the border region.

Parity between Northern Ireland’s communities came with institutional equilibrium and constructive British-Irish intergovernmental cooperation. These were, in turn, assisted by a more consensual landscape provided by the evolution of attitudes within both countries, born of their experience within the EU. Now EU partners are tasked with maintaining the integrity of both the European project and the GFA amid the multiplicity of interests at play. Northern Ireland was ignored during the referendum campaign. To do so during the negotiations could be dangerous. ■

David Kitching is director of social and political research at AudienceNet.



WITHOUT FRONTIERS

There is an opportunity to give the arts new meaning for local communities—*Lois Stonock*

Museums, theatres, radio stations, artists, administrators, thinkers and creatives are just a few of the places and people that fall into a sector called ‘the arts’. I like to think of them as the preservers of our heritage, as story tellers, as fantasists, as guardians of the intangible and the not too sensible. A small, inspired and sometimes eccentric army who house, build, and preserve our souls. It’s a mission without frontiers, so it is perhaps not a shock that a survey by the Creative Industries Federation showed 96 per cent of its members wished to remain in the EU. The recent resignation of Martin Roth as director of the V&A Museum in London has been a very public example and a symbol of the turmoil and uncertainty across the arts since the announcement of the EU referendum result on 23 June.

Watching the BBC coverage following the result, I was struck to hear one interviewee saying their reason for voting to leave was that the EU had spent “9m euros on art”. I have not been able to validate this figure. However the Arts Council England (ACE) notes that in the past two years, UK arts organisations have been recipients of more than 40m euros through the Creative Europe funding platform. On top of that we also receive support through other programmes such as Erasmus, Interreg and the European Development Fund. The possible end of this stream of funding is a reality that we will have to face and coupled with the ever-tightening belt of the Arts Council, means that opportunities will be lost.

Stephen Duchar, director of the Art Fund, an organisation which works to ensure our museums are collecting the art we go to see, said: “At one level there is obviously now great financial uncertainty – the effect on European funding streams for the arts, for example – but quite as important is the potential effect on the spirit that drives a myriad of international partnerships in the arts. These are driven at heart by the principle of Britain as a collaborative component of, and participant in, a vibrant European culture. We must work hard to keep this spirit alive, regardless of politics.”



As Duchar points out, the arts collaborate and that is what they are good at. Since 2008 they have had to adapt ways of working and thinking about financially sustaining their practice while keeping free access at the heart of what they do. The referendum result feels a little like the carpet has been pulled from under their feet. Leaving the EU not only reduces funding opportunities directly but also reduces the scope for partnership to build reach and scope.

But maybe it's not all bad if the result pushes us to think harder about what we do. We know that partnership is good and that making our money go further is good. If the referendum results in different people having different conversations then perhaps that is one positive outcome. Ever since Jennie Lee's White Paper 'A Policy for the Arts – First Steps' back in 1965, the Arts Council has instilled into our sector an inherent need for the arts to be 'for all'. We know we need to have a deep working knowledge of who our museums and theatres are for and what it is they do, but are we there yet? John Kieffer's essay 'Where has all the Chaos Gone?' for the Centre for London argues that the arts are still not yet for all, and as proof we only need to look at the lack of diversity in our sector. There we see a painful but clear reminder that there is still a way to go.

I think the Paul Hamlyn Foundation got a sense of this when commissioning Bernadette Lynch's paper 'Whose Cake is it Anyway', in which Lynch interrogates education programmes in museums to understand to what extent they action the feedback from their local communities. Even though mechanisms are in place to gather input from audiences, sometimes these reflections are set aside in favour of other visions. Or sometimes it's only the feedback which is most conducive to a vision that's already been decided on which ends up being taken on board.

The challenge for the sector is two-fold. Building partnerships has never been more important, both to ensure funding and to support artistic exchange bringing in new ways to inspire and involve audiences. Keeping partnerships viable during the planned exit from the EU will be crucial. But perhaps this is also a moment to think about partnership more widely. How can we rebuild trust with local communities whose interests and needs are clearly far away from those of our large London-based or national institutions? How can we build space for them to get involved and be part of this currently exclusive sector? Perhaps when we can think about this we can start to see the

arts taking on new meaning for those who have felt the sector is too expensive or just not for them. **F**

Lois Stonock is a consultant and curator



A GOOD COMPROMISE

Labour has been at its best when it has worked with, rather than as, a social movement
—*Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite*

From its earliest years, Labour has been divided between those who wanted socialism to be a radical vision of a new, moral way of life, and those who saw Labour politics as about maximising votes to win power and enact practical social and economic reform. Sometimes, social movements and electioneering were successfully yoked together – as George Lansbury did in Bow in London's East End in the early twentieth century. In this case and others, it worked because local people understood local issues and the coalitions that could be stitched together between the electioneering machine of the party and the local social movements and campaigns. But Labour has flourished best when it has worked with and developed organic connections to social movements, rather than attempting to be one.

Jeremy Corbyn established the centrality of social movements to his vision for Labour early on, telling LabourList in June 2015, "Labour is a social movement or it is nothing". Momentum now aims, as its three national organisers recently wrote in *Renewal*, to develop and support a "grassroots network to unite people in their Labour parties, communities and workplaces to win victories on the issues that matter to them", and "link this network with other movements and campaigns to build a diverse, united, mass movement for political change". Social movements can be a resource, a network, an inspiration for, and a check on the Labour party. They are also a social good in their own right: usually progressive in nature, they have achieved huge cultural and political changes, and championed grassroots

empowerment – important in our increasingly anti-deferential, anti-elitist, even anti-statist culture.

To understand why Labour has worked best when it has worked *with* rather than *as* a social movement, we need to examine the history and characteristics of social movements: they are (or aspire to be) less hierarchical than other forms of politics; involve large-scale collective activity and campaigning; are at least partially extra or anti-institutional; aim to alter one broad area of the politics, institutions or cultural norms of society; and pursue targeted campaigns at the micro-level.

The 'new social movements' which sprang up from the late 1950s, in which activists like Corbyn were politically socialised, were identified as 'new' because they focused on issues outside class or material distribution – like gender, race, or peace – and because their politics often seemed to be driven more by the desire to express and embody individual identity and morality, than by the desire to bring about specific practical changes. As early as 1968, in one of the first studies of CND, sociologist Frank Parkin concluded that for many participants, "the rewards of personal involvement are almost wholly of an emotional or psychological kind"; their politics was one of "the making of gestures which stress moral absolutes, but which tend to have little practical effect on outcomes". Parkin did not suggest that the movement was therefore not worthwhile – far from it. But its achievements were primarily in the realm of cultural change, rather than in policy shifts at state level.

Social movements usually have more focused and limited aims than political parties. Remaining outside the political institutions which they want to change, social movements and their participants can criticise as much as they want; they can remain ideologically and ethically pure; they can avoid compromise; they can embody their identity and values. It is harder to do this as an *internal* part of an organisation attempting to win and exercise political power. Fighting elections involves compromise and the balancing of different interests and identities. The exercise of political power is often about priorities and compromises. The Labour party *as* social movement runs a real risk of being stymied by the unwillingness of social movement participants to make pragmatic and sometimes unpalatable compromises. Political leaders must balance morality with pragmatism.

This is now one of the defining divisions within the party: should Labour be above all a political party and an electioneering

machine, or should it be a social movement? But the question is based on a false premise. As Lea Ypi and Jonathan White recently wrote in *Renewal*, much contemporary writing on parties reduces them to mere electioneering machines, entirely missing the “transformative aspirations that define partisanship”. The Labour party defines itself by long-term and developing goals and ideological commitments – to equality, justice, progress, collectivism. What defines the scope of those goals at any moment is *history* and *tradition*. Activists are motivated by the knowledge that we are contributing to a project with a past and future, and “owe a duty of fidelity to the commitments of [our] predecessors”. A recognition that partisanship has always been about more than winning elections provides a route out of the impasse over the electioneering/social movement divide.

A commitment to working closely with social movements can infuse Labour with some of their moral purity, vitality, and organisational reach. We also need partisanship. Above all, we need a realistic assessment of what parties are and what social movements are, if they are to be tied together effectively into a transformative left project. **F**

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TROUBLING TIMES

Labelling and stigmatising families does nothing to help them out of poverty—*Claire Sewell*

On the steps of Downing Street, Theresa May promised to speak for “the ordinary working-class family” struggling to make ends meet. Historically, when politicians have spoken of ‘ordinary’ working-class families, however, they have done so with reference to the other kind of working-class family: one that is deviant, or troubled. May must resist the temptation. The new prime minister has an opportunity to adopt policies that support families and tackle poverty, whilst moving away from David Cameron’s ill-fated agenda for ‘troubled families’.

After the 2011 riots David Cameron said: “Either there was no one at home, they didn’t much care or they’d lost control... So if we want to have any hope of mending our broken society, family and parenting is where we’ve got to start.” This stigmatising, sweeping, and frankly offensive statement by Cameron resulted in a £1.4bn pound programme to ‘turn around’ Britain’s 120,000 most ‘troubled’ families.

In 2015, Cameron announced that the first phase of the scheme had saved the tax payer £1.2bn and turned around the lives of 99 per cent of the families involved. This seemed unlikely in the context of social welfare cuts. A year later leaked independent

It is no coincidence that these moral panics, and the subsequent moralising of family life, tend to occur during times of recession and widening gaps between rich and poor

analysis has confirmed the programme had “no discernible impact” on its key objectives of reducing unemployment, truancy and criminality.

Rather than improving lives, the troubled families programme was a kneejerk policy based on poorly informed, judgemental and historically entrenched attitudes to family. Its inspiration came from the ideas of people like Eric Pickles, who was secretary of state for communities and local government secretary in 2012 when he said: “We have sometimes run away from categorising, stigmatising, laying blame. We need a less understanding approach”.

Historian John Welshman has charted the various guises of the troubled family: from Charles Booth’s identification of a ‘social residuum’ in 1880s London to the ‘social problem group’ of the 1920s and 1930s. And from the post-war ‘problem family’ to the ‘the cycle of deprivation’ described by Sir Keith Joseph in 1972 but still influential at the time of New Labour’s Sure Start initiative.

In terms of government policy, the notion – and indeed the label – of the troubled family is most closely aligned to the 1950s idea of the ‘problem’ family. At a time when the government was trying to better understand and measure its population, Family Service Units were established to identify problem families. The troubled families programme emerged from this tradition: local authorities were tasked with identifying troubled

families and compiling lists, so that the impact of policy interventions could be quantified. However, as we now know, the success of the programme was subjective and open to manipulation. More worryingly, as philosopher Ian Hacking has argued, labelling people, changes them. Being classified as troubled is sure to do more harm than good.

The notion of a troubled or problem family implies that there is such a thing as an ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal’ family. Historian Pat Thane has said: “The 1930s to 1950s was... the only age, of the near universal, stable, long-lasting marriage, often considered the normality from which we have since departed.”

Perceived threats to ‘normal’ family life are often part of broader moral panics, whether concern over rising divorces rates in the 1970s or the fear that civilised society as we knew it was on the verge of collapse in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 riots. It is no coincidence that these moral panics, and the subsequent moralising of family life, tend to occur during times of recession and widening gaps between rich and poor.

Back in 2011, Welshman offered Cameron some policy recommendations which are worth restating now, before May heads down the same all-too well-trodden path. Before labelling families, the government should consider if the labels are valid and reliable, especially as relatively little is known about the nature of families and so-called cycles of deprivation. Politicians should focus on tackling the systemic causes of poverty and on evaluating specific policies rather than on counting, and calculating the cost to the state of, certain families.

Cameron instead adopted a behavioural view of poverty, based on the notion of moral or psychological weakness, which whilst compassionate was also condemning. His government was unable, or unwilling, to address poverty as a broad structural phenomenon affecting ‘ordinary’ families ‘doing the right thing’. Child poverty rose by 200,000 between April 2014 and April 2015 due to welfare cuts and is projected to rise a lot more by 2020.

The government honed in on a few hundred thousand families considered prone to ‘deviance’, whilst cutting support to the millions of families affected by poverty. To raise living standards and life chances we need to extend benefits, childcare support and policies such as the pupil premium which are unifying, morally neutral and support all of Britain’s families. **F**

Claire Sewell is media and communications manager at the Fabian Society

Labour and the nation

Finding a social democratic language about Britishness is crucial if it is to reconnect with its traditional support, as *Ben Jackson* explains



Ben Jackson is associate professor of modern history at Oxford University and co-editor of Political Quarterly



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THE LABOUR PARTY has a serious problem with patriotism and national identity. The events of the last few years – foremost among them the referendums on Scottish independence and Britain’s membership of the EU – have shown that Labour’s failure to develop an authoritative approach to the politics of nationalism is a critical factor in cutting it adrift from its traditional support base. It is of course true that both the recent, existential confrontations between Labour and plebiscitary democracy were decisively shaped by economic factors such as rising income inequality, deindustrialisation, and austerity. But to analyse the referendums purely in these terms, as some on the left are tempted to do, would be a misreading of the febrile state of British politics. Distributive conflict in Britain after the financial crisis, although undoubtedly a class issue, has at a popular level been understood, expressed and channelled in terms of competing nationalisms. The Labour party will have to engage with this politics of national identity if it is to gain a hearing for its ever more ambitious programme of economic reform.

One part of that engagement must be a response to the emerging importance of English national identity, a topic that is rightly, though belatedly, now commanding significant attention on the left. But for the purposes of this article I want to focus on Britishness and consider why Labour has found it so hard to come up with a convincing *British* socialist response to both the rising political salience of Scottish and English identities and the Conservative unionism that usually serves as the dominant defence of the British state. The difficulty for the Labour party in doing so rests not only in a weakness of will and? political creativity on the part of the party’s leadership, but also in deep historical and cultural forces that inhibit efforts to marry patriotism and socialism in early twenty-first century Britain.

To understand the depth of the problem, consider how Labour thought about the nation in the 1940s, the period in which it is widely agreed to have achieved its most effective synthesis of popular patriotism with left-wing radicalism. Thanks to the enhancement of working class economic power and social prestige generated by total war, and the popular association between the Conservative party and the failed strategy of appeasement, Labour was able to position itself throughout the 1940s as the party that spoke for the national interest rather than privileged sectional interest groups. This much is a familiar theme in the histories of the period. It is less frequently asked how leading figures in the Labour party of the 1940s conceived of British patriotism and what they regarded as the distinctive features of British national identity. Yet it is instructive how thoroughly the towering figures of Labour’s golden age, such as Clement Attlee, Herbert Morrison, Hugh Dalton and Ernest Bevin, shared an instinctively Whiggish view of British patriotism and political culture.

In the first half of the twentieth century Britishness had many different connotations – of empire, of a romantic

attachment to the British landscape, of Protestantism, of a purportedly undocrinal, pragmatic national character – but for almost all of the British elite what was fundamental in distinguishing Britain from other nations was its uniquely successful constitution. It was the gradual and managed growth of individual liberty and democratic self-government in parliament over the course of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries that was thought to set Britain apart from other, less favoured nations. The combination of freedom and social order established by this constitutional system was believed to be remarkable when compared to the revolutionary upheavals and despotisms suffered by other European nations in the same period. The leaders of the Labour party fully shared this analysis and drew political legitimacy from it, since the rise of Labour could be presented as the ‘logical’ next stage of the gradual expansion of political participation to include the working class.

The second world war strengthened the plausibility of this vision of Britishness, since it apparently confirmed the fundamental political weaknesses of other European nations. Evan Durbin, the leading thinker of the Labour right at this time, wrote in his 1940 book, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, that Britain was “an island of social peace... surrounded by the fierce sea of European hatred and fear.” Britain, argued Durbin, had “contributed a great idea and a great example” to the rest of the world because “we have lived in peace with one another for nearly three hundred years”. Indeed, he said, in its system of government Britain had discovered “the secret of social peace.”

What the Labour party added to this traditional British constitutionalism in the 1940s was a new note of social patriotism that presented the rise of economic planning and the welfare state as the next stage in securing British liberties and democracy. Following the guarantee of individual civil rights against the state and the universalisation of the right to vote, Labour argued that the use of the democratic state to pursue full employment and minimum economic standards was the culmination of the British tradition of gradual social inclusion by constitutional means. This was in effect the line of historical interpretation that T. H. Marshall built into a larger sociological theory in his seminal 1949 lecture, *Citizenship and Social Class*, which argued that the concept of citizenship could in retrospect be seen as progressing through three distinct phases: the rise of civil rights in the eighteenth century followed by political rights in the nineteenth century, leading eventually to the emergence of social rights in the twentieth century, as citizenship began to entail rights to material goods such as health-care, education, housing and social insurance.

In the 1940s, then, radical social politics and British patriotism were closely connected, not only because of the intense social experiences of total war, but also because Britain’s distinctive parliamentary political system was thought to be uniquely successful at mediating social

The Labour party will have to engage with this politics of national identity if it is to gain a hearing for its ever more ambitious programme of economic reform

conflicts, protecting liberty, and managing peaceful social change. This worldview remained highly influential on the British left (and right) for many years afterwards, and it provided a vision of Britishness that could be presented as progressive and democratic rather than (or in addition to) imperialist and traditionalist. But after the 1960s this version of British national identity began to collapse, hollowed out by a number of significant political and cultural changes. Labour has never developed a model of patriotism of comparable social authority to replace it. The origins of Labour's subsequent problems with national identity therefore lie precisely in the crisis of the Whig democratic view of Britain articulated by Labour in the 1940s.

A series of important developments undercut the foundations of Labour's constitutional patriotism and made it harder for the British left to stick to its traditional narrative about Britain as distinctively democratic and progressive. First, the radical political currents of the 1960s and 1970s, including the New Left, feminism, anti-colonialism and the civil rights movement, offered powerful and influential scepticism about how democratic and egalitarian the 1940s settlement actually was. Second, the concurrent rise of Celtic nationalisms in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland dramatically highlighted the extent to which the 'British' patriotism of the 1940s elided Britishness and Englishness and underplayed the character of Britain as a multi-national polity. Third, Britain's entry into the European Community and the seemingly greater economic and social successes of other Western European nations in the 1970s compared to a Britain mired in economic crisis made it much harder to defend a discourse of exceptional British political and economic performance. Fourth, the subsequent ruthless and disorientating efficiency of the Thatcher governments in undoing key elements of the 1940s settlement raised profound questions for the left about why it was possible in Britain for radical change to be introduced by governments supported by only a minority of the electorate. Labour had enjoyed a similar privilege in 1945, but viewed from the perspective of opposition, this proved to be a more disturbing experience.

The cumulative impact of these developments was that the British left could no longer regard British parliamentary institutions and constitutional history as an unambiguous source of national pride. Progressives even began to look instead to the benefits of radically changing that constitution, with electoral reform, devolution, and written guarantees of rights all leading candidates to modernise what was now more commonly presented as a dilapidated and antiquated political system propping up an antediluvian social order. But in the absence of such an authentically modern constitutional settlement, the left lacked any basis for a positive historical account of British civic institutions.

When Labour entered government once again in 1997, important political reforms were introduced, but not in a

way that was explicitly intended to build a new constitutional settlement and thus foster a new civic British patriotism. Labour and the wider left therefore found themselves with little of any political depth to say about Britishness beyond an impressionistic collection of historical episodes and political values that were collectively said to add up to a progressive British tradition. Although Gordon Brown, for one, perceived that this was a problem for Labour, he did not succeed in office in articulating an account of Britishness that achieved any substantial political or social resonance, nor did he sponsor any meaningful efforts to reform systematically the British constitution.

Until the Scottish independence referendum this did not strike many within the Labour party as a serious problem. But during the hectic spring and summer of 2014, Labour's profound inarticulacy on British identity was clearly revealed. It proved surprisingly difficult for leading Labour figures to give a compelling positive account of British identity to go alongside the ferocious economic critique of Scottish independence. The main exception to

this was Gordon Brown, who succeeded in refining his ideas about Britishness to the point where they at last had a significant political cut-through. Brown's concept of the union as about risk sharing and resource pooling between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland was a fertile one, which opened up a distinctively social democratic way of characterising British institutions and traditions. The

weakness of Brown's analysis, as Scottish nationalists pointed out, is that post-Thatcher the 'pooling and sharing' case for British institutions is harder to make. After rapid deindustrialisation, growing economic inequality and a period of relatively right-wing Labour government followed by Westminster-sponsored austerity, the argument that Britain stands for egalitarian collective action unsurprisingly proved difficult to land with some long-standing Scottish Labour voters.

The reason 'Britishness' is so elusive for Labour today is therefore less, as some critics assume, because of the fading away of traditional props of Britishness such as empire or religion, but more because the teleology of Britain as the site of inexorable democratic progress elaborated in the 1940s has been swept away in Labour thinking, replaced (on both the left and right of the party) by a declinist vision of historic defeat by the forces of globalised capitalism. A civic British patriotism becomes hard to formulate with any conviction when the democratic credentials of the British state are in question. There is plenty to be pessimistic about in Labour politics at the moment, but the sheer difficulty of finding a social democratic language about Britishness that could hold together an election-winning coalition across England, Scotland and Wales is surely one of the most intractable problems for any Labour leadership serious about government. ■

**A civic British
patriotism becomes hard
to formulate with
any conviction when
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of the British state are
in question**



Instilling skills, uniting communities: A Labour agenda for youth volunteering and service

Tuesday 27 September
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The uncivil war

If the two sides in the battle for Labour don't reach out to each other the results will be devastating, writes *Emma Burnell*

The Labour leadership contest has exposed divisions within the party that make it hard to see how it will survive. Whereas a recent YouGov poll put Jeremy Corbyn 24 points ahead of Owen Smith in the race, the same poll showed a two to one lead for Smith in members who joined before 2015. You could not ask for a starker picture of how much and how quickly Labour has changed.

Will Labour split? That's the question everyone is asking. Can the party be held together when the two sides so fundamentally disagree on the fundamentals?

The answer lies in whether the parliamentary Labour party and their supporters can be humble in defeat and whether Corbyn and his supporters can be magnanimous in victory.

Neither will be the easy or natural instinct of either side in what is an extremely bitter civil war. Not since the 1980s has Labour been so focused inwards with so much vitriol. But the lessons of the 80s also make knowing what to do now far more complicated.

The lesson of the Social Democratic party, which broke away from Labour in 1981, is that small parties don't survive Britain's brutal first past the post system. Any split would create two rival left parties fighting over similar territory. It is not clear that either side would break through. So the lesson for the non-Corbynite left is pretty tough. If you split the party over 'electability' (one of the key criticisms of Corbyn), you will not find yourselves in an electable party as a result.

The left of the party can learn their own lessons from history too. They dominated the party through the late 70s and early 80s and it was a time of strife and factionalism. As internal battles raged, where they were in power hubristic mistakes were made. Illegal budgets were bad. But sacking your own workers and handing out redundancy notices by a fleet of taxis was not something the vast majority of Labour members could stomach. It wasn't that one act that changed Labour,



but it was a symbol of all that needed to change to bring the party back to being one of government, in touch with the people. What is the way forward for a humbled PLP?

No one can or should force anyone to serve in the shadow cabinet. It's an incredibly tough beat even when you're entirely behind your leader and his project. When you aren't, it's impossible to retain your own integrity and stand full square behind your leader.

But there has to be some kind of opposition. Some compromise will have to be reached where opposition briefs are filled and the hard graft of challenging Theresa May's government is done – perhaps even as policy is formulated elsewhere.

One of the key concerns of those who did serve, previous to the leadership challenge, was the lack of communication with, and co-ordination by, the leadership. This isn't a political or philosophical difference, and as such is quite easy to fix. Corbyn could choose to beef up his staff team with pluralists who can both support his agenda and work across the party. As new skin they would be untainted by the nastiness of the past few months. They could work in support of his more closely allied core team in building their policy agenda while also keeping the party together and supporting and reassuring shadow cabinet members in fulfilling their roles.

If Corbyn were to reach out in such a way, the PLP should respond in kind. With the leader having won a second mandate it will be incumbent on MPs to make it work. However disastrous the polls, however much they may feel they are marching towards general election disaster, they must know now that the party has no mechanism that lets them choose another leader. The party

will have made their choice loud and clear and we will have to go into a general election as we are, however challenging that may be.

This scenario, one in which Labour is still likely to lose badly at the next general election, is the optimistic viewpoint. It is not necessarily the most likely scenario.

The hard left will be further strengthened by a second victory for Jeremy Corbyn and have at the very least hinted that they don't intend to be magnanimous. And the PLP shows little sign of backing down.

One of the darker lessons the hard left learned from the 70s and 80s was that controlling the mechanics of the party is essential to building it into a hard left political entity. This is why there has been open talk of sacking the staff of the workers' party. It is why there is open talk, no longer quite so vehemently denied, of deselection of MPs. It is why the makeup of the NEC is so contested. It is why the 2018 contest to be general secretary of Unite will be fascinating to watch.

If the PLP continues to attack Corbyn at every opportunity rather than find a way to agree to disagree collegiately, that and the boundary changes will give the left political and even moral cover to pursue a full programme of deselections. Staff members will be in the firing line too.

If Labour's uncivil war continues, it will be played out in hundreds and hundreds of bloody battles in every corner of the UK. Labour will again focus on itself and not the country. Both sides will blame each other for this and to an extent both will be right. But the public will not see the difference and will not forgive such excess from Labour again. If this battle continues in the worst – and most likely – way, the spoils will be slim: the rotting shell of a party that held power less than a decade ago and may never do so again. ■

Emma Burnell is a political commentator and blogger

Grassroots appeal

Populist forces are making waves across the world
– and Labour needs to learn from them, argues *Paul Hilder*

Social democratic parties are crumbling all across Europe. Insurgent political forces are on the rise, from left to right. The US establishment was shaken to its foundations by the populist campaigns of Trump and Sanders, and new movements have also been making waves in southern democracies like India.

Knee-jerk elitists dismiss all populism out of hand, but this is short-sighted folly. Progressive giants like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Bobby Kennedy and Nye Bevan were passionate populists. Today's economic and social insecurities demand a practical radicalism equal to their example. The front-lines of twenty-first century politics will be increasingly defined by competing populisms: even Theresa May's Conservatives are getting in on the act.

European politics is being transformed by these forces. In austerity-ravaged southern Europe, the left have made the most progress, from Greece to Portugal and Spain's Podemos. In central and northern Europe the right are ahead – governing in Poland, in pole position for the Austrian presidential re-run as well as in the Netherlands, and flourishing in both France and Germany.

Here in Britain, lightning has struck three times in the last two years. The Corbynite movement, the SNP takeover in Scotland and the Brexit insurgency each tapped into different social forces; but all shared anti-establishment DNA, familiar from my own experience of networked campaigning.

The global hollowing out of third way and social democratic forces was decades in the making. Undertows came from the fragmentation of employment and social identity, growing inequality, and declining trust and deference. Political programmes suffered from timidity or triangulation. Campaigning and organising decayed. Scandals tainted reputations, and leadership became increasingly technocratic and out of touch.

The financial crisis of 2008 and subsequent stagnation shook the foundations of



the Western order. It undermined status quo politics, sowed sparks of anger and dissent, and incubated a new generation of movements. These insurgencies are now centre stage.

The campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders illuminate similarities and differences. Both set themselves up as outsiders, tilted at a corrupt politics and a rigged economy, and claimed to be more authentic and trustworthy than their primary opponents.

Trump dominated the national conversation and decimated his primary opponents through aggressive, personalised media campaigning. By contrast, earlier this year I went on the road with the Sanders campaign to see them building a grassroots movement of millions, who powered the campaign with a flood of small donations, phone calls and doorstep conversations. The new right are often more ruthless at media cut-through, while the new left dominate movement-building.

Sanders and Trump also illuminate the continuing importance of leadership. Trump's appeal to his party base does not appear to have translated into a winning general election strategy. Sanders' strength was partly down to public approval ratings which far outstripped Trump or Clinton, in particular among independent swing voters; but his weakness among black Democrats proved his undoing. Yet while Sanders lost, he has radicalised Clinton's economic agenda and changed the Democrats for a generation.

The most effective of the new political movements weave together grassroots organising with leaders with broad

appeal and professional media campaigning. Italy's Five Star Movement is an impressive, if troubling, example. It has cultivated new political leaders and embraced direct democracy, recently won the mayorships of Rome and Turin, and is neck and neck with centre-left prime minister Matteo Renzi's Democrats. Many around UKIP talk of copying the Five Star playbook to target Labour's heartlands.

Popular competition will clearly be fierce in the coming years: the left has no monopoly on new politics. Beyond this leadership election outcome, Labour's scattered factions must find a path to combine movement organising with effectiveness and broad appeal.

How can Labour build a pluralistic winning coalition – in particular in England – and reach people who have voted for Brexit, for the Tories or for UKIP? In the new politics, credible leadership, effectiveness in communications and campaigning, and a well-tuned strategy remain essential. No matter how many passionate activists you have, they need a compelling offer to put to voters.

Nationally and locally, Labour needs to renew its leadership and turn outward to the country. The opportunity was missed to involve millions more in this leadership contest. In future the doors should be flung open. More parliamentary selections also seem likely in the coming years: but in place of old-fashioned reselections, the party could experiment with more open primary contests to involve voters at large. The new politics needs to turn toward the future and the public, starting now. ■

Paul Hilder is co-founder of CrowdPac, 38 Degrees and openDemocracy. He was a candidate for general secretary of Labour in 2011, and has played leadership roles at Oxfam, Avaaz and Change.org



Voice of experience

As the longest serving opposition leader in British political history, Neil Kinnock has plenty of lessons to share. He talks to *Mary Riddell* about Labour's leadership battle and his predictions for the party's future



Mary Riddell is a
writer and journalist

IT IS EASY to imagine that Neil Kinnock must be a haunted man. In the past year, the former leader of the Labour party and one-time vice-president of the European Commission has been forced to watch a life's work begin to crumble. Is he not heartbroken, I ask, to see his legacy on Labour and on Europe turning to dust? Lord Kinnock is not so frail as to be daunted by the ghosts of any bygone glory. "The reason egotistical people want statues is because they understand the transitory nature of legacy," he says.

Were a statue to be erected in Kinnock's honour, a suitable site might be the car park of his local supermarket. We meet in the height of summer at his north London home, where Kinnock had begun his day, as usual, with a visit from his four-year-old granddaughter, followed by some garden-tidying and a trip to stock up on household provisions. "Today I managed to do the shopping without any political discussion," he says. "That was remarkable. It's the first time for weeks that I haven't got to Waitrose and had to hold a surgery."

Almost a quarter of a century after Kinnock resigned the leadership of the Labour party, his opinions are sought out from the frozen food aisles to the higher echelons of the parliamentary Labour party. He is not, he claims modestly, an influential figure. "I don't think I am. I was leader one hell of a long time ago." While that is indisputable, his words still echo down the years.

Not long ago I went with him and his wife, Glenys, to watch the first run of *Handbagged*, a play by Moira Buffini about the relationship between Margaret Thatcher and the Queen. Unbeknown to any of our group, the script contained a Kinnock oration delivered by one of the cast. "I'm here. You can take the night off," Kinnock roared at his stage impersonator, who ignored the heckler and ploughed on with the speech.

"If Margaret Thatcher wins on Thursday, I warn you not to be ordinary. I warn you not to be young. I warn you not to fall ill. And I warn you not to grow old," the excerpt went. In the silence that followed, the audience rose from its seats, turned towards Kinnock and gave him a standing ovation. Yet durable as his most famous speech has proved, there is perhaps an ironic resonance today. For when he now inveighs against a damaging leader, the target is most likely to be the head of his own party.

Kinnock has a formula for describing his feelings about Jeremy Corbyn's tenure. "Only anger is preventing me falling into despair," he says. We meet as the early votes are being cast in the Labour leadership contest, at a time when soundings suggest that Corbyn may have a better than 80 per cent chance of winning. That apparent invulnerability is juxtaposed with a seemingly shambolic campaign featuring

a rebuttal by Richard Branson to a film of Corbyn sitting on the floor of a "ram-packed" Virgin train, proselytising about renationalising the railways.

Both the initial episode and the way the subsequent row was handled by the Corbyn team, after CCTV footage showed empty seats the leader might have occupied, have only increased Kinnock's rage. "Bizarre doesn't do it justice. Anyone can make a mistake, but this is part of a whole series of errors, clangers, disasters, that ten months in [to a leadership] shouldn't be occurring. I think a decision had been made that there was going to be a film identifying Jeremy Corbyn with the wretchedness of passengers, and the reality wasn't going to be allowed to intrude."

In a final flourish to 'Traingate', it was alleged that Corbyn proved difficult to contact in the aftermath because he was busy making jam. "I've been in jams, and my advice is this – when in a jam don't go and make any," says Kinnock grimly. "The whole thing was a parable of Corbynism – of avoiding an opportunity in order to make a gesture."

At the time of our interview, the campaign still has some weeks left to run before the result is announced at the party conference in Liverpool. Does he believe that Owen Smith, the challenger and recipient of the Kinnock imprimatur, is in with a chance? "I have absolutely no idea. I do know that I've had substantial numbers of emails from people who voted for Corbyn last year – for reasons which I totally understand – who have now changed their minds.

"The references aren't to his policies but to his inactivity and to people's revulsion at the alleged antics of some who say they support him. [Similarly] the parliamentary Labour party (PLP) didn't vote overwhelmingly that they had no confidence because of policy but because of a total lack of confidence in his ability to lead the party. It wasn't about the remnants of Blairism or people who had an innate grudge against Jeremy Corbyn. It was a vote by people who thought: "This guy just can't do the job.""

Nonetheless, this broad consensus failed to produce a rival candidate with any certainty of rattling Corbyn, let alone of unseating him. One criticism of Smith is that he appeared to be the embodiment of the problems bedeviling Labour rather than an antidote to its woes. Was he, at best, merely a staging post on the road to a post-Corbyn future? "I don't see him as a halfway house. I [formed a] confidence in his ability to lead, to articulate, to organise and to manage. Those are the qualities we are looking for to restore Labour to a credible opposition.

"I led the party for eight and a half years, and in the end [the 1992 election] we just missed. But even on the days that were a manifest failure, we gave it our best shot.

"Anyone can make a mistake, but this is part of a whole series of errors, clangers, disasters..."

Owen Smith will always give it his best shot. That is why I voted for him in good heart. Ours is a party committed by constitution, history and tradition to the parliamentary route to socialism. Owen Smith understands that – like Bevan and Attlee and Foot and Callaghan.

“Protest will not bring the Tory walls of Jericho crashing down. It has to be done by organisation and ceaseless effort. We [had] one candidate, Jeremy Corbyn, who can’t do that, and one who can.” As Kinnock knows, by the time this interview is published, his words may stand as an epitaph to a failed campaign.

Should Corbyn be reappointed leader in Liverpool, what does Lord Kinnock think would happen next? “The strife can’t be concluded. I say that with no threat and much regret. The inability of Jeremy Corbyn to select a convincing shadow cabinet shows he is not fit to lead the Labour party. Those who will not serve are people who, in all conscience, cannot support a leadership that lacks all credibility. There will then be threats, some veiled, some not, against those MPs.”

Having previously discarded the idea of a coalition of progressives from assorted parties, does Kinnock now concede that the tensions within Labour might portend a split within its ranks? “No. I’ve made very clear that there are no circumstances in which the party could or should split. People antagonistic to Corbyn are entirely legitimate members. They’re not going to jettison [their party] and find some other political vehicle. Jeremy Corbyn has a decision to make: How much does he love his party?”

It is unlikely that Kinnock detects much self-sacrificial impulse in a man who has long been a thorn in his side. When Tony Benn made his move against Kinnock in 1988, in the last challenge to an incumbent Labour leader, Corbyn was in the rebel vanguard. On that occasion, Kinnock easily secured sufficient backing from MPs to ensure his inclusion on the ballot paper. Corbyn, who failed to do likewise, had to rely on an Appeal Court ruling endorsing the NEC’s decision that he be allowed to run.

Kinnock is contemptuous of Corbyn’s remedy. “When the leader of a political party has to take refuge in the judgment of judges, and not do what is politically vital and honest, that speaks volumes. The constitutional provision was clearer back in 1988, but I didn’t know that when I made my decision. My attitude was that I wouldn’t take refuge in occupancy, and it wouldn’t have mattered a damn what the constitution said.”

Is he saying that Corbyn would have stood aside if he were a man of honour? “It’s a pretty straightforward matter of political integrity. You damn well have to maintain at least reasonable support in the PLP and across the party.”

Though many MPs share Kinnock’s concern about “utterly inadequate” local election results, the timing of the move against Corbyn was dictated by a Brexit vote which could, at the time of our interview, have led to an early general election.

“That prospect remains. My guess is that, if it happens, it will be levered by when to trigger article 50 [the starting

point in a two-year process to leave the EU]. Theresa May may argue she wants either a mandate or an endorsement for having triggered it. There will be incessant Tory pressure to get on with it. I don’t know how resilient she would be in those circumstances.”

Despite being a fervent Europhile who served first as an EU commissioner and then as the Commission’s vice-president in the years after he resigned the Labour leadership, Kinnock declines to endorse Owen Smith’s call for a second referendum or a general election to endorse any future deal. “I think that’s leaping too far ahead. We shouldn’t be describing the finishing line.”

Instead he wants a minimum of one select committee or similar body to ensure full parliamentary involvement in the Brexit negotiations. “Constitutionally, it’s essential to orientate policy, since they [the government] don’t know what the hell it is. We’ve got three Brexit secretaries of state. I’d make the case for three select committees.”

Kinnock denies that such bodies would merely become talking shops. Instead he argues that a time-limited investigation is essential. “The first part of what Owen says is practical and necessary – to hold off triggering article 50 until we know what the hell it is we’re triggering.”

Parliament, he believes, must vote on activating the trigger and ensuring that Britain stays in the single market. And that means also accepting freedom of movement? “Yes, of course. When we made that case, we were dismissed as Project Fear. [But] the British people voted without being aware of the realities of staying, and certainly those of leaving.”

Given that he envisages so little change, what’s the point of leaving the EU and incurring all the potential disadvantages with none of the gains? “Those are profound questions, and I recognise their validity. But the fundamental question is: Are we still a parliamentary democracy that has to operate on the basis of a referendum result [albeit advisory]? The answer is yes, and the result is implacably there. Those who are elected must solve the problem.”

But shouldn’t people have a vote on the final deal? “I would be making a guess about [what happens in] two or three years’ time. And I simply don’t know.” On whether we might never leave the EU, he is similarly Delphic. “I have no way of knowing that.” He is however emphatic that Jeremy Corbyn’s feeble endorsement of the remain message contributed to the Brexit vote.

Much more curiously for a diehard Labour crusader, Kinnock places great trust in the Conservative prime minister. “I do have faith in the basic rationality of Theresa May. She’s not flashy. I don’t think she’s as devoted to tomorrow’s headlines as some of her predecessors. She’s not going to risk her political future. I might be doing her too much credit, but I do think she’s enough of a responsible patriot to try everything she can to get the best possible deal for the UK.

“Suppose there was a queue of people, saying: ‘Brexit means Brexit – but what the hell does Brexit mean?’ Number one in that queue would be Theresa May. She knows that in making that assertion, she was also begging a generation-sized question. I don’t think she’s flippant or superficial.”

**"The British people
voted without being aware
of the realities of staying,
and certainly those
of leaving"**

Briefly, Kinnock tempers this unprecedented endorsement. "I'm not a fan in any way. She's a Tory, and a right-wing Tory at that. But daft she ain't. So she will feel a deep obligation to do the best for the UK." And if the deal to leave proves unworkable, could May yet pull back from leaving the EU? "Well, we will see."

His respect for the PM and his disdain for his own party leader beg the question of whether Kinnock would rather live in a Britain led by May than submit to an (admittedly unlikely) Corbyn premiership? "No. I want a Labour government. Full stop." But how, as many delegates will wonder at Liverpool, is that to be achieved?

Though several MPs may be quietly manoeuvring for a future leadership bid, Kinnock detects no political messiah waiting in the wings. "Anyone who thinks they are some kind of loaves-and-fishes saviour is completely deluded." Nor does he hope for some charismatic challenger to rescue the party from its turmoil. "If the sun was charisma, Clem Attlee would be Saturn, but I'd settle for Clem. He took over in circumstances even more fraught than in our miserable age."

While Kinnock has never succumbed to despair, he grieves for his party's plight. "It is a source of dismay to me that basic lessons are overlooked. It means that yet again the labour movement has to learn the hard way. It's like self-flagellation." He does not believe that the model of social democracy for which he has fought so hard is no longer viable, and nor does he think the gulf between centrists and the hard left within Labour is unbridgeable. The Militant Tendency which he faced down has little in common, in his view, with Corbyn's backers in Momentum.

"Let's go back. I knew as soon as Jeremy Corbyn was on the ballot paper that he was going to win." As a veteran of campaigning, Kinnock detected a dangerous mood within Labour as early as after the 2010 defeat and conveyed his fears, to little avail it seems, to those around Ed Miliband. "Rage against the Tories and impatience for Labour [to do better] landed straight in Corbyn's lap. All that coincided with allowing people to have a vote for the price of a pint. But it was the will of existing members and newcomers which gave us Jeremy Corbyn and Momentum.

"There are a small number of ultra-leftists. But rage and impatience have given Momentum an influence Militant was never able to achieve." The next step in Kinnock's view, is that Momentum members will also grow hungry for victory and so evolve into the kind of doorstep campaigners who practise Kinnock's brand of "socialism by slog." In his expectation: "When people are presented with doorstep arguments, they will realise that they need a credible leader.

So under that process of osmosis, Momentum will become part of the solution rather than the problem? "But it's the only solution. They [the hard left] slog for their ideology or they don't slog much at all until they realise they can't do anything without power. Then they slog. I've seen it happen to countless people who moved from near-inertia to getting stuck in and realising that if Labour's appeal is not broadened, its future is bleak."

If Neil Kinnock has correctly assessed the route to political recovery, then his party will be saved by the very force that seems to undermine it. But if he is wrong, as less optimistic onlookers may suspect, then Labour's future will rarely have looked more parlous. **F**

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ALL EVENTS TO BE HELD ON THE FOURTH FLOOR
OF THE MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM,
ALBERT DOCK, L3 4AQ UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE

	TIMING/ROOM	INFORMATION	SPEAKERS	PARTNERS
SUNDAY	12.30–13.45 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	INTEGRATION AND IMMIGRATION In conversation with Chuka Umunna MP and Lord Maurice Glasman	Chuka Umunna MP, Lord Maurice Glasman	
	13.00–14.15 <i>Event Suite</i>	CHANGING WORK How the world of work has changed and why the left needs to change with it	Yvette Cooper MP, John Park (Community), Cameron Tait (Fabian Society) Norman Pickavance (Grant Thornton), Nita Clarke (IPA)	
	18.00–19.00 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	NO RIGHT TO EXIST What now for the Labour Party?	Kate Green MP, John McTernan (commentator), Polly Toynbee (The Guardian), Andrew Harrop (Fabian Society)	
	19.30–21.30 <i>Dining Room</i>	THE DEMOCRACY RALLY Big ideas for a better politics	Jonathan Reynolds MP, Wayne David MP, Melanie Onn MP, Katie Ghose (ERS), Alexandra Runswick (Unlock Democracy), Ellie Reeves (NEC) Clive Lewis MP, Stephen Bush (New Statesman), Jon Ashworth MP	
MONDAY	08.30–10.00 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	MAKING WORK PAY FOR YOUNG WOMEN	Jess Phillips MP, Carole Easton (Young Women's Trust), Olivia Bailey (Fabian Society), Ayesha Hazarika (invited)	
	08.30–10.00 <i>Event Suite</i>	SPEAK UP DEARS! Women in post-Brexit Britain	Mary Honeyball MEP, Catherine Fookes (Organic Trade Board)	
	12.30–13.30 <i>Event Suite</i>	A SECOND MACHINE AGE OR BUSINESS AS USUAL? What does the future of work mean for workers?	Yvette Cooper MP, Frances O'Grady (TUC)	
	13.15–14.30 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	BREXIT Risks and opportunities for the UK's financial and professional services	Seema Malhotra MP, Alison McGovern MP, Olivia Bailey	

TIMING/ROOM	INFORMATION	SPEAKERS	PARTNERS
17.00–18.00 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	COMMUNITY CHEST How can businesses best serve the communities they operate in?	Jim McMahon MP, Rebecca Bunce (Small Charities Coalition), Bola Gibson (TSB)	
17.00–18.00 <i>Event Suite</i>	A PROGRESSIVE RESPONSE TO BREXIT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION	Senior Labour politicians such as Emma Reynolds MP, Alan Johnson MP (invited), Gisela Stuart MP (invited)	
18.00–20.00 <i>Event Suite</i>	FOR THE MANY Improving diversity and trust in the private sector (Invitation Only)	Rachel Reeves MP, Seema Malhotra MP, Frances Coppola (economist)	Deloitte
18.30–19.30 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	CREDIBLE, ETHICAL AND AFFORDABLE What does a Labour Defence Policy look like?	Launch of the Final Report of the Young Fabian Defence & Security Review	
21.00 until late <i>Dining Room</i>	THE FABIAN PARTY Supported by the ABI	Seema Malhotra MP Members and invitation only. RSVP to events@fabians.org.uk, John McDonnell MP ahead of Seema Malhotra MP	
08.30–10.00 <i>Event Suite</i>	GENERATION CITIZEN How do we engage more young people in their local communities?	Michael Lynas (CEO, NCS Trust), Chris Elmore MP, Rupa Huq MP	
08.30–10.00 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	LABOUR'S ELECTORAL FUTURE IN SCOTLAND What should Labour's position be on Independence?	YF Law Network discusses whether it is possible to win back Scotland following the Scottish Referendum and Brexit, and if so how to go about this.	
12.30–13.45 <i>Event Suite</i>	AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE Ensuring disabled people play a key role in the changing world of work	Neil Coyle MP, Debbie Abrahams MP, Anna Bird (Scope)	
12.30–13.45 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	INSTILLING SKILLS, UNITING COMMUNITIES: A Labour agenda for youth volunteering and service	Jon Yates (The Challenge), Anna Turley MP, Sophie Livingstone (Generation Change)	
17.00–18.00 <i>Event Suite</i>	GENERATION BREXIT How can we overcome the challenges of intergenerational inequality?	Representatives from the YF and policy networks	
18.00–19.00 <i>Lecture Theatre</i>	FABIAN QUESTION TIME	Keir Starmer MP, Liz Kendall MP, Owen Jones (journalist), Sonia Sodha (the Guardian), Andrew Harrop	
19.00–21.00 <i>Dining Room</i>	CREDIBLE, ETHICAL AND AFFORDABLE What does a Labour Defence Policy look like?	Chuka Umunna MP, Wes Streeting MP, Seema Malhotra MP, Kate Green MP, Johanna Baxter (NEC) Angela Eagle MP, Owen Jones, Stephen Bush (New Statesman), Marie le Conte (Buzzfeed)	

Politics by people

A new charter for democratic reform could help close the gap between voters and political institutions, as *Olivia Bailey* explains

The labour movement has always fought for the mass participation of people in politics – from campaigning for the equal franchise in the 1910s, to devolution to the nations in the 1990s. As our democracy faces a growing crisis of trust and participation, the left must once again rise to the challenge.

As part of a Fabian Society research project, a diverse group of Labour politicians and activists are working to put democratic reform back on the party's agenda. Over the last year they have led discussion meetings, published articles and sought ideas on a new discussion website. Focus groups were also convened in order to gather the views of the public.

The project found clear evidence that there is both a need and an appetite for radical reform of our politics. And, through a process of consensus building, the group has written a six-point charter to increase political participation. The group is now asking others to add their name to the charter, as a way of building support for reform from the grassroots.

The charter tries to answer some difficult and controversial questions that have long divided the left. How can we fix the scandals caused by big money in our politics without damaging the trade union link? Can we settle our differences on the question of electoral reform? Can we find consensus on House of Lords reform? While the full charter won't attract the support of all in our movement, the intensity of disagreement on these issues seems to be diminishing. Hopefully differences of opinion on some points won't stall action on the rest.

For too long reform to expand democratic participation has been a niche preoccupation within the left. It is now time it moves into our mainstream. This is not only a political imperative for Labour when so much of its traditional support feels alienated from politics; it is also a moral one. We must close the gap between people and political institutions, in order that everyone in Britain has the power to change their lives. **F**

Olivia Bailey is research director at the Fabian Society

Figure 1: % who trust the government to put the needs of the nation first

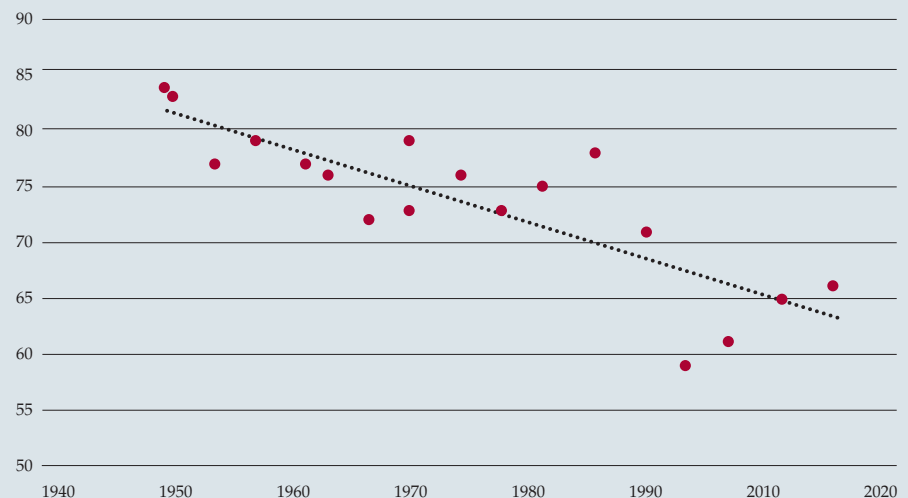


Figure 2: % political engagement by social grade



There are three key trends at the heart of our democratic decline: declining participation, declining trust, and widening social inequality between those who participate.

First, there has been an overall decline in voter turnout since the 1950s, from a high of 84 per cent in 1950 to a low of 59 per cent in 2001. There is also evidence of a gradual decline in the completeness of the electoral register in the post war period, with millions now thought to be missing from the register.

There is evidence that attitudes towards politics and politicians have also hardened, following a series of crises for political institutions including the financial crash and the expenses scandal. Successive British Social Attitudes surveys have demonstrated this deterioration of trust, represented in the graph above.

This political disengagement relates directly to economic and social power. Working class people are less likely to feel that the political system serves them well, and less likely to participate in it. The graph on the left, taken from demographic splits in the 2016 Hansard Society Audit of Political Engagement shows the scale of the problem.

BRITISH POLITICS IS GRIPPED BY FEAR AND MISTRUST

The vote to leave the European Union was the latest expression of the deteriorating relationship between democratic institutions and the public.

By voting to “take back control” the British people have made a powerful statement about the state of our democracy that must not be ignored.

Britain’s democratic decline has been gathering pace for decades. The individualism of the Thatcher years taught people to believe in the “I” not the “we”, breaking community bonds and a sense of cooperation. The financial crash of 2008 created huge economic uncertainty. And, a series of scandals have hit Britain’s most trusted institutions,

including parliament, the press, the police and the BBC. Political parties have been found wanting in response to these challenges, pursuing the politics of the soundbite and the median voter, and failing to connect with vast swathes of the public who feel that politics has no relevance to their lives.

The vital ingredient for a healthy democracy is the participation of citizens who feel powerful. Today, that is under threat. We, the undersigned, call for a democratic ‘reset’ to ensure our politics faces outwards and encourages people to have their say. We call for politicians to urgently pursue democratic reform in the interests of the strength and stability of our United Kingdom:

PRIORITISE POLITICAL

EDUCATION with strengthened political and citizenship education at school and throughout life, including school councils that enable pupils to make meaningful change.

AN OPEN, ACCESSIBLE AND PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY

with automatic voter registration, greater citizen participation in public institutions of all kinds and the use of new technologies to make it easier to vote. In the future, we should work towards safe and secure online voting.

AN INFORMATION REVOLUTION

with tougher regulation of the use of statistics by politicians and campaigners, clearer, more accessible information about political parties and elections from an independent source and a published job description for MPs.

ACTION TO REMOVE THE INFLUENCE OF BIG MONEY IN OUR POLITICS

with a comprehensive register of all lobbyists and action for a fairer and more sustainable funding system. This should consider, in the longer term, increased state funding and low level caps on donations to political parties.

A FAIRER AND MORE REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

with a democratically elected house of lords which amplifies the voice of nations and regions, votes for sixteen year olds, and a fairer voting system where every vote makes a difference, but where we retain constituency representatives. Such a system is already in place for elections in Scotland, Wales, and London.

DIVERSE POLITICIANS WHO ARE ROOTED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

with a democracy diversity fund, central publication of equalities data on candidates at all elections, and the use of positive action.

This charter was developed by an advisory panel of senior Labour figures after a consultation with Labour party members and supporters. It does not represent the collective view of the Fabian Society, which does not take organisational positions on policy questions.

The members of the advisory panel, who have signed this charter are: Lewis Baston, Ann Black, Wayne David MP, Melanie Onn MP, Billy Hayes, Cllr Reema Patel, Ellie Reeves, Jonathan Reynolds MP, Alexandra Runswick, and Nan Sloane.

GET INVOLVED!

Add your name to the charter by going to www.fabiandemocraticreform.org.uk

An economy that works for all

The new prime minister has to be held to account over her promise to support ordinary workers, writes *Kate Bell*



Kate Bell is head of economic and social affairs at the TUC

"If you're from an ordinary working class family, life is much harder than many people in Westminster realise. You have a job but you don't always have job security. You have your own home but you worry about paying the mortgage. You can just about manage, but you worry about the cost of living and getting your kids into a good school. If you're one of those families, if you're just managing, I want to address you directly. I know you're working around the clock, I know you're doing your best and I know that sometimes life can be a struggle. The government I lead will be driven, not by the interests of the privileged few, but by yours. We will do everything we can to give you more control over your lives."

HERESA MAY'S WORDS on the steps of Downing Street prompted a wave of "Who said it, Theresa May or Ed Miliband?" quizzes, speculation about a "new progressive consensus" in British politics – and some disquiet. The Institute of Directors said that May's proposal to put workers on company boards would be fine as long as this were voluntary, and William Hague quickly warned against the new Department for Business and Industrial Strategy taking a view on which industries required strategic support.

It's clear that if May is to achieve the aim of "an economy that works for everyone", those of us who have long been advocating this goal will need to make our voices heard. How can we ensure that the general vision gets translated into the specific reforms that will be needed to deliver it? And how should we judge whether the commitment has gone beyond warm words?

Brexit brought Theresa May into Downing Street, and it is Brexit that is likely to define her premiership. The first test of how serious she is about a better deal for working families will be her efforts to stave off a post-Brexit slowdown that could hit jobs and pay across the country. While the Bank of England's decision to cut interest rates may have quieted the worst post-Brexit fears, it's clear that there are still real short-term risks. The Treasury's round-up

of economic forecasts for August saw GDP growth for 2017 revised down from 2.1 to 0.7 per cent between its June pre-referendum and August post-referendum assessments. And even after the Bank's "sledgehammer" approach, it is still warning of an increase in unemployment that would mean around quarter of a million job losses.

The government needs to act now, and the TUC is far from alone in calling for an immediate increase in infrastructure spending to help keep the economy moving. Investing to improve broadband, rail, and power supply would help create high quality jobs, and give businesses the confidence they need that government has a plan to keep up demand, not to mention to improve the productive capacity of the economy well into the future. And as everyone from the IMF to the OECD has pointed out, with interest rates at record lows, borrowing to invest now offers a good deal for governments, with the OECD arguing that investment today can prompt the growth that's needed to pay back any additional borrowing in the future. Philip Hammond's announcement that the Treasury would ditch the surplus target is a good first start; now we need to see the government use the space this opens up for action. From getting on with building the third runway at Heathrow, to public spending on desperately needed housing, there's no need to wait.

Investment in infrastructure would help boost the number of high quality, high paid jobs. But May could also send a clear message about her intentions to millions of workers already in low-paid sectors, by making it clear that one aspect of Osbornomics she hasn't ditched is the commitment to a higher National Minimum Wage. Giving a clear steer to the Low Pay Commission that her government will stick to the target for the government's official 'Living Wage' to reach £9 by 2020 would help reassure workers that she understands that the wage squeeze has hit their living standards hard. And doing away with the arbitrary wage rate distinction between workers over and under 25 would represent a decisive break with her predecessor should she want one. With record profitability in the service sectors where most of those who earn the minimum wage can be

found, May has an opportunity to show that she's genuinely prepared to put the interests of workers first – and boost consumer confidence at the same time.

These are steps that Theresa May could take now, but the first set-piece occasion where we'll have a chance to see whether a new Conservative prime minister means a rethinking of the Conservatives' approach to economic policy will be in the autumn statement (for which read: 'just before Christmas statement' although some suggest it could be brought forward this year). Here it's worth remembering just how far a departure May's words that "when it comes to tax cuts, we'll prioritise not the wealthy, but you" would be from David Cameron and George Osborne's approach. IFS analysis after the 2016 budget shows that the cumulative impact of tax and benefit changes announced by the coalition since 2015, including regressive income tax changes and cuts to in-work benefits, was set to see incomes for the poorest tenth of families reduced by around nine per cent between 2015 and 2019, while those of the richest tenth are set to fall by just one per cent. For the next richest group down (the ninth decile) incomes will actually rise. Put another way, cuts will hit the poorest families nine times as hard as the richest.

Reversing that direction of travel, by protecting or even boosting support for low income families, would demonstrate that May means it when she says she understands the concerns of families "just getting by". We'll also be looking carefully for any sign of further cuts to in-work benefits, whether those come to tax credits or universal credit, that might be smuggled in to help off-set the poor performance on the public finances that May has inherited. May also has an opportunity to look again at pensions policy, with a review of the auto-enrolment system due next year that could be used to ensure a real consensus on how to ensure a decent retirement for everyone.

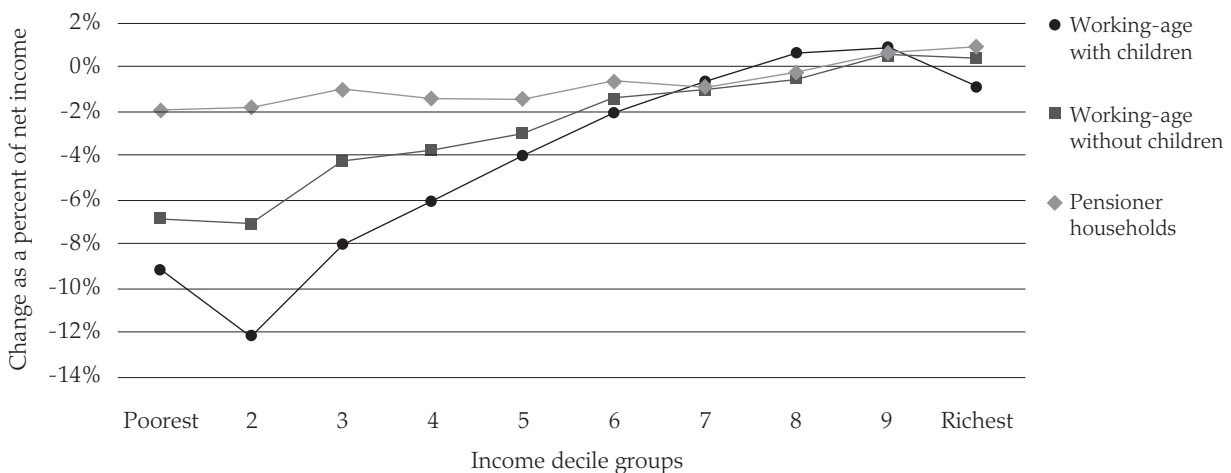
The autumn statement could also give May the opportunity to put some flesh on the bones of her commitment to

an industrial strategy, and to check that this means something other than yet another name change for what's now known as the department of business, energy and industrial strategy (its fourth title within 10 years). Developing the strategy will take time, but we'd like to see an early statement that it will prioritise an increase in high-paid, high-skill jobs, an attempt to address the regional inequalities that came to the fore in the Brexit vote, and an approach to sustainability that considers both our long-term economic success and the necessity of tackling climate change. We'll also want to see that the government understands that such a strategy has to engage with the industries we have now – as well as those we want in the future. With more than 80 per cent of the workforce in the service sector, any industrial strategy that aims to build an economy that works for everyone will need to address low productivity and low pay in these sectors, as well as looking to expand high-value manufacturing jobs.

May's recognition of the value of workers on boards gives some hope that she sees that listening to the voices of working people is a critical lever in improving the performance of businesses across the country. New industrial bodies in low-paid sectors, drawing on lessons learned from the old wages councils as well as the current Low Pay Commission, could help boost pay and productivity across large sectors of the economy, as well as tackling exploitation at the sharp end of the labour market. Addressing the latter would include ensuring that migrant labour cannot be used to undercut wages and addressing some of the concerns raised in the referendum.

The backdrop to all this will be the debates about the kind of relationship that Britain negotiates with Europe and the rest of the world May could reassure workers now that she intends to do everything she can to protect their jobs and rights in those negotiations. But there's also plenty she could do at a UK level to start to improve the quality of working life now. As Ed Miliband said in response to May's speech: "Good words in Downing Street. Time will tell." **F**

Figure: Impact of tax and benefits reforms May 2015 – April 2019 (including universal credit)



Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies



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www.youngwomenstrust.org/campaigning

Prime minister's questions

Tim Bale takes a look at the background and ambitions of Theresa May

Theresa May. Or Theresa may not. Right now it's difficult, if not impossible, to tell.

It is, of course, early days. But even if we try to look back over her career prior to taking over in Downing Street, we can find precious few clues as to how the country's second female prime minister might one day go beyond the fairly predictable platitudes she has so far served up.

Indeed, for a politician of such longstanding, Mrs May is something of an enigma. Pundits, trying desperately (but not particularly convincingly) to fill in the blanks, have alighted on the thoughts of the man the *Mail* recently called her 'Brummie Raspustin', Nick Timothy, and his much-trumpeted admiration for the 19th century liberal reformer Joe Chamberlain.

May hasn't made it any easier by her, in some ways rather admirable, reluctance to begin her reign as PM with a flurry of eye-catching policy announcements. In fact, anyone watching her first set-piece Sunday encounter with Andrew Marr at the beginning of September, will have garnered little more than the impression that she's already mastered the dark (but excruciatingly dull) art of hammering home a few key messages without actually giving anything away.

That's hardly surprising, perhaps. Theresa May would never have survived so long in politics without learning not to give too much away. Her first serious break came when Iain Duncan Smith appointed her the shadow transport brief on becoming leader 15 years ago in the spring of 2001. Not for the first or last time, she said and did little of note in a frontbench opposition role. Indeed, when a year or so later he appointed her as the party's first female chairman, she was still better known for her fashion sense ("Think Diana Rigg meets Sybil Fawcett", quipped Matthew d'Ancona) than for her policy positions.

On the other hand, it was in that post – spurred on by the Conservatives' young modernising chief executive, Mark



MacGregor – that she made *that speech*. The Conservatives, she told them at their annual gathering, had to face up to the fact that they were seen by too many voters as "the nasty party". They had to change, to embrace and to look more like twenty-first century Britain instead of hankering after what she dismissed back then as "some mythical place called Middle England."

All of which, makes some of what we have seen from her at number 10 more than a little disappointing to liberal Tories, let alone progressives on the centre-left.

May's apparent intention to end free movement for EU citizens, of course, is all of a piece with the increasingly hard-line (if hopelessly ineffectual) immigration policy she pursued as David Cameron's home secretary after 2010. But – perhaps inevitably if the intention is also to mop up as much of Ukip's support as possible before it can recover from Brexit and Nigel Farage's

departure – it also smacks of a worrying desire to return the UK back to some prelapsarian vision of the 1950s.

The same is true of her willingness to flirt with the idea of expanding grammar schools – something that makes a mockery of her declared intention to look after the interests of the ordinary majority rather than the privileged few. May is no fool: you rarely get to Oxford from a state school if you are. So she must know that the vast bulk of hard evidence shows that selection at 11 produces poorer outcomes overall and does nothing whatsoever for social mobility. That she should even play with the idea of widening its use suggests she is rather less preoccupied with the national interest than with tickling her party's tummy.

Likewise, the fact that one of her first concrete actions was to give into demands that she dilute the government's obesity strategy suggests that her admirable willingness to take on vested interests which she demonstrated when confronting the Police Federation in 2014, is unlikely ever to extend to interests which are heavily commercial. So far so familiar.

The same goes for another of the rare early announcements – a fund to kickstart housebuilding. It turns out most of it is made up of already-earmarked money and that it won't be accompanied by any significant action to tackle one of the major causes of shortages, namely planning laws – which core Conservative voters in, yes, middle England, would die in a well-manicured ditch to defend.

In and of itself, none of this – apart from the fact that it's wrapped up in the potentially powerful language of opportunity, aspiration and common sense – need present an insoluble problem for an opposition that is forward-looking, centrist and halfway-competent. **F**

Tim Bale is professor of politics at Queen Mary, University of London





Backwards march

Britain needs to do more to turn back the rising tide of authoritarianism in eastern Europe – and post-Brexit that will be a challenge, argues *David Clark*



David Clark was special adviser to Robin Cook MP at the Foreign Office 1997–2001. He is chair of the Russia Foundation and a senior fellow at the Institute for Statecraft



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AS A CONSEQUENCE of the Brexit referendum and its aftermath, the UK has embarked on a path of self-marginalisation at precisely the moment when its voice as a traditional bastion of European liberalism is needed most. Boris Johnson pleads that we will remain a European power, but the simple truth is that we are about to vacate our seat in the continent's most important decision-making bodies. The inevitable result is that our influence will decline and the balance of European politics will be altered in ways that threaten to harm our interests.

Among the trends that ought to concern us most is the resurgence of authoritarianism as a major force in European affairs for the first time since the end of the cold war. Propelled by the aftershocks of the global financial crisis, fear of social change and the rising pressures of migration, new political parties have succeeded in mobilising voters with appeals to economic populism, social conservatism, nationalism and xenophobia. Often these parties base their programmes on an explicit rejection of the liberal democratic values that are supposed to unite countries belonging to the EU, the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe.

This phenomenon has become apparent in almost all European countries, but it is in the new democracies of central and eastern Europe that weak institutions and the legacy of communism have combined to give authoritarian populism a real foothold. This change has happened with alarming speed. It is only a decade since these countries were admitted to the EU on the assumption that they had completed their democratic transitions. Yet instead of helping to consolidate the gains of the post-communist

era, accession has been followed in some cases by a clear regression from democratic standards.

The political conditions of EU membership were set out in the 'Copenhagen criteria' agreed by the European council in 1993. These stated that applicant states would need to show that they had "achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities". Whereas all of the new member states were deemed to have met these conditions at the point of accession in 2004 and 2007, there is little doubt that several of them would fail if they were assessed objectively on the same basis today.

The problem is particularly acute in relation to Romania, Poland and Hungary. In the latter countries, electoral victories for parties of the authoritarian right have been followed by efforts to restrict political pluralism. In Romania, the threat to human rights and the rule of law comes from a dysfunctional system that leaves the organs of the state open to partisan manipulation.

In all three cases there has been a failure to maintain a proper separation of powers between the judicial, legislative and executive branches of the state.

The authoritarian trend is most strongly represented in Hungary, where rightwing prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has introduced a style of government that bears more than a passing resemblance to the one pioneered in Russia by Vladimir Putin. Elected in 2010 with a two-thirds majority in parliament, Orbán immediately set out to neuter the country's constitutional court as the most significant potential limit on his power. The rules were changed to enable the governing Fidesz party to appoint judges without the

agreement of the opposition and the court's membership was expanded from 11 to 15, allowing Orbán to pack it with his own nominees. By April 2013 they constituted a majority and the court's behaviour changed dramatically. A survey produced by Hungarian human rights organisations shows that in the two years before government appointees constituted a majority, all of the court's rulings went against it. In the year that followed, 77 per cent of rulings went its way.

Orbán's next target was the media. A powerful new media regulator was created composed exclusively of politically appointed officials, with the authority to grant broadcasting licences and levy fines on media outlets deemed guilty of unbalanced reporting. Coverage on the state broadcaster is now heavily slanted towards the government while the major private outlets are increasingly under the control of business groups close to Fidesz. State advertising expenditure – traditionally a major source of media revenue in Hungary – is used to punish criticism and reward loyalty. Critical journalists have been removed from their posts while others complain that self-censorship is now rife.

The assault on democracy has reached deep into Hungarian society. In a tactic borrowed directly from Putin's Russia, Orbán has attacked critical civil society groups as agents of foreign influence and in 2014 police raided the offices of the Ökotárs Foundation, an organization that disburses funds to hundreds of NGOs on behalf of the Norwegian government. The Hungarian government had been demanding oversight of the disbursements. Electoral laws have also been changed, with rules on party registration and constituency boundaries redrawn to favour the ruling party. The OSCE declared Hungary's 2014 parliamentary elections, which returned Orbán to office, as free but not fair. As the final report of its election monitors stated: "The main governing party enjoyed an undue advantage because of restrictive campaign regulations, biased media coverage and campaign activities that blurred the separation between political party and the state."

For an EU member state to receive such a negative assessment of its democratic standards is unprecedented, all the more so since the deficiencies it highlights cannot be put down to political immaturity or temporary lapses of judgement. The Hungarian model is a conscious choice based on a repudiation of liberal democratic principles. Orbán has spoken admiringly of authoritarian regimes in Russia, China and Singapore as examples to be followed and declared his ambition to create "an illiberal new state based on national foundations". A major element of this project is to end the separation of powers. As Orbán said in an interview to years ago: "Checks and balances is a US invention that for some reason of intellectual mediocrity Europe decided to adopt and use in European politics." These ideas represent a fundamental challenge to the values underpinning post-cold war order in Europe.

Until recently it was possible to dismiss Orbán's Hungary as an aberration. That changed last year with the victory in presidential and then parliamentary elections of Poland's

ultra-conservative Law and Justice party (PiS). Eastern Europe's largest and most strategically important country is now following the authoritarian precedent established in Hungary. At the end of 2015 the Polish parliament hastily passed amendments to national media law, giving the government direct control over state-owned media outlets. It also curtailed the power of the national broadcast regulator, which had been strongly criticised by media interests close to PiS. A new National Media Council, appointed by parliament and the president, was established in July. In the space of a year, Poland has slumped from 18th to 47th place in the World Press Freedom Index.

Again, the separation of powers is under attack with measures designed to impede the work of the constitutional court. The appointment of five replacement judges approved by the outgoing government was annulled and five new PiS nominees installed in their place. A new rule has been passed obliging the court to consider cases in order of presentation. The large backlog of cases means that the government is effectively able to act without judicial scrutiny for the foreseeable future. In a further assault on the rule of law, the minister of justice has been given sweeping new powers to control public prosecutions and release information uncovered during investigations to the media. As one PiS MP told parliament to the ovation of his colleagues: "The good of the nation is above the law."

**These ideas represent
a fundamental challenge
to the values underpinning
post-cold war order
in Europe**

The authoritarian revival and central and eastern Europe takes more than one form. In Romania it arises from the fractured and contested nature of the political landscape rather than the ability of one party to monopolise power. Opposing

factions of the post-communist elite have found it impossible to reach a consensus about how the country should be governed, with the result that public institutions and the rules of democracy have often become instruments of bitter political warfare. The socialist government of Victor Ponta that took power in 2012 unsuccessfully attempted to impeach its centre-right opponent, President Basescu, and was censured by the European Commission for trying to circumvent the constitution in the process.

The criminal justice system has become a favoured means of settling scores with political rivals and media owners. Politicians and the intelligence services often exert improper influence over prosecutors and judges to that end. In May 2014, Ponta announced the forthcoming arrest of Dan Adamescu, owner of the main centre-right newspaper, on charges of corruption, signalling both political motive and collusion between prosecutors and the executive. In a case that featured countless violations of legal standards that began when the judge in a pre-trial hearing denied bail on the grounds that the accused refused to admit his guilt, Adamescu was convicted and sentenced to more than four years in prison. Ejected from power last year, Ponta and several of his party colleagues now find that they in turn have become targets of investigation.

The extent to which Romania is departing from European norms is poorly recognised because so much of it

is disguised under the congenial cloak of 'anti-corruption'. Romania's western partners want to believe that it is making progress in tackling its biggest problem and are reluctant to see an increase in prosecutions as a sign of anything other than success. Yet a legal system that produces conviction rates in excess of 90 per cent is one that clearly isn't working fairly in the interests of justice. It is one in which corners are being cut to produce pre-determined results. This includes mass surveillance, the pre-trial leaking of evidence to the media and the use of other intimidatory tactics. Judges who have angered prosecutors by acquitting defendants have even found themselves targeted with investigation. Romania's anti-corruption drive has become tainted by authoritarian methods that pose a serious threat to the rule of law.

So where does this leave the UK in the context of Brexit? Those with a poor grasp of history will console themselves that we will soon be well out of it, as an ex-member of the EU. But we don't have to look too far back into our past to appreciate how complacent this isolationist sentiment is. As Winston Churchill remarked on the eve of the first world war, "Europe is where the weather comes from". Every time we have fallen for the idea that we can afford to remain aloof from European affairs we have paid the price at a later stage. A Europe lurching back towards authoritarianism would become a serious risk to our prosperity and security, so acting to support democracy across the continent should remain a strategic priority whether we are in the EU or not.

As Theresa May has said, the UK will continue to accept the rights and responsibilities of EU membership until Brexit is completed. That means taking the threat to democratic standards seriously and not allowing the demands of our Brexit negotiations to inhibit us from making a forceful stand in their defence. The EU has effective tools for addressing the problem of resurgent authoritarianism at its disposal if it chooses to use them. The problem so far has been an absence of political will. The fact that the UK is scheduled to leave the EU within the next five years makes it all the more important that we add our voice to those calling for firm action while we still have the opportunity.

Article 7 of the EU treaty establishes two ways of dealing with member states that flout their democratic commitments. An alert procedure allows the council of ministers to identify an emerging risk and address recommendations to the member state in question. A sanctions procedure empowers the Council of Ministers to suspend the voting rights of any member state deemed guilty of "a serious and persistent breach" of democratic standards. Additionally, the European commission has established a Rule of Law Mechanism that allows it to monitor developments of concern and make recommendations accordingly. So far only the last of these instruments has been used, in relation to Poland. On the basis of developments so far, the UK should be calling for both Poland and Hungary to be subjected to the alert procedure, while Romania should be considered under the commission's Rule of Law Mechanism.

Beyond Brexit, the UK will remain a full member of other international organisations with democratic criteria that bind their European members, including NATO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. The opportunities these present should be used to the full. The Council of Europe, in particular, has a broad remit to uphold human rights and democracy, along with an extensive array of instruments for holding member states to account. These include a Commissioner for Human Rights and the Commission for Democracy Through Law (the so-called Venice Commission), both of which have been more vocal in their criticism of Orban's Hungary than most EU leaders.

There are also important steps that the UK can take unilaterally. One of these concerns the future of the European arrest warrant (EAW). The case for reform of the EAW would be overwhelming even if we were staying in the EU because the assumption on which it is based – that all EU countries have fair legal systems – is self-evidently wrong, leaving the system wide open to abuse. The problem has been highlighted by two recent cases involving Romania. The first concerns Alexander Adamescu, son of Dan Adamescu, who has become the target of an EAW request here in the UK where he lives. Adamescu angered the Romanian authorities by repeatedly challenging their treatment of his father, so they orchestrated his arrest as

he was about to address a public meeting in London in June. No evidence of criminal wrongdoing has been presented and none is needed under the EAW.

The second case involves Stuart Ramsay, a Sky News journalist who ran a report about gun running in Romania in August. Officials in Bucharest strongly disputed its

findings, but instead of limiting themselves to a formal denial, they decided to charge Ramsay and his colleagues with the crime of "spreading false information". Romania's Directorate for Combatting Terrorism and Organised Crime has approached the UK with a formal request for legal assistance. An EAW may follow, but even if it doesn't, the message is clear: journalists expressing opinions that incur the disapproval of the Romanian state will need to watch their backs.

The fact that the EAW mechanism can be used by foreign governments to pursue political grudges and suppress free speech on British soil shows that a successor agreement is needed that will include stronger human rights safeguards.

British and other European leaders have been far too slow in recognising and responding to the resurgence of authoritarian politics in their own continent. A threat that would have been easier to contain if firm and early action had been taken against Viktor Orban in Hungary has been allowed to spread. The problem will continue to grow as long as it is ignored. Brexit adds to these difficulties because it removes a traditionally strong advocate of liberal democracy from the most important centres of European decision-making. Developing a new strategy of European engagement to compensate for that loss is among the most pressing foreign policy challenges Britain now faces. ■

A Europe lurching back towards authoritarianism would become a serious risk to our prosperity and security

Books

The left's future: progressive or post-liberal?

Progressive politics alone will not be enough to renew Labour's traditions,
argues *Tobias Phibbs*



*Tobias Phibbs is research and editorial assistant
at the Fabian Society.*

One year on from a heavy general election defeat and with the Labour party in crisis, the idea of a 'progressive alliance' is under discussion once more. *The Alternative: Towards a New Progressive Future* brings together politicians and authors from Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green traditions to make the case for a new, pluralist politics on the left.

There is lots to agree with within its pages, especially on collaboration at a council level. Yet it is hard to think of a less auspicious time for such an alliance. The political elites in every mainstream political party – upwardly mobile, culturally confident, global in outlook, from the professional classes – are (or were, before Theresa May's inauguration) the ones that claim the 'progressive' mantle.

But these elites are losing their grip on a substantial majority of the population – not just in the UK but across Western democracies. In particular, there is Labour's troubled relationship with so many of its working class voters. While a clear definition of progressive politics remains elusive, if it is the movement of a cultural elite, it is unlikely to have any significant electoral traction amidst today's political fissures.

Rather than denoting any coherent political philosophy, progressivism seems to function as a code-word for the *bien pensant*; to be a progressive is to be on the side of the angels, on the 'right side of history'. This moralism and its attendant teleology are written into the very word 'progressive', which disavows any prospect of respectable opposition to its forward march, for how could you possibly be against progress?

Still, we can discern the outlines of a progressive political agenda. The editors of *The Alternative* distinguish two main political currents: one progressive and one conservative. Underpinning the progressive worldview lie the abstract principles of equality, tolerance and diversity, which equate to its red lines: support for the European Union, environmental protection, civil liberties, electoral reform and a relaxed approach to mass immigration.

Here though, the moralising of progressivism obscures more than it reveals. Environmentalists like Roger Scruton find their inspiration from conservative philosophy and David Cameron's 'Notting Hill set' were relaxed about



The Alternative: Towards a New Progressive Politics

Edited by
Lisa Nandy MP,
Caroline Lucas MP
and Chris Bowers
(Biteback,
2016, £9.99)



The Politics of Virtue: Post-liberalism and the Human Future

John Milbank
and Adrian Pabst
(Rowman
International,
2016, £24.95)

mass immigration. Ukip are enthusiasts for electoral reform, while one-nation conservatives and paleoconservatives alike have a deep concern for the poor. The progressive/conservative dichotomy seems more about the good guys versus the bad guys than any meaningful political or philosophical divergence.

One sequence in *The Alternative* illustrates this wooliness well. Neal Lawson concludes his chapter with a warning: "neither the people nor the planet will survive" if the Conservative party remain the dominant force in British politics. Then the very first paragraph of the next chapter recommends as inspiration for this new progressive alliance the ideas and practice of liberal reformer, Joseph Chamberlain, who is cited as a political inspiration for Theresa May.

Whatever progressive is, a significant proportion of Labour voters certainly do not seem to be it. While John Curtice's chapter cites support among the wider population for some progressive principles, especially with respect to inequality and civil liberties, the same support is not necessarily there on social issues. Historically, Labour has drawn more support from morally conservative Catholic communities than from more typically socially liberal Protestants. Likewise, a recent YouGov poll showed 48 per cent of Labour voters support a ban on the burka, while only 37 per cent would oppose it.

Nor, apparently, were remain voters all that progressive. As James Morris reports in the new Fabian policy report, *Facing the Unknown*, 44 per cent of people who voted remain think it is essential to reduce immigration, compared to only 20 per cent who disagree. Similarly, 48 per cent of black, Asian and minority ethnic voters think it is essential to reduce immigration – only 10 per cent disagree.

So while politicians as diverse as Jeremy Corbyn, Tony Blair and David Cameron may be progressives, they may only represent a minority of voters, even if they have been running the country for the last 20 years. Those on the left who call for a new progressive consensus do not realise how good they have had it.

Moving away from the contents of *The Alternative*, there is a more serious problem with progressivism than either its nebulosity or its lack of political grip. Its philosophi-



cally tepid foundations mean that it may ultimately be its own gravedigger, as Adrian Pabst and John Milbank suggest in their new book, *The Politics of Virtue: Post-liberalism and the Human Future*.

Conservative politics speak to real attributes of human societies: the human need for roots, order and permanence; the intractability of tribe and tradition; how easy it is to destroy what is valuable and how arduous it is to replace it. Labour politics, too, speak to profound human sensibilities and philosophical traditions: the value of creative and free labour; the impulse to resist harmful forms of domination; the dangers of unfettered individualism and the need for social solidarity. These are insights that Pabst and Milbank incorporate as they look to a post-liberal left politics that advocates “creatively reshaping traditional prescriptions and the reforming of habits”.

In contrast, it is hard to know where to look when trying to understand the intellectual origins of progressivism. For example, egalitarianism, a cornerstone of the elusive progressive philosophy, is not a human universal and in fact the concept has appeared only relatively recently. The notion of egalitarianism depends upon a conception of free and equal individuals that emerges in part from the Christian conception of God and the human soul. As political philosopher Larry Siedentop argues, “secularism is Christianity’s greatest gift to the world.”

This thin gruel of progressive philosophy has practical dangers. For rather than engaging with questions concerning the character of political action, public virtue or the good life, some on the progressive left have a tendency to dismiss as backwards those who offer challenges to its forward march. While many progressives today have moved on from New Labour, their implicit philosophy is perhaps best summed up by Tony Blair’s taunting description of the modern world to the 2005 Labour party conference: “indifferent to tradition. Unforgiving of frailty. No respecter of past reputations. It has no custom and practice. It is replete with opportunities, but they only go

to those swift to adapt, slow to complain, open, willing and able to change.”

This brings to mind Blair’s relaxed approach to neoliberal globalisation, but the description fits Corbyn and John McDonnell’s antipathy to national borders just as well: the trouble with those simple-minded folk who still believe in nations and controlled immigration is that they are not swift to adapt, slow to complain, open, willing and able to change.

And so progressive politicians, whether of ‘Blairite’ or ‘Corbynite’ hue, enter politics to ‘change things’. In order to change things, however, you need a conception of what it is that you are trying to conserve. Redesigning society is also redesigning human relations, but without understanding what is worth preserving in existing relations you are one step away from misanthropy and nihilism.

The underlying assumption behind change-fetishism is that our current political settlement is wicked, and the role of the politician is to change as much of it as possible, in as little time as possible. But society is a covenant – not a contract, as the liberal tradition of Locke and Rousseau imagined it. And it is a covenant shared, in Edmund Burke’s memorable phrasing, between “the living, the dead and those who are to be born”. Good political leadership is successful stewardship as much as it is social reform.

We are not born liberals or progressives and paradoxically it is only through creating and sustaining traditions and institutions that the possibility of a socially liberal society emerges. They provide the platforms through which we may live a common life geared towards a common good, as Pabst and Milbank argue. If progressivism is defined by a restless opposition to institutions viewed as arbitrary it would do away with the very institutions that make its values realisable, undermining the bonds and customs that bind us together.

As the centre-left attempts to renew its traditions in an age where we face total electoral wipe-out across Europe, we should heed the 1939 warning of T.S. Eliot:

“that liberalism may be a tendency towards something very different from itself, is a possibility in its nature... By destroying traditional social habits of the people, by dissolving their natural collective consciousness into individual constituents... Liberalism can prepare the way for that which is its own negation: the artificial, mechanized or brutalized control which is a desperate remedy for its chaos.”

In the throes of the Enlightenment a progressive worldview which saw the past as barren, wicked and backwards, and its values as in need of complete uprooting was understandably adopted by misguided interpreters of evolutionary theory. Others, including Karl Marx, knew better but were unable to resist the teleological allure. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the triumph of the socially and economically liberal political centre in the 1990s, such an optimism was once again understandable, though wrong.

We are today witnessing the inelegant discontents of a progressivism that is too self-righteous, imposing a pace of change too fast, on a population who never asked for it. The responses range from Trump and Brexit to the very real prospect of Austrians electing a far-right president. Rather than doubling down with renewed vigour, for progressives, a bit of humility is required. **F**

History lessons

Michael Weatherburn reports on the renaissance of Oxford's Fabians

As one of the most intellectually engaged cities in the world, Oxford is a wonderful location to develop a new branch of the Fabian Society. More accurately, I should say re-found, because Fabianism and Oxford have a very long and involved history. From 1895 to 1915, the Oxford University Fabian Society thrived, and one of its presidents, A.D. Lindsay, went on to contest the Conservative seat of Oxford in 1938. It was an important by-election in which the Labour and Liberal parties stood their candidates down and supported Lindsay, as some Conservatives did, as an "independent progressive".

Also in the 1930s, G.D.H. Cole, then a professor at Oxford University and previously a proponent of "guild socialism", created the New Fabian Research Bureau, which by engaging and much expanding the intellectual remit of the by-then creaky Fabian Society, was influential on the post-war Labour government. Plus, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, another Oxford University Fabian Society emerged which was apparently a welcome oasis of discussion and debate amid fraught times for the Labour Party.

Our branch was founded immediately after the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014. I couldn't guarantee anyone would show up to the first event, but I took a chance and invited a speaker to address a society which didn't yet exist. I advertised where I could and three people responded positively, so I figured that the event might not fail too embarrassingly. I needn't have worried: a wonderfully varied group of 40 people aged 18 to 81 showed up – only one of whom I knew by sight – and from then on things have been going up and up.

True to the original principles of Fabianism, we continue to adapt patiently and to evolve for a new century which presents new opportunities and challenges. What is distinctive about the new phase of Oxford Fabianism is that we have attempted from the outset to encompass not just both of Oxford's fine universities but the entire city. This has proven to be an overwhelming popular move and affords us access to a far larger set of voices and opinions than would otherwise be possible.

Our nine-strong executive committee meets once a month and will very soon launch www.oxfordfabians.org.uk. We stage

successful public events in a variety of lecture halls, cafes, pubs, meeting rooms, homes, and, perhaps my favourite, the Gladiator Club. These events attract up to 100 people to hear speakers such as Owen Jones of the Guardian and professor of social history, Selina Todd of St. Hilda's College, Oxford.

We're currently building on these successful activities by establishing a monthly reading and discussion group, to take place in private homes and in the conference room of an education start-up in east Oxford. These events are proving popular with members who may have left formal education some time ago or do not have obvious access to university seminars or think tank events. Other organisations we engage with are universities, schools, trade unions, small businesses, religious groups, and charities like Oxfam.

We hope that we offer a modest but very real chink of light, cooperation and uplift in an otherwise bleak political, economic and intellectual landscape

One striking feature of our group which may surprise Fabian Review readers is that, in addition to Labour members, many activists and even candidates from the Liberal Democrats, Greens and National Health Action Party attend our events and engage very

positively. Indeed, the meetings are always respectful, constructive and link together, hopefully leading to a substantive body of collective wisdom and useful ideas.

So our Fabian branch in Oxford appears to have evolved into being quite politically and intellectually pluralistic, which, for debating purposes at least, is certainly a good thing. In this context, the terminology of "left wing" or "right wing", which dates from the French revolution, doesn't seem to work anymore. As the recent Brexit result indicates, the issue seems to be far more about whether you feel you are going "up" or "down" – and in relative rather than absolute terms.

Given Oxford's global reputation for culture, thought, scholarship and research, we hope that we offer a modest but very real chink of light, cooperation, and uplift in an otherwise bleak political, economic, and intellectual landscape. And we do this because we believe that collective organisation is both a means and an end, and that in leading by example, we hope others will notice and join in.

As things stand, it's working. As historians well know, some actions we conduct in the present, large or small, can echo down the corridors of time and eventually reach waiting ears elsewhere. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that in another century's time, the Oxford Fabians of the future, whoever they are and whatever strategy and structure they adopt, will be kind enough to discuss us in an article in the pages of the Fabian Review. ■

Michael Weatherburn is chair of Oxford Fabian Society



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Seema Malhotra MP, chair of the Fabian Society

It's been another highly impressive year for the Fabian Society, and I want to thank all members of the executive for their support of the society. The Fabian Society continues to lead the way on new thinking, and on extending across the country the evidence-led debate on the economy and social justice. I am proud of the contribution we continue to make.

This year the Fabian Society has achieved an incredible level of output for such a small team, and it is a tribute to the work of general secretary Andrew Harrop, Olivia Bailey and team. A huge thank you to Felicity Slater, head of partnerships and events, Ed Wallis, editorial director and senior research fellow, and Lucy Snow, editorial and communications manager, who have left this year, and a welcome to Alex Sanderson, Claire Sewell and Tobias Pibbbs.

Our New Year conference as always set the agenda for the year, asking the big questions for Labour: winning the battles, the art of opposition, how does Labour win in the 2020s, rebalancing the economy and how we must tackle our housing crisis. The conference was addressed by the leader of the Labour party and attended by more than 800 people from across the UK and abroad. I am proud of our internationalism. After six years of Tory government, never has it been so important to make the case for Labour values. With a government turning a blind eye to growing inequality, eroding the quality of our public services and our public realm and failing to grow and share prosperity, the Fabians are the place to be for answering the questions of where next for Britain and why we need a Labour government.

In May we saw former chair of the Fabian Society Sadiq Khan elected as the Mayor of London – a huge achievement in which many Fabians played a part campaigning in London. The Fabian summer conference a few weeks after saw former Prime Minister Gordon Brown speak alongside former Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema and deliver a compelling social-democratic case for Britain's membership of the European Union. This was a hugely important conference at a key moment in Britain's history. The Fabian Society continues to play a big role in the debate about what Brexit means and where Britain

goes next. The publications from the Fabian Society continue to inspire new thinking and new responses to the challenges we face. The new series on the changing nature of work examines how the world of work is being rapidly transformed by technological innovation, at a time when the loss of stable employment is contributing to a growing sense of insecurity and anxiety for many families and communities. How we think about skills, productivity and co-operation and inclusion will set the scene for the future we create. Andrew Harrop and Ed Wallis take on the big strategic question about how the left responds to a changing society – new currents on left and right of politics in *Future Left: Can the left respond to a changing society?* And Bryan Gould contributes to Labour thinking on how we tackle austerity and invest to achieve growth and stay internationally competitive in the important pamphlet *Productive Purpose: Investment, competitiveness and the new economics*.

The Fabians are the place to be for answering the questions of where next for Britain and why we need a Labour government

Fabian Women have continued to grow their work and profile under the leadership of Ivana Bartoletti, who this year had a beautiful daughter Miranda. The mentoring scheme led by Christine Megson and Caroline Adams reaches new heights each year. This year I was proud to speak at the launch of *Footsteps in the Sand* by Rosie Campbell and Joni Lovenduski – a report on five years of the Fabian Women's Network Mentoring and Political Education Programme.

The Young Fabians continue to drive debate with young Fabian members on a range of themes from foreign and defence policy, women in finance, tax reform and education. I want to thank the Young Fabians, the Fabian Women's Network, Deborah Stoate and all our local societies for helping the society reach out and enrich our debate. Particularly at a time when people feel distant

and cynical about politics, the difference it makes is huge.

My thanks also to Phil Mutero and Giles Wright, to our vice chairs Ivana Bartoletti and Sara Ibrahim, and to our treasurer David Chaplin for all their incredibly hard work and support this year. The society couldn't run without you.

Treasurer's report

I am pleased to report that the Fabian Society ends its 2015/16 financial year with a well-balanced set of accounts and a strong track record of income generation over the past 12 months.

We have eliminated the need for long-term borrowing to contribute to our running costs. Furthermore, we have ended the year with a small but important net surplus, and a healthy and manageable cash-flow. As I reported last year, these three priorities remain the executive committee's stated financial objectives, and we will continue to focus on building a lasting financial reserve for the society in the future.

Over the past year, our team of staff at Petty France have done an excellent job in pursuing new income streams in extremely challenging political circumstances, and their hard work is evident in the stability of our accounts. I'd like to thank Andrew Harrop, our general secretary, Phil Mutero, our director of operations, Olivia Bailey, our research director, and the whole staff team on behalf of the members and the Executive Committee for their commitment and dedication to the society and its work.

The grassroots of our movement also remains healthy, and the society's membership income increased by nearly 9 per cent compared to this point last year. This growth in membership numbers is a welcome reversal of the worrying reduction over recent years, particularly in the Young Fabian section where I am pleased to report a return to growth for the membership overall. I'd like to thank this year's Young Fabian executive chaired by Martin Edobor for all their hard work in turning this short-lived trend around.

Our ambition is to continue that growth in membership over the coming year, and to ensure that newly joining members remain with the society for longer periods of time.

Income & Expenditure Accounting

for the Year Ended 30th June 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
INCOME		
Individual Members	225,097	205,604
Institutional Affiliations and Subscriptions	6,320	6,320
Donations and Legacies	9,466	7,377
Publications Sales	2,663	3,751
Conference and Events	140,109	242,057
Publication Sponsorship and Advertisements	47,509	54,650
Research Projects	243,910	176,500
Rents	16,873	15,593
Bank Interest, Royalties and Miscellaneous	770	599
Total Income	£692,717	£712,451
EXPENDITURE		
Research Projects	54,953	38,236
Staff Costs	362,626	387,687
Printing and Distribution	84,869	71,636
Conference and Events	65,374	87,947
Promotion	5,842	6,628
Affiliation Fees	5,421	5,244
Postage, Phone and Fax	10,623	12,082
Depreciation	16,898	17,873
Travel	533	2,121
Other	6,148	5,837
Stationery and Copying	6,545	9,073
Legal and Professional	5,194	5,680
Irrecoverable VAT	333	422
Premises Costs	52,598	53,083
Information Systems	7,952	8,080
Total Expenditure	£685,909	£711,629
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Tax and Transfers	6,808	822
Transfers from Reserves	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) before Taxation	6,808	822
Corporation Tax	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	£6,808	£822

Balance sheet as at 30th June 2016

	2016		2015	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		1,237,559		1,253,716
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stock	4,515		2,120	
Debtors and Prepayments	133,503		98,077	
Bank and Cash	9,575		487	
	147,593		100,684	
CREDITORS-AMOUNTS				
FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR				
Creditors and Accruals	(105,808)		(81,864)	
Net Current Assets		41,785		18,820
Net assets		£1,279,344		£1,272,536
General Fund		1,273,069		1,266,261
Restricted Fund		6,275		6,275
TOTAL FUNDS		£1,279,344		£1,272,536

ANNUAL REPORT 2016 (continued)

This will both financially support our work and ensure our local societies remain vibrant and politically diverse.

In the coming year we will once again face uncertainty at the top of the Labour Party which will inevitably have implications for the society's financial and operational plans. We have prepared for a range of scenarios and continue to tread cautiously when preparing our budget for the forthcoming 2016/17 financial year.

Throughout this uncertain political period the executive committee is especially grateful to Fabian Society members for their continued generosity in terms of regular giving, legacies, and other donations to help fund our work.

I'd like to draw members' particular attention to the importance of our headline conferences and events over the year to ensuring our financial growth and stability. Without strong attendance and ticket sales at our New Year conference and other events we risk losing income, so I'd encourage as many members as possible to buy tickets for our forthcoming events and to help to ensure they are both a political and financial success.

Many thanks for your continued support, and please do get in touch if you have any questions or comments about the society's finance and operations.

David Chaplin

The Fabian Society's financial year runs from July 1st 2015 to June 30th 2016 and the

Research and Editorial

DST, FES, Lord Falconer, Groundwork, Independent Age, JRF, JRRT, Landscape Institute, John Mills, RNIB, RSPB, Sanofi, Shelter, TUC, Trust for London, Woodlands Trust, Webb Memorial Trust

Conferences, Receptions, Lectures & Seminars

Age UK, British Wind, Deloitte, EEF, Europe Commission, Electoral Reform Society, Heathrow, ICAEW, NSC Trust, Sanofi, Scope

Trade Unions

Community, CWU, FBU, GMB, TSSA, TUC, UNISON, USDAW

Partner Organisations

Bright Blue, Centre Forum, Compass, FEPS, Labour List, Progress, Reform

Noticeboard

financial information in this report covers that period. This report is sent to all members in the September mailing and presented to the AGM which takes place on Saturday 19 November 2016.

Financial statements

The accounts presented in this report are an extract from the financial statements and may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the society. For further information the full financial statements and auditor's report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from the Fabian Society, 61 Petty France, London SW1H 9EU.

Auditors' statement

We have audited the financial statements of The Fabian Society for the year ended 30th June 2016 which consists of a balance sheet, income and expenditure account and notes to the accounts. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of freehold property and on the basis of the accounting policies set out therein. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and The Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities effective January 2015 (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice for Smaller Entities).

In our opinion the Financial Statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with The Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities effective January 2015 (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice for Smaller Entities), of the state of The Fabian Society's affairs at 30th June 2016 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

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

Fabian Society AGM 2016

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

Date: Saturday 19 November 2016, 13:00–16:30

13:15 Doors open

13:30 Debate

14:30 Tea and Coffee

15.00 Annual General Meeting

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2015 AGM
3. Matters Arising
4. In memoriam
5. Chair's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. General Secretary's report
8. Approval of annual report 2015/16

9. Appointment of auditors

10. Jenny Jeger Prize

11. Date of next AGM

12. AOB

16.30 (approx) Close of meeting, followed by an informal social.

To register your attendance at the AGM, please visit www.fabians.org.uk/agm-2016

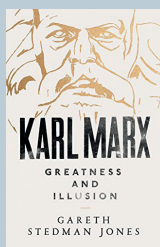
No resolutions were received this year.

Fabian Fortune Fund

Winner: Neil Dolby £100

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

FABIAN QUIZ



KARL MARX: GREATNESS AND ILLUSION

Gareth Stedman Jones

As the nineteenth century unfolded, its inhabitants had to come to terms with an unparalleled range of political, economic, religious and intellectual challenges. Distances shrank, new towns sprang up, and ingenious inventions transformed the industrial landscape. It was an era dominated by new ideas about God, human capacities, industry, revolution, empires and political systems – and above all, the shape of the future.

Gareth Stedman Jones's impressive biography explores how Karl Marx came to his revolutionary ideas in an age of intellectual ferment, and the

impact they had on his times. In a world where so many things were changing so fast, would the coming age belong to those enthralled by the events which had brought this world into being, or to those who feared and loathed it?

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

Which Labour leader made famous the expression that the Labour party owes more to Methodism than Marxism?

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

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

ANSWERS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 4 NOVEMBER 2016



Listings

BIRMINGHAM

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

BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

The Society celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2017 with activities and meetings. Meetings are held at the Friends Meeting House, Wharnclyffe Rd, Boscombe, Bournemouth at 7.30. 28 October. Lord Roger Liddle 25 November. Prof. Alan Whitehead MP Contact Ian Taylor on 01202 396634 for details or taylorbournemouth@gmail.com

BRIGHTON & HOVE

All meetings at 8.00 at the Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton. Please use Meeting House Lane entrance. Friday 23 September. Professor Michael Kenny on 'Labour and the Politics of National Identity' Friday 21 October. Andrew Harrop, General Secretary of the Fabian Society Details of all meetings from Ralph Bayley: ralphbayley@gmail.com

BRISTOL

Regular meetings. Contact Ges Rosenberg for details on grosenberg@churchside.me.uk or Arthur Massey 0117 969 3608 arthur.massey@btinternet.com

CARDIFF

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

CENTRAL LONDON

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

CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

29 September. Stephen Beer, Chief Investment Officer, Central Finance Board, Methodist Church on 'The economy after Brexit: How should the Left respond?' All meetings at 8.00 in Committee Room, Chiswick Town Hall. Details from the secretary, Alison Baker, at a.m.baker@blueyonder.co.uk

COLCHESTER

Hexagonal Room, Quaker Meeting House, 6 Church St, Colchester Details of meetings from Maurice Austin – maurice.austin@phonecoop.coop

COUNTY DURHAM

19 November. Urgent care as an example of work by North Durham GGC. Dr Jan Panke Meetings in alternate months at the Lionmouth Rural Centre, near Esh Winning, DH7 9QE, Saturday 12.15–2.00 £3.00 including a light lunch. Membership not needed at 1st visit. Details from the secretary, Professor Alan Townsend, 62A Low Willington, Crook, Durham DL15 0BG, 01388 746479, Alan.Townsend@dur.ac.uk

CROYDON AND SUTTON

New Society with regular meetings. Contact Paul Waddell on 07540 764596

CUMBRIA & NORTH LANCASHIRE

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

DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM

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

DERBY

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

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT

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

EAST LOTHIAN

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

EPSOM and EWELL

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

FINCHLEY

29 September. Colin Shindler on Israel and the British Left. 8.00 at The Blue Beetle, 28 Hendon Lane. 24 November. Isabel Hardman, Associate Editor, the Spectator. Labour 2020 vision. Enquiries to Mike Walsh on 07980 602122, email mike.walsh44@ntlworld.com

GLASGOW

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

GLOUCESTER

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

GREENWICH

New Society forming. Contact Thomas Murphy at t.anthonymurphy@gmail.com

GRIMSBY

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

HARROW

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

HASTINGS and RYE

Meetings held on last Friday of each month. Please contact Valerie Threadgill at val.threadgill@gmail.com

HAVERING

Details of all meetings from David Marshall at email david.c.marshall@talk21.com or 01708 441189 For latest information, see the website: haveringfabians.org.uk

IPSWICH

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

LEEDS

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

LEICESTER

New Society forming. Anyone interested, please contact Peter Broadhurst at pjbroadhurst@hotmail.co.uk

MERSEYSIDE

Please contact James Roberts at jamesroberts1986@gmail.com NORTHUMBRIA AREA For details and booking contact Pat Hobson: pat.hobson@hotmail.com

NORTHAMPTON AREA

Please contact Dave Brede on davidbrede@yahoo.com

NORTH EAST LONDON

Contact Ibrahim Dogus at ibrahimdogus@gmail.com

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

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

NORFOLK

New Society forming. Contact Stephen McNair for details. stephen.mcnair@btinternet.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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

OXFORD

Please contact Michael Weatherburn at michael.weatherburn@gmail.com

PETERBOROUGH

Friday 7 October. Mark Walker on Affordable, reliable public transport. Saturday 8 October. Theatre visit, The Redshank Redemption, Curve Leicester 2.15 performance followed by discussion at 87 Glamis Gardens in the evening. Get your tickets from the box office 0116 2423596 and let Brian know. Friday 9th December. Olivia Bailey on Democratic Reform. All meetings at 8.00 at the Ramada Hotel, Thorpe Meadows, Peterborough unless otherwise stated. Details from Brian Keegan on 01733 265769, email briankeegan.demon.co.uk

PORTSMOUTH

Wednesday 28 September. Discussion 'Britain after Brexit' Wednesday 26 October. Cameron Tait, Fabian Society on 'Changing Work' Wednesday 23 November, Andrew Harrop on 'The Labour Party and the Fabian Society'. New members very welcome. Meeting at 7.30. The Havelock Community Centre, Fawcett Rd, Southsea PO4 OLQ. For details, contact Nita Cary at dewicary@yahoo.co.uk

READING & DISTRICT

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

SALISBURY

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

SHEFFIELD

Regular meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month at The Quaker Meeting House, 10, St James St, Sheffield.S1

2EW Details and information from Rob Murray on 0114 255 8341 or email robertlmurray@hotmail.com

SOUTH EAST LONDON

Contact sally.prentice@btinternet.com

SOUTH WEST LONDON

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

SOUTHEND ON SEA

New Society forming. Contact John Hodgkins on 01702 334916

SOUTHAMPTON AREA

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

SOUTH TYNESIDE

10 October. Phil Brown on 'When the Astronomer Royal used Westoe Pit to weigh the world in 1854'. Contact Paul Freeman on 0191 5367 633 or at freemanpsmb@blueyonder.co.uk

STOCKPORT AREA

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

SUFFOLK

Details from John Cook – ipswichlabour@gmail.com, www.twitter.com/suffolkfabians

SURREY

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

THANET

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

TONBRIDGE and TUNBRIDGE WELLS

11 September. Informal gathering at the Compass, 45 Little Mount St, Tunbridge Wells at 12.30 Contact John Champneys on 01892 523429 or email lorna.blackmore@btinternet.com

TOWER HAMLETS

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

TYNEMOUTH

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

WIMBLEDON

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

YORK

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

Immigration and Integration:

In conversation with Chuka Umunna and Maurice Glasman



Sunday 25 September
12.30 - 1.45PM

The Merseyside Maritime Museum,
Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront,
Liverpool, L3 4AQ

Speakers:

Chuka Umunna
Maurice Glasman
Chair TBC



**WORKING PEOPLE
MUST NOT PAY
THE PRICE OF
BRITAIN LEAVING
THE EU**

WE NEED TO STOP A BREXIT RECESSION
TUC.ORG.UK/ACTIONPLAN





Visit our website for some great campaign ideas and resources: www.usdaw.org.uk/campaigns

To join Usdaw visit: www.usdaw.org.uk
or call: **0845 60 60 640**

Usdaw
*Union of Shop, Distributive
and Allied Workers*

General Secretary: John Hannett President: Jeff Broome
Usdaw 188 Wilmslow Road Manchester M14 6LJ



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