

FABIAN REVIEW

The quarterly magazine of the Fabian Society

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*Why women need a Labour government: Harriet Harman MP, Rosie Campbell, Kudsia Batool and more **p10** / Tracy Brabin on making women's safety a priority **p18** / Ed Turner and Davide Vampa trace the recovery of German social democracy **p21***

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**FABIAN
SOCIETY**

An illustration of two stylized human figures walking across the top of a bar chart. The figure on the left is wearing an orange jacket and blue trousers, while the figure on the right is wearing a light blue jacket and dark trousers. They are walking from left to right across the top of the tallest bar in the chart.

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FABIAN REVIEW

Volume 133—No.4

		<u>Leader</u>	
<i>Andrew Harrop</i>	4	Defining issues	
		<u>Shortcuts</u>	
<i>Ben Cooper</i>	5	The best start	
<i>Hilary Benn MP</i>	5	Rebuilding bridges	
<i>Emma Burnell</i>	6	Common cause	
<i>Neema Begum and Maria Sobolewska</i>	7	Pigeonholed	
<i>Sam Dalton</i>	8	Total transformation	
<i>Anne Clarke</i>	9	A growing scandal	
		<u>Cover story</u>	
<i>Harriet Harman MP</i>	10	Standing up for women	
<i>Rosie Campbell</i>	12	Leading the way	
<i>Kelly Grehan</i>	14	In focus	
<i>Kudsia Batool</i>	15	At all costs	
<i>Catrin Hughes</i>	16	A turn for the worse	
<i>Amreen Qureshi</i>	17	Seeking change	
		<u>Interview</u>	
<i>Kate Murray</i>	18	Centre stage	
		<u>Essay</u>	
<i>Ed Turner and Davide Vampa</i>	21	Phoenix from the ashes	
		<u>Features</u>	
<i>Stewart Lansley</i>	24	Fighting the battle of ideas	
<i>Paul Richards</i>	26	In defence of compromise	
<i>Verene Shepherd</i>	28	Repair and reconciliation	
<i>Jo McBride and Miguel Martínez Lucio</i>	30	Clean break	
		<u>Books</u>	
<i>James Meadway</i>	32	Sticking plasters	
		<u>Fabian Society section</u>	
<i>Zann Maxwell</i>	33	Strength to strength Listings & quiz	

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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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Defining issues

Labour needs show the alternative it can offer in the face of Tory sleaze and cronyism, writes *Andrew Harrop*

TRUST IN THE prime minister is shattered at a critical moment for the UK's health and prosperity.

The example he has set has reduced people's willingness to abide by coronavirus restrictions and minimise transmission risk. His carelessness costs lives.

But hopes of an early end to Boris Johnson's tenure are probably wishful thinking. He will only be defenestrated if his colleagues have clear and consistent evidence that he will lose them the next election. It would require Labour to lead in the polls for months by the healthy margins seen in December.

If that happens, these weeks will turn out to be a political turning-point to rank alongside the economic crises of 1992 and 2007. But it is more likely that the polls will narrow in the new year, as the stench created by the prime minister's recent scandals fades into the background.

Nonetheless, things will never be the same for Boris Johnson. He cannot repeat the vaccine bounce of early 2021. Brexit and the early phases of the pandemic, which drew swing voters to his camp, are receding memories. Labour's new top team offers a credible alternative and Johnson has little to show for his time in office. It all points to close, attritional politics, with the opportunity for Labour to steadily build a lead that lasts.

We will probably be stuck like this until 2024. The more competitive Labour looks, the less likely the Conservatives are to call an election early, not least because boundary changes favouring the Tories only take effect at the end of 2023. Labour needs to use the time purposefully. Its task is not just to demonstrate that the

Conservatives are unfit to govern, but to present a clear programme of its own.

The party can do without hundreds of small-scale policies which the public will struggle to remember. Instead it needs to show to people what it stands for, and why it wants power. That means a handful of pledges that have the heft to change the character of the country.

So far two Labour policies meet the bill: the party's commitment to huge climate change investment and its plans for major new employment rights for those struggling in the workplace. Neither of these has had the attention they deserve. They need to be reintroduced to the public with more vigour.

Then the party must go further. It needs big promises that bring to life the political principles Keir Starmer believes in – security, opportunity, contribution and community. They must be measures that touch people's lives and will be hard for the Conservatives to imitate.

But Labour must also present policies targeted at people and companies at the very top. It needs to create a dividing line with the Conservatives by linking Tory cronyism and double standards to the spectacle of the very wealthy playing by different rules. In contrast, Labour should promise tax and financial reforms to stop the super-rich avoiding the taxes everyone else has to pay.

This is the politics of integrity and the level playing field. Boris Johnson is a wounded figurehead for the sleazy nexus between money and power. It is the perfect moment for Labour to define itself and promise action against excessive concentrations of unearned wealth, privilege and power. **F**

Shortcuts



THE BEST START

Children and their families deserve more support in the earliest years—*Ben Cooper*

For millions of under-fives and their families, more than a decade of Conservative rule has been devastating. Conservative-led governments have shut more than 1,000 Sure Start children centres, underfunded and undervalued early education, and cut vital social security payments. The 2021 budget announcement of £500m over three years for early years, including family hubs – the unsatisfactory replacements for Sure Start centres – will not change the fact that our country is failing the youngest in society. Inequalities open up early on, poverty scars deeply, and life chances are cut short.

Labour must offer a clear, future-focused, evidence-based and comprehensive plan for early years in order to meet the scale of the challenge. Statistics show that more than two million families with children under five are living in poverty, and poverty is rising fastest for our youngest children. Every year, 185,000 children start school not ready to learn, with children from ethnic minority backgrounds, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and children from low-income families more likely to be behind their peers. And there are significant regional inequalities – a child qualifying for free school meals in London is 30 per cent more likely to be at the expected standard by the end of reception than a child in the Leeds city region, Greater Manchester or on Merseyside.

Unless these inequalities from birth are tackled, our country's path to a more prosperous and fairer future will be barred.

In July this year, the cross-party Early Years Commission, co-chaired by Sharon Hodgson MP and Edward Timpson MP with the secretariat provided by the Fabian Society and the Centre for Social Justice, set out a long-term plan to give every child

the best start in life and tackle inequality. The recent budget and spending review fell a long way short of what is needed to deliver this ambition.

The commission argued that society must make young children its top priority by tackling child poverty and making sure our public services deliver for families. Children deserve coherent, relevant, familiar and well-funded support. We need leadership at every level of government and a commitment to ensuring no child or family misses out on the help they deserve.

The commission also argued that every parent must have what they need to make their home a nurturing and safe environment. That starts by ensuring parents can spend meaningful time with their child, free from financial pressure. The Labour party is already committed to ensuring current rights to parental leave are available from day one of employment. But it should go further by increasing compulsory leave for mothers and fathers, introducing new use-it-or-lose-it entitlements and an additional 60 weeks of shared parental leave, and substantially boosting parental pay. These are family-friendly policies that will make a real difference to millions who are not currently entitled to leave or cannot afford to take it. And health visitor services must be funded to support all parents, assess the development of young children and provide extra help to those who need it.

Public services in the community are vital to improving health outcomes, psychological wellbeing, school readiness, and narrowing the educational attainment gap. Yet they have been neglected for far too long. Labour can promise to change that by investing in early education, improving the sustainability of providers and ensuring the most disadvantaged children gain the biggest benefits from what is on offer. Whether we call them Sure Start, children's centres or 'family hubs', what matters is that the infrastructure and funding exists to provide universal help, targeted interventions and integrated support for families between conception and the age of five.

Investing in early years is not just the right thing to do, it is politically popular too: polling for the Early Years Commission found that only 19 per cent of English adults would oppose more funding for services that help young children and families if

it were paid for by increasing taxes or by cuts to other services, compared to 43 per cent who would support it. And some 56 per cent agreed that investing in early years services would have a positive impact on their local area.

Labour leader Keir Starmer says he wants Britain to be "the best place to grow up in". This prospect speaks to our Labour values, and the values of the British people. The current government will never deliver on this; the recent budget and spending review, on top of their record over the past 11 years, prove it. It will be up to the next Labour government to ensure every child has the best start in life. ■

Ben Cooper is a senior researcher at the Fabian Society. The manifesto of the Early Years Commission is available on the Fabian website



REBUILDING BRIDGES

A better relationship with Europe is possible—*Hilary Benn MP*

We are only just beginning to see the true consequences of Brexit.

Businesses, and in particular SMEs, are having to cope with costs, bureaucracy and pointless form filling. According to the National Audit Office, this has amounted to an extraordinary 48 million customs declarations and 140,000 export health certificates since the UK left the single market and the customs union.

As a result, trying to export to our biggest market on the other side of the Channel is now more difficult. Exports of food and drink – one of our great British success stories – fell sharply in the first half of this year compared to the same period before Covid-19. And while the government has imposed all these burdens on British businesses, it has not even begun to do checks on goods exported from the EU to the UK.

Artists and performers are furious that their ability to tour in Europe has been made much more difficult, if not impossible, by visas, costs, carnets and trucking rules.

And we are all familiar with the shortages of some goods on our shelves and the problems of not enough lorry drivers and fruit and vegetable pickers.

In its recent report the Office for Budget Responsibility said that leaving the EU would reduce our long run GDP by around 4 per cent – a bigger impact than the pandemic.

And as for the promises that we would make up for these losses by negotiating new trade deals with other countries, it seems pretty clear that the United States is in no hurry to make one. Most of the other deals have simply rolled over the benefits that we already enjoyed as members of the EU. And in the case of Australia and New Zealand, ministers appear to have given a lot away for very little in return, simply so that they could wave a piece of paper in the air.

If this wasn't trouble enough, the government is now engaged in a fight with the EU over the Northern Ireland protocol which was negotiated, signed and praised at the time by the prime minister, only for him apparently to discover later on that he did not like it. If the government does go ahead and rip up the protocol, then there is a risk that the EU will retaliate by imposing tariffs on some of our exports or by threatening to suspend the whole trade and cooperation agreement. This would be highly damaging to the UK economy.

As for checks on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, the EU has eventually understood that saying 'the rules are the rules' showed insufficient appreciation of the practical impact the checks were having or of the political consequences in Northern Ireland.

If there were political goodwill on both sides then it would be perfectly possible to reach an agreement, but the prime minister is more interested in a punch-up with the European Union. He thinks it is politically advantageous even though it is actually undermining peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

Relations between the two sides are now pretty poor, and there is a profound lack of trust in the UK government and its word. This is not only damaging our relations with the EU but our reputation worldwide.

This all demonstrates that the aftershocks of Brexit have not finished, and it will be some time before the EU and the UK can start to address what kind of future

economic relationship we wish to have with each other.

So where should Labour put its energy and effort? I do not think we should fight the next election on a commitment to rejoin the European Union or the single market and the customs union. Apart from anything else, any such decision would require another referendum and there is no political appetite for that whatsoever.

Instead, we should be highlighting the adverse economic consequences of the Brexit deal for many different parts of the economy and calling on the government to find a way of reducing or removing them.

We need to start thinking about what a new, but different, relationship with the EU could look like. There are plenty of models around – like EFTA and the agreements with Switzerland and Ukraine – which could be adapted to our particular circumstances. We could reach a veterinary arrangement. We could do a deal to allow UK performing artists to travel across the EU and EU artists to come here to the UK. And we could agree more digital customs clearance procedures to lessen costs and paperwork.

I believe it will be possible, in the right political circumstances, to reach an agreement on closer economic ties with Europe, building them bit by bit. It is in our mutual interest to do so, but for that to happen we will first need a Labour government. ■

Hilary Benn is the Labour MP for Leeds Central



COMMON CAUSE

Labour members need to get better at disagreeing—*Emma Burnell*

For people whose common cause is making things better for everyone, some Labour members are, sadly, very good at making things worse for each other. This is the inevitable conclusion that must be drawn from the recent survey of Labour members undertaken by the Fabian Society. The report *More to Do* outlines a membership that is unhappy with how we conduct meetings and how we treat each other. This is particularly true of Jewish members who

reported the highest levels of unhappiness but also of Black, Asian and minority ethnic members, members with disabilities and LGBT+ members.

In this, the Labour party may mirror society – but it is not leading as it should be. If we can't get this right, and show by example, how can we expect anyone else to listen to us or let us be in charge of anything bigger than a branch or constituency Labour party? When we present this dysfunctional and unfriendly face to each other, we also show it to the world. We tell a far greater story about ourselves and our party through our actions than our words.

This discomfort members feel manifests in many different ways. Through selections and achievement of office, through opportunities offered and lost but in particular – and most perniciously – through our conduct towards each other in meetings. These have increasingly gone from being the spaces where we administrate our campaigning and discuss, set and monitor our political priorities to a place where we fight each other over factional micro-differences that would baffle any objective observer.

The disagreements we have at these meetings might start over policy and political differences but they often feel exceptionally personal. They become heated and mean and nasty all too easily. The battle to be secretary of a small branch of the Labour party may not seem to matter in the grand scheme of things. But I have seen fights escalate into such vitriol that regional offices have had to be called in. This is not good for our internal democracy, our ability to function as a unit after internal elections or our ability to campaign.

The good news is that few people want it to be this way even if many of us are unsure how to change it. It will take all of us examining our behaviour to change the atmosphere. It will take all of us wanting to work together with those we have previously disagreed with to learn how to do so in a comradely fashion.

We must approach our disagreements in good faith and as individual issues. This could mean offering training within CLPs about how to disagree well and for CLP and even branch officers having mandatory training in both the administrative tasks that make an organisation function but also in the kind of facilitation that makes meetings collaborative and worthwhile.

This does not mean taking the politics out of party membership. It is fine for members to disagree – and do so robustly – on how they see the party implementing its vision. But it must mean taking the heat out of

those disagreements and championing ways of debating that ensure everyone feels respected and listened to whatever the eventual outcome.

This may feel like a mammoth task. There are those who benefit from the atmosphere of spite and gloom that will be resistant. But though they are frequently loud and can often be intimidating, this data shows that they are in the minority. In fact, the vast majority of members would like to see action taken to improve our behaviour towards one another and would applaud any such steps taken.

Labour has to have a positive and forward-looking offer for all British people. It should be able to set itself up as a hopeful beacon that can bring a government of unity contrasted with Johnson's government by division. But Labour will only do so if it can be seen as a positive and forward-looking organisation. This means less public infighting and less internal angst. It is only by recognising where we are that we can start to make the changes required to move on. This new Fabian report is a vital first step in doing so. **F**

Emma Burnell is a journalist who works as media consultant for the Fabian Society



PIGEONHOLED

Ethnic minority councillors are being held back—*Neema Begum* and *Maria Sobolewska*

The Labour party has historically been the leader on ethnic minority representation in politics. Most ethnic minority MPs represent Labour, yet the party's record on representation in local councils lags.

The pervasive belief that ethnic minority candidates can only represent wards where there is a high ethnic minority population was named by many ethnic minority councillors to be one of the main factors restricting their opportunities.

These new findings are based on an ESRC-funded project at the University of Manchester. We have collected the ethnicity, gender, political party and ward of every local



© Nicola Fioravanti/Unsplash

councillor sitting in 2019 in the UK for the first comprehensive picture of diversity in local government. And we conducted almost 100 interviews around Britain with ethnic minority local councillors and white British councillors to investigate barriers to entry, selection, election and serving as a councillor.

We found that the most diverse local areas usually have equal representation of ethnic diversity relative to their populations. But in areas where minority residents amount to under 40 per cent of the local population, underrepresentation is stark.

Our research shows that assumptions are made by parties and selectorates that ethnic minority candidates are a 'better fit' for ethnic minority wards, and that ethnic minority voters would favour ethnic minority candidates, while white voters would favour white candidates. In fact, ethnic minority politicians who want to compete for less ethnically diverse wards are not thought to be sufficiently 'local' regardless of their place of residence.

Some ethnic minority councillors described feeling they had to be 'different enough' in order to appeal to ethnic minority voters but not 'too different' to remain palatable to the party. Many reported they did not want to be pigeonholed as only speaking out on race-related issues or penalised for doing so. If they did speak out on issues affecting ethnic minority communities, they were worried they might be seen as only representing ethnic minorities and not their white constituents as well, adding

to the problem. Some described having to 'tone down' their differences, making sure that they were seen as fitting into a 'white' council culture.

The sense of exclusion from certain wards based on ethnicity and race is then reproduced within the council. Leadership and cabinet roles in the council were often seen as dominated by white councillors. Some ethnic minority councillors described being passed over for cabinet positions or responsibilities for certain portfolios, sometimes for white councillors with less experience or less time served as a councillor. Some Muslim councillors felt social events in the council were geared towards drinking and meeting in pubs where they felt less welcome.

This, of course, is only reinforced by the more general experiences of discrimination. Some Muslim councillors recalled their experiences of Islamophobia within the party, council or from residents they represented. This is particularly a problem for Muslim female local councillors, who described being stereotyped as submissive and oppressed, and that they were often working against ingrained stereotypes of Muslim women. Many of the ethnic minority female councillors we interviewed experienced the interaction of racism and sexism. Black female councillors described the racism and sexism they faced; some were mistaken for cleaners and they also faced extreme levels of racist and sexist abuse online, including rape and death threats.

Campaigning for the party also places different demands on different individuals; for ethnic minority members and representatives, it could mean facing racism and sexism on the doorstep.

To tackle this, we need commitment to act from all parties. As a first step, we must increase scrutiny. While there have been increasing calls to tackle racism and sexism at the national level, attention must be paid to the local level.

Better quality data is certainly needed to track progress on ethnic and gender representation at the local level. One option for Labour is to enact and extend section 106 of the 2010 Equality Act to local government. This would mean taking responsibility for collecting and reporting equality data on the party's candidates and representatives.

Political parties are important gatekeepers who influence selecting candidates for council and funding campaigns. For things to improve, Labour must recognise the distinct experiences of ethnic minority candidates and councillors. **F**

*Neema Begum is assistant professor in British politics at the University of Nottingham. Maria Sobolewska is professor of political science at the University of Manchester and author of *Brexitland: Identity, Diversity and the Reshaping of British Politics**



TOTAL TRANSFORMATION

Innovative thinking can fix social care—*Sam Dalton*

After years of dither, social care reform has finally risen up the political agenda and is the subject of serious discussion in parliament. The government's health and social care bill – passed narrowly in the Commons – contains funding proposals for social care including a new national insurance levy and a cap of £86,000 on lifetime care costs. This was followed by the publication of the government's Putting People at the Heart of Care white paper.

From Labour's perspective, the government's funding plans are clearly

problematic. The cap means people in less well-off parts of the country will have to sell their home to pay for care while those in more affluent areas will not. The fact that government financial support will not count towards the £86,000 makes it an even less generous plan than had been previously thought.

While debates about the funding of social care are critical, we must be careful not to sideline an equally important part of the equation. Even if we created a completely just and sustainable mechanism for funding social care, that system itself needs transforming. The way that social care is provided, and the settings in which it takes place, need an injection of imagination.

We have got to articulate a proper vision for social care, fit for the modern day, and centred on prevention, keeping people healthy and independent for longer, and enabling them to stay in their own homes and connected to their local communities.

Currently, older people needing care have a limited choice between receiving this at home or moving to a care home. But what about an older person who wants somewhere with a little more support and care, but for whom a care home would be inappropriate?



© Jana Sabeth/Unsplash

Imaginative care options are beginning to emerge – but these need proper political backing. Shared Lives Plus schemes enable people to bring someone needing extra support and care into their home and family life, creating bonds across the generations, making care personal, and allowing people to thrive as part of the community. Around 15,000 people are already visiting or living with a Shared Lives carer.

Housing-with-care is also helping to straddle the binary between care at home and a care home. Through what are now called integrated retirement communities, older people can rent or buy their own apartment within a community that also includes 24/7 staffing, social care when needed, and communal spaces. The Chocolate Quarter near Bristol shows how these settings can be closely integrated with the local community; apartments sit alongside office space, a swimming pool, pottery and dance studio, cinema, restaurant and bar – accessible to all locals.

Again, housing-with-care is growing but not nearly fast enough – just 0.6 per cent of over-65s have the chance to live in this kind of setting, with provision in New Zealand, Australia and the US about 10 times higher. This is despite preventative options like housing-with-care being great for residents, who see improvements in health and wellbeing, and great for the NHS and social care system, with GP and hospital visits going down by an average of 38 per cent per resident. Win-win.

It is positive that the social care white paper has recognised new options like Shared Lives and housing-with-care, and provides some funding to support their growth.

But policy reforms are going to have to go far beyond funding for these new options to thrive. We need stronger regulation and for those working in these services to be better recognised.

The government will also need to overcome departmental silos. A clear route needs to be introduced in the planning system for building housing-with-care, and proper consumer protection regulation is required for the sector. This requires joint working between the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department of Health and Social Care, which is why organisations including Age UK, the National Housing Federation and Care England have called for a cross-government taskforce to be set up.

Labour's shadow care minister, Liz Kendall MP, has pointed in the right direction. Setting out the party's vision

for social care, she called for a 'home-first' approach by increasing the use of early help and technology to help people live independently and expanding the options between care at home and a care home. In a speech to parliament, she said sector-specific legislation was needed to expand housing-with-care.

What we now need is a full and proper cross-government strategy to realise the ambitions set out in the government's white paper, so that social care reform is not just about a funding solution, but creating an imaginative system prioritising prevention, health, independence and social connection. **F**

Sam Dalton works on housing and social care policy. He is a Labour party activist in Southwark



A GROWING SCANDAL

Millions of people are trapped in unsafe homes they cannot sell—*Anne Clarke*

It has been more than four years since the horrific tragedy at Grenfell – and still there are an estimated 11 million residents living in unsafe homes across the UK.

Whilst the government fails to take urgent and comprehensive action on this, the scale of the building safety crisis just continues to grow.

In my role as a local councillor and London Assembly member, I have met with residents of around 20 blocks impacted by this growing scandal. For many, the first time they become aware of a problem is when a neighbour tries to sell a flat. Then a mortgage cannot be arranged because the building doesn't have the necessary cladding safety form or other safety defects are raised by the mortgage lender. The EWS1 safety form did not even exist when leaseholders purchased these flats. But without this documentation, flats are unsellable.

In some buildings, the cost of insurance and wakening watch is so high that the management companies have stopped maintaining the buildings. In one block, nurses have not been able to have a hot shower



throughout the pandemic. In another, paint is peeling in the hall and the lifts do not work while residents are paying more than £1,000 a month in service charges.

Many who purchased flats in these blocks are key workers who bought as part of the government's Help to Buy scheme. They are often teachers, nurses and even firefighters.

It is disgraceful that leaseholders are still picking up the huge costs for the removal of dangerous cladding and faulty insulation, soaring insurance premiums, wakening watches and EWS1 forms. In some cases, even the ground rent has gone up.

That the government still does not have a plan to tackle this crisis is shameful. We can make no real progress without a comprehensive approach. Ministers should be doing all they can to speed up remediation works to protect residents living in unsafe homes and to safeguard leaseholders from the enormous costs of putting things right. Delaying support is causing unwarranted stress and financial ruin. There is also a significant impact on the budget of the fire brigade. A dangerous built environment means they are called to inspect more buildings and are given no additional resources to do so.

We now have more than 1,000 buildings in London alone where stay put advice, like we saw at Grenfell, has been suspended and a simultaneous evacuation strategy is

in place. This means the fire brigade do not think these buildings are safe to shelter in from a fire.

Ultimately, it should be the developers responsible for the crisis who foot the bill but they will not do this voluntarily – we need legislation. The mayor of London Sadiq Khan has called for a developers' levy which would raise greater funding to support remediation work than the scheme yet to be implemented by government. Such a plan relies on developers continuing to develop in order to pay the levy. As such working with developers is a key to ensuring they make payments towards remediation works. The government has not even replied to the mayor's request made a year ago to allow him to enact this levy in London.

We must now be bold. Let us push for a national cladding taskforce, where government would train and employ people to inspect, remediate and remove dangerous cladding and other fire safety defects. This would not only make buildings safe but it would employ thousands of people and so boost post-pandemic growth. The government could then claw back money from developers in the form of a levy. It is time to end the cladding scandal for good. **F**

Anne Clarke is a Labour councillor in the London borough of Barnet and the London Assembly member for Barnet and Camden

Standing up for women

The next Labour administration should be a government of and for women, writes *Harriet Harman MP*



Harriet Harman is the Labour MP for Camberwell and Peckham. She was the first ever minister for women, from 1997 to 1998, and has served in a number of cabinet and shadow cabinet roles

THE LABOUR PARTY is the political wing of the women's movement. That has been the case since the 1970s and remains so to this day.

Like all progressive forces, the women's movement demands change. And we have to keep on doing that until women and men are equal.

As with all demands for progress, there must be action from government to abolish discrimination and drive change. That means there has to be political activism.

The Labour party was the natural home for feminists in the burgeoning women's movement of the 1970s.

The Tories styled themselves the party of the family, which meant support for a household headed by a man with the woman in a subordinate role looking after the home and children. Women demanding change could never look to the Conservatives as their champions: by definition they were for defending the status quo.

The women's movement shouted their demands into a society in which women were to know their place. That men were to make decisions and women to abide by them. This was the case both at home and in politics. Women took responsibility for the work of caring for children and older relatives but even there, key decisions were taken by the husband and father. The woman was not just the mother but, as important, she was the housewife, serving the husband and keeping his home.

Women who challenged this in the name of equality were not just politely ignored, they were branded as dangerous.

The feminists of the 70s, of which I was one, demanded wholesale change and were vilified. We argued that women should be able to work outside the home. That was denounced as damaging for children and dangerous to the family by undermining the father's role as head of the household. We argued that women should be paid equally at work. That was branded an attack on working men and

their unions whose bargaining agenda was shaped around the demand for men to earn 'the family wage'. Women in the workplace were denounced as a threat to undercut men's hard-won terms and conditions.

We argued that the courts could not be fair to women when all the judges were men. Our demands for women to advance into the all-male judiciary were met with allegations that this would reduce the quality. It was not sex discrimination, they argued, it was just that the male lawyers were so much better than the women.

The same argument was levelled against us in our complaint that parliament was unrepresentative as there were only 3 per cent of women representing a population which was 50 per cent women. Parliament was of immense importance, they said, and should not be undermined by letting in substandard women. The very fact that the men were there and the women were not proved that the men were just better than the women, so we were told.

What was remarkable about that era of the women's movement was the sense of fearlessness. We knew we were up against every aspect of the establishment and would be pilloried as subversive or unstable. But we were determined in our analysis that women's equality was not only right in principle but would be good for men too, and the economy and our society as a whole.

In light of the cultural context at the time it was nothing short of remarkable that the Labour party, which was then as male-dominated as every other traditional institution, adapted. It accommodated us feminists and made our demands its own. Labour was the party of aspiration, for those seeking progress and the champion of the oppressed.

The Labour party had already shown itself as a party women could look to with the 1970 Equal Pay Act and the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. Those were revolutionary pieces of legislation which dared to regulate the workplace and the provision of services and to give cultural

The feminists of the 70s, of which I was one, demanded wholesale change and were vilified



Unveiling of the Millicent Fawcett statue in Parliament Square, 2018 © Alamy

leadership. It was political vanguardism in giving people not what they were all asking for but what the women's movement felt was needed.

To get into government we knew we had to appeal to women voters. And offering women the chance to vote for women MPs was a major part of that. So we arrived at the 1997 general election with women fighting in half the seats that we held or hoped to win. The 100 Labour women were elected on a mandate to deliver for women. And as minister for women in Labour's first cabinet I was able, together with other women ministers, to bring in the New Deal for Lone Parents, to help lone mothers get into work and the national childcare strategy. Later when I was solicitor general and then justice minister I introduced new laws to tackle domestic violence and tougher action on sexual offences.

In 2010, as the final legislation of the Labour government before we were voted out of office, we passed the Equality Act and, to this day, it is there protecting and promoting the rights of women, and other groups who are unequal and discriminated against.

By 2010 the Tories had recognised that they had no choice but to embrace the new demands of women if they were to modernise and throw off their reputation as the 'nasty party'. So they brought in women Tory MPs, knowing that an all-male cadre of MPs looked – and was – reactionary. Those women knocked off some of the harshest patriarchal edges of the Tory party.

But it remains the case that women are still far from equal.

Male violence against women still goes unpunished whether in the home or on the street. Decision-making is still dominated by men. And in the home, the care of children and older relatives still falls overwhelmingly on women.

Public policy has many more changes to make to tear down the barriers for women. We need sick pay for parents who need to look after a nursery or primary-school age child who is ill. We need paternity pay which is high enough that it is possible for men to take time off. We need an affordable, accessible quality childcare, building on the base of the Labour government's Sure Start programme which the Tories have shamefully dismantled.

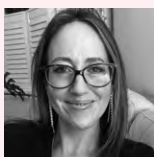
Whilst the Labour party is the political wing of the women's movement, it is not the same as the women's movement. We women in the Labour party have always drawn strength from the myriad different organisations of women both at community and at national level. We must respect that relationship, nurture and build on it.

We must listen to women. But it is not enough for women to be heard by men making the decisions. They must have an equal share in decision-making.

To do all that, and so much more that is needed, we need to be in government. It remains the case today, as it ever was, that the only engine of change to meet women's aspirations for equality is the Labour party. It is a virtuous circle. The more Labour stands up for women, the more women will vote for us and bring forward the day when we can once again have a government of and for women. **F**

Leading the way

We campaign for better representation in politics. But what difference do women politicians actually make? *Rosie Campbell* investigates



Rosie Campbell is professor of politics and director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London

DURING THE FIRST months of the Covid-19 pandemic there was a series of news stories asking whether women leaders were handling the crisis better than men. When the behaviour of women leaders was juxtaposed against some notorious men it was tempting to conclude in the affirmative. Angela Merkel's serious scientism and Jacinda Ardern's empathy and decisiveness were the model of effective leadership when contrasted with the response of populist male leaders such as Jair Bolsonaro and Donald Trump, who mocked the virus and its ability to damage themselves or their supporters.

However, this binary opposition between feminine and masculine leadership overplays the differences between most women and men politicians; hyper-masculine leadership styles are more likely to be adopted by populist male politicians and are not typical of leaders of wealthy democracies.

Furthermore, in the summer of 2020 fewer than 10 per cent of nations were led by women, limiting our ability to undertake robust analysis of their impact.

But some studies have attempted a rigorous approach. Academics Supriya Garikipati and Uma Kambhampati, for example, compared women leaders with men leading similar countries and found evidence that death rates were lower in those headed by women. However, these kinds of studies often lack power due to their small sample. Plus, further analyses have suggested that country-level factors, rather than women leaders themselves, provide the most powerful explanations for better health outcomes.

Evidence may indicate that gender played a part in the rhetorical response to the crisis: a recent analysis in the *BMJ* found women leaders were more likely to emphasise the impact of the pandemic on communities and individuals and to reference a wider variety of welfare services in response. But again, sample size issues meant these findings were tentative.

Although difficult to prove, it has been suggested that women leaders might be more likely to emerge in collective and meritocratic political cultures, that are also better placed to respond effectively to crises. Thus, we should not simply ask 'what difference do women leaders make?' but rather, in addition, 'what does the presence, or absence, of women leaders tell us about the democratic health of a nation?'

In 2020 the Global Institute for Women's Leadership and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy published a report, authored by my colleague Dr Minna Cowper-Coles, reviewing more than 500 articles and reports assessing the impact of women political leaders on democracy. There have been too few women heads of government to give a robust account of the difference they make, but if we extend the notion of women political leaders to all elected women politicians then we can draw some conclusions.

One unequivocal finding is that women political leaders have and continue to reshape the nature of politics and international relations by bringing issues previously perceived as 'non-priorities,' such as gender-based violence and reproductive health, to the fore.

Furthermore, as policy makers, women more often prioritise issues that benefit the most vulnerable in society through healthcare, welfare and education. As such, more women leaders seem to make for more equal and caring societies. And crucially states where women hold more political power are less likely to go to war and less likely to commit human rights abuses.

Another frequent finding in the existing research is that as elected officials, women tend to work harder than men to represent their constituencies, which is linked to a stronger sense among voters that government is responsive to their needs.

There is also evidence of an association between increased representation of women in elected office and lower levels of corruption and the focusing of resources on the quality and consistency of public service delivery.

The research therefore demonstrates that greater representation of women in politics is associated with positive outcomes for women and society in general.

The divergence in the priorities and behaviours of women and men politicians reflect continuing gender differences in lived experience and socialisation, and illustrate that the inclusion of women in policy making is essential for authentic democratic linkage between citizens and state.

However, women's presence in elected office is not just a cause of more inclusive policy making, it is also a consequence of it. The lower levels of corruption evident in societies with more women political leaders is most likely



Women from the Murshidabad district of West Bengal queuing to vote in the 2009 general election © Public.resource.org/Flickr

an indication of more meritocratic and inclusive political recruitment processes. Thus, it is not simply the presence of women per se that indicate good democratic health but the presence of diverse women from varied social backgrounds.

It is apparent that women political leaders have an impact on policy and the quality of government, but they also serve as role models for the next generation of women politicians. Whilst women remain a tiny proportion of heads of government, when they hold office they can help to generate a virtuous circle where greater numbers of young women are inspired to pursue a political career.

Research from Ian McAllister has shown that when Julia Gillard was in office – my boss at the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership and the only woman to have served as prime minister of Australia – the political knowledge gap between men and women in Australia declined because of women’s greater attentiveness to news media. Sadly the gap widened again after she left politics.

Political knowledge is driven by interest and engagement in politics, two areas where there is a long-standing gap between men and women across the globe. And of course interest and engagement in politics fuel participation and are therefore essential in a vigorous democracy.

Experience of women political leaders in Indian villages has also famously been shown to elevate adolescent girls’ career aspirations and educational attainment and reduce time spent on domestic chores. Exposure to women political leaders thus has multiple benefits that over time can help to undermine gender stereotypes, bringing economic and social benefits to women and girls and the whole of society.

In some circumstances women politicians’ political priorities have been shown to more closely align with those of women in the electorate. Research I have undertaken with Sarah Childs and Joni Lovenduski has shown

congruence between women voters and women politicians on attitudes to public spending and gender equality. From this perspective it can be argued that more women leaders are required not only on the grounds of justice or fairness, but also because their presence has implications for the substantive representation of women’s preferences.

It is well known that in the United States men and women’s political attitudes differ with a greater proportion of women supporting the Democrats than men in every presidential election since 1980. This ‘modern’ gender gap has emerged across wealthy democracies reversing the traditional divide between men and women, where in the immediate post-world war two period women were more often supporters of parties of the right than men.

What is less well known is that this trend has finally reached British shores.

Research I have conducted, with my colleague at Manchester University Rosalind Shorrocks, has highlighted that the 2017 general election was a critical turning point for the relationship between gender and voting behaviour in Britain. Prior to 2017 a greater proportion of women voted for

the Conservative party than men in almost every general election since 1945. However, a radical shift occurred in 2017 and continued into the 2019 general election, where women were considerably more likely to vote Labour versus the Conservatives than men were. The link between the proportion of women elected representatives and the policy platforms offered by parties may well provide some of the underlying mechanisms explaining the emergence of this gender gap.

Clearly the difference women political leaders actually make is fundamental to the health of democracy. Sweeping generalisations about a leader’s gender and their capacity to manage a crisis are much less useful than a deep reflection on the fact that the majority of our citizens are women, and our political systems and cultures are weakened if they are not fully included. ■

**Women political leaders
have an impact on the
quality of government,
but they also serve
as role models**

In focus

There is a direct link between domestic abuse and suicide which cannot go ignored, writes *Kelly Grehan*



Kelly Grehan is a Labour councillor in Dartford and a member of Fabian Women's Network's executive committee

TWO WOMEN A week are killed by partners or ex-partners every week in the UK. As a campaigner against violence against women and former probation officer, that figure is etched in my mind.

What is less well known is the horrific link between domestic abuse and suicide. Research in this area is somewhat lacking, but the Transforming Health and Social Care in Kent and Medway partnership conducted a study which concluded that almost one in five of the people who died by suicide in the county in 2020 had been impacted by domestic abuse. This included current victims and those who had historically experienced abuse, perpetrators and young people living in households where abuse was occurring. A 2018 study by the University of Warwick, focusing on more than 3,500 women supported by domestic abuse charity Refuge, found that almost a quarter of women supported by the charity had felt suicidal at one time or another. Some 83 per cent reported feelings of hopelessness and despair which are key symptoms of suicidal ideation. The research also found that nearly a fifth of participants had actively planned to take their own lives.

In many respects the risk of suicide for a victim of domestic abuse is not surprising when we consider the very character of domestic abuse. Perpetrators commonly undermine their victim's mental wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem and isolate them from others. Other common tactics that have an impact on mental health include forms of emotional abuse, especially gaslighting. Those who do manage to leave domestic abuse behind can struggle in their recovery because loss of agency is another classic experience of those who have been coercively controlled and trauma can shut down victims' self-belief.

Women who have been abused by a partner are three times more likely to suffer depression, anxiety or severe conditions such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder than other women, according to research by Birmingham University. Women with mental health problems are also more likely to be domestically abused, with 30 to 60 per cent of women with a mental health problem having experienced domestic violence.

For the last few months I have been working with Kirsty Robinson, a woman from my area whose sister, Gemma,

took her own life after suffering a fractured eye socket in a vicious assault from her ex-partner and being frightened of seeing him in court. Kirsty and I have been seeking to shine a light on the scale of the problem. We believe that changes in focus and policy are needed by health and justice agencies and the police to tackle what we see as a health crisis caused by domestic abuse.

Although attributing suicide to someone else's actions is difficult there is a precedent in the law: in 2017 Nicholas Allen pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of his ex-girlfriend, Justene Reece, after she killed herself as a 'direct result' of his controlling behaviour. This is thought to be the first manslaughter case brought in such circumstances. Allen had previous convictions for assault and harassment against other partners, was also convicted of 'controlling and coercive behaviour' and of six counts of stalking Justene and her family. He was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

Possibly other convictions of this type could follow – but of course evidence is required. When a homicide takes place the crime scene and the victim's circumstances are fully investigated by senior police officers. But it is not clear that police investigate suicides as fully once it is clear that it is a self-inflicted death. We believe that checks for a domestic abuse history should always be made and a system of recording this needs to be set up. Where there is a history of abuse, a proper inquiry should be carried out.

We also believe that more focus needs to be placed upon the suicide risk of those in, and who have left, domestically abusive relationships and that all frontline practitioners in the field should have more training in this area: health practitioners who see women with mental health problems need to ask routinely about domestic violence and abuse and how to safely respond. Similarly, police officers, probation officers and those working with victims must be trained on how to approach this. We also need to lay the foundations for greater collaboration between the mental health and domestic abuse sectors in the hope we can see prevention of further tragedy.

Finally, victims of domestic abuse need mental health support from highly trained practitioners to deal with the deep trauma that they have experienced. A recent report from the Agenda Alliance found trauma-informed mental health services in the UK for women are rare. This must change. We need to address the link between suicide and domestic abuse and suicide to save lives. **F**



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At all costs

We must not rest until a fairer economy and workplace equality are won, argues *Kudisia Batool*



Kudisia Batool is head of equality and strategy at the Trades Union Congress

WE NEED URGENT action to combat the discrimination women face in the workplace. The coronavirus pandemic has shone a stark light on the deep structural inequalities which cut across our country and the labour market – and women have been disproportionately affected.

Women have borne the brunt of meeting rising care needs, have been at increased risk of domestic abuse; have faced restrictions accessing sexual health and family planning services; and are more likely to have been affected by job losses. Women whose lives are also shaped by other aspects of their identity – working-class women, women who are Black, disabled, LBT+ and those in insecure and low-paid jobs – have been particularly hard hit.

The pandemic has highlighted the endemic low pay and occupational segregation faced by many women workers, particularly those in vital frontline jobs including social care and retail. Nearly two-thirds of the UK's 9.8 million key workers are women. Women kept the healthcare system and our country moving as the pandemic hit its peak. And 2.6 million of these women key workers earned less than £10 an hour.

It is no secret that the UK has one of the worst gender pay gaps in Europe. Women effectively work for free for two months a year and whilst companies publishing information on their gender pay gaps is a small step in the right direction it is nowhere near enough. Women in the UK will only start to get paid properly when we have better-paid, part-time and flexible jobs with higher wages in key sectors like social care.

But this issue is about more than just money. Violence against women and girls is rooted in structural inequalities and power imbalances between men and women. Intersecting inequalities also compound the threat of violence women face.

Sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women have continued to occur on streets, in workplaces, in public spaces and online. Lockdown and enforced home working have also shaped women's experiences of sexual harassment at work, with harassment via emails and virtual meetings increasing. Yet reported instances of sexual harassment at work fall way short of showing its true prevalence. Labour and the trade union movement must lead on campaigning for safer workplaces free from violence and harassment.

Women's work is often concentrated in sectors which were shut down by coronavirus restrictions such as beauty,

arts, hospitality and leisure. But the government's plans for economic recovery focused investment in male-dominated sectors such as construction. Women, on the other hand, were prevented from a return to work as vital services and support were unavailable.

The government failed in its duty to consider the needs of and impact on women when developing policy. Too often during the pandemic, equality was an afterthought, if not completely forgotten, with equality impact assessments glaringly absent.

Where the government has failed, Labour must be brave. It must start by tackling the structural inequality faced by women. Bold policy moves should include fixing our broken parental leave system, giving all parents 10 days paid parental leave, scrapping the qualifying threshold for statutory sick pay and ensuring no worker is excluded from accessing vital financial support.

Investing in a care-led recovery would create 2.7 times as many jobs as the same investment in construction: 6.3 as many for women and 10 per cent more for men.

Giving care workers a pay rise to the real living wage would create 2 million jobs, increasing overall employment rates by 5 per cent and decreasing the gender employment gap by 4 per cent. There must be a recognition too of the vital infrastructure role the childcare sector plays and invest in it accordingly. And we should also seize the opportunity to address occupational segregation by making high-quality jobs in the green economy genuinely accessible to everyone.

Labour must prioritise the safety of women at work and in society by reversing cuts to public services and enhanced training on preventing and responding to violence against women. We need long-term funding to provide specialised services for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence and a cross-departmental action plan to tackle the structural inequalities in work, health, education, housing and justice.

There are many wider changes too. Labour must tackle gender pay gaps and extend this work to include ethnicity and disability pay gaps. We need new mandatory requirements on employers to report on pay gaps alongside action plans focusing to address the causes of these gaps. And genuine flexible working must become a day one right to have, for everyone.

The government's mishandling of the pandemic has failed to promote equality, and too often has further undermined it. But a fairer economy will also be a stronger one. By organising on the ground, and forcing government to act, we must not rest until equality has been achieved for everyone. The pandemic has shown the scale of structural inequality women face, and the case for change is stronger than ever. In order to build back better, we need to build back fairer and equality must be at the heart of any roadmap out of the pandemic. ■

A turn for the worse

Stark health inequalities exist not only between men and women, but amongst women too.

Catrin Hughes explains



Catrin Hughes is external affairs and APPG manager at the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. She is responsible for managing the all-party parliamentary group on sexual and reproductive health and is writing in a personal capacity

IT IS NO secret that women in the UK experience poorer health outcomes than men. This bucks the trend across 156 other countries where gaps in outcomes generally leave men at greater risk of poorer physical and mental health than women, according to a 2020 study by men's healthcare start-up Manual. But to meaningfully address health inequalities we must see the full picture.

The disparity in outcomes between women and men in the UK – the largest gap in the G20 – makes for sobering reading. Take dementia as an example: a 2016 study by researchers at UCL found that women with dementia made fewer visits to a GP, received less health monitoring and took more potentially harmful medication than men. When looking at mental health, the Department of Health and Care found that eating disorders and the risk of self-harm are both greater among women and girls than men and boys.

There has been much study on the contributing factors towards the 'gender health gap' in the UK – from women being routinely underrepresented in clinical trials and receiving less medical research funding than men, to bias in the treatment of pain resulting in women being less likely to be prescribed relevant medication or admitted to hospital.

We have, however, made great strides in understanding the systemic biases at play here. And this year, the government made clear that the Women's Health Strategy would "make women's voices heard and put them at the centre of their own care".

But there are stark inequalities between different groups of women in relation to their health.

A particularly bleak statistic is that Black women in the UK are more than four times more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth than their white counterparts.

There are now concerns that Covid-19 has worsened these gaps in care, as an inquiry from the all-party parliamentary group on sexual and reproductive health

into access to contraception suggests: Data indicates that only 31 per cent of healthcare professionals were confident that women from marginalised groups could access contraception and other sexual reproductive healthcare during lockdown.

So how do we address the different challenges in women's healthcare?

It is first important to acknowledge the role of wider social factors. The Health Foundation champions the need to view health as inextricably linked to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, and work; their age; and inequities in power, money and resources – the social determinants of health.

It is in this vein that many healthcare leaders are calling for a cross-government strategy to reduce health inequalities, accompanied by the necessary funding.

But where does this leave women facing worse outcomes across different aspects of healthcare? How can we ensure our strategy is able to eradicate inequalities in pregnancy and birth outcomes, or improve health outcomes for transgender women, for instance?

Any overarching strategy to reduce health inequalities for women must be underpinned by equity policies across the life course. In practice, these are policies that can address inequalities in physical and mental health from preconception and early years up to adolescence, working age, and older age. This is how we significantly address the inequalities not only between women and men, but also between women.

And we can only make meaningful progress by taking an intersectional approach to tackling inequalities. This means that our policies must reflect the inextricable way that factors such as race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality intersect to shape each other.

Researchers are looking at how this can be done in practice, including a group in the United States who reviewed the challenges around adoption of the HIV-preventative treatment PrEP among young adult Black women. Alongside their sexual and reproductive healthcare needs, researchers explored multiple other factors including awareness, interest, and the utilisation of PrEP within these groups of women.

Essentially, we cannot take one social category at a time. Instead, we need to adopt a cross-sector policy framework that recognises the way in which different inequities are intertwined – with the aim of making tangible health improvements for different groups of women.

'Levelling up' is said to be a key agenda for the government – although it is widely criticised for being more of a slogan than anything else. And it is yet to translate into progress by way of developing a cross-sector strategy. We are also still awaiting the publication of the Women's Health Strategy, further to the call for evidence closing in mid-June.

The Labour party has long held itself up as 'the party of equality', with pledges including the introduction of a new Race Equality Act to tackle complex structural racism in the UK. Putting this commitment meaningfully into practice in women's health is an important task, albeit not an easy one. But with a general election potentially around the corner, now is the time to show how it will rise to the challenge. ■

Seeking change

In this hostile environment, we must better support women with insecure immigration status, argues *Amreen Qureshi*



Amreen Qureshi is a researcher at the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

THIS NOVEMBER WE witnessed the tragic deaths of 27 people as their boat capsized while crossing the Channel to enter the UK. Of those who drowned, seven were women – including one expecting mother. Despite the efforts of some to minimise and obscure the experiences of refugee women transiting through Europe, the reality is they face a set of distinct challenges when seeking asylum.

Sexual and gender-based violence can be the reason why a woman chooses to flee her home, or even her home country. But women remain at a heightened risk of violence during their migration journey, both while travelling along unsafe routes and at the point of integration when they reach their host country.

In Europe, refugee women have experienced sexual and gender-based violence. Women in Calais and other parts of northern France have also faced a high risk of exploitation, abuse and untreated health concerns, as reported by the Refugee Women's Centre.

Across Europe the hardening of responses to migration has raised concerns, with the UK government also providing minimal safe and legal routes to enter the country. This is unlikely to change, as the Home Office's nationality and borders bill proposes primarily punitive measures towards asylum seekers, recognising only those who come via resettlement schemes or other authorised routes as worthy candidates for rebuilding their lives in the UK. Combined with tightened travel restrictions due to the pandemic, these proposals will only force more people into taking perilous journeys across the Channel, leading to yet more tragic and foreseeable deaths.

Even if, despite these challenges, women manage to enter the UK to seek asylum, they are not automatically

afforded protection. A recent report from the University of Birmingham found that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence were left 'feeling broken' after experiencing harrowing asylum interviews that lacked sensitivity towards their experiences of trauma, and so reinforcing a 'culture of disbelief' within the Home Office, often leading to their claims being wrongly refused.

Without secure immigration status, women are likely to be exposed to immigration control measures under the hostile environment policy before they can appeal. IPPR found that under this policy women are more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and modern slavery.

Women may also be affected by the 'no recourse to public funds' condition, which prevents people from accessing universal credit, social housing, homelessness assistance, and other forms of support. Home Office data suggests that those seeking to lift their no recourse to public funds condition due to destitution tend to be women.

No recourse to public funds also restricts access to support for survivors of domestic abuse. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, UN Women has warned of a 'shadow pandemic': a global surge of violence against women compounded by lockdown restrictions and increased burdens from caring responsibilities and loss of livelihoods. Although the establishment of the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021 was viewed as a positive step forward across the women's rights sector, a stark omission from the act is protection for migrant women. It further silos vulnerable women as either eligible or ineligible for support depending on their immigration status.

At IPPR, we have long advocated for the Home Office to cultivate an evidence-based, non-discriminatory approach to immigration policy. In particular, we have called for reforms to no recourse to public funds, and an expansion to the existing destitute domestic violence concession so that more women will be eligible for public funds and other services, regardless of their visa type.

Another priority must be making safe and legal routes available for forcibly displaced women. Deterrent tactics will only perpetuate a vicious cycle of people crossing the Channel if that is the only option available. For women who are compelled to use this route, specialist training should be given to frontline officials such as the police and border and immigration staff to identify victims of sexual and gender-based violence and refer them on to essential specialist support.

Crucially, trauma-informed and gender-sensitive support must be mainstreamed in asylum and immigration practices. If not, the current approach to immigration will continue to disadvantage women living with precarious status who call the UK their home. Ultimately, gender equality in the UK must mean equality for all women – regardless of their immigration status. **F**





ON THE SURFACE, a career as an actor on some of Britain's best-loved TV programmes might seem to have little in common with success in politics. But Tracy Brabin, *Coronation Street* star turned MP and then mayor of West Yorkshire, says the key quality she needed when she first entered parliament after the murder of Jo Cox was one she drew from her previous life.

"Actors are often incredibly empathetic people – they have to be because you have to get under the skin of a character and play for real and in order to do that you need to understand them," she explains. "And I think that the MP for Batley and Spen at that time needed to be somebody with bucket loads of empathy, because it wasn't about being a political animal. It was about supporting a community at its worst time, listening and being kind. And so empathy was very helpful. I would suggest it would be a prerequisite for all MPs but not everybody has it."

We are talking at the height of the scandal over Number 10's Christmas parties in the face of coronavirus restrictions, so the issue of being in touch with the public and sensitive to what they're going through feels particularly salient.

"I think there is an empathy bypass in Number 10," Brabin says. "They don't understand the sacrifices people have made because they just don't get it."

"Their empathy bypass is where they're going to lose. Because people realise they lent them their vote and they've just been made a laughing stock."

Brabin's own background, is, she laughs, 'Yorkshire through and through'. Brought up in social housing, her pre-politics life was not without its struggles. "Being a creative freelancer, where we have been worried about paying the mortgage, having to borrow money from parents, thinking about selling the car. Having been

a child on free school meals, then seeing my own kids on free school meals, thinking 'bloody hell, this job is so tough when you're waiting for the next gig'. Being kept awake at night because you're worried about money. I don't think the majority of people in the Conservative party, and particularly those in parliament, really understand that fear."

Back in May, Brabin swapped her Westminster seat for the West Yorkshire mayoralty, becoming the first woman ever elected as a metro mayor. She's also one of only two mayors outside London to hold responsibility for policing – powers which meant she had to step down from parliament – and she's determined to make the most of the role.

A key priority is tackling violence against women and girls, with a range of initiatives from more advisors to help victims of domestic violence to improved systems for those who report a sexual assault. It is an issue which has personal resonance for Brabin.

"I speak from experience, as do so many women: I was sexually assaulted at university by a stranger in the street who tried to rape me and batter me," she says. "I was incredibly blessed actually in my recovery because he was arrested and he went to prison. Justice was served for me. So many other women don't ever get that closure. They have to live with it all their lives knowing that that perpetrator got away with it. They have to work with them, or they sleep next to them or it's their brother's mate."

Brabin likens her work in this area with her deputy mayor for crime and policing, Alison Lowe, as 'two little speedboats' working to turn a tanker around. West Yorkshire's approach also includes putting funding into a safer public realm for women, and projects in universities and schools to help men and boys think about healthy relationships.

CENTRE STAGE

Tracy Brabin is the first woman to be elected as a metro mayor. She chats to *Kate Murray* about her top priorities in office, from safety for women and girls to standing up for the north

“We’ve got to do everything in our power to free up the brilliance of women across our community”

Austerity has had an impact on both the support services available for women and on the working of the criminal justice system. But important too, according to Brabin, is addressing the societal changes, particularly ready access to online porn, that have had such an impact on attitudes towards women.

“We have to provide the safety net, but we also have to do the upstream work of intervening – [ensuring] people respect others, understand what consent is, are able to call each other out when things go too far, support each other in society to do the right thing.”

Brabin argues that a focus on women and girls is an issue of social justice. “If you’re talking about levelling up, how do we even level up our own region if 50 per cent plus of our citizens are living in fear, they can’t live freely, they can’t do the things they want to do without worrying whether they have to take keys with them, or take their trainers or bat off unwelcome advances?” she says.

“We’ve got to do everything in our power to free up the brilliance of women across our community, so that they can be the best they can be – and flourish.”

Brabin’s own position as a role model to women is one she takes seriously. She particularly relished being able to turn the ‘shouldergate’ incident – where she was trolled on social media for wearing a dress in parliament which revealed her shoulder – into a positive by auctioning the dress and making £20,000 for the Girl Guides.

“I know there are many women in positions where they don’t have that voice. They just have to take it in their workplace, the ‘banter’,” she says. “I do have a responsibility to other women. Part of that responsibility is to be a ladder dropper to enable other women to get to senior roles. When you are in a senior position as a woman you do need to support others by talking about gender.”

When she spoke at the Fabian Society northern conference last month, Brabin condemned the toxicity in politics, telling the audience she had to have police at her surgeries. The problem, she says, comes from the very top, with Boris Johnson fuelling the negative atmosphere with his language around Brexit.

“It’s so shocking that it becomes so much part of the job,” she says. “My issue was always with our young members of staff that have to triage that and how it gets you down. My own kids used to watch it and burst into tears and say, ‘Mum how can you do this job and everybody hates you?’ I said, they’re a small minority, but with the loudest voice, but it does stop good people engaging with you online, because they don’t want the pile-on. So it’s anti-democratic, actually.”

Being a mayor rather than an MP has meant Brabin feels she is seen as a local voice and ‘more liked and more welcomed’ as a result than she was in her stint as an MP. But she still worries about the lack of trust in politicians

which has become so acute in the last few years. That won’t have been helped by the latest government U-turn when it decided to scale back plans for high-speed rail to – and across – the north.

“The sense of betrayal is off the scale and people are furious,’ says Brabin. “What is even worse is people saying ‘well what else would you expect?’ But we should expect the best, we should expect the same investment as the investment that goes into the south.”

“We needed that HS2 to get the fast intercity train and to get freight off the roads, so we could have more stopping trains and connect our towns with our new workspaces, our communities end loneliness and create opportunities for youngsters.”

Brabin is hoping Conservative politicians across the north will speak up for their communities on the need for more infrastructure investment. Transport, she says, will determine the success and failure of so much, from tackling climate change to ensuring young people have easy access to good education, training and jobs.

“How are you committed to a green agenda when 70 per cent of all people who commute to work into a city in the north are using their car, when 100,000 people a day are on M1? You have to get them onto trains and the only way to do it is to increase capacity.”

In future, Brabin insists, the London-centric approach has to change so that regions like hers can make their own decisions on investment.

“I want us to be sustainable. I do not want to keep going down to London with a begging bowl,” she says. “Going for beauty contests, where we don’t win, or where we win, and it’s small amounts of money that should have been given to us anyway, to build a swimming pool. Back in the day your councils built swimming pools and gyms. And now we have to go to government to go into a competition to get the things that actually we should be entitled to. So I want us to be sustainable, but also to have inclusive growth across West Yorkshire.”

In the meantime, she is relishing the opportunity to make a real difference in her home patch.

“It is a super job. You know, I just would really encourage everyone to get into local government politics, I do think being a mayor is quite compelling.”

“We really are the engines of change and we will help Labour get back into Number 10.”

So doesn’t she miss her former life on screen?

“I don’t miss it at all. I thought I would, and both my girls are actors, my husband’s a TV director, but I have no yearning at all to go back,” she says. “This job is so interesting, and so exciting. I feel at the heart of things to deliver. The idea that you’re at the centre of change is very compelling.” **F**

Kate Murray is the editor of the Fabian Review

Phoenix from the ashes

Not so long ago, there were fears that Germany's SPD faced electoral wipeout – but now its candidate has become chancellor. *Ed Turner* and *Davide Vampa* chart the party's road from despair to victory and consider whether it holds lessons for Labour



Ed Turner is reader in politics and Davide Vampa is senior lecturer in politics, both in the Aston Centre for Europe at Aston University. Their research on German social democracy was funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

ROLL THE CLOCK back to early June 2019, when an emotional leader of Germany's social democratic SPD, Andrea Nahles, announced her resignation. The party had received just 15.8 per cent of the popular vote in the European elections in late May, the worst result in a national election in its history. This came on the back of some miserable results in state elections (under 10 per cent in Bavaria in 2018, under 20 per cent in Hesse, a state the SPD had governed for much of the post-war period), and morale was at rock bottom. At the 2017 federal election, the party got its worst result in its history (20.5 per cent), yet found itself once again entering the federal government as junior coalition partner to Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats – a move actively opposed by a third of members, and agreed to only through gritted teeth by many more. The SPD's progress after 2017 seemed to follow the same pattern as in previous grand coalitions under Merkel: it would be able to push through large parts of its policy agenda, such as more rights for those in precarious employment, reduced health insurance contributions and taxes for those on lower incomes, and an increase

in minimum pension levels. However, it got scant credit from voters, with the star of the Greens in opposition appearing to shine particularly brightly.

Among academics and think tankers concerned with social democracy, the debate was not so much whether the SPD could recover, but rather whether it would disappear from the scene completely (so-called PASOKification), or by virtue of its continued strength in some regions, bump along at the bottom of the polls. In particular, the 'crisis of social democracy' narrative, positing that social democratic parties were unable to unify an increasingly diverse potential support base, gained ground. How, it was asked, could social democrats appeal at the same time to liberal, well-educated voters concerned about the environment and tempted by the Greens, and to more socially conservative, working-class voters concerned about the risks of a transition to a low carbon economy?

Fast forward to September 2021, and the transformation in the party's fortunes appears remarkable: a gently smiling Olaf Scholz, the SPD's chancellor candidate has topped the poll (albeit with just 25.7 per cent – reflecting the fragmentation of Germany's party politics) and embarks

Fast forward to September 2021 and the transformation in the party's fortunes appears remarkable

on the negotiations which will see him take over from Angela Merkel as chancellor. How can we explain the turnaround in the party's fortunes? There are three aspects that we discuss here: sound strategic choices, fortunate circumstances, and also the importance of not overstating the extent of the party's success.

We have been investigating the SPD's electoral performance at the regional level in Germany since reunification in 1990, and have analysed election results, manifesto data, and data about party organisation and incumbency (an analysis of 113 manifestos and sets of election results). Our findings help explain the SPD's success in 2021 in two ways. Firstly, the SPD seems to get better election results when it stands on a more left-wing platform. In the 2021 election, the party moved somewhat to the left: an important aspect of Andrea Nahles' legacy as leader was that the SPD coalesced around a social policy agenda that departed from the Hartz reforms – the package of welfare cuts introduced under SPD chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the early 2000s. The Hartz reforms led to substantial reductions in support for the unemployed, and the party paid a heavy price in terms of party unity and electoral support from those affected. In the 2021 manifesto, the leitmotif was 'respect' – for all in society, especially those in caring professions and other key workers, with measures proposed to improve their pay and conditions. The SPD pledged a substantial rise in the minimum wage to 12 euros per hour. Scholz's own image shifted too:

previously he had been perceived as a fiscal hawk, and in his early years as the SPD's federal finance minister he seemed to have an unwavering commitment to balanced budgets. The pandemic changed all that: he became associated with a 'big bazooka' of measures to support and revive the German economy, and led the way in developing the EU's fiscal response through its recovery fund.

Secondly, in state elections we find that party organisation matters, and specifically that levels of party membership make a difference to electoral support. Whereas the SPD's 2017 election campaign was characterised by some major organisational missteps (explored in an independent report the party commissioned bluntly entitled *Learning from Mistakes*). By contrast, in 2021 it made a real effort to engage its members, co-ordinate its campaign putting Scholz at the centre, raise its social media profile, and commission effective advertising.

The third lessons from state elections, though, is that the SPD does best when it is leading the government; it does worst when it is the junior partner in a coalition government, with results from opposition landing somewhere in between. This finding – that being a junior coalition partner is politically difficult – chimes with the SPD's experience in government nationally, and explains the party's reluctance to re-enter government in this role for the 2017–2021 period. We also know that there seems to be a significant, and related, incumbency bonus in state elections: popular minister presidents can give a real

In the 2021 campaign, the SPD made a real effort to co-ordinate its campaign putting Scholz at the centre



boost to their parties (something that the SPD repeatedly found when the chips were down, most recently in Rhineland Palatinate in 2021, when under Malu Dreyer, the SPD secured a triumphant victory well before the polls turned nationally in Scholz's favour). Yet its success as junior coalition partner is something readily explained in the context of September 2021: Angela Merkel was not re-standing as chancellor, so the Christian Democrats failed to secure the incumbency bonus which they would otherwise have received, and instead Olaf Scholz, as vice chancellor and finance minister, was able to profit. In the days when the SPD was in the doldrums, party officials repeatedly told us that their last hope was that, when German voters finally realised Angela Merkel was not re-standing, they would take a closer look at Scholz, as a popular and effective incumbent finance minister. And so it proved.

This takes us to the more contingent factors leading to the SPD's victory. Three are particularly worthy of mention. The first was the implosion of the Christian Democrats. Eventually, the minister president of North Rhine Westphalia was installed as chancellor candidate (having narrowly secured the CDU's leadership). Laschet had not had a good pandemic, his poll ratings were poor, and he was made to fight all the way for the nomination by the Bavarian minister president Markus Söder, leader of the CDU's sister party in Bavaria, the CSU. The campaign was not kind to Laschet: he was caught on camera laughing with party colleagues while the federal president made a speech in the immediate aftermath of flooding in Laschet's state; he apologised but the damage was done. He was accused of plagiarism, struggled to name three priorities for a government he would lead, and Söder carped from the sidelines, conveying a strong sense of disunity.

Second, the Greens did not cope well with the pressure of the short campaign, with their candidate Annalena Baerbock accused of embellishing her CV, not declaring all her income, and also of plagiarism. Third, the SPD's unusual structure in 2021 seemed to serve it well. In 2019, Olaf Scholz and his running mate Klara Geywitz lost a vote for the party's leadership to two relatively unknown left-wing candidates. Yet these leaders, Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken, shored up the party's left flank, and meant in 2021 it was uncharacteristically united, rather than squabbling over its direction.

We should not, however, overstate the party's success. Severe challenges remain, perhaps hinting that some of the underlying structural issues leading to that 'crisis of social democracy' are not completely solved. In particular, while the SPD did disproportionately well amongst older voters (32 per cent amongst those aged 60–69, 35 per cent amongst the over 70s), it fared worse amongst younger voters (15 per cent amongst the 18–24s, 17 per cent for 25–34 year olds). After the televised debates, too, it was striking that Scholz was perceived far more favourably amongst older than younger voters, for whom the Green candidate Baerbock was more attractive. Scholz's projection as a serious, competent, experienced politician (trading on his 'Hanseatic', north German, lack of flamboyance)

resonated with older voters (many of whom previously voted for Merkel). That was helped by the CDU's chaotic appearance, but the SPD has not completely cracked the puzzle of how to appeal across society. This was confirmed by polls published immediately after the elections showing that while the SPD gained 1.5 million votes from the CDU (by far the largest swing), it continued to leak votes to the Greens. So while topping the poll and taking the chancellorship in 2021 is a remarkable achievement, we should bear in mind that the same vote share – 25.7 per cent – had translated into a clear defeat back in 2013 and was a long way off the successes of the late 1990s, when Gerhard Schröder got more than 40 per cent of the vote.

Another key aspect was the geography of the vote. Since 2005, the SPD has experienced significant decline in the poorer regions of eastern Germany. These have traditionally been characterised by a competitive (and unstable) party system. The rise of the Left Party (a descendent of the East German Community Party) was significant, and the far right Alternative for Germany also became particularly established in the east. Between 2005 and 2017, the SPD's support fell by 18 per cent in eastern Germany, compared to a decline of 13 per cent in the West. This slump was representative of a general European trend, which saw social democratic parties struggling in more peripheral, 'left-behind' areas.

The 2021 federal election marked a clear reversal of this trend. The party's share of the vote in eastern Germany jumped by 10 percentage points, more than doubling its electoral growth in the West (4.1 per cent). According to the polls mentioned above, the SPD regained 640,000 votes from the Left Party and 260,000 from AfD. For the first time

since Schröder's last victory, Scholz's SPD seems to have benefited from east Germans' weaker party allegiances and their readiness to switch vote. The vacuum left by Merkel and immediately occupied by Scholz, combined with the role played by some strong local leaders, had a positive impact on the SPD's performance.

Are there any lessons for Labour here? Undoubtedly so, and they should offer some encouragement. The SPD's results show that voters welcome a serious, competent leader. They indicate that a more left-wing programme can have traction (though to be clear, this is more Labour in 2015 than 2019 – Olaf Scholz is no Corbynista), and that party members and strong organisation can make a real difference. They also show that social democratic decline in less economically dynamic regions is not irreversible: pragmatism in response to competitors' mistakes, combined with strong local leadership, may even trump populist appeals to the so-called 'losers of globalisation'.

Yet perhaps the most important lesson is that a party looking in an impossible structural position should not give up: the SPD's turnaround happened late (the party only overtook the CDU/CSU a month before the election, and had been in third place, at around 15 per cent, in late July).

There is a German saying "hope dies last" and in an era of volatile, fragmented party politics, the German SPD, with a mixture of good judgement and good fortune, showed that there can be a road to social democratic recovery from the most difficult circumstances. ■

The SPD has not completely cracked the puzzle of how to appeal across society

Fighting the battle of ideas

Only transformational politics, such as we saw in 1945, can break Britain's high inequality, high poverty cycle. *Stewart Lansley* explains



Stewart Lansley is the author of The Richer, the Poorer, How Britain enriched the few and failed the poor, a 200-year history, published by Policy Press. He is a visiting fellow at the University of Bristol and a council member of the Progressive Economy Forum

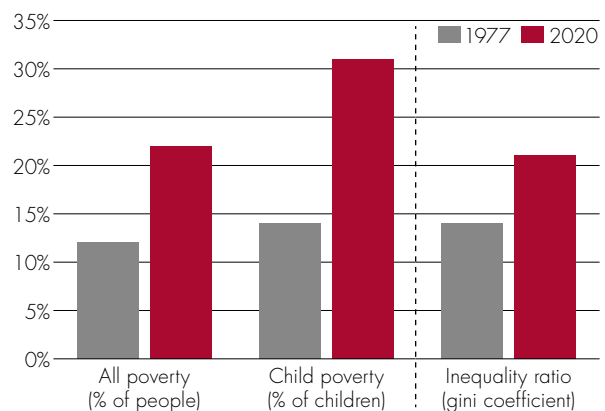
SINCE 1980, ONE of the most striking economic trends in Britain has been the surge in levels of both inequality and poverty. Among the world's rich nations, Britain sits in second place – behind the United States – for inequality, and has one of the highest rates of poverty in Europe. We live in a society where poverty and inequality have become normalised.

That these two key measures of social fragility have moved in line with each other is no surprise. History could not be clearer: poverty and inequality are critically linked. Poverty occurs when sections of society have insufficient resources to be able to afford a minimal acceptable contemporary living standard. Its scale is ultimately determined by how the 'cake is cut'. For much of the last 200 years, the process of private wealth building at the top has come at the expense of wider life chances, bringing not just a higher ceiling but a lower floor as well.

The last four decades represent the third wave of an embedded and ongoing flaw in Britain's modern history: its high inequality, high poverty cycle. Unlike the business cycle which is common across capitalist societies, the inequality/poverty cycle is neither natural, nor universal. It is an artefact determined by the pattern and distribution of the structures of power. Poverty and inequality levels are ultimately rooted in the outcome of the political and economic power games that play out in company boardrooms, plush City offices and the corridors of Whitehall, and in the extent of popular resistance.

In recent decades, as in the period up to 1939, these factors have worked in favour of an over-empowered financial and corporate elite that has been unwilling to acquiesce to anything other than a token erosion of its muscle, privileges and wealth. Apart from the post-1945 decades – when the long poverty/inequality cycle was broken – a significant section of society has had to make do with the limited proportion of the proceeds of economic activity consistent with the needs of capital and wider political expediency and the self-interest of the wealthiest classes.

Trends in poverty and inequality in Britain 1977–2020



At the heart of these power games has been a process of ‘economic extraction’. Such extraction occurs when a small elite of capital owners is able to use its power to secure an excessive slice of the economic cake using business practices that have reverberated across economies and society, negatively affecting wage levels, working conditions, livelihoods, and community resilience.

The history of economic change has been one where the costs of upheaval, however necessary for economic progress, have been born most heavily by the weakest members of society, a group which also ends up with a limited share of the subsequent gains. The biggest winners from the industrial revolution were a small group of plutocrats – landowners and the new financial and merchant classes – who used their political and economic power to seize an excessive share of the undoubted gains from industrialisation. The same story has been repeated time and again. The Great Crash of 1929 and the state’s response wrought years of havoc and intractable poverty across industrial Britain. The fall-out from the rolling shocks of the past four decades – rapid deindustrialisation, globalisation, the 2008 financial crisis, austerity and now Brexit – have, as in the pre-1939 era, all been unevenly born in a way that has deepened existing divisions.

Despite Britain’s long poverty/inequality cycle, those who have had the biggest influence on the course of social history – the political classes, business elites, and mainstream thinkers – have mostly taken the view that poverty is a standalone issue, quite separate from the way the gains from economic and social progress are shared. They have simply dismissed or ignored the link between inequality and poverty, while egalitarians have only won the battle of ideas all too briefly.

In 1914, the historian and reformer, RH Tawney, argued that: “What thoughtful people call the problem of poverty, thoughtful poor people call with equal justice, a problem of riches.”

Tawney had a big influence on the Labour party and its early egalitarian thrust. But the view that tackling poverty depends on tackling inequality and its roots has mostly been a minority one. His views were not shared by other social reformers of his time. Inequality was also a blind spot for Sir William Beveridge. It was not one of his five ‘giants’ that needed to be slain.

The post-war era of ‘egalitarian optimism’ is as close Britain has come to implementing Tawney’s vision. When equality peaked in the late 1970s, poverty levels hit an historic low. But during that decade, the egalitarian school lost the war of ideology to a group of pro-inequality New Right thinkers who claimed – wrongly – that higher levels of inequality were necessary to drive economic progress. Keith Joseph, one of the key advisers to Margaret Thatcher, put it bluntly in 1976: “The pursuit of income equality will turn this country into a totalitarian slum.” As in the 19th century, this view soon became a key tenet of mainstream economics, taught in universities, promoted in boardrooms and parts of Whitehall and enacted by political leaders.

While creating a more equal society has long been Labour’s central purpose, the party has mostly been much

less precise about what it means or how to achieve it. “The commitment of the Labour party to equality is rather like the singing of the Red Flag at its gatherings,” wrote the distinguished economist Sir Tony Atkinson: “All regard it as part of a cherished heritage, but those on the platform often seem to have forgotten the words.”

The last 40 years have seen a real life experiment in a model of inequality-driving capitalism that was meant to boost entrepreneurialism, with the gains trickling down to all. What has actually been at work is a form of levelling up at the top and levelling down at the bottom, a process that simultaneously sucks strength from the economy and is the enemy of wealth creation. The extractive power of today’s business barons, as in the 19th century, has allowed disproportionate rewards at the expense of others, from ordinary workers and local communities to small businesses and taxpayers, often by steering economic resources into unproductive use, with no or limited addition to economic value. “The efforts of men are utilised in two different ways,” declared the influential Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto in 1896: “They are directed to the production or transformation of economic goods, or else to the appropriation of goods produced by others.” Such ‘appropriation’ – as widespread today as in Victorian times – simply ‘crowds out’ activity that would yield more productive and social value.

It is no coincidence that today’s rich lists are full of wealth extractors – a mix of landowners, financiers, property tycoons, oil and private equity barons and tech monopolists – rather than wealth creators. Extractive capitalism has fuelled the surge in levels of poverty but also weakened the economic base and delivered greater turbulence. The evidence is clear. As shown by the International Monetary Fund, high levels of inequality are associated with weakened economic performance.

Today, with mounting evidence of the negative impact of excessive levels of inequality on economic stability, social resilience and individual life chances, politicians play lip service to narrowing social divisions. There is much talk of creating a better post-Covid society and speculation about a third ‘sea-change’ in political philosophy, away from the austerity politics of the last decade. But are we on the edge of a more fundamental change in direction or a mere political tweak, a temporary, pragmatic response to a national crisis? As Robert E Lucas, one of the Chicago-based high priests of the post-1980s market revolution, once observed about economic crises: “We are all Keynesians in a foxhole.”

A post-pandemic society can take one of two paths. It can retain today’s value-sapping and high-inequality system. Or it can be steered in a wholly new direction, one built around a different set of social values aimed at finally breaking Britain’s high-inequality, high-poverty cycle. This would require the kind of transformational politics of 1945 aimed at ending the built-in inequality bias of the current economic system. On current trends and policies, the odds are on the former. To deliver the latter, egalitarians need to win back the battle of ideas and quickly. ■

What has actually been at work is a form of levelling up at the top and levelling down at the bottom

In defence of compromise

Sixty years on from the publication of *In Defence of Politics*, what can Bernard Crick's great work tell us today? *Paul Richards* takes a look



Paul Richards is a writer and a former chair of the Fabian Society

IT IS 60 years since a 33-year-old professor of politics at the London School of Economics published the work that would make his name, and secure a place on undergraduate reading lists in perpetuity. Bernard Crick wrote *In Defence of Politics* as a deliberate attempt to 'justify politics in plain words by saying what it is'.

The result is a book of staggering power and clarity whose message should be heard and heeded by each generation. Politics, loosely defined as a way of balancing competing demands and settling differences without gunfire, needs defending against different antagonists in each decade. Crick was writing when one-sixth of the planet had governments claiming to be socialist, and plenty in the west believed in an ideology which would end both history and politics altogether. Today, the challenge to politics comes from people who swear by false prophets, faulty evidence, and fake news. Yet Crick's warnings and remedies remain prescient and pertinent to our current predicament. No wonder *In Defence of Politics* has remained in print since 1962.

A couple of years after its publication, Crick said the book had been written 'all in one deep breath'. Seldom does something written with such spontaneity enjoy such longevity, nor something untroubled by endless edits deliver such a straightforward style. The conscious choice of words, syntax, structure and wordcount serve to aid, not bewilder, the reader.

In this, Crick shares the same motive and approach to language as George Orwell. It is no coincidence that

Crick produced arguably the best biography of Orwell and founded the prize to honour great political writing which bears his name. They are kindred spirits.

Crick, writing in the early 1960s, felt the need to describe and defend 'politics' in a time of Cold War, messy decolonisation, the first fractures in the post-war consensus, and the nascent twitchings of the New Left. Like many of the greats he cites, from Pericles to Hannah Arendt, his book both reflects, and transcends, his own time.

Crick's targets are as relevant as ever: those who cling to ideology, or proclaim 'democracy' without living it, or avow nationalism, or bow supine before technology, or claim 'anti-politics' as a legitimate system of belief. This last prefigures the rise of 'populism', the ultimate 'false friend'.

The book was an instant hit. Isaiah Berlin described it as 'exceedingly clever and disturbing ... penetrating and serious' at which point lesser men might have hung up their typewriter, knowing no review would ever again feel so sublime. The original 1962 hardback, published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, was soon turned into a Pelican paperback, with an appendix aimed at professors of politics, to rally academia in pursuit of honesty and clarity. Crick's despair at the lack of quality and opacity of academic approaches to politics remained undimmed for the rest of his life.

Twenty years later, in the midst of one of those bitter, internecine struggles that characterise Labour's history, Crick added *A Footnote to Rally Fellow Socialists*. Perhaps

this 1982 addition is of most utility to Fabians today. It reappeared, or at least a version of it, as *Socialist Values and Time* in March 1984 as Fabian Tract 495.

Here Crick reminds us that alongside orthodox Marxism, other socialisms are available:

“The decentralist, syndicalist and co-operative tradition of socialism that stems from Proudhon...the managerial or mixed economy version of socialism which emerged from both the German revisionists and the British Fabians...not to forget what I technically call ‘British socialism’...Robert Owen’s cooperative ideas, the cultural vision of William Morris, Methodist conscience, Chartist democracy and revisionist Marxism: libertarian, egalitarian and above all ethical, placing more stress on personal exemplifications of socialist values than on public ownership or class legislation.”

Labour then, as now, needed reminding that those whose worldview claims to have all the answers do more harm than good. Indeed, some only do harm. Far better is a pluralist, open, non-doctrinaire socialism, with heroes not idols, guiding lights not tablets of stone, which is based on a system of values not a rigid system of economics. Crick further reminded us that to be a moderate socialist is not a less-valid or somehow less-serious version of a ‘left-wing’ socialist: “Determined political socialists, however revolutionary their long-term aims, have to build up popular support if their measures are to work.”

He identified himself as a moderate socialist: “My goals are extreme and therefore I moderate and measure my means.”



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Crick, alongside his friend David Blunkett, developed this theme in a pamphlet in 1988, *The Labour Party’s Aims and Values*: an unofficial statement, at a time, as now, when Labour was undergoing a policy review and more than a little soul-searching. As an undergraduate, I found its force and lucidity galvanising. It was the antidote to both rapacious Thatcherism and faux Leninism.

They wrote:

“The Labour party from its origins rejected revolutionary socialism. But Labour’s founders had ideals which if applied through free and democratic processes, example and discussion, applied step by step, patiently but with determination, would create a uniquely civilised society with a revolutionary change in social attitudes and values.”

The transforming periods of Labour in government, which now seem as distant as Narnia, Wakanda or Xanadu, bequeath to us no shortage of examples of this revolutionary change, based on civilised values not guillotines or secret police. If we forget how revolutionary the Equal Pay Act was, or the minimum wage, or healthcare free at the point of need, then we shall stumble into the future without a torch to light the way. Worse, if we dismiss Labour’s years in office as no better than the Tories’, we do their work for them. Who, then, is the true revolutionary? The drafter of White Papers or the waver of red flags?

In his original 1962 work, Crick wrote that:

“To think of the growth and survival of British Labour is to be impressed not with the efficacy of a single doctrine, but with the wonder of politics. It was acting politically that bound these forces together into a party of which, all too obviously, an intellectualised socialism was only one part.”

The wonder of politics. This is Crick’s core theme, and life’s work. Messy, frustrating, tiresome, ending inevitably in compromise, dilution or outright defeat, yet ultimately capable of greatness and infinitely preferable to the gulag. For Bernard Crick, conciliation, compromise, and adaptability were great political virtues not vices.

This was a theme Crick developed and amplified throughout his life, in his lectures, books, essays and articles for his beloved *Political Quarterly*. His brilliant work with Labour education secretary David Blunkett to instil an ethos of citizenship within the school curriculum remains unfinished business. To achieve such a thing, and with it an informed, educated and discerning polity, would be prize worth having.

In the appendix to *In Defence of Politics* in its 2000 edition, titled accurately as it turned out ‘epilogue’, Crick ended where he began: defending politics. The tumult of the previous 40 years had done nothing to diminish his faith in the power of politics to make things better. The scale of the challenge might be greater (the climate crisis), the process of politics more debased (sleaze), and the teaching of politics more internalised (pretty much every university politics department), but politics remains the least-worst option: “Only political solutions can meet whole world problems.” **F**

Repair and reconciliation

With Barbados having now removed its final tie to the British Empire, it is time for the Labour party to listen up: the Caribbean is demanding reparations and expects your support. *Verene Shepherd* explains



Verene Shepherd is professor emerita of social history and director of the Centre for Reparation Research at the University of the West Indies. She is a vice chair of the CARICOM Reparations Commission and a vice chair of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

THIS NOVEMBER, ON the 55th anniversary of independence, Barbados formally became a republic – renouncing the final vestiges of control held by the British monarchy. This feat by Barbados (the fourth Caribbean nation to remove the Queen as head of state) secured another cog in the revolving wheel towards sovereignty and reconciliation taking over the Caribbean.

Across the Caribbean people are taking demands for justice, dignity and respect further, adding their voices to the worldwide call for reparations from former colonial countries in Europe like Britain.

The reparations movement is a global one that has been described as the greatest political movement of the 21st century. Its demands should be essential to Labour's vision, with the party's renewed commitment to racial justice following last summer's Black Lives Matter protests: Reparations are vital to eliminating racial inequality.

The reparation movement has a long history: It was started by the Indigenous Peoples and enslaved Africans, including Maroons, who understood the evils of capture, land conquest, trafficking and chattel enslavement.

Today, reparation commissions have been launched, or are in development, in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Venezuela and in Europe – namely Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands. In South Asia, Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, and Shashi Tharoor, a member of parliament, have also called on Britain to pay reparations to India for the damage done during 200 years of colonial rule.

And in the Caribbean, the movement for reparations turned a corner in 2013 with the formation of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, of which I am vice chair.

The Commission has been establishing the moral, ethical and legal case for reparation to the Caribbean community for transatlantic trafficking in Africans, genocide, a racialised system of chattel enslavement, deceptive Indian indentureship, and the continued harm from these legacies.

Since its formation, the CARICOM Reparations Commission has received support from the Pan-African Congress, human rights organisations, and the

international media – solidifying its prominence in modern discourse on human rights abuse, reparatory justice, and reconciliation. It is imperative for Labour to recognise the magnitude of this movement and engage in the conversation on a wider scale.

With so many countries supporting reparations, the movement has finally achieved greater global visibility. Reparations can no longer be viewed by British political parties as a quiet plea, but one which has momentous support amongst nations with key diplomatic ties to Britain. Moreover, it must be recognised as a plea shared, to varying degrees, by the entire African diaspora – a community that is often marginalised in political and social discourse. Labour must recognise this and begin to provide a platform for its underrepresented voters.

Why do former colonies need reparations?

At the core of the transatlantic trade in Africans and the system of chattel slavery was the dehumanisation of people on the basis of 'race'; a social construct that, to this day, shapes access to fundamental human rights.

At present, former colonies are underdeveloped and experiencing state failure. This is intrinsically linked to the ravages of slavery on their indigenous lands, economies, people, and societies which must be rectified. Though Haiti is one of the more concerning examples of state failure resulting from slavery, former British colonies like Sierra Leone have endured decades of underdevelopment and failure due to the poor governance from social and economic systems emerging out of British colonisation.

International law helps us establish precedent within our claims. Famous cases such as the reparation extracted from Ayiti by France; reparation paid to the Jews; and reparation paid to the British planters at emancipation all support the call that reparation can and should be provided for past wrongs.

What do our demands for reparation look like?

Reparation comes from the Latin word for 'repair'. Broadly, reparations can come in the form of a payment;



an apology and acknowledgement of past wrongs; or by enacting practices, policies and systems to ensure that victims are given the right tools to move forward.

The Caribbean reparations movement asserts that we must collectively “remember, reclaim, restore and repair to secure rights and achieve reconciliation” (the six Rs), on behalf of the five million Africans forcefully relocated to the Caribbean and their descendants who continue to live with colonialism’s legacies.

The CARICOM Reparations Commission has created a 10-point plan to negotiate with former colonisers. Amongst our demands include a full formal apology; development programmes for Indigenous communities; the return of cultural heritage; psychological rehabilitation; education programmes; debt cancellation; and monetary compensation.

For the Caribbean reparations community, receiving a formal apology for historical abuses is an important first step. An apology recognises the pain and the human rights abuses that were perpetrated by these systems. Repair and reconciliation cannot be truly achieved without the acknowledgement of past wrongdoings.

Support for developmental programmes, debt cancellation and monetary compensation will further aid former colonies to fill the development gap that was caused by colonisation. With European states leaving their colonies without functioning economies and social and political systems, these nations have endured a tedious journey towards development and growth. By injecting financial assistance and infrastructure into former colonies, a more equal global system will be created.

To this end, the United States Virgin Islands, inspired by the Caribbean reparations movement, has made significant progress in advancing reparations claims from the government of Denmark. In addition to formal apologies being made by the Danish royal family and government, Denmark agreed to provide financial support for cultural and educational development programmes.

Receiving a formal apology for historical abuses is an important first step

The movement is also pushing for change across several elite universities. And in Glasgow, Cambridge, Bristol, Liverpool and Edinburgh, universities have started investigating the extent to which their institutions benefited from slavery. The historic Memorandum of Understanding which was signed between the University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow, signalled their intention to partner in a reparations strategy and is yet more proof of this movement’s global identity.

Where does Labour fit in to the global reparations movement?

Reparation must be seen by Labour as an all-encompassing process that directly addresses the racial injustice and inequality that emerged because of slavery. To support reparation, then, is to acknowledge the legacy of pain many citizens have endured because of their racial ancestry.

Racial inequality in the UK today is directly linked to historical structures of inequality and abuse. Labour should support the reparations movement, then, because it speaks on behalf of the marginalised voting population in Britain who are impacted by racial inequality.

The way forward is for Labour to engage with and promote the ‘six R’s’ both at home and internationally. Ideally, to accomplish this Labour must be willing to approach the reparations dialogue with an open and proactive mind. An annual Remembrance Day to commemorate the abolition of slavery may act as a significant way forward.

Yet the party has previously fallen short in its support of reparations.

In 2007 Tony Blair, then Labour leader and prime minister of the UK, disappointed the Caribbean amidst expectations that he would use the bicentenary of the passing of the Slave Trade Act to apologise for Britain’s role in the *maangamizi* – a Swahili term which refers to the African holocaust of chattel and colonial enslavement.

While Blair expressed ‘deep sorrow’ that the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans ever happened, he stopped short of offering an apology.

Keir Starmer can correct this.

Unfortunately, Britain feared that a full, formal apology would open the country to claims for reparation. This line has been taken by subsequent UK prime ministers including David Cameron. The response to a 2016 letter setting out the reasons the UK should meet and talk reparation with representatives from the Caribbean was not met with a positive response.

There are, however, Labour MPs like Diane Abbott and David Lammy who think the Caribbean’s claim is just.

Now, for Labour to assume a leadership role in addressing reparations, the entire party must support this movement and recognise its moral and ethical obligation to critically examine Britain’s role in the global system.

As we celebrate Barbados removing its final colonial ties, the time is ripe for the party to take leadership on this issue. The world is looking to Britain’s role in the Caribbean and Labour must step up: it is time to throw its support behind the CARICOM Reparations Commission in its struggle for justice. ■

A clean break

Despite being so vital to our safety through this pandemic, cleaners are isolated, undervalued and working in dangerous conditions. *Jo McBride* and *Miguel Martínez Lucio* consider what must be done



Jo McBride is professor of work and employment relations at Durham University and Miguel Martínez Lucio is professor of international human resource management and comparative industrial relations at the University of Manchester. Together, they have been researching cleaning work and the degradation of certain occupations in the UK

THERE ARE ANYTHING between a million and a million and a half people working as paid cleaners in the UK. Their work has been essential during the pandemic. Throughout each wave, they have deep cleaned communal spaces, hospitals and schools; working, not safely from home, but ‘out in public’ during a global health crisis.

And yet a stigma remains around cleaning: it is often viewed as ‘unskilled’ and ‘dirty’ labour and its workers ‘unimportant’. And as with other forms of low-paid work, it is undervalued – especially as cleaning jobs have become more uncertain, insecure, and populated by a marginalised workforce.

There have also been major challenges accentuating the already difficult aspects of cleaning work. Cleaners are now increasingly working alone, often in isolated workplaces or out in public, using a wide range of hazardous chemical products, and dealing with often violent and challenging situations.

During the early stages of the pandemic there was a sudden – but in retrospect brief – appreciation of various undervalued, low-paid jobs, which was expressed in the national ‘clap for carers’ campaign. It suggested there was mutual agreement on the actual value certain jobs have to society, and led to a growing interest from the public in the need to reward and protect such key workers in a way that had not been the case for some time.

During this period, the Conservatives were placed under pressure to respond to unfair working conditions by acknowledging – and indeed – rewarding cleaners along with other key workers. This pressure grew, especially as the government had argued that Brexit and other national developments would lead to higher wages and better working conditions.

The Conservatives responded to these demands by providing ‘formal guidelines’ as to how key workers ‘should be protected’ in their workplaces. Much of this was written in the ‘spirit’ of the time, citing a mutual appreciation for key workers and adopting a nationalist tone around solidarity and value: “We are all in this together” and “It is all in the interest of the national good”. At the heart of these guidelines was a populist sentiment that focused on ‘duty’.

Yet, these guidelines essentially transferred the responsibility to protect cleaners – during the danger and uncertainty of a pandemic – to the cleaners and general workforce themselves, with the government emphasising self-regulation and advancing rhetoric of individual action to limit their responsibility.

This is nothing new.

The cleaning profession has become more individualised and precarious in nature in recent years, with growing levels of isolation and less ability to train new cohorts of cleaners.

And this is in great part due to the impact of austerity, where we have seen health and safety enforcement decline, the collective voice of cleaners increasingly marginalised politically, and decisions on operational issues having to be taken individually on a day-by-day basis in the face of declining management support.

Austerity has thus led to new workplace cultures where the expansion of tasks and responsibilities have not been paralleled by greater attention to working conditions and fair working practices.

Pre-Covid, we interviewed cleaners working across different public sector organisations to learn about their experiences. Many had seen a move from team working to working more in isolation due to job cuts and less

A stigma remains around cleaning: it is often viewed as ‘unskilled’ and ‘dirty’ labour



or unstable supervision. Some workers did not see any other colleagues or supervisors in their entire working day. Often, they were left to decide what they felt was a work priority.

Clear, then, is that cleaners are taking on more of a decision-making role. This sense of increasing discretion surely undermines the use of the term 'unskilled'.

Due to the growing isolation, many cleaners felt they were also at greater risk in terms of danger, fear, and violent threats. Cleaners working in public spaces such as litter pickers, refuse collectors and street cleaning operatives explained how levels of verbal and physical abuse were significant.

There have been a range of campaigns in the past few decades raising the plight of cleaners. Many of these have been through the courts to establish demands for fairer employment practices. Despite such campaigns, normally led by new forms of independent trade unions or networks within established trade unions, this sector of employment remains increasingly fragmented.

It has been suggested by Labour that we need a new deal with a fresh approach to fairness at work. But these approaches are often individualised and centre around questions of minimum working conditions and pay.

Yet the fundamental changes that austerity has brought to these workers' lives have rarely been challenged.

Many have suggested we look into amending labour legislation around rights at work, especially given that so much energy is expended in long-running court cases, which are, in effect, fighting for basic employment rights. Such cases can be draining for workers and their trade

unions, hampering their efforts to pressure employers into systematically enhancing working conditions.

We need to look more widely then – not just at 'individual' or 'employee' responsibility, but at democracy at work and trade union rights. We should put collective voice and the extension of trade union roles at the heart of the cleaning sector, alongside other similar sectors.

Developing worker representation and deepening trade union recognition rights – along with removing restrictions on the right to strike – will give an actual voice to workers, not just a symbolic voice.

Cleaners, through their representatives, need to be more clearly inserted into the decision-making processes and operational development of their work and how it is organised. And on top of that, work must be increasingly brought back in-house on a systematic basis. As various campaigns by unions such as UNISON or the IWGB have shown, that is how we win stronger workplace regulations and representation.

The cleaning workforce has shown its ability to take on the challenges of the pandemic and austerity, but it can only continue to do so if we reconsider the collective value of this type of work and the importance of enhancing industrial relations and collective worker voice.

Labour should take the lead on this, with more than just references to 'good' or 'decent work' and the hope that employers will somehow voluntarily comply with some opaque set of minimal labour standards. This is crucial at a time when workers are being forced to carry not just heavier workloads, but ever larger aspects of managerial responsibilities without the resources they need. **F**

Books

Sticking plasters

Piketty's socialist vision is sharp but falls short by ignoring how wealth is produced, finds *James Meadway*



James Meadway is director of the Progressive Economy Forum

Does socialism have a future? Economist Thomas Piketty argues, in this short and readable collection of newly translated essays, that it does. Against today's 'hypercapitalism' he wants to rescue both the word and the concept.

The collection of essays draws on Piketty's writings over the last five years, taking in the period from Brexit to Covid-19. Both are covered, in Piketty's usual clear style, alongside the rise of Trump, the developing ecological crisis and 'identity politics' in various guises.

Piketty admits himself that these years have been radicalising. He is today "convinced that we need to think about a new way of going beyond capitalism, a new form of socialism, participative and decentralized, federal and democratic, ecological, multiracial, and feminist." The problem, whilst it is now 'commonplace' to declare that this form of capitalism has no future – Piketty agrees – is to define an alternative.

It is here, of course, that the left has been found most wanting. The 2008 crisis was greeted not exactly with jubilation but with at least a certain amount of satisfaction amongst some leftish quarters that, after roughly a decade in which financialised, globalised, neoliberal capitalism had apparently been able to walk on water – 'no return to boom and bust' – a proper old school financial crisis had erupted, jamming the growth machine into juddering reverse and provoking extraordinarily deep recessions across the world.

Alas, this did not turn out to be entirely the left's moment as governments across the developed world imposed the most stringent austerity spending cuts since the 1930s, in a perverse rejection of the macroeconomic management techniques developed since that time and commonly called 'Keynesianism': using fiscal policy – tax cuts and increased spending – in a recession was what governments were supposed to do. Instead, major economies applied austerity and then massively loosened monetary policy to compensate for the loss in demand. The result, broadly, was to further accelerate the accumulation of wealth by the top fractions of society.

One major economy broke with the new thinking: China, which turned hard into the crisis, massively

expanding borrowing – government and private sector – to deliver an authentically Keynes-style infrastructure investment boom. High speed rail was completed, new housing built, and the economy continued to grow – helping sustain global growth throughout those years.

And China, of course, calls itself socialist. Its political leadership, notably under Xi Jinping, have become more confident about asserting the superiority of its system over the many and varied failings of the West. Piketty is scathing of the system there, noting the obscene wealth of the elite is likely to provoke its own populist backlash (as, arguably, Xi's own crackdown on wealth has responded to).

Piketty's alternative is clarified as the book progresses. Unsurprisingly, it focuses on the transfer of holdings of wealth. His striking proposal for a 'minimum inheritance', tax-funded for all, is reminiscent of James Meade and those in the 'social dividend' tradition: Labour's Child Tax Fund was the closest we have seen to it in this country. Piketty proposes going far further in providing a minimum guarantee of wealth to all, and there is mileage in this for any future Labour government contemplating radical, workable policies beyond the usual limits of social democracy.

Perhaps his most radical proposals centre on the need for poorer countries to take shares in the taxation of richer: as we move out of a purely neoliberal tax regime, with global agreements on minimal corporation taxes, these arguments on fair shares of tax revenues are surely becoming more pressing.

The arguments are solid, and hard to fault on their own terms. But where Piketty falls short – as with his last book – is in moving from looking at the distribution of wealth and income, and asking how it is produced.

Without also addressing the purposes of production – who it is organised for, and why – the most we can hope for is to patch up an unequal distribution produced elsewhere in the system, with all its ecological and social side-effects. Socialism, if it still has any meaning or use, must now be about democratising the ownership and control of productive wealth. ■



Time for Socialism
Thomas Piketty
Yale University Press, £16.99

Strength to strength

In Australia, Fabianism is more popular than ever. It will have a key part to play in the upcoming election, explains *Zann Maxwell*



Zann Maxwell is national editor of the Australian Fabians Review



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CHARLES MARSON WAS a democratic socialist, an Anglican priest, and an early member of the Fabian Society in London. When he moved to South Australia in 1889, he quickly became known as an outspoken social critic and deliverer of impassioned sermons.

In 1891 Marson formed a South Australian branch of the British Fabian Society. In doing so, he figured that any attempt to construct the Fabian Society on socialist lines would need the involvement of the labour movement and the emerging Australian Labor Party (ALP), which was founded that same year. He thus worked to establish close links with the United Trades and Labour Council and the United Labor Party in South Australia.

In this respect Marson differed from some members of the London Fabian Society who, before the creation of the British Labour party almost a decade later, believed in ‘permeating’ existing political parties, in particular the Liberals, with progressive ideas.

This early difference in approach conjures up a provocative sense of ‘the path not taken’ for progressive politics, in both Britain and Australia. Writing in the *New Statesman* in the aftermath of the 2021 Hartlepool byelection, Tony Blair said that: “[The Labour party’s] limitations have been there from its inception, particularly its estrangement from Britain’s great Liberal tradition – Gladstone, Lloyd George, Keynes, Beveridge.”

Blair's statement is applicable to Australia too.

Pat Conroy, Australian Labor's current assistant climate change spokesman, has said the ALP can only govern when it unites its two bases of working-class Australians and university-educated, progressive voters.

To an extent there is a tension between these two bases in Australia, and it partly flows from those same inherent limitations that Blair reflected on in the UK. In theory the ALP exists to represent the sectional interests of the working class as the political wing of the industrial movement. However, in practice it governs for all Australians as a centre-left social democratic party. So whose party is it?

The Fabians have always been and continue to be part of this dynamic tension. The original Fabian Society of Victoria petered out in 1909, in no small measure because the labour activists of the trade unions and the ALP did not trust the middle-class radicals and intellectuals in the Fabians.

However, Fabian activity in the 1960s and 1970s played a key role in redesigning the Labor Party's image and creating the conditions under which it could attract the support of middle-class Australians, white-collar workers and intellectuals.

The historian Frank Bongiorno has written that "One of the greatest achievements of [Labor leader Gough] Whitlam and the Fabians was to convince a sufficient number of Australians from different social classes that they all had a stake in better education, the arts, urban reform, a healthier environment, rights for women, justice for Aboriginal Australians, fairer treatment of ethnic minorities, and an independent foreign policy."

This work to widen Labor's appeal saw it finally elected federally in 1972 after 23 years in opposition, and Whitlam's commitment to Fabianism was at the heart of his government; he was once heard to say: "Among Australian Fabians, I am Maximus."

But the tensions between the two bases have once again become central to conversations about the future of the ALP as well as UK Labour.

In Australia, the executive director of an ALP aligned think-tank, which takes its name from prime minister John Curtin, has said the party's narrow contemporary membership had contributed to cultural problems and electoral weakness at the federal level, saying "Labor was once a working-class party that needed middle-class votes to win elections; it has since become a university-educated, socially-liberal, white-collar party that needs blue-collar, non-tertiary educated, precariously employed votes to win."

However, Bongiorno has also written that: "To accept the rhetorical tricks of those who wish to present modern Australia as divided into an elite of the 'chattering classes', and a mass of 'battlers', is to play into the hands of those who seek to benefit from 'wedge' politics. There is no future for Labor in this kind of thinking."

He wrote that in 2003, but the point is still valid, given that the same criticism of the ALP arose in the wake of the 2019 federal election.

The story of the Australian Fabians is one of constant rebirth, as it flourished

or faltered, depending on the passions and enthusiasm of key individuals, and the different challenges of the times. However it always survived, and continually contributed to progressive public thinking. Now, with more members than ever, the Australian Fabians are going from strength to strength.

Australia must go to the polls again before the end of May 2022, and as conservative forces continue to contest the support of the working classes more aggressively and unscrupulously than before, Fabians should take Bongiorno's message to heart and use their growing strength to continue to be a unifying force between the two key bases Labor needs to win. **F**

The story of the Australian Fabians is one of constant rebirth, as it flourished or faltered

FABIAN QUIZ

A HISTORY OF MASCULINITY: FROM PATRIARCHY TO GENDER JUSTICE

Ivan Jablonka



What does it mean to be a good man, brother, father or friend?

In his latest book, acclaimed historian Ivan Jablonka attempts to answer this question by re-examining patriarchy and its impact on men.

Looking across cultures, from Confucianism to Christianity, Jablonka uncovers the origins of our patriarchal societies and offers an updated model of masculinity; one based on a theory of gender justice which aims for a redistribution of gender, just as social justice demands the redistribution of wealth.

Arguing that it is high time for men to be as involved in gender justice as women, Jablonka shows that for a more equal and respectful society, we need a deeper understanding of the structure of patriarchy – and

must reframe the conversation so that men define themselves by the rights of women.

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

Equal Pay Day is a national campaign led by the Fawcett Society in the UK. It marks the day in the year where women effectively, on average, stop earning relative to men because of the gender pay gap. Which day was Equal Pay Day in 2021?

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

ANSWERS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 14 FEBRUARY 2022



Listings

ANNOUNCEMENT

Fabian Society events

Many Fabian Society events are still being held online. Keep an eye on our website for news of up-to-date activities and contact your local society for ways to stay involved.

BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

Contact Luke John Davies at bhamfabians@gmail.com

BOURNEMOUTH & DISTRICT

Contact Ian Taylor, 01202 396634 or taylorbournemouth@gmail.com for details

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Contact Stephen Ottaway at stephenottaway1@gmail.com for details

CENTRAL LONDON

Contact Michael Weatherburn at info@londonfabians.org.uk and website <https://fabians.org.uk/central-london-fabian-society>

CHISWICK & WEST LONDON

Contact Alison Baker at a.m.baker@blueyonder.co.uk

COLCHESTER

Contact Maurice Austin at Maurice.austin@phonecoop.coop

COUNTY DURHAM

Contact Professor Alan Townsend 01388 746479

CROYDON & SUTTON

Contact Emily Brothers at info@emilybrothers.com

ENFIELD FABIANS

Contact Andrew Gilbert at enfieldfabians@gmail.com

FINCHLEY

Contact Sam Jacobs at Sam.Jacobs@netapp.com

HAVERING

Contact Davis Marshall at haveringfabians@outlook.com

HORNSEY & WOOD GREEN

Contact Mark Cooke at hwgfabians@gmail.com

NEWHAM

Contact Mike Reader at mike.reader99@gmail.com

NORTHUMBRIA AREA

Contact Pat Hobson at pathobson@hotmail.com

PETERBOROUGH

Contact Brian Keegan at brian@keeganpeterborough.com

READING & DISTRICT

Contact Tony Skuse at tony@skuse.net

RUGBY

Contact John Goodman at rugbyfabians@myphone.coop

SOUTH TYNESIDE

Contact Paul Freeman at southtynesidefabians@gmail.com

SUFFOLK

Would you like to get involved in re-launching the Suffolk Fabian Society? If so, please contact John Cook at contact@ipswich-labour.org.uk

TONBRIDGE

& TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Contact Martin Clay at Martin.clay@btinternet.com

WALSALL

Contact Ian Robertson at robertsonic@hotmail.co.uk for details

YORK & DISTRICT

Contact Jack Mason at jm2161@york.ac.uk

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

FEPS/Fabian Society
New Year conference
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Full details at
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