The Labour tradition and the politics of paradox

The Oxford London seminars 2010-11

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Maurice Glasman, Jonathan Rutherford, Marc Stears, Stuart White (eds)

This ebook is made up of the papers, and a selection of the responses to them, that were the outcome of four seminars organised between October 2010 and April 2011. The seminars were held in Oxford and London and involved politicians and intellectuals whose politics ranged across the spectrum of the Labour Party.

The task of the seminars was to start laying the political and philosophical groundwork for a new Labour politics for the coming decade. The aim was not to define policy or determine what should be done but to ask some fundamental questions about the condition of the country and the predicament of Labour following its defeat in the May 2010 general election.

The starting point was the paradoxes of the Labour tradition that constitute its ongoing relationship with tradition and modernity, nation and class, labour and capital, community and the individual, society and the market, the state and mutualism, and between belief and empiricism, romanticism and rationality, obligation and entitlement. By exploring these paradoxes, the seminars aimed to open up the Labour tradition to new syntheses of meaning, and so to originality and transformation. Out of this work we begin shaping a new story for Labour for the decade ahead.

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Preface

Ed Miliband

I welcome this ebook and I would like to thank all the participants of the Oxford London seminars for their contributions, and particularly Maurice Glasman, Marc Stears, Stuart White and Jonathan Rutherford.

When I was elected leader of the Labour Party I said that we were beginning a long and difficult journey. We did not have all the answers, we needed to do some hard thinking and set a direction of travel. The discussions published here have political energy and intellectual confidence. There is a welcome openness to new ideas and new approaches. Opinions will differ over some of the contributions, as they should when an important debate begins. But the whole debate is written in the spirit that should characterise our party's approach to our renewal – affirming our achievements, facing up to our past, and equipping ourselves for the challenges we face in the future.

One of the central challenges we face is revisiting our approach to the balance between state and market. Historically, debates within Labour have often been conducted on the basis of a choice between 'more state and less market' or 'more market and less state'. That approach needs revisiting for three fundamental reasons. First, because Labour's approach to prosperity and fairness should rely on an effective combination of both strong, good government, and efficient, well-regulated markets. Second, because a twenty-first century Labour project must pledge to be reformers of both the state and the market. And third, because in Labour's debates of the past, both the statists and the pro-market voices underplayed the importance of the aspects of our lives and

our communities that must be protected from the destructive effects of both markets and the unresponsive state.

The central contribution of this ebook, and of the Blue Labour idea more generally, is squarely in the middle of this discussion – one which has already re-energised the party and politics more generally since we left office.

This book explores issues around the way in which our excessive dependence on financial services, and the broader historical dominance of the City of London in our economy, needs to be challenged. It is a subject that has long been debated by economic historians, but what Maurice Glasman, Jonathan Rutherford and others emphasise is the need for a new approach to the relationship between our banks, our industry and our communities. In this sense, thinking through the lessons from the financial crisis is not simply an economic issue – it is about the character of our country and the strength of the democracy we leave for future generations.

All the contributors emphasise the centrality of life beyond the bottom line. It is our families, friends and the places in which we live that give us our sense of belonging. Even in the aftermath of a profound economic crisis, politicians of all parties need to realise that the quality of families' lives and the strength of the communities in which we live depends as much on placing limits to markets as it does on restoring their efficiency. And for social democrats in particular, the discussion points to the need to ask how we can support a stronger civic culture below the level of Whitehall and Westminster.

Finally, this discussion offers some reflections on how to refresh the labour movement itself. The debate in this ebook reminds us that Labour originally grew out of a vast movement of voluntary collectivism. We should remember the co-operatives, mutual associations, adult schools and reading circles that constitute a proud tradition of mutual improvement and civic activism. Labour's traditions gave countless men and women the

means to stand tall. We should be proud of the achievements of Labour governments that have relied upon strong central intervention – the building of the NHS, the redbrick university revolution, or the tax credits that did so much to tackle poverty from the 1990s onwards. But, going forward, we need to rediscover the tradition of Labour as a grassroots community movement – not for the sake of nostalgia for the past, but to strengthen our party's capacity to bring about real change to people's lives.

Reading through this debate we see a picture of Labour emerging as a party of overlapping traditions and tendencies. It is a party of individual aspiration, but also a party committed to equality. It is a party that aims to expand individual freedom, but locates true freedom in thriving communities not individualism. It sees democracy and the power of association as crucial bulwarks in protecting people against the encroachments of both government and markets. These are early days in the renewal of Labour after our defeat in 2010. But the themes that emerge from the vibrant debate of this ebook should give us confidence that Labour is best placed to build a better future for Britain.

Introduction: the Labour tradition and the politics of paradox

This ebook is made up of the papers and a selection of the responses to them that were the outcome of four seminars that we organised between October 2010 and April 2011. We've not rewritten them and the editing is light-touch, so the reader will, we hope, experience some of the immediacy of the dialogue. The seminars were held in Oxford and London and involved thirty people whose politics ranged across the spectrum of the Labour Party. The responses were part of an online debate that followed each seminar. Looking back on the discussions, they had a richness, generosity of spirit and energy that belied the often negative portrayals of Labour as a defeated and exhausted party.

The idea of the seminars emerged out of a number of discussions that followed an earlier day long seminar on 'Labour's Future' in May 2010. An ebook *Labour's Future* was one outcome from this. A second outcome was a recognition that the debate needed some political direction and philosophical grounding. We were NOT trying to define policy or determine what should be done. We wanted to ask some fundamental questions about the condition of the country and the predicament of Labour following its defeat in the May 2010 general election. We agreed on a series of seminars that would involve politicians and academics rooted in the Labour Party. The starting point of these seminars would be the paradoxes of Labour's tradition.

These paradoxes constitute the ongoing historical arguments and conflicts over Labour's purpose, meaning and value. By engaging with these paradoxes we could explore the Labour tradition and open it up to new syntheses of meaning, and so to originality and transformation. Out of this work we might begin shaping a new story for Labour for the decade ahead.

The problem as we saw it was that thirteen years of unprecedented electoral success, sustained redistribution, the building of a more open society, the renewal of public buildings, and improvements in public services, had nonetheless left Labour with an identity crisis. Labour had no shared interpretation of its history, and it had lost its idea of reason and its conception of the person. The Coalition government had accepted much of its progressive agenda of social tolerance and constitutional reform, and Labour lacked an alternative. It had no viable political economy through which it could address issues of the deficit and sustainable growth. The party was administered, not organised, and its membership had fallen as its power was removed. In England there was no redistribution of power to localities that was not managerial. There had been no development of the appropriate relationship between state, market and society, and of the role that the labour movement and a Labour government could play in generating a good life for our country.

Following its defeat Labour lacked an organised party, it had no plausible ideology, and it had no narrative of the past thirteen years that could explain its lack of transformative power. The focus on a politics of paradox enabled us to appreciate both the scale of the success and the depth of failure of New Labour.

There is a good argument to be made that the Labour Party was the most important institution in Britain in the twentieth century. It was transformative in its redistribution of power and resources, extension of democracy and protection of liberty, and its assertion that working people had a legitimate place in the

body politic, and as much right to rule as any other group. However, partly through its unshakable commitment to justice through the state, Labour had lost its practices of association and action. A corporatist, localist, federal and institutional form of politics came to be replaced by a liberal and consumerist one that ceased generating the leadership necessary to sustain a democratic movement.

Labour needs to address the crisis of its political philosophy and to recover its historic sense of purpose. This includes rethinking Britain's position in the global economy, which is based on a disproportionate reliance on a financial sector that has proved to be volatile and unsustainable. There was ominously little growth during Labour's period in office in the regional and productive economies, and where there was growth it was largely due to the expansion of the public sector. Indeed, state-sponsored capitalism was not the least of the paradoxical achievements of New Labour.

In the decade ahead, all governments will have to act under conditions characterised by financial volatility, energy insecurity, environmental degradation, both natural and social, and an ageing population. These will all require qualitatively new kinds of social and economic responses in conditions of fiscal austerity.

Labour's capacity to achieve the necessary level of change will depend upon it rebuilding a strong and enduring relationship with the people. The loss of public trust in politicians and in Britain's system of representative democracy demands substantial and systemic reform. Political and economic power, both local and national, need to be entangled within and made accountable to a more democratic society. The dangerous behaviour of the banks and financial markets, and the depth of the recession they triggered, mean that Labour must now have a reckoning with the destructive, itinerant power of capital. We need to find ways to strengthen and nurture the relationship between capital and local areas, which is another instance of

New Labour's paradoxical approach. The lack of internal investment is a consequence of the subject nature of the state's relationship to finance capital. .

Customary patterns of social life and the flourishing of persons have been threatened, as well as transformed, by unmediated forms of globalisation, industrial decline and the commodification of non-market spheres of life. The free rein given to markets has led to high levels of inequality, the exploitative use of cheap migrant labour in a desperate attempt to fuel economic growth, and a pervasive sense of insecurity. To ensure the social and economic security of the British people Labour will need to recover its role as defender of society, and bring capital under national and global democratic control.

In general terms, there is a need to define a new sense of national purpose that is associative, democratic and free, and which can be defined by the ideas of the common good and the good society. Democratic politics is the way that people act together to resolve differences and to protect themselves and the people and places that they love from power, be it of the state or market. The tension between liberty and solidarity is vital to any meaningful Labour conception of the good society, and will continue to shape our politics today. Labour has always held the promise of re-enchantment, and the restoration of reciprocity as a central labour practice and value could be important in this.

As Labour elected a new leader it was time to begin a period of open and critical re-evaluation of its political philosophy and purpose; revisiting the ideas of key Labour intellectuals such as Richard Tawney, GDH Cole, Karl Polanyi – and also critics such as Raymond Williams – and drawing in more contemporary thinking. The task of the Oxford London seminars was to signal the beginning of a new revisionism following on from Anthony Crosland in the 1950s and the Third Way of the 1990s. Over the coming years it will require imaginative, sustained and collective thinking and action.

Have we made a good start? By publishing these essays and comments, we pass it to you to judge how successful we have been.

Maurice Glasman
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1. Labour as a radical tradition

Maurice Glasman

The Liberal-led coalition government, self-consciously progressive in orientation, while appropriating Labour's language of mutual and co-operative practice, asks a fundamental question as to what distinctive gifts Labour could bring to this party. Beyond saying, 'its not fair', what resources does Labour have to explain the financial crash and its electoral failure, particularly in England? Out of what materials can Labour fashion a compelling vision of the type of country it wishes to govern and offer an effective orientation for assured political action?

It will be suggested in this paper that Labour is a paradoxical tradition, far richer than its present form of economic utilitarianism and political liberalism. The Labour tradition is not best understood as the living embodiment of the liberal/communitarian debate, or as a variant of the European Marxist/Social Democratic tension. Labour is robustly national and international, conservative and reforming, christian and secular, republican and monarchical, democratic and elitist, radical and traditional, and it is most transformative and effective when it defies the status quo in the name of ancient as well as modern values.

Labour values are not abstract universal values such as 'freedom' or 'equality'. Distinctive labour values are rooted in relationships, in practices that strengthen an ethical life. Practices like reciprocity, which gives substantive form to freedom and equality in an active relationship of give and take. Mutuality, where we share the benefits and burdens of association. And then if trust is established, solidarity, where we actively share our fate with other people. These are the forms of the labour movement, the mutual societies, the

co-operatives and the unions. It was built on relationships of trust and mutual improvement that were forged between people through common action. They were transformative of the life and conditions of working people. The Labour tradition was rooted in a politics of the Common Good, a democratic movement that sought its rightful place in the life of the nation. The Labour tradition has never been straightforwardly progressive, and that is not a defect which we are on the verge of overcoming, but a tremendous strength that will offer the basis of renewal.

This type of political tradition is to be distinguished from matters of philosophy. Philosophical arguments, like policy proposals, aspire to be universal, abstract and generalisable. Such demands may be useful at the final stages of a policy review when specific recommendations have to be ordered, but remain unsuited to either political action or ethics. Historical continuity, democracy, the necessity of extemporised action and leadership, render politics contingent, comparative and paradoxical in form. Machiavelli remains a surer guide than Kant in these matters. Ideas are not ultimate and singular in politics, but contested and related. The English nation, above all, is deeply synthetic in form, constituted by large waves of immigration that generated an unprecedented form of common law, common language and an inheritance of a commonwealth. Its political parties and movements have been stubbornly synthetic too, a matter of blending folk and academic concerns through a politics of interests. Political movements which are rooted in the lives and experiences of people bring together new constellations of existing political matter, previously disconnected parts of political life. What to philosophers is an incoherence can be a source of vitality and strength to a political tradition which contests with others for democratic power over its vision of the Common Good.

The next part of this paper delineates the traditions and institutions out of which Labour emerged. Some academics call this a genealogy, but it is just another way of telling the family history.

This is so that we can give some meaning to the Labour tradition and its particular tensions and dynamics.

Meet the family

Two ancient political traditions came together in the labour movement; one could almost call them ancestors. The first is Aristotelian and brings with it the notion of the Good Life and the Common Good. In this the importance of politics, of virtue understood as a middle way between extremes (courage, for example being the middle way between recklessness and cowardice), of the integrity of family life and citizenship, were carried into the political life of the nation. The founders of the labour movement understood the logic of capitalism as based upon the maximisation of returns on investment and the threat this posed to their lives, livelihoods and environment; but they did not embrace class war and clung stubbornly to an idea of a common life with their rulers and exploiters. The paradox here is that class conflict is necessary for reciprocity. The Labour idea of the person, in which the plural institutions of public and private life have a vital effect on the flourishing of the individual and are inseparable from it, are explicitly Aristotelian. This is an important root of the conservatism in the Labour tradition, a concern with the preservation of status, limits on the market, an attachment to place, starting with the common sense of people rather than with external values, and a strong commitment to a common life. This is also a direct link to the Tudor-commonwealth statecraft tradition of the sixteenth century, self-consciously Aristotelian, which engaged with the balance of interests within the realm, pioneering endowment to promote the sciences and commerce, developing apprenticeships, and slowing enclosures. The Balliol Commonwealthmen in the early twentieth century, of which GDH Cole and RH Tawney were active participants, are part of that tradition.

The second ancestral tradition within which Labour was

embedded is that which followed the Norman Conquest and actively pursued the idea of the balance of power within the Ancient Constitution and the 'rights of freeborn Englishman'. It was on the basis of the violation of customary practice that villagers and artisans resisted the subsequent enclosures and assertion of Royal Prerogative in the name of Parliament, and the liberties threatened by the domination of one institution or person alone. The English tradition of liberty is far older than liberalism. Within three weeks of the Norman Conquest, more than half the land in England was owned by eleven Norman aristocrats, and it has been pretty much uphill ever since. Labour takes its place within a far longer national tradition of resistance that values a legal and a democratic order, that is both reforming and traditional, in simultaneous motion. Parliamentary Socialism, the National Commonwealth – whichever way Labour chose to describe itself in its first fifty years – each acknowledged its attachment to the language and sensibility of the politics of the Common Good, and a central role for the inherited institutions of governance that represented the interests of what used to be known as 'the commons', the House of Commons not being the least of those.

The early theorists of Labour economics, Therwell and Blatchford, had a commitment to natural law in which there were prescribed limits as to how a person could be treated by political authority, and by economic ones too. In England, in particular, these natural laws were assumed to have existed in this country before the Conquest, so they were not abstract, but embedded in the political history of the nation. Democracy and common law were used as ways to constrain the domination of the monarchy. Parliament was vital in this, as was the Church. This sensibility found Labour form in what Marx called the 'utopian socialism' of Blatchford and Morris and the 'guild socialism' of Cole, Hobson and Penty.

We now move from the ancestors to the grandparents of the labour movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The

relationship between the English church and the Labour tradition has been neglected and is worthy or re-examination, if not resurrection. A central aspect of the Labour tradition is to combine what was previously opposed and antagonistic into new forms of common life. Immigrant and native has been one crucial aspect of this. It was the non-established churches, excluded and often persecuted by the Reformation Church Settlement – the Catholic Church, and the non-conformist Protestant churches – that provided two of the grandparents of the Labour Movement.

It is far too rarely acknowledged that, alone in Europe, Labour succeeded in generating a workers' movement that was not divided between catholic and protestant, or between secularists and believers; it was the movement itself that provided the common life within which these potentially antagonistic forces could combine in pursuit of a Common Good. In cities like Glasgow and Liverpool, as well as London and Birmingham, this was an extraordinary achievement, and one that Labour failed to draw upon in its search for 'social cohesion' during the last government. Common action for the Common Good – politics in other words – served the movement, and the country, very well. This is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Labour tradition, as opposed to social democracy in Europe, which was far more explicitly secularist in form. The non-established churches, for reasons of historical self-interest, were committed to freedom of association and expression. The churches who nurtured the labour movement were associational forms of religious solidarity, severed from state power, and concerned with preserving a status for the person that was not defined by money or power alone. Aristotelianism flowed predominantly through the Catholic Church, the rights of free-born Englishmen through the protestant congregations of the South and the Midlands, and they came together in the labour movement. They also provided a national connection, that has proved durable, with the labour movements in Scotland and Wales.

The London Dock strike of 1889 is a classic expression of the

labour movement in action, built on the assumption that only organised people could resist exploitation. It was based on an alliance between Irish and local workers, brokered by the Catholic and Methodist churches. The local Labour Representation Committees were the new institutions within which the previously unrelated forces met, and within which leaders were elected, strategy discussed and actions planned. It is here that the third grandparent of the labour movement – the 'labour aristocracy' of skilled workers who had lost their status and small holders who had lost their land – make their appearance, drawing upon customary practice as a means of defying managerial prerogative. The courage of the strikers was remarkable. To disrupt trade was viewed as unpatriotic and seditious, given that the British Empire was a maritime emporium with London at its hub, and the force of the navy and army as well as the police was threatened against the strikers. The laws of the maritime economy, freely contractual, were held to apply to the port, which was excluded from territorial legislation. To build a successful political coalition on the basis of stable employment and wages was a great founding achievement of Labour politics. Cardinal Manning, accompanied by the Salvation Army Band, leading the striking dockers on their march, made it very difficult for the employers to use force and depict them as an undisciplined rabble.

The sheer ferocity of the market storm within which Labour was born in the nineteenth century – the scale of the dispossession, of property, status and assets, generated by the creation of the first ever free market in labour and land; the simultaneous enclosure of the common lands; the criminalisation of association; the scrapping of apprenticeships; and the eviction and proletarianisation of the peasantry – meant that the only port in the storm was the security that people found in each other. The burial given by the Co-operative Society is another example of the retrieval of status generated by the labour movement, the dignity of death given by solidarity in life. The pauper's grave was one of the most fearful fates

of dispossession. It was a combination of subs-paying membership, co-operation with chapels and churches, and the practices of mutuality and reciprocity, that provided the resources out of which a human status for the person could be retrieved and retained. The reverence for life, the dignity of death, the honour given to each member through their membership and dues, were not drawn from a secular or modernist ethic; they were a radical solution fashioned from traditional assumptions and practices. Labour as a radical tradition was crafted by both workers' and Christian institutions as they confronted the hostility of an exclusivist state and an avaricious market. They called their ideology socialism and their party Labour.

Over the past decade, the Living Wage campaign within London Citizens has been the way that I have been able to understand radical traditionalism. The campaign began during a retreat by faith group leaders, overwhelmingly Catholic and non-conformist, but including Muslims, Anglicans and a trade unionist, on the theme of family life. What emerged from the conversation was a concern at lack of time with children or parents, of the need to work two jobs to make ends meet, a recognition of the demoralisation that welfare brings; and what also emerged was a concept of a Living Wage, enough for a family of four to live on at a basic level. Committed to work as a value, yet challenging the prevailing market distribution as hostile to the living of a good life, it brought the two together. It is telling that the trade unionist wanted to call it a 'fair wage', tying it to an abstract idea rather than directly addressing the necessities of life in an urban, contemporary environment.

All of the Living Wage successes have been won within firms and institutions which had contracted out their cleaning and catering. This had broken any possibility of solidarity between 'members' of the same firm. The cleaners and cooks were not invited to the Christmas party. The strategy of London Citizens was to bring together, at a public meeting, with shareholders and employees present, the CEO and a leader of the contracted-out staff in order to have a conversation about what it meant to work in the same office.

Due to a refusal to meet, this was usually at the AGM, attended by London Citizens who had bought shares so as to be able to do so. Confronted by a personal and public refusal by the CEO to recognise any common interest or status with the contracted-out cleaner, and the reluctance of the stakeholders in the room to accept that, it didn't take long for a common ground to appear, and this tactic worked time and again. The Living Wage itself could be funded out of a small fraction of management bonuses, a redistribution within existing budgets; and more times than not it has led to cleaning and catering staff being brought back in-house, as has recently been the case with John Lewis. It has been faith communities, overwhelmingly Catholic and non-conformist, not trade unions, that have devised and pushed the Living Wage campaign. With its adoption in the Manifesto, and then by each of the Labour leadership candidates, we can begin to understand the importance of grandparents in the development of their grandchildren.

It is here, however, that we must return to our genealogy and move from the grandparents to the parents of the Labour Party and the specific circumstances of its birth. Labour was the child of a cross-class marriage between a decent working-class Dad and an educated middle-class Mum. The Dad in this schema was the trade unions, the co-operative movement, and the building societies and mutuals which were built by the working class out of the materials available to hand. Their concern was to build the relationships and institutions necessary to confront market power, and their language was exclusive and associational. Brothers, Comrades. The Mum was the Fabian Society, Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, the Anglican Church (which alone among the churches finds itself on this side of the family), the strong tradition of ruling-class public service, the architects, scientists and writers who were deeply connected to the development of the labour movement and who developed ambitious plans for government. Sidney and Beatrice Webb's LSE was founded as a Labour think tank.

In philosophical terms we have an Aristotelian Dad and a Platonic Mum, a Common Good Dad and a progressive Mum, a traditional Dad and a radical Mum. For the Mum, the overwhelming concern, the categorical imperative, was with the 'poorest and most vulnerable in our society' and the use of scientific method and techniques to alleviate their condition. For the Dad, they were a big warning of what would happen if you didn't have friends, if you didn't organise, if you didn't build a movement with others to protect yourself from degradation, drunkenness and irresponsibility – and the people who didn't pay their subs, didn't turn up for meetings, crossed picket lines and got pissed on the money they earned. It was not just in Scotland that the temperance movement was a training ground for future Labour leaders. Both Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald come through that tributary. George Lansbury too.

The problem in the marriage was clear from the start. The Mum had all the advantages of class – resources, eloquence, confidence and science – and none of the experience of hardship. There was a lack of reciprocity as the years went by and Labour moved towards government. The Mum was much better suited to the demands of the modern world, capable of understanding the big picture, developing technical complex policies, managing change. The role of trade unions meant that they only had the power to disrupt, as there was no democracy in corporate governance, no capacity to pursue a common good within the firm in which power was shared, and, therefore, no possibility of internal promotion and responsibility without crossing picket lines. While growing in status to be a full partner in the political governance of the nation, in the economy Labour remained excluded and subordinate.

This shift in power in the relationship is clearly seen in Labour's attitude to the governance of the firm and the economy. Nationalisation, and its direction by state appointed experts, was but one form of the social ownership that was discussed by the labour movement for three decades before 1945. For most of the

time before that, co-operative firms, worker- and passenger-owned railways, mutualised waterways and worker-run mines were party policy. This was all but abandoned by the time Attlee became prime minister. The Dad had no power at work, and no power at home either, as the party became increasingly dominated by middle-class policy technocrats. The marriage, you could say, became increasingly abusive, which is why it is necessary now for the grandparents to step in and play a more active role in nurturing the well-being of the child by rebuilding love and reciprocity between the parents. This will require a commitment to renewing cross-class organisation within the party, to common action for the Common Good, throughout the movement. The Living Wage could be a good place to start.

The source of Labour's continued vitality lies in learning to cherish neglected aspects of its tradition that place reciprocity, association and organisation as fundamental aspects of building a common life between antagonistic or previously disconnected forces. It is a radical tradition that is as committed to the preservation of meaning and status as it is to democratic egalitarian change, and seeks to pursue both. This gives tremendous resources and possibilities to the Labour tradition as it seeks to renew its sense of political relevance in political circumstances that threaten its rationality and purpose. This requires, and has always required, an organised resistance to the logic of finance capitalism, and a strengthening of democratic institutions of self-government.

Revising revisionism

The resources for renewal lie within the tradition itself, but this requires an understanding of participating in a lived tradition, in which we identify with its defeats and victories, successes and failures, as it has engaged with its adversaries through time. This directly relates to the rationality of the tradition itself. Revisionism is a wonderful thing, but it becomes impoverished when it is

understood as a constancy of ends, pursued through a variety of means. Eduard Bernstein, the founder of German revisionism in the early twentieth century, said that the movement was everything and the ends were nothing. Fifty years later, Anthony Crosland, for reasons I have never fully understood, but with enormous consequences for the Labour tradition here, argued that revisionism was the opposite, that the ends were everything and the movement was nothing.

With the domination of this kind of revisionism, equality of rights and outcome became the end, and this was decisive in moving Labour from being a tradition concerned with the Common Good in this country, as part of the country's history, to become a progressive, left of centre, social democratic party. In the same way that Labour's response to globalisation after 1992 was a move from specific vocational skills to general transferrable skills, so, philosophically, it moved to general transferrable concepts, such as justice and fairness, which would apply in any country, society and terrain, rather than developing the specific language from within the political traditions of our own country. It was a move from the Common Good to progressivism, from organisation to mobilisation, from democracy to rights, from self-management to scientific management.

The management of change to pursue our ends thus became our creed for almost the whole second half of the twentieth century. Setting aside that he was still required to sign the checks to keep the mortgage payments going and the business afloat, the Dad might as well have left home. The gamble on state power and perpetual and real Labour government had failed, and the role of the trade unions within the economy remained one of inferiority, hostility and impotence. Mutual self-help was antagonistic to universal welfare, and the labour movement itself had no purpose beyond winning elections. The nature of the estranged relationship between unions and party was a crucial reason why they were not very good at doing that.

We can best make sense of this revisionist moment when we consider that Crosland directly questioned three fundamental assumptions of the Labour tradition.

The first assumption of the Labour tradition concerned capitalism. The tradition was built upon the assumption that capitalism was an exploitative and inefficient system of economic organisation, prone to speculative bubbles and recession. A Labour political economy would be different and superior.

The second assumption followed from this. It held that there was an ethical problem with unreformed capitalism, in that it exerted pressure to turn human beings and their natural environment into commodities. This threatened the very possibility of living a life proper for a human being, and people associated democratically to protect each other from a common threat. That was the meaning and form of the labour movement. One of the axiomatic assumptions underpinning the labour movement was that only organised people could resist the domination of money. For Labour, democratic association was a fundamental commitment.

The third assumption concerned the capacity of scientific knowledge and managerial expertise to exercise a progressive control of capitalism so that its excesses could be tamed and its general direction allied to more progressive human ends. Technical know-how was thus one of the prime means through which the dangers of capitalism could be tamed. State control of vital utilities, planning, effective demand management and a weather eye kept on the dynamics of boom and bust, with the appropriate Whitehall levers ready to pull at the right time, would do the trick.

British Labour revisionism, encapsulated in Crosland's *Future of Socialism*, was founded on the claim that the first two of these assumptions had been 'falsified' by historical experience. Labour's response to the challenges to its sanity posed by this 'falsification' was fateful, and that creates the conditions in which we find ourselves now. The uncritical rejection of the first assumption was decisive. Capitalism was understood as a singular system based

upon price-setting markets in the factors of production. It either worked or it didn't. The historical reality was that it did, providing unprecedented degrees of prosperity to unheard-of numbers of people, transforming the conditions of daily life and the opportunities that they enjoyed. Not only was capitalism more efficient; it was, in fact, more moral than planned economies. It allowed greater freedom and diversity, while promoting a challenge to existing hierarchies and sensibilities. The over-the-counter culture exerted a liberating force.

So the first two assumptions were held to be false by revisionist social democracy as it developed in Britain. That's a pretty big crisis of identity in itself. Any intelligible entity – a person, an institution, a political party – claims a sanity for itself based upon its capacity to explain the past, predict the future and act reasonably in the present. When a fundamental aspect of identity, in this case the Labour political economy, is thrown into question and based upon assumptions that are considered to be wrong, there is something worse than an epistemological crisis; there is a threat to the capacity to act at all. That is fatal for a political party, and its fate at that moment, is, in the worst sense of the word, academic.

The way that Labour reconstructed its identity and retained its sanity was to hang onto half of the third assumption concerning scientific management in pursuit of progressive ends, and transfer it to the state. This is the idea that the state, guided by correct method and modern management, can achieve a more equal and free society, in which all can share in the prosperity of the nation through redistributive taxation, effective public sector administration and a progressive orientation. Justice, in this schema, is the primary end of politics, and fairness is the operative value.

A Good Society

Tradition in such a schema is an impediment to justice, understood in terms of equality of opportunity and treatment. Tradition

becomes irrational, a defiance of necessary change that needs to be overcome, and in some cases broken, by modern management. Flexibility became a workforce virtue. The idea that tradition could be more reasonable than modernism is almost inconceivable on such a view. Tradition is synonymous with conservatism, an inability to adjust to new circumstances and an acceptance of prejudice. If it is the case that inherited associations, institutions and practices are an impediment to efficiency and justice, alongside the assumption that transferrable and not specific skills are the best way to intervene in the market logic of globalisation, then what results is the biggest paradox of all, which is that contemporary socialism has no effective category of the social.

I am alert to these things, but, as far as I know, social democracy, in party, union, or think tank, has no plans for extending democracy in the social life of the nation. Put another way, social democracy has become neither social nor democratic. This is the land that Labour has vacated and is now being filled by the Conservative's 'Big Society'. The Conservative tradition does have a conception of the social, Burke is an important thinker, but it was lost under Thatcherism and has been robustly reclaimed by Cameron. In response Labour needs to develop the idea of a Good Society as its rival, and such a society would be built on relationships built on reciprocity, mutuality and solidarity, all the way up and all the way down, in politics and within the economy.

By 1997, unmediated globalisation in the economy was combined with an identification of Labour with justice, abstractly understood in terms of pluralism, rights, and equality of opportunity. This is the basis of the serious predicament we face today. As John Rawls says, 'rights draw the line but the good makes the point', and we had nothing to say about the good. This directly threatens the expressions of national solidarity that remain. The retreat from state rationality in the economy is now being complemented by a denial of state rationality in promoting and protecting public welfare. Pluralism and diversity, without strong forms of a common life,

undermine the solidarity necessary for generating a welfare state and redistribution. The positive outcomes of welfare spending are questioned and are given as a primary cause of the deficit, and we are confronted by a volatile and destructive form of finance capital on which we depend for our prosperity and growth.

Our predicament is real, it is radical, and it is an enormous comfort that we have our tradition to guide us now. Without it we would have run out of road. We have pushed the market and the state as far as they can go, in isolation and combination, and would be left without a political economy, a democratic vision and a theory of history.

The tragedy for the Labour tradition is that the modernists reached the limits of their rationality, in terms of their unique embrace of both market and the state, while those seen as traditionalists are incapable of criticising the state, extending social democracy or having a plausible critique of finance capital. The financial crash and the deficit that it generated are the political battleground for the next five years. Labour has to reassert its historical understanding as superior to its rivals, and its predictions for the future as more assured, so that it may act reasonably and effectively in the present. Simultaneously, the organisational base of the labour movement has been hollowed out. While all this goes on, the universal welfare state, once the greatest achievement of cross-class solidarity, is being dismantled in the name of progressive ends, targeting the poorest and most vulnerable for favourable treatment. The integrity of family life and the upholding of a Common Good is the strongest way of responding to this, but it does not sit comfortably with progressive arguments.

What is being argued is that the labour movement emerged as part of the national history of Britain, that it is unique in the combinations of existing matter it combined in itself, in the institutional forms that it took, based upon mutuality, co-operation and solidarity, and in the distinctive moral and political traditions that gave it language and understanding. It asserted a resistance to

markets without claiming ultimate powers for a sovereign state. The form it took was federal and corporatist. The big rupture with the dominant Labour narrative, presented here, is that the victory of 1945 was the trigger for its long-term decline. It could be said that in the name of abstract justice the movement was sacrificed. The democratic responsibility and practice that was the labour movement and that had built up over a hundred years was severed from the idea of the Common Good and left without a role. This has intensified over the last fifty years. The trade unions became antagonistic forces within the economy, nationalisation placed managerial prerogative as the fundamental principle of organisation, and universal benefit replaced mutual responsibility as the basic principle of welfare.

What was forgotten politically was that the welfare state was not a right fulfilled, but an achievement won through sustained organisation and political action, and that was the only way it could be sustained. What was forgotten economically was that capitalism is a volatile system, based upon the exploitation of human beings and nature, and left to itself, will eat itself and the world around it. There are ethical reasons for generating democratic association as an alternative source of power that can entangle it within institutions that promote a Common Good. There are also political and practical considerations that make that necessary. Labour is right on this, the tradition is strong. It can tell a story of an economy in which money was too powerful, where the virtual economy displaced a virtue economy, with the consequence that there was neither reality nor any ethics in its practice.

The mistakes made affect both the 'left' and 'right' of the party, modernisers and traditionalists. On the left, the problem was to denigrate the compromises involved with a Common Good politics in favour of an absolute standard of morality, which proved incapable of recognising the vitality, innovation and dynamism which markets bring, and complement that with an equally true story of disruption, exploitation and destruction. So, the left forgot about redistribution of assets and power and were concerned with

collective ownership and money transfers; meanwhile, the modernist right lost any sense of tragedy and tradition and placed their money on scientific management in both the public and private sectors All of it depended on clever people doing their jobs very well. And that was not even understood as a paradox.

The fundamental insight of the both the Aristotelian tradition and that of the Ancient Constitution have been neglected across the party. It is that in any institution, in all aspects of life, there should never be one sovereign dominant power but a balance of interests, so that the King ruled in parliament, so that managerial prerogative could be resisted within the firm, so that a Common Good could be pursued between reciprocal partners. This was too right-wing for the left, involving union participation in economic governance, and too left-wing for the right, involving constraints on managerial prerogative and markets. The most important cause of the financial crash of 2008 was a lack of oversight of a balance of power in the corporate governance of financial firms, which meant that the people Minsky called the 'money managers' were free to deceive, exaggerate and cheat. Oversight keeps things honest. Interest based oversight keeps it real.

The problem with Labour's conception of capitalism, as with its conception of state planning, is that it was an abstract ideal type. There were unacknowledged varieties within capitalism, and a lack of appreciation of the Social Market Economy as the most important of those. Crafted by Social and Christian Democrats after the war in West Germany, under the supervision of Ernest Bevin and the British occupation, it generated economic growth through its practices of subsidiarity, worker representation on works councils and at board level through co-determination, the preservation and strengthening of vocational training, its pension fund governance, local relational banking and strong city government. The democratic institutions established within the economy had force. It turned out that greater vocational regulation led to higher levels of efficiency, worker representation to higher growth, local banking to more secure accumulation. Paradoxes can be friendly too. Any

comparative analysis of economic growth between the German and British economies would indicate that we came down on the wrong side of the argument in the mid 1990s. One of the reasons for that was an uncritical acceptance of abstract economic, philosophical and political analysis over a comparative historical and institutional understanding. PPE has a lot to answer for.

Labour's commitment to the state as the exclusive instrument of economic regulation had to fail. It was too blunt, too big, too small, and generally inappropriate. It could not work within the specialist knowledge of specific sectors, or with technological change, it could not engage locally or globally. The consequences of its failure led, under both Blair and Brown, to an uncritical embrace of the market, in terms of its internal logic and consequences. The social market economy indicates that democratic micro entanglement within corporate governance, combined with a clear floor on wages and a ceiling on interest rates, could combine the Tudor Commonwealth inheritance with a strong vocational role for trade unions in both training and strategy within firms and sectors.

It is not the least of the paradoxes of the present political moment that the Conservatives have given Labour the language of socialism back. It is, however, a matter of political logic that a financial crash should lead Labour to re-connect with the lost wisdom of its political economy. It is not to be found in 1945, 1964, or in 1997. None of them were democratic enough; none of these shared power with the workforce; none of them released capital to local businesses and families, none of them integrated vocational training into its work practices. And, most importantly, each of them led to the greater domination of the City of London, of finance capital, in the economic life of the nation. Labour did not change the balance of power in the economy or disrupt our developmental pathway.

Where does power lie? That was Aneurin Bevan's question, and the answer was to democratise it. This should remain our orientation, not the fantasy of abolishing power, but of democratic self-government within the reformed institutions of the realm. In

order for there to be a redistribution of power it is necessary to confront unjust concentrations of power and wealth. The credibility of Labour as a radical tradition lies in this terrain. The Corporation of London, for example, is an ancient city, founded by the Romans, established as a commune in 1191, a status it retains to this day. It is unique among great European cities in never having grown in size and never being absorbed by the population that grew around it, or by the state. As one of the four pillars of the ancient constitution it remains a partner to Parliament (as well as the monarchy and the Church), but not subordinate to it. As it survived the Norman Conquest unconquered, it has preserved the status of the freeman, democratic hustings, its guildhall, indeed, its guilds. The only problem is that this most ancient of cities represents the interests of capital alone and is immune to the charms of the common good. Skilled workers are not permitted to join their ancient institutions of economic self-regulation. Only in April, the last recognised workforce of the City of London, the Billingsgate Porters, were abolished, leaving capital as the only inheritor of our civic traditions.

One important part of Labour's renewal as a party of the Common Good would be not to abolish the City of London but to extend its ancient liberties, democratic rights and its significant inheritance to all the citizens of London. To build a politics of the Common Good by returning citizenship to all our cities, re-establishing guildhalls, and restoring institutions of vocational self-regulation within them, including regional banks. The countryside too has no effective institutions of self-government, and the democratisation and restoration of the country hundreds could reconnect us to conservation and the needs of country people while working within their language and experience. These are examples in which Labour can inhabit and renew ancient institutions and present a radical challenge to the concentrations of power and general sense of powerlessness. The economic and democratic regeneration of local economies requires a reciprocal partnership between capital, state and society. You could call it socialism in one county.

In summary, and in conclusion, Labour is a radical tradition with claims to superiority to its rivals in terms of its reasonable assumptions, its conception of the person and its theory of history. Its axioms are as follows.

Capitalism is based on the maximisation of returns on investment, which creates great pressure to commodify land and labour markets. Human beings and nature, however, are not created as commodities and should not be treated as such.

Human beings, in contrast, are dependent rational beings capable of trust and responsibility, who need each other to lead a good life. People are meaning-seeking beings who rely on an inheritance to make sense of their world, on liberty to pursue their own truth, and on strong social institutions which promote public goods and virtue.

Democracy, the power of organised people to act together in the Common Good, is the way to resist the power of money. In that sense, Labour holds to a theory of relational power as a counterweight to the power of money.

The building of relational power is called organising and this is a necessary aspect of the tradition.

As a theory of the Common Good, Labour holds to a balance of power within the Constitution, and in all public institutions, including the economy.

While recognising the innovation, energy and prosperity that markets bring, there is also an awareness, absent in liberalism, of the concentrations of power, the disruption and the dispossession that are its accompaniment.

This requires not the abolition of capital nor the elimination of markets, but their democratic entanglement in regional, civic and vocational relationships. This takes plural forms.

The first is a commitment to local, relational or mutual banking, that would entangle the short-term imperatives of investment with the longer term needs of economic growth.

The second is a commitment to skilled labour, to real traditions

of skill and knowledge that can mediate the pressures of homogenisation and preserve the capacity to transform the world in co-operation with others through work. A vocational economy would be one way of trying to grasp this.

The third is a commitment to the balance of power within the firm, so that managers are held accountable, strategy is not based upon the interests of one group alone, and the distribution of burdens is equitable.

The fourth commitment is to forms of mutual and co-operative ownership.

The reason for the instability of capitalism is based upon the movement of capital from the real economy to speculative bubbles that are based upon the reproduction of money through money alone. The incentive is given by higher rates of return. Local, vocational and political constraints on the sovereignty of capital to pursue its rate of return are a defence against both concentrations of money power and speculative collapse, as well as giving purpose and interest to democratic association.

Socialism is a condition of sustainable capitalism, in that universities, schools, libraries, vocational institutions, the rule of law and democracy, all provide public goods that are necessary for its flourishing and growth. Against its own understanding, Labour asserts that capital needs partners too. Some reciprocity in the relationship with capital is required.

The tradition is strong, it offers a framework within which previous mistakes can be rectified, and a claim to rational superiority to rivals can be plausibly asserted. The Labour tradition, alone in our country, resisted the domination of the poor by the rich, asserted the necessity of the liberties of expression, religion and association, and made strong claims for democratic authority to defy the status quo. It did this within a democratic politics of the common good. The argument of this paper is that it might be a good idea to do it again.

Gramsci not Machiavelli

Sally Davison

In Maurice Glasman's interesting account of the history of the British labour movement I would argue that he is doing exactly what Gramsci suggests – he is seeking to construct a counter-hegemonic argument by articulating together ideas and elements that could be articulated in other ways, and seeking to yoke them to a particular strategic view of democratic politics and constituency. That is a good thing to try to do, but I would have a number of reservations about this particular construction.

Firstly, his account is too organicist. He seems to suggest that values spring directly from relationships (mutuality, reciprocity). I agree that ideas and values are constructed in relationships, but I think that they are nevertheless still constructed. Philosophy/theory is part of the resources of the movement. Intellectuals (organic intellectuals in Gramsci) have a role in helping to construct these ideas and values. The aim of such intellectuals is to try to help make into common sense a different set of values from those that are dominant in society, to challenge the dominant hegemony, and articulate ideas in new forms. We need theory if we are to act strategically. We can't just rely on a pick and mix of whatever ideas we like best from the tradition. And not least, we need a theoretical understanding of how capitalism works if we are to make the most useful interventions; and an understanding of politics as a 'war of position' in which we strategically marshal our resources to move things in the direction of democratic change and equality. We need a sense of the direction in which we wish to go, and a strategy to get there, of which a narrative is a key part.

Secondly, I might choose a different set of forebears from those

that Maurice puts forward (and, incidentally, unlike Maurice, I find it hard to locate many mothers or grandmothers in the traditional lineage). I think he has chosen Aristotle and the 'freeborn Englishman' as the main ancestors because they fit into his argument about balance and rights: he is constructing an ancestry – articulating a politics – from the available elements, in a way that is strategically directed towards a particular politics. But if you take a concept such as the 'freeborn englishman' – that can be articulated in a number of different ways, but none of them are a given. The sense that the British people have of their history has changed over time – for example Normans and Romans were much more popular in Victorian times than they are today. History too is something that is fought over in the name of politics. I would like to add in to the mix, for example, the suffragettes, the civil rights movement, the Levellers, the countercultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the green movement, the long history of anti-fascism in Britain.

Thirdly, I think the 'mum' side of the genealogy is problematic. I don't think you can lump together under the rubric of progressivism all the things that Maurice does. Does progressivism have to imply top-down statism? I don't think so. Could we widen the boundaries of what we include within the tradition to include aspects of modernism – for example feminism? I am concerned that Maurice's list of forebears emphasises the traditional too much – we still need to think about modernisation and alliances – just not in the way that New Labour did. (And this of course will also mean coming up with new ideas and visions.)

I would also like to add a comment about pluralism. The labour movement – much less the left – cannot be equated to the Labour Party. That is a representation that has to be worked for. And there are many other movements and constituencies that may overlap with some labour/left interests and not others – e.g. the civic nationalists in Wales and Scotland (and possibly Northern Ireland). There are constituencies – such as the churches – that have both progressive and reactionary strands. The task of the Labour Party is

to represent these constituencies when it can, and work in alliance with other progressives when some interests overlap. Although the party is itself an alliance, it can also make external alliances. But it can only do all this if it has a strong sense of direction, and of the hegemonic challenge it seeks to make.

Labour history and Glasman's Labour tradition

Ben Jackson

Like other seminar participants, I greatly enjoyed Maurice Glasman's paper. I learned a lot from reading it, and from the subsequent discussion. In response, I want to make three points that focus on the historical elements of the paper, but also have wider political implications. In the interests of advancing the discussion, I have focused on areas of disagreement.

Crosland and the Labour tradition

A certain amount of the paper and the discussion at the seminar concerned the shortcomings of the socialist revisionism articulated by Anthony Crosland and his allies in the 1950s. Maurice thinks Crosland and the revisionists traded in core elements of the Labour tradition for an emphasis on abstract philosophical egalitarian goals. Although I don't think the revisionists got everything right, I do think that there is more to be said in their favour than Maurice allows.

First, we should remember that in *The Future of Socialism* Crosland himself arrived at his conclusions by examining the history of the British labour tradition (rather like Maurice in his paper). Crosland set out what he took to be the most important currents on the British Left over the previous 150 years or so: the philosophy of natural law; Owenism; the labour theory of value (Ricardian socialism); Christian socialism; Marxism; the theory of rent as unearned increment (JS Mill and Henry George); William Morris and anti-commercialism; Fabianism; ILP ethical socialism; the welfare state or paternalist tradition; syndicalism and guild

socialism; and the doctrine of planning (which included Keynes-style criticisms of free market capitalism).[1] By reflecting on this complex historical legacy, Crosland distilled a set of objectives that he felt could be taken as representative of the aspirations of the British labour tradition. In terms of method, therefore, I don't think there is a gulf between Crosland and the approach recommended by Maurice.

Second, Crosland's account of British Labour's aspirations was more complex than is usually remembered. They consisted, he said, of: (1) a passion for liberty and democracy; (2) a protest against the material poverty produced by capitalism; (3) a concern for the interests of those in need or oppressed or just unlucky; (4) a belief in equality and the classless society; (5) a rejection of competition and an endorsement of 'fraternal' (his word) co-operation; and (6) a protest against the inefficiencies caused by capitalism, particularly mass unemployment. Writing in the 1950s, Crosland argued that the first of these objectives was shared across all parties, while the second and sixth had been rendered less relevant by the achievements of Labour in office after 1945. He was therefore left with the third (promotion of the welfare of those in need); the fourth (equality) and the fifth ('the co-operative ideal'). In practice, he found it hard to make sense of ideas of co-operation, so he focused on the welfare and equality aspirations.[2] I'm sympathetic to the claim that Crosland was therefore too quick to dismiss certain elements of the tradition – I would say democracy and co-operation remain relevant and distinctive Labour aspirations – but I'm less sympathetic to the claim that equality is not a crucial Labour aspiration. This latter point seems to be one that Maurice is edging towards in his paper, although I wasn't clear if he was willing to take the plunge and dismiss egalitarianism altogether. I think it is very hard – indeed probably impossible – to come up with an authentic historical account of Labour's tradition that does not include an important role for egalitarian objectives.[3] On this point, Crosland was correct. The question is what should be added to Crosland's

commitment to a more equal society to provide a full account of Labour's tradition, and here some of the points Crosland marginalised, such as the need for greater democratic control over both the state and the market, could profitably be retrieved.

Liberalism and the Labour tradition

Maurice leaves liberalism out of his account of the genesis of the Labour tradition. He presents Labour as the product of two ancient political traditions, Aristotelianism and the 'rights of freeborn Englishmen', and then later, in the nineteenth century, of the churches. But if we are to account for the exceptionalism of the British Labour tradition that Maurice identifies, the pervasive influence of British liberalism must also enter the reckoning. The political culture of nineteenth-century popular liberalism exercised a profound influence on the infant labour movement. The struggles for the franchise, for the rights of trade unions to organise, and against corrupt elites, were all first waged under the banner of Gladstonian liberalism. Keir Hardie was a liberal before he was a socialist; JS Mill was as much a grandparent of the labour movement as the nonconformist churches. It is of course tempting in present political circumstances to tell a story about Labour that forgets about these liberal roots. But considerable historical research has demonstrated that the Labour tradition was an open and pluralistic one, which developed from and overlapped with various forms of radicalism and liberalism. Stedman Jones on Chartism; Biagini and Reid on radicalism; and Clarke and Freeden on the new liberalism have all traced lines of continuity from the Paineite radicalism of the late eighteenth century to Chartism to popular liberalism to the ethical socialism of the early labour movement.[4] To omit this is therefore to miss an important part of Labour's history. But it is also tactically unwise, because it presents Labour as a political tradition uncomfortable with liberalism. This forecloses important opportunities for dialogue today between

Labourists and those liberals aghast at their party happily trading away much of the British liberal tradition.

Labour governments and the Labour tradition

It is striking that Maurice dates the dissolution of the Labour tradition from 1945, the very point at which Labour started to be an effective party of government: 'the victory of 1945 was the trigger for its long term decline'. I am generally suspicious of this sort of declinism. But it particularly worries me when the main implication of Maurice's periodisation is that the Labour tradition was creative when it was lodged in oppositional movement politics, but became sterile when Labour finally managed to exercise power over the state. Of course, we all have criticisms to make of Labour in government, whether after 1945, 1964, 1974 or 1997. But it is important to find a way of speaking about Labour in office that is balanced and recognises the significant social achievements won by periods of Labour government. A movement-centred declinism, which privileges the 1899 dock strike over the NHS, is as one-sided as a purely governmental account of Labour. We have to find a way to combine the politics of the movement with the politics of government. Our task is not to substitute one for the other but to make room for both.

Notes

1. CAR Crosland, *The Future of Socialism*, Jonathan Cape, second edition, 1964, pp43-59.
2. Crosland, *Future*, pp67-80.
3. I have marshalled the historical evidence for this claim in B Jackson, *Equality and the British Left*, Manchester University Press, 2007.
4. G Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism', in *Languages of Class*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp90-178; E Biagini and A Reid (eds), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1991; P Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats*, Cambridge University Press, 1978; M Freeden, *Liberalism Divided*, Oxford University Press, 1986.

The progressive son

James Purnell

Maurice's seminar paper is seminal. I apologise for the over-used word, but the paper actually is 'highly influential in an original way; constituting or providing a basis for further development'. It is original in identifying Crosland as the wrong turn and the 1945 government as the problem. Until this paper, Labour's default setting has been that 1945 was paradise lost and Crosland John the Baptist. That's what gives the keepers of the scrolls the right to denounce anyone who doesn't privilege equality, or ex-communicate anyone who blasphemes by winning elections.

This is our family myth. It may not always be what we present when we leave home or when talking to strangers or voters as they are sometimes called. But over Sunday dinner or at Christmas, we talk about how sad it is that others don't meet our moral standard. And when we open our pay slips, or decide where to send our children to school, we feel an awkward guilty confusion.

Rather than paying attention to that cognitive dissonance, we compartmentalize – whilst undermining our moral claim with our behaviour. I'm talking here about those who lecture others for not caring about equality but then send their children to private or selective schools. I'm talking about people who criticize New Labour for not being up front about redistribution, but are really talking about the super-rich not about their own multi-million home.

Because, like most family myths, when it is held up to scrutiny, it turns out to be at best half-true. It's not that Crosland's moral standard is right, and that Labour's task is to compromise that belief just enough to get a workable majority. It is that Labour's tradition

is a better moral guide than Crosland's theory. It's not that we can win despite being Labour – it is that we can win by rediscovering what being Labour means.

As Maurice says:

> The source of Labour's continued vitality lies in learning to cherish neglected aspects of its tradition that place reciprocity, association and organisation as fundamental aspects of building a common life between antagonistic or previously disconnected forces. It is a radical tradition that is as committed to the preservation of meaning and status as it is to democratic egalitarian change and seeks to pursue both. This gives tremendous resources and possibilities to the Labour tradition as it seeks to renew its sense of political relevance in political circumstances that threaten its rationality and purpose. This requires, and has always required, an organised resistance to the logic of finance capitalism and a strengthening of democratic institutions of self-government.

There's a lifetime of seminars and action that springs from this paragraph. But before we do that, a question or two. Isn't this just saying Mum should stay at home and Dad should go out to work again? Isn't there a bit of 'wasn't it all better when all the Dads went to work in the mill, or at Ferranti's'? And isn't that hard to do now that those mills and factories are all in China?

Furthermore, the family tree is missing a generation. Mum and Dad had a Son, and he was called New Labour. He won a scholarship to the City of Islington School. It was a boarding school, and during term time he learned how to make an argument in Law class; he learned new communications techniques in Media Studies; and most of all he learned about empowerment in Modern Public Service Management.

And, of course, the Son went to parties with friends whose parents hadn't been members of unions, had never heard of the

Webbs and could pay for their own funeral. They weren't from Islington, but nor were they from Windsor, or Eton. They could afford the fees at City of Islington because their parents had passed the Eleven Plus, been the first in their family at university, and then become a chartered surveyor and a human rights lawyer. And the Son of course got a Girlfriend, and of course her Dad was the surveyor.

So, when half term came, and the Son went home, he invited the Girl's parents round to meet his own. But then the unexpected happened. He'd worried that they might not get on with Mum. But what he hadn't expected was the row between the Dads. He hadn't expected it because they were so similar underneath – they both thought they were slightly traditional on social issues, they both wanted to protect their families, they both wanted their kids to do better than they had, they both worried about their feckless peers.

It all started with a misunderstanding about the wine; and then the subject of Islington came up (her parents lived there); and Dad suddenly felt patronized, and it went downhill from there.

The Son and the Girl broke up. Eventually, the Son came home and took over the family business. He brought his new business methods. To everyone's surprise, it was rather a success. He was an early Internet entrepreneur, and overnight his business took off – it was soon valued at a couple of hundred million. He saw less of his Mum and Dad, but the admiration of his peers more than made up for it. He became a bit of a global business story.

You know the rest – the internet bubble crashing, the bank stepping in, a lot of pain, but he survived.

And as we decide now what new, Labour business to set up, we know it's not another dot.com wheeze, but nor is it an engineering firm.

Mutuality, reciprocity, and organization are good guides to what is insufficient about empowerment. But they do not replace it.

For example, they're not a guide to renewing education policy. In fact, in education, we need to go further in a New Labour

direction, not turn around. Whilst doing so, we should remember Dad's lessons: about the need for schools to be strong institutions; about the danger of uniformity; about treasuring craft and loving relationships. But that should be something we take into account in the way that we design a system that allows schools to be self-reforming, rather than our primary goal.

Or, to put it another way, there are some good lessons the Son can teach us:

- That people need to be able to choose their good life; just as it's true that a good life is about relations with other people.
- That we should trust people to make their own decisions; just as it's true that they can't do that if the market or the state turns them in to commodities.
- That people should be able to choose a school for their child or a hospital for their operation; just as it's true that's just a demeaning false prospectus if the school ends up choosing them.
- That we need to be winners from globalization; just as it's true that people want to feel some control over the places where they live.
- That if people work hard, they can take their reward in having more money, if they want; just as it's true that if the market doesn't give them enough to live on, then that's just not right.
- That the Gini coefficient isn't the measure of moral perfection; just as it's true that we won't have built a common life if people who do the right thing still end up without a home, a pension or a job.
- That we have to be reformers; just as it's true that we have to protect each other from pain.
- And that we're not going to win again just by getting Dad out of retirement.

Keeping the family together

Anthony Painter

We pretend to ourselves that we no longer need storytellers when we need them now more than ever. And in Maurice Glasman and a few others, the left finally has its storytellers. The first reflection on 'Labour as a radical tradition' is that it is an exhilarating story of nationhood and identity in which the radical impulse is intrinsic. My intention here is not to marvel at the prose; it's to appreciate the solder that fixes justice to a sense of common identity.

Common law, common good, common wealth: Maurice's family is most definitely common and that's no bad thing. It is not good enough for a nation to be a kind of free market where its participants bring their power (currency) derived from status, class, gender, and identity (resources), mitigated with laws and democracy (rules of exchange.) There has to be a common life beyond that – messy, real, human, contextual, balanced, relational. Kant secured the odd universal declaration, Machiavelli has his fingers in every political pie, but it was Max Weber who was the real winner (like PPE, SPS has a lot to answer for!). And as we see the rise of nationalist economics again, not least in China's development and power trajectory, so Weber has the last laugh once again.

At some point the left became squeamish about nationhood, though only relatively recently. Further back, socialism and nationhood were understood as intrinsically entwined. Take Gaitskell or Foot's suspicion of the EEC. It was an expression of this close relationship of nation and social justice. It was overly romantic but there was an important point underlying it. Social democracy has been built one nation at a time.

It was internationalist, sure, not least because Bretton Woods

had to provide a protective canopy, but where human societies have come together it is on the basis of a tangible, common bond: nationhood. So when Maurice reminds us that, 'pluralism and diversity, without strong forms of a common life, undermine the solidarity necessary for generating a welfare state and redistribution', he is forcing us to confront our predicament with a basic historical fact.

What is that predicament? Humanity has enormous capacity for generosity in the context of the trust that comes with a common understanding of ourselves and our condition. Yet we live in times where that trust is fracturing. On what basis does the left make its plea for common action in such a context?

Perhaps near financial meltdown was an opportunity in this regard; but if it was, the moment has gone. We are seeing the opposite process at play. Not only are we becoming more divided as a nation – financially, culturally, socially – we are actually becoming antagonistic towards one another, encouraged by the statecraft of a ruthless Coalition.

That is why Maurice's appeal to us as a people on these islands is so important. It's not sentimentality; it's a response to our incapacity as a consequence of the weakening of these bonds. And this is also why the issue that Graeme Cooke raised in the seminar about majoritarianism is an important one. In these discussions we have to, in my view, consider a politics of power alongside a politics of ideas. This is where things get a bit more complicated and why I had a slight instinctive reaction to the family in the paper.

In this I am slightly misreading (deliberately so) Maurice's intention in presenting the satirically brilliant marriage of Hardie and Webb! It was meant as a social and ideological construct of course. But I couldn't help thinking about it as kind of a political version of the Two Ronnies and John Cleese class sketch. There is more than mischief to my reading of it in this way.

The left has a bad habit of seeing the world in primary colours. The working class are our base in this view. Professionals are

increasingly becoming so also, but we've not quite adjusted to that. Working-class Dad; professional mom. So then the battleground becomes the middle classes. If this model of political society ever convincingly worked it doesn't any more. It is the assumptions we make about who people are because of where they have come from socially that have increasingly separated the movement from where – and who – people actually are. We've tried to paper over the cracks with micro-targeting, focus grouping, and poll-driven strategising, and this has just made matters worse.

In the seminar I described Maurice's working-class dad, professional-mom family as a Hackney family. It doesn't contain the diverse middle classes who are neither primarily 'traditionalist' nor 'educated professional'. We find the broad and diverse middle class increasingly as we leave the city's heart and arrive in the suburbs, new towns, former industrial towns, and market towns. It is dangerous to generalise, but there is a risk that, much like the petit bourgeois played by Ronnie Barker (who is but one of many and diverse middle-class characters), they will be interested in neither mom nor dad.

James Purnell brought the early X Generation son into the conversation. He's recognisable. But just wait until you meet his daughter – she's ethical as a form of self-expression rather than social instinct, materialistic but not mass market, she has the intellectual self confidence to tie you up in knots, she socially participates on and off line, near and far, and, graduating this year, she's just learning that things are going to be far more up-hill than she was promised. New Labour son is just as bewildered when it comes to her as his mom and dad were with him. She's certainly socially liberal and if things play right she may become radically liberal also – activism in the pursuit of interest should come naturally. Liberal Democrat seemed like a good compromise but no longer. How we engage her from here will determine a great deal; the pathway is by no means established. Things are not getting any easier as we cascade down the generations.

And this is why it is important to place the majoritarian question alongside the bigger questions that Maurice poses. It is one way in which this conversation can remain embedded. If we are lucky then power and intellectual clarity will flow one from the other. If we are not they will collide and then where will we be?

Finally, the practical questions posed by Graeme Cooke are crucial. There is a risk in transferring our focus from ends to means that we replace abstract ends with abstract means. Reciprocity, solidarity and power can be real: proactive, personalised welfare; a realistic political economy of distribution as well as production; real choice and scope for involvement in local services; democratic involvement in the public realm but also in the workplace; or the capitalisation of mutual enterprises in utilities, housing, public services, and finance. But they could just as quickly become empty terms; the 'fairness', 'equality' or, dare I say, the 'big society' of the future.

Maurice's paper should gain wider readership as a provocative alternative to Croslandite renewal. Its narrative sweep reconnects the left to its own history and to a deeper national story. It is a journey worth taking but it is important to keep the pitfalls in mind. At worst we could find ourselves at the beginning once again. In searching for our tradition we could find ourselves locked in our past. We could also rediscover our values but remain stuck in the same place. In other words, let's avoid in rediscovering the values of Dad sounding like him also. Even worse, let's not mimic Dad while acting like Mom. Crucially though, we have to bring the whole family with us. And if we don't, the whole thing may not last: everyone for themselves. To close with Maurice: 'the movement itself provided the common life'. There may be something in that.

Equality and relationships

David Miliband

Maurice quotes Bernstein that the movement is everything and the ends nothing. If by that token the debate is everything and the paper nothing, then the exercise is already a success. But like others I think the substance of the paper is important and good, both as a corrective and as a guide.

I was glad to read Ben Jackson's note on what Crosland actually said. His historical facts rather confirmed my prejudice that Crosland was not as myopic as one reading of Maurice's paper suggests. But I don't think you need to believe Crosland was myopic, or that his politics were a disastrous crushing of a historic and rich seam of Labour thinking, to see the strengths of Maurice's reasoning. It seems to me Maurice is saying two important things.

First, that a politics which is divorced from people's relationships to each other is not a progressive politics with the sort of roots worth fighting for. This is a point about substance and ends. He is saying that in defining the ends of progressive politics (leave to one side the weakness of that phrase for the moment) we need 'people not (just) programmes'. He is saying that the alternative to the indignities and inequalities of the unregulated market and the overbearing state is one that asserts uniquely human values of mutuality and reciprocity – because you cannot live out a credo of the brotherhood of man/woman without it. And his argument that Crosland took this for granted, is a good one.

Interestingly enough, I think that New Labour's rediscovery of community, admittedly often from a deficit model of tackling crime and its causes, was a recognition of this. The Croslandite inheritance became a politics that was too individualistic,

epitomised in arguments about Gini coefficients without sufficient attention to the housing and community conditions (including tenures) in which people lived. New Labour set out to correct this, but was under-strategic in doing so.

Second, that a politics that underestimates the importance of mature and dignified relationships is likely not to be sustained. This is a point about means not ends. It is also a good one. The need to build a movement to sustain our politics is an obvious and good one. This has immediate implications. For example that constitutional reform is not an add-on but is key to our politics. Ditto for party reform.

It is important to understand what this means. It is not just that 'our' programme will lose loyalty if it is not owned by a movement, and that we therefore sow the seeds of our own downfall. It is that that the infamous project of 'renewal' was never going to sustain itself unless aerated by the hopes, ideas, aspirations of a wider movement.

So much so obvious. Where I parted company with Maurice in the seminar, and where I would ask for further discussion, is the intersection of his politics of relationships with Crosland's (and not just his) politics of equality. Put crudely, as I did at the seminar, relationships of mutuality and reciprocity are helped or hindered by the equality, or lack of it, between the participants. That equality might be about legal rights, income and wealth, social and cultural capital. I just don't think it is possible to escape questions of equality by stressing the vital nature of relationships – vital though they are.

Crosland wrote – not in the *Future of Socialism* but, I think, in *The Conservative Enemy* (great title) – words to the effect that the job of socialists is not to sit in nunneries, or their equivalent, and debate how much equality is desirable in the good society, but instead to identify inequalities in the societies in which we live and go out and do something about them. He would approve of the Living Wage campaign. That is a campaign for dignity. But it is a

campaign for dignity whose force is massively increased by the fact that it is being led in companies where rewards to a few are massive, and a small reduction in them can pay for a living wage.

I have embraced the argument that the three most significant dimensions of modern politics are power, security, and belonging. These are all about human relationships. But they are also about the different degrees of disempowerment, insecurity and disengagement that people feel. So they are about equality too. They are about the fulfilled life and the good society. Modern politics succeeds when it addresses both ends of the telescope.

The strange folk down the road

Mike Kenny

I too find Maurice's argument challenging and powerful. Here, though, I want to take issue with one particular implication of his position. This concerns the nature and value of 'revisionism'. In short: I think we currently need a whole lot more, not less, of this.

Maurice has a point about the rather abstracted and attenuated way in which Crosland framed the 'ends' which he derived from his account of the history of the labour movement. Yet there are good reasons why Crosland's overarching vision and political arguments remain of value. One important aspect of his position, which has not surfaced here, involves his insistence on posing the following question: what do the values and aspirations that have animated the Labour Party and the wider labour movement mean in the context of the major changes to culture, community and class consciousness associated with the economic growth and consumer boom of the post-war years?

Now, we may well want to debate the merits of his answers to that question, and we may well also wish to challenge, as Maurice rightly does, the presumption that 'the ends' for Labour are as Crosland defined them. But we should also note the latter's readiness to subject the values and visions of 'the tradition' to the tests posed by a fast-changing capitalist economy and a society in which established values and forms of community were being challenged by a rising tide of consumerism and a growing sense of 'classlessness'. The thoughtful and principled way in which Crosland considered these issues represents one of the most important legacies of his thinking.

And, importantly, the same is true of many other expressions of

what we might also label 'revisionist' thinking – if we adopt a slightly more catholic approach to this category than is conventional. Repeatedly, throughout the party's history, right back into the nineteenth century, it has drawn sustenance from bodies of political thought that have emerged either from outside itself (as Jonathan Rutherford rightly observes) or from thinkers operating on the margins of its culture.

I would include under this heading the deep and extended interaction with social liberalism (both as a popular movement and a set of theoretical ideas, as Ben Jackson observes), the pluralist and guild socialist ideas of the early twentieth century (especially figures like Laski and Cole), the rich and creative body of ideas about community and cultural politics associated with the early New Left movement (before its Marxist turn after 1962) and the important debates sparked by the magazine *Marxism Today* in the 1980s.

While the degree to which these currents challenged or confirmed aspects of the party's dominant thinking varied considerably, all of them generated ideas which were utilised by Labour activists and leaders at times of considerable political and economic challenge. Importantly, this broad lineage cuts across the central distinction advanced in Maurice's account – with some of these thinkers advocating statist and universalist ideas, and many others exploring the kinds of practically focused campaigning and ethical sense of community which he favours.

Three aspects of this tradition strike me as especially pertinent today.

First, nearly all of these thinkers shared Crosland's disposition to re-think socialist ideas in the context of the here-and-now, and to develop or rekindle the sociological imagination of the left, so that it was ready to understand and fight the battles of today, not return to the default of yesteryear. Once again Labour needs to look hard at the different forms which the quest for security and community currently take, and the role that new assertions of collective identity (for instance the growing emphasis upon English nationhood) play

in a context where many of the traditional institutions and practices that sustained the ways of life that Maurice invokes have disappeared or waned. Any wholesale review of the party's policy 'offer' needs to be informed by a real appreciation of the insecurities, the yearning for belonging, and the kinds of social relationship (or lack of relationship – think of the massive problems associated with loneliness) that frame and inhibit people's sense of empowerment today.

Second, an overlooked benefit of forms of thinking that lie on the edge of, or outside, the party's core traditions is their ability to provide the ingredients for the kinds of powerful narratives that build upon the party's sense of its own history, and allow it to present itself to a much wider public as a political force that is in tune with, and determined to remake, modernity itself. The approach of Harold Wilson in the run-up to the election of 1964 is an interesting case in point. He helped orchestrate a wider mood for change which harnessed the account of the technological and scientific future offered by various intellectuals of the time, and also promised a new settlement including improved living standards and educational prospects for working-class people. Of course this vision was rapidly blown off course after his election victory, but this does not invalidate the attempt to appeal to a broad social coalition within a distinctive, coherent and forward-facing narrative.

Third, what I think a re-engagement with this tradition might teach us now is that we should wean ourselves off the idea (for which Crosland was partially responsible) that revisionism means merely restating the established goals of the Labour Party and focusing on updating the means to deliver them. None of the currents and thinkers referenced above framed their arguments in such a self-defeating fashion. All contributed to moments of intense debate about what Labour was for, what its animating vision of the good society ought to be, and how the party could turn itself – in modern, rejuvenated form – into an important part of the 'means' required to deliver the various ends which it has pursued.

I agree wholeheartedly with Maurice that it is time once again to open up a serious debate about the party's purpose and traditions. But this might also involve a willingness to extend an invitation not just to family members, but also to those strange folk down the road, with their pointy heads and fancy ideas.

2. Democracy, leadership and organising

Marc Stears

What kind of Labour Party do we want to be part of? When that question is asked in most seminars, discussion races immediately to the party's grand goals or to its policy programme. We think about our support, or hostility, to the growth of the state, the place of the private sector, or our aspirations for international development. We debate the effectiveness of tax credits, our preference for comprehensive school education, or our hopes for the alleviation of child poverty.

In this paper, though, I want to direct our attention elsewhere. I want to return, in particular, to issues that mattered enormously to our party's founding generations, but which have often dropped away from attention in the decades since. I want to enquire, that is, into the *nature* of the party itself. My subject, then, includes the relationship of Labour's leadership to its membership, the party's organizing structures, its understanding of the relationship between its long-term goals and its short-term political practices.

The Labour Party of Ed Miliband has begun to take up these issues. They are at the heart of Peter Hain's project to 'refound Labour for a new generation'. But our conversation so far has been largely practical and concrete, rather than ideological and philosophical. It has been addressed to the immediate rather than long-term. Here, I want to delve deeper, to search for core ideals, and challenging paradoxes, that might profitably shape our deliberations in the years to come.

Leadership

A re-examination of the nature of our party naturally begins with its leadership, if only because leadership provides the lightning rod for both enthusiasm and discontent.

Labour's approach to leadership of late has swung dramatically backwards and forwards between two equally unsatisfying poles, each of which reflects a distinctive recent Labour mood.

In the first of these moods, Labour insists that there is something inherently suspect about the very idea of leadership. In this frame, the party trumpets its egalitarianism and insists that no-one should think of themselves as 'above' the crowd. Leadership is deeply problematic because it presumes that one individual, or group of individuals, can and should be 'ahead' of the others, by virtue of personality, expertise, or ability to represent key interests. The party of democratic socialism, the argument goes, cannot be comfortable with such a notion. There would be no leadership in a socialist utopia, and as such there should be no warm endorsement of the idea of leadership in the party at present. Instead, party members should keep a constant look-out for those who strive for positions of authority in order to aggrandise themselves, and embrace leaders who mingle with the crowd rather than strike out from the front. In this mood, the party constructs far-reaching mechanisms of democratic accountability and continually strives to foster a culture of equal participation. It allows candidates to be recalled by constituency parties and trade union groups. It insists on crafting its appeals to the electorate on the basis of the content of its programme and eschews any based on the personality of its spokespeople.

In the second of these moods, Labour despairs of the senseless optimism of its first outlook. The denigration of focused leadership, Labour in this mood charges, leads not to utopian togetherness and collective harmony but to party disintegration. Without the smack of firm authority, the party becomes a mess, incapable of

designing a programme of its own let alone advancing one effectively to the electorate. What is required, then, is that the party fights the electoral battle on the terms that battle demands. And the battle demands singularity. It needs a singular focus for the public, a singular decision-maker at the centre, and a singular figure with whom the broader movement can identify. In this mood, Labour turns to an almost cult-like admiration of its official leader. It strips away mechanisms of accountability and control, bypasses official decision-making mechanisms to allow policy to be made on the sofa, and puts a close-up portrait of its leader on the cover of its manifesto.

With the exception of the very youngest members of this seminar, we have all lived with the party in both of these moods, and, as with any bipolar friend, the excesses place great strains on our relationship. Labour was in the most demanding of its idealistic moods in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when leadership-critique reached new (and paradoxical) heights under the demagogic direction of Tony Benn. It then swung back the other way, first and relatively ineffectively under Neil Kinnock, and then much more profoundly under Tony Blair. A member of the Labour Party in her forties will thus remember both the time when the party told her that she was the centre of all power and authority within the movement, and the time when the party told her that the most important thing she could do was carry a pledge card with Tony Blair on the front. In that, she is not unusual. Labour has moved back and forth between these poles constantly across its recent history. Not knowing what leadership actually expects is one of the perils of being a member of the Labour Party. The cause of Labour's bipolar attitude to leadership lies in an even more fundamental difficulty for the party. Labour has struggled of late to relate its values to its practices, or, in other words, its *ends* to its *means*.

For some in the party, let us call them the 'idealists', it has been crucial that Labour realizes its values in its everyday practices and

in the experiences it generates in the present. We are all familiar with the arguments. If Labour is committed to gender equality, then meetings must be composed of equal numbers of female and male speakers. If Labour is committed to material equality, then the party should refuse to pay its officials market-rate salaries. If Labour is committed to democratic equality, then the role of leadership must be dramatically restrained. Seen from this perspective, the means of Labour politics must be directly and immediately shaped by the ends that Labour claims to pursue. When the idealists are in control, the mood is leadership-critique.

For others in the party, let us call them the 'realists', this is to get the whole business wrong. Seen from this perspective, it is crucial that the ends take priority over the means. It is impossible to satisfy the ends in the immediate here-and-now because the immediate here-and-now is blighted by domination and inequality of power. The battle in which Labour is engaged, the argument continues, has to be fought in a way that might bring it victory, not in a way that reflects the desired goals in the present state. There is nothing the party can meaningfully do in opposition and so all efforts must be made to engage effectively with the electoral process so that power can be achieved and real progress made towards the securing of Labour ends. We are all familiar with the results of this argument too. It is this sort of 'realism' that led to the acceptance of spin and personality-assault that characterized the worst aspects of Labour politics in the late 1990s and 2000s. When the realists are in control, the mood might best be described as a leadership frenzy.

There are grave difficulties with the arguments of both the idealists and realists. The first difficulty concerns the idealists' innocent account of the relationship between means and ends. The idealists go awry here in their faith in the possibility of securing idealized goals in the very non-ideal conditions of our present politics. Idealists of this sort usually relegate themselves to a position of continual defeat while convincing themselves of the moral rectitude of their actions, and there is something depressing

about a position that is at once naive and self-congratulatory. In philosophical terms, they are the worst sort of 'anti-consequentialists'. The outcome of their actions makes no difference to them as long as they practise the values to which they claim to adhere.

But it is crucial to note that the realists also go wrong. Realists suppose that decent ends in politics can be straightforwardly secured by indecent means. But this is an undoubted error. The manner in which a particular goal is pursued actually shapes the nature of the goal that will become obtainable. Social cohesion and the common good cannot emerge from a politics of outright domination. A better, more relational society cannot be brought about through managerial or technocratic control.

Labour's early pioneers – men and woman like Keir Hardie, Annie Besant, GDH Cole, and Arthur Henderson – were all very well aware of the limitations of both straightforward idealism and realism. They rejected the revolutionary violence of their generation's realists. They also turned their back on the naive utopianism of the romantic socialists who made up their idealists. They turned instead to a unique combination of trade union organizing, on the one hand, and electoral politics, on the other. They did so because they knew that the kind of society that they wished to see could come into being only through the actions that they chose to take. A solely electoral approach of the sort favoured by the Liberal Party, focused solely on the winning electoral victories, would leave too much of everyday experience untouched. That is why they insisted on a continual role for trade unionism. A violent revolutionary approach, on the other hand, would exacerbate tensions between the classes, inviting still greater repression from the state and alienating potential supporters. That is why they insisted on the parliamentary route.

The end that these pioneers pursued in the face of huge obstacles was a more equal and democratic social order. That meant that the means that they chose were insistent and realistic – they had

to be in order to overcome the ferocious obstacles they faced – but also focused directly on shaping experiences that would enable social divisions to heal in time, and a common good to be discovered.

What this reminds us of is that the idealist and realist strands of Labour's more recently polarized thinking on means and ends in politics are each fundamentally flawed. They fail to appreciate that the political means that we choose to employ in any on-going struggle must be shaped by *both* a realistic account of the challenges that we face *and* an idealistic account of the goals that we are aiming to pursue. In fact, in the very best of political thinking these two elements combine to generate a form of political action that turns away from crude means and ends thinking altogether. It is from there that Labour's best account of leadership comes. To grasp that, we must both understand the 'world as it is' and keep alive our notion of the 'world as it should be'.

Relationship

When we start to reflect on both the 'where we are' and 'where we want to be' of politics, we are reminded that the Labour tradition is at its strongest when it strives to overcome the constraints placed on people's lives by the unaccountable power of capital. That power is an ever-present in our society. It is a power that now shapes the lives of everyone, seeking to turn people into commodities that can be bought and sold and moved around the globe at will, dismantling communities, disregarding the social and individual consequences of both its up-turns and its down-swings. People, seen this way, are but entries in a spreadsheet. We are to be transacted with and acted upon, measured and quantified, and we find ourselves constantly at the disposal of the cause of profit-maximization.

From a Labour perspective, it is nonsense to pretend that this power does not exist, or to insist that its workings are always and uniformly beneficial. It is also nonsense, however, to pretend that

the power of capitalism and its political advocates can be dismantled, either by simply wishing it away through the shaping of preferred alternatives, as the idealists might try, or by directly battling with it on its own terms, as the realists attempt. Instead, the right response to the power of capitalism comes through the creation of an alternative power: one grounded in the possibilities of relationship. It is what Labour thinkers used to call 'combination' that potentially makes the difference, with people coming together to identify shared concerns and building a movement of solidarity through which they seek to face down the gravest of all the evils that rampant capitalism imposes on them.

Crucially, the benefits of these combinations are both instrumental and intrinsic. Relationship is, in other words, both a means and an end. It is only through effective common action that capitalism can be constrained: that is the instrumental part. It is also through effective relationship that we are able to overcome the pathologies that come from being treated like an object rather than like a person: that is the intrinsic part. Relationship with others thus offers both a mechanism essential to battle and a direct experience of life as it might be lived if we were not subject to capitalist power.

More strikingly still, these two aspects of relationship – the instrumental and intrinsic – actually reinforce each other. As the political theorist Bonnie Honig explains, some political causes do need to be 'fought for on judicial or formal institutional terrains. But they also need to be *lived* ... The work of institution-building simply cannot succeed without the support and perspective of life lived otherwise.' That is why Eduard Bernstein said that the 'movement is everything'.

It is here that the story of Labour renewal begins to emerge. Seen from this perspective, what Labour needs most fundamentally to do is help enable relationship. That does not mean that Labour should encourage people to act exactly as they would in a putative ideal state, generating a 'touchy-feely' sense of 'we're all equal in this together.' That would entail overlooking the real difficulties that

people face in relating with each other today, and ignore the possible contributions that leadership can bring. But nor does it mean that Labour should try to win the political battle on the terms on which it is currently fought – through, say, cult of personality, elite competition or managerial manipulation. That would overlook the potential benefits of relationship altogether and mire Labour in an alienated, transactional individualism from which no strong challenge to rampant capitalism can possibly emerge.

Instead, Labour needs to recognize that the immediate task is to help release the relational capacity of its own party members, supporters, and the broader citizenry. This would make Labour a more powerful party capable of competing in elections. It would also make it a better party, in which good relationships are forged and not broken. The political philosopher Hannah Arendt once said that real power came from 'moving with others'. That would be something that even the most hardened sceptics amongst us would give up an evening for.

Leadership + relationship = organising

Four fundamental practical tasks follow the account developed so far.

The *first* concerns party organization. In order to build effective, fighting relationships, Labour needs organizational structures that enable otherwise disconnected people to find combination with each other.

The labour movement was originally conceived in just this way. When we think of Labour's past now, we often imagine that it drew its strength from an inherently solidaristic, socially uniform working class. Those of us who strive to retrieve Labour's democratic traditions are often thus dismissed as nostalgic for a lost homogeneity. But this is a profound mistake. In fact, in the early twentieth century, just as today, Labour faced a nation deeply divided along vocational, regional, religious and ideological lines,

and that rich diversity was thoroughly reflected in the party itself. As the great Labour thinker, RH Tawney noted in 1934:

> the elements composing the Labour Party are extremely miscellaneous. If variety of educational experience and economic condition among its active supporters be the test, Labour is, whether fortunately or not, as a mere matter of fact, less of a class party than any other British party. That variety means that the bond of common experience is weaker than in parties whose members have been taught at school and college to hang together.

The difference is that in the past the party responded to that diversity by seeking to build relationship through its own organization. Constituency parties provided meeting places for those with different opinions and different interests who nonetheless wished to discover shared interests. The broader party then brought these geographical groupings into alliance with industrial groupings through its connection with the trades unions. The socialist societies and affiliated organizations then further brought people with other differences in aspirations and outlooks into the coalition. A series of meetings, rituals, events, and struggles cemented the relationships, ranging from annual conference to festivals, picket lines, marches, galas, and demonstrations. In the early years of the party, commentators even talked of developing a 'religion of socialism'. They did so not because the party demonstrated belief in the truth of its own dogmas, but because the party had grown by devising structures and practices that mirrored those of the non-conformist churches who had faced a similar struggle in building relationship where none had been present before.

If there is to be party renewal, the Labour leadership's first task is to address itself to the creation of a set of organizing structures and practices that can do this once again. Such structures will not

be identical to those of old. They will need to be even more inclusive, more diverse, and more wide-ranging than before. They will need to enable people to come into combination who have previously felt excluded from common action. Such structures will, as a result, have to strive hard to reduce the barriers to entry. They will have to welcome new members, and encourage the slow building of connections, through one-to-one and group discussions. These organizations will also flourish as they engage winnable local campaigns. It is when people come together locally to save a library, help set up a new day care centre, or clean up decaying public spaces, that they begin to feel bonds of solidarity with each other that do not currently exist. This is a powerful basis for Labour renewal.

The *second* task moves from structure to style. In order to help release relational energies, the Labour leadership at all levels must communicate in a way that practically demonstrates the difference between the individuated, transactional quasi-relationships that dominate capitalist culture and the fuller, reciprocal relationships required to face up to capitalist power. This does not mean that Labour needs to strive for a thorough-going participatory structure where everyone engages as a full-blown equal. Effective relationships do grow better in democracies than in authoritarian regimes, but they most emphatically do not require the absence of hierarchy or authority. Instead, relational renewal requires that leaders within the party both acknowledge the importance of pre-existing relational bonds and make continual efforts to shape new bonds through their rhetoric and argumentation.

It is for this reason that the party's leaders are ill-served by the language of ahistorical, abstracted liberal universalism, the language of 'fairness' and 'justice' that has become our standard Labour vocabulary. Instead, they need to find a language that is rich in respect – or even better, love – for the actual relational strengths of the British people, be they grounded in traditions, stories, or places. This is the true importance of the need for 'narrative' often

trumpeted by experts in political communications. Real narratives, which are recognizable in their concrete references to real people, places and actions, celebrate the connections between people and help us to stitch together those who currently stand outside the group. They transform a leader into a real representative. They enable us to shape a lived history in which the character of the leader – the virtues, the bravery, courage, strategic consistency and tactical virtuosity of the leader – are understood and valued as part of a story where we all play a part, where we all think and act together.

The *third* task begins with recognition of responsibility. Effective relationships are built on trust. They therefore require that people who have the greatest role in shaping the destiny of the group are willing both to acknowledge their errors and to accept that the consequences of any mistakes fall on their own heads. Leaders who resist this responsibility engender a sense of nervousness among the group with whom they identify. As a result, relationships fray and collective action becomes far more difficult.

It is this failure of responsibility that lies at the heart of many of the caricatured critiques of Labour today. In an understandable desire to protect the reputation of the out-going government, senior Labour Party politicians are frequently found publicly denying that Britain's financial troubles are the party's fault. But it is extraordinarily difficult for these same politicians to help build new and better relationships in the face of such denials. People will not engage in common action with those who they believe are shirking responsibility. The crash in the financial sector and the resulting deficit came under Labour's watch. The party and its leadership is thus always going to be popularly held to be at fault, whatever the disagreements on macro-economic policy. An acceptance of responsibility – an acknowledgement of weakness in this regard – would not make the crafting of new relationships between Labour's leaders and its people harder, as is currently implied. It would make it far easier. Pride in our party's achievements should not prevent us from acknowledging our mistakes.

The *fourth* task has been raised implicitly throughout this discussion. Leadership in the Labour Party is never invested in a single person. However crucially important Ed Miliband's own behaviour, communication, and administrative expertise is, therefore, a party that is committed to building effective relationships in the face of an alienating, individuating capitalist culture has to have leaders throughout the organization and across the country. Labour thus desperately needs a programme of leadership development. It needs to ensure that there are individuals capable of fostering relationships at a local, regional and national level. Individuals who can bring people together, help them identify shared concerns, provide strategic guidance, exhibit courage in the face of difficulty, inspire others to step out of the protected privacy of their domestic lives and engage in acts of solidarity.

These leaders already exist in pockets of the country. Most of us know at least one person like this. But many of them need further training, funding, and encouragement if they are to transform the party and bring real change to the communities in which they live. This training could come in many forms. It could emerge through the trade unions, especially with the expansion and development of the TUC's Activist Academy. It could also come from independent groups of self-organized activists such as those which have recently taken the fight to the Coalition in order to save the EMA or to prevent the sale of our national forests. Most importantly of all, though, it should come through the Labour Party itself.

The party has been nervous about developing new leaders of late, concerned perhaps that they might destabilize relationships within the party itself, especially where it is locally in office and has been for some time. Now, however, is no time for such queasiness. An enriched organization, and a new generation of leaders, is worth the price. I have found nothing as inspirational this year as the conversation I had during the Labour leadership election with Sophie Stephens, one of Movement for Change's organizers. As

Sophie told me the stories of the local campaigns that she had helped facilitate and their sometimes strained but always transformative relationship with already established Labour politics, it became paradoxically clear both how difficult is the job that faces organizers, and how much can achieved even in a short space of time.

An old approach and a new generation

Barack Obama's campaign had a catchy slogan that summed up much of what I have been discussing in this paper so far: '*We are the change we have been waiting for*.' It is a slogan that contains three crucial components. The first is the collective 'we'. With that word, it makes it clear that change in politics cannot come about through individuated action. It needs solidarity. The second is the insistence that people far beyond the Washington elite have a part to play in securing change. Leadership, the slogan tells us, is not just a property of those at the very top. The third is the implicit insistence on responsibility. If change does not come, the slogan suggests, that is no-one's fault but our own. *We* are the change we have been waiting for. If we do not act then we have no-one to blame but ourselves. There is no sense that radical politics consists merely of a culture of complaint, and an expectation of state beneficence. There is no victim mentality here.

It might be argued, of course, that little has come of this movement since it dramatically helped to sweep Barack Obama to power two years ago. The enthusiasm has ebbed away, the organizational prowess passed from Democratic activists to Tea Party lunacy. Some take this as an indictment of Obama's Washington performance. On this account, it is his inability to do deals with Congressional Republicans or to outline a clear legislative agenda that has undermined his leadership.

But this seems to get things wrong. The original Obama campaign revealed beyond question the potential power of relational politics. Obama was a candidate at the head of a

movement. He was a leader capable of entering towns and villages across the country, finding people who had never been engaged in politics before and helping stitch them together into a new series of common actions. It was no surprise that he won the Democratic Party nomination by succeeding in the 'caucuses', where people actually have to turn up in meeting halls and community centres, rather than in the traditional 'primaries', where people simply have to vote.

The difficulty Obama has faced, therefore, has been one of maintaining that style of politics while also being the chief executive, primary legislator, and commander of the armed forces. It is hard to build strong every-day relationships in opposition to power while also being an administrator and trying to say above the partisan fray. This is, no doubt, a problem that any future Labour prime minister would also face, if to a lesser extent than a US president. But it would be quite wrong for Labour to be paralyzed by this thought, not least because it is far from as grave a problem in opposition.

Labour today has two key roles. It must get back into position so that it can fight effectively at the next election *and* it must be a force for immediate good in Britain today, fighting the coalition across the country and building new possibilities where it can. In order to do both of these things, it must commit itself to the kind of politics that we saw from Obama the candidate rather than Obama the President, and from Labour at its best rather than Labour at its worst. Labour, in other words, must strive to create a new relational dynamic in British politics, new alliances with contrary and previously antagonistic forces to build a common life within the labour movement. It must do so by being clear of its purpose. The party's leadership must help to reorganize, communicate in a way that is respectful of relational traditions, accept responsibility for its own actions and the actions of its immediate predecessors, and help to train a new generation of leaders for the future.

It would be a tragedy if Labour shirked this challenge. Labour

cannot expect success to be generated by happy accident. Just like Stanley Baldwin's National Government of the 1930s, David Cameron's coalition knows that it can be re-elected without Wales, Scotland, and large swathes of the North of England. It does not need the public sector to be on side. It can quite happily allow Labour to represent the rump, while it collects the support of the rest of the country. If Labour is to stop this from happening and turn its political fortunes around it needs dynamic and effective leadership and it needs new organization. In this paper, I have tried to show that these are, in fact, part of the same story. We cannot have leadership with organization, nor organization without leadership.

If Labour gets this right, though, the rewards will be enormous, and key amongst them will be a reconnection with the party's own tradition. In 1938, GDH Cole wrote that, whatever their many differences, every member of the Labour Party shared 'a desire for human fellowship, and a belief that fellowship is unattainable save within an economic order based through and through on the principle of social co-operation, and immune from those destructive antagonisms which to-day keep men humanly as well as economically apart'. Labour's renewal today will be guaranteed when we begin to craft such fellowship through our own movement and party once again.

Three styles of modern leadership

Jonathan Rutherford

I want to respond to Marc's paper in two parts. The first part is an engagement with his ideas on leadership. The second part is adding to what he's already set out so well.

Marc's paper is characteristically robust and clear in its argument. He defines the themes of leadership in the context of Maurice's earlier paper. By placing relationships and communication at its heart, Marc recognises that in a democracy, successful leadership is achieved in a dialogue between leadership and followership. Leadership requires an 'emotional aliveness', the capacity to put one's self in the shoes of others. It also requires the resolve to exercise authority and to squarely face conflict.

Central to Marc's notion of leadership is the idea of relationship. It is also a key theme in Maurice's radical tradition. I agree with Marc and Maurice that relationships must be at the heart of Labour's revival as a political force. The relational, the emotional, the distribution of power between men and women, are once again central in politics.

Marc's paper offers a means of judging leadership. Good leadership distributes leadership throughout the organisation, it enlivens people, it establishes a just exercise of power and authority, it builds consent, collegiality, loyalty and trust. Poor leadership creates a 'parentless organisation' that is incapacitated by indecision, fear, anxiety and drift. It avoids conflict and creates gangs and disconnection rather than groups and networks.

The nature of leadership is a live issue for us, which, if we are to

be true to Marc's notions of leadership, we must address. Labour currently lacks a strategic political direction and it is searching for an intellectual basis for renewal. It has lost very large numbers of members and is unsure about how to win them back or what kind of party it is to become.

Marc's paper is not about something happening 'out there'. The task of the seminars is to help shape the future of Labour's politics. What is their role in helping to shape the organisational culture of Labour's leadership? How might they set down some philosophical and political foundations for building a Labour identity and a series of policy strategies?

These are questions we need to consider. We cannot separate theory and practice, nor can we detach theory and practice from the cultural and emotional life of our organisation. As Marc says, that involves the destructive splitting of means and end.

The second part of my response asks a wider question. What makes an effective leader? With the risk of being simplistic, if we dig down into the idea of political leadership we come across three styles.

First there is the early-modern leader. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli discusses what happens when a private citizen becomes prince of his native city not through violence or wickedness, but 'with the favour of his fellow citizens'. He advises that such a prince 'must have the friendship of the common people'. Without it he will have no support in adversity. For Machiavelli, what counts is the relationship between the leader and his followers. The Prince 'leads by example', demonstrating a virtuous life of moral courage.

Second there is the modern leader. Modernity and industrialisation have changed the nature of power and the exercise of authority. Each has become more systematised and routinised. And so leadership has also changed – it has become ideological.

Gramsci is the theorist of the Modern Prince. He argues that the Modern Prince cannot be a real individual. It can only be a complex element of society, 'a collective will' that has already been recognised,

and has to some extent already asserted itself in action and begun to take concrete form. For Gramsci, the Modern Prince is the political party. The role of the party is to be both organiser and active expression of a national-popular collective will. Its task is to enact moral and intellectual reform and transform the culture and economy of a society. Its success is defined by the achievement of hegemony.

The third style is the postmodern leader. The mass political party is in decline. It has lost its social foundations. Can we talk any more about a national collective will? The party has become a kind of 'cartel' geared to office seeking. Party politics is more instrumental, and geared to management, efficiency, performance and delivery. The 'party on the ground' has been downgraded in favour of a political class of professional politicians, public opinion specialists, etc.

At the same time party politics has been incorporated into the media world of instant reaction, branding and celebrity culture. Political leadership has been personalised, encouraging leaders into an intimacy with the electorate: speaking about what were once private feelings and thoughts. The party leader must become a 'personality', and must be seen to be doing and saying something, in order to exist in people's minds and to avoid being re-described by the opposition. In this media culture, what counts is the same as what counts in reality tv shows: an appeal based on personal ethics and character.

Three styles of leadership: Machiavelli's charismatic leader; the ideologist; the post-modern shape shifter.

A successful leader needs competence, but also a combination of all three styles. The question is, what combination and what kind of organisation will prove to be most effective? In the wake of the financial crash, with a dysfunctional economy and trends toward political realignment, this political moment poses extraordinary difficulties for effective political leadership. Marc's paper offers us the means for answering these questions.

The policy implications

Duncan O'Leary

In the seminar David Miliband made the point that Andrew Straus has an easy job in one respect: he knows what success looks like. Jonathan raises the question of what success looks like for us. It seems to me that in these seminars we are trying to lay the groundwork for the intellectual renewal of the Labour Party, but also to work out how we renew as an organisational force at the same time. The genius of Maurice's paper is that it brings those two things together. Labour must reunite 'mum' and 'dad', (re) integrating organisation and association into our political philosophy. We are in trouble if the party becomes a single-parent family, either bereft of ideas or adrift from practical action.

Marc's paper moves us on to what some of the conditions are for achieving that. What kind of leadership allows both parents to work in harmony? His answer is that it must be (1) relational – 'the movement is everything'; and (2) distributed – direction and initiative can't just come from the top. The question that now follows, posed by Jon Cruddas, is how we achieve those things in practice.

Hearing from people who understand and have lived 'organisation' is vital. So too, though, is the policy context. It can either encourage and provide opportunities for leadership or snuff it out. During the period we were in government there was a lot stacked against the kind of leadership Marc argues for.

Labour fought the '97 election faced with a very powerful, centralised broadcast and print media. We responded with centralised control of 'the message' and by closing down opportunities for people to depart from that. Meanwhile, our

funding model was based mostly on a small number of large donations. Having won the election, we inherited a centralised state and, despite devolution, centralised it further in many areas. To compound all of this, the power and patronage of two people at the top dominated the internal dynamics of the parliamentary party for more than a decade.

None of this is very encouraging either to relational or distributed leadership. How does anyone lead when the broadcast and print media have such power to frame the terms of debate? Why bother to organise a community to address anti-social behaviour if the Home Secretary sets police priorities through central targets? How do you become a political leader in a local area when all the power resides in Westminster? What happens if you disagree with whichever gang happens to be in control of the party?

Marc references the Obama campaign in his paper as an example of the kind of leadership we need. The comparisons are telling. First, in the US there were more channels for someone from outside the mainstream to emerge. City Mayors. Governorships. The Senate. The House. These different routes provide more opportunities for people to demonstrate real leadership outside of the patronage of the party's central hierarchy. Also consider the 'republican' culture of America, which makes organising much less counter-cultural. US judges and police are democratically accountable, for instance, which gives communities leverage if they get organised. Then think about the way Obama ran his campaign. He decentralised communication through social media, and democratised fundraising through small donations. People had (more) ownership over the money and the message.

So there are things we can do on how we campaign, organise and communicate in the party. But it is also policy that can provide some footholds for organisation and leadership. Maurice has been arguing for worker representation on company boards, for example, as one such foothold in the workplace. In other areas of policy it might mean city mayors, local licensing & planning laws, more

democratically accountable policing/judiciary and so on. All these things give people more opportunities to emerge as leaders, and communities something to organise around. To me the lesson is that we won't get decentralised, relational leadership in a centralised, overly hierarchical politics.

What does empowerment mean?

Jon Stokes

Marc makes a compelling case that the Labour Party is uncomfortable with leadership. I would describe this in terms of a conflict between two styles: charismatic leadership which focuses on the importance of the leader, with an essentially passive, dependent followership; and inspirational leadership which focuses on bringing out the strengths and capabilities of the followers. An important ingredient in this is the capacity to empower others. The fatal attraction that most leaders – including leaders of the Labour Party – have to charismatic styles of leadership is in sharp contrast to a rhetoric about 'empowerment'. I want to argue – as Marc does – that looking at the problematic dynamics of leadership must be at the heart of the Labour Party's search for a new approach to politics. If people are to become more engaged and empowered, then the largely dependent relationship we often create with our leaders must be something that we in turn more actively and deliberately resist. This response sets out one approach to doing this.

I want to argue that if Labour is to have a future, it will be not so much as the meaning-maker itself, but as the facilitator or enabler of meaning-making, of the human capacity to identify problems and to create solutions from within – within groups and from within communities. I believe it can only do so by a radical re-imagining of what politics is about, and what it can help people with. To improve politics we have to take better account of two things – what empowerment is, and what we know about the relationship between a group and its leader.

The profession of politics, and its close relative the law, are the last remaining unreconstructed professions. Medicine, teaching, the helping professions generally, have all had to go through a paradigm shift in which the professional can no longer sit above, in judgment and distant from its client. Whilst politicians on the left often believe themselves to be in the business of empowerment, they have rarely thought through what this means in practice.

The charismatic model of leadership still holds sway, despite our experience that when a group projects so massively its hope, intelligence and power onto a leader, the inevitable result is some form of tragedy.

David Miliband has spoken of the three significant dimensions of modern politics as being power, security and belonging. What I think this may miss is that human beings also have aspirations and want to improve themselves and their families, and to achieve. New Labour seemed to recognise this. There seems to be a risk of this getting lost. Rather, the Labour Party should recast itself as a politics of enablement, helping people to achieve what they want to do in their lives, rather than returnomg to the same old politics of dependency, in which politicians posit solutions to the largely uncomprehending and now largely uninterested masses.

Over the past forty years we have learnt a great deal from a scientific perspective about what enables human development. From the fields of child development, counselling, psychotherapy, teaching and all manner of helping professions, a common central finding emerges. We now know that the central common essential ingredient in any effective helping relationship is an experience in which the client feels properly listened to and understood. There is no compelling evidence that any one method or technique of parenting, teaching or therapy, or school of helping, is superior to any other. Indeed, the scientific evidence is the reverse, that they are more or less all equally effective, providing that one simple but essential developmental ingredient is present – a helper who is experienced by the client as paying close attention to, and

empathising with, their own experience, and is hopeful about the client's capacity to solve their problem. Indeed, this seems to be the essence of the empowering ingredient in any helping relationship.

Like all professionals, those drawn to politics underestimate the importance of this factor. They tend to project all too quickly their own assumptions, desires, ambitions and solutions onto the 'client'. If the Labour Party wishes to be, as it claims, in the business of empowerment, then it will have to start from another place. The single greatest cause of failure in those who try to help others is to assume that they understand how it feels to be the client – and that they know what the cause of the problem is. Even if they do, their explanation of the cause of the problem is of little matter: what matters is that the client develops their own understanding of the cause of the problem. And all the evidence suggests that, once the client has done so, a solution will start to occur from within the client, not from the expert. This is the essence of an act of empowerment – providing the conditions in which an individual or group becomes free to think, to identify the problem and to discover solutions.

What might that mean in practice? It seems to me that we need more politicians who have grown up as community activists, learning how to do leadership that empowers, who have had to listen, influence and persuade through relationship and connection, as Marc has argued. It will mean the party deliberately recruiting people to stand for MP who have had a broader experience of leadership, with a richer experience of life, who have been leaders in a wider variety of walks of life, and with whom people are able to identify. And to learn from these experiences.

The appeal of the Big Society is that more big government is fairly clearly not going to provide much in the way of solutions to the problems of the communities in which we live and work. Currently, more people seek meaning and purpose from reality television and celebrity role models than they do from politics. The explosion in life coaching and coaching in the workplace is similarly

driven by the desire to make sense of things for oneself, in order to have more control and influence over one's life and experience. Politics will only be meaningful for people when it is experienced as being capable of delivering some of these same things. The narcissism of the professional classes, including professional politicians, is a potential danger to the always ambivalent and fragile desire within each of us to take charge of our own lives.

Labour evasions

Jon Wilson

Perhaps Labour's biggest failure is that it never worked out its own practical theory of power. The bipolar oscillation between leaderless paralysis and cultish followership that Marc identifies is a consequence of that failure. Neither fantasising about living in a powerless society nor replicating the forms of power we wish to challenge are the answer. Marc's answer is for Labour to reach into our tradition to develop a distinctively Labour way of thinking about and acting out power.

Marc's account offers a challenge to the idea that power works through forms of abstraction. Our politics and government is dominated by abstract ideas and numbers that are distant from the way people experience their lives. On the left, our idea of equality is based around the measurement of the average statistical attributes possessed by this or that section of the population, rather than the real experience people have of hardship in particular places at particular points in time. The last Labour government seemed stuck in a loop that never touched the individual experiences of real people. And despite talking about the post-bureaucratic society, its Liberal Conservative successor seems no different.

What's missing, Marc says, is the kind of leadership that works by making 'concrete references to real people, places and actions', and in doing so connecting different traditions, perspectives and ways of life into a single movement. Rather than trumpeting abstract but often meaningless concepts like individual rights or equality, Labour politicians need to tell stories rich in the concrete details of individual lives, times and places. Those stories must take sides in the struggles which people face in daily life, for example for

a decent wage (therefore against the local supermarket paying poverty wages) or a safe local environment (so against the land-fill site). They bring people from different backgrounds and points of view together: as Maurice argued, Labour's distinctiveness is that it united Catholic and Protestant, church-goer and atheist, working-class trade unionist and middle-class social democrat.

What unifies, though, is a clear moral perspective on the specific ways in which life for me and my neighbours, in this place, can be lived better together. The kind of leaders Marc talks about tell convincing stories about the kind of collective action which is necessary here and now. They then take responsibility for the particular ways things need to change, but also involve others as active participants in the process of transformation.

Yet there is something in the present culture of Labour politics that repels us from making these kinds of connections and commitments. There is a justifiable unwillingness to appear falsely familiar – remember Nick Clegg's name-dropping in the election debates last year? But there is also a deep-rooted reluctance about taking sides in the tense situations that cut through real local life (and what life *isn't* local?). Labour Party branches push leaflets through doors claiming to be 'on your side'. But when was the last time a local Labour Party branch stood up for under-paid workers in a particular local firm, rather than against low pay in general? 'We have no power' would be the answer. But these are the struggles the labour movement was founded to fight. Are we really saying that after thirteen years in government we have less power than we did when you could count the number of Labour MPs on one hand?

What has changed is our idea about the kind of power we have. In government, Labour relied on what I'd call statistical power – the power to alter big numbers through tiny acts that can nonetheless have a potentially cumulatively massive effect over time. This is power that is also directed at generalities, never at particular concrete situations. It can only be exercised by state institutions. It happens when politicians tell paid bureaucrats to change a rule or

regulation somewhere, that then alters how the machinery of government behaves towards a particular class of the population: increasing the tax allowance or changing the way Job Centre workers treat benefit claimants for example.

Statistical power is done to other people. It is profoundly unrelational. It treats its subjects as numbers, as members of a statistical series, rather than as people with lives, families and personalities, who can only be understood by two-way conversation and interaction. Most importantly, it allows politicians to evade any sense of responsibility for what is happening here and now, or for creating any kind of collective momentum that could lead to local change. If all power really lies with the bureaucrats, the ordinary Labour Party member is truly disempowered. With an almost Stalinist degree of arrogance, 'progressive' politicians tell us not to push our own personal interests too far, and instead wait until a future Labour government acts for the common good.

Of course statistical power was never *our*, Labour, kind of power. It came to dominate our politics as too many our brothers and sisters were seduced away from the messy, argumentative field of real political struggle to a bureaucratic world in which policy answers are discovered amidst polite chatter and excel spreadsheets.

With its emphasis on the centrality of relationships to Labour politics, Marc's paper pulls us out of Whitehall and back to reality – where change isn't just about waiting for government to act on our part. It relies on local leaders creating forms of solidarity that allow transformative forms of action to occur. The central idea – that any kind of effective social action relies on relationships that are specific to a particular time and place – offers the starting point for a truly Labour theory of power.

Leaders matter

Stefan Baskerville

In 2008 I was on a voter registration and turnout effort in Dayton, Ohio. I was with colleagues in a housing project, a bleak and low-slung collection of 1970s houses, trying to encourage its residents that it was worth their while to vote. On one doorstep, a colleague started a conversation with an energetic young woman, and when it transpired she was too young to vote, we invited her to make a difference by joining us in getting others to vote. Natasha was 15 years old, but she was excited by the prospect of an African American president, and she rose to our challenge to act on that. The next Saturday we went out walking, and she came with us, bringing her cousin along too. The week after that, and every week for the following two months, Natasha brought at least eight new people to join in with the effort. During that year, we spoke to more than 30,000 voters in the lowest-turnout neighbourhoods in Ohio. That was only possible because of leaders like Natasha. Leaders matter.

What is a leader and what do they do? A leader is by definition someone who has followers and can deliver them consistently. They build a following through the intentional development of relationships in which they listen to their people. Listening is more important than talking. The most effective way of becoming a powerful leader is to get very skilled and effective at developing other leaders, developing other people's power. In the words of Lao Tzu, 'A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves'.

Leaders build relationships, bring people together around a shared aim, lead them into action, and develop new leaders. These actions of leaders can be taught, learned and practised. Leadership

is an acquired skill not an inherent trait. And it can only be acquired through action.

Jon Stokes has argued that 'the charismatic model of leadership still holds sway despite our experience that when a group projects so massively its hope, intelligence and power onto a leader, the inevitable result is some form of tragedy'. It results in an alienated membership, declining participation, and a less powerful party. Labour must turn away from the charismatic conception of leadership that underpins what Marc calls the current terms of battle: 'cult of personality, elite competition and managerial manipulation'. Instead, the party should cultivate leaders through the conscious creation, development and nurturing of relationships. The party must teach and learn leadership all the time, as an intrinsic part of what it does. Each local meeting should be used for the development of the party's members, as a chance to strengthen relationships and plan action.

On the charismatic conception, leaders are simultaneously supposed to be intelligent, charismatic, inspiring, brave, consistent, humorous, accessible, humble, attractive, confident, and a whole host of other things. The problem is that no one has all of these qualities. Every leader is made of crooked timber. This is one of the reasons why the party needs lots of leaders, at all levels. The issue of leadership is not only about the person at the top. A group of leaders can form a team with a common purpose that, collectively, makes up for their individual weaknesses. Good leaders know that they are at their most effective and powerful when they have co-operative relationships with other leaders. Leadership is multiple, not singular.

A relational model of leadership is the most democratic understanding of leadership we can have: anyone able to build relationships is able to lead. You don't need to be in a position of authority or have a title. This is threatening to those in bureaucracies and established structures, who often owe what power they have to patronage or the authority of their position.

Policy-making needs to change dramatically too. Currently it is dominated by small groups of similar people who think like each other, live similar lives, and who mostly do not have relationships with the people their policies affect. Instead the party should focus on creating opportunities for people to participate, and particularly for people outside the party with whom Labour has lost touch. Hearing directly from people and acting with them on what they want is an integral part of successful leadership development programme.

This understanding of the solution to the party's current plight is based on a relational understanding of power. Marc's argument here cuts to the heart of the party's current predicament. In thrall to unilateral power for decades, hoping to capture the state and use it for agreed ends, the party has forgotten the magic that was part of its beginnings: the power that people generate together when they know one another and act together. The development of new leaders is an expansion of power, not unilateral power 'over' but relational power 'with'.

For years there has been a growing sense of disconnection felt by party members and supporters, arising from the prioritising of the short-term media 'message', the centralization of power in the leader's office, the focus on electoral machine rather than political action, and policy-making by focus group and elite special advisers. Under these circumstances, what role is left for the party member other than to push leaflets through doors and do turnout on election day?

Labour likes talking too much and listening too little. To win again, it needs to embark on a programme of leadership development that takes ordinary members into action on issues they choose themselves. The party can only claim to trust people if it's willing to listen to them and have them exercise real power. There's a long way to go.

3. The future is conservative

Jonathan Rutherford

Labour has won the Oldham by-election and it has gained 50,000 new members since May 2010. But let us be wary of false dawns and recognise the historical predicament Labour is in. What has Labour lost? It has lost five million voters and an election that fell just short of a catastrophe. It has lost touch with a generation of younger voters many of whom will never vote Labour. Scores of thousands of party members, embittered, disillusioned and ignored, have left. Many people no longer trust that the party is on their side. What is Labour's historical purpose? The answer is unclear. And it has lost its traditional values and an identity. In these predicaments Labour shares a political crisis of social democracy with its sister parties across Europe. But in England something more fundamental has been lost and that is a Labour language and culture which belonged to the society it grew out of and which enabled its immersion in the life of the people. Labour is at risk of losing England and it has lost the ability to renew its political hegemony within the class which gave it life.

That hegemony was about community, work, country and a sense of honour. It was also about men. In the last three decades the meaning of all of these has been thrown into question and irrevocably changed. Labour's patrimony, the party loyalty and culture of work that fathers handed down to sons – and daughters too, but Labour has been a deeply patriarchal movement – is dying out. None speak as clearly of this loss as the philosopher Roger Scruton. His father was a man whose class meant that his intelligence and gifts went unrewarded and unrecognised. Scruton rejected his father's discontent and socialism and instead embraced Conservatism. And yet there lies in his choice an ambivalence that

offers an insight into how Labour might rebuild its political support in England. Despite himself Scruton remains sympathetic to his father's cause.

> The coal miners, protesting against the closure of their mines, were fighting the same cause: namely the local community against the global economy, somewhere against nowhere. Many people shared my father's belief in the Labour Party, as the sole institution that would actually stop things. Only through the Labour Party, he thought, could we safeguard England which belonged to the people, who in turn belonged to it. The spectacle of a Labour Party committed to 'globalisation', indifferent to the fate of rural England, and managed by smooth 'consultants' who might next year be working for the other side, which is in fact only the same side under another description, would have appalled him. Even in his bitterest protests against the monarchy, the aristocracy and the class system, he was a patriot (Scruton 2010: 256).

Labour's future is conservative. It needs to rediscover England's radical traditions that are rooted in the long political struggle against dispossession. This includes reconnecting with an English socialism that grew out of the struggles for land and for the ownership of one's own labour against the forces of the market and of arbitrary power. In this post-crash era, and in the wake of unregulated globalisation, Labour needs to develop a politics of belonging and a reform of capitalism that draws on the traditions of the common good and a common life. It must, in a literal sense, go out to the people and once again become an organising force in the life of our country, from the cities to the market towns and the villages.

Common life

Each morning I take out our dog and walk a roundabout way to the newsagent. I meet the same people on their way to work, sometimes

we stop briefly to speak to one another. We do not know one another, we are not a community, but, in our differences – and they can be considerable – we share this familiarity and our routines. Our ordering of daily life is unspoken but it gives meaning to the idea that this is where we live. Whatever our different routes here, this is our home and it's where we belong. In the separateness of our lives we share these streets and the events that define them. The unremarkable activity of dog walking is a small part of creating a common life that makes living habitable and understandable.

Without the shared meanings of a common life there is no basis for living a life of one's own. Without society there is no individual; the two are inseparable. First there is 'we', then 'I'. We are born to our parents, and in our birth we transform their lives and identities. We become individual social beings in our relationships, in the associations we join and through the civil society institutions we identify with. Our values are shaped by them, and our corporate identities are formed in the imagined communities of class and place. Our learning and the work we do is our reciprocal engagement with society and, if we are fortunate, a source of self-development. And there is something more to each of us that cannot easily be defined, it remains unfinished and open to the world. We can name it love, hope, optimism, desire, faith. It is inextinguishable and its impact on us is transformational. As individuals we can never be reduced entirely to sociological context and explanation. We know things that we cannot always think.

This broadly speaking is our individual 'life world'. Culture gives meaning to this life world. It makes us intelligible to ourselves and to each other through the shared symbols of a common life which both relates us to one another and separates us. Without it, as Hannah Arendt says, we become imprisoned in our own singular experience. Culture provides a society with its collective idiom: out of the traditions of the past, and based on the experience of present time, we shape a future and project ourselves into it. Culture tells us the story of who we are.

This is a story that Labour has lost in the last decade. The early years of New Labour – the pluralism, the ethical socialism, the stakeholding economy, the idea of a covenant of trust and reciprocity with the people, the emotional language that reignited popular hope – created a powerful and successful story. But today Labour is viewed by many as the party of the market and of the state, not of society. It has become disconnected from the ordinary everyday lives of the people. In England Labour no longer knows who it represents; its people are everyone and no-one. It champions humanity in general but no-one in particular. It favours multiculturalism but suspects the popular symbols and iconography of Englishness. It claims to be the party of values but nothing specific. Over the last decade it has failed to give form to a common life, to speak for it and to defend it against the forces of unaccountable corporate power and state intrusion. The achievements of Labour in government were considerable, but we have to address the failures, and these go beyond policy and are foundational in nature. For all the good it did, Labour presided over the leaching away of the common meanings and social ties that bind people together in society. It was its apparent indifference to 'what really matters' that incited such rage and contempt amongst constituencies which had once been traditional bastions of support.

When a common life fragments and a culture becomes disoriented and individuals no longer know who 'we' are, they succumb to a state of bare life. In such a state, though life continues the symbols that give it meaning die. Society's institutions, rituals and customs lose their vitality and fade into shadow. Its leaders and its most capable persons find themselves ill-equipped to deal with the new. In the meaninglessness of a disoriented culture, hope fades and people experience a sense of dispossession.

The American anthropologist Ruth Benedict describes this dispossession as a 'loss of something that had value equal to that of life itself, the whole fabric of a people's standards and beliefs' (Benedict 1968:16). The loss is irreparable. Benedict is describing

the cultural death of highly integrated societies of indigenous people. But in the diverse societies of the west, a similar, less extreme form of cultural devastation is a consequence of transformations in modes of production and consumption. Ways of life associated with redundant industries and forms of work are destroyed. Here too, the future collapses because the concepts for understanding it have disappeared. People are left impotent and defeated. Some become enraged and others become sick, or debilitated by depression and addictions. Despair and rage find their nemesis in cultural difference and in the figure of the immigrant who becomes the harbinger of disruption and the loss of a familiar life. The common capacity for kindness, reciprocity and generosity is undermined and overshadowed by a victim culture of sentimental nostalgia, intolerance and hatred. A populist politics of blame and resentment takes root in which the stranger becomes a scapegoat and the poor are accused of being the cause of their own misfortune. In this descent into impotence lies a collective loss of pride and honour which brings with it indifference and cruelty.

This story of dispossession is of an England that lies in the shadow of the bright lights of consumer culture and the glamour of celebrity and money. The experience of dispossession is most evident in former industrial towns and amongst the working class who have either lost their economic role or feel it threatened. Men who were the agents of its culture of work and solidarity have lost their standing and authority. The Labour Party which grew out of this culture has suffered a similar fate. More widely, a sense of loss extends across class and society to those who have made material gain and climbed the meritocratic ladder. Elements of it exist within each of us, fostering intolerance, a withholding of trust and a concern with the self. Over the last three decades a culture of capitalism has come to dominate our society. Its logic of commodification is to disentangle people from their social ties in order to establish market relations and a language of exchange

value. What it brings in terms of choice and a greater abundance of things, it takes away in terms of non-monetised social value and relationships.

In government, New Labour did not appear to understand this culture or recognise its impact on either its own party or on society and human relationships. By 2005 Tony Blair had embraced globalisation as a positive force for change: 'there is no mystery about what works: an open, liberal economy, prepared constantly to change to remain competitive. The new world rewards those who are open to it'. And while social solidarity remained essential, its purpose today, 'is not to resist the force of globalisation but to prepare for it, and to garner its vast potential benefits' (Blair 2005). Labour's role was to prepare individuals for the global economy not protect them from it: in effect society should be subordinate to market forces.

New Labour ended up with an abstract and jargon filled language, imposing targets and measurable outcomes on the complexities of institutions and people. Its micro-management got results but their permanence lay in league tables and measurable outcomes, not in human hearts. Despite the prosperity of many, New Labour was not loved. It won no enduring loyalty. Its myriad of often excellent policy initiatives, its new hospitals and schools seemed to be met by public indifference. By the end, the market and the state were used as instruments of reform without democracy and without any transfer of power to people. Many of its own pro-market reforms around welfare, education and health are now being taken to their logical conclusion by the Coalition. Cameron claims the legacy of Blair. In opposition Labour can only protest lamely – 'we wouldn't go so far' – bereft of any meaningful alternative.

By moving to the liberal economic right, New Labour abandoned traditional supporters, along with the idea of an ethical commitment to mutual support. In so doing it pushed many of them off the political centre ground toward the emerging English nationalist and racist social movements, and allowed the opening up

of a space to the liberal social left. David Cameron was quick to seize the opportunity. Through a series of skilful manoeuvres, he used Labour's own ethical traditions of mutual improvement, solidarity and reciprocity to begin reconstituting the centre ground around a centre-right politics. All this meant that, with embarrassing speed, the Conservatives were able to detach Labour from its own achievements. By the sleight of hand that redefined the market failure of the banks as a crisis of public debt, Labour's spending in government has been successfully held up as irresponsible and profligate.

Labour must now have a reckoning with itself. It stopped valuing settled ways of life. It did not speak about an identification and pleasure in local place and belonging. It said nothing about the desire for home and rootedness, nor did it defend the continuity of relationships at work and in neighbourhoods. It abandoned people to a volatile market in the name of a spurious entrepreneurialism. Estranged from people's lives and communities, lacking the institutional memory of campaigning and organising, and denuded of internal democracy, it leavened an increasingly dour politics with abstract principles and policy jargon. In its impotence as a social movement it tended to idealise the dynamism of the market, and in doing so it ended up dispersing its own historical purpose and meaning to the four corners of the earth.

Benedict argues that 'our civilization must deal with cultural standards that go down before our eyes and new ones that arise from a shadow upon the horizon' (Benedict 1968:195). Labour's revival in England depends upon it once again being the shadow on the nation's horizon. It must become the creative meaning maker of the people; the collective poet who reworks the shared values of our common life into new ways of living. Wordsworth called this kind of poet, 'an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love'. Labour's historic task is to organise to conserve the good in society, to speak of it when it is silenced, to defend it when it is threatened by the market and the state, and to

nurture it back into existence when, like today, it has been reduced to piecemeal.

Dispossession

Dispossession lies deep in the history of England. It has been the consequence of the enclosures of common land and of primitive forms of capitalist accumulation, both here and in its colonies.

In 1799, Dorothy Wordsworth and her brother William settled in Dove Cottage in Grasmere. Dorothy decided to keep a diary (Wordsworth,1986). She writes about nature, their walks and the garden. But there is more. Almost everyday she describes her encounters with beggars: 'a poor girl called to beg'; a 'broken' soldier; 'a pretty little boy' of seven – 'When I asked him if he got enough to eat, he looked suprized, and said "Nay"'; an old sailor 57 years at sea. She asks those she meets about their lives. Where had these sick, destitute and uprooted people come from?

Countless pamphlets of the time attempted an answer: wages were too high, wages were too low, paupers were feckless, they had bad diets, they had drug habits, they drank tea that impaired their health. In the most intense period of the industrial revolution there were very few who understood that they were living through the wholesale destruction of traditional patterns of common life.

The English working class has been defined in three acts of dispossession and exclusion. The first is the dispossession of the people from their land – and from the common way of life it sustained – through enclosures. Gerrard Winstanley summed up their history in his 'Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England'. He told the landowners: 'The power of enclosing land and owning property was brought into creation by your ancestors by the sword'. Enclosing became standardised in the General Enclosure Act of 1801, and the industrial revolution turned the common people into shiftless migrants.

The second is the exclusion of the labouring classes from the

political life of the country. The enclosures dispossessed the people of common land; the 1832 Parliamentary Reform Act excluded the landless from the franchise. 'In England', wrote GDH Cole, 'it became the unwritten law of the Constitution that the working class must be denied the vote'. The third – which was central to the development of capitalism as a system – was the dispossession of the people from their own labour power. The 1834 Poor Law Reform Act established a competitive market in labour. The poor were divided into helpless paupers who were confined to the workhouse and a new category, the unemployed. Free labourers had to earn their living by working for a wage. Unemployment meant the hated workhouse or death by starvation. Labour became a commodity to be bought or sold, and this commodification destroyed the common people and created the conditions for an industrial working class.

With this new class began what Karl Polanyi describes as the double movement of capitalism in which capital sought to establish self-regulating markets through free trade and laissez-faire principles. Its logic was to commodify land, money and human labour. In reaction a counter movement grew up to defend and conserve individuals, society and nature against commodification. The Labour Party is the product of almost two hundred years of this counter movement. Its history is rooted in the response of people to their dispossession and exclusion.

The early nineteenth-century national debates about the causes of pauperism developed the idea of society. The idea of society was integrated into holistic explanations of life and political economy, providing the intellectual foundations for socialism. English socialism has not been revolutionary, nor has it shared the Presbyterian corporatist values of the Scottish Covenanters. Its powerful strain of rebellious individualism partly grew out of the historic ideal of an Englishman's right to the land and to ownership of one's own labour against arbitrary power and the forces of the market. This independent-mindedness can be found in John

Lilburne's free born Englishman and the common right of the 1647 'An Agreement of the People'. It was the midwife of Labour's emergence from the harshness of Non-Conformism. Out of a culture of religious obedience it helped to fashion a belief in a person's singularity and a concern with ethical life. It gave rise to a politics of liberty, virtue and democracy, and a vast popular movement of voluntary collectivism, co-operativism and mutual self-improvement.

English socialism shares Edmund Burke's recognition that a common life is a partnership between, 'those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born'. And when Ruskin rails against the machine age with his rallying cry, 'there is no wealth but life', he also belongs to the socialist tradition. And Coleridge too, in his belief in 'cultivation' as 'the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterise our humanity'. But though English socialism shares these antecedents with Toryism, it differs from it in one significant way. Its aim has always been a militant defence of a common life as well as individual liberty, and of ethical life and creativity against commodification and against the usurpation of the state. Its desire to conserve the integrity of the individual placed it in conflict with the class structure of property rights and power. Capital unbound was the enemy of the people and of individual self-realisation. The struggle for liberty was a struggle for democracy, not for paternalism and an organic society where each knew his place.

The counter-movement against capitalism that originated in the nineteenth century suffered its historic defeat in the 1970s. Even at the height of its post-war, collectivist power the working class had begun to change. The Miner's Strike of 1984 marked the final moment of the old mass industrial unionism. The ways of life of an industrial working class that shaped England are passing into history. The decades since have belonged to capitalism unleashed. A financialised, liberal market model of capitalism has transformed the social order in Britain over the last three decades,

and as a consequence there have been new waves of dispossession and exclusion that are reshaping the economy, family life and culture.

Economy

A financialised capitalism has transformed the social order in Britain over the last three decades. The neoliberal model of capitalism was underpinned by a popular compact between the individual and the market. Chancellor Geoffrey Howe's 1981 'austerity budget' of public spending cuts and tax increases brought the post-war consensus of welfare capitalism to an end. But it was the 'right to buy' of the 1980 Housing Act and the privatisation of the utilities that broke its collectivist ethos and secured the hegemony of neoliberalism. Both promoted a neoliberal compact that provided the foundational structure for a market society of consumers. Economic growth depended upon this compact, and the housing market became its epicentre, turning homes into assets for leveraging ever-increasing levels of borrowing.

The financial sector began to play an increasingly dominant role in the economy. Millions became entangled in the global financial markets as their savings, pensions and personal and mortgage-backed debt were appropriated for the profit seeking of the banks. David Harvey has described this appropriation as 'capitalist accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2005). This accumulation through dispossession created an indentured form of consumption, as the financial markets laid claim to great tranches of individual future earnings. It has led to unprecedented levels of private debt, which in September 2008, at the beginning of the financial crash, stood at £1.4 trillion, of which £223bn was unsecured (Credit Action 2010).

Financial capital did not create wealth so much as redistribute it on a massive scale, from the country to the City, from the public sector to the private, and from individuals and households to a rich

plutocracy. In 1976 the bottom 50 per cent of the population owned 8 per cent of the nation's wealth; by 2001, despite a near threefold increase in GDP, it had fallen to 5 per cent (National Statistics 2010). The bank bail-out capped this transfer of wealth with one gigantic bonanza. The neoliberal compact promised freedom through individual market choice and cheap credit. It was a vote-winner, providing rising living standards and new avenues for many, particularly in the South. But its housing market consumer axis was a dysfunctional model of economic development. It was unsustainable and it is now redundant. It was a symptom of Britain's refusal to recognise the extent of its underinvestment in public infrastructure and productive wealth creation. It reflected the failure of successive governments to resolve the larger macro-economic problems of capital accumulation, technical innovation, and the over-consumption of goods produced in foreign, low-wage economies.

In government, Labour dodged these structural issues. It allowed City excess and redistributed the tax revenue via health and education expenditure to the de-industrialised Midlands and the North. Tax credits boosting low wages propped up an anaemic private sector unable and unwilling to pay a living wage. The financial crash ended public confidence in the neoliberal compact, and exposed the transfer of risk from the state and business to the individual. It brought to an end Labour's state distributionist strategy. Labour does not have macro-economic policies for productive and ecologically sustainable wealth creation. How will it reform the banking sector and bring finance back to its proper role of serving business entrepreneurs and productive wealth creation? In a time of deficit reduction, how will it make the necessary shift away from the over consumption of private goods to investment in and consumption of public goods? The state needs radical democratic reform to be both a strategic investment authority and a network of mutuals, co-ops, and partnerships with civil society institutions. It needs to be a guiding hand for the green economic revolution and the development of a learning society. The old nation state welfare contract is

discredited and in tatters. A national system of apprenticeships and technical training, and affordable access to Higher Education, all remain out of reach. What political economy for Labour?

Family life

Deindustrialisation and the growth of a market society have accelerated the long historical decline of the puritan moral economy that underpinned British capitalism. Individual self control, hard work and a willingness to delay or forego reward and gratification provided a social glue and the purposefulness of a national, imperial destiny. These values were an essential element of the dominant class culture that was passed down from father to son. The narrative of a patriarchal social order that they sustained ensured the reproduction of normative family and social relations, status hierarchies and moral values. They transmitted a common life down through the generations – mankind, fraternity, masterful, sons of free men, faith of our fathers. This patrimony has now been fragmented and disrupted by changing cultural attitudes, new patterns of work and the growing independence of women. An inter-generational rupture was most evident in the emergence of the youth and counter-cultures of the the 1960s and the growth of social movements around gay and lesbian liberation, women's liberation and black identity politics. Francis Fukuyama declared the 1970s to be the period of the 'Great Disruption', such was the rate of change in earlier patterns of life (Fukuyama 1997). Uneven changes in patrimony have continued ever since at different rates within different classes and with variations of causes.

Despite the greater independence it has brought women, they have borne the brunt of the changes. The strains placed on women's unpaid labour and time make family life for many difficult to sustain. Economic participation has brought with it time poverty and work related stress. Research shows high levels of mental ill health amongst girls and women (Platform 51 2011). While the pressures

on women as employees, carers and housekeepers have intensified, it is men who have been identified as the gender disorientated by the changes. Men's incomes have stagnated, the old 'family wage' has disappeared, and for increasing numbers the traditional role of family breadwinner and head of household is unattainable. The loss of patrimony, the rise of single-parent households, and women's challenge to men's traditional roles, have led to recurring moral panics about a crisis in masculinity, family and fatherhood. The 1990s witnessed a growing consensus of opinion in the media and popular literature that men were emotionally inarticulate, socially and personally disoriented and demoralised.

In the historical past paternity was never enough to qualify men for fatherhood. There were plenty of biological fathers who lived without families, not due to any moral failing on their part, but to the economic structures that ordered their lives. Have the changes in the jobs market, in the law and in gender relations returned us to an age when paternity once again does not automatically mean fatherhood? There is no consensus of opinion, but the kind of democratic, involved fatherhood that many men and women aspire to is not compatible with an economic system which leaves men with either too little or too much work. With the decline of patriarchal authority, what are the sources of non-official, non-state authority that hold together families and communities, and how shall we define them? What will provide the ethical basis of civic virtue and decency, and who, apart from the state, will hold in check the anti-social behaviour of young men? The values and behaviours that mark out youth from adulthood are less distinct. When does one become an adult and what does it mean to be an adult man or woman? What sexual and personal politics for Labour?

Culture

In contrast to the impact of worklessness and precarious work on family life, there has been an expansion of cosmopolitan modernity.

In England's larger cities, and particularly amongst the educated elite, economic modernisation has led to an affirmation of racial and cultural difference, and a celebration of novel experience and the expanding of individual choice (but accompanied by a failure to adequately deal with racism). These have been part and parcel of the neoliberal era and have been considered unquestionable social goods that enrich life and enlarge freedom. But across the country a more conservative culture holds sway which values identity and belonging in the local and the familiar. Economic modernisation, 'the new', and difference, are often viewed more sceptically, and as potential threats to social stability and the continuity of community.

These two cultural sensibilities of cosmopolitanism and conservatism need not be mutually exclusive. They can divide along differences in age and region, and they constitute the contradictory desires within each of us for freedom and security, difference and familiarity. However the neoliberal model of capitalism and its market society have created a more insecure, fragmented and divided country. Conflicts around class opportunity and individual life chances have been played out in a cultural politics of belonging and dispossession. Cosmopolitanism is viewed by many as a symptom of a wider loss of control over one's working and daily life, over immigration, and over the cultural integrity of the nation.

Across Europe the decline of social democracy has been accompanied by the rise of cultural movements of the nationalist right that are fuelled by xenophobia and racism. The English Defence League is the new symptom of our cultural dislocations and economic crises. It is a street militia dominated by men who came of age in the 1990s – the sons of the 'defeated' and 'absent fathers' – and who are willing to fight to defend England and democracy against the 'civilisational threat' of Islam. Its language of belonging and cultural dispossession speaks for much larger politically disenfranchised forces that have been unleashed by the transformations in capitalism and society. The EDL is powered by a resentful hatred of a metropolitan elite who it believes has heaped

humiliation upon people and robbed them of their English identity and culture. In 1970, Enoch Powell similarly accused a liberal intelligentsia of being an 'enemy within' and destroying the moral fabric of the English nation with its promotion of cultural difference and 'race' (Powell,1971).

It was Powell and his politics of racial difference who was the prophet of the Thatcher revolution. He gave it words and a language. Powell as much as Thatcher championed market liberalism and transformed our country. In 1997, New Labour both accommodated itself to the revolution and blunted its impact. In England, the experience has come close to destroying it as a national political force. The hegemony Powell instigated is now under severe strain with the financial crash of 2008. Labour must lay the groundwork for a counter-hegemony. It must confront what Enoch Powell began by seizing and transforming the political terrain of English identity and belonging that he established as his own and which has been held by the right ever since. It must ask the question, what in our differences do we hold in common? And it must find answers capable of holding together broad 'national-popular' alliances across classes and cultures. Only by speaking for a common life can Labour build the political power to take on Britain's failing economy, the inadequacies of British democracy and the disenfranchisement of large swathes of the population.

There is 'in the air' a feeling that a shared morality and culture has been eroded. It is manifest in a nostalgia for older ways of life, and amongst a minority in an insidious search for scapegoats to blame for their loss. The controversies over EU immigration and Islam are about a politics of belonging, fired up by economic insecurity. It is a reaction to the dispossession of men from the sources of their authority and entitlement, to the loss of people's capacities to determine their own ends, and to the loss of an identifiable national culture. What now is the ethical relationship of individuals to one another? What kind of institutions will create

synergies between people's individual aspiration and the common good? Cultural struggles around economic freedom and security, racial differences, sexual morality and fatherhood play a significant role in establishing new hegemonic political formations. What cultural politics for Labour?

The future is conservative

People today want new experiences, but they also want security. They desire self-fulfilment but at the same time they want to have a sense of belonging. Self reliance is valued but so too is the reciprocity of 'give and take', and a shared ethical life. Labour must grapple with these paradoxes by engaging with a conservatism that values what is shared in common rather than a liberalism that promotes individual distinction and difference. Labour's future will be conservative because the decade ahead requires a reparative politics of the local, and a re-affirmation of our human need for interdependency. Society needs to be defended against the destructive impact of financial capital and unaccountable corporate power. Social ties and associations need renewing, and the excluded to be included. The state needs radical democratic reform, and we need an ethical economy in which capital is entangled in a myriad of civic society institutions and different forms of ownership and democratic accountability. It will be a conservatism that draws on the traditions of English ethical socialism, and it will involve claiming the best of its Tory antecedents.

The neoliberal model of capitalism has been a form of permanent revolution that enhanced the individual and the global at the expense of what is in between. It has been the architect of its own downfall. No counter movement brought it down. There are as yet no collective agents of social change ready with an alternative model of the economy. We face a situation in which the old system does not work but the new cannot yet be born. The great danger is that Labour will recoil from this predicament and retreat into

business as usual. What will come next? The answer is ours for the making.

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Modern life is not rubbish

Jon Wilson

Redcar, Barnsley East, Merthyr Tydfil, these are the heartlands of England and Wales where Labour's vote was decimated in 2010, with an 18 per cent swing against in some places. They are places Labour abandoned to the forces of the state and market, where society died. The closure of a steel plant in Redcar, for example, was an act of both market and arbitrary power which voters blamed on our party. As a result Labour is near to becoming a coalition of the unrooted and the enraged, of ethnic minorities, the liberal middle class, and people from nations and towns with a historic grievance against the Tories – Scotland and Liverpool for example.

Jonathan's paper says the answer is for Labour to value those things that people value themselves. And he notices that what we value often has roots in the past. To say Labour is conservative is to say that it listens to what people say. It is also to recognise that when they're listened to, people want to protect the things they've had in the past, and that 'progress' is an empty, meaningless word. When people want to get on, they do it with their feet planted in the place they're from. Everyone wants some change, but very few people want everything to change all the time. Jonathan is not saying we *should* be conservative, he is simply saying that if we are to live lives that have any meaning, dignity and purpose, we *are* conservative.

Necessarily, those things that give our lives both meaning and purpose come from the past. It is through the languages and practices we inherit from the past that we are 'intelligible to ourselves and to each other through the shared symbols of a common life'. This is, I'd like to suggest, a practical political philosophy that is as much about the present as the past. It looks for

the good life in the way we live now, wanting to protect and nurture it. It finds value in how people are now, rather than telling us we need to transform ourselves to become radically different. Modern capitalism and statism are destructive forces. But there is room for optimism about the possibility of living a good life the way we are now.

Yesterday once more?

In the seminar, Jon Cruddas asked us whether Jonathan wanted the left to embrace a mood of nostalgia. In a sense, yes. Nostalgia's original meaning was simply 'homelessness'. The kind of conservative or blue Labour we've discussed in the last few seminars asks how we can recover a liveable home life against the dispossession of capitalism and state government.

But nostalgia is also often used to describe a yearning for the past not for home. It evokes a vague and romantic sense of the past as a better world that we have lost forever. This kind of nostalgia celebrates the past, but in doing so severs us from it. It romanticises past deeds and ways of life, but in the process makes us realise how different we are from what happened before, leaving us with nothing but melancholy.

The effect of nostalgia might, then, be to disconnect us from the way life is actually lived in the here and now. I wonder if this is how nostalgia functions within branches of big-C Conservative thought that combine a backward looking Toryism with free market capitalism. A romanticised image of how life used to be is celebrated and used to sanctify present-day institutions. But because the past is invoked as an image separate from present-day life, we can get on with money-making and ruling with no practical respect for the continuities of the past.

It is this nostalgic approach to culture and identity that marks Enoch Powell's conservatism, which as Jonathan suggests instigated Thatcher's revolution. A romanticised image of community life in

an all-white England was essential to Powell and Thatcher's politics. That nostalgic past was central to mobilising support; but it made no moral claims on how we should act out our political or economic lives in the present. The result was an amoral politics, and for many a self-hating attitude to their own present-day lives.

Our task should instead to be make the past real. It is to recognise that the traditions that give us dignity and meaning have had a continuous existence, surviving even through their darkest moments. In embedding our politics in the locally-rooted, settled sense of the common good which Jonathan advocates, it is not enough to simply hark back or invoke. We need to trace the practical lines of continuity, finding not just the common forms of meaning but the practical forms of common life that stretch back into the past.

Here, the role of political leadership is often to tell a story about the existence of that common life where others don't recognise it. Through those stories, it gives us a sense of home, but also a sense of our collective power to make the lives we live for ourselves.

Let me give an example of what I mean. In the ward in Walthamstow where I was a councillor a few years back, there is a much praised voluntary-sector-run SureStart Children's centre. The centre is built on very strong relationships between real people that have been built up through a shared history of common struggle and work over more than thirty years. The children's centre began as a community-run under-5s club in the later 1970s, and the strong relationships it is based on allowed it to reinvent itself four or five different times, in response to different council and government initiatives.

This history is invisible though. Anyone who came across the Centre for the first time would see it as an institution without a history. They would think it had been created by the latest bureaucratic initiative and served the local population's abstractly defined 'needs'. In fact, it exists because many generations of parents have worked continuously together to protect something they valued.

What the centre lacks is a language that can articulate that sense of itself as an institution made by the common action of common people through time; which, to quote Jonathan quoting Burke, connects 'those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born'. To hear its story you have to listen very hard. It is Labour's role – our role in this seminar – to find a way to listen, and then find a way of recognising what we have heard.

Transforming common sense

Andrea Westall

Following Jonathan's thought-provoking paper and the comments made so far, I want to try to get underneath Jon Cruddas's challenge of nostalgia. Jonathan and Jon Wilson talked persuasively and movingly of the importance of security and stability to good lives. This is often found in place, and in the shared history of place – in the connections, the relationships and the institutions we make together.

So another way to look at Jonathan's paper is to recognise that some of the yearning for conserving/conservatism is because of a feeling that the whole of our 'humanness', and of our current lives, is not being recognised politically. Jon W touched on this, as did Marc Stears in the seminar. Any response to the recognition of what has previously been ignored, or just not 'seen' or understood, requires not just listening and 'adding-on', but profoundly rethinking how we talk about and 'frame' what is possible.

The danger is that talking about 'conservatism', however radical, or of 'blue' labour, risks limiting these insights. The commonly-understood connotations of these words will do this. The origin of these ideas in a more 'bottom-up' socialism has a range of radical implications, and is not easily accommodated along a simple Left-Right or Red-Blue line.

So shouldn't we be transforming common sense, not accommodating to it? The dominant common sense 'prefers' individualism, self-interest and competition. But the response is not to prefer the opposite, and to make that the focus of a renewed political project; but to create a transformed way of thinking and acting that responds to and reflects both.

We need to recognise, though, that the current political 'common sense' was reinforced by Labour, even when it tried to do something else. In effect, the implicit neoliberalism of New Labour limited what was possible. We know that there was a tendency to use business language and approaches in non-market places. But the process was also more subtle than this. 'Enterprising Communities', for example (part of the title of an early Policy Action Team paper), was really meant to be about communities working together to improve their places and relations between people. However, it ended up – partly because of the language (and its connotations) and partly because we had ceased to recognise anything other than individualised approaches to anything – being mostly about isolated start-ups.

But let's not forget that there were many practical examples of a more democratic and relational approach that happened under New Labour. But this only seemed to happen in areas of 'market failure'. Think about the implications – these activities are therefore marginal to what is the dominant and normal market. The Treasury Green Book underlined this approach, with its dominant rationale (despite the odd addition, such as equity, etc) for policy being market failure. The EU also helped narrow the options by threatening 'state aid' in relation to what could have been some quite transformatory policies, particularly in regeneration.

And all the above helps reinforce the sense that everything we have been discussing is just 'other' or secondary to the main action, and can be dismissed. It is not part of a better future and of a more sustainable and resilient economy.

In some ways, Maurice, and David M in the last meeting, when talking about a 'social market' economy, also reinforced the status quo by implicitly qualifying 'business as usual'.

This is the kind of insight that Lakoff used in the US political context when discussing why the Democrats had a hard time shifting opinion without thinking about cognitive frames and emotions. (If you haven't read *Don't think of an elephant* – do.) Why can't we just talk about our vision for the *economy*.

Shifting to a new 'common sense' is surely a better and more strategic way to engage people (perhaps even become more loved) than to always focus on 'other' and opposition. Common sense becomes an inevitability, where we all have to go, rather than just another option.

As I said in the seminar, it is bad enough having to react to the Big Society's misappropriation of some aspects of Labour history, but the next push it seems, from thinkers behind the Coalition, will be to talk about a different kind of economy. It would be tragic if Labour is a second mover on that too.

This is also partly a response to Sally's challenge about vested interests sometimes holding back progressive responses, for example in relation to the environment. And, as has been said quietly but needs saying a lot more loudly, this poses profound challenges for unions to be part of solutions, and to recognise interests and issues beyond their own.

But this is also an illustration of where the limits of the past become apparent. By building on past (and current) examples, we might address calls for continuity and security in the short-term but miss the long-term.

Nothing in our past prepares us for the challenge of balancing different stakeholder interests and power differences in pursuit of negotiated and trusted futures (for example, we could learn from existing multi-stakeholder partnerships in the economy or in society), but we also need to look at how to incorporate issues such as the future or the environment. Here, again, it is about being *transformatory*. The Coalition's attempts to John-Lewis and co-operatise everything *is* nostalgic and unthought-through. Organisations, institutions – and the relationships between them – as well as democracy itself, will need to change to help create a shared vision, common values, or at least agreed understandings, that enable us to manage knowable and unknowable change.

And this will not be easy. We are going to have to create more spaces for communities to have conversations that accommodate

and negotiate difference. This is not just at local level and between people, but also within economic sectors, if we really want to start transforming (and in Maurice's words domesticating) the economy. (Perhaps we are talking about forms of social dialogue and partnership, more common elsewhere in the EU, or a more responsive and sectoral industrial policy.)

So this poses yet more questions about conservation and continuity. We need to build on Jonathan's thoughtful and heartfelt paper to reflect further on what exactly should be conserved and why and what is important in people's lives.

It is very unlikely that the pressure and pace of change will slow. It most probably will increase with environmental and economic challenges. The need for places and spaces of security and support, or negotiated change and adaptation, will be critical – if we are not as a society to become more divided, or even hostile to each other.

Why I am not a conservative

Philip Collins

The first thing to say is that conservative thought has a serious and important insight that radicals of all stamps forget at their peril. It is that most people are impatient with our ill-gotten attempts at dragging them towards paradise. There is a lot about life they value and, as Oakeshott once said, change is almost always experienced as loss. Jonathan's paper is an eloquent reminder that this is not a contingent ideological feature of conservatism. It is a description of what people tend to be like.

I think New Labour is guilty as charged. Its main proponents did always sound like they were in a tearing hurry. I was always concerned that 'change' was elevated to a principle in its own right. Change to what? For a long time there was no convincing answer to that question. It always concerned me that the government was committed to 'what works'. Well, of course. Who doesn't prefer things that work to things that don't? But works to do what, exactly? Late in the New Labour period, a clear account of change emerged, but it was by then too late, and it was (to put it mildly) not exactly popular in the Labour Party.

I also really like and share the sense from Jonathan's paper that we have to begin from the actual, lived experience of real people, living out their lives. Too many political deliberations (I know I'm guilty of this) are abstract and therefore rather empty. I regularly try to ask myself, in the midst of some verbal flow, 'what would my mum think of that?'. Jonathan's paper brings us back to earth and reminds us that people have reason to value things in their life as it is. He's also right to point out that many, probably most, of the things we value exist in our private lives, our family lives and our

cultural lives. That leads me to draw a slightly different conclusion, as you will see below, but the point is well made.

That said, it sparked a number of thoughts, some of which embody genuine and substantive disagreements – these are points at which I understand Jonathan's point and I appreciate the force of it. I just disagree.

The central point

I don't really understand how it is possible to be both conservative and radical. They strike me as opposing terms. I agree strongly with Jonathan's assertion that Labour

> … has lost its traditional values and an identity. In these predicaments Labour shares a political crisis of social democracy with its sister parties across Europe. But in England something more fundamental has been lost, and that is a Labour language and culture which belonged to the society it grew out of and which enabled its immersion in the life of the people.

Indeed, it has probably. The operative word is 'lost'. It's probably gone and it's not coming back. The work that sustained it has disappeared. Its extra-curricular activities have dwindled. The political ideas that it inspired were found wanting. Though the cultural practice of Labour territories was conservative, its political thought was social democratic. I don't think there is anything left of the social democracy that came out of the Labour heartlands. I think it's a historical curiosity – perfectly comprehensible in its day and not without either appeal or success. But of no real value as a guide to the future. If Blue Labour is nostalgic, then I think that paragraph – about a world that has been lost – is what makes it so.

Some historical and analytical disagreements

I am troubled by the regular repetition that Labour has lost five million voters since 1997. This reminds me of the criticism of the pony for only having one trick, when the wonder is that he should be able to do any tricks at all. In 2005 Labour did something that it had never before done. It won its third successive majority. Surely we might pause to wonder what it was in those heady days that appeared to work. You say that 'New Labour won no enduring loyalty'. Well, by that standard no twentieth-century political formation in Britain ever has. Nor will it ever. Three resounding victories is, in fact, the currency of politics. I don't expect people to love governments like they love their children.

You say that 'Labour … has become disconnected from the ordinary everyday lives of the English'. I agree, in a way. But it sparked the heretical thought that isn't this just what happens to governments. When was the last one that reached this standard? Attlee? Hardly. He was out within six years. Thatcher? For a while but eventually the wear and tear started to tell. Blair? Again, for a while. Do governments ever last long in the human heart? Perhaps in a chronically sentimental party like the Labour Party. But nowhere else, not really.

At times I felt the paper was too gloomy. I least like Cameron when he is in 'country gone to the dogs' nineteenth-hole mode. While there is nothing in the paper in that vein exactly, there were moments when I felt I didn't really recognize the portrait you were painting. For example, if you gave the description below (quoted from Jonathan's paper) to a randomly selected group of people and asked them which country they think it refers to, I bet none would say England:

> People are left impotent and defeated. Some become enraged and others become sick or debilitated by depression and addictions. Despair and rage find their nemesis in cultural difference and in the figure of the immigrant who becomes the

> harbinger of disruption and the loss of a familiar life. The common capacity for kindness, reciprocity and generosity is undermined and overshadowed by a victim culture of sentimental nostalgia, intolerance and hatred. A populist politics of blame and resentment takes root in which the stranger becomes a scapegoat and the poor are accused of being the cause of their own misfortune. In this descent into impotence lies a collective loss of pride and honour which brings with it indifference and cruelty.

Some places where I wasn't sure what was meant

'For all the good it did, Labour presided over the leaching away of the common meanings and social ties that bind people together in society.' What are they, though? Overwhelmingly, the most important ones are private. They are my family relationships. The paper is excellent on this, and that is a compliment that one can only pay rarely to papers on Labour thought. The stress on the private and the cultural realm is one of the great strengths of this approach (the same was and is true of Maurice's work). That said, I still felt that the process of politics is more removed from these relationships than you suggest. I think almost everyone in politics has a tendency to over-estimate how important politics is. You say that 'in government, New Labour did not appear to understand … its impact on either its own party or on society and human relationships'. But, for most people, the impact of a government is relatively small. The biggest change in most lives is whether people have work or not, and that is rarely the result of government action. The biggest problem for contemporary governments is surely not their excessive power but the fact that they achieve so little. We need to be even more sceptical – as conservatives habitually are – about the power of government.

The attempt to adduce the components of the common life will run into the same impasse that Cameron is now stuck in after his

Munich speech. Beyond the well-known (and vital) list of liberal freedoms, what else do you want from me? What are the values that I need to cleave to? And what are you going to do about it if I disagree? Conflict and disagreement are endemic in human life. There is no resolution to them. We just need to devise rules that allow us to live well together. A shared commitment to those rules is the overlapping consensus. Beyond that, you're kidding yourself.

Some places where I was wasn't sure what we should now do

I am unclear about what is meant by the Labour Party becoming an 'organising force' in people's lives again. To the extent that I do know, I'm unclear whether this is a small, medium-sized or big idea. This is a genuine declaration of ignorance and a question, rather than an implied criticism.

I absolutely, wildly and loudly agree that the great deficiency of New Labour was that its achievements usually came 'without any transfer of power to people'. That is obviously the starting point for the future. But I worry that we only half mean it. We mean it when we can happily describe something as 'collective'. But what about when we transfer control of the budget to the disabled person? Do we mean that too? I do, emphatically. In fact, that's power that really bites.

Should we keep the Redcar steel plant open, irrespective of whether it makes money? If not, what should we do?

One final thought on why I am not a conservative

Disraeli's question in *Coningsby* was 'what should we preserve?'. That instantly raises the supplementary question: 'Why that and not something else?'. We can only work out what we need to conserve and what needs (in Burke's term) reform with reference to some other value. Conservatism itself supplies no value. So, finally, in its exaltation of the status quo, conservatism leads us away from radicalism.

The radical potential of conservatism

Marc Stears

Phil Collins's insightful response to Jonathan's paper raises many compelling questions. Most important of them all is that of how it is possible to be both conservative and radical at the same time. Aren't conservatism and radicalism necessarily at odds?

Phil is right to insist that not all conservatives are radicals. He is right, too, to insist that conservatism per se doesn't prescribe very much at all. We need to know *what* we are conserving and *why* before we can know what kind of conservatism we are faced with. We need also to be careful here. There is no Labour value to be found in conserving traditions of democratic exclusion and inequality.

There are, however, two vital ways in which the distinctive kind of conservatism that Jonathan advocates is radical, or at least potentially so, and it is worth pointing each of them out.

First, Jonathan's position reminds us that the everyday customs and traditions of life in Britain can offer powerful opposition to the commodifying tendencies of capitalism. The Welsh poet and short story-writer Dylan Thomas began one of his most celebrated tales with the phrase: 'One Christmas is very much like another'. To some, this is just a throwaway line. To others, it is a nostalgic, sentimental, yearning for times gone by. For Thomas, though, it was a statement of the absolute importance of family, love, constancy and tradition in maintaining our essential humanity. On Christmas day, he was saying, families across the country are able, even if only briefly, to forget the way in which capitalism tends to treat us all like commodities, like objects that can be employed or not employed,

bossed around, told what to do. The repeated traditions of Christmas day – the family meals, the squabbles, the memory of loved ones who are no longer with us – enable us to recall something that transactional capitalism always encourages us to forget.

These traditions remind us, that is, of the fundamental importance of truly human relationships. They remind us that we are who we are not because of what we earn, but because of where we live, how we live, and with whom we live. The power of tradition, on this account, is the power to resist commodification; the power to assert our own relational humanity. Once seen this way, the struggle to maintain these traditions – to save a space for them in an increasingly transactional world – becomes at once both a conservative and a radical one. The content of the traditions themselves may not greatly matter, but their role in saving us from becoming mere objects at the disposal of others certainly does.

Second, Jonathan's insistence that we should derive our ideals by attending to the ways in which people actually live and experience their own lives, rather than by dealing in the currency of idealized abstractions, is also both a conservative message and a radical one. Jonathan demands that we justify our programmes and policies in terms that the people can understand, appreciate, and cherish, rather than in terms that appeal only to a group standing outside of social experience.

This recalls the arguments of Labour's founders. GDH Cole once wrote of the 1889 Dock Strike that 'what the British workers wanted was not a purely political movement conducting its propaganda in Marxist phraseology to which they attached no meaning, but rather a movement which would directly express their industrial grievances and aspirations in language and in demands which they could readily understand'.

By drawing attention to this feature, Jonathan does more than insist on a particular political tactic. He reminds us of the essence of democracy. Another poet, the American Walt Whitman, once said that in a democracy citizens 'look carelessly in the faces

of Presidents and Governors, as to say, "Who are you?"'. And that is the question that Jonathan urges us all to ask too. Who are you to tell us what to do? Who are you to tell us what social justice involves, or fairness, or freedom, or equality? Who are you to say what people should aspire towards and what they should seek to avoid? These are decisions that must be made by real people in the contexts of their real lives. They are not to be answered for the public by anyone else, be that by well-meaning academics or politicians or other experts.

This instinct is vital to Labour's efforts at renewal. For far too long, parts of the Labour Party have exhibited a tendency to look down on the people they claim to represent, even at times to be disdainful of the lives that they lead. Jonathan's spirit reminds us that this is a terrible error, both politically and morally.

There are, of course, many other arguments in both Jonathan's paper and Phil's response, and the debate over what it is that Labour should seek to be conserving will no doubt be a long and tortured one. But to my mind, these stand out. As we seek to renew the Labour Party, we must be conservatives of sorts because being so helps us resist the commodifying tendencies of capitalism and because being so encourages us to be sceptical of those who make false claims to special knowledge. Putting that another – more positive – way, we could say that an appropriately conservative Labour Party would be a relational and a democratic Labour Party. And that sounds indisputably radical to me.

Timeless truths

David Lammy

The left loves utopias. We paint a picture of the sunny uplands – literally in the case of our last manifesto cover – and urge people to follow us there. But the problem with utopias is that no-one has experienced them before. No-one remembers one. No-one has visited one. As a result our language tends towards abstraction. People switch off, finding no connection to their own lives. And we resort to talking about Sweden again.

Jonathan's paper avoids this trap beautifully. We read about him walking his dog as he grounds us in his and our experiences of what he calls the common life. There is an important lesson here. Conservatism avoids the problems with abstraction because it aspires to preserve things rather than reach for them. It starts from people's actual experiences, their real memories and folklore. When conservatives talk about something being lost everyone knows what they are talking about.

The risk for conservatism is always the accusation of sentimentalism. It is vulnerable to the idea that the past has gone, isn't coming back and perhaps wasn't all that good anyway. This seems to be the thrust of Phil Collins' response. He argues that some of the practices and institutions that Labour grew out of have disappeared or are dying. Phil's logic is that the ideas they embodied are dying too and perhaps ought to.

I disagree. As Maurice's paper reminded us, the Labour Party didn't invent the idea that people must organise to keep corporations accountable. Our party is just one expression of a timeless truth. Today the same instincts are visible across Britain if we look hard enough for them. London Citizens buys shares in

firms to press for a living wage. Uncut activists invade Topshop to attack tax avoidance. Fair trade spreads from coffee to gold. Unite campaigns against tips being included in the minimum wage.

In fact, it was our government that became obsessed with public service reform when people were worried about everything from security at work to the commercialisation of childhood. Ask people in Tottenham whether they feel 'empowered' as their football club tries to move across London, or as betting shops swamp the high street. Ask the employees who work in Tesco how powerful they feel between 9 and 5 each day.

Because we never listened to these concerns we were unable to challenge the Tories as they talked tough on family, venerated those who worked hard, or adopted the language of localism whilst simultaneously letting big business off the hook. The point is that bossy statism is disempowering – but so too is a politics that treats us only as consumers. The ideas that once animated the labour movement are not dying, it is our connection to them that has withered away.

What is different about modern Britain is that these vanguard campaigns are taking place beyond Labour Party structures. The people who run them aren't members. Their organisations are not affiliated with us. We need to reconnect with them, showing that we also respect the things they are trying to preserve, whether it is a connection between a football club and its community or the time and space for family life.

One implication of this must be a more open and plural Labour Party. We have to be more welcoming to those who would join or work with us. I have been pushing open primaries for the last three years as one way of achieving that. And we must be more humble: an elitist, instrumental approach to the rest of civil society will only cut us off from it further.

The other lesson is that we need not rely on utopian dreams. We should point, instead, to real-life campaigns as we rehabilitate some timeless truths about life in our country. We should remind people

that it has not always been ok to target adverts at other people's children, or to elevate shareholder value above all else, whether local loyalties or the dignity of your workforce. We must remember how to speak about time-old human fundamentals of family relationships, working life and local identity.

In short, we have to learn to speak about Britain again. There is a big prize for the political party that lands on a convincing story that sets the scene for Britain in this century. Of course every narrative about Britain's identity and future is contested, from Thatcher's bombast to Blair's 'cool Britannia'. But every successful political project needs one. This concerns Britain's place in the world, post-empire, post the cold war and amidst the rise of new powers in the East. But it is also about who we are and where we come from. Labour needs more than a story about Britain's future. We must also be clear what our national history teaches us – and how the ideas that animate it are being lived today.

4. How conservative should Labour be?

Stuart White

Taken together, the papers presented by Maurice Glasman, Marc Stears and Jonathan Rutherford have a coherence, and set out a distinctive view of what Labour politics is and ought to be. The perspective has been termed 'radical conservatism'. Adopting this term, my aim here is to interrogate this perspective. I will start by asking what radical conservatism is. I will then try to identify what I see as some of its strengths and weaknesses.

What is radical conservatism?

Radical conservatism includes at least the following five key ideas:

- *A politics of conservation*. Radical politics ought to be centrally about the protection of identities and sources of personal meaning based on place and/or work. In particular, radical politics is about protecting them against erosion by mobile capital.
- *A politics of community organization*. Second, radical conservatism looks to popular self-organization to defend the integrity of these identities and sources of meaning. In the radical conservative view, this has always been what the labour movement, at its best, is about. Today, this tradition of self-organization to restrain capital finds expression in community organizing of the kind practised by Citizens UK.
- *A politics of ownership*. Third, radical conservatism holds that a

radical politics must take the ownership of property seriously. The power of capital within the firm should not be that of an unaccountable sovereign, but a power that is balanced by workers' rights. Capital should not be entirely footloose, but more entangled and grounded within specific places, e.g., by vesting local civil society with the ownership of productive assets.

- *Less moral abstraction*. Fourth, radical politics should not base its claims in 'abstract' notions like fairness, equality, social justice or rights, which are remote from people's life experiences and immediate concerns. It should base itself on concrete grievances and historical traditions.
- *Less emphasis on state welfare*. Fifth, radical politics should give less emphasis than social democracy conventionally does to redistribution, welfare transfers and the state as a provider of services.

This is of course a very schematic and incomplete summary. And one should be wary of attributing too much unity of viewpoint to a collection of thinkers. But taking the above as a provisional account, what are the strong and weak points of radical conservatism?

A politics of conservation?

The first tenet of radical conservatism, its politics of conservation, will raise some anxieties. Critics will rightly want to know, for example, where a conservative politics of place leaves the interests of vulnerable outsiders. However, this tenet captures a cluster of concerns and some of these do strike me as important and resonant.

To see this, consider Philip Pullman's speech on the subject of library closures from January of this year, a speech which clearly stuck a chord when it was posted online, not only in the UK but internationally (http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/save-oxfordshire-libraries-speech-philip-pullman). Pullman situates his objection to library closures in a wider critique of what he calls 'market

fundamentalism'. Market fundamentalism not only pressures democratic societies to shrink public provision, but also, according to Pullman, corrupts the nature of working life. As an example, Pullman discusses the role of the editor. An editor, he argues, used to have a belief in objective literary value. He or she understood their work – and, hence, their life – in terms of the promotion of this value. 'I'm an editor' did not signify just a place in a market division of labour, but hinted at a story about what gives meaning and value to the person's life. But now, Pullman argues, the book trade is run by 'money people' not by 'book people'. As a result, it is more and more difficult to work as an editor in the older sense. This job can no longer sustain the kind of identity and sense of meaning – meaning above the 'bottom line' – that it once did.

Radical conservatism shares this sense of loss, of a degradation of human labour under the conditions of a profit-maximizing capitalism. It supports the aspiration for an economy that can better respect work-related identities and sources of personal meaning. As Pullman put it in his speech on library closures, the point is not to denigrate profit-making as such, but to want to 'put profit in its place' – a distinction which echoes that made by Will Davies between profit-optimising and profit-maximizing economies. An economy optimises the pursuit of profit when it balances the objective of generating a surplus (for potential expansion) in an optimal way against other desirable goals, such as meaningful working lives. By contrast, an economy which seeks to maximize profit will produce a gravely imbalanced society where the plurality of proper social goals and values get subordinated to the creation of an investible surplus. (The surplus itself need not then be invested in the real economy, of course, but might fuel asset bubbles.)

Renewing democracy?

In his *Equality*, RH Tawney wrote that the Labour Party should not think of democracy 'merely in terms of ballot-boxes and

majorities, but as a vast reservoir of latent energies'. Labour's task, he said, is:

> … to arouse democracy to a sense both of the possibilities within its reach and of the dangers which menace it; to put it on its mettle; to make it militant and formidable … It must treat electors not as voting-fodder, to be shepherded to a polling station, and then allowed to resume their slumbers, but as partners in a common enterprise … the issue of which depends ultimately on themselves.

To read these words in the context of fifteen years or so of New Labour's politics is to get quite a jolt. What, one might say, were all those focus groups for, if not to figure out the best way to get the 'voting fodder' to put a cross in the right box? And when a democratic public emerged as something more than 'voting fodder', as in the anti-war demonstration of 2003, New Labour ignored it – a breach of respect which has had major ongoing repercussions for Labour's support.

In looking to renew democracy, radical conservatism is addressing a deep problem. In addition, the focus on the community organizing, as embodied in Citizens UK, offers one promising model of what this new democratic politics might look like.

This said, I would want to add that it is not only a question of building what community organizers call 'relational power' *within* Labour, but of building it *around* Labour – indeed, as something that has every right to be *against* Labour on this or that issue, and which can thereby pressure and constrain Labour. It is a question of building what Clifford Singer has called a new 'civil society of the left' to contest the way the terms of political choice (e.g. over the deficit) are presented – including the way they get presented by Labour politicians. This calls for coalitions and alliances across people of different parties and none, and, therefore, for a spirit of pluralism that runs counter to any idea of Labour as the sole proper representative of radical politics.

A new politics of ownership?

Another strong point of radical conservatism, in my view, is its emphasis on a new politics of ownership. Social democrats and radical liberals have long argued that workers should be on a par with shareholders in the constitution of the firm, entitled to representation in decision-making at all levels. They have called for tax policy to bear down on large concentrations of unearned (and therefore undeserved) wealth, e.g. through inheritance tax and land value tax. And they have called for positive measures to spread the ownership of wealth, including occasional proposals for a system of universal capital grants.

New Labour's initiatives around 'asset-based welfare' connected with some aspects of this agenda. But New Labour rejected other aspects of it. Radical conservatism can helpfully serve to press Labour to revisit some basic questions about the nature of property and the ownership of wealth. Related to this, it is prepared to ask and pursue the tough questions about the place of finance and the City in the UK economy (which New Labour took as decisively settled in the City's favour).

Less moral abstraction?

On the other hand, I am unpersuaded by radical conservatism's eschewal of the role of 'abstract' ideals such as equality, social justice or rights.

As a historical matter, first, I do not think it is correct to characterise the English radical tradition as one in which these ideals have been marginal or else expressed overwhelmingly through a purely local language of national identity ('our ancient liberties', 'the rights of freeborn Englishmen', etc). That kind of language has been important, but so too has a more straightforwardly universalising language of justice and rights. After all, Tom Paine wrote the *Rights of Man*, not the *Rights of Englishmen*. In doing so, Paine drew on resources that went back at least as far as

the Levellers of the English Civil War, who articulated their radical democratic ideas both in a language of English liberties and a language of universal rights.

If tradition matters, then this universalistic conception of rights and justice is an integral part of the English tradition (and, I suspect, of other radical traditions in the nations of Britain and Ireland). Were Labour to repudiate this inheritance, it would set itself up against something that is central to English and other radicalisms – and a swathe of radical opinion would rightly look elsewhere for a home.

Also I think it is wrong to set up – as I think radical conservatism does – a dichotomy between abstract and concrete ways of thinking politically. The two interact. It's hard to get a handle on abstract moral principles without thinking about concrete cases. This is one reason why 'testimony' has such an important role to play in the struggle for social justice (e.g. in the current campaign against the Coalition's program of public spending cuts). But some sense of wider principle often informs responses to particular cases. Think, for example, of the way we respond to concrete cases in the NHS in terms of the wider principle of an 'equal right to care on the basis of equal need'. Principles like this are part of the argumentative cut and thrust of democratic politics. Moreover, notions of universal rights and social justice obviously play a key role in tempering local affections, connecting them with wider projects of both national and global justice.

Less welfare state?

Related to this, we need to interrogate the claim that the left should place less reliance on income redistribution and state welfare provision. Of course, a social justice strategy has to embrace *more* than welfare transfers and tax-financed public services (such as a new politics of ownership). And a democratic, republican left should always want to interrogate the particular modes of state

welfare provision (which can be paternalistic and degrading to both workers and service users). Nor would I want to insist dogmatically that, if workers had more power within firms, or communities had more control over assets, that we would necessarily need as much redistribution or public spending to achieve the same social justice goals. But I am sceptical that we ought to want less redistribution or tax-financed spending on public services. Let me focus on just one aspect of the redistribution issue. In his final book, *Capitalism Unleashed*, Andrew Glyn pointed to what he saw as the new global pressures on labour incomes:

> … there is the impact of surplus labour in China and elsewhere, significant segments of which will be highly educated but with much lower wages than in the North. Access to this cheap labour could encourage a much higher level of direct investment from the North, in effect an investment drain away from the rich countries. In effect the capital-labour ratio would decline on a world scale, by one-third or more according to one estimate, as the vast reserves of labour in those countries become inserted into the world economy. The result could be a major fall in the share of wages in the rich countries as workers find their bargaining position weakened.

If Glyn's analysis is correct, then, unless and until we do something *really* radical on ownership so that the population as a whole can tap directly into higher capital incomes, this suggests the need for continued, significant redistribution to maintain decent living standards for those at the bottom end of the labour market. (Glyn's preference was for a substantial Citizen's Income.)

Conclusion …

Radical conservatism is best understood dialectically, as an antithesis to features of New Labour, such as its technocratic

character and lack of democratic grounding in communities; and its liberalism, in both left- and right-wing senses of the term. But this raises the question: What is the synthesis? There is no single synthesis to be had, but a range of possibilities, depending on how one combines the various elements of the 'Blue' and the 'New'.

And is *any* synthesis drawn from only these two sources enough?

In at least one respect, radical conservatism seems to reproduce a key weakness of New Labour. While radical conservatism is critical of the welfare state, it has relatively little to say about the form and structure of the political state. It tends to see the disconnects and lack of trust between politicians and other citizens as essentially a dispositional or cultural problem on the part of an overly liberal-minded elite, rather than as a structural problem related to the way political representation is organised. It honours a tradition which proclaims our 'ancient liberties'. But it does not show a great deal of curiosity about the way basic liberties have been curtailed and threatened by the state, under Labour's direction, in recent years.

If we want a democratic politics of the kind Tawney had in mind, then we need much more scrutiny of the state in these areas. We will need less Edmund Burke and a lot more of the spirit of Tom Paine.

New and blue

Graeme Cooke

Since suffering its worst general election result since 1983, Labour has so far managed to break the habit of its relatively short political lifetime. On previous occasions defeat has led to introspection and division – followed by further defeats. This time round things have been strikingly different. Partly spurred on by the common purpose of its coalition opponents, unity has broken out in the Labour Party.

This is, in many ways, a great source of political strength. But it also carries dangers, especially with the next election still over the horizon. Perhaps the biggest risk for Labour is the opposite from the one it has traditionally faced after being rejected by the voters. After 1983 no-one was in much doubt about what the Labour Party stood for, it was just that not nearly enough people wanted it. Conversely, current poll leads suggest people quite like Labour, though few are sure exactly what it stands for.

The fear, of course, is that these two facts are related – which would be increasingly problematic as people's minds begin to focus on choosing their next government. In the short term, favourable poll numbers suggest a willingness among the public to listen to Labour again. And the foundation of unity creates the space for constructive argument through which political definition can be forged. However, too much debate is currently focused on either abstract values – like fairness and equality – or micro-policies – like opposing particular cuts.

Between the very general and the very specific lie questions of broad orientation: stakes in the ground that indicate where Labour stands on the big political and policy issues of the future. The shape of our economy, the nature of our public services, the character of

our welfare state and the common life we build together. Knitted together, these are the building blocks of a story that links the condition of the country to the project of the party.

Addressing these questions requires a spirit of honesty and pluralism, in search of a creative tension between different strands of thought and practice. One such paradox which could prove fruitful is between New Labour and the set of ideas associated with Blue Labour. If these apparently contradictory worldviews engaged with each other, what sort of Labour Party would emerge from the battle?

To answer this we first need some definitions: what is *New* and what is *Blue*? In some ways 'New Labour' has become a deeply unhelpful political label, tossed around to the point of meaninglessness. But for these purposes, I take it to mean its general spirit, especially in its early phase, rather than specific policies. Its emblematic concepts and themes were modernity, progress, globalisation, mobility, flexibility, individual rights and universal values. Its orientation was for Labour to modernise Britain through an accommodation with capitalism and the pursuit of social justice via the state.

At first blush, the growing band of thinkers associated with Blue Labour – Maurice Glasman, Marc Stears and Jonathan Rutherford – stand in direct opposition to this political perspective. They want to resuscitate the labour movement's concern for family, faith, flag, a sense of place, the dignity of work and the value of ordinary life and common institutions that make us human. They are critical of New Labour's naivety about capitalism and over-reliance on the state, arguing that these combined to undermine relationships and turn people into commodities. They want Labour's project to be about creating the conditions for ordinary people to lead decent lives together – by constraining capitalism, strengthening associations and decentralising power.

These are not precise or incontestable definitions, rather short-hands for broad and general political perspectives. What they provide

in these uncharted waters of post-TB-GB Labour politics is a guide, or pivot, for direction. What holds out promise is that they are the smartest critics of each other. And on the fault lines of their disagreement lie the most important – and often most difficult – questions facing Labour. In some areas the paradox is more apparent, in others it is real. There is no objective way of synthesising these perspectives, but what follows is one approach, based around our major economic, public service and social policy challenges.

First, the tension between the best of *New* and *Blue* would mean advocating a competitive, entrepreneurial and creative economy, open to trade, investment and innovation. It wouldn't endorse protectionist or inward-looking instincts, or linger under the illusion that an old industrial age can be recreated. However, it would be discerning about claims of permanent and unprecedented transformation associated with a 'new economy'. The world is not flat, capital is not rootless, the era of permanent employment has not ended. Labour's political economy would therefore attend to the reality of a significantly local, regional and national economy, such as the large domestically traded sectors, as well as globally focused activity.

This economic orientation would mean celebrating the incredible capacity of markets to incentivise innovation, drive prosperity and challenge the status quo. But would also recognise that they don't achieve this naturally; indeed, left unchecked, markets can humiliate, dominate and concentrate power. So, the friction of *New* and *Blue* would generate a political economy pursuing a more relational, democratic and productive capitalism. It would bust monopolies and champion consumer power. It would support powerful city mayors able to drive economic development and reforms to corporate governance, to balance the interests of owners, workers, managers and users who have a stake in the firm.

One of its central priorities would be increasing the historically low levels of investment in business and the productive capacity of the economy. The main critique of financialisation would be the way

it has starved capital and constrained private sector growth in other sectors (and regions) of the economy. It would support an expansion of university participation alongside the strengthening of technical skills and status. Its goal would be to unleash a new wave of solidarity and innovation to improve living standards and meet the needs of the country. Or, put another way, it would argue that Thatcherism wasn't nearly entrepreneurial enough.

Critical engagement between *Blue* and *New* would lead to a greater concern with the share of national wealth going to wages relative to profits than with the level of the Gini coefficient. Reducing unjustified inequalities would be a necessary condition for a more democratic and relational society. There would be less reliance on state-led redistribution because of a more robust engagement with the structure of market outcomes, such as taking steps towards a living wage and institutions aimed at raising productivity and pay. It would oppose the idea that cutting public spending, regulation and corporation tax amount to a strategy for economy reform and renewal, though it would not fetishise higher taxes or argue that public spending is the solution to every problem. It would claim that George Osborne is right to want an economy driven by exports, investment and saving, but that his old-fashioned 1980s policies won't deliver it.

In a second decisive area of public policy – public services – the creative tension between *New* and *Blue* would also generate a qualitatively different orientation for Labour. A commitment to high standards, strong accountability and diversity of providers would remain, but the descent of New Labour's statecraft into paternalism and managerialism would be challenged. Centralism and targets would be kept in check to minimise the disrespect and demoralisation they can breed. Rather than defining equality as everyone receiving the same, greater localism and contingency would be embraced – balanced by basic minimums and tough intervention where services are failing.

Policy would, fundamentally, seek to balance the interests of the

people who use, work in and pay for public services. Power for patients, parents and citizens would be strongly advocated, balanced by a recognition that the quality of the workforce dominates most that is good (or bad) about our public services. At root, it would place relationships – and the conditions needed to make them flourish – at the heart of its agenda. That is essential to meeting the challenges of our age, whether loneliness, anti-social behaviour or soft skills. Practitioners would have greater power and respect – matched by real accountability for poor practice or bad work. This could provide the basis for trade unions to rejuvenate their role as independent advocates of professional status and guardians of good work standards.

The friction between *New* and *Blue* would make these issues the central axes of policy debate, rather than public or private, market or state. In the short term, this would help to guide Labour's response to government reforms, like free schools and GP commissioning. Rather than opposing ideas in the abstract, it would provide a Labour orientation against which to define the plans. So, the core problem with the proposed NHS reforms would be the denial of patient power; the bureaucracy of turning every GP into a manager; the downgrading of basic entitlements; and the absence of integration with social care, which could enable the relationships essential to supporting people with long-term or chronic conditions.

In a third area – social policy – *New* and *Blue* would be clear that society should be intolerant of those who commit crime or free-ride on the effort of others. Welfare would be reciprocal, but fresh ground staked out by matching the duty to work with the right to work, through job guarantees – so the welfare state protects better and demands more. The objective would be support that is temporary, generous and conditional – enabling a more compassionate debate for those facing real struggles in their lives. New models of (non-state) social insurance – applying the spirit of the contributory principle to the reality of modern work and family life – would be sought as the basis for a majoritarian welfare settlement.

The paradox of *Blue* and *New* is more intense on questions of liberty and community, where support for the universal and the individual on the one hand can clash with a concern for the particular and the collective on the other. For instance, Jonathan Rutherford has poignantly criticised Labour as coming to stand for 'everyone and no-one, everywhere in general and no-where in particular'. There are some genuine distinctions here that shouldn't be smoothed over; Labour must regain the intellectual and political confidence to disagree. However, it is also wrong to suggest there is no space for a new orientation to be forged, rescuing the left from the circularity of the liberal versus communitarian debate. For a start, the vitality of community depends on leadership and individual initiative, while personal freedom rests on bonds of belonging and a shared fate that embody more than merely instrumental value.

The issue of immigration falls directly on this fault line, tied up with the politics of economic insecurity and cultural identity. The activities of the English Defence League, while marginal for now, show how toxic and visceral this mix can be. There are no easy answers, but the conventional language and strategies of the left struggle to cope. Drawing on elements of *New* and *Blue*, Mike Kenny's call for a politics of recognition to match a politics of redistribution is surely right. On immigration policy directly, migration would be managed, with new arrivals welcomed but expected to contribute and engage. But this is far from enough.

On wider social questions, the tension between *New* and *Blue* opens up terrain for Labour to rediscover a morally engaged voice, while not sacrificing its proud tradition of defending civil rights and opposing discrimination. Family policy would start with the pressures of bringing up children and making ends meet: low wages, long hours and expensive childcare. Marriage would be cherished as a precious institution, though not degraded by using the tax system to promote it. Civil partnerships would be celebrated as much for the value we place on loving, stable and committed relationships as the blow they strike for gay rights.

Within a secular state, our politics would embrace the contribution of faith to the fabric of society and the meaning it brings in people's lives. All the major world religions share the fundamentally socialist 'golden rule' that we must do to others as we would be done by. On the signature social policy issue of the Big Society, this orientation would see Labour arguing that George Osborne's economic strategy – of cuts to the state and subservience to the market – is killing David Cameron's important idea at birth.

The issues covered here are not comprehensive, but aim to show that in the friction between New Labour and Blue Labour a fresh and attractive political orientation can emerge. On their own each are insufficient. The great weakness of New Labour was its lack of a clear political economy or critique of capitalism. This fed through into a reliance on an increasingly exhausted statecraft and a whiff of elitism and disrespect for ordinary ways of life. Blue Labour is an eviscerating corrective to these tendencies. However it faces hard questions too: turning its insights into a plausible economic strategy; giving a credible account of how society can be strengthened without simply resorting to the state; and showing how conservative instincts can provide momentum for the centre-left. New Labour can help on each.

There are, of course, no objective outcomes from an engagement between the ideas and instincts of *New* and *Blue*. But what the paradox provides is an axis for debate about the orientation of the Labour Party, rooted in democracy, people and relationships. Engaging with the tussles and tensions this throws up is the way to avoid a drift into complacency and conventional wisdom. It is also the way to develop a political story and policy agenda that can renew the partnership between Labour and a broad majority of the people that is the basis for winning and governing again.

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Democracy of the dead

Jon Cruddas

When GK Chesterton wrote that tradition is 'the democracy of the dead', he suggested the importance of honouring the past, of respecting the struggles and sacrifices of those who went before. Yet many 'progressives' on the left scorn tradition as conservative and nostalgic.

Conservative radicalism lies deep in Labour history. Take the politics of the Clarionettes, who in the 1890s and early 1900s became the greatest extra-parliamentary socialist movement in English history. Their leader, Robert Blatchford, expressed loss and dispossession in terms of fellowship and solidarity, in contrast to the scientific approach of those on the left who were dedicated to the notion of progress. While the latter were sentimental about the future, Blatchford – influenced by William Morris – drew on Romanticism as an essential part of English culture and history.

Over the past century, the left has repeatedly divided between progressive and traditional; forward and back; future and past; new and old; ultimately, between good and bad. In this tussle, victory has gone to successive varieties of progressive. Indeed, all political parties today can be described as 'progressive', in that they want to depart from tradition. Sure, there have been prominent 'romantic' figures – such as Keir Hardie, celebrated as a founder of the Labour Party, and George Lansbury, who was Labour leader from 1932 to 1935 – but they have tended to be isolated and vulnerable; exceptions, not the rule.

The lost socialist tradition speaks to the dignity of people and their labour, to the search for self-realisation through a virtuous life.

It is deeply Aristotelian. EP Thompson, whose book *The Making of the English Working Class* was published in 1963, faced general hostility from a left that favoured abstract theory, structuralism and, subsequently, cosmopolitanism, over his focus on human experience and his belief in the virtues of the common people. In response to criticism of his 'virtue politics', he once said: 'It is mere English. It has no articulate spokesmen – they are all kneeling in the presence of other, more sophisticated, voices.'

Thompson wrote about the parochial, the cross-currents that buffet men and women. He identified subsistence and necessity on the one hand, and the search for self-fulfilment on the other – what it is to live and to flourish, to be a freeborn Englishman. He was accused of being unthinking in his Englishness, and was consistently deemed 'romantic' and 'nostalgic'.

But Thompson articulated the conservative nature of English socialism – how it is a love of home, of place and of the local. It is a resistance against the uncontrollable forces of capitalism and dispossession; a struggle for liberty and democracy, to feel part of a community, for a sense of belonging that brings with it esteem and meaning.

A couple of months before his death, in 1988, Thompson's fellow left-wing thinker Raymond Williams responded to the charge of a sentimental attachment to his own country, family and history: 'When I see that childhood coming at the end of millennia of much brutal and thoroughgoing exploitation, I can see it as a fortunate time: an ingrained and indestructible yet also changing embodiment of the possibilities of common life.'

No Marx

Karl Marx said that 'the traditions of the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the minds of the living'. He argued that capitalism turned all that was sacred into the profane and the approved. Like Marx mostly did, modern progressives side with

progress, often at the expense of human relationships, the ordinary and the parochial.

At its best, New Labour encompassed both the progressive and the traditional, captured in Tony Blair's early recognition of the need for a 'modern patriotism'. Over time, however, it became all about the 'progressive new'. By the end, it embraced a dystopian, destructive neoliberalism, cut loose from the traditions and history of Labour. 'Leave the past to those who live in it', Blair said in 2004. But what about the victims of this change?

People in this country do not look at the future in the sentimental way in which New Labour came to view it. They are fearful for their jobs, their families and their communities, as they experience the most destructive period of capitalism since the 1930s. They yearn to fight against their insecurity. But how do you resist when all the political parties are progressive? This is why we need an English socialism that resists relentless commodification, values the land, believes in family life, takes pride in the country and its traditions: a conservative socialism.

The government is not conservative; it is liberal and extreme. Through its indulgence of the banks and corporate and media power, and attempts to sell off parts of our English common life to the highest bidder – forests, waterways, ports, the Post Office, sport and culture – it is systematically destroying the hard-won victories of generations and, in so doing, unravelling the essential fabric of this country.

Labour should redemocratise its own dead to conserve what it fought for. It needs to recover the value of the ordinary, the importance of the specifically English struggles of working people – a politics of English virtue, and not simply of abstract notions of 'progress'.

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Hope will always triumph over fear

Hazel Blears

Since last year's general election much has changed on the British political landscape. Only a year since polling as the most popular leader of a political party since Winston Churchill, Nick Clegg finds himself the subject of ridicule, to the point of being airbrushed out of his own party's election literature for the May 2011 elections – Cleggmania is no more. Meanwhile David Cameron finds his own popularity threatened by a growing and outspoken group of right-wingers, many of whom believe that it was a lack of 'red meat' that meant Cameron had to join forces with the Lib Dems after the election. They are angry at some of the policies being pushed through by a supposedly Conservative government, and feel that Cameron is using the Coalition as a shield to introduce policies that they oppose.

As the deficit reduction programme begins to lead to job losses and public service cuts, opposition to the government from the public is growing. However, though it is too soon to analyse the May 2011 local election results in detail, they show that Labour, though making some very welcome gains, still has much ground to make up.

Though some recent opinion polls have been encouraging, we cannot rely for Labour success on antipathy towards the government. There are a number of underlying problems facing Labour, which I will deal with briefly before going onto discuss the question of how radically conservative Labour should be. It's important that philosophical questions be placed within a political

context – after all Labour exists as a political party to win elections.

From its peak in 1997 there has been a persistent decline in Labour's popularity. This has been demonstrated differently over recent elections. 2001 saw turnout fall from 71 per cent in 1997 to just 59 per cent – a record low. Whilst some non-voters undoubtedly were satisfied after four years of Labour, many chose not to vote to register their dissatisfaction with both Labour and the unreformed Conservatives – indeed, the milder version of the 'plague on all their houses' that we saw in 2009. In 2005, in the aftermath of the Iraq war, Labour saw a significant reduction in its number of MPs, with many voters leaving Labour and registering their vote with the then party of centre-left opposition, the Lib Dems. 2009 saw Labour collapse to fourth place in the European elections, contested under the shadow of the MPs' expenses scandal, and in 2010 a decade of decline saw Labour returning just 258 MPs with 29 per cent of the popular vote – the worst result since 1983. Add to this the persistent loss of seats at local elections and a bleak picture emerges, particularly as not only were Labour losing representatives, but also losing activists.

In the thirteen years between 1997 and 2010 Labour lost 5 million voters. The new political landscape shows a collapsed Labour vote, with the South West, South East and Eastern regions all verging on no-go areas for the Labour Party. Interestingly, despite all of the – accurate – analysis of Labour's dire results in the South, a recent Smith Institute report states that when historical performance and seat size are taken into account, Labour's collapse was actually more pronounced in London, Yorkshire, the East, and both the West and East Midlands.

So who are these lost voters? In 2010 Labour gained more votes from ABC1s than C2DEs – and support amongst ABs remained relatively constant from 1997 to 2010. The fall in support was most pronounced amongst the 22-55 age group, a group that makes up half of the voting population. Struggles were especially difficult in

suburbia and suburban towns; whilst Labour did not retreat into the industrial heartlands through choice, the voters ensured that, with a few rare exceptions, Labour's Parliamentary representation is concentrated in metropolitan seats. Voters left Labour for a number of reasons. Some were disillusioned with New Labour, others believed a lack of clearer measures to tackle the deficit and the pursuit of Keynesian economic policies during the recession made the party too left-wing; some felt that Labour had lost touch with working-class voters over immigration, and some just became so disillusioned with politics that they no longer voted at all.

Looking to the future, Labour needs to win at least 70 seats to form a Parliamentary majority – a figure that does not take into account the boundary review and the subsequent reduction in numbers of MPs. Part of the challenge Labour faces is that the scale of the defeats in 2005 and 2010 have left it difficult to mount any offensive campaign that could deliver a quick victory. Every Conservative MP who took a Labour seat in 2005 increased their majority in 2010, and in these seats the average swing against Labour was almost double the average national swing. Significantly, none of the seats that Labour lost in 2005 can now be classified as target seats.

So far a refreshing honesty has emerged amongst Labour figures about the reasons for our defeat. A healthy conversation is taking place within the party, analysing both the positives and the negatives from thirteen years in power. The ongoing policy review aims to construct a narrative that resonates both with supporters that we lost and with new supporters that we can reach out to – and abstract ideas such as radical conservatism form an important part of that debate.

The theory of radical conservatism argues that the history of radical politics is based around conservatism, preserving and protecting. I have to disagree with that analysis. The labour movement has always been rooted in improvement and change – demanding the right to vote, marching and organising for better

working conditions, creating the NHS to deal with poor health, the white heat of the technological revolution, the public service reforms of the New Labour years. None of this was about conservation, it was about radical change to improve the lives of ordinary people. Radical politics has to mean a constant renewal for the future, not a return to the past.

The first problem with the language of conservatism is that implicit is a nostalgic romanticism, looking back to the past and trying to create policies that lead us back to those perceived halcyon days. But for most people this image does not tally with reality. Working conditions and living conditions have improved immeasurably over the past fifty years, and there is little desire to return to the poor conditions that characterised the past. Even areas of the economy like manufacturing that have traditionally been identified as working-class sectors have modernised to become a part of the new age. Intentionally or not, creating an impression of a glorious past for the working class would put Labour as the party against aspiration. For evidence, ask those who worked in the pits or under almost intolerable conditions whether they wanted their sons to do the same. Ed Miliband's recent speech on the British Promise spoke of the desire to improve life for the next generation. Labour's working-class roots are of course important, but it's also important to celebrate the progress that has been made. The improvements to workers' rights brought about by the New Labour government, such as paid holiday, maternity leave, paternity leave and the National Minimum Wage, have all been about improving working conditions. If anything, the language of conservatism relative to the working class can risk putting us on the side of free-marketing Tories, who see unravelling social legislation as the path towards unbridled capitalism, far from the progressive values of the labour movement.

There is also a significant problem concerning the role of women within radical conservatism. In the past women were often expected to stay at home whilst the husband went off to work, before

beginning to find jobs themselves, partly as a result of the war efforts in the first half of the twentieth century. Thankfully, we have moved away from those days, and now women are able to pursue their own careers independent of old-fashioned stereotypes. Appealing simply to male-dominated sectors of society would be electorally flawed, and I am concerned that the overt masculinity of radical conservatism would place us as diametrically opposed to modern feminism, and alienate many of the women who have been key to our electoral success.

The theory of radical conservatism argues that there should be less emphasis on wealth distribution, but does not provide a cohesive prescription that would replace an enabling state. State intervention is necessary in some areas, and I fail to see how a more equal society would be created without the state reallocating some money from the wealthiest to help the poorest. Pushing the emphasis of taxation from earned income onto unearned wealth is a fairer way of state redistribution, but language emphasising limited redistribution is troubling.

Conservatism does not adequately react to the shifting patterns of wealth that we saw in the second half of the last century. Now most young people grow up expecting to own their own homes, buy cars, take holidays with their families and live comfortably. Lower personal tax rates – kept low during Labour's years – have increased disposable income and are now taken as the norm by most people. Interestingly, as David Miliband's recent LSE speech demonstrated, elections across Europe have shown us that, despite the economic crisis, if anything voters have been moving to the right, suggesting that there is no appetite for a return to the high marginal tax rates that we have seen in the past.

A failure by the state to push through redistributive policies can leave the poorest in society at the whim of a compassionate capitalism, and I have yet to see evidence that this has emerged. The conservative alternative to an economically active state appears to be the American model of charity and philanthropy underpinning

the Big Society, which would lead to the unwelcome position of a progressive party leaving people dependent on handouts from wealthy individuals.

Radical conservatism does recognise that people have a keen interest in their identity – however I see this as more of a positive view of identity as opposed to the more negative defensive conception. A person's occupation is often one of their defining features and forms the basis for many social introductions as people are understandably proud of their backgrounds. Similarly, people are proud of their communities, and often feel a natural desire to protect them. The best opportunity for people to protect and promote the things that they are proud of is by giving them more power and control over their lives and their neighbourhoods.

This is addressed by radical conservatism's second major strength, which argues that Labour needs to broaden the concept of democracy, and move away from the traditional approach that an adequate democracy is one in which people are simply asked to vote once every four years. Many people are far more political than they would recognise, often not counting involvement with their school or their local community club as political activity. Labour should be in the heart of each community, working with people and encouraging them to take the next step to involvement in party activity. Much of this will require a major change in the way that Labour operates, and is a key part of the current policy review, to make Labour's structures and way of doing business more relevant for the twenty-first century. Visiting Chicago a few years ago I was amazed at how reluctant many community activists were when I asked them whether they planned to get involved in local politics – they saw the two as incompatible, and viewed the political system as dishonest and corrupt. Labour's task is to breakdown that barrier. The New Labour years saw the beginning of devolution of power and control to people, through the introduction of choice and responsibility into public services and the encouragement of community activity. This should be seen as the starting point to

widening political engagement and releasing potential which can then be harnessed to generate change.

Finally, radical conservatism talks about the need to widen ownership of capital. The economy has been the most important policy area since the global economic crisis of 2008, and regaining trust on the economy is critical to Labour's future electoral chances.

Recent polling by Searchlight for their Fear and Hope project focuses on areas where the British National Party has prospered, and found that seats that had suffered a high level of economic and social change were particularly susceptible to the rise of the far-right, due to the damaged and fragmented communities that had emerged. Areas such as Barking & Dagenham, Stoke-on-Trent, Nuneaton, Barnsley and Luton all suffer from low voting turnout as a result of political disaffection. The collapse of local industries such as car-making and coal-mining hit economic prospects hard, and the lack of jobs created a culture of anger, apathy and disengagement from the political process and an anti-politics vacuum that the BNP could fill. Whilst the lamentable rise of the far right is the symptom, Labour's failure to adequately reform the economy is the cause.

The unparalleled period of economic growth between 1995 and 2008 gave us years of steady growth, combined with low inflation and consistent interest rates that raised standards of living. Boosted by the availability of credit it seemed like a golden era for the UK's economy – unfortunately, as we now know, this continued growth was not sustainable.

As we rebuild our economy following the deepest recession since the war, Labour needs to come up with an alternative economy, a new economic model to follow. Not in the sense of a centralised planned economy, but an economy that rewards entrepreneurs, increases and devolves ownership, and embeds a culture of social responsibility into capitalism. Arguably, New Labour's greatest failure was to turn a blind eye to the failings of traditional capitalism – perhaps because as a party we needed financial support, perhaps

because we did not want to upset the City and lose their hard-won support at elections. Labour should always be a friend of business, but to be a true friend we need to feel comfortable pointing out where businesses can change, and the role that a new capitalism can play in creating a better society.

It's no coincidence that companies with social responsibility embedded into their business models, such as the Co-op and John Lewis, have come out of the economic crisis in far stronger positions than others. Rather than simply seeing their corporate social responsibility as giving a proportion of their profits to charities each year, instead they have built their whole organisations around the values of developing their workers, creating a shared ownership and expanding at sensible speeds. That is not to say businesses should be risk averse, but there is an important distinction to be drawn between recklessness and responsibility.

Labour's role is not only to develop a healthy dialogue with business, but also to champion new types of ownership models. The new capitalism has to include a realisation that the means matter as much as the ends, and to embrace new ownership models that devolve the power of capital. Social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives all have the ability to rebalance where the power of capitalism lies and increase the control that people have over their own lives. Redressing the failings of old-style capitalism will need new approaches, and the strength of radical conservatism is a commitment to seeking different ownership models that will play an important role in creating a new, vibrant economy that long-term sustainable growth delivers.

Earlier I touched on the problems that Labour faces in embedding democracy and politics into people's lives on a daily basis. Labour's challenge of building an inclusive social democracy takes us down a difficult path between realism and idealism. Ideally we would all like the Labour Party to be involved in constant dialogue with people and communities – in fact the language that I used earlier about business can be applied here, and Labour should

be adopting a new model of organisation that embeds it into local communities on the side of the people. The harder reality is that the Labour Party faces the limitations and struggles of all modern political parties.

Decreasing numbers of people identify closely purely with a political party, as many instead find themselves sympathetic to and sometimes part of cross-party movements and campaigns. The era of linear identification is over, and this means that parties have fewer members and fewer resources. This has come in conjunction with a reduction in income, meaning that, in terms both of people and money, party resources are overstretched. This set of circumstances has created a political party ruthlessly focused on winning elections, ruthless and sometimes cold, and without the time and energy to build long-term close personal and community relationships.

There are two different electoral strategies that the party can now embark on. The first, the adoption of the equivalent of Howard Dean's 50-state strategy, would see Labour making an attempt to win everywhere, campaigning in all seats, even those where there is little chance of winning, and spreading resources more evenly. The second is a continuation of targeted campaigning, focusing on the swing voters in the marginal seats that decide elections. Both have their flaws.

That's why the work around community organising and citizen empowerment has been so heartening over the past year. Unless we are out there speaking to the public – indeed, explaining any of these themes to them – we will just be having a conversation with ourselves, which is hardly a desirable place to be. Recent evidence, including the success of Gisela Stuart's campaign in Edgbaston, the Hope not Hate fight against the BNP in Barking and Dagenham, and Tessa Jowell's work promoting social action in her Dulwich and West Norwood constituency, shows that there is a large swathe of people wanting to get involved with politics. Our task is to excite them and empower them.

But community empowerment has to be harnessed by

channelling people's commitment and devotion to changing their communities into the political sphere. Without this there is a real danger that community organising will become part of the anti-politics agenda; the rise of the Tea Parties in the USA shows how dangerous it can be when emotions are driven away from, instead of welcomed into, the political process. The challenge is to give people the incentive and opportunity within politics to get involved and change or conserve their community without creating a generation of anti-politicians. Advocating the widening of democracy is radical conservatism's strongest argument, and one that Labour would do well to adopt.

All of this begs the question, where does Labour go from here? The reason that I earlier discussed the surrounding political context is that without electoral success notions of New Labour, Blue Labour, Old Labour, progressivism, conservatism, social democracy and any other strands of political thought are just synonyms for the most depressing of political terms: opposition. Of course it's important for Labour to find a political direction that creates a coherent narrative and deliverable objectives that resonate with the public, but without renewing the party as an electoral force we will not be in a position to change these abstract philosophies into a governing doctrine.

Traditional conservatism has so many negative connotations. It's old-fashioned, defensive, pessimistic and unattractive, particularly to younger people who fear for their future. Labour's strength during the 1990s was not only that we were new, but that we were exciting, we offered something different, we brought promise and hope to those who had suffered under eighteen years of Conservative rule. Whilst radical conservatism is of course different from traditional orthodoxy, I worry that looking back with nostalgia to the past does not allow us to present ourselves as a party for the future. We were the optimists then, and we need to be the optimists again.

Biographies

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Hazel Blears has been Salford's MP since 1997, and is proud of Labour's record in transforming the city of her birth. She has held a number of senior positions, including chair of the Labour Party, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Minister of State for Policing and Counter Terrorism. Hazel was the first person in her family to go into higher education. She went on to become a senior local authority solicitor, and a local Councillor for Eccles, before becoming an MP.

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David Lammy is the MP for Tottenham. He was the youngest Minister in the Blair and Brown governments and the former Minister for Higher Education.

David Miliband was Foreign Secretary from 2007 to 2010. Before that he was Secretary of State for the Environment and Minister for Schools. He led the policy renewal of Britain's Labour Party under Tony Blair from 1994 to 2001. He is currently Member of Parliament for South Shields.

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Jon Stokes is a business psychologist and leadership coach who consults and advises at board and senior levels in both commercial and public sector organisations. He is an Associate Fellow at Oxford University's Said Business School, a Visiting Professor at the Graduate School of Business at Strathclyde University, a member of Associate Faculty of Henley Business School, and an Associate at the Institute for Government. He is a director of the leadership and management development firm Stokes & Jolly, www.stokesjolly.com.

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Jon Wilson teaches history at King's College London, where he helped lead the successful recent campaign to pay the London Living wage. He is a Labour activist in Greenwich and Woolwich where he coordinates campaigning, and helped set up Labour Values. Jon's research focuses on what makes governments lose touch with the people they rule, and has predominantly focused on British rule in India. His most recent book is *The Domination of Strangers. Modern Governance in Eastern India, 1780-1835*.

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