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The Biden effect

The Democrats' victory makes the world a better place. Now we just need Keir Starmer to do the same here, writes *Andrew Harrop*

Journalists and political activists in the UK are famously obsessed with American politics. In past US elections, the level of interest has been out of all proportion to the consequences of the race for Britain. But this year, Donald Trump's defeat has ramifications that ripple far beyond the frontiers of the United States.

Trump made the world a more dangerous place and a Trump second term would have made it more dangerous still. His approach to global relations represented an assault on much that Fabians hold dear – open, democratic values; multilateral rule-bound cooperation; evidence and reason; and leadership as long-term stewardship. Joe Biden's victory advances peace, prosperity, public health and climate justice.

The soft power impact of Trump's toxic political brand was perhaps even worse than his policies. For as long as the 45th president was a winner, he served as the global beacon for a virulent right-wing populism that combined authoritarianism, bigotry and the politics of division. He gave succour to political hatred and strongmen everywhere – and Britain was not immune. Trump's influence rubbed off on a Boris Johnson premiership that has been marked by culture war politics and contempt for institutions and the rule of law.

Already Biden's victory is forcing a retreat, as Number 10 realises that the Dominic Cummings template for prosecuting Brexit will do lasting damage to US-UK relations. Johnson has always travelled lightly with respect to political conviction: in a new international and domestic context he could easily tone down his Trumpian persona and resurrect the image of a cosmopolitan centrist, which he burnished for eight years as London mayor.

The chances are that once Johnson is past Brexit he will seek to project himself as a unifying one nation leader: Trump's defeat is an alarm bell for Conservatives on the downsides of divisive extremes. Labour will need a response because Johnson is a proven vote-harvesting machine. Even in defeat, Donald Trump was able to gain 10 million extra votes, and there is no reason to rule out the Conservatives also winning more support when our next election comes. Opinions on the prime minister may have soured this year but there are few who voted Tory in 2019 who regret their choice today.

Joe Biden won because he was able to stitch together a truly diverse coalition of different types of people, in different types of places. The broad church constructed by the Democratic party this year must be a model for Labour's new political project.

Keir Starmer has made a start, with his energies devoted to detoxifying the Labour brand. This is an essential first base, following a catastrophic election defeat that was caused by the collapse in Labour's vote not a surge in Tory support.

Next the party must seek to square the circle, by inspiring the young and radical while reassuring and reengaging the cautious swing-voter. To achieve both at once, Starmer needs a hopeful and credible message of economic and social progress. But he must also sidestep Tory political traps designed to force him to take sides on faultline questions of identity and values.

The Democrats won in spite of an electoral map skewed to Trump's advantage. Again this offers hope for Labour, because the UK map also favours the right. If the Labour and Conservative vote is tied in 2024, the Tories are likely to end up with many more MPs.

Just as with the US electoral college, Labour must accept a political backdrop it cannot change. The party will need to reach out further and put down new roots in all of the 150 constituencies that will determine the next election. The map may look daunting, but Joe Biden won in Georgia. Labour's pathway to winning again lies both through reclaiming former strongholds and through seats the party has never won before. **F**

Shortcuts

VALUABLE WORK

We need a care-led recovery from the pandemic—*Nadia Whittome MP*

The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on the discrepancy between the work we most urgently need as a society, and the work we value and reward. So many of the people who keep our country running are also the people forced to survive on poverty wages, who put up with job insecurity and have little control over their lives. The late and sorely missed David Graeber might have been intentionally provocative when he said that there is an inverse relationship between social usefulness and income – but it is hard to deny that, to an extent, he had a point. It was not buy-to-let landlords, investment bankers or corporate lobbyists on six-figure salaries who we clapped for every Thursday, but our carers, cleaners, delivery drivers and supermarket workers, often paid less than the living wage.

When I was a care worker, I received the national minimum wage of just over £8 an hour, working on a zero-hours contract. So did most of my colleagues and many care workers around the country. In fact, given that many carers are paid per visit rather than per hour, and not paid for time spent travelling, they often take home less than the legal minimum. Paula Barker's National Minimum Wage Bill seeks to address this injustice and it is vital for MPs to support it – just as it is crucial for everyone to support care workers fighting for fair pay, such as UVW members at Sage Nursing Home who have recently voted for strike action.

Meanwhile, as workers struggle to make ends meet, too many people cannot afford the care they need. Analysis by Age UK shows that 1.4 million older people – one in seven of the UK's over-65 population – have unmet care needs. Between 2009 to 2010 and 2016 to 2017, local authority spending on adult social care in England fell by 8 per cent in real terms, while the number of elderly people has grown. The pandemic has exacerbated the crisis in the already struggling sector, and we have seen 30,000 excess deaths in care homes in the pandemic already.

It does not have to be like this. A recent report by the Women's Budget Group made the case for a care-led recovery from the pandemic. The report estimates that, by spending 2.7 per cent of its GDP on care, the UK could create more than two million decently paid jobs. This would increase the sector to the size of its equivalents in some Scandinavian countries, ensure that no one is left unsupported and help close the gender employment gap. Crucially, care jobs are green jobs too: investment in care generates 30 per cent fewer greenhouse gases than investment in construction, while creating twice as many jobs.

We could think more creatively and imagine a system that is co-designed by the real experts: workers and users

In the last general election, Labour stood on a pledge of setting up a National Care Service, to provide free personal care for everyone who needs it. This would allow more people to stay in their homes and take the pressure off unpaid carers. It would take care provision out of the hands of unaccountable private companies, ensuring the sector is run for the public interest and not for profit. Importantly, it would help better integrate healthcare and social care – sectors that are logically inseparable, yet currently fragmented.

This plan would go a long way towards addressing the problems in the system and helping older and disabled people live full, fulfilling lives. However, one key question remains unanswered: the question of management. We could have a nationalised social care system run by managers in suits, with no direct experience of being a carer or needing one. Or we could think more creatively and imagine a system that is co-designed by the real experts: workers and users.

Cooperative models of ownership already exist in the care sector, although they are currently the exception rather than the rule. In Suffolk, for example, a successful employee-owned cooperative Leading Lives provides care for children and adults and reinvests profits into improving services and the wider community. These kinds of initiatives deserve our wholehearted support: they both help improve the care sector in the here and now and could provide models for the future in the shape of a free and truly democratic National Care Service.

Older people and disabled people are not inherently vulnerable and powerless – it is society that marginalises them by treating them as second-class citizens. Equally, there is no reason why care workers, who play such a vital role in society, should continue to be underpaid and undervalued. The role of social care should be maximising autonomy and giving people control over their lives. Let us work towards a care sector that treats both users and carers as agents, gives them the respect and dignity they deserve, and puts power in their hands. **F**

Nadia Whittome is the Labour MP for Nottingham East

SOLID PLATFORM

A universal basic income could be our generation's NHS—*Patrick Hurley*

During the Labour leadership contest at the start of the year, Keir Starmer summoned the spirit of Clement Attlee, citing the NHS, the welfare state, decent affordable council homes, the promise of the new towns, civic pride and national ownership as huge Labour achievements during the 1940s and part of a new settlement that lasted generations.

That indicated the extent of ambition a Starmer-led government would have even in normal times. But right now, in the midst of the worst public health crisis for 100 years and the worst economic shock

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in living memory, the sort of radicalism Starmer spoke about in January is needed more than ever.

The economic challenges people face have been getting tougher year on year. We were told we faced "a lost decade" because of the 2008 global financial crash, but we are now 12 years into that lost decade, and there is no end in sight. The failed response to 2008 – the austerity years, cuts to local government, health agencies, education budgets – was self-defeating, causing unnecessary pain and hardship. And so, we arrived at March 2020, woefully unprepared for a global health crisis.

Henceforth, there will be fewer votes in fighting for a return to the pre-pandemic economy than in advocating a build back better approach.

The government's economic response to the pandemic has been chaotic, partial, and riddled with holes. But the real failure has been the underlying principle behind the Tory's economic recovery policies which rely on targeting, conditionality and means-testing.

Sunak targeted employees with the job retention scheme, meaning the self-employed missed out. He targeted restaurants with the eat out to help out scheme, meaning other sectors missed out. He targeted businesses mandated to close with the extended furlough scheme, meaning their supply chains missed out. At every turn, an obsession with targeting and providing the minimum necessary has left people destitute and has cost more in the long run. In this context, it is unsurprising that calls for a universalist approach to providing support should be growing louder and more urgent.

A much more effective and efficient approach is needed to replace targeting with universalism, whereby governments provide financial support to as many as possible without conditionality, and then tax back from income the more that people earn. Whatever you choose to call this type of system – citizen's income, negative income tax or universal basic income (UBI) – is beside the point. The intention is to provide a solid platform on which people can stand, not a safety net into which they will fall.

Since its formation, Labour has historically been at the forefront of progressive change in the UK, and that should now be the case with UBI. But shadow chancellor Anneliese Dodds MP already ruling out UBI in Labour's next manifesto misses the widespread mood for change, helped in no small part by the non-political UBI Lab Network, a genuinely grassroots movement has developed over the past two years that is growing more powerful by the week. Throughout 2020, several councils campaigned to have UBI piloted in their local area, including Liverpool, Brighton and Belfast. And, in October this year, the cross-party parliamentary and local government group on UBI supported the running of such pilot schemes.

We have seen Labour-led administrations in local government make the case for UBI powerfully again and again, as well as the formation of Labour for a Basic Income. And the party tentatively committed to pilots in its 2019 general election manifesto. The time has come to embrace the next step in progressive change and adopt the policy nationally as the best way out of the damaging economic effects of the pandemic. More work needs to be done before adopting bold policies nationally, but there is time enough before the next general election to lay the foundations upon which widespread public support can be built.

The impact of Covid-19 and the growing strength of Labour voices outside of Westminster have intersected in unexpected ways during 2020. From Andy Burnham's forceful standing up for Manchester interests against a chaotic government, to Mark Drakeford's quiet determination to do the right thing by the people of Wales, the impact of political action away from SW1 is plain. That same dynamic is at work with UBI – local leaders are showing the way forward to a post-pandemic new settlement that could rival the post-war years in its progressivism and claims to universalism.

Labour wins when it offers a vision of hope for the future, when its offering matches the country's mood. If Labour is serious about building a new settlement to last decades into the future, Starmer could do far worse than adopt UBI and make it our generation's NHS. **F**

Patrick Hurley is a member of Liverpool City Council and chair of Labour for a Basic Income

MIND THE STRESS

It is time to act on the mental health crisis—*Rosena Allin-Khan MP*

The year has flown by. For so many, it has been a lost year. The struggles that we have all faced were unimaginable 12 months ago, and with the knowledge of the losses that the first wave of Covid-19 brought, it is more important than ever that there is a true understanding of the status of people's mental health as we go through the winter.

During the first wave of Covid-19 in the spring, there was an alarming rise in mental illness. People suffering from depression almost doubled, and there was an increase of 28 per cent of people who said they were experiencing stress. These issues are coupled with increasing levels of loneliness and anxiety and decreasing levels of happiness.

The uncertainty born of the virus fuels these problems. Families have lost loved ones, face growing concern about their jobs and are struggling to feed their children. In this day and age, it should be a badge of shame for the government that – despite its U-turns on school meals in the holidays, too many children are still not getting enough food. Our communities have come together to show the kindness and compassion that British people have for one another. But it should not be left to random acts of kindness to ensure that people can go to sleep each night without worrying about how they will feed their families.

Without a functioning test, trace and isolate system, and with an inadequate social security system, people are being placed in the unfortunate situation of worrying about whether they can afford to take time off work for fear of not being able to pay the bills. That worry does not affect just the one person either – it affects the whole family.

Labour has called for a mental health and wellbeing guarantee from the government to ensure that mental health is at the heart of the government's response to Covid-19 going forward. People's mental health across the country has been hugely impacted by the virus and the government's lack of action. From the lack of PPE for frontline health and care staff to the A-level results fiasco, the government's mismanagement of the Covid-19 crisis has led to increased strains for very many people.

Frontline health and care staff took almost two million days off for mental ill health during the first wave of the pandemic. Month after month, the figures published by NHS England should have served as a wake-up call to the government to act on behalf of our hard-working frontline staff who continue to put their lives on the line. Back in June, Labour launched our 'Care for Carers' package for all three million health and care staff, to help ensure they can access 24/7 specialist support. However, the government continues to refuse to meet to discuss the plan which would level the playing field for all health and care staff, who have had to endure situations they simply were not trained for.

Many of the frontline staff who passed away from Covid-19 were from our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Unfortunately, it has become all too clear just how catastrophic this pandemic has been for these communities, because of the health inequalities that are all too prevalent in our society. The same is true for the mental health of our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

The latest figures showing the number of detentions under the Mental Health Act in England highlight that the rate of detentions for Black or Black British people was more than four times higher than for white people in 2019–20. The racial disparity of detentions under the Mental Health Act underlines the need to address health inequalities, and to ensure provision is widely accessible and support is suitable for all. As Baroness Doreen Lawrence called for in her review into the impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities, the government must urgently implement a national strategy to tackle health inequality.

This crisis has shone a spotlight on areas where the government needs to act, and act quickly. The British people have continued to show an astounding level of resilience throughout this pandemic, but with Christmas upon us, the government must realise the effect their mismanagement and miscommunication is having on the mental health of the nation. Labour will continue to seek to work cross-party on this vital issue. It is time for the government to stop hitting snooze on mental health and wake up to the crisis. **F**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan is the Labour MP for Tooting and shadow minister for mental health

GENERATION JUSTICE

Labour success will only come if young people are on side—
Athian Akec

There is a moral clarity that comes with being young. We examine the world through the lens of unending possibility. We do not disregard the challenges ahead or the barriers against progress but have greater faith in what could be. That is why across the globe we are leading the fight against systemic racism, climate change and other major social justice issues. We are the climate strikers. We are the Black Lives Matter protesters. We are generation justice.

Labour has a mountain to climb against this 80-seat majority government, and if the party is serious about winning in 2024, it must mobilise young voters like never before. In particular, the party must make a concerted effort to galvanise the student vote, as there are some important marginal seats Labour must win where students could decide the outcome.

But to ensure a greater turnout of young people in the next election, our party must be seen as a viable tool for transformational change. And for that, the leadership, NEC and wider membership must represent young people's concerns around economic, environmental and racial injustice.

Our experiences, having grown up during a decade of austerity in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, are of economic precarity, inequality and exclusion from opportunity. Living in the age of social media, with global connectivity like never before, we are a generation in tune to the injustices unfolding all across the world. This was evident with this summer's mass Black Lives Matter protests in which we saw young people, unashamedly radical, turn out in record numbers calling for racial equality. This generation of young people embraces community, interdependence and a commitment to leaving no one behind.

Huge numbers of young people are pushing for Labour to do more to tackle the existential threat of climate change. Central to our 2024 platform must be a Green New Deal to deliver good, green jobs, and decarbonise the economy. Rights for gig economy workers, the scrapping of tuition fees and the regeneration of public services are important too. We must redistribute wealth, power and resources to the communities which need them most.

Well before 2024, Labour must undertake a recruitment drive of young, motivated and talented campaigners to communicate the politics of the next generation.

A stronger social media game will be key to Labour's success. We have to invest heavily and use the next four years to create and refine a social media strategy capable of winning over young voters en masse. The internet is our most powerful tool to directly connect with the voters of tomorrow. Three things must guide us in this area: tapping into what young people value; making the content short but powerful; and making stronger use of social media a long-term priority.

But we must also embrace multigenerational policies. Better social housing would help the young and old. Strengthening the NHS must be one of our top priorities too – it is our nation's greatest institution that serves us from cradle to grave. Building

a fairer education system for lifelong learning is also a must.

The coronavirus pandemic has placed us at the crossroads of history; we have a choice between a fairer economy, a greener climate and tackling racial injustice or returning to the same old broken systems, the same old cycles of needless pain and suffering. But Labour can help us reach a more equal world. Young people will support our party if it shows commitment to implementing real change: change that will transform lives and deliver real hope. **F**

Athian Akec is an activist on knife crime, inequality and climate change

A DIFFERENT PATH

Workers must get a real say in the change that shapes their lives—*Josh Abey*

The arrival of 2020 heralded a new decade of profound change – and this was true even before Covid-19 exploded into view. An intensifying climate emergency, realignment in global power structures, new technologies becoming mature: we already knew that the world in 2030 would be very different from the one we lived in back in January.

But as the pandemic has unfolded, extraordinary changes we expected to take place over 10 years happened in a few months. Covid-19 has taken many thousands of lives. It has also dramatically transformed millions of peoples' experience at work – and there is a real chance that some of this transformation is here to stay.

Change has looked different for different workers. Many have seen an ongoing shift to full-time home working, enabled by video conferencing and cloud technology. Others have had their jobs paused, with incomes kept afloat by furlough. Key workers in social care, teachers, doctors and nurses have been dealing directly with the pandemic.

For too many, this transformation has proven extremely painful. People have fallen through the gaps and have faced either drastic falls in hours and earnings or unemployment – with recourse to little more than a paltry safety net. Beyond the Covid crisis, the recession may well entrench and accelerate change, as employers move to bring down costs by automating more job tasks.

This is a key finding of the Fabian Society and Community union's commission on workers and technology, a two-year inquiry chaired by Yvette Cooper MP. Alarmist concerns about technology-driven mass unemployment have often been overblown. But with the pace of change boosted by the pandemic, there is a real risk that a significant number may indeed face losing their jobs, or having those jobs changed beyond all recognition.

How should policymakers respond? We do not need to look back far in our national history to understand how things can go wrong. Recent decades have seen seismic economic and social changes reshaping life for people and communities – and too often before those who are most affected get a meaningful say. Decision-making about deindustrialisation and economic liberalisation in the 1980s happened over the heads of workers. Governments and employers acted without the consent of the people who have been hit by and left unprepared for change, and the consequences continue to be felt today in the shape of deep inequality and insecurity.

When there is democratic engagement on society-altering issues, it tends to happen only after the change has already transpired. Imposing change on people, not making change with them, damages social trust and undermine the fabric of public life – whether it is national government deciding to accept or hasten the decline of an industry or an individual business deciding to redesign a job role.

Technology-enabled industrial change in the 2020s must not unfold in the same way. The people whose lives are most affected by this change – workers – must be empowered to use their voice. This is, at its core, the democratic principle: people should get a real say in deciding what happens in their own lives. Many of the recommendations made by the commission on workers and technology are about putting this principle into practice.

Fundamentally, if technology change is to work for all, we need to embrace more democracy in the economic sphere. Consultative arrangements must be made mandatory for large employers, with new options for consultation in smaller firms too; workers should be able to elect employee representatives to company boards; and barriers to trade union representation should be dismantled. Beyond the workplace level, workers voices must be heard, by reforming key economic institutions, like local enterprise partnerships and the Industrial Strategy Council, to make them 'social partnership' bodies – where government involves workers and businesses.

A new culture of representation, consultation and participation will help identify issues before they develop into real problems for either workers or businesses. Workers will be able to co-design the introduction of new technology in workplaces – making sure it works in practice, averting dysfunctional top-down implementation from managers and ultimately leading to higher productivity for their employers and the economy. Giving workers a voice will not hold back progress, but will ensure its healthy delivery.

This decade must mark a departure in the way economic change is played out in our country. With the spur of the Covid crisis, we can now decide to do things differently. Policymakers, businesses and workers – the people most affected by the shifts already upon us – must forge the way forward together, before it's too late. **F**

Josh Abey is a researcher at the Fabian Society. The summary report of the commission on workers and technology has been sent to members with this issue of the Fabian Review. It, and the full report, are available at www.fabians.org.uk

NEW DIRECTIONS

Reforming our economic system can 'level up' the UK—*Fran Boait*

Covid-19 has sent the world into turmoil. The pandemic is not just threatening lives, but exposing a highly dysfunctional economic system.

The response from the UK government has been mixed. On the one hand, after years of being told the government's budget is like that of a household, and that it cannot spend money it does not have, we have had unprecedented interventions by the Treasury

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and Bank of England. Whilst this U-turn is welcome, the response has prioritised protecting banks, large corporates, landlords, and rentiers above households, workers, and small businesses.

One positive shift is that monetary and fiscal policy has become more coordinated. The £300bn created through quantitative easing has helped expand government spending on schemes such as the furlough, and now the job support scheme. This is in stark contrast to the austerity years, where despite the Bank of England creating £375bn between 2009 and 2013, the government slashed spending which crippled the economy and left us in a weak position for fresh challenges like Covid-19 and Brexit. As a result, the main outcome of quantitative easing in the past has been to make the rich richer. This premise for quantitative easing is still present, and whilst this time it has been used to support government spending, it has also helped keep asset prices high, inflating the wealth of the UK's billionaires. An alternative, often referred to as 'direct monetary financing', would allow the Bank of England to lend to the government to spend directly. In April the Bank announced it was willing to do this through the government's 'ways and means' overdraft, but the government is sadly yet to use it.

These policies are symptomatic of an economy that has its priorities upside down: asset-rich above asset-poor, big banks over small business, and corporations over society. If the government's rhetoric around 'building back better' and 'levelling up' is to be anything more than empty sloganeering then there needs to be a change in direction on both monetary and fiscal policy, and more investment into the economy.

If the government's rhetoric around 'levelling up' is to be more than empty sloganeering then there needs to be a change

On the latter, there has been an unwillingness to deliver state-led investment, which has led to a decade of wage stagnation and decline. This is coupled with a financial system which exacerbates inequalities. Most bank lending is still directed towards property and financial markets (around 75 to 80 per cent), while lending towards productive sectors accounted for only a tenth of total loans in the decade since the crash. Meanwhile, by channelling so much money towards the exchange of pre-existing assets – particularly property – the UK's oversized financial sector inflates asset prices and increases inequality. At the same time, banks and investors are directing billions towards fossil fuels, and accelerating climate breakdown.

As was the case before the crash, the UK has five globally systemic commercial banks that dominate the market, with an 85 per cent share of personal current accounts. As such, huge power is concentrated in the hands of this tiny number of institutions and their central role in our economy and payments system means that governments are unable to let them fail. Despite efforts to encourage new entrants to the market, challenger banks do not offer much of an alternative. They often have the same models of shareholder ownership, and lack a geographical focus, or specific mission. It is no surprise they have done little to diversify the bank lending landscape.

A 'fair, green, recovery', as the prime minister has pledged, will need state-led investment and different models of banking. It will also require a coordinated approach to macroeconomic policy, rather than the siloed approach that has dominated for a decade. Fiscal and monetary policy have previously pulled in different directions, and whilst there has been some progress, the government currently does not seem to be moving towards a joined-up approach alongside the now year-old industrial strategy. In July, whilst many were anticipating a bold summer statement by the chancellor incorporating a green stimulus package, the actual substance was lacking with 'eat out to help out' for restaurants being the headline policy. As some campaigners put it: "We wanted a Green New Deal, and got a meal deal."

For too long the UK economy has run on asset price inflation and an oversized financial sector. It is clear that this model is broken, but the Covid-19 economic response has failed to challenge it in any significant way. Whilst it is welcome that this Conservative government seems willing to U-turn on some of the most damaging economic orthodoxies of the austerity years, there remains a huge chasm between the policies they have deployed and ones that would actually 'level up' the UK. **F**

Fran Boait is executive director of Positive Money, a non-profit think tank which campaigns for systemic change of the money and banking system

Rebuilding trust

Labour's commitment to keeping people safe must be felt by all across the country, argues *Nick Thomas-Symonds MP*

Nick Thomas-Symonds is Labour MP for Torfaen and shadow home secretary

Following our humbling election defeat in 2019, we have to ask ourselves deep questions about what went wrong.

We have now lost the last four UK general elections – it must be our mission to listen, change and win back trust.

I take the job of building trust incredibly seriously. One thing which was so deeply distressing about the election last December was that we lost votes, and trust, in working-class communities across the country: towns and communities that have always been the beating heart of Labour.

Many of these areas were built on the importance of close community and family, forged by working in heavy industry. This is the story of my constituency of Torfaen, where I am proud to have grown up and to live today. My mother, Pam, worked in a local factory; my father, Jeff, worked in the steelworks – it is a background shared by so many of those voters we lost.

Growing up in Torfaen instilled in me the values of respect and fairness, which I take into my job of shadow home secretary.

Too many people have told me they lost faith in Labour's commitment to keeping people safe and upholding the law.

Across the country we have seen the huge cuts to the police, increases in anti-social behaviour and the horrors of knife crime and domestic abuse. There is no doubt that this has been driven by the loss of 20,000 police officers under the Tories and deep cuts to preventative services. My priority is to convince people that Labour will keep them, their family and their community safe – not only in the areas where we lost seats last year, but right across the country.

We will push the government to rectify urgently the mistakes of the last 10 years, holding ministers to account for the fact that losing 20,000 officers has resulted in violent crime rising by 150 per cent.

Attacks on frontline police increased by 50 per cent in the last five years – officers are not getting the support they need from government. The Tories have broken a contract of trust with those that put themselves in harm's way to keep us safe and we will push for that to be repaired.

However, any officer will tell you that policing alone will never be enough to tackle crime. We have heard too little about the devastating impact the Tories have had on preventive services – youth clubs, mental health services and local authority gang services – which are all vital to the fight against violent crime and which have all been massively undermined and constrained by cuts.

Similarly, we know that domestic abuse continues to be a stain on our country, made even worse by lockdown. All the warning signs were there that domestic abuse would increase, and, sadly, that came to pass.

I am proud that we forced the government to commit £76m for domestic abuse services during the first UK lockdown. However, that will not address the systematic failure to support such life-saving services or to give the police the necessary tools to bring perpetrators to justice.

The truth is at no point have the Tories taken the issue of crime seriously enough. In fact, their serious violence taskforce, which was supposed to be chaired by the prime minister and driven forward by the home secretary, has not met for over a year.

So we will develop policy in the coming years, working closely with the police, communities, charities, local government and many more. This will be underpinned by our commitment to rebuilding trust across the country that Labour cares deeply about, and will act on, law and order.

We take on that work at an extraordinary moment for our country. We went into this crisis weakened by a decade of Tory austerity: a housing crisis that left many households financially overstretched; insecure work on a grand scale meaning many workers were vulnerable to labour market shocks; a health system in England undermined and fragmented by Tory ideology; and a systematic government attack on our trade unions, in an attempt to diminish the very organisations that have proved so vital to saving livelihoods and getting people back to work safely. The pandemic did not create these challenges, but it magnified them enormously.

As a proud biographer of Bevan and Attlee, I am clear that the values and vision that drove those two great figures from Labour's past must shape the way our party responds to today's global emergency. Our party has a great responsibility in moments of crisis, with people relying on Labour to offer direction and moral leadership.

Moments of crisis shine a penetrating light on how the world has been; how we live today; and what our futures can hold. That is why they can be such catalysts for change.

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Bevan summed this up when he said we can never "excuse indifference to individual suffering… There is no test for progress other than its impact on the individual." The baton now passes to our generation to find a way to make these timeless values real.

The Black Lives Matter movement is an incredibly powerful reminder – not that one should be needed – of the scale of individual suffering caused by anti-Black racism, in the UK and across the world. We must listen to those voices from our Black communities who have expressed how deep-rooted the systemic racism is and why so much more remains to be done. I am proud that Labour has committed to implement a new Race Equality Act to tackle structural racism and inequality, as was recommended by Baroness Doreen Lawrence in her recent review. I pay great tribute to Baroness Lawrence for her tireless campaigning to tackle racism.

We know, too, the importance of trust in policing and delivering a service that looks more like the people it serves. As home secretary, I would lead the change that is necessary from the top. This must include working to improve diversity in policing, as well as increasing the involvement of diverse communities in police training and improving accountability. There are excellent recommendations on tackling disproportionality in reviews from David Lammy MP and Dame Elish Angiolini, but this government refuses to act on continuing injustices.

We face a Tory government that is so lacking in compassion that it would rather leave unaccompanied children in Greece's burning Moria refugee camp, than live up to our promise to help them, and would mobilise the Royal Navy against dinghies in the English Channel in a bid to militarise a human crisis.

That is why we opposed the Tories divisive immigration bill. Among its many terrible features was the hypocrisy of branding low-paid workers unskilled. We were not prepared to stand aside on a bill that effectively meant the 180,000 EU-born NHS staff and care workers we had been clapping for on Thursday evenings were told they are not welcome here.

We must build a Labour immigration policy that is true to our values of compassion and internationalism, while exposing the inhumanity and incompetence of the Tories. Alongside that, we will be a strong voice on issues like the Dubs amendment so that we can offer sanctuary to some of the most vulnerable people on earth, and we will continue to expose the lack of compassion and competence with which the Tories have handled those terrible scenes we have seen in the Channel.

We must build a Labour immigration policy that is true to our values of compassion and internationalism

Tory incompetence has also led to the gross mishandling of the Windrush scandal. At least nine people have died waiting for compensation and just 12 per cent of those who applied have so far received a payment. This is yet more disrespect from this government to a generation of people to whom we owe so much. Labour will continue campaigning on this issue and will push for the Wendy Williams review to be implemented in full, without delay.

With the honour of being in the shadow cabinet comes a responsibility to help rebuild trust with the Jewish community, so badly damaged and powerfully exposed by the EHRC report. I will work closely with groups looking to tackle issues like the increases in vile antisemitic hate crime and the deeply worrying violence we have seen targeting Jewish people. However, it goes beyond individual policies. I will do all I can to help ensure the necessary shift in party culture is delivered.

I am fully aware that I take on the role of shadow home secretary at a critical moment in the history of not only our party and movement, but the country as a whole. Nobody can yet predict what situation we will face by the 2024 election. However, I am committed to ensuring that we go into that election having done all we can to rebuild trust in our party to keep people safe and true to our values of compassion, decency and humanity. F

The route ahead

Joe Biden is the right president to heal America's divides but the Democrats' power hangs in the balance, writes *Amy Dacey*

Amy Dacey is executive director of the Sine Institute of Policy & Politics at American University and previous advisor to president Barack Obama and senator John Kerry. During the 2016 presidential election, she served as the chief executive officer of the Democratic National Committee

In the United States, we love to say this election is the most important election of our lifetime every election year, but in 2020 that was the absolute truth. I have seen many elections from many angles, whether at the local, state, federal, or national level. Still, none has had the incredible historic turnout and, at the same time, inconsistency in results as that of 2020.

As we tallied the votes, we had a sitting president unable to get to grips with his loss, creating misinformation, division, and threatening the effective transfer of power that makes us stronger at home and in the world. We also have a nation that still seems divided in its ideology and unwilling to see any compromise. The new leadership offers a promising hope of change and much-needed direction in a year where unprecedented has become a common word.

Voter turnout is estimated at 66.5 per cent of eligible voters compared to 60.1 per cent in the 2016 election, with the highest turnout rates in the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin – both over 75 per cent. In numbers, at least 158.8 million people voted in this election, and close to 102 million voted early. It means that more people than ever before participated in the electoral process to elect Joe Biden. It is a great accomplishment that the United States increased its total voter turnout in the middle of a global pandemic. Democracy prevailed but with anger, mistrust, and widespread misinformation about voter fraud and mail-in ballots. Yes, president-elect Biden had a winning mandate – but inherits a divided country where red states are redder, blue states are bluer, and divides have deepened between urban/suburban voting and rural parts of the country.

Our electoral college process also holds us to a system where a small number of states decide our next president, and there, the results were all with close margins. The mere fact that after four tumultuous years in office, Trump increased his vote by four million people is worth reflecting on.

At their core, campaigns are a conversation. And during this election cycle, the candidates wanted to have very different conversations. The Biden-Harris teams focused on Trump's failures and poor Covid-19 response, offering hope that a new administration could find solutions. And the Trump administration wanted to deflect from the chaos the pandemic presented both nationally and around the globe. More interested in voter fraud allegations and accused misdoings from the Biden family, Trump offered little aspirational at a time of tragedy and sacrifice for so many. The election also offered a striking difference between leadership versus showmanship, as most amplified by the debacle of the first presidential debate.

The Democrats won the presidential election, but there needs to be an honest conversation about who is voting for the party and who is not

In the months leading up to the election, many Democrats hoped for a true blue wave that would wipe out four years of a Trump presidency and his toxic environment whilst also recapturing the Senate, increasing numbers in the House of Representatives and taking back control of statehouse across the country. But as polls closed across the country on election night and votes were counted, that appeared less of a reality.

The Democrats did not receive the repudiation of Trump they were looking for in this election. There was not the outright rejection of his policies and practices one expected. In addition, candidates that embraced Trump and his style and beliefs won districts, at times defeating Democratic incumbents.

Yes, the Democrats won the presidential election, but there needs to be an honest conversation about who is voting for the party and who is not. Why did the Hispanic

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vote perform differently in different areas? Why again did white women not support the democratic ticket? The party must make sure they are not treating these voting blocks as monoliths but as very individualised, persuadable voters. In the months to come, it is important to seek out what voters cares and concerns are, and articulate that the Democrats share their values and want to provide opportunities to help them thrive. They will need to make politics personal and show that the Democrats are the ones that are listening, connect with their situation and are solution driven.

As the country appears more divided, Biden is the right president for the right time, a healing transitional leader who has spoken more times about unity than anything else. As a priority, the new administration should focus on rebuilding communities across the country and must fight for racial justice, after conversations sparked earlier this year.

But our balance of power is set to be affected by two runoff elections in Georgia on 5 January 2021 which will decide whether Biden works with a Democratic or Republican majority in the Senate. So far, the Democrats have a net loss of 11 seats in the House of Representatives and a net loss of one governor's seat. All eyes are therefore on Georgia, where resources are being poured to get an embattled electorate to return to the polls and cast their vote.

And even more damaging long term, no state legislative chambers flipped for the Democrats. Biden brought with him no coattails, no as we call it, blue wave. This is especially troubling as the Democrats were hoping to strengthen themselves in redistricting fights across the country and legislatures are key to this plan, which would redesign congressional districts every 10 years to reflect the electorate and make sure they are represented fairly. This is not only a political problem for Democrats but will also affect the long-term make-up of the House of Representatives. Knowing this, the transition is focusing on collaboration and outreach to all Americans and all elected officials regardless of party.

Biden and his vice president-elect Kamala Harris are facing major issues at the beginning of their term. Rates of Covid-19 have resurged and concerns are growing around greater isolation restrictions. But mere weeks after election day, Biden and his team have already selected key staff, started to build a cabinet, worked on and received what briefings they can, and sent a message to the American people that change is coming, relief is coming. Meanwhile, in the election aftermath, president Trump made no public appearances and instead spent his time pushing lawsuits, golfing and refusing to concede.

Without Trump as president, the Republican party finds itself in a difficult position. Do they still acknowledge an outgoing president who received 4 million more votes in 2020 and has a Twitter following of massive impact? Or do they build a republican coalition without the presence of the Trump brand? This is likely to become clearer after the runoff elections in Georgia, and whether Trump is still needed to galvanise voters to maintain power in the Senate. As Trump leaves the White House, his future influence on government and politics remains to be seen. Will he use his voice to continue his divisive narrative? And will he still have the following and strength to make an impact? Only time will tell.

In the aftermath of the election, we have already witnessed a focused president-elect bringing together experts to tackle the underlying issues which have worsened this pandemic, namely around a dysfunctional economy. As we look forward to 2021, there is new leadership, and there is hope. President-elect Biden is bringing back seasoned established leaders, he is ready to work and has the experience we need at this time. The challenge is not to ignore the systemic divisions amongst the American people, the anxiety and angst and real turmoil we have seen these past few months. To move forward and govern without acknowledging these divisions and actively discussing solutions would be a mistake. The Biden-Harris team has already set the tone that they will not do that, and that in 2021 we will move forward, not backwards, at home and on the world stage. **F**

Winning the war

The Democrats' victory should give cause for both hope and caution over here, writes *Thom Brooks*

Thom Brooks is Dean of Durham Law School and a member of the Fabian Society executive committee

In 2016, many of us were close to despair watching Donald Trump win a surprising victory over Hillary Clinton. That election was seen as unleashing a new post-truth populism. Evidence-based policy was out and ideologically driven politics was in. Four years of lies from the president about everything from the size of his inauguration audience on day one to non-existent mass voter fraud today have gone so far they give the phrase 'fake news' a bad name.

Progressives worldwide will rejoice in Trump's defeat at the hands of president-elect Joe Biden. This was the first time in nearly three decades where the White House incumbent failed to achieve a second term in office. No victory is inevitable, especially where an opponent is so committed to breaking conventions wherever he finds them. But there are insights we can gain from the result that shed light for progressives elsewhere, including in the UK, on how populism can be defeated.

The first lesson is that Trump's brand of populism is more a personality cult than popular movement. What appealed to supporters was authenticity over achievement. Trump's late-night tweets were his alone, noticeably untouched by any spin doctor. His voters valued that direct connection to a 'real' individual in power. In sharp contrast to the image of politicians acting as mouthpieces for other interests, Trump stood out – as acting only for himself. It is easy to underplay how strongly this resonated given his defeat. Yet we should not forget Trump won over 70 million votes – more than any other US politician with the exception of Biden.

We should not forget Trump won over 70 million votes – more than any other US politician with the exception of Biden

Trump's strength was, in the end, his Achilles heel. It is easier to be a personality than a political success. While he had much to say about putting the world to rights, Trump actually achieved little beyond staged photoshoots. The public eventually concluded that his rhetoric never translated into reality. The slogans about making Mexico pay for a southern wall, putting America first in revitalising the rust belt and locking up his fiercest political rival all came to nothing. The more the public got to know Trump, the less they liked him. He is the only president in modern history never to have had a positive approval rating during his term in office.

The consequence is that Trump's loss creates a political vacuum for Republicans. Trumpism has been revealed to be nothing more than whatever Trump chooses to tweet or text whenever it suits him. The appeal for his supporters lay in his unique brand of authenticity that neither his adult children nor GOP lawmakers can match. This vacuum offers Republicans an opportunity: if they seize it we may see the party regroup and rebuild itself. Remaking the party happened before under former speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich and his 'contract with America', which fuelled the rise of neo-conservatism and led to a string of major victories. Democrats must watch this space carefully.

The second lesson is that dividing a country can unite voters against you. Trump's embrace of racial and cultural division no doubt energised his core voters. But like a political anti-gravity, the unethical and cynical posturing that caused much pain for so many repelled in even greater measure than it attracted votes. In carving out an ever more targeted political base, Trump did not drain the swamp in Washington DC but instead shrank the pool of possible voters.

Nothing exemplifies this better than Trump's reaction to the video capturing George Floyd's death from a Minneapolis police officer's knee on his neck in broad daylight. Instead of sharing in a nation's shock and seeking to heal its pain, Trump chose to demonise public demonstrations claiming he alone was a 'law and order' president ready to clamp down on angry protests and stoking public anger for personal partisan gain.

In contrast to Trump's increasingly narrow appeal, Biden managed to reach out to a broad range of voters. He was able to galvanise the support of women and BAME voters who felt left behind by Trump and increase

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the Democrats' share of votes among older people and working-class voters. His was a coalition of young and old bringing people of different backgrounds together around a message of hope and unity.

The third lesson is that decency and competence are values much in demand and never needed more urgently. Biden easily won the test of character. Whatever Trump's supporters might say in favour of his ideological commitments, there was nothing positive about the personification of selfishness. The public grew tired of a bully turning instead to someone whose public life and service could inspire across generations.

The Covid-19 pandemic was a mortal test of the Trump administration's competence. Failing to take coronavirus seriously and making mask-wearing a partisan issue undoubtedly cost Trump votes – and American lives. Re-election is a time, as Ronald Reagan once said, when the public is asked whether or not they are better off. With the world's worst handling of the coronavirus in terms of cases and deaths, most US citizens wanted a return to a government for and by the people – that could deliver competently.

These three lessons offer a mix of hope and caution for the Labour party's future prospects under Keir Starmer.

Let's start with hope. In Starmer, Labour has a leader with a proud track record of distinguished public service. His frontbench team have emphasised competency and evidence-based decision-making that stand in sharp contrast with the chaos and confusion of Boris Johnson's cabinet as they stumble from one U-turn to the next.

Labour's competent approach has a broad appeal because it is founded serving the public good. The Covid-19 pandemic helps exemplify this. There is nothing right or left-wing about wanting to protect the public from this deadly disease. Johnson's government has appeared to cut corners in awarding significant sums of public money without competitive bidding to friendly organisations raising serious questions, if nothing else, about value for money. Even worse is the growing lack of confidence in the evidence informing government policy, which shifts like desert sands in a midnight storm.

However, the challenges for Labour are different from those the Democrats faced. The latter were up against a party personified in a particular individual who openly courted a narrower demographic, pitting one section of society against others. Conservatives are not Republicans. The Tories are larger than their leader. While they have slipped behind Labour in opinion polls since Starmer became leader, Conservatives have not given up – at least not yet as witnessed by the launch of the Northern Research Group and other groupings of Tory MPs – on winning over a broad coalition of voters north and south across demographic groups.

While Trump may see Johnson as Britain's 'mini-Trump', Tory electoral success in 2024 is not inextricably tied to Johnson's popularity – and there are reports he is likely to stand down and hand the keys to a successor in the New Year. This makes the Conservatives a more difficult target.

But like Trump, the Tories have a poor record of broken promises in office – and it is a much longer one. Their success at staying in power means they have a catalogue of errors to their name: failings over Windrush, Grenfell Tower, Covid testing and tracing, public money wasted in the transfer to private hands and the risk of a no-deal Brexit.

Equality of power, wealth and opportunity are Fabian values that have never more needed to address the growing inequalities across society under the Tories – Fabian values that Starmer's Labour holds as its own. The public has heard a list of promises from 10 Downing Street about world-leading programmes in the future that never come to pass. What a Labour party winning government needs to deliver is an evidence-based set of policies that the public believes Labour is competent to implement.

So instead of seeking ideological shifts to win, the path to victory in the UK – as it was in the US – may ultimately lie in a question of trust: which party does the public believe will deliver for them? Decency, competence and a commitment to enable a more equal future must be way forward. So-called 'culture wars' are ideologically based distractions from the failures of government to deliver the public's priorities. Pursuing such battles is not the way to win the war over competence – and public trust.

Identifying the core values we need to build our programme upon is, of course, easier than winning over hearts and minds, But it is a vital step in heading for the better future we all need to fight for. We often hear the phrase that a contest is 'a once in a lifetime election'. This past autumn, that was exactly how Americans viewed their choice. When the general election comes to Britain, we must ensure people seize the moment for a fundamental change – and a new progressive alliance bridging the Atlantic from the United States to the United Kingdom. **F**

LESSONS IN PROGRESS

Good education is key to a better future – and that is what Labour wants to prioritise, shadow education secretary Kate Green MP tells *Kate Murray*

© Stefan Rousseau

Kate Green has education in her blood. Growing up in a household where both of her parents were teachers, she understood very early on in life the difference a good education could make.

"My parents were not from privileged backgrounds, they had come from very impoverished backgrounds in the west of Scotland in the 1920s and 30s when their parents – my grandparents – had known long periods of unemployment and poverty. Education was the route out of that," she says. "So they were very, very passionate about it as the thing that opens the doors to opportunity. It was really taken for granted that you would absolutely make the most of your education and that every effort would be made to support you to do that."

Now that she is Labour's shadow education secretary, Green wants to give every family that same sense of opportunity. "My parents were not unique – every parent is looking for the best for their children and Labour is very aspirational for our children and young people," she says. "That belief that I grew up with, that I would have access to the best quality education and that that was something to celebrate, is something that I now want to see for every child and young person and for every parent to be confident that their children will have."

Education has long been one of the touchstones of Labour in power, from the battle for comprehensive education and the establishment of the Open University in the 1960s to New Labour's famous 'education, education, education' mantra in the 1990s. That centrality of education to Labour values is why Green was delighted to take up her current role.

"No Labour politician offered the chance to be our shadow secretary of state for education – and I hope one day our secretary of state – would ever turn down this job," she says. "It goes to the heart of what we believe in – enabling everyone to make the most of their potential and giving everyone the opportunity of enrichment and enjoyment from their learning."

"The focus on 'education education education' in 1997 not only really spoke to public aspiration and imagination but it led to some really brave and imaginative policy, things like SureStart, things like the London challenge to drive up standards in London schools, and things like the education maintenance allowance that enabled young people from less well-off backgrounds to continue in education," she adds. "Those were really radical groundbreaking policies and they grew out of this huge priority that was given in government to the importance of education. That's something we absolutely want to come back into government to do again."

Some political commentators argued that Green was a surprise choice for the education job, given that she had only had one relatively short stint in the shadow cabinet under Jeremy Corbyn and had only been back in a shadow

post for a couple of months under Keir Starmer. Fabian members, of course, were far more familiar with her thanks to her active role in the society in recent years, including her stint as chair. But she's not the only active Fabian now on the front bench, a development which she sees as good news not just for the Fabian Society but for the Labour party as a whole. "It's a great opportunity for us to use the Fabian strengths – really detailed well-researched well-evidenced policy thinking to develop ideas that will be life-changing: radical ideas but also very pragmatic policy approaches that have got to be deliverable in government," she says. "It is really great that the leader of the Labour party and the deputy leader are Fabians, and that right at the heart of our movement, Fabian thinking is understood and appreciated."

Recent Fabian research, including the work on access to justice and, now, on workers and technology, is proving influential in policy-making, Green adds. "There is an opportunity to take that up a gear now and to look at how the Fabian habit of very careful, very thorough research and policy thinking can begin to help us develop a rich, bold, creative social justice programme for government."

Exciting as that policy-making process might be, education, just like pretty much everything else, has been dominated this year by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers, support staff, pupils and families have all been telling Green about the pressures of trying to keep everyone safe while still learning. She maintains that it is right schools are open. "I definitely think children should be in school – it's the best place for them, the best place for their learning and the best place for their socio-emotional wellbeing," she says. "It's particularly important for disadvantaged children. We saw in the first national lockdown that although schools were kept open for them, many did not attend. That's why I think it is really important that we've had a return to compulsory education this term and I support that. I also think it's been really important from a safeguarding point of view – teachers are often the first professionals to pick up signals of a child in trouble."

Labour would, however, have done things differently, both in the speed of its response and in avoiding the edicts from on high that have characterised this government's response. "Too often school leaders, childcare providers and college and university principals have been telling me that they would receive guidance late, it would sometimes be contradictory and sometimes very difficult to implement," Green says. "We would have made sure that we were engaging all the time with the professionals so that there was a collaboration in planning and in implementing plans, so that everyone could work together to come through the Covid crisis."

The government has seemed unwilling to grasp the scale of the crisis: with attendance figures among the worst in peacetime, she adds, much more should have been done to support schools to keep children in education. Then there is the early years sector, which according to Green, has not had any real attention or support from the government in months. "I'm really concerned that we will see a flight of providers from the sector, and it will be very, very difficult

to rebuild that provision and a generation of young people and their parents will suffer as a result," she says.

Beyond that, many of the immediate problems coronavirus has created have pointed to underlying issues that Labour wants to address. "The short-term pressures are actually highlighting what are going to be the long-term strategic questions too – questions about what kind of exam system you have, that treat children and young people fairly, that test them on what they're capable of, enable them to demonstrate their abilities and their potential," she says.

It's similar too on accountability. "During this term we've had Ofsted making informal visits rather than carrying out formal inspections, I think that's been a good approach. Nobody, other than the government can seriously think it's a good idea to revert to formal assessments in a few weeks time when schools are still coping with the brunt of the pandemic and high levels of staff and student absence. We need to learn from this term's experience about how you can use your accountability and inspection regime to support and spread good practice and schools improvement."

Although she is careful to emphasise that it is still too early to have detailed policies in place, Green is clear that reform of tuition fees is still on Labour's agenda. "It's really important that we don't have students graduating with this psychological burden of enormous and frankly unrealistic debt – much of which never gets paid off so it's not a particularly good model for the economy either – but which has left our higher education sector with an unsustainable and very, very fragile funding model which has really been cruelly exposed in the Covid pandemic," she says. "We've really got to rethink how we protect that sector and have a fair deal for students."

And could there be another big area for reform – rolling back the tide on academies and grammar schools or even phasing out private schools? Those in favour of a radical approach were heartened by Green's appointment: the Labour Against Private Schools group welcomed the news by saying she was the first MP to support its 'abolish Eton' campaign. But she insists she is 'less interested in structures than in what's going on inside schools and what's coming out of them'. On private schools, she adds: "Only seven per cent of our children go to private schools and the vast majority of my time in this role and I would say as secretary of state as well, if I go on to do that job, is not going to be spent on the seven per cent of children in private schools, it's going to be spent on the 93 per cent of children and young people in our state education system and making sure that they get the very best education that they can. Naturally, I would like a funding mechanism that addresses some of the inherent privilege that students in private schools benefit from that students in some of our state schools don't – things like the smaller class sizes, the access to additional high-quality equipment and learning resources. I do want to see a shift in resources, so that the state sector is benefiting at least equally but actually I would like it to be benefiting better than any privately funded institution because the vast majority of our children are going to be in our state sector."

The shock of the 2019 result sits with all of us – it was traumatising

As Labour gears up for the hard work of preparing a policy offer to win the next general election, Green is particularly passionate about ensuring early years education and lifelong learning form a core part of that offer. A broad, engaging curriculum also looks set to be a key component in Labour's plans: a curriculum that prepares learners for the 'very volatile and uncertain future' ahead, but which also engages them and reflects their own lived experiences. "It's about embedding Black history and LGBT identity, making sure that every learner can see their identity reflected and celebrated at every point in the curriculum – which scientists are you learning about in science, which mathematicians, what books are you reading in English or in modern foreign languages, who are the authors, which painters are you looking at, what particular sports personalities are you following?" she says.

Her own experience where, under the Scottish system, she had an extra year at school after her highers, is an inspiration. "That was a wonderful year because it was really the first time that I could pursue the subjects that I really wanted to pursue in the way that I wanted to pursue them – the freeing up of how you could start to think about things, question things, research more deeply into some aspects of what you were learning because they particularly interested you," she says. "If I could distil that and find a way of making it the essence of the whole learning experience, I think that everyone, whatever their stage in the learning journey, would find that really exciting and enriching. It would be a real springboard for raising standards, ensuring that people continue to participate in learning throughout their life."

There is a mountain to climb, of course, before Labour will get the opportunity to turn its vision into reality. But Green says there is a huge sense of purpose among Labour parliamentarians after the crushing disappointment of last year's general election. "I think the shock of the 2019 result sits with all of us – it was traumatising," she says. "We feel desperate about the millions of voters up and down the country who needed a Labour government, and have now been many years without one, and who have seen their life chances and their wellbeing and prosperity suffer as a result. And so I think there's a huge sense of determination in the parliamentary party, to understand what it was the voters wanted of Labour, what it was that we weren't delivering, and to listen to them so that we are able to respond to and develop policy in a way that understands their concerns and their aspirations and their hopes."

The current government is likely to be just as unequal to the task of steering the post-Covid recovery as it has been to managing the pandemic, Green says. So it falls to Labour to set out over the next few years "a positive, radical, and entirely credible alternative that gives people a sense of hope, a sense that they and their families and communities will have a better future under Labour but that it's realistic and they can see a roadmap for it". **F**

Kate Murray is editor of the Fabian Review

No going back

We have so much work left to do to support disabled people, writes *Vicky Foxcroft MP*

Vicky Foxcroft is Labour MP for Lewisham Deptford and shadow minister for disabled people

THIS YEAR WAS meant to be one of celebration for disabled people. It marks several significant milestones in the fight for disabled people's rights: the 50th anniversary of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, the 25th anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act and the 10th anniversary of the Equality Act.

Instead, 2020 nears its end with disabled people having to defend some of their most basic rights and freedoms. Although the Covid-19 global pandemic has been difficult for us all, it has been especially tough for disabled people.

Tragically, the most recent data from the Office for National Statistics shows disabled people and those with health conditions which limit their daily activities have been disproportionately hit by Covid-19, with this group accounting for 59 per cent of all deaths between March and July. The worrying truth is that a lot of these deaths were potentially preventable.

Right from the start of this pandemic, disabled people have been an afterthought. Issues ranging from a lack of accessible communications to problems accessing food, medicines, PPE equipment and social care support have never been adequately addressed. Countless people were abandoned when they needed help the most.

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During this second wave, the government needs to redouble its efforts to tackle the stark inequalities this pandemic has laid bare. It is time for the Tories to put their money where their mouths are and show real commitment to disabled people.

I recently wrote to Justin Tomlinson MP, the minister for disabled people, urging the government to step up. As the minister with cross-government responsibility for disabled people, he must be their strongest advocate. This government has the power to alleviate a great deal of stress and suffering, but it must act now. As a top priority, the Tories must ensure better financial support for people with disabilities.

Disabled people, many of whom will be shielding, should be fully consulted on the level of sick pay support they actually need. Statutory sick pay is simply not enough; this needs to be looked at and ministers need to finally commit to uplifting legacy benefits in line with universal credit.

Throughout this pandemic, it is also unacceptable that accessible communication continues to be an issue, with government news conferences not having British sign language interpreters government needs to work with disabled people, the experts by experience, to find a solution – this must never happen again.

Access to food and medicines is a fundamental right and the government must ensure disabled people are properly supported, especially if they do not have family or friends that can assist them. This is about enabling all clinically extremely vulnerable people to follow government advice to stay home as much as possible. The government need to work closely with supermarkets to ensure they continue to prioritise the clinically extremely vulnerable.

We also need a mental health guarantee for disabled people. The next few months will be extremely challenging for us all, but particularly for people with existing mental health problems, and those at risk of developing mental health problems. I strongly encourage the government to support Labour's call for a mental health and wellbeing guarantee this winter, which ensures everyone who needs support is able to access it.

If this government is going to support disabled people and households properly, it must follow through on its commitment to properly fund local government – it is local authorities that deliver so many frontline services. The government line that local authorities need to share the burden does not stack up; have ministers forgotten that councils are already struggling after a decade of austerity imposed by them?

As we reflect on the great achievements disabled people have made, it is crucial we learn from the last year and ensure this country never rolls back on disabled people's rights.

This year the government was due to publish its national strategy for disabled people – aimed at removing barriers and increasing participation – but this has now been delayed until 2021. I hope the government uses the extra time to ensure that the strategy can be fully implemented, that it has the full involvement and backing of disabled people, and – most importantly – that it delivers a better life for all disabled people. F

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen a wave of cronyism and outsourcing which poses a threat to the health of our communities, institutions and even our democracy. Are we living in rogue state Britain? Luke Cooper and Sonia Adesara discuss.

The mask that slipped

Luke Cooper explores the story of Dominic Cummings, cronyism and Britain's new authoritarianism

Luke Cooper is a consultant researcher at LSE IDEAS. His book on the new authoritarianism will be published in 2021

A few months before the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, Dominic Cummings, then Vote Leave supremo, was invited to give evidence to the Treasury select committee.

Cummings could at least be credited for speaking his mind. Treasury civil servants were described as 'charlatans'. He accused the UK Cabinet Office of bullying those who did not support the EU. The committee members who had pulled him in were left unimpressed. Andrew Tyrie, the body's Tory chair, accused him of playing 'fast and loose' with the facts. Helen Goodman, at the time a Labour MP, described Cummings as having, 'no grip on reality at all'. When he spoke to the committee in 2016, Cummings was still a figure in the shadows – few members of the public would have known his name until the lockdown fiasco four years later.

Now ousted from the corridors of power, Cummings will be remembered as one of the most powerful advisors to Boris Johnson's government, and his appearance at the select committee provides a retrospectively revealing insight into his politics and vision. Discussing his experience as an advisor to Michael Gove, he complained about the 'nightmarish' EU rules on government procurement. "PricewaterhouseCoopers did a big audit of them", he said, "suggesting that it added 30 per cent to the cost of contracts over about 200 days". Brexit would allow the UK to extricate itself from these rules, he argued. "That would be one huge gain, but how many billions you can save is very hard to say", he told Tyrie.

Cummings went on to describe his vision for the British state. Freed from the rules-based system it would form, he believed, what we might call a platform organisation, engaging in distributing tenders to the private sector. This lightly resourced, flexible state would allow, he argued, for systems capable of 'error correction' – and he compared the American model favourably to EU 'bureaucracies' which he held to be hostile to innovation and unsuited to the demands of the time.

In government, Cummings has been able to turn this vision into a political reality. Under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic, the UK government suspended its normal procurement rules. These state that any contract over £10,000 in value needs to be put out to competitive tender. Far from saving money, the result has been a series of high profile crony deals at huge cost to the taxpayer.

> These crony capitalist deals are not accidental occurrences but the logical outcome of a particular ideological vision

Covered extensively by Peter Geoghegan and a team of investigative journalists at openDemocracy, these deals demonstrate a chronic lack of transparency and shocking levels of waste: from a small loss-making firm in Stroud run by a Conservative councillor that was given £156m to supply PPE with no competitive tendering; to a private equity firm that received £252m for masks which were deemed unusable; and – the most disastrous from a public health point of view – the £12bn privatised 'test and trace' system that failed to avert a second wave of the virus and new national lockdown.

Looking at these events in the context of Cumming's 2016 performance for the Treasury select committee helps us to underline their ideological coherence. These crony capitalist deals are not accidental occurrences arising from bad implementation, but the logical outcome of a particular ideological vision – one that has not changed significantly since the referendum itself.

So, what exactly is the nature of this vision?

Authoritarian protectionism: a paradigm of the 21st century?

The rise of global authoritarianism is undeniable. From Narendra Modi in India to Xi Jinping in China,

Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and Viktor Orbán in Hungary – to name but a few – there is a clear trend away from democratic politics towards 'something else'. The threat to global democracy is diverse, but there is a common theme to their arguments and appeal.

I call this approach authoritarian protectionism. It contains two broad features. First, the national community is defined along ethnic lines, explicitly or implicitly. This establishes the group to be protected and defines the 'foreign' threats against which they are aligned, both within and outside the national society. Second, it involves the absolute prioritisation of the (now ethnically defined) partisan interests of the people – and prosecutes them regardless of democratic norms.

The rise of this logic is occurring in the context of a change in how political institutions and economic markets interact. Simply put, since the 2008 financial crisis and now – to an even greater degree –with the 2020 coronavirus recession, the contemporary economy is hugely dependent on the state.

Authoritarian protectionism finds a wide audience in this context. It re-politicises the use of power, brushing aside the language of technocracy in favour of national identity, tradition and sovereignty, but leaves the fundamentals of the economic status quo unthreatened. And its autocratic wielding of sovereignty means governments can bypass 'rules-based' institutional politics.

Brexit, authoritarian protectionism and the new Toryism

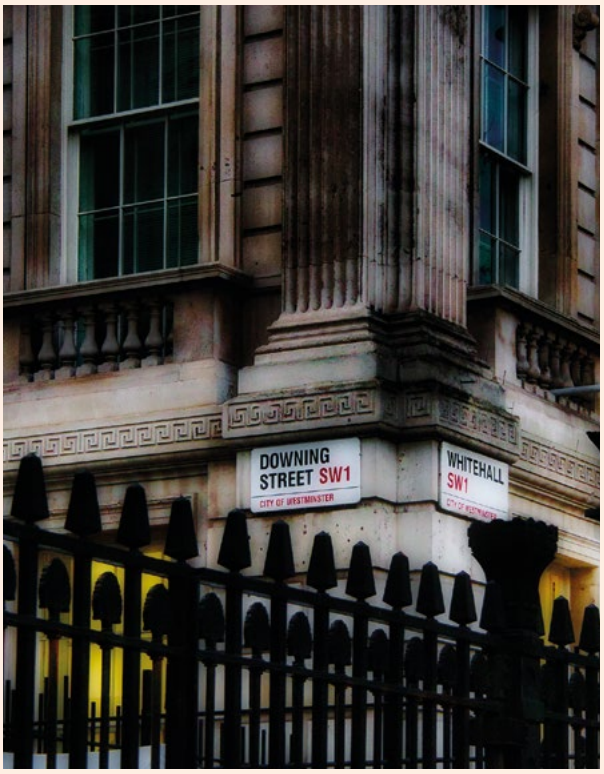
In the referendum Vote Leave ran a cleverly triangulated campaign. Its mainstream pitch was around the themes of democracy and sovereignty ('take back control'). But this was conjoined with creating a sense of 'identity emergency', sounding the alarm over what the EU would allegedly become in the future. The leave campaign gave particular emphasis to the potential EU membership of two predominantly Muslim countries, Albania and Turkey. "Think the EU is bad now? Wait until Albania joins," wrote Michael Gove in the Daily Mail. "The EU is planning not just to give visa-free travel to 77 million Turks, but also to absorb this Muslim state into the EU,", he added. The implication of this was coded but clear: a vote to remain represented a threat to an ethnically white Britain. A vote to leave mobilised the alleged partisan interests of white Britons against this multicultural 'danger'.

Both in the original referendum and the politics of the Johnson government today we find the consummate illustration of the new politics of authoritarian protectionism. The illegal prorogation of parliament in 2019 was a classical gesture from this playbook. It sought to persuade Brexit supporters that their partisan interests were best served by violating the norms of the democratic process. The government has stoked similar conflict with refugee advocacy groups and human rights lawyers with the same nationalistic logic in mind: 'these unpatriotic liberals are obstructing the nation's protection'.

This feeds into a series of policies aiming at the authoritarian reform of the state. Both the Overseas Operations Bill and the 'Spycops' Bill break with the key principle of the rule of law that it should apply equally to all regardless of who they are. They create special exemptions for service personnel and security agencies from criminal allegations that are not available to ordinary citizens. The Conservatives also have an ominously vague manifesto commitment to establish a 'Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission'. The Human Rights Act – a long-time bugbear of the authoritarian right – and access to judicial review of public authorities may be at risk. Brexit provides a cipher, 'a will of the people', that these authoritarian policies are easily wedded too.

Yet, issues of immigration and law and order are also very conventionally Tory. The novel element of the new Toryism lies in their economic approach. It rejects the rules-based system of technocratic management of the economy in favour of the autocratic wielding of sovereignty. Their attempt to negotiate an exit from the EU state aid rules in order to aggressively subsidise British technology businesses represents an undoubtedly interesting evolution for the party of Margaret Thatcher. While Brexiters have overstated the barriers EU state aid rules represent to an industrial strategy, an exit from them could open up opportunities to democratise the economy. But this is not the orientation of the new Toryism. Viewed in tandem with their procurement policy it points towards a new crony capitalism. Indeed, the American state that Cummings praised for its flexibility in 2016 has long been subject to 'corporate capture' – the same rentier politics is now taking root here.

The outlines of the future-facing Britain and the world are therefore becoming clearer. As markets become more dependent on the state to function, do we take the opportunity to reinvent them on democratic lines with a new politics of redistribution and state stewardship? Or do we allow a rentier political economy to coalesce where ethnic nationalism is mobilised to protect inequality and privilege? Between these options, the 21st century appears to provide little ground for a 'third way'. **F**



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Catalogue of errors

Cronyism and a rush to privatisation have diminished our healthcare system and undermined our response to this pandemic, writes *Sonia Adesara*

Sonia Adesara is an NHS doctor and National Medical Director's clinical fellow 2018/19

> "Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around."
> —Milton Friedman

A WEALTHY NATION, GLOBALLY renowned for its public health expertise, with a world-class national health system, is suffering one of the highest Covid-19 death rates in the world. How did we get here? The reality is that this crisis was decades in the making. Our vulnerabilities to the virus are structural and ideological – a hollowed-out state, a fragmented healthcare system, and a nation's health impoverished. The same ideology that has created these faultlines has also undermined the response. Coronavirus has exposed not only gross incompetence and fragility, but cronyism at the heart of government. We must address the structures in place that allow this crisis to be exploited, with contracts for chums and billions of taxpayers' money siphoned off to the private sector. This corruption has not only cost unnecessary deaths, but left unchecked could become entrenched in public life, with dangerous consequences for our democracy.

Covid-19 hit following a decade of policy decisions to reduce capacity, resulting in the 'worst winter on record' for the NHS, with critical care capacity amongst the lowest in Europe. Alongside chronic underfunding, our NHS has been diminished by 30 years of neoliberal reforms, moving the NHS away from a unified integrated system, toward a fragmented marketised system, ill-equipped to deal with a pandemic. Privatisation started under Thatcher, who introduced the outsourcing of 'hotel services', cleaning, laundry and catering. After this year we can all appreciate the importance of hygiene in infection control, but the privatisation of cleaning was synonymous with poor quality services, and a proliferation of hospital-borne infections, such as MRSA. This legacy persists today, with hundreds of thousands of 'NHS' workers outsourced. The way in which they are treated as second-class workers has had deadly consequences this year, with many not having risk assessments, adequate PPE or basic protections, including sick pay.

Thatcher introduced the 'internal market' into the NHS, forcing hospitals to compete with each other. This is another legacy which persists today. The illogic of market forces in a national health care system led to bizarre circumstances where the government had to ban NHS trusts from competing to procure ventilators and PPE, due to fears it would deplete national supply. The market structure was solidified with the highly controversial 2012 Health and Social Care Act. The Lansley reforms compelled trusts to put services out to competitive tender, opening up opportunities for the private sector to extract profit from our health system. This led to further fragmentation not just within the NHS but also in relationships with local government, and crucially public health. Within a market-based system, there is little incentive to build spare capacity for emergencies, and it is unclear where accountability lies for coordinating a response – both required in a pandemic.

Since this legislation, we have seen a proliferation in NHS services being contracted out to the private sector. Prior to Covid-19, the most recent data showed that private providers accounted for £9bn worth of NHS contracts, 7 per cent of the Clinical Commissioning Groups' budget. Relying on a host of non-state actors to provide a coordinated response to a health crisis is fundamentally problematic. Private contracts block agility and dynamism, and hinder different services working together, which is essential in a fast-moving pandemic.

These vulnerabilities were not unforeseen. In 2011, 400 public health professionals wrote an open letter warning the Lansley reforms would "undermine the ability of the health system to respond effectively to communicable disease outbreaks and the public health emergencies". In 2014, a report by independent think tank the Centre for Health and Public Interest stated that a "market-driven health care system underpinned by a series of contracts is ill-suited to the demands of a major health crisis because it prioritises efficiency savings, patient choice and competition between healthcare providers over centralised planning."

It is within our social care system however, where the most catastrophic failures of the market have been laid bare. Our dysfunctional, largely privatised care system has been unable to protect its residents or staff, with over 19,000 deaths. Eighty-four per cent of care home beds are run by for-profit providers. Alongside the swingeing austerity funding cuts, the care industry leaks 10 per cent of its funds – £1.5bn every year – to investors, private equity firms, and real estate companies that are often based in offshore tax havens. Meanwhile, the workforce remains

grossly underpaid. Many are on zero-hours contracts; the lack of work security or basic protections has undoubtedly contributed to high death rates among carers.

The response to the virus has been further compromised by this government's blind commitment to the private sector. Testing and tracing is a vital component of infectious disease control. Against the advice of public health experts, the government outsourced both elements of the process to private companies, at huge taxpayer expense.

Deloitte was given a contract, of undisclosed value, to set up off-site testing centres and run the new Lighthouse Laboratories, bypassing and undermining existing NHS infrastructure. Deloitte then outsourced the running of these testing centres to numerous other corporations. From the start, there has been a catalogue of cock-ups – samples lost, leaking test vials, barely trained staff, and people directed to nonexistent testing centres. Delays in processing results have left NHS staff unable to work. GPs and local authorities have been unable to receive timely, detailed information on results from these private testing sites. It is this basic failure, that public health experts in Leicester state contributed to the extended lockdown there.

Again bypassing local public health teams, for which contact tracing is their bread and butter, Serco and Sitel have been awarded multi-million contracts to carry out a spectacularly ineffective tracing system. According to government records, approximately one-third of positive cases transferred onto the system were not contacted by call handlers. The consequence of these failures is soaring profits, predicted at £165m. This year, Serco will be paying out dividends to their shareholders, directly from taxpayers.

This string of failures follows the model of previous NHS outsourcing. Extortionate sums of taxpayer money have been handed to the private sector, hidden behind private companies' use of NHS branding so the public were kept in the dark. Too often there are no consequences for poor performance. Indeed with the Serco contract it has been revealed there is no penalty clause. Furthermore, when the corporations fail to make the profits they desire, they can simply hand the mess they created back to the NHS – as happened with Circle and Hinchingbrooke Hospital – again without any consequences.

Possibly the most invidious part of the government's response to Covid is how it has exploited this crisis to entrench the private sector within our health service. A contract was agreed in March to 'block book' almost the entirety of the private hospital sector's services and facilities, including 8,000 beds and 1,200 ventilators. Anecdotally, it appears that many of these private facilities have not been used due to a lack of staff. But we do know that the sector has benefited to the tune of an estimated £125m per week from this sweetheart deal. Furthermore, there is already a plan over the next four years to increase taxpayers' funds going into the private hospital sector. This is effectively a taxpayer bailout for a sector that would have otherwise suffered the fate of so many other businesses, as many private patients were unable to attend due to the pandemic. No contracts have yet been published on this £10bn deal, meaning zero accountability or transparency into how taxpayer money is being spent. The deals segment private providers into future NHS provision, many of which had very few NHS patients prior to the pandemic.

This substantial transfer of power towards the private sector is no accident. It is very much in keeping with the governing party's ideology. Rupert Soames, grandson of Churchill and CEO of Serco, said in a leaked email that the Covid response went "a long way in cementing the position of private sector companies in the public sector supply chain".

For a government 'unable' to fund school meals, it has an extraordinarily cavalier attitude towards government spending when it comes to the private sector. The Nightingale Hospitals set up to provide care during the pandemic have cost over £350m, but treated fewer than 100 patients. There is a stark lack of transparency in the multi-million pound contracts for medical supplies and hospital equipment awarded to private companies without the usual competitive tender. Contracts for the supply of PPE were given to, among others, a pest control company, an employment agency, and a confectionery manufacturer. Amongst those companies is Ayanda Capital, which specialises in offshore property and private equity, yet won a £150m contract for 50 million FFP2 masks. Not a single mask was used, as they failed safety standards.

Contracts for chums are a recurring theme. Cabinet office contacts have been assisted to award million pound contracts outside normal procurement channels, with potential for enormous profit margins. The conflicts of interest amongst government appointees and advisors are deeply problematic. The corruption and cronyism that has tainted the response to the crisis cannot be overlooked. Public trust, which is vital in managing pandemics, is being destroyed with dangerous, long-term consequences for our democracy.

Public trust, which is vital in managing pandemics, is being destroyed with long-term consequences for our democracy

Alongside coronavirus, we have seen the effects of a second pandemic – one of rampant health inequality, driven by austerity and political apathy. Despite our country's wealth, a significant proportion of the population were vulnerable to this virus due to underlying conditions. Often, they are the same people without the financial or job security to isolate themselves. We are the sick man of Europe, at the bottom of the league tables for 'healthy living expectancy'. Covid-19 has acted as a mirror to our society, exposing the injustices that for too long have been left untouched. It is the political response to the last financial crisis that widened the faultlines and left our nation vulnerable. We cannot make the same mistakes in future. We must strengthen the public realm, invest in our public infrastructure and the care economy, and rebuild a society that values our collective health.

As Friedman said: "When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around". We cannot afford to be passive. We must robustly challenge the ideology that has allowed this crisis to be exploited for private sector profit. "Only a crisis, real or perceived, produces real change". It was after the crisis of war that the NHS was created. If we have strength and ambition, Covid-19 could be the catalyst for change. **F**

Hearing their voices

How do Scottish voters see their future – and how might Labour win them back? *Martin McCluskey and Katherine Sangster* report on new Fabian research

Martin McCluskey is an executive committee member of the Scottish Fabians and former political director of Scottish Labour and Katherine Sangster is national manager of the Scottish Fabians

Next year, the people of Scotland will vote in the sixth Holyrood elections against the backdrop of a pandemic, an economic crisis and renewed calls for a second independence referendum. The clamour for another referendum has been buoyed by polls showing a majority for the pro-independence side.

But what does Scotland want its future to look like? Over the past year, the Scottish Fabians – in partnership with the Foundation for European Progressive Studies – have been researching the views of the Scottish public on the past 20 years of devolution and their expectations for the future. In the New Year, we will publish our findings in full.

Our interim results have revealed a Scotland that is full of contradictions. People are satisfied with the current devolution settlement and have a desire for more to be decided in Scotland. But many still do not understand where power lies and who has control over their public services. There is often dissatisfaction with the delivery of these services, but a reluctance to hold the politicians who are in charge to account. And many people are sceptical about independence but enthusiastically support the Scottish National Party either as an expression of their identity or because they see no viable alternative.

Donald Dewar, Scotland's first First Minister, envisaged a parliament that would be the focal point of Scottish political life and would finally put to bed the constitutional wrangling that had been a key feature of Scottish politics since the 1960s. With 20 years of legislating behind it, Donald Dewar's wish has in part come true and our devolved institutions are now firmly fixed in the Scottish political landscape. The vast majority of Scots support the Scottish Parliament and only one in 10 would prefer all power to be returned to Westminster. It is easy to forget that in the early years of the parliament, it was ridiculed by the media and treated with suspicion by the public

The Scottish government has never been more powerful, yet the devolution settlement has never been more fragile. It risks being pulled apart by the SNP, whose objective has always been independence, and a Conservative party which is still deeply sceptical of devolution.

Power and the parliament

From the very early days of devolution, the Scottish parliament held wide-ranging powers with full control over education, health and justice – powers which have been expanded in recent years. Despite this, our research has shown a gap in understanding about who has power over what in Scotland.

Polling we commissioned from YouGov found 27 per cent of people wrongly believe that the Scottish NHS is controlled by the UK government and 21 per cent similarly believe that control of police and criminal law is in Westminster's hands. Nearly a third of people believe that the Scottish government is responsible for social security, even though the most significant social security spending (such as universal credit) is determined by the UK government. Thirty one per cent of people believe employment law – a policy area that is frequently discussed as a candidate for devolution – is already devolved. And only 55 per cent of people know that income tax rates – devolved with significant fanfare in 2016 – are now under the control of the Scottish government.

Despite this lack of clarity about who does what, the Scottish government and members of the Scottish parliament command far higher levels of trust than their UK counterparts. While 31 per cent of people would not trust MPs 'at all', only 18 per cent of people feel the same about MSPs.

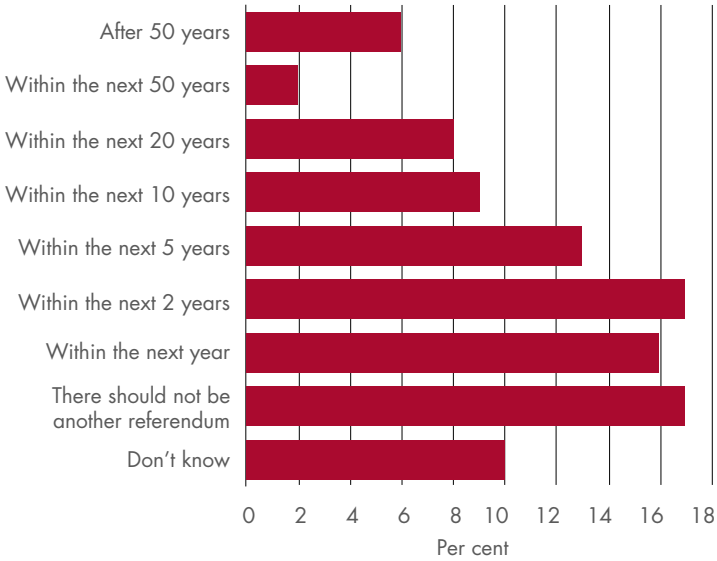
Our findings present significant challenges for Labour and all opposition parties. First, when a significant proportion of the population is unable to identify the responsibilities of the Scottish and UK governments, it does not bode well for accountability and scrutiny.

Second, it calls into question the approach taken over the past decade of devolving more powers in an attempt to find a stable settlement to answer demands from people across Scotland for more control. Whilst these moves may have been necessary, the fact that they were clearly insufficient suggests there are deeper emotions and beliefs driving support for further devolution. Understanding and responding to these will be key to successfully making the case for continuing with a strong Scottish parliament inside the United Kingdom.

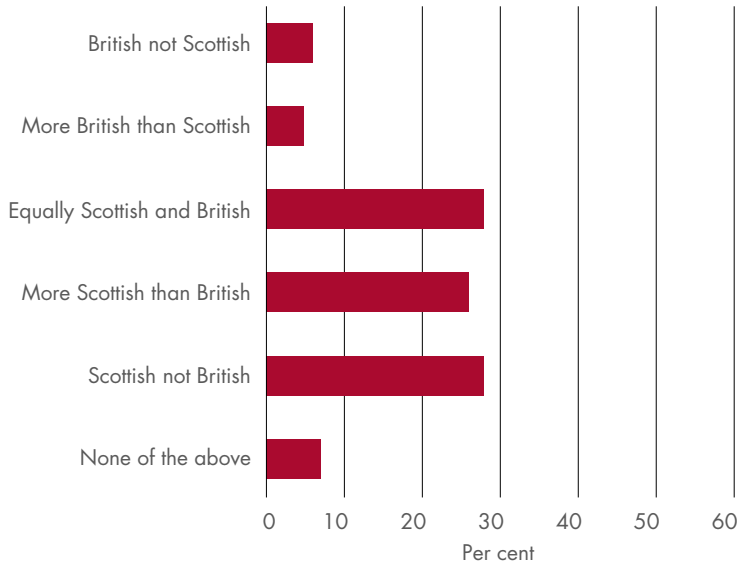
Identity

The theme of Scottish identity ran through our research. There has always been a strong sense of national identity in Scotland and this has often been used in political debate. Labour successfully made the argument that Scotland was at the mercy of a government it did not vote for in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, the SNP uses the same argument.

When, if ever, do you think another referendum on Scottish independence should take place?



Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself?



Source: YouGov Poll of 1,073 Scottish adults, 29 May–1 June 2020

The legacy of both the 2014 and 2016 referendums still looms large in Scottish politics and the result of the former has come to define how many people in the population vote. Whilst the 'no' vote won in 2014, the independence vote coalesced around the SNP. And the fallout from the Brexit vote in 2016 has resulted in a slow drift of some 'no' to independence voters to 'yes', causing independence to nudge ahead in the polls.

The effect of the independence referendum in particular, and the lack of any alternative unifying political force, has pushed many voters to the extremes. Our research shows that nearly six in 10 Scottish voters now consider themselves 'unlikely' to vote for a party that does not share their position on the Scottish constitutional question – such is the extent that this choice has come to define Scottish politics.

Scottish identity is strong among the population in Scotland, with a majority of people considering themselves Scottish ahead of British (if they have a British identity at all).

These sentiments are unsurprising. Scotland had its own legal and educational system long before devolution but this strong Scottish identity has not always been linked with a belief in political nationalism.

Devolution has not succeeded in encompassing Scottish identity within the broader framework of the United Kingdom. The dual referendums of 2014 and 2016 created a Scottish identity which opposed a British nationalism represented by successive Tory governments and ultimately the Leave vote. Findings from focus groups conducted as part of our project show that there is now a far stronger link between reported identity and political preference. In the current political climate, that has benefited the SNP and the Conservatives which both have clear distinguishable positions on these constitutional questions.

How should Labour respond? The party's natural inclination is to reach for an economic response instead of addressing the issue of identity head on. This failure has left Labour in recent years with little to say to the majority of Scots who are fiercely patriotic and who want to see their Scottish identity reflected in their politics. Our research suggests that Labour needs to be able to speak to the patriotic majority of Scots if it is to ever succeed in the future.

Breaking the link between cultural and political nationalism is crucial both to winning another independence referendum and revitalising the Scottish Labour party. The Scottish Labour party has to learn from its own history and from that of European regional parties. Any solution has to be grounded in a well-developed view of Scottish identity that differentiates Labour from the SNP and does not resort to tactical devices (such as an 'independent' Scottish Labour party) which will only further alienate voters.

Finally, Scottish Labour should not put itself on the wrong side of the debate around a second independence referendum. Our research found no enthusiasm for another referendum in the next year or two. However, 46 per cent of voters support another referendum in the next five years and only 17 per cent would never support one.

The next 20 years: a constitutional settlement for the majority

The lack of a strong party defending and arguing for devolution has put the settlement at risk from both the SNP and the Tories. While, in some polls, independence now has the support of a majority, this is not the case when presented against a range of other constitutional options.

There is a clear space opening up in Scottish politics for a party that is capable of making the argument for a progressive devolution that works within the UK as the debate is now polarised between independence and the increasingly defensive unionism of the Conservatives. We must ask ourselves how can we articulate Scottishness and how does it relate to Britishness? So far we have engaged in an auction of powers but after Brexit we must make any further devolution part of a wider debate over where powers sit in the UK. F

Dancing with diversity

There are now more ethnic minority MPs than ever before – and most of them are Labour. But the party must ask itself some difficult questions if it is to represent all of our communities, writes *Sonny Leong*

Sonny Leong CBE is vice-chair of Chinese for Labour

The flurry of complaints around the amazing performance by the aptly named dance group Diversity (complaints rightly given short shrift by ITV) could not have provided a better example of the importance of continuing to fight racial discrimination in all its forms. Tensions around inequality, discrimination and representation in modern Britain have been one of the major ongoing political issues this year. We have witnessed the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on certain minority ethnic communities, the righteous anger of Black Lives Matter protesters, and a shameful rise in racist, populist language from some on the right, too often intersecting with triumphalist Brexiteers and Trumpian dog whistles.

Labour prides itself on its record on equality. But there are some difficult questions which need to be asked about the party's record on diversity of representation – and whether it should and could be doing more.

The first issue we need to recognise when we discuss diversity is that the label BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) has had its day. As a British Chinese entrepreneur who came to the UK from Malaysia 45 years ago, I have never felt that the term BAME really applied to me. It became clear during a discussion at Labour's online conference this autumn that most of the participants felt similarly uncomfortable with it. Of course, it is necessary to capture data on ethnicity to enable statistical analysis and make policy decisions. However, over the past couple of decades, politicians have increasingly used the term lazily and indiscriminately, and have, at times even used it to ignore or distract from specific issues facing particular communities.

We need to recognise when we discuss diversity that the label BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) has had its day

The label itself, arising from measuring the immigration into the UK during the 20th century that was primarily from Commonwealth countries – formerly the British Empire, of course – still has more than a whiff of the colonial about it. And, as many have pointed out, it is inconsistent and Anglocentric: 'Black' is based on skin colour, but it encompasses a huge number of countries and cultures from Africa, the Caribbean and from America; 'Asian' is a phenomenally broad geographical area containing widely divergent countries and cultures; and 'minority ethnic' could actually cover both these groups anyway, as well as including everyone else who doesn't identify as white British. And of course, there are numerous boroughs, towns and cities across the UK where 'minority' does not accurately reflect the balance of the local population either.

Britain in the 2020s – especially urban Britain – is a country where there are strong, established and growing communities from parts of the world which were never subjugated by Britain, be they Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Middle Eastern or many others. Then there are many European identities within the UK – not all Europeans are white, remember – and a growing number of people who have mixed heritage, which may or may not include white British.

Fifteen per cent – one in seven of our fellow citizens – are now labelled as BAME, and yet millions of us, and especially our children and grandchildren, who when faced with the irritating but still too common question: "where are you really from?" are likely to answer that we are from Glasgow or Leeds, Cardiff or London, rather than the countries of our forebears. We are British with a heritage which is enriched by, not defined by the colour of our skin or our ethnicity. So, it is indeed right that we reflect on whether the term really should continue to be used, although until an alternative is found we may have to compromise (as I will in this essay).

Continuing to encourage debate on the terminology and language we use regarding diversity issues, should, however, happen alongside, not at the expense of, taking practical steps to challenge attitudes and encourage diversity wherever we can. And it is in this spirit that I want to address some of the long-held and deeply embedded assumptions within the Labour party around its approach to the increasingly diverse Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in the UK.

Where we are now

The Labour party should be rightly proud of its breakthrough in 1987 when the first non-white MPs were elected since well before the second world war – a fact that still seems staggering. We rightly celebrate the achievements and careers of the four trailblazers: Bernie Grant, Keith Vaz, Paul Boateng and of course, the indefatigable Diane Abbott MP, who still proudly represents Hackney North and Stoke Newington, 33 years on.

One of the few positives we can take from the 2019 election result is that there are now 65 BAME MPs – exactly 10 per cent of elected members – sitting in the House of Commons. 41 of these are Labour – constituting 20 per cent of the parliamentary party, while the Conservatives have 22 (6 per cent of their 364 MPs), and the Liberal Democrats have two (18 per cent of their 11 MPs).

So far, so good, some might say. Labour is ahead, we are the party of BAME voters, we are still leading the way, let's give ourselves a pat on the back and keep doing what we are doing. But I want to look a little closer.

First, despite big steps forward since 1987, the House of Commons still falls significantly short in terms of reflecting the national population. According to the 2011 census, 14.7 per cent of the population were from BAME communities, and this is reasonably expected to show a further increase in next year's census. Which means that unless there is a net increase of at least another 33 BAME MPs at the next general election, representation in parliament will still be lagging behind. This is a huge challenge for all parties, especially when we remember that there have been only 25 minority ethnic MPs in the past three decades who are not currently elected members.

Second, Labour needs to seriously reconsider its approach to the selection and placement of minority ethnic candidates in relation to the diversity of the voters in each constituency. In this respect, we are way behind the Conservatives. All but four of the BAME Labour MPs represent seats that – again, according to ONS 2011 census data – have white populations of under 80 per cent. The four exceptions are Taiwo Owatemi (Coventry North West, 81.7 per cent white), Clive Lewis (Norwich South, 90 per cent), Navendu Mishra (Stockport, 90.7 per cent) and Lisa Nandy (Wigan, 97.1 per cent). Thirteen BAME Labour MPs represent constituencies where the white population is below 50 per cent.

Conversely, all of the Conservative BAME MPs – and both Liberal Democrats – represent constituencies that are predominantly white – ranging from Alok Sharma (Reading West, 80.9 per cent) to Nusrat Ghani (Wealden, 97.3 per cent). Ten Conservative BAME MPs represent seats in which 95 per cent or more of their constituents are white, while only one Labour MP does.

© Flickr / Jeremy Corbyn

Also worthy of note is that 29 of the 44 BAME Labour MPs are women (66 per cent) in a PLP which has a majority (51 per cent) of women members for the first time ever. Only six of the Conservative BAME MPs (27 per cent) are women in a parliamentary party which has just 87 women out of 364 MPs (24 per cent).

While this reflects well on Labour in terms of gender balance, it also raises some concerns. Many of the BAME candidates have been selected in seats that have had all-women shortlists. Although this process still remains controversial with some members, the current gender balance of Labour MPs demonstrates that it can deliver equality of outcomes in the long term. But there is a danger here that all-women shortlists seats are also being seen as BAME seats, in effect ticking two 'equality' boxes for the price of one.

Finally it is important to recognise that, while we should celebrate the fact that we now have 65 BAME MPs, the term itself disguises the fact that they do not necessarily represent the range of diverse minority ethnic communities living in Britain. This is, I believe, where the BAME label has failed us the most.

Even discounting the seats from Scotland and Northern Ireland – where there is no BAME representation at all in the current parliament – and looking at the 2011 census data for just England and Wales, we can see that Black MPs represent 3.8 per cent of seats compared with 4.4 per cent of the population, Asian MPs have 6 per cent of seats compared with 8.1% of the population and other minority ethnic MPs have 0.7 per cent of seats compared to 1 per cent of the population.

Dig deeper into these very broad categories and you find that certain communities have little or no representation at all. To take just one example particularly close to my heart: the first ever MP with Chinese heritage to be elected was Alan Mak for the Conservatives in 2015 and the second was my good friend Sarah Owen for Labour in 2019. This is despite the fact that the British Chinese community is long established in the UK and is fast approaching one million people.

Of course, we must not fall into the trap of dividing against each other, but the point is that although BAME communities are still under-represented in parliament, (10 per cent of seats versus 15 per cent of the population) some communities are considerably less well represented than others, if at all. As a party, we should be looking to rectify this and seek out representatives from those communities which are neither seen nor heard on the green benches.

How have we got here?

This is where the Labour party, not only the senior leadership but also its active members – who are in many cases the selectorate for our proposed candidates – must start to face some uncomfortable truths about how our electoral and political assumptions can conflict with our stated values. There has been a long-held tendency to assume that constituencies with high BAME populations will probably support Labour, especially if they have a candidate who is from the BAME community themselves. This is both lazy and patronising. It ignores the increasing number of voters,

especially second and third generation immigrants who are aspirational, university educated and increasingly likely to be working in the professional middle classes. We all know that there are tragic levels of poverty and disadvantage among many minority ethnic communities, but this is not the only story. There are many people from these communities too, who are increasingly being wooed by the Conservatives in elections. We need to speak to them too.

The flip side of this attitude is that we are in danger, at least implicitly, of making assumptions about voters in majority white constituencies if we think that they are less likely to vote for minority ethnic Labour candidates, and therefore do not select any. To give one specific example where Labour is very clearly failing: why are there are so few Black men on the Labour benches in parliament? David Lammy (who succeeded Bernie Grant in Tottenham) and Clive Lewis are the only two. We should be asking why the Conservatives have five Black male MPs when they have only half the number of BAME MPs that we do. We need to confront some of the prejudices that are baked into the thinking, and in some cases the structures and practices, of the Labour party.

We need to confront some of the prejudices that are baked into the thinking of the Labour party

It is complex when we face intersecting identities – whether ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, disability or any other identity. However, this complexity should not prevent us honestly confronting some uncomfortable facts. By many measures we are behind the Conservatives in representation – both in terms of ethnic diversity and gender. This is especially the case where it matters – in the most senior roles, as the New Statesman's Stephen Bush recently pointed out when he suggested the first Black prime minister would be a Tory.

Labour has never had a permanent woman leader. The Conservatives have had two female prime ministers. The current and former Conservative chancellors were Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid. Labour has only this year appointed its first woman as shadow chancellor. Diane Abbott was the first non-white person to shadow one of the four great offices of state. Lisa Nandy, as shadow foreign secretary, is only the second.

We can and must do better.

The task ahead

Whenever the next general election is called, returning Labour to government is, by any measure, a monumental task. Putting Keir Starmer in Downing Street with a majority of just one requires Labour to make a net gain of over 120 seats. To achieve this, we not only need to hold the vast majority of seats we already have, but to make historically unprecedented gains. The former is no longer a safe assumption: the 2019 election saw some of our majorities that had previously been counted in the thousands, or tens of thousands, fall dramatically. So much so that Labour now holds eight seats formerly considered 'safe' with a majority of less than 1,000, of which three are represented by minority ethnic MPs. And in order to come close to making the level of gains we will need we have to consider the kind of constituencies that we will need to win.

The 2011 census – and by the next general election we should have more accurate data – tells us that 437 Westminster seats have more than 90 per cent white constituents (including the Northern Irish seats, which Labour does not contest) and a further 88 seats have between 80 per cent and 89.9 per cent white populations. In total, 525 seats out of a total of 650 are more than 80 per cent white.

The vast majority of the remaining 125 seats are already held by Labour, including 37 of the 41 already held by minority ethnic MPs. So, to oust the Conservatives, Labour has to win in more than 100 constituencies which have more than 80 per cent, or even more that 90 per cent white populations. To match or exceed the 15 per cent of the UK population from BAME communities in the House of Commons, we should be aiming to have at the very least 50 BAME Labour candidates fighting for these target seats (and ideally we should aim for far more as we cannot depend on the Conservatives and the SNP to match our aspirations in practice).

We must therefore challenge both sides of the diversity issue: our assumptions about candidates and our assumptions about the voters. If we do not, electoral expediency will continue to trump our explicitly expressed commitment to all forms of diversity in representation when and where it really matters. We cannot simply hope that we can win a parliamentary majority by focusing on seats with large BAME communities. And this speaks to deeper issues in our party's relationship with and assumptions about different electorates, that the elections since the Brexit referendum have brought to the fore, and to which the Tories have been far quicker and more electorally successful in adapting.

Do we continue to assume that ethnic minority voters are automatically going to vote Labour? Is it sensible to assume that as more BAME people enter the professional middle classes – although they may face discrimination in certain areas of their lives – they still automatically have an affinity with Labour rather than Conservative values? Are we assuming that most BAME Labour candidates can only hold or win seats in areas with a high proportion of BAME voters? Do we presume that some of 'our voters' in seats where there is a large white working-class population would not vote for a Black man, or a Chinese woman? Will we be bold enough to have BAME shortlists, in the same way that we have had all-women shortlists? And can we get past our habit of effectively 'double-counting' diversity where BAME women candidates effectively tick two boxes at once?

Facing these issues head on is not just a question of being true to our core Labour values around equality, diversity and equal opportunity for all. It is absolutely essential if we are to achieve the twin aspirations of improving diversity in the parliamentary Labour party and winning enough seats in the Commons to govern the country and deliver on those values. We must show that the ethnicity of our candidates, while important, is not their sole defining electoral asset. We must also respect our voters enough to show that competent and capable Labour MPs who share their values can run the country better than this shambolic Conservative government. **F**

Books

A living legend

This timely biography will open your eyes to how misogynoir plays out in the corridors of power, writes *Shaista Aziz*

Shaista Aziz is an Oxford City councillor, co-founder of the Labour Homelessness Campaign and vice-chair of the Fabian Women's Network

More than 30 years after smashing the reinforced concrete ceiling that Black and ethnic minority women have to break, Diane Abbott remains the highest profile Black politician in the country – and the most bullied and disrespected. The intersection of anti-Black racism and misogyny means a very particular type of bigotry is dumped on the shoulders of Diane Abbott: misogynoir.

This treatment is also dished out by members of the parliamentary Labour party, including white women MPs who refer to themselves as feminists but reserve the type of treatment for Abbott that many Black women experience daily in this country.

Whilst reading this biography, it struck me that it is impossible to separate Diane Abbott the MP, the history-maker and pioneer, from the systemic racism, sexism and misogyny she has faced her whole life, from her school days to Cambridge University, to being elected a councillor, to her career in breakfast TV and the media, to becoming Britain's first Black woman MP.

Also striking is the lack of meaningful progress in the Labour party on race and representation in its structures, particularly around the self-organising of Black sections.

One of the most eye-opening aspects of this well-researched, nuanced and thoughtful biography is how deeply uncomfortable Labour remains, as a party and a movement, to do the real work to tackle racism, in all its forms and at all levels. But this work must be done if Labour is to become a political force that transforms people's lives at a time of multiple crises.

Through the pages of this biography, we learn how Abbott made her way upwards through the ranks of the party, despite who she is and not because of it: a fiercely bright, brave, articulate and thoughtful woman, yet seen as a threat, a liability and a woman who will not be controlled. Abbott is very much like Marmite, too strong for many to handle.

Figures such as Andy Burnham, David Lammy and Jeremy Corbyn pop up as strong and consistent allies, pushing Abbott to take up space and leadership roles in the party, proof once more that for Black women and women of colour, more often than not we are supported by white men and men ahead of women and white feminists.

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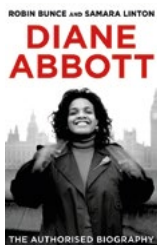


Diane Abbott: The authorised biography, Robin Bunce and Samara Linton, Biteback, £10

Black African American novelist and writer Tayari Jones, wrote the following after the death of Maya Angelou for the Guardian in 2014. These beautiful words very much apply to Diane Abbott too.

> "This is what happens when our elders do their work well: Angelou kicked the door open so wide that within her own lifetime there existed younger people who didn't quite remember that there was ever a door there at all."

Not everyone has to like Abbott's views or politics, nor her political approach or style. But that does not give license to deny her living legacy. We stand on the shoulders of giants.

Thank you, Diane Abbott. F

Weakened foundations

Voters in the Red Wall have a powerful story to tell about their estrangement from Labour, writes *Kate Murray*

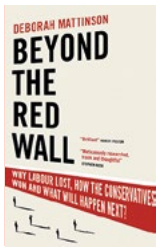
Kate Murray is editor of the Fabian Review

Every general election has its favourite target voter. In 1997, Labour won a landslide victory courtesy, it was said, of Mondeo Man and Worcester Woman. Four years later Pebbledash People, suburban middle-income couples, were targeted by the Conservatives, while in 2010 Holby City Woman was identified by David Cameron's strategists as the likely key to victory at the polls. In last year's election, it was the turn of Workington Man, a leave-voting northern voter who, according to Onward, the think tank which coined the term, would prove crucial in swinging the result the Tories' way. And so it proved: Workington, along with Wakefield, Sedgefield and Blyth Valley in the north, Bolsover, Bassetlaw and Mansfield in the East Midlands, and many others besides, did indeed vote in a Conservative MP. It is already looking as if winning the votes of Red Wall Man and Woman, in Workington and beyond, will come to define politics in the 2020s.

Deborah Mattinson takes us to the centre of this battle for hearts and minds, visiting Stoke, Darlington and Hyndburn to understand why so many seats which had been Labour for years or even decades fell to the Conservatives. But this is not just a look back at the disaster of December 2019: Beyond the Red Wall provides some critical insights into how voters who turned away from Labour might be persuaded to put their trust in the party again.

Mattinson, a pollster who lent her expertise to Gordon Brown in government, does not pull her punches. Early on in the book, she gives her own confession: "Other than the occasional by-election, at no point in the decades that I spent advising Labour did we ever consider running focus groups or polling in any of the Red Wall seats. Their reliability was seen as a given – quite frankly, they were taken for granted."

The voters whose stories we read tell a powerful story of disillusionment and anger with politicians in general – and Labour in particular. They talk of being patronised, left behind – even downright robbed – by a political elite which does not seem to care for 'little people' like them. They bemoan the changes they have seen in their high streets, the poor quality of jobs on offer in their areas and the damage to the fabric of their communities. Some of their views, especially on immigration and on Brexit, make for uncomfortable reading, particularly for those of us who might be seen as very much part of that metropolitan elite that Red Wallers fear has left them behind. And that of course is the point: however much we might be tempted to unpick their arguments – that Brexit will reverse the loss of their manufacturing industries, say – to do so will only serve to deepen the alienation they feel.



Beyond the Red Wall: Why Labour Lost, How the Conservatives Won and What Will Happen Next?
Deborah Mattinson, Biteback, £16.99

One of the most interesting themes in Mattinson's book is one that has been too often ignored in Labour's internal debate over the fall of the Red Wall – that it was a defeat that was years in the making. Left and right have rushed to assign blame for the loss to either Labour's Brexit position or its leadership depending on where they sit in the party. Of course, both Brexit and Jeremy Corbyn had a significant impact, as anyone who canvassed in Red Wall areas, as I did in two of Stoke's seats, can testify. But the Labour party and its Red Wall voters had grown apart over decades, in no small part, Mattinson suggests, because politicians like Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson parachuted into what were then safe seats and because there were decreasing numbers of local working-class candidates with whom people could truly identify.

Winning back the Red Wall will not be simple. Labour will need to convince the voters it lost that it will address the issues that matter to them, without alienating the liberal-minded voters (and party members) who backed it last year. The criticism we have seen from within the party in recent months over Labour's position on everything from the 'spycops' bill and Home Office deportations to how MPs will vote on the final Brexit deal, shows that appealing to both sets of voters is no easy task. But Mattinson reports on a fascinating citizen's jury session which suggests that compromising to produce an election-winning platform, while painful, might be possible.

And there is another shift which might be hugely significant. Boris Johnson's own personal appeal and the reputation of his party for competence, so key to the decision of many Red Wallers to vote Conservative, are fading in the wake of questions over the handling of the coronavirus. An opinion poll in early December suggested the Conservatives would currently only hang on to nine of the 45 seats they won in 2019. The notorious trip to the north east taken by Johnson's then advisor Dominic Cummings was cited by many of those polled as the reason for their move away from the Tories. Cummings, of course, famously took a day trip to Barnard Castle to 'test his eyesight'. It would be fitting if his jaunt to a constituency held by Labour since 1935 until it swung Tory last year proved to be the key to the Red Wall turning red once more. **F**

The power of deeds

The story of Michael Young shows how actions speak louder than words, finds *Paul Richards*

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

There is a creeping tendency to define socialism, and being a socialist, as what people say rather than what people do. If you say the right things, in the right places, then you are legitimately 'left'. If you dirty your hands with the messy business of changing things, and the inevitable compromises and disappointments, you are tainted. The phenomenon is perhaps best demonstrated by hefty biographies of long-serving politicians who have never served a moment in office, nor introduced one line of legislation, nor run anything more substantial than a bath. It is the triumph of the performative over the pragmatic.

In her new book academic Lise Butler has served up a useful reminder that progress comes from action not talk, or as Keir Hardie once said: "Socialism does not come by shouting." And more, while socialism is inspired by visions of utopia it must also be anchored in evidence, facts, and the concrete realities of modernity: the genetic code of Fabianism. Our bricks and mortar reforms are born from our lofty ideals. We are the heirs to Morris as well as Morrison.

Butler's intention is clearly stated: to examine the relationship between social science and public policy in left-wing politics. She chooses as her period the most vibrant time of social democratic change, when social democracy was ascendent and verged on hegemonic, between the Labour landslide in 1945 and the end of the Wilson Government in 1970.

The lens she selects is the thought and deeds of Michael Young. Butler makes the point that Young is paradoxically both obscure and ubiquitous. He is well-known in sociological, political, and dare I say Fabian, circles as the pen behind the 1945 manifesto, Let Us Face the Future, inventor of Which? and the Consumer Association, founder of the Institute for Community Studies, now the Young Foundation, in Bethnal Green, and the brains behind the Open University. Young's myriad achievements are testament to Harry S Truman's axiom that it is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.

But as Butler shows, Young was not a mad professor firing up experiments until something worked. His was a socialism rooted in the emergent social sciences. Digging deep into Young's prolific archive, Butler describes the link between Young's imagination and belief that society was shaped by sociological forces, just as rocks are shaped by physical ones. For example, she quotes Young's 1949 memo to Labour's policy committee:

Michael Young, Social Science and the British Left 1945–1970, Lise Butler, Oxford University Press, £60

> "Can the emotionally inspired aims of socialism now be clarified with the aid of social science? Can the party now have a programme for happiness? Can social science now assist the impractical men, the dreamers, and show the practical men the way forward?"

Young's answer, played out over the next 50 years, was yes. Butler's forensic analysis of a hitherto unpublished 1952 memo by Young For Richer, For Poorer shows his evolving political thought amidst a changing socio-economic landscape and his shift of emphasis away from 'the workers' and towards non-workers: the elderly, the unemployed, children and women. Young's willingness to view society as it was, a complex nexus of citizens, consumers, families, communities and neighbourhoods, rather than two conflicting classes, led him into areas of social policy previously dismissed or ignored on the left. This was especially true of the centrality of families to working-class experience – kinship – too readily disregarded by trendy graduate post-war social planners and architects. Young saw families as democratic, co-operative and, drawing on his study of psychology, formative institutions.

Butler's work is successful in showing the influence of a range of social sciences, not just sociology, but also psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, human geography, and political science, on socialist thought after 1945. She shows the interrelation of people from Titmuss, Townsend, Marshall and Durbin, to thinkers such as Ann Oakley and the sociologist Jennifer Platt. The role of the Fabian Society, as the clearing house for so much of this activity, is there, but probably deserves a book of its own.

Another central theme of Young's work, influenced by the social sciences, is an almost anarcho-syndicalist approach to bottom-up social change. Young showed that you can have socialism without the state, and proved the value of small DIY organisations, fixing social problems one broken window at a time. Most of all, Young believed in the centrality of the individual, placed within society, but unique in aptitude and capable of greatness.

Young drew deeply on the emergent intellectual and academic ideas of his time, and successfully used ideas as scaffolding for social reform. The vital lesson of Butler's book is that social democracy flourishes when it is anchored in empiricism. Young showed us the power of deeds over words, no matter how rhetorically 'socialist'. In an era when facts are in a fight to the death with fakery, superstition and populism, we should do well to remember that. F

Acts of faith

Christian Socialists have played a key role in Labour party history – and many of them have also been Fabians, as *Anthony Williams* explains

Dr Anthony AJ Williams is a political theorist who has held teaching posts at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Liverpool. His new book, Christian Socialism as Political Ideology: The Formation of the British Christian Left, 1877–1945, is published by I.B. Tauris

In 2020 we might not readily make the connection between left-wing politics and religiosity. A commitment to Christianity in particular would seem to tend rather towards the conservative, with the stock image of Christians in politics today that of the US religious right. By some estimates three-quarters of white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump in November, and this group has backed every Republican candidate since Ronald Reagan. The words of Stewart Headlam are therefore striking:

> "Not only is there no contradiction between the adjective 'Christian' and the noun 'Socialism', but … if you want to be a good Christian you must be something very much like a good Socialist."

Headlam's argument was made in a lecture on Christian Socialism, subsequently published in 1899 as Fabian Tract 42. His insistence on the link between Christianity and socialism would not have sounded strange to the many ethical and religious socialists of the past several centuries – from the social gospel and civil rights movements of the United States, to the liberation theology of Latin America, to the anti-apartheid movement of South Africa, to the Christian Socialism of the UK.

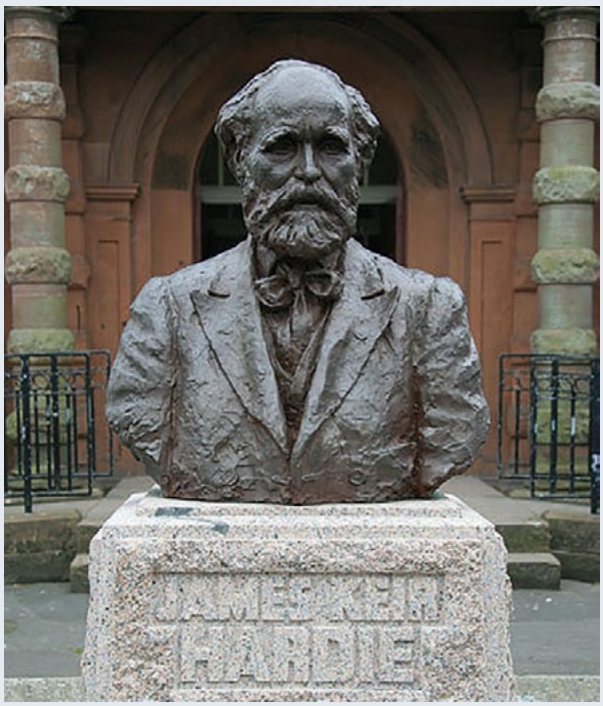
Christian political thought which could be described as socialist goes back almost as far as the church itself. What we today know as Christian Socialism arguably has its origins in the mid-19th century and the work of FD Maurice, Charles Kingsley, John Ludlow and others. Together they aimed to provide a Christian response to the radical stirrings of their day, especially the Chartist movement. It was Maurice who in 1850 first suggested a name for their project, proposing that he and his fellows produce a periodical titled Tracts on Christian Socialism. The extent, however, to which the Maurician vision was truly socialist rather than merely paternalistic is still debated. It fell to the next generation of Christian Socialists to fashion Maurice's concepts of brotherhood and co-operation into a genuinely socialist creed.

We should seek with passionate ardour to incarnate a collective rather than an individualistic idea in society

Among the first was Headlam. His Guild of St Matthew, an Anglo-Catholic society founded in 1877, is reckoned to be the first socialist society in Britain. Amongst the injunctions to take seriously the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, the Guild of St Matthew declared that the "contrast between the great body of workers who produce much and consume little, and those classes which produce little and consume much, is contrary to the Christian doctrines of brotherhood and justice", and that all Christians should seek to bring about a better distribution of the wealth created by labour". Headlam was not alone. John Clifford, president of the Baptist Union of England and Wales and another Fabian, founded the Christian Socialist League in 1894. Clifford was also the author of a Fabian Tract in 1898 in which he argued that "we should, as did the first Christians, seek with passionate ardour to incarnate a collective rather than an individualistic idea in society".

Henry Scott Holland and Charles Gore – both Anglican ministers – co-founded the Christian Social Union (CSU), a Fabian-style society for Anglicans, in 1889. Gore, later the Bishop of Oxford, also founded the Community of the Resurrection. Samuel Keeble, a Wesleyan Methodist lay preacher (reputed to be among the first in the UK to read Das Kapital) formed the Wesleyan Methodist Union for Social Service along similar lines to the CSU. William Temple – later Archbishop of Canterbury – was the driving force behind the ecumenical Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC) in 1924.

These churchmen though were often cool on the question of Labour representation. Temple was an enthusiastic supporter of the Labour party, but he was the exception. Headlam, despite his undoubted radicalism and commitment to the Fabian Society, was scathing on the issue, denouncing the 'feeble Fabians' who supported James Keir Hardie's Independent Labour Party in 1893. "To advocate the introduction of working men, as such, into Parliament, as the Fabians now seem to be doing, is utterly absurd." Headlam's view was that socialism could be achieved



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gradually through the existing political parties, especially the Liberal Party of which he was also a member; his opinion also betrayed a degree of snobbishness towards the working class.

Keir Hardie was himself a Christian Socialist with a strong Nonconformist, evangelical faith. He once wrote:

> "The impetus which drive me first of all into the Labour movement and the inspiration which has carried me on in it, has been derived more from the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth than from all other sources combined."

Hardie was joined in the early decades of the Labour party by figures such as John Wheatley, a Red Clydesider and founder of the Catholic Socialist Society; Margaret Bondfield, a trade union activist and the first female member of cabinet; and RH Tawney, destined to be the party's main intellectual influence throughout its first half-century. George Lansbury, Labour leader from 1932–35, was another. "I am a Socialist," declared Lansbury, "because the Christian religion teaches us that love, co-operation, brotherhood are the way of life which will give us peace and security." Despite the differences between these men and women – Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Nonconformists; church ministers and career politicians; theological liberals and theological conservatives – there was a remarkable unity when it came to the key ideas or core concepts of Christian Socialism as political ideology. All started with religious faith – the doctrines of scripture, the teaching of the church, the symbolism of the sacraments – as their basis for socialism. Like Maurice before them they believed the message of Christianity – exemplified in the preaching and example of Christ himself – was one of God's universal Fatherhood and the brotherhood of all people. Christianity taught, as Lansbury put it, God's "Fatherhood and the consequent Brotherhood of man", and, in Keir Hardie's words, a "Gospel […] proclaiming all men sons of God and brethren one with another". From these religious concepts were logically derived political ones: equality, collectivism and co-operation, and democracy.

These ideas became part of the very DNA of Labour. The result was a party with a commitment to ethical socialism more than scientific analysis, to fighting elections rather than fomenting violence – yet also to radical change rather than mere reform. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the 1945 Labour government and its remarkable expansion of the welfare state, most notably the foundation of the NHS. This, as Clement Attlee put it, was the building of Jerusalem – for Christian Socialists a part-realisation of the Kingdom of God for which they had been advocating since 1877. It was a Christian Socialist, Ellen Wilkinson, whose commitment to fighting 'injustice' wherever it affected 'human beings, the children of God' whose co-authorship of the 1945 Labour manifesto helped steer the party in this direction. The spirit of 1945 was the spirit of Christian Socialism.

Christian Socialism is still with us today. Christians on the Left (founded in 1960 as the Christian Socialist Movement) is an active part of the Labour party with around 40 members in the House of Commons and more than 2,000 members overall. Different strands have emerged. Tony Blair's Christian Socialism was quite compatible with a third-way social democracy which at times looked more like neo-liberalism. The Christian Socialism of Blue Labour is a socially-conservative leftism, perhaps not dissimilar to European-style Christian Democracy. For some on the left of the party and in groups such as Ekklesia and the Catholic Worker movement, Christian Socialism still represents the radicalism of Headlam, Hardie and Wilkinson. Questions, however, remain over the future of Christian Socialism. If the political right claims Christianity as its own it seems that fewer on the left are willing to argue. Can Christianity be progressive enough while remaining truly Christian? Or will the left, committed to intersectionality and critical theory, condemn Christianity as representing privilege, imperialism and oppression? Has Christian Socialism had its day? F

Noticeboard

FABIAN SOCIETY BYE-LAWS

ADDITION TO BYE-LAW 2

Member conduct and participation in society activities

iv. Member conduct that is harmful to the society and will warrant disciplinary action shall include: (1) any incident (including digital communications) which might reasonably be seen to demonstrate hostility or prejudice towards people based on characteristics protected by equalities legislation or socio-economic status; (2) disruptive, violent, hostile or bullying behaviour during activities or digital communications associated with the society; (3) the disclosure of confidential information relating to the society or to any other member, unless the disclosure is duly authorised or made pursuant to a legal obligation.

Listings

ANNOUNCEMENT

Fabian Society events
Due to Covid-19, all Fabian Society events are still being held online. Keep an eye on our website for news of up-to-date activities and contact your local society for ways to stay involved.

BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS
Contact Luke John Davies at bhamfabians@gmail.com

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

BRIGHTON & HOVE
Contact Stephen Ottaway at stephenottaway1@gmail.com for details

CENTRAL LONDON
Contact Michael Weatherburn at londonfabians@gmail.com and website https://fabians.org.uk/central-london-fabian-society

CHISWICK & WEST LONDON
Contact Alison Baker at a.m.baker@blueyonder.co.uk

COLCHESTER
Contact Maurice Austin at Maurice.austin @phonecoop.coop

COUNTY DURHAM
Contact Professor Alan Townsend 01388 746479

CROYDON & SUTTON
Contact Emily Brothers at info@emilybrothers.com

DARTFORD & GRAVESHAM
Contact Deborah Stoate at debstoate@hotmail.com

FINCHLEY
Contact David Beere for details at djbeere@btinternet.com

GRIMSBY
Contact Pat Holland for details at hollandpat@hotmail.com

HAVERING
Contact Davis Marshall at haveringfabians @outlook.com

HORNSEY & WOOD GREEN
Contact Mark Cooke at hwgfabians@gmail.com

ISLINGTON
Contact Adeline Au at siewyin.au@gmail.com

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Contact Nathan Ashley at NELondonFabians @outlook.com

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NORTHUMBRIA AREA
Contact Pat Hobson at pathobson@hotmail.com

OXFORD
Contact Dave Addison at admin@oxfordfabians.org.uk

PETERBOROUGH
Contact Brian Keegan 01733 265769 or brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk

PORTSMOUTH
Contact Nita Cary at dewicary@yahoo.com

READING & DISTRICT
Contact Tony Skuse at tony@skuse.net

RUGBY
Contact John Goodman at rugbyfabians @myphone.coop

SOUTHAMPTON AREA
Contact Eliot Horn at eliot.horn@btinternet.com

SOUTH TYNESIDE
Contact Paul Freeman at southtynesidefabians @gmail.com

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

TONBRIDGE & TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Contact Martin Clay at Martin.clay@btinternet.com

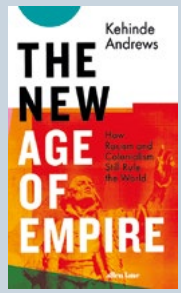
WALSALL
Contact Ian Robertson at robertsonic@hotmail.co.uk for details

YORK & DISTRICT
Contact Mary Cannon at yorkfabiansociety @gmail.com

FABIAN QUIZ

THE NEW AGE OF EMPIRE: HOW RACISM AND COLONIALISM STILL RULE THE WORLD

Kehinde Andrews



The New Age of Empire goes back to the beginning of the European Empires and outlines the deliberate terror and suffering wrought during every stage of their expansion.

Kehinde Andrews destroys the myth that the West was founded on the three great revolutions of science, industry and politics. Instead, genocide, slavery and colonialism are the key foundation stones upon which the West was built. And we are still living under this system today: America is now at the helm, perpetuating global inequality through business, government, and institutions like the UN, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO.

Offering no easy answers, The New Age of Empire is essential reading to better understand our global system.

Penguin has kindly given us five copies to give away. To win one, answer the following question:
Between 1899 and 1902, in which country did the British Empire use concentration camps?

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

ANSWERS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 12 FEBRUARY 2021

End violence and abuse against retail workers

Let's work together to ensure the Government takes real action to protect retail workers from violence, threats and abuse.

Help us get there by signing and sharing our petition.

Scan the QR code to sign the petition or go to: petition.parliament.uk/petitions/328621

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Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

General Secretary: **Paddy Lillis** • President: **Amy Murphy**
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