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Participating in
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50 years

Young Fabians 50th
Anniversary Pamphlet

Edited by Adrian Prandle

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YOUNG FABIANS

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2010: Young Fabians' 50th year

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Sponsor Foreword

TU Fund Managers

When the financial markets imploded in the Autumn of 2007, many people justly felt that if nothing else came from this experience, at least the banking and financial services sector of the future would change for the better - steering itself towards the requirement for personal responsibility and social accountability.

However, three years on and many bankers are eagerly anticipating exorbitant bonuses on banking profits, made only on the back of billions of pounds of taxpayers' money propping up the financial system. Is this justifiable and have any real lessons been learned?

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Congratulations to the Young Fabians as you too celebrate longevity – in this your 50th year.

Marion Colverd
General Manager
TU Fund Managers Limited



Introduction

Adrian Prandle, Young Fabian Vice Chair 2009/10

When Ed Miliband, in his first leader's speech, told Labour Party Conference that a new generation had taken charge, ears pricked up. He spoke of a new generation 'idealistic about our future' and 'not bound by the fear or the ghosts of the past.'

The Young Fabians – and the four essays in this pamphlet – epitomise this new generation. We bring not just a new generation of ideas to the centre-left, but also an optimism, an ambition, and a determination about what government and society together can achieve.

Fifty years since a youth section of the Fabian Society was founded, the Young Fabians go from strength to strength. The young policy specialists of the Labour movement have seen membership rise by 25% in the six months since the 2010 general election.

At a time when the potential of a mass membership movement is being recalled, the Young Fabians are ahead of the game. Our involvement in Labour politics may focus on ideas and participating in change, but in publishing this work we have also developed a highly participatory model of policy development.

The four Young Fabians policy development groups that have been meeting since May have utilised the heartbeat of our organisation: members. Members who individually, and collectively, are both doers and thinkers. The belief in collectivity, central to the Labour movement, should never again allow us to forget the value of participation.

This is a key theme of our work on Labour Party reform. From participating in a functional policy-making process, and participating in driving change in our communities, to ensuring a boost in participation of the full diversity of Labour's members, we must speed up in replacing command and control with listen and learn as the basis for action.

And so, Young Fabian members, involved and empowered, have presented their policy ideas in a variety of fora: meetings, magazine articles, blog posts; to politicians, to experts, and to each other. We have run wiki-policy experiments, and held online meetings bringing in passion, expertise and experiences from the breadth of the country, not just from within the Westminster policy world.

And now this pamphlet.

The policy development groups met in a unique context: with Labour out of power for the first time in most Young Fabian members' political lifetimes, coalition government may well have brought 'a new politics', and, still in the aftermath of the global economic crisis, public services begin to feel the harsh impact of the new government's extensive and ideological spending cuts.

Change starts at home, which is why Jessica Studdert, Chair of the Young Fabian special project group, *Transforming our Party*, argues for a vibrant, diverse Labour Party, utilising its members to respond to the issues of the modern world with relevance and innovation and to provide a link between leadership and wider electorate. In *The path to green and equitable growth*, Adam Short presents the case for a holistic approach to dealing with the interdependent challenges of energy, global governance, and developing economies and livelihoods. Chair of the Young Fabian Work and Families policy development group, Josie Cluer, calls for a proper definition of the fairness Labour represents, a new economic narrative, and a willingness to transform workplaces and family life. In the final contribution, Young Fabian members Bren Albiston and Dan Harkin discuss the interrelation of aspiration and

education, and look for a commitment of involvement and participation from beyond the education sector – in families, in communities, in trade unions and in business – with the support, not control, of government. Each chapter is packed with ideas.

Take these ideas to your CLPs, your union branch meetings, your community campaign groups. Write about them, talk about them. But also let us know what you think via the YF blog where the debate can continue: www.youngfabians.org.uk/blog.

This pamphlet presents new ideas for a new leader of the Labour Party – but also for the whole movement. Change is needed and together we must participate in that change. The new generation is ready and able.

1 | Transforming our Party

Jessica Studdert

"Be in no doubt. The new generation of Labour is different. Different attitudes, different ideas, different ways of doing politics."

*Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP,
Leader's speech to Labour Party Annual Conference, 2010*

Introduction

The Labour Party's new leader set out a clear vision and direction for our party in his first speech to annual conference. At this critical juncture, we must use this opportunity to reform, renew and revitalise our party's approach. Thirteen years in government have left their mark on a party which, in overcoming the traumatic period of militant dogma and entryism during the 1980s, can be characterised as more of an overweening centralised electoral machine than an organic expression of values from which the Labour movement originated. Constituency parties (CLPs) have become little more than agents of a centralised bureaucracy which retains tight control over campaign method, message delivery and which defines only narrow measures of effectiveness such as voter ID volumes. Closed and opaque structures enforce procedure which can deter meaningful engagement, and there is a sense that policy discussion has been all but extinguished from the experience

of the party's membership.

For Young Fabians and young party members, unscarred by the turbulence of the 1980s and of a generation which experiences political activism more directly and interactively, it is clear that many people participate in the Labour Party in spite of, not because of, how it is structured as an organisation. In the first five months since Labour's election defeat, over 30,000 new members joined the party. They seek a means to express their belief in social justice, and if the Labour Party does not have a clear strategy for retaining them and channelling their energy, they will leave as quickly as they signed up.

We urgently need to demystify the Labour Party and increase transparency within its structures. The tight central grip needs to be loosened to allow local activism to flourish. We need to rediscover a more personal, relational politics. Reform of party structures needs to engineer a cultural shift that will enable us to thrive as a party with purpose, anchored deeply in the communities we seek to represent and fired up by our core values of social justice and empowerment, not distracted by rules, procedure and minutes.

Local party organisation

Most newcomers will have their first face to face interaction with the Labour Party through their local CLP. It is essential that this is a positive experience, if people are to return and contribute their time to the party, yet too often this is not so. Young members' experiences show a huge variation in quality between CLPs. What makes the difference between a good and a bad CLP is the calibre, commitment and the priorities of the people running it.

To build up Labour's capacity to attract, retain and develop an active membership, power in the organisation must be rebalanced from the centre to the local level. The top-down structure needs to be turned on its head so that the focus of central party and regional office activity is

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facilitating platforms for action and building capacity locally. The command and control approach needs to give way to a culture of support and incentive which encourages sustained bottom-up development.

Local volunteer party officers need to be better supported to run effective local organisations. The 100-page long Labour Party Rule Book rigidly and archaically dictates party structures without covering the range of activity CLPs should pursue: it covers 'what' but not 'how'. Good practice needs to be far more accessible. Local officers should be able to tap into training and advice that includes how to run a good meeting and active participation and listening techniques. Clear job descriptions for each officer post would enable the individuals in each position to understand what is expected of them as they contribute their time and allow other members to hold them to account. Skills audits of members could more effectively match people to different roles and tasks. Term limits for Executive Committee officers of approximately 2-3 years would better develop the talents and skills of individuals who would have more opportunity to progress whilst providing more members with more opportunities.

The GC (general committee) meeting model must be phased out entirely – it is unacceptable that members can only contribute to a meeting if officially delegated, a practice that actively excludes newcomers. Many CLPs have chosen to move to an all member meeting model, allowing more scope for participation. The format should be clear though – the Executive Committee is the forum for business, so all member meetings can embrace a fun and engaging discussion of issues, motivating people's passion for Labour politics.

Centrally, the party also needs to think about creating better links between CLPs, who too often operate in silos and can only look up the party hierarchy, not horizontally across the movement. Having the tools to coordinate more effectively, for example by turning Membersnet into a more open, workable and facilitative networking platform to share

ideas, compare best practice, and build campaign momentum around particular issues, would be a start.

Incentivising and facilitating campaigning rooted in the community

The entire institutional dynamic of the Labour Party has to change from a marketing-professional centralised structure to a community-embedded movement party. Communicating with the electorate should not be about extracting data and then pummeling people with information. We need to develop a more relational sense of politics that recognises and rewards qualitative interaction – turning off identification and broadcast and turning on conversation and reciprocity.

Local parties need to be given freedom, and where needed the support, to develop a culture and practice of constant campaigning, building and sustaining links with the wider community. Institutionally, we must move beyond the principle that voter ID is the be all and end all of our dialogue with the electorate. A more conversational style of campaigning that recruits supporters, builds relationships and develops networks locally has been proven on both sides of the Atlantic to be very effective.¹ Earlier in the electoral cycle the data matters less - the aim should be more to identify potential allegiances, locate support around different issues and voluntary action, and find local people to spread the word. In due course, a bigger army of volunteers and supporters who have developed trust, skills and a relationship with Labour over time will be well-placed to undertake voter ID.

Achieving this will require leadership and direction from the centre, but ultimately this is about providing members with the tools to act for themselves. The role of the central and regional offices is to encourage, not dictate, and to support, not withdraw. The party currently rewards CLPs for high voter contact rates with mass marketing material, but should think about rewarding qualitative local relationship building as

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well as quantitative.

The party should create “Beacon CLPs” which are already active and effective community campaigners and organisers. CLPs which build broad coalitions of support around local campaigns, open their meetings to all members, create ongoing dialogue with local voters and energetically pursue the recruitment of supporters and members, should be held up as good examples of our values in action. CLPs can be encouraged and rewarded to gain Beacon status with, to be blunt, more power and money. There could be financial bonuses for supporter and membership growth. Beacon CLPs should be rewarded with more control over their own affairs, such as the ability to select their own local council candidates when they want. Beacon CLPs could offer mentoring, shadowing opportunities or apprenticeships to officers with less experience from other CLPs, and play a role in conducting peer reviews and producing local action plans.

Reforming the policymaking process

The early years of the Partnership in Power policymaking process were largely positive. The model² established a good entry point for members into the policymaking process and initial policy forums were well attended, facilitated lively discussions and submitted a range of views into the policymaking process. Yet early optimism gave way to cynicism after poor feedback and communication, coupled with often undynamic outputs, left people feeling their contributions had not been worthwhile. By 2010, members reported feeling that while manifesto discussions were useful exercises in isolation, conducting them just before the election gave the impression that views presented would have minimal impact. The votes at 16 policy proposal, having gone through all the necessary hurdles including agreement at Warwick, only appeared in the final manifesto as a commitment to ‘look at it’.

Now that Labour is out of power, a consultation on reforming the

policymaking process has begun.³ This provides an excellent opportunity to reform the bureaucratic and lengthy National Policy Forum (NPF) process and to create new structures that are more open and accountable. Reform should have twin aims. Firstly, the policymaking process must produce relevant policy that is both values-driven and captures the imagination of the public. Secondly, the process should seek to get more people involved, broadening the base of our party's support as people see a purpose to participation.

To do this, new structures should better channel member input and individual expertise. They should move away from generalist policy input whereby the only opportunity for members to contribute is at forums which cover the whole range of policy. The party could support the rejuvenation of those socialist societies which are structured around different policy areas such as health, education and the environment. Though often viewed as irrelevant, defunct, or captured by special interest groups, they have the potential to become policy networks that provide forums for dialogue, drawing in the expertise and interest of individual members. They could engage formally with supporters and other organisations outside the party, broadening input. Above all, the more specialised structures would create a benchmark for what constitutes 'useful' policy discussion, and ideas that have demonstrably wider legitimacy have more chance of becoming official policy.

Beacon CLPs, who have demonstrated broad participation and active engagement locally, could be rewarded with more of a voice in the reformed policy-making process. If CLPs show they are representative of their communities then their voice has more legitimacy and should have more influence. CLPs who have demonstrated community involvement in consultations should be rewarded with greater priority in the NPF and conference processes.

Above all, good communication with members is a vital component in a good policymaking process. Members are mature enough to understand that they cannot expect every suggestion to be taken up, but too

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often there has been a sense that the system stifles, rather than facilitates, true debate and the development of ideas.

Equality and diversity

For a party that prides itself on egalitarianism and social justice, having a diverse party – at local, regional and national levels – should be a priority.

Labour's approach to increasing gender diversity, via the use of all-women shortlists (AWS) for selections and quotas for elected posts, has boosted numbers. At best though, they are short term fixes, and should always be used in conjunction with other policies to support women's progression. Instead they have become the sole mechanism to increase diversity, heavily geared towards quantitative outcomes, and to the detriment of sustainable, qualitative culture change. Moreover, AWSs are fast losing legitimacy due to the lack of transparency and due process. Their imposition on local parties has led to increasing perceptions amongst members that they have been used by the national party to disempower people, rather than promote genuine equality. Rightly or wrongly, there are common perceptions that on occasion AWSs appear to have been used in constituencies either to keep certain men out, or get certain women in. AWSs have actually narrowed women's opportunities to progress within the party and, counterproductively, have not helped win the argument amongst male sections of the party which are not predisposed to gender equality.

Gender diversity policy must do two things: equalise women's representation, whilst bringing about cultural change. In the short term, reform of the AWS process needs to focus on increasing transparency and consultation with regard to how they are implemented. They cannot be used in isolation. Clear guidance and best practice should be established and regional offices should support local parties to increase gender balance. CLPs that actively demonstrate they are working to

promote the involvement, development and selection of women into posts should not have an AWS imposed and should not have to fulfil selection quotas. A more organic approach to encouraging female participation would better develop buy-in amongst all members. A move towards implementing balanced shortlists is the best mechanism to achieve fairness – putting forward women who have been supported to participate through the ranks and allowing them opportunity to prove themselves against men in an open and fair contest.

Beyond gender equality, there is a constant need to reassess and address the representation of people across a range of backgrounds and experiences – for example, socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality. CLP officers should be encouraged to survey party members to find out their needs before, as far as possible, addressing them. This could involve thinking about where and when meetings are held to increase accessibility or being aware of an over-focus on particular types of meeting, such as fundraising social events which might deter the involvement of people on lower incomes. CLPs should also be encouraged to think about how they might engage with different ethnic or faith communities in their area, and how their practices and communications could seek to be more inclusive and relevant.

A major impediment to diversity within our party is the view that the selections system makes it harder for ‘outsiders’ and easier for ‘insiders’ to run for elected office. The long selection process (averaging 10-12 weeks) and huge potential costs involved mean that standing to be a parliamentary candidate is not a realistic option for many people, with 9-5 jobs or on lower incomes. Accessibility could be increased by initiating a cap on spending and a time limit on selections. The NEC emergency selection procedure should be applied as an emergency brake on an unsuitable local candidate, not as standard practice in an election year. Local members should, as far as possible, be able to determine shortlists; encouraging the development of local talent is a great way of encouraging participation more broadly.

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Conclusion

Common across these issues is the need for the Labour Party to rediscover, in the way we operate, a sense of the interdependence and reciprocity that are at the core of our Labour collectivist culture. Participation in the pursuit of our values is motivated by a very human instinct, the need to see a purpose to our actions. Too often this purpose is stunted by the rigidity of procedure, the weight of bureaucracy and the primacy of quantitative outcomes. If people cannot see our values in the way we work, we risk diminishing their faith in our ability to put those values into action when in government.

The leader and the general secretary need to work together to restructure Labour in a way that shifts the balance of power and control from the centre, out to the local level, allowing maximum scope for individual efficacy. Initiating a strategic review of the Labour Party would be a useful exercise. This would consider the functions and effectiveness of the party at all levels, and how they interact with each other – branch, CLP, regional, national, the parliamentary party and leader’s office. And it would analyse trade unions, affiliates and successful movement-based organisations such as Hope Not Hate to identify strengths, potential for coordination and to build capacity. The findings of the strategic review should be launched with a statement of purpose that sets out a clear direction and tone for the conduct of the Labour Party moving forwards.

As we strive to move from opposition to government, the challenge for our party is to combine an emphasis on our core eternal values with an ability to respond to the issues of the modern world with relevance and innovation. We can only do this with a vibrant, diverse and active base which has high levels of visibility, trust and interaction with our communities, providing an effective link between our leadership and the wider electorate.

2 | From fairness to a force for change: improving work and family life

Josie Cluer

It is crucial that Labour's mission remains focussed on the ordinary families in, and out of, work around the country. Work and family life are inevitably interlinked, and the decisions people make in these spheres will impact upon Britain's capacity for growth. Through work, economic and family policy we see some clear challenges for Labour's new leadership.

Labour must define its place in the new politics based on our values: frank fairness

In sharp contrast to the party of pragmatism – the Conservatives – and the party of political convenience – the Liberal Democrats – Labour is the only mainstream British political party based on principle. We should not be shy about defining our party and our policies by our values. We should be flattered that our achievements over the last 13 years have helped shape public opinion and the political weather such that our opponents fall over each other to steal our language about fairness and opportunity. We must restate our values as well as reclaiming this language, and, in turn, the centre ground, from those who use them to mask regressive policies: “we’re all in this together” is not the call of a party whose budget hits the poorest hardest.

The judge of any good policy must be fairness: people put into a

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system and deserve to take out. In some cases others need extra help, and that is fair too. We must be careful – ‘fairness’, like ‘equality’, is a promiscuous concept, used by different people to mean different things. We fought the 2010 election on fairness, but were not clear about what we mean, and in particular, what is unfair. Any party that talks about “being on your side” must be clear about who is on the opposing side. A party that talks about “helping people who play by the rules” must define what the rules are. A party which is for “the many not the few” must be clear about “the few” it is not for. A party striving for a fairer Britain must articulate what is currently unfair. If we shy away from these issues, our values will be empty. Only by rooting out unfair systems and sanctioning behaviours that undermine fair processes will we really show we represent the interests of the majority.

In work policy, that means we must be clear that we are not on the side of employers who do not pay the minimum wage, do not train their staff or do not recognise unions. Although the minimum wage is fair in principle, it is not fair in practice. Since its introduction in 1998, there have been seven successful prosecutions under the legislation, and in 08/09, only 5% of instances of “non-compliance” were followed up with an enforcement notice. Employers – particularly small ones – look around and see bad employers bending the rules, under-cutting them, and getting away with it. Labour must articulate a renewed focus on enforcement of employment legislation in order to prevent the minimum wage and other key workplace reforms being undermined. It is unfair that there are 4.5 million people on housing waiting lists, but 600,000 empty homes. We must explore mechanisms to encourage – or even mandate – these homes to be let. On welfare, the few (and it is only a few) who take unfair advantage undermine the system and offend a sense of fairness. To maintain public support and the integrity of the system, we must consider fresh ways to combat benefit fraud. The UK loses £2.2bn per year in benefit fraud and error. But we lose ten times more - £25bn - in tax avoidance. Therefore, we must clamp down on tax

avoidance. Building on the excellent work of the TUC, Labour should commission an independent review of how to prevent and address tax avoidance through legislation and international partnerships.

Capturing a new narrative about how a Labour government will make change happen

The post-mortem of Labour's election defeat suggests voters were frustrated by Labour apparently seeing its swollen state as the answer to everything. Demos analysis¹ suggested that 27% of voters who Labour lost said they saw government as 'part of the problem not the solution,' compared with just 14% voters who Labour retained.

Faced with wanting to achieve change Labour usually used one of two options. Firstly, public spending. We know that people with basic skills are more likely to get a job, so we spent billions on offering training to job seekers. Secondly, we dictated solutions from the centre: we wanted employers to give mothers more maternity leave, so we legislated to force them to do so. Both are good policies and have achieved real change in this country: since 2001, nearly three million adults have learnt basic skills and new mums now get nine months paid maternity leave. But when increasing public spending is impossible, and central diktat is so out of fashion, Labour's new politics must call for a fresh – more subtle – approach.

On spending, the next Labour government should make clearer that we understand how hard people work for their money and so government has a duty to be careful with it. Central and local government has enormous buying power, spending at least £86bn a year on goods and services. But government procurement rules focus on cost, rather than value. Labour should reframe the debate about public expenditure. We don't just care about what money is spent on, but how money is spent. Just as people buy Fairtrade coffee to improve the lives of others, so government can use its spending. Through intelligent use of public

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procurement, government could drive up workplace rights, create thousands of apprenticeships, and choke companies who operate poor employment practices. And all without spending an extra penny.

On public services, we must recognise complexity in real people's lives and show humility about the capacity of the state to help. When they talk about benefits, the coalition's focus on "push factors" and "pull factors" fundamentally misunderstands just how complicated people's competing responsibilities are. On the one hand, a single mum may want to work, on the other, she needs to pick the kids up from school, help with the homework, and make sure her sister who suffers from mental health problems is OK. These are not problems solved by central government, they are solved by people themselves, supported by high quality public services: flexible, reliable childcare; activities for the children in the evenings; employment advisers who are linked up to social care services. Labour should continue its relentless focus on joining up public services, which put people in the centre and treat them as agents, rather than recipients of interventions.

Labour must have a compelling alternative economic strategy

Anyone who opposes every cut in public spending is in denial of the economic situation. Our plans must centre on fairness with cuts spread evenly across the income spectrum and a focus on growth. The best way to reduce welfare spending is to create jobs for people to move into. But in building the economy again there is an opportunity to reshape it to be more resilient, as well as better for jobs and communities.

Labour should also show a vision for the future with a view about the kind of economy we want to build: a fair economy built on stable employment, sustainable growth, and a balance of public, private and third sector employment. Britain should seek to attract the high skill, high wage jobs that will power the global economy in the future. This

does not mean 'picking winners'; it requires a far more subtle approach. But all government actions – not just those in industry – contribute to the willingness of enterprises and industries to invest and develop in Britain.

Attracting inward investment is essential. Multi-nationals can take large elements of their business to any country in the world. We need them to invest in Britain. We know that their decision relies upon a range of factors, including industrial policy, financial policy, universities, transport and the weather. Labour should have an inward investment review to understand these factors fully, and join up policies to attract investment.

We must think more about how to stimulate key areas of the economy. For example, Britain has long had an ambition to lead the world in developing technologies to counter climate change. A proportion of green taxes should provide tax relief for any company developing a response to climate change. In another area, we should help social enterprises get off the ground and scale up quickly. We must encourage the provision of new financing instruments for social enterprises. Social enterprises are not the same as grant-reliant charities and require access to capital in order to grow and benefit more people. However, many traditional forms of financing are unsuitable for social enterprises due to the emphasis placed on financial returns to the detriment of social returns. New financial instruments such as the social innovation bond and the creation of venture capital funds that invest only in social enterprises can be useful. This is the good side of financial innovation and channels capital towards organisations that perform well against their stated social objective. However, to understand how well a social enterprise meets its social objective(s), we require a commonly accepted framework for assessing social impact just as there is for financial reporting.

Labour must lead the case for squeezing out the grey economy at the bottom of the labour market. Low wages, informal employment, poor

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health and safety, and few rights all characterise work for too many people in Britain. Tax credits for the low paid help address the symptom but miss the cause: this is not just an issue about employment rights, but also about the structure of the economy. Building on the work of the fair work coalition, Labour should remove the economic structures which allow the grey labour market to flourish. Things can be different.

Refreshing our view of work

New Labour's vision of economic efficiency and social justice should remain our ambition. Faced with the challenges of an ageing population, emerging economies and globalisation, Britain cannot afford to have so many people out of work. But many who do not work are prevented by a labour market that is insufficiently flexible to enable them to juggle work with family and other responsibilities.

Every mother who chooses not to work because of the inflexibility her employer gives her to look after her kids if they're off school sick is a blow to the economy. And it's unfair on her. Every older worker who is denied a job because the employer worries about him being a bit slow up the stairs is a blow to the economy. And it's unfair on him. Every person whose employer cannot give him the flexibility to manage his mental health problems is a blow to the economy. And it's unfair on him.

Labour must refresh its view on the world of work and what a good workplace looks like.

Ed Miliband should initiate a wide-ranging joint employer and union commission on "fair workplaces of the future" examining:

- Unions' role in improving the workplace: The review should focus not on acrimonious industrial disputes, but on unions' partnerships with employers. There is much good practice to build upon. Through Unionlearn's 26,000 union learning reps, hundreds of

thousands of people have gained basic and further skills at work. Through advocacy, negotiations and advice, unions have benefited millions of workers and employers.

- Parents' working rights: Britain lags behind Europe in flexible support to parents. Labour should advocate parental leave that can be split in any combination between both parents, giving families flexibility to run their lives how they want, and reducing the temptation for employers to discriminate against women.
- Childcare at work: Every survey shows that parents want better, more flexible, more affordable childcare. We should identify incentives to introduce innovative childcare solutions linked to the workplace and look to countries such as Germany where in some working areas babies and young children can be part of the normal working environment.
- Older workers: With an ageing population, it is essential that older people are able to work longer, and more flexibly.
- Mental health at work: Amongst the largest growth in incapacity benefit claimants are white collar workers suffering mental health problems. Estimates say mental health problems cost employers up to £26bn annually. With one in four people suffering from mental health problems at some point in their lives, it is a problem we can no longer pretend is not happening.
- Working hours and flexibility: Longer working days are a barrier to parents spending more time with their

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children. As working hours go up well-being goes down. The relationship between working hours and productivity is not straightforward, but a reduction in working hours does not always equate to a reduction in productivity. The commission should look to build a business case for flexible and lower working hours, which maintain - or even increase - economic output.

Labour as a force for positive change in communities

Despite being out of power, the Labour Party is not impotent. It is a movement that must still fight for change. As well as supporting oppositional campaigns such as Don't Judge My Family and others, Labour MPs, councillors and activists can involve members of the public in running campaigns with life changing impacts for people in every constituency. It is reassuring that Ed Miliband has pledged to mainstream his brother's Movement for Change, which should campaign on:

- Skills: Increasing an individual's skills is key to getting a job, and the best way to turn a job into a career. The coalition is slashing skills funding, but Labour should be campaigning – with unions – for employers to increase apprenticeships, take up the skills pledge and invest in their staff for the upturn.
- The living wage: The coalition is obsessed by the “poverty trap” which sees people gaining negligible income as they get into work. The poverty trap is a real problem. But the answer is not to cut JSA but to implement a living wage.
- Quality housing: There is a dearth of good information available to tenants to distinguish between good and bad landlords and provide the information they

need about their rights. Labour activists should be campaigning for landlords to prove they meet basic standards as part of a new kitemark scheme.

- Sure Start: Sure Starts have been a transformative force in communities, including the most deprived, since their introduction. Labour should be part of the campaign to Shout Out for a Sure Start.
- Ending discrimination: Labour should be campaigning to change people's minds as well as to change policy. For example, despite the fact that one in four children grow up in a one parent family, too often, they are stigmatised. Gingerbread's "let's lose the labels" and "you're brilliant!" campaigns are good examples of opportunities to end discrimination of single parents.

Conclusion

Through campaigning in communities on issues that affect families and day-to-day life, and challenging perceptions of what workplaces must be like, Labour can begin to redefine the fairness it stands for. It can shape a different economy, one that works for everyone, and uses new levers for change to enact party values and fulfil its ambition to improve lives.

3 | The path to green and equitable growth: securing livelihoods and resource security

Adam Short

At the point of global economic meltdown, social justice was unfortunately compromised. But social justice must not be at odds with economic recovery.

This is true in both developed and developing countries, where the significance of environmental sustainability to our economic futures is only slowly being understood. Climate change will damage the industries and livelihoods that power economies. However, with economic failure comes an opportunity – the opportunity to reshape the foundations of economies so that they can grow in a green and sustainable way.

What has been termed as the ‘Hydra-headed crisis’¹ – the series of interdependent, systemic challenges (energy and food security, jobless growth, climate change, global governance) facing countries, institutions and individuals alike – requires a holistic approach and decisive action.

Understanding challenges in development

The Labour government’s leadership in putting international development on the national and global agenda is well recognised at home and abroad. The Department for International Development’s reputation and substantially increased aid budget has been termed by some ‘the golden inheritance’ for the new coalition government.

The coalition has since proposed a significant shift of focus in the aid budget towards failing and conflict-affected states. The approach risks ignoring the fundamental dilemmas of resource scarcity that underlie the real development challenges of the coming decade: the carbon intensive growth that underpins current development gains, the shocking inequalities present in many developing economies, and huge increases in urban poverty. The UK could and should provide greater leadership on these issues. Progressive development policy must begin with these dilemmas in mind, bridging development, environmental and distributive concerns. This is a common challenge at home and abroad, and one that Britain must face its responsibility to address – to secure both its own long-term recovery and sustainable growth in developing countries.

Change starts at home

The most powerful way that the UK can lead is by example. Our economy should be synonymous with sustainable products, design and construction, clean energy and technology, ethical consumers and attractive, green cities.

These would be the true green shoots of a balanced British recovery and it is vital that progressives use this moment to press for a new, greener, more equitable path to growth in Britain. There is a real danger that in the coalition's rush to jump-start the economy the dirty, unequal ways of doing things are preserved. The economic crisis has given us an opportunity to do things differently, an opportunity we should not squander.

In the UK domestic action towards sustainable development strengthens the moral and political foundations needed for a global role as catalyst and reformer, impacting positively upon the environment and the world's most vulnerable.

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New global role for the UK

The UK must not abandon its activist role in governance issues. We have an opportunity to strike new terms for regional and global engagement. Labour should now champion the G20 as the global forum for economic cooperation and encourage the disbanding of the outmoded G8. We must resist being seen as part of a G8 or western bloc versus the East. As we have seen with the coalition government's largest trade delegation to India, renewed relations and new partners are vital to the UK's national interest. The G20 must now also take on development and aid.

Labour should press the government to champion sustainable development at home and exert pressure on the international community through the G20, and other multilateral forums and processes, to broaden its sights from the immediate and much needed reform of the global banking and financial system, towards green and equitable growth. Not easily done, but in opposition Labour must be early in getting itself on the right side of the argument.

In the aftermath of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, from which most countries are still reeling, even out of government Labour can forge new global partnerships to press for green and equitable growth, demonstrating the same ability to mobilise and coordinate that, in government, it displayed in the international arena during the financial crisis. The economic growth needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals cannot be at the expense of MDG 7, 'ensuring environmental sustainability'. From the left we can pledge, with international alliances, to build momentum towards the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

With fulfillment of the aspirations of the various declarations on sustainable development in mind, Labour policy must not forget to articulate how to unlock private sector investment in green path development. Public funds are dwarfed by the \$70 trillion held by investment funds ready to invest; the UK must push for the scale up of pilots that have reduced risk and the expectations of return such as the Green

Bonds scheme of the World Bank.² Such investment could help the least developed countries leapfrog dirty development by building low carbon energy infrastructure. Such investment could spur growth by investing in communications systems, such as broadband, that encourage entrepreneurship by enabling people to connect market information and local knowledge, enhance opportunities for civil society organisation and help in the provision of efficient and effective basic services.

Securing livelihoods

Those tasked with nurturing recoveries must do all they can to ensure growth is linked to job creation. Jobs and trade are crucial to lifting people and countries out of poverty. The time is right for the UK to push for a progressive overhaul of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and conclusion to the Doha round. At the moment international and EU trade policy is expensive and regressive. Import and technical barriers prevent agricultural goods from low income countries entering UK and EU markets and escalating tariffs deter these countries from developing and expanding into value added exports which could increase their revenue. Furthermore, the UK spends over £3 billion on subsidising agricultural producers which primarily benefits large agribusinesses, multi-national companies, and wealthy landowners, while shouldering low income families with high food bills and preventing low income countries from developing. Policy should liberalise international trade, abolishing most of the subsidies, barriers and tariffs that are stalling the development of low income countries. It is estimated that a progressive close to the Doha round could unleash three times the financial flows of current aid levels.

From opposition we must raise attention to one of greatest threats facing the poorest and most vulnerable in both advanced and developing countries – a jobless recovery. The global economic crisis has

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slowed the pace of poverty reduction in developing countries, the IMF estimating that by the end of 2010, 64 million more people will have fallen into extreme poverty than without the crisis.³

In the textiles and clothing industry alone the global recession has led to around 8,000 textiles and apparel production units closing since June 2008. In particular, China experienced 33% losses in the sector.⁴ After working long hours for little money and often in bad conditions, girls and women in particular now face negative development trajectories; girls are being taken out of education and put back into factories and women are working longer hours to supplement lost income.⁵ We cannot accept such outcomes.

Of particular concern is the evidence that young people are bearing the brunt of the economic downturn. The latest global employment trends for young people by the ILO shows in developed economies, the crisis has led to the highest youth unemployment rates on record, while in developing economies – where 90 per cent of the world's youth live – 'the crisis threatens to exacerbate the challenges of rampant decent work deficits, adding to the number of young people who find themselves stuck in working poverty and thus prolonging the cycle of poverty through at least another generation.'⁶ The ILO inform that between 2007 and 2009, youth unemployment increased by 7.8 million at the global level (1.1 million in 2007/08 and 6.6 million in 2008/09) and forecast a continued increase in global youth unemployment to an all-time high of 81.2 million and a rate of 13.1 per cent in 2010. The damaging effects on the individual of unemployment when young are well documented⁷ as are the social and economic costs of their inactivity. The emotional impact and individual hardship endured and consequent political and security issues should be of great concern to progressives, and it will be up to those on the left to ensure this voice is not forgotten.

While structural issues must be tackled, within national economies, to ensure the economic inclusion of young people, the UK should play a more catalytic role in cultivating youth innovation and economic devel-

opment in developing countries by supporting young entrepreneurs, as called for in the final communiqué from the first G20 Young Entrepreneur summit.⁸ There is positive evidence of the impact of such support to youth-led social enterprise start-ups in the Middle East⁹ where youth makes up 20% of the total population – similar proportions as in Sub-Saharan Africa (20.3%), North Africa (20%), and South Asia (19.5%). Other schemes could see micro-finance provided to local communities to diversify their crops or create small-holdings to increase food security. At the same time the UK should support entrepreneurs here, who are creating new supply chains through socially driven enterprises that are delivering to both ethically conscious consumers in the UK and the developing country producers.¹⁰

Similar support and short-term policy responses are needed in the UK to provide opportunities for the nearly one million unemployed young people to remain active and engaged. Programmes could support energy efficiency as set out in ippr's Green Jobs report.¹¹ Long term, it is well recognised that growth needs to be more balanced across the UK and less reliant on a small number of sectors.

Achieving UK energy security: practically, how change starts at home

A green recovery needs to be inextricably linked to UK energy security. And domestic action is near essential to influencing behaviour in, and aiding, developing countries.

There is acceptance that however quickly we increase the supply of renewable energy over the next few decades, the UK is going to need a mix of nuclear, gas and oil in its energy mix for the foreseeable future. With diminishing domestic supplies of fossil fuels, it is now necessary to deal with various countries and regimes in order to secure oil and gas supplies; the UK therefore is currently strengthening its relationship

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and energy agreements with Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Norway, Nigeria, Qatar and the EU.¹²

It is going to be important to strike a balance between assisting other countries to develop their oil sectors for export and the local communities and environments which are often negatively exposed to the activity. We can demand greater transparency of the extractive industries in line with recent legislation in the US. A strengthening of international criminal law and its institutions could ensure adequate social and environmental protections that give local communities recourse if things go wrong. Pressure should be put on countries with a secure supply of fossil fuels to also develop renewable energy policies now.

We must ensure the needed investment is being made in research and development and in supporting private sector innovation. Energy security issues are such that striving for cross-party support, rather than oppositionalism, is essential given the long-term investment needed for infrastructure in renewable energy, its transportation and its storage. Political consensus in the UK is important to ensure programmes that are started, continue. The new political context makes space for this. Energy security should be seen as an important intergenerational justice issue and sitting comfortably therefore with Labour values. There are substantial competing demands on public spending, but younger generations must see investments in renewables now to ensure their energy security in the future.

Education institutions can contribute to energy security by providing skills and training in sustainable energy to improve local knowledge and markets for sustainability services such as micro-generation and insulation. Funding of research in the UK or EU could be linked to academic sabbaticals in developing countries that include assistance in skills and technology transfer.

Labour must take the lead in educating the public about the UK's energy challenge. Effective community action can get people involved in solutions to the UK's energy needs and security, to become both

greener and less reliant on other countries for our energy. The UK should do more to insulate housing, such as installing smart meters and grids, to cut down on wasted energy. A genuinely progressive government could do three things to create a culture of 'yes in my backyard'. Firstly, review planning regulations to allow the use of sustainable materials, such as wood, in construction. Britain needs to end its love of the brick if we are to build more energy efficient homes. Secondly, planning rules and incentives should be scaled up to encourage more households to invest in generating their own renewable energy. Pilots have shown government can get its investment back quickly and consumers see lower usage followed by a cost reduction, or in some cases profit, from micro-generation. Lastly, the government should support programmes that encourage street-by-street energy efficiency competition like the recent pilots conducted by ippr and British Gas.

'Yes in my back yard' also saves consumers money, quickly, so it pays to get involved. Locally, Labour could foster 'YIMBY' campaigns and support local communities organising themselves to build, for example, wind farms. Any changes in energy sources should try and help those in fuel poverty.

2009's Copenhagen climate summit showed that some developing countries want to emulate developed nations' earlier carbon-based economic growth. Britain and others must set a new, green example of success.

Conclusion

The progressive agenda on development, climate and the economy waits to be wrested back. The three must come together at both a national and international level. Whilst recognising the international political economy of that agenda is extremely complicated, the UK stands to gain a lot - both economically and diplomatically - in first move advantage. Many opportunities present themselves for progress

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on this agenda, from the continuing climate and trade negotiations and a newly forming G20. Securing economic recovery is vital, but this need not be at the expense of environmental and resource security. Progressives must make a call to action on these issues of social justice which confront us.

4 | Raising aspiration, offering equal chance, and getting education right

Bren Albiston & Dan Harkin

Introduction

Since Rousseau, those on the progressive side of the political spectrum have had as much to say about deprivation of spirit – the poverty of aspiration – as they have about material deprivation. Labour often trumpets the advances against material deprivation it has made, such as healthcare and the welfare state but progressives fought just as hard to bring us public libraries, public support of museums and galleries and, of course, a state education system.

Education has not survived the coalition's cull. Yet it is vital to our future; it is young people today who will power economic recovery and, hopefully, a return to the unprecedented growth enjoyed under the last Labour government. The central tenets of English education provision must include a determination to change lives and offer chances but also an opportunity for everyone to participate. Education is essential to individual lives but beneficial to society as a whole, which is why it requires a commitment of involvement and participation from beyond the education sector.

Education must be seen as a part of long-term anti-poverty strategies and is clearly significant to the economic importance of work. It is futile to see aspiration, equality, and education as anything but interrelated.

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Outside of school

Making the home a classroom

Many learners are at a disadvantage even before they set foot in the classroom due to differential home learning environments. Evidence suggests approximately 85% of the variation in pupil achievement is due to factors external to school, such as family background and economic circumstances.¹ Parents may not see education as worthwhile, clouded potentially by their own experience from childhood. We need to tackle this misconception head on. Government cannot impose itself in the home, but can encourage parents to foster a home environment where learning is prized. In his report to government on 14-19 education, Mike Tomlinson was clear that young people 'should have a passion for learning and should see it as natural, necessary and enjoyable part of adult life.'²

Labour should be standing up for:

- Funding and provision of joint parent-child learning, so that parents can share in their child's education, whilst transforming their own attitude to learning
- Expansion of support networks for those parents that feel failed by the education system, to reshape their conception of formal education, through institution-community outreach schemes. These may be promoted through a range of places where parents can be found – from Sure Start centres to post-natal classes, from Mums groups to pubs, in the workplace via trade unions or Unionlearn, or online at sites such as Mumsnet

Tackling low aspiration: providing much needed advice and support
A lack of aspiration is not just something confined to individual house-

holds; it is something that afflicts whole communities. Lack of state engagement with some of those communities can lead to the 'loss' of whole generations, adding to cross-generational benefit dependency and joblessness. Not only does the Conservative's 'big society' fail to answer this, it will entrench such problems. We need to address this alienation and we need to address the 'education and success is not for me' mentality, most often outside of the school environment.

At a community level, Labour can campaign for:

- Workshops in libraries, Sure Start centres, and youth centres - those successful in varied fields with lower socio-economic backgrounds show how they have succeeded, relaying what education can do and sign-posting available support
- Mentoring schemes for young adults, led by university students, entrepreneurs and employees from a variety of workplaces, to help young people achieve in what they are interested in and good at.

The third sector is already attempting similar services³ but funding for wider rollout and national promotion to secure more people to donate their time is necessary for widespread impact to be felt. Incentives could be introduced to encourage volunteer mentors and presenters – for example, repayment holidays on post-university debt, or additional funding to support local apprentices in their organisations.

People are different and need different support and role models, but alongside education spending, investment in community intervention cannot be forgotten. Government must demonstrate that it has not abandoned people and is willing to help them make the most of their lives.

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In school

Qualifications and curriculum changes came thick and fast under the Labour governments of 1997-2010. Before it came to power, Labour published *Aiming Higher*, which committed the party to bringing coherence to post-16 study by establishing greater breadth and creating greater equivalence between vocational and academic qualifications through a credit transfer system. Fast forward to 2010 though and Labour's timidity in reforming the 14-19 curriculum has proven exasperating. The Tomlinson Report in 2004 was a wasted opportunity to bring in a system of breadth and depth, meeting the needs of business, universities and – most importantly – young people themselves.

During Labour's 2010 leadership campaign, Andy Burnham – now shadow education secretary – said, "I think it's time for us to devote much more of our intellectual energy to the career opportunities and life chances of the 50% of young people who do not go to university. This has not had the attention it deserves and we need to be much more ambitious for these young people." Amidst a weakened economy and a very difficult graduate jobs market, it is right to now question seriously the notion of a degree being prized above all else. Whilst we need a strong knowledge based economy, we also need those in highly skilled vocational occupations.⁴ We need to address this imbalance, where those who are academically less able can feel abandoned and useless in a system that puts university first.

This is why we need to put vocational learning back at the heart of teaching, in partnership with employers and industry groups, to create worthwhile and highly prized qualification routes. Education needs to be flexible, and we must take advantage of the top resource of thousands of highly trained professionals desperate for the freedom to cater effectively for more than one broad learning style. We need to set out clear pathways of progression that cater for a greater number of interests, both academically and vocationally.

There is not so much a need to reinvent the wheel as dust it off and oil a few spokes. Labour has in its hands a comprehensive plan for reform of 14-19 education. The diplomas that emerged were not what were proposed and Tomlinson remains an untried set of reforms, reforms with support across the teaching profession even six years on.⁵

To recap, young people could be awarded a diploma, according to their aptitude and aspirations, at four levels: entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced, and it would cover both vocational and academic disciplines. These diplomas would have a central core component of functional skills, community service and an extended project.

So, building upon Tomlinson and the recent experience of the Welsh Baccalaureate, a new system might consist of:

- A new qualification comprising core transferable skills such as English language, quantitative reasoning, scientific reasoning, critical thinking and citizenship. It might also include requirements for an extended project and community service.
- Widespread acceptance and use of the Qualifications and Credit Framework with students earning transferable credits to be awarded the qualification, by taking existing examinations (such as A Levels, GCSEs, vocational and other approved qualifications).

Existing qualifications would thus be brought under an overarching framework, achieving parity between vocational and academic qualifications.

It is hoped that such a system would liberate the curriculum available in schools and colleges – allowing teachers to teach and learners to learn – and increase the flexibility of options available to young people. Post-14 young people would be able to build up points in a variety of

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settings, from schools and colleges to the workplace and less traditional environments. This new qualification for England would also embrace a vision of the good society by emphasising solidarity and civic responsibility. To this end, programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Prince's Trust xl Award or the numerous schemes run by organisations such as ASDAN should be incorporated into the core element, encouraging service to others and citizenship with an emphasis on “doing” over classroom learning.

After school

Universities

From an individual, economic and a social perspective, Labour's goal of increasing the number of young adults who experience higher education was right. Rapid expansion in the sector has collided with a new government determined to drastically cut services and funding across the public sector. Whether or not Peter Mandelson intentionally laid the trap of the Browne Review on higher education funding, the passage through parliament of the government's preferred course of action is a fracture point which could define this parliamentary term and the success or otherwise of the coalition.

Coverage of the debate since autumn 2009 has largely ignored the vision Labour set out in its new framework for higher education.⁶ We desperately need to be talking about the modernisation of universities. Labour should seek to return this to the agenda. The problem – of Labour's creating – with responsibility for universities sitting within government's department for business, is that the purpose of universities is commonly skewed. Education as a social goal in itself frequently loses out to UK plc when defining success in the sector. Both are of course important. We need world-class research, but we also need institutions that can teach and inspire.

It is essential that universities facilitate the realisation of aspirations. It will never be acceptable for them to again be accessible only to a small section of society. Ed Miliband's Labour Party should redefine the purposes of higher education and, from this basis, argue the case for a system that will meet these goals.

Only once the purposes of higher education are clearly defined should the funding of universities be determined. Clearly time is a challenge; out of government Labour no longer controls the timetable for change. It is dangerous that HE funding and tuition fees have become almost synonymous. On the left, we must take responsibility for exploring and advocating other sources of funding to complement an affordable student contribution that will not be paid up front by compulsion – then get them into the public domain and table amendments to the bill in parliament. The starting point should be with who else benefits from higher education. Business, especially the top companies admitting hundreds or thousands to their graduate employment schemes, should be expected to pay a fair contribution for what they gain. A local authority contribution would recognise the benefits universities bring to the local economy. And there should be a clear long-term plan for how the state will come out of its period of deficit reduction cuts and reinvest significantly in higher education. Irrespective of the economic climate, pressures should be exerted on universities to spend smarter.

The new generation of modern universities would emphasise and extend the very best of what already exists, finding new ways to reach as many people as possible, whether enrolled students or not. This includes:

- Universities involved to a greater degree in pre-tertiary learning to unlock expertise and to inspire young people to want to achieve and kindle their aspiration (this could also include financial education that

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could assist in decision-making pre-application and budgeting at university)

- Coherent, achievable strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning incentivised by an element of the state funding
- Research linked to the community – in development or presentation of findings
- Introducing some teaching-only institutions, similar to liberal arts colleges in the US (where students pursue general, four-year degrees)
- Local partnerships with business to bring in funding, deliver training to workers, and to broker connections between students, academics, employees and the community
- Fairness at their heart – part-time students, who are often those from the poorest backgrounds, should have access to the same financial support as full-time students
- Support, promotion and expansion of the few distinctive HE institutions in the UK, such as Birkbeck College, the Open University and the University of London's External System
- A new contract with society to underwrite this modernisation, including community outreach, demonstrably valuable research, class size targets, and participation of students, public, and business at its heart.

The back-to-front debate over the future of higher education means we are sleepwalking into at least one of four problems that our values shouldn't allow: less young people going to university, deterred by the prohibitive cost or a cost-benefit analysis; the burden of debt; having to

pay more than the stated cost of a degree over a longer lifetime of work; the entrenchment of a two or even three-tier hierarchy of institutions.

Alternative pathways

In a dynamic, socially mobile society, we hope that learning is lifelong and it is loved. But it should also be accessible at any point. Education in the UK predominantly still has one entry point and one trajectory: 'success' at school more often than not leads on to higher education and, in most cases, a degree useful to one's professional life. To fulfil a joint commitment to equality and aspiration, the next Labour government (and its partners in the trade union movement) should work towards ensuring there are multiple entry points to a fulfilling education, multiple pathways amenable to the very different lives that people lead and, crucially, that people actually know about them. Our aim must be that different pathways enjoy an equality of respect in society.

Labour should not forget its affiliates, where there is a long history in (adult) education. The mutual improvement societies of Fabianism and the co-operative and trade union movements have been crucial in establishing both programmes of learning, such as Unionlearn, and institutions themselves – the Fabian Society's founding of the London School of Economics is not entirely unique with Labour's ancestors also having strong connections with Birkbeck College in London, whose purpose has always been 'to provide for persons who are engaged in earning their livelihood during the daytime.'

Whilst government resources should, in the pursuit of equality, be predominantly dedicated to compulsory education, there is much that Labour can argue to support further and higher education and alternative educational pathways, such as:

- Facilitating free access to public buildings that are often unused in the evenings, such as schools and libraries, to organisations such as the Workers'

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Educational Association, with the intention of developing 'community hubs' for learning and careers advice

- Expanding personal development loans into a regulated private student loans market, as in the USA, with subsidised loans for those on low incomes to pursue their educational goals
- Supporting Individual Savings Accounts for Learning with matched contributions for those on low incomes
- Labour, under new leadership, taking the opportunity to backtrack on its damaging decision, taken in government, to withdraw funding for second degrees, something that disproportionately and unfairly affects part-time and FE students.

Conclusion

The coalition's unpicking of Labour's action in education perfectly exemplifies the need to be bold when in government. It is not easy to achieve radical change from opposition but Labour's challenge, indeed responsibility, is to present coherent alternatives and reform that extends active participation in education and a system that is attractive and accessible to the full diversity of Britain's population. We should not underestimate the lives and livelihoods that are at stake.

For the right, aspiration has been seen in limited terms of enterprise and ownership. For the left, certainly in the field of education, "aspiration" is something deeper and more powerful: it is about the liberation of the spirit and should be a defining narrative of the next Labour government.

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Dan is a philosophy postgraduate at Birkbeck, researching the problems surrounding autonomy and multicultural states. He previously read English at Oxford. Dan has also been known to teach philosophy, history and citizenship in secondary schools. He likes coffee, cakes and libraries. Dan was a member of the Young Fabian Aspiration and Equality policy development group.

Note of thanks

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Adrian Prandle
October 2010

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