HS3T71: Topic in Modern History

From Bevan to Blair:
The Labour Party and British Politics since 1945

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Spring 2014
Introduction

The module will discuss the transformation of the Labour Party from the time of Nye Bevan through to the leadership of Tony Blair. Labour won the election of 1945 on a platform that promised full employment, the nationalisation of key industries, the creation of an extensive welfare state and a foreign policy based on a global empire. By the time of New Labour’s landslide victory in 1997, however, there was little doubt that the party had undergone a fundamental realignment. In the first half of the module, we will consider the major controversies each of its leaders faced during this period. In the second, we will explore a number of themes – including class, trade unionism, ideology and internationalism – that have coloured the deep-seated disputes of Labour’s recent past. Throughout, we will seek to locate the history of these divisions, the different ways historians have sought to categorise them, and what they can tell us about the wider shifts in the political, economic and social makeup of Britain over the last sixty years. We will concentrate especially on the ideological disputes and internal party debates that have shaped Labour and the split between the socialist left and the social democratic right.

Seminar overview

1. Introduction
2. Attlee and the building of the post-war consensus, 1945-51
3. Gaitskell, Bevan and the struggle for Labour’s ideology in the 1950s
4. The future of socialism? Wilson, Callaghan and the Labour party in the 1960s and 1970s
5. Labour in the 1980s
6. Blair, the ‘Third Way’ and the rise of New Labour in the 1990s
7. Socialism and Labour party ideology
8. Working class hero? Labour and the working classes
10. Labour, foreign policy, defence and internationalism

Introductory and Recommended Reading

B. Brivati and R. Heffernan (eds.), The Labour Party: A Centenary History (Basingstoke, 2000)
K. Jefferys, The Labour Party since 1945 (Basingstoke, 1993)
A. Thorpe, A History of the British Labour Party (Basingstoke, 2001) – good for all weeks

Copies of some speeches are available at www.britishpoliticspeech.org/

Please see Library website for details of various biographies of the key figures that we will discuss, which I have not individually listed here.

BB = book/article is on Blackboard
Week 2 – Attlee and the building of the post-war consensus, 1945-51

Was Labour’s foreign policy championed or challenged by the left between 1945 and 1951?  
**He was all substance and no show’. Discuss with reference to the leadership of Clement Attlee.  
***How did the Labour government of 1945-51 shape politics in post-war Britain?

S. Brooke (ed.), *Reform and reconstruction: Britain after the war, 1945-51* (Manchester, 1995)  
**J. H. Brookshire, Clement Attlee (Manchester, 1995)  
M. Francis, *Ideas and policies under Labour, 1945-51: building a New Britain* (Manchester, 1997)  
**G. K. Fry, *The politics of decline: an interpretation of British politics from the 1940s to the 1970s* (Basingstoke, 2005), chp. 2 – BB  
Marquand, *The Progressive Dilemma: From Lloyd George to Blair*  
**D. Russell, ‘The Jolly Old Empire: Labour, the Commonwealth and Europe, 1945-51’, in A. May (ed.), *Britain, the Commonwealth and Europe: the Commonwealth and Britain’s Applications to join the European Communities* (Basingstoke, 2001) - BB  
N. Tiratsoo (ed.), *The Attlee years* (London, 1991)  
***M. Williams, *Crises and Consensus in British Politics: From Bagehot to Blair* (Basingstoke, 2000), ch. 3 – BB
Week 3 – Gaitskell, Bevan and the struggle for Labour’s ideology in the 1950s

**Account for the division between the ‘Gaitskellite’ right and the ‘Bevanite’ left in the 1950s.**

**How do we explain the rise and subsequent failure of the Clause IV debate under Hugh Gaitskell?**

L. Black, *The political culture of the left in affluent Britain, 1951-64: old Labour, New Britain?* (Basingstoke, 2002)


M. Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*


R. Jobson, ‘“Waving the Banners of a Bygone Age”: Nostalgia and Labour’s Clause IV Controversy, 1959-60’, *Contemporary British History*, vol. 27, no. 2 (2013), pp. 123-44

T. Jones, *Remaking the Labour Party*, chapters 1-3

T. Jones, ‘“Taking genesis out of the Bible”: Hugh Gaitskell, clause IV and Labour’s socialist myth’, *Contemporary British History*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1997), pp. 1-23


P. Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell* (London, 1979)
Week 4 – The future of socialism? Wilson, Callaghan and Labour in the 1960s and 1970s

**How did Wilson’s election as Labour leader in 1963 alter power relations within the party?**

**Account for the growth of the left in the Labour party after 1970.**

***Was Labour’s factionalism in the 1970s restricted only to the left?***

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**J. Cronin, New Labour’s Past: the Labour Party and its discontents** (Harlow, 2004), chapters 3-5


**G. Daly, ‘The campaign for labour victory and the origins of the SDP’,** Contemporary Record, 7/2 (1993), 282-305


**G. K. Fry, The Politics of Decline: An Interpretation of British Politics from the 1940s to the 1970s** (Basingstoke, 2005), chp. 9 - BB

**S. Fielding, Labour and Cultural Change** (Manchester, 2003) - BB


**D. Hayter, Fightback! Labour’s traditional right in the 1970s and 1980s** (Manchester, 2005)


**J. Jones, Remaking the Labour Party, chapters 4-5**

**D. Leonard, A Century of Premiers: Salisbury to Blair** (Basingstoke, 2005), chapters 15 & 16 – on BB

**D. McKie and C. Cook (eds.), The Decade of Disillusion: British Politics in the Sixties** (Basingstoke, 1972)


**R. Miliband, Parliamentary Socialism**


**P. Seyd, The rise and fall of the Labour left** (Basingstoke, 1987)

**Thorpe, A History of the British Labour Party, chapters 8-9**

**J. Young, International Policy** (Manchester, 2003)

**Williams, Crises and Consensus in British Politics: From Bagehot to Blair, chapter 4 – on BB**


+ the relevant biographies – see Library catalogue for details
**Week 5 – Labour in the 1980s**

*Why did Labour lose the 1983 election?*


**Was Labour truly ‘modernised’ under Neil Kinnock?**

- M. Foley, *John Major, Tony Blair and a conflict of leadership: collision course* (Manchester, 2002) – chp. 4
- Williams, *Crisis and Consensus in British Politics: From Bagehot to Blair*, chapter 5 – on BB

+ list from Week 4
Week 6 – Blair, the ‘Third Way’ and the rise of ‘New’ Labour in the 1990s

*What was new about New Labour?

**How did the concept of political leadership change under Blair?

***Tony Blair was Britain’s first post-ideological prime minister’. Discuss.


D. Coates, Prolonged Labour: The Slow Birth of New Labour Britain (Basingstoke, 2005) – on BB


S. Driver, Blair’s Britain (Cambridge, 2002)


M. Freedan, ‘The ideology of New Labour’, The Political Quarterly,

*S. Fielding, The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the Making of New Labour (Basingstoke, 2003)

S. Hale et al, The Third Way and Beyond: Criticisms, futures, alternatives (Manchester, 2004) - BB


A. Giddens, The third way: the renewal of social democracy (Cambridge, 1998)


Jones, Remaking the Labour Party, chapter 7

**D. Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon, The powers behind the Prime Minister: the hidden influence of Number Ten (London, 2000) – good for information on Wilson as well

Leonard, A Century of Premiers, chapter 20 – BB


***P. Norton, ‘Tony Blair and the Office of Prime Minister’, in M. Beech and S. Lee (eds.), Ten Years of New Labour (Basingstoke, 2008) – BB, entire book is good for this week


T. Quinn, Modernising the Labour Party: Organisational Change since 1983 (Basingstoke, 2004) – on BB


+ works by Seldon on Blair/New Labour

7
**Week 7 – Socialism the Labour party ideology**

*How consistent has Labour’s ideology been since 1945?*

*Has Labour suffered a ‘progressive dilemma’ since the Second World War?*

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<th>Books</th>
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+ lists from weeks 2-6
Week 8 – Working class hero? Labour and the working classes

*To what extent has the basis of Labour support changed since 1945?

*Did those on the left of British politics see Labour as helping or inhibiting the working class?


*A. Heath, ‘Were traditional voters disillusioned with New Labour?’, Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends research paper, no. 68 (March, 1999), available at [http://www.crest.ox.ac.uk/papers/p68.pdf](http://www.crest.ox.ac.uk/papers/p68.pdf)


R. Leach, *Political ideology in Britain* (Basingstoke, 2002)


R. Riddell, ‘The End of Clause IV, 1994-95’, *Contemporary British History*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1997), pp. 24-49 – also useful for weeks 3, 6 and 7


D. Rubinstein, *The Labour Party and British Society, 1880-2005* (Brighton, 2006), chps. 4-8

+ lists from weeks 2-6
Wee


D. Farnham, ‘New Labour, the new unions and the new labour market’, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 49 (1996), 584-98

Foote, *The Labour Party’s Political Thought: A History*


K. Laybourn, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (Stroud, 1992), chapters 6-7

S. Ludlam, ‘Norms and Blocks: Trade Unions and the Labour Party since 1964’, in Brivati and Heffernan *The Labour Party: A Centenary History*


*L. Minkin, The contentious alliance: trade unions and the Labour party* (Edinburgh, 1991)


Seldon and Hickson, *New Labour, Old Labour*

B. Simpson, *Labour, the Unions and the Party* (London, 1983)


A. Taylor, ‘Trade unions and the politics of social democratic renewal’, *West European Politics*, 16/1 (1993), 133-55

*C. Wrigley, ‘Trade unions and the 1964 General Election’, *Contemporary British History*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2007), pp. 325-335

+ lists from weeks 2-6
**Week 10 – Labour, foreign policy, defence and internationalism**

*To what extent was Labour an 'internationalist' movement after the Second World War?*

**How has the notion of ‘war’ changed for the Labour Party since 1945?**

***How has Labour reconciled the concept of socialism with the European integration process since 1945?***


***R. Broad, Labour’s European dilemmas: from Bevin to Blair (Basingstoke, 2001)


D. Coates and J. Krieger, Blair’s War (Cambridge, 2004)


O. Daddow, New Labour and the European Union: Blair and Brown’s Logic of History (Manchester, 2005)


O. Daddow and J. Gaskarth (eds.), British Foreign Policy: The New Labour Years (Basingstoke, 2011)

***O. Daddow, “‘Tony’s War’ Blair, Kosovo and the interventionist impulse in British foreign policy’, International Affairs, vol. 85, no. 1 (2005), pp. 547-60


P. Jones, America and the British Labour Party: The Special Relationship at work (London, 1997)


***T. Nairn, The left against Europe? (London, 1971)


R. Self, British Foreign and Defence Policy since 1945: Challenges and Dilemmas in a Changing World (Basingstoke, 2010), chapter 7


P. Williams, British foreign policy under New Labour, 1997-2005 (Basingstoke, 2005) – BB, good for all questions!

+ lists from weeks 2-6
## Presentation topics

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<td>How close were Labour and the trade unions between 1945 and 1992?</td>
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<td>What impact did New Labour have on industrial relations in Britain?</td>
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<td>How has Labour reconciled the concept of socialism with the European integration process since 1945?</td>
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Exam Questions

For your essay, you are free to choose any of the seminar questions above providing that it is not from the week that you are due to present.

Please engage with the question and refer to the historiographical debate.

Assessment

All assessed essays must be submitted both in hard copy and electronically. Electronic submission will be via Blackboard, and students must submit twice, once as an essay submission, and once via Turnitin. Non-submission of either or both electronic copies may result in a penalty.

Turnitin software detects similarities between your essay and other material on the internet or in the Turnitin database (including other essays submitted to the database). Turnitin can thus help you to understand whether you are referencing and quoting correctly, as well as helping the Department to detect any plagiarism or poor academic practice. If you wish to use Turnitin to help you with this, you must submit a draft of your essay to Turnitin AT LEAST 24 HOURS BEFORE you will be submitting the final essay. Be aware that Turnitin ‘scores’ can be unusually high or low for a variety of reasons: a high score may not indicate plagiarism. Please see the History area on Blackboard and the Department’s handbook, Studying History at Reading (available via Blackboard) for more detail on how to interpret Turnitin reports, and how to avoid plagiarism or poor academic practice.

Re-using work you have already submitted for another assessment is against the University’s rules. This applies whether the previous assessment was for the same module, another module in the same department, a module in another department or a module in another university. Turnitin can detect the re-use of your own work as well as plagiarism of other sources. The University will impose penalties ranging up to awarding a mark of zero for modules in which work has been re-used (without the right to re-sit) for a first offence. A second offence could lead to expulsion from the University.

What is required for assessments? Criteria for achievement

Students often ask what standard of work they need to produce to gain a particular mark or class. The criteria that follow have been drawn up by the Department and are relevant to all coursework and exam essays in History. If you are taking a joint degree, you will need to find out the criteria for your other subject from the School or Department in question.

The following criteria are offered as a guide to some of the characteristics typically associated with the work of each particular class. They indicate in broad terms what it is that we are looking for. Remember, however, that each class spans a range of marks and that a specific piece of work will not necessarily contain all the characteristics of the class awarded.

First Class (70% or more)
A comprehensive treatment of the topic showing a sustained, coherent, and clearly structured examination of the issues raised by the question; demonstrates a confident command of a wide range of material, including factual information, appropriate concepts and historiography; shows the ability to analyse and synthesise the different aspects of the topic, to evaluate received opinion, and to consider the subject beyond its immediate context; evidence of original and independent thought; clear writing and some stylistic flair. Stepped First-Class percentage marks are: 72, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95 and 100%
Upper Second Class (60-69%)
Accurate exposition and confident command of a wide range of factual, conceptual and interpretative material; maintaining a logical argument; thorough in coverage without being fully comprehensive, and revealing some independence of thought without being original; good organisation and clear writing; may contain some minor errors or omissions and may not sustain a consistent depth of analysis.

Lower Second Class (50-59%)
An answer which, though fairly detailed in terms of factual information, is more limited in its ability to handle concepts or issues of historiography, and which does not engage as far with the issues raised by the question, tending instead to deal with the subject in general in an unduly narrative or descriptive way. May contain errors and omissions, and may not cover the full range of key elements; may not always fully explain points and material may not follow on section by section.

Third Class (40-49%)
Shows limited information, and a lack of conceptual or interpretative awareness; addresses only part of the question and does so at a very general or imprecise level, tending to narrate what happened rather than to assess its significance; shows some understanding, but has important omissions or inaccuracies; is often unclear in both the expression and the organisation of the material.

Pass without honours (35-39%)
Work shows a very limited appreciation of the subject and the issues relating to it; limited knowledge; unclear expression and organisation.

Fail (less than 35%)
Clear, obvious and serious deficiencies in relevance, knowledge, understanding, and expression. Work not degree-worthy. A fail may also be given where work has not been attempted or submitted, or where the student is guilty of plagiarism.
Module title: **From Bevan to Blair: The Labour Party and British Politics since 1945**

Module code: **HS3T71**
Providing Department: **History**

Level: **6**
Number of credits: **20**

Terms in which taught: **Autumn or Spring**
Module convenor: **Dr Matthew Broad**

Pre-requisites: **None**
Co-requisites: **None**

Modules excluded: **None**
Current from: **2013-14**

**Aims:**
Topics involve the study of specific periods, subjects or types of history.

**Assessable outcomes:**
By the end of the module it is expected that the student will be able to:

- identify and explain the main issues and events studied
- acquire a detailed knowledge of the events through extensive reading in specialised literature
- locate and assemble information on the subject by independent research
- appraise critically the primary sources and historical interpretations of the subject
- organise material and articulate arguments effectively in writing, both under timed conditions and in assessed essays.

**Additional outcomes:**
The module also aims to encourage the development of oral communication skills and the student’s effectiveness in group situations. Students will also develop their IT skills by use of relevant web resources.

**Outline content:**
The module will discuss the transformation of Labour from the time of Nye Bevan through to the leadership of Tony Blair. Labour won the election of 1945 on a platform that promised full employment, the nationalisation of key industries, the creation of an extensive welfare state and a foreign policy based on a global empire. By the time of New Labour’s landslide victory in 1997, however, there was little doubt that the party had undergone a fundamental realignment. In the first half of the module, we will consider the major controversies each of its leaders faced during this period. In the second, we will explore a number of themes – including class, trade unionism, progressivism and internationalism – that have coloured the deep-seated ideological disputes of Labour’s recent past. We will seek to locate the history of these divisions, the different ways historians have sought to categorise them, and what they can tell us about the wider shifts in the political, economic and social makeup of Britain over the last sixty years.

**Brief description of teaching and learning methods:**
Seminars for which students must carry out full preparatory reading and research. Seminars rely on structured group discussion and may also include: seminar papers by students; discussion of evidence; team-based exercises and debates; study visit to a relevant location. Students are expected to carry out self-directed revision in the Summer term. Staff will be available for consultation as necessary.
Contact hours:

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<td>Lecture</td>
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<td>Seminar</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
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<td>Project supervision</td>
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<td>Demonstration</td>
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<td>Practical classes and workshops</td>
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<td>Supervised time in studio/workshop</td>
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<td>External visits</td>
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<td>Work based learning</td>
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<td>Guided independent study</td>
<td>169</td>
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<td>Placement</td>
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<td>Year abroad</td>
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Formative Assessment Methods:

Summative Assessment Methods (%):

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<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written exam</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
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<td>Written assignment, including essay</td>
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<td>Report</td>
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<td>Dissertation</td>
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<td>Portfolio</td>
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<td>Project output (other than dissertation)</td>
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<td>Oral assessment and presentation</td>
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<td>Practical skills assessment</td>
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<td>Set exercise</td>
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<td>Class test administered by School</td>
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Coursework

Students will write one essay of not more than 2,500 words, to be submitted electronically via Blackboard and in hard copy to the History office by 12 noon on the Friday of week 8 of the term.

Penalties for late submission

Penalties for late submission will be in accordance with University policy.

Length of Examination

One two-hour paper requiring two answers to be taken at the time of the Part 3 examinations.

Requirements for a pass

A mark of 40% overall.
Reassessment arrangements
Re-examination in September. Where students are permitted to re-sit this module, coursework will be carried forward if it bears a confirmed mark of 40% or more. Otherwise it must be resubmitted by 12 noon, 1 September.