Editorial

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Welcome to the third issue of volume five of *British Politics*. Our first main article, from David Richards and Martin Smith, examines the response of the New Labour government to the growing dilemmas of British governance. In particular, the authors analyse the way in which the Labour government sought to take account of the material conditions of the twenty-first century by redefining its notion of sovereignty, moving beyond traditional Westminster model interpretations to a more multi-dimensional and nuanced understanding based on Labour's own ideological traditions of pluralism and guild socialism. Our second contribution, from Arthur Aughey, also draws on the theme of conceptual re-examination. In this, Aughey reconsiders the idea of 'fifth nation' as a way of conceptualising the contemporary, post-devolution United Kingdom, and claims that one impact of devolution has been to shift the emphasis from the definite to the indefinite article, meaning that it may now be more appropriate to consider the United Kingdom as *a*, rather than *the* fifth nation.

Following this, our third paper is from Stuart McAnulla, who examines the ideological direction of the Conservative Party under David Cameron's leadership. Drawing comparisons with Tony Blair's modernisation of the Labour Party, the author argues that the Conservatives have drawn on a number of Third Way ideas and discourses, but that this should not necessarily be taken as evidence of an emergent ideological consensus in British politics given the different emphasis Cameron has placed on issues such as the role of the state and social justice. The fourth main article for this issue comes from Mark Garnett. In a novel analysis, Garnett examines the range of published diaries of New Labour officials, and considers their utility as a scholarly source for understanding the respective roles of individuals and the institutions of governance under Tony Blair.

Accompanying these contributions, our 'Beyond the Mainstream' paper for this issue comes from Shane Blackman. In this, Blackman provides a new interpretation of the crossover between youth subculture and drug consumption, and claims that the prevailing policy of drug prohibition has entered a legitimisation crisis, due, in part, to the effects of drug normalisation. We conclude this issue with a piece for our 'Forward Thinking' section from

Caroline Kenny. Here, Kenny explores the extent to which there was an ideological rift between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in the area of education policy. Through a content analysis of both leaders' speeches, Kenny concludes that whilst it is possible to detect some level of ideological difference between the two, these differences have largely been exaggerated within the literature.

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