Editorial

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Welcome to the second issue of the fifth volume of *British Politics*. In this, a key theme of our collection of papers is that of parties and policies. Our first contribution, from Philip Cowley and Mark Stuart, examines the contemporary framing of the European issue. Analysing the level of internal party divisions over the Lisbon treaty, the authors show that the main characteristic of the European theme is no longer one of internal party division, but inter-party divisions. Our second main article, from Peter Dorey and Victoria Honeyman, provides an interesting slice of historical revisionism, focussing on the contribution of Labour's Richard Crossman to debates about constitutional reform throughout the 1960s. Utilising archival data, the authors argue that Crossman's attempts to push for a variety of parliamentary reforms should be seen, in retrospect, as ahead of their time. In the context of the 1960s, though, they largely failed to make an impact on a party which was struggling to deal with the management of Britain's economic decline.

Our third contribution, from Toby James, deals with an aspect of constitutional change that has frequently been overlooked; namely, the politics of electoral administration in the United Kingdom. Deploying the framework of statecraft as set out by Jim Bulpitt, James analyses the activities of New Labour in this area, and argues that the driving force behind policy reform has been party interest. The fourth article for this issue comes from Aeron Davis. In this, Davis applies the conceptual frameworks of Bourdieu to an analysis of recruitment and upward mobility within political parties. This examines the various forms of capital that politicians need to acquire in order to progress within the political field, and observes a qualitative change in the forms of capital being acquired by the newer generation of front-bench politicians compared both to the older generation of MPs, as well as to the collective pool of MPs more generally.

We conclude this issue by presenting the winner of our 2009 Student Competition Prize. In this, Chris Rogers, then a PhD student at the University of Warwick, examines the shift in the wage determination process under the 1974–1979 Labour government towards a more interventionist model under the £6 pay norm. Using archival resources, Rogers contends that trade union and backbench opposition to this policy was undermined by

the weakness of sterling on the foreign exchange markets, a position that the government deemed to be beneficial to their broader policy objectives. Many congratulations to Chris, and thanks to all those who took part in the competition.

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