Editorial

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Welcome to the third issue of Volume 6 of *British Politics*. Our first two articles in this issue provide contrasting analyses of the role played by the trade unions in the 2010 Labour leadership election. In the first of these articles, Peter Dorey and Andrew Denham contend that the influence of the unions in the eventual victory of Ed Miliband has been exaggerated by his opponents. Although the votes of the unions were clearly crucial, the authors maintain that the increased support given to Miliband from Labour MPs and the wider party as the campaign progressed was also central to the outcome. In comparison, our second contribution claims that the trade unions were critical in determining the outcome of the contest. Drawing on a series of interviews with political figures, Richard Jobson and Mark Wickham-Jones argue that, despite their apparent loss of influence within the Party since the early 1990s, trade union elites decisively intervened in the leadership election.

Our third article in this issue comes from Andrew Kakabadse and Nada Kakabadse. This examines one of the central offices within the British political system; namely, the Minister of the Crown. On the basis of a qualitative analysis of their operational tasks, accountabilities and leadership capacities, the article critically outlines numerous pressures which, the authors claim, have led ministers to put greater emphasis on seeking transactional, short-term accomplishments. Following this, our fourth contribution, from Alistair Cole and Rosanne Palmer, explores the way in which political leaders in post-devolution Wales have sought to influence policy-making processes in the European Union. Using new empirical evidence, the article addresses broader concerns dealing with the strategic behaviour of regional authorities in a context of multi-level governance. Our final piece for this issue comes from Mark Garnett. Providing a follow-up to his previous article on the subject of political memoirs from Volume 5, Garnett passes judgement on the autobiographies of Lord Mandelson and Tony Blair, assessing their usefulness to our understandings of contemporary British government and the New Labour project.

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