Editorial

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Welcome to the second volume of *British Politics*. This begins with what is our most diverse issue to date; featuring an eclectic and contrasting mix of historical, contemporary and theoretical themes. This includes the continuation of a debate carried over from our first volume, and a selection of special papers designed to mark New Labour's tenth year in government by combining an analysis of the past decade with speculations about the future of British politics after Tony Blair.

The opening salvo in our main article section, however, turns its attention towards a series of equally defining events during the first years of the Thatcher government. In this, Jim Tomlinson examines the direction of economic policy-making from 1979 to 1981, taking issue with orthodox narratives of Thatcherism to offer an illuminating and revisionist account of this period. In our second offering, from Andrew Taylor, the central theme revolves around a even longer-standing debate in British politics; namely, the implications of the Westminster Model for democracy, representation and the party system. Through a discussion of changing patterns of domestic governance, this outlines the central role of the 'first-past-the-post' electoral system in cementing power relations within the British polity, and assesses the prospects for electoral reform. For our remaining two featured articles, the themes are perhaps less familiar, though highly contemporary: tobacco and football. On the former, Paul Cairney provides an assessment of recent changes in UK tobacco policy through a consideration of alternative 'multi-lens' narratives and explanations of policy change; while in the latter, Wyn Grant offers an ambitious and highly engaging attempt to construct a framework for examining the political economy of football in Britain.

Following on from our main articles, we revisit a debate that featured prominently throughout our first volume. Considering the utility of 'path dependency' for examining political change, Fiona Ross provides a critical reply to Ian Greener's paper, 'Realism, Path Dependency and the NHS', which featured in our previous issue, to which Greener, in turn, offers his own response. This brings us on to our Forward Thinking section, which consists of a series of 'think-piece' discussion papers under the heading: 'New Labour: Ten Years On'. In this, we present four short critical assessments of the legacy and possible future direction of the New Labour government. The debate is initiated by Anthony Giddens, Tom Bentley and Stuart Hall, who provide a series of contrasting audits of continuity and change during the last decade, while Andrew Gamble provides an overview of these various interpretations and offers his response to the issues raised.

Finally, it is with great pleasure that we are able to announce that our first 'Best Article' prize, drawn from the contributions to Volume One, is to be awarded to Mick Temple for his paper, 'Dumbing Down is Good for You', which featured in our second issue. Congratulations to Mick, and a big thank-you, as ever, to all of our contributors. A copy of the winning paper, along with all the papers from our first volume, is available from our website: <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/bp/index.html>

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