Editorial

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Welcome to issue two of the second volume of *British Politics*. The central theme of this issue is the current state of Britain's three main political parties. We begin with the Conservatives. In our opening contribution, Peter Dorey offers a thorough and reflective analysis of the first year of David Cameron's leadership. Focusing on his attempts to reposition the party both in terms of policy and ideology, Dorey considers some of the potential difficulties that the new leader might encounter in his drive towards implementing a social conservative agenda. Complementing this, our second offering, from Andrew Denham and Kieron O'Hara, seeks to place Cameron's reform agenda within the broader context of Conservative Party modernization strategies during the postwar period. In a persuasive historical narrative of Conservative Party reforms, the authors argue that the past 10 years of Conservative Party politics can be characterized, in relative terms, as a period of 'failed modernization'. These analyses are followed, in our third paper, by an examination of the Liberal Democrats. In this, Andrew Russell, David Cutts and Ed Fieldhouse provide a contemporary account of the changing fortunes of the Party, and offer a detailed assessment of their prospects for building on the upward electoral momentum that has been accumulated during the past few years.

Making a slight departure from this core theme of party politics, our remaining two featured articles turn their attention towards more policy-related and theoretical concerns. In our fourth contribution, Dave Marsh and Matthew Hall analyse New Labour's constitutional reform agenda, locating this within the broader historical context of Britain's evolving political tradition. Through a critical engagement with the interpretivist approach of Bevir and Rhodes, the authors argue that New Labour's constitutional reforms have displayed a substantial degree of continuity with traditional, institutionally embedded definitions of representative and responsible government. Our final featured article, from Chris Howell, also provides a theoretically and historically informed account of policy developments. Focusing on the changing form of British industrial relations, Howell considers this issue from within the wider context of the British variety of capitalism, assessing the utility of institutional explanations for policy change in the postwar period.

In our final section, we return to the theme of British party politics with our ongoing series of short discussion papers on New Labour's 10 years in government. Our commentators for this issue are Anthony Seldon, Lord Philip Norton of Louth and Bob Jessop. Offering varied and contrasting accounts of

the past decade, the authors respectively examine the long-term legacy of Tony Blair's Premiership, the process of constitutional reform and the political economy of the New Labour project.

Steven Kettell and Peter Kerr