

# England Arise!

## The General Election of 1945

— KEITH LAYBOURN

This year is the 60th anniversary of the first landslide election victory of the Labour Party

'The past week will live in history for two things', announced the *Sunday Times* of 29 July 1945, 'first the return of a Labour majority to Parliament and the end of Churchill's great war Premiership.' Most other newspapers concurred. *The Daily Mirror*, of 27 July, proclaimed that the 1945 general election 'is an historic moment in British politics. The Labour Party, which has in the past held office without power, now finds itself in possession of a decisive majority.' The 1945 general election victory was indeed an historic moment for the Labour Party, which had formed two minority governments during the inter-war years, was now in power with a landslide victory which the main national newspapers, despite the omens for the Conservative Party, had failed to predict. Why had this occurred? What were the reasons for Labour's victory? These, and related questions, have been asked by both contemporary writers and recent historians. Was it simply that wartime socialism favoured Labour's success or that the previous track record of the Conservatives told against them? It seems likely that both of these factors were important and that Labour was neither ahead of nor behind the British electorate but in tune with its prevailing mood, which favoured the wide-ranging reforms which might produce the 'New Jerusalem' of social reform, welfare provision and an improved life for all, even if it was more Liberalism than socialism.

The British electors went to the polls on 5 July 1945 to elect a new post-war government. The ballot boxes were then promptly sealed for three weeks to allow the Services vote to be collected, and the count did not finally occur until the 25 and 26 July. The result was one of the great turning points of British history for it brought to power Clement Attlee's Labour government, the first majority Labour government in British history which went on to introduce the basis of the modern welfare state. Labour won what the *Daily Herald*, on 27 July, referred to as a 'People's Victory'. Winning 48.8 per cent of the poll to the Conservatives 39.8 per cent, it secured 393 seats, giving it a landslide majority of 148 over the combined opposition of 213 Conservative, 12 Liberals and 22 Independents. Churchill, the brilliant and successful wartime leader, had been beaten and humbled by the dull, and apparently unelectable, Attlee, of whom Churchill later famously and bitterly reflected that 'An empty taxi drew up outside 10 Downing Street and out got Mr. Attlee.' Nevertheless, there was no doubting that, according to two psephologists, 'The General Election of 1945 was one of the greatest turnovers in parliamentary history since the time of the Great Reform Bill of 1832.'

### Labour, Churchill and the Coalition

The Labour Party entered Winston Churchill's wartime coalition in May 1940 and Clement Attlee acted as his deputy prime minister. Churchill and Attlee had worked closely together to secure victory, but as victory in Europe drew near there was rising debate about how long the Wartime Coalition government would last. When Victory in Europe (VE) Day occurred on 8 May 1945, although victory had yet to be secured in Japan, the Cabinet discussions turned to the possibility of an early election. This notion was discounted, however, as ministers gravitated towards the view that the coalition



Clement Attlee, 1945  
By courtesy of the National  
Portrait Gallery, London



would continue until Japan was defeated. Although Churchill was encouraged by his Conservative advisers to go to the country early to cash in on his personal triumphs as war leader, he sent a letter to Attlee suggesting that the general election would be delayed until the defeat of Japan. This suggestion also appealed to Attlee, who did not want an election for the very same reasons advocated by Churchill's advisers. Indeed, Churchill wrote to Attlee on 18 May 1945 offering him either an early dissolution or the continuation of the coalition until the war with Japan had ended. Attlee replied by offering an amendment to Churchill's letter, adding to it the statement that the coalition would do its 'utmost to implement the proposal for social security and full employment' which had been contained in recent White Papers.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that Attlee desired a continuation of the coalition, but he was at the very moment of Churchill's approach going off to a meeting of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Party at the Whitsun Labour Party conference being held at Blackpool between 18 and 21 May 1945. He took the agreed revised letter and presented it to the National Executive of the Labour Party on Sunday 20 May, but found himself opposed by Herbert Morrison, Manny Shinwell and Nye Bevan, three of the leading political figures in the Party. Even though Ernest Bevin, the old trade union leader who had been Minister of Labour during the War, gave him support for the continuance of the coalition, it was made clear by Willie Whiteley, Labour's Chief Whip, that the Parliamentary Labour Party would not stand for

Clement Attlee at the Labour Party Headquarters, Transport House, Westminster on General Election Night 1945. *TUC Library Collections at the London Metropolitan University and THE UNION MAKES US STRONG website at: [www.unionhistory.info](http://www.unionhistory.info)*

continuing the Wartime Coalition. Indeed, only three of the twenty-seven member executive were prepared to support Attlee for the continuation of the Wartime Coalition government.<sup>3</sup> An early general election was thus inevitable, although it was by no means clear that Attlee would be leading Labour's campaign.

### Labour leadership

Ellen Wilkinson, Chairman of Labour's NEC, was not convinced of Attlee's leadership qualities and approached Hugh Dalton to persuade Attlee to retire.<sup>4</sup> Dalton refused, suggesting that it was now too late to change leaders.





Nevertheless, this did not prevent Professor Harold Laski, who replaced Ellen Wilkinson as chairman of the NEC, from writing to Attlee, just after the announcement of a general election, suggesting that the strong feeling of the Labour Party even before the Blackpool conference was that 'the continuance of your leadership in the party is a grave handicap to our hopes of victory in the coming election.'<sup>5</sup> The letter ended by stating that: 'I am convinced that you are selfless and single-minded enough to put the party's cause first, and yourself second, in your reflection of the grave issues we have to face.' Whiteley advised Attlee to ignore the letter and its inappropriate suggestion. In any case, it was clear that Ernest Bevin would not have tolerated Herbert Morrison, who was favoured to replace Attlee, being leader. Famously, to the suggestion that Morrison was his own worst enemy, Bevin is supposed to have retorted: 'Not whilst I am around'. Bevin, 'Mr. Attlee's Sherman Tank', as he was popularly dubbed, was protective of his Party leader.

### The campaign

Churchill resigned on 23 May and immediately became prime minister of a caretaker government. On 4 June he made the first of four major speeches in a BBC broadcast just eleven days before the dissolution of Parliament. Disregarding the sensitivities of his former colleagues he made the astonishing comment that a Socialist government 'would have to fall back on some form of Gestapo, no doubt very humanely directed in the first instance.'<sup>6</sup> Attlee replied the following evening, stating firmly that this was simply propaganda, and that 'The voice we heard last night was not that of Mr. Churchill but of Mr. Beaverbrook', the newspaper baron. The Labour and Conservative parties were allotted ten broadcasts each in the campaign, but Attlee delivered only the first of Labour's, and was generally considered to have got the better of the initial exchanges with Churchill. Indeed,

Crowds wave and cheer as Winston Churchill, second balcony from left, a members of the cabinet appear, to celebrate the end of the war in Europe in Whitehall, London, 8 May, 1945.  
*empics*

the Labour MPs, some of whom had doubted his leadership qualities cheered him as he entered the House of Commons on 6 June 1945.

Attlee's credibility as a serious contender for the post of prime minister was also strengthened by the fact that Churchill recognised that, since international negotiations were going on and it was possible that Attlee might win the general election, Attlee should accompany him to Potsdam as an observer. Attlee accepted the invitation on 8 June. This present few problems since both Churchill and Attlee were close on the issue of foreign policy. Attlee reflected, in a letter to Churchill on 15 June, that 'There seems to be a great



THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO . . .

# LABOUR



# FOR HIM

**VOTE LABOUR AND WIN THE PEACE!**



public advantage in preserving and presenting to the world at this time, that unity on foreign policy which was maintained throughout the last five years. I do not anticipate that we shall differ on the main lines of policy which we have discussed together so often.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, Harold Laski, chairman of Labour's NEC, felt that Attlee might well attend as no more than a mute observer. This produced further tensions between Laski and

Attlee, since it was linked to the idea that the Labour Party Executive should make a decision on the precise role of the Labour Leader. This kept alive the press speculation of the political rift in the Labour leadership. Churchill sought electoral advantage from this rift by pointing to this split in his third BBC broadcast on 21 June, when he stated that: 'It was my conception that I should enjoy Mr. Attlee's counsels at every stage of the discussions. . . . However, a new

**HELP THEM FINISH THEIR JOB!**

*Give them homes and work!*



# VOTE LABOUR

Posters from the 1945 election campaign

figure has leaped into notoriety. The situation had been complicated and darkened by the repeated intervention of Professor Laski, Chairman of the Socialist Party Executive. He has reminded all of us, including Mr. Attlee, that the final determination of all questions of foreign policy rests, so far as the Socialist Party is concerned, with the dominating Socialist Executive.' Churchill pressed this constitutional issue further and suggested that Labour's NEC could override Parliament:

'It would appear that a Labour or Socialist Government would be subject to the directions of this Committee and that matters of foreign affairs and, I presume, if they desired it, military affairs, would then be submitted to them.'<sup>8</sup>

Attlee's simple and direct response was that 'Neither by decision of the Annual Party Conference nor by provision in the Party constitution is the Parliamentary Party answerable to or under the direction of the National Executive Committee.'<sup>9</sup> When Churchill returned to the attack on 3 July, Attlee simply stressed the need for his critics to be aware that there was a distinction between the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The Labour Party also played up its essential moderation in *Let Us Face the Future*, its manifesto, which was skilfully drawn up by Herbert Morrison, chairman of the Party's policy committee. It pronounced that Labour was a socialist party 'and proud of it', but declared that 'Socialism cannot come overnight, as the product of a weekend revolution', and emphasised that the British people are practically-minded men and women.<sup>10</sup> As a result it attempted to explain, in practical terms, the need for nationalisation proposed on grounds of efficiency. It also made vague references to the national health service, but not to the nationalisation of the health service which became the basis of the National Health Service, introduced in 1948. Labour's socialism was being tapered to a public that wanted reform but which might still have been suspicious about the revolutionary nature of Labour as a socialist party. What was being offered was a contributory welfare state, along the lines being envisaged by the Liberals between 1906 and 1914, and the nationalisation of a few industries.

### Why did Labour win?

The count took place on 25 July and was completed on the morning of 26 July. It produced one of the greatest shocks in British politics, as the press was quick to recognise. Almost twenty-five million people had voted, which meant that the turnout was 72.7 per cent. Just under twelve million of these voters had voted for Labour.<sup>11</sup> The Conservatives had secured just over nine million votes, the Liberals about two-and-a-quarter million and the National Liberals, whose vote was normally attached to the Conservatives, just over three quarter of a million voters. The Independent Labour Party, the Communist Party and the Independents had secured an insignificant number of votes in comparison.

Labour's victory was overwhelming. But why had it occurred? Initially it was argued that wartime socialism favoured Labour, but more recently some historians have suggested that the Labour victory owed more to the hostility of voters to the Conservatives than to their support for the socialist Labour Party.<sup>12</sup> There is good evidence for both points of view and both may well have made their contribution.

It is clear that the Gallup polls, still in their infancy, had been predicting a Labour victory since 1942. Between 1942 and 1945 they regularly indicated that 37 to 42 per cent of those interviewed were in favour of Labour, although there was still much more support for the continuation of the wartime coalition after the War. However, their findings were ignored, even though the final one before the election predicted the result to an accuracy of about one per cent. Gallup gave Labour about 47 per cent of the poll when it in fact received 47.8 per cent. It over-calculated the Conservative vote at 41 per cent, when in fact the Conservatives received only 39.8 per cent. The Liberals, given 10 per cent by Gallup in fact received only about 9 per cent. It is clear that Gallup detected the strong swing to Labour in a way in which even Labour politicians, such as Hugh Dalton who expected a small Conservative majority, did not. Why had this swing occurred?

It certainly seems to have been emerging from about 1941, and particularly so in 1942 just as the tide of war was turning towards the allies and the discussions about post-war society were being encouraged. The report on *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, better known as the Beveridge Report, was published in December 1942, just after the British military success of El Alamein and at a time when both public confidence and spirit were running high. Naturally many historians have pointed to

the way in which Labour was committed to the new society of social reform based upon a contributory system, which was being envisaged, rather more than the Conservatives were. Indeed, the reluctance of Churchill to endorse the Beveridge Report led to the only occasion in the War when Labour threatened to leave the Wartime Coalition Government.<sup>13</sup>

Not surprisingly some historians have pointed to the way in which the electorate seems to have embraced wartime socialism which culminated in Labour's general election victory. Henry Pelling has reflected that the 1945 general election indicated 'a steady strengthening of left-wing feeling'.<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Morgan argued, powerfully, that Labour alone 'seemed to understand and project the new mood'.<sup>15</sup> Paul Addison has asserted that the Labour victory was 'Mr. Attlee's consensus' which emerged after Dunkirk, whilst others, such as Jim Fyrth, stress much more the emergence of wartime radicalism, rather than socialism as such, secured by a profound desire for progressive reform throughout every sphere of life.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the Labour Party wrapped its political ambitions around the Beveridge Report of 1942 and the hopes and aspirations it raised.

Support for Labour from a more radical and socialist electorate has been challenged in recent years, particularly by Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo in *England Arise: The Labour Party and popular politics in 1940s Britain*.<sup>17</sup> They argue that it was not wartime socialism and popular radicalism that brought about Labour's victory as much as the

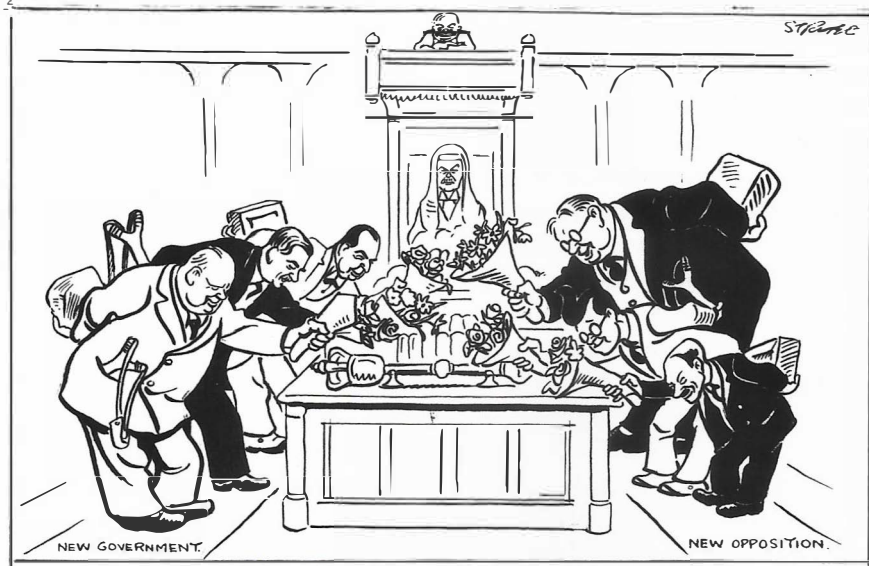
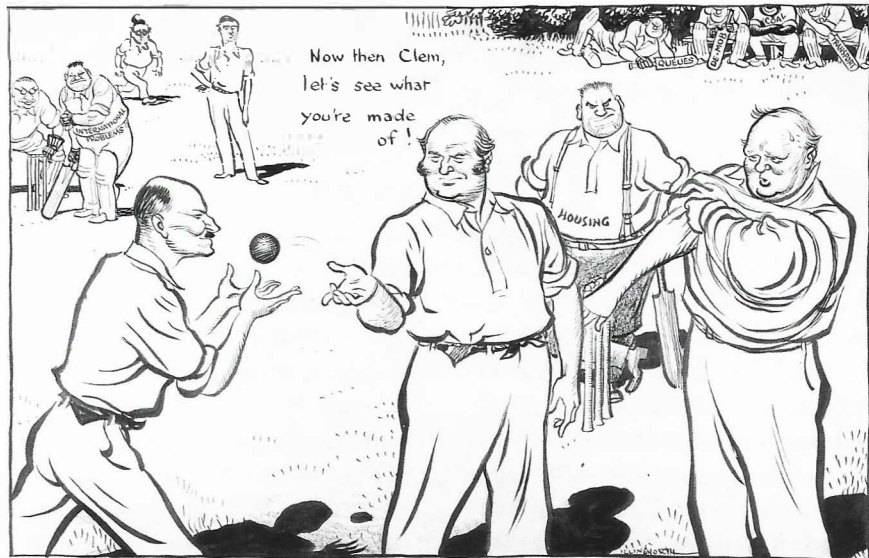




# England Arise!

(top) 'Labour wins the UK general election' cartoon by Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, from July 1945  
Solo Syndication / Associated Newspapers  
(bottom) 'New government. / New opposition' cartoon by Sidney 'George' Strube, published in *the Daily Express* on 28 May 1945.  
Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature, University of Kent

electorate not wanting to see the return of a Conservative government. The electorate therefore had no choice but to vote 'straight left'. This view challenges the prevailing orthodoxy of the wartime shift to the left which they feel was based upon the records of political parties. Instead, they argue that evidence drawn from Mass Observation, social surveys and the records of other institutions, suggest that apathy reigned during the 1945 general election, and that the electorate were more concerned about rejecting the Conservative Party than supporting a socialist government. Thus voting for Labour was evidence of a glum electorate 'confronting Hobson's choice'.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, as they point out, it was the Conservative Party which raised the issue of socialism in February 1945, not the Labour Party. Herbert Morrison, at the 1945 Labour Party conference, actually warned of the need to prepare the defence of socialism and of nationalisation, stating that 'you must spend substantial time in arguing the case for the socialization of these industries on the merits of specific cases. This is how the British mind works. It does not work in a vacuum or in abstract theory.'<sup>19</sup> It is also the case that the Gallup poll of March 1945 indicated that 55 per cent of the interviewees were in favour of an anti-Conservative alliance, and that even Liberals would vote Labour if it kept the Tories out. Recognising the limits of socialist support, then,



Fielding, Thompson and Tiratsoo argue further that, when the first Attlee Labour government came into power, it failed to use the potential for social transformation and held back on many fundamental reforms by conservatism and the indifference of its own members.

The Conservative Party was certainly attacked upon its past record and associated with the unemployment of the inter-war years. Indeed, the Labour Party focused upon this particular theme when it published a speech made

by Arthur Greenwood in the House of Commons the day before the publication of the Beveridge Report, in which he stated that 'There are two words graven on the hearts of the overwhelming mass of men and women, "Never again" ...never again will they submit to the social and economic evils of the past.' Labour printed this speech in a pamphlet with newspaper cuttings announcing unemployment figures, during the 1945 general election. The motto that emerged became 'Never again, never again the Tories'. In other words, the Conservative association

with the unemployment of the 1930s became a powerful tool in encouraging the nation to vote Labour.

The notion, put forward by Fielding, Thompson and Tiratsoo, that the British public was apathetic about the 1945 general election seems somewhat exaggerated. Although it is claimed that up to 40 per cent of service men did not vote, the turnout in the 1945 general election was about 72.7 per cent, up from the 71.2 per cent of the previous election, held in 1935. If apathy about Labour set in later, there is also little evidence since the turnout was 84 per cent and 82.5 per cent in the 1950 and 1951 general elections, respectively. Labour won the first two of these general elections, and captured the highest percentage of the vote in the second one, which it lost! On the balance of voting, it does not seem that the electorate was dragged yawning to the polls in the 1945, 1950 and 1951 general elections.

### Labour's assumption of power

Churchill resigned at 7.0 pm on 26 July and went off to the Palace to meet the King. Attlee was sent for and undertook to form a Labour government, although there was a futile attempt by Herbert Morrison to delay Labour's acceptance of the King's commission. Attlee then gathered together one of the most talented Cabinets ever in British history, including Hugh Dalton as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison as Lord President of the Council, Leader of the House of Commons and Deputy Prime Minister, and Nye Bevan as Minister of Health. The 'kissing of hands' and approval of the new

ministers took place at Buckingham Palace on 28 July 1945 and the Labour government came to both office and power.

### Conclusion

The Labour Party won the general election of 1945 because it was the party most likely to introduce the post-war reforms which the electorate had been favouring from the early 1940s. Undoubtedly its cause was helped by the reluctance of the Conservative Party to endorse the Beveridge Report, and the poor economic record of the Conservative Party in the National government of the 1930s. However, there is no doubting the attractiveness of the radical, if not socialist, society, the 'New Jerusalem' Labour was proposing. In the end, they were not disappointed, for the Attlee post-war Labour governments created a modern welfare state and a National Health Service which provided the more caring society that the electorate wanted.

Labour celebrated its victory at a rally at Central Hall, Westminster, on 26 July 1945. Attlee outlined his aims in an understated style. Ernest Bevin reflected that 'It was a grand thing to have lived to see the day when the British electorate cast their votes for policy and personality.'<sup>20</sup> It was, however, Harold Laski, who made the most significant comments. He stated that:

'We have won a great victory for socialism, but we have won a greater victory for the British people. And we send a message of hope to every democracy all over the world. At long last we have made possible full friendship with the Soviet Union... May I, as Head of the Socialist Gestapo, say

that not all of us have been treated with generosity in this election. But on the day his rule as Prime Minister draws to a close I want in the name of the British Labour Party, to thank Mr. Churchill for the great service he has rendered the nation. This is a hard night for Mr. Churchill, but it was not of our making. It is the British people who have spoken, and we thank the British people for the proof of the full maturity of British democracy.'

Both Bevin and Laski had reflected that the British electorate had delivered its decision in hope of a new society and had put policies before personality. They had seized the moment to put in place the social reform measures, largely Beveridge and Liberal in style and contributory in nature, which the Labour Party had wrapped around itself. These were relatively moderate policies which, apart from the NHS and some nationalisation, eschewed the normal socialist policy of paying out of taxation. The British people had grasped the radical wartime policies being offered by the Labour Party but it should be remembered that Labour was not offering parliamentary socialism as such but wartime radicalism. It was in tune with the needs of the British people, neither behind nor ahead of the game. The Conservatives failed to appreciate that their leader might secure the victory but lose the peace by failing to grasp the need for even modest social reform.

### Further Reading

P. Addison, *The Road to 1945* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1977).  
S. Fielding, 'What did the People





# England Arise!

want? The meaning of the 1945 general election', *Historical Journal*, 35. 3 (1992), 623-639.

S. Fielding, P. Thompson and N. Tiratsoo, *"England Arise": The Labour Party and popular politics in Britain in 1940s Britain* (Manchester University Press, 1995).

R.B. McCallum, *The British General Election of 1945* (London, Frank Cass edition, 1964).

Kenneth Morgan, *Labour in power 1945-51* (Oxford University Press, 1984).

Henry Pelling, 'The 1945 General Election reconsidered', *Historical Journal* 23. 2 (1980), 399-414.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> R. B. McCallum & Alison Readman, *The British General Election of 1945* (Oxford, OUP, 1947 and London, Frank Cass, 1964), p.247.
- <sup>2</sup> Hugh Dalton, MS diary, British Library of Political and Economic Science, 18 May 1945.
- <sup>3</sup> H. Pelling, 'The 1945 General Election reconsidered', *Historical Journal*. 23.2 (1980), p.399-414.
- <sup>4</sup> Chuter Ede diary, xii, 28 May 1945, B.M. Add. MSS 59701.
- <sup>5</sup> Laski Correspondence, 38/20, Labour Party Archives at the John Ryland Library, Labour Study and Archive Centre, 103 Princess Street, Manchester.
- <sup>6</sup> Chuter Ede diary, xii, 6 June 1945.
- <sup>7</sup> Letter from Attlee to Churchill, 15 June 1945, PREM 4/65/4/518.
- <sup>8</sup> Letter from Churchill to Attlee, 2 July 1945, PREM 4/65/4/507.
- <sup>9</sup> Letter circulated in all the main newspapers on 2 July 1945 and quoted in C. R. Attlee, *As it happened* (London, 1954), p. 145.
- <sup>10</sup> Labour Party, *Let Us Face the Future* (Labour Party, London, 1945), p. 6.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Labour Party Report of the 45th Annual Conference held June 10-14th 1945* (London, Labour Party, 1945), p.6.
- <sup>12</sup> S. Fielding, P. Thompson and N. Tiratsoo, *'England Arise! The Labour Party and popular politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester University Press, 1995).
- <sup>13</sup> K. Laybourn, *The Evolution of British Social Policy and the Welfare State* (Staffordshire, Keele University Press and Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp.213-217.
- <sup>14</sup> Pelling, 'The 1945 General Election reconsidered', p. 411.
- <sup>15</sup> Kenneth Morgan, *Labour in power 1945-51* (Oxford, OUP, 1984), p. 44.
- <sup>16</sup> Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1977), p. 278; Jim Fyrt (ed.),

*Labour's Promised Land? Culture and Society in Labour Britain 1945-51* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1995).

- <sup>17</sup> Fielding, Thompson and Tiratsoo, *England Arise*.
- <sup>18</sup> S. Fielding, 'What do the People want? The meaning of the 1945 general election', *Historical Journal*, 35.3 (1992), 623.
- <sup>19</sup> *Labour Party Annual Conference Report, 1945* London, Labour Party, 1945), p. 90.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Times*, 27 July 1945.

Keith Laybourn is Professor of History at the University of Huddersfield. He is currently the Editor of the *Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature*. He has written and edited many books including *Britain on the Breadline* (1990, 1996), *Under the Red Flag* (with Dylan Murphy) (1999), *A Century of Labour* (2000) and *Unemployment and Employment Policies concerning Women in Britain, 1900-1951* (2002).

## On the Web

### A victor too far?

The UK general election of 5 July 1945, the outcome of which, as the preceding article explains, was finally declared on 26 July 1945, produced a surprising result and an unanswered question which remains after sixty years. Why did the British people dump, at the ballot box, the war leader and hero of the previous years? Surely, amidst the hubris of celebrations for Victory in Europe, their electoral choice was already made up. It would be difficult to explain that the victor's downturn of political fortune happened overnight. In any case, when and how did they make their choice, let alone why.

Certainly, information is not lacking. There is a welter of it: analysis of British Governments

and elections since 1945 ([www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/man.htm](http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/man.htm)), and statistics from the seat of government (1945-2003: [www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2003/rp03-059.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2003/rp03-059.pdf)). There seems to be agreement on that the election 'marked a watershed in British history' ([www.bbc.co.uk/politics97/background/pastel/ec/ge45.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/politics97/background/pastel/ec/ge45.shtml)), *A New Dawn* (a book which 'chronicles in detail the events leading up to the election': [www.politicos.co.uk/item.jsp?ID=5282](http://www.politicos.co.uk/item.jsp?ID=5282)). Nevertheless, a reticence apparently persists concerning its effects on the outgoing Prime Minister, since Churchill mostly gets a strictly factual treatment ([www.censusuk.co.uk/winstone\\_churchill.htm](http://www.censusuk.co.uk/winstone_churchill.htm)) or is simply described as 'surprised' ([www.uk.cn/bj/index.asp?menu\\_id=407&artid=1052](http://www.uk.cn/bj/index.asp?menu_id=407&artid=1052)).

On the other hand, study could focus on the Labour Party's manifesto: 'Let Us Face the Future' ([www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1945/1945-labour-manifesto.shtml](http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1945/1945-labour-manifesto.shtml)) or on the

pattern of voter turnout (1945-2005: [www.ukpolitical.info/Turnout45.htm](http://www.ukpolitical.info/Turnout45.htm)) or perhaps on 'Unemployment and Voter Turnout Rates [Timeweb]' ([www.bized.ac.uk/timeweb/digging/dig\\_verifying\\_illus.htm](http://www.bized.ac.uk/timeweb/digging/dig_verifying_illus.htm)). To be sure, controversy will continue. For some, 'Peace brought the shocking Labour landslide of 1945' ([www.thehistorychannel.co.uk/site/features/election\\_2005.php](http://www.thehistorychannel.co.uk/site/features/election_2005.php)). Shocking to whom? For others, the prospect of a general election raises a hope: 'Finally we might be able to lay to rest that disastrous 1945 Labour Government' ([opendemocracy.net/forums/thread.jspa?forumID=174&threadID=44093&tstart=0](http://opendemocracy.net/forums/thread.jspa?forumID=174&threadID=44093&tstart=0)). Who is lurking there?

Rafael Manuel PEPIOL