not go very far to meet the housing deficit. There is no government grant for the new homes or the schools or health facilities or public transport, which are essential components of any new community. These are to be market led privately financed initiatives, so the homes will not going to be cheap to rent or buy. The new towns are not likely to provide a large range of employment opportunities – but no doubt will be attractive to London professionals with cars and first class season tickets.

If more hyper-dense central London developments and garden cities are not the solution what is? The answer is in three parts. First, incremental intensification of the London suburbs – many developed in the past at 20-30 dwellings per hectare could provide a range of homes; low rise flats and terraced houses at 70-120 dwellings per hectare. These could include a significant number of family sized homes at low rents – council or housing association owned. Yes, it would mean using some large suburban private gardens and a few private golf courses – but why not? We don't need to touch the public parks and other metropolitan open spaces.

Suburban extensions

The second part of the solution is suburban extensions on the edge of London, where land is cheap and residents can have access to public transport, employment opportunities and to existing town centres. Some of these developments might need to use sites currently in the Green Belt but land-take could be limited to those sites which are not green make no contribution to Green Belt functions and which are not publicly accessible. We need a green finger approach as in Stockholm or Helsinki – not a Green Girdle, which strangles London and Londoners.

Thirdly, we need urban extensions to the economically successful Home Counties towns, which provide opportunities or local employment as well as access to central London and to the London suburbs. Many of these towns are blocking new homes and fail to recognise that they need to contribute to the needs of the metropolitan region as a whole. They need to be made to do so, and bring back a strategic planning system for the London metropolitan region is the way to do this.

For those readers who think this article is London-centric, I also support a national economic strategy and special plan which supports employment growth beyond the South-East. There does not need to be polarisation between London and the rest of the UK. By strengthening local economies across the country, we not only take the pressure off London but also enable other areas to grow and attract new population. This will help to reduce London's dominance of not just the English economy but of English politics.

OUR HISTORY 55

Fred Jowett - What is the use of parliament? (1909)

Fred Jowett was the leader of the Independent Labour Party in Bradford. He had been a member of the Socialist League and then the Labour Electoral Association and was also president of the Bradford Labour Church. In 1889 he was elected as the first socialist councillor on Bradford City Council and secretary of the Trades Council from 1893. A member of the national administrative council of the ILP from 1900, he failed to be elected to parliament in the 1900 election, but was returned in 1906. He was a columnist in Blatchford's Clarion. He was highly critical of parliamentary procedures and of the role of the Labour party leadership within in and in 1909 also contributed to the pamphlet Let us Reform the Labour Party. He argued for the primacy of principle over party tactics and was promoter of the successful resolution at the 1914 Bradford ILP conference that Labour should 'vote on all issues in accordance with the principles for which the Party stands' a resolution Beatrice Webb called impractical.

Jowett had a wide range of interests – in 1907 he published a volume in the ILP's Labour Ideals series on Socialism in the City and he also led for Labour on the debates on the 1909 Housing and Town Planning Bill. He was also interested in foreign policy, supporting Roger Casement's campaign against slave labour in Peru in 1912, was a member of the executive committee of the Union of Democratic Control (on foreign policy) in the war years, was one of the organisers of the pro soviet Leeds convention of June 1917 and in 1920 joined a delegation to Hungary to examine the white terror of Admiral Horthy and suppression Bela Kun's communists.

In MacDonald's first Labour Government in 1924, Jowett joined the cabinet as First Commissioner of Works, but lost his seat in the 1924 election. He remained active within the ILP and supported their radical' Socialism in Our Time' programme. He was returned to parliament in 1929, but this time remained on the backbenches, Lansbury taking his former post. In the 1935 election a split in the Labour ranks, with Jowett as ILP candidate fighting a Labour Party candidate, let in the Conservative. Jowett died in 1944 at the age of 80. Ten years later his friend Fenner Brockway published a biography of him - Socialism over Sixty Years.

"No school of politicians can justify the present system of conducting the executive basis of State on its merits… The present system fosters and maintains a governing class, that is why the ruling classes support it. They think that the aristocracy and the chief persons of the State should govern, in the interests of the people, of course… If State departments were placed under committee control, not only would the system of single Ministerial control go, but the two-Party system would go with it. As for those who are now Ministers, they might be chairmen of committees, but the powers they would now wield should be vested in the committees over which they preside. In recommending as I do most emphatically, the present system of single Ministerial control, supported as it is by joint Cabinet responsibility, and the substitution in its place of a system of committee government similar to the system which prevails in county and local government, I am making no unsupported recommendation, though if I were the only one to protest against the present system, I would persist in doing so."