

class based voting, although the Tory lead over Labour for the C1 and C2 groups was substantial (11% and 8%). Kellner would no doubt say that this was the middle ground that Labour has to win. This is undoubtedly the case, but to do so we should look to the real centre here and not the more affluent AB group.

Academic debate over the relationship between class and voting (class (de)alignment) has rumbled on for decades, and there have always been significant minorities of working class Tory and middle class Labour voters. Indeed, had the working class all voted Labour there wouldn't have been a Tory government in the 20th century until the 1980s, when the working class became a minority.

But the terms middle and working class have become increasingly meaningless, as improved educational standards and a widely shared mass culture have rendered old caricatures obsolete.

Three criteria

Two changes to the way we talk about class would be useful. Firstly, to use the NSSEC system briefly referred to above. Secondly, to look at class along the lines suggested by the sociologist W. G. Runciman, who identified class positions on the basis of three criteria of economic power – ownership, control and skill or attribute marketability. Labour must appeal to the majority who have no ownership or con-

trol over the work they do and do not possess marketability beyond average levels. The attraction of this schema is that it demonstrates the enormous differences there are in economic power, the root of real class differences and antagonistic class interests.

In an era of capitalist crisis and growing inequality Labour must talk this language on class, but should abandon the middle class/non manual as against working class/manual divide that has increasingly confused the issue. The original Clause IV sought 'To secure for the workers by HAND or by BRAIN (my emphasis) the full fruits of their industry'. That should remain our goal.

OUR HISTORY - 40

Robert Blatchford - Merrie England (1894)

Blatchford was editor of the socialist newspaper *The Clarion*. After leaving the army, and a job as a storekeeper, Blatchford became a journalist contributing to the *Manchester Sunday Chronicle* under the pen name 'Nunquam'. Writing articles on the Manchester slums drew him into socialism and he joined the Salford branch of the Social Democratic Federation. When he announced his intention to stand for parliament as an independent Labour candidate, he was forced to leave the *Chronicle*, and together with former *Chronicle* colleagues, A M Thompson, who used the penname 'Dingle', and others, he set up the *Clarion* as an explicitly socialist journal.

The *Clarion* campaigned for an independent socialist party and established in 1892 Manchester Independent Labour Party, though when the national ILP was founded the following year, it refused to adopt Blatchford's fourth clause – the principle that socialists should abstain if there was no Labour or socialist candidate. Blatchford increasingly distanced himself from the ILP and focused on using the *Clarion* as a basis for developing a national unaligned socialist movement with political, social, recreational and educational interests. Merrie England was originally published as articles in the *Clarion*, addressed to 'John Smith.' 20,000 copies were sold, making Blatchford the most widely read socialist writer. *Clarion* clubs sprang up across the country – Cinderella clubs for slum children, *Clarion* scouts, *Clarion* cycling clubs, *Clarion* vocal unions and glee clubs, armed with the *Clarion* song book, *Clarion* handicraft guilds, *Clarion* field clubs as well as an all-embracing *Clarion* fellowship.

Blatchford promoted socialist unity, convening a Federal Labour Parliament in Manchester in 1898, which established a General Federation of Trade and Labour Unions. Blatchford contributed to a number of unity initiatives, including Andrew Reid and Grant Allen's New Party initiative in 1895, and some *Clarion* groups were to merge with the SDF to create the British Socialist Party in 1909. Blatchford however increasingly focused his attention on

the threat of war and became one of the leading supporters of the war, and with his co-editor A M Thompson, took a leading role in the Socialist National Defence Council, established 'to counteract the peace at any price policy of the anti-national elements of the Socialist and Labour movements in the country', a role which is interestingly omitted from the substantial biographical entry in John Saville's *Dictionary of Labour Biography*. In the 1924 election, Blatchford voted Conservative. He died in 1943. "Practical socialism is so simple that a child may understand it. It is a kind of national scheme of co-operation, managed by the State. Its programme consists, essentially, of one demand, that the land and other instruments of production shall be the common property of the people, and shall be used and governed by the people for the people. Make the land and all the instruments of production State property; put all farms, mines, mills, ships, railways and shops under State control. As you have already put the postal and telegraphic services under State control, and Practical Socialism is accomplished."

"Under Ideal Socialism there would be no money at all, and no wages. The industry of the country would be organised and managed by the State; goods of all kinds would be produced and distributed for use, and not for sale, in such quantities as were needed, hours of labour would be fixed, and every citizen would take back what he or she desired from the common stock. Food, clothing, lodging, fuel, transit, amusements, and all other things would be absolutely free, and the only difference between a prime minister and a collier would be the difference of rank and occupation." "Let us once get the people to understand and desire Socialism, and I am sure we may very safely leave them to secure it. The most useful work which Socialists can do at present is the work of education and organisation. Socialism will not come by means of a sudden coup. It will grow up naturally out of our surroundings and will develop naturally by degrees. But its growth and its development may be materially hastened."