

## Michael Young: an innovative social entrepreneur

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Michael Young resembled Cadmus. Whatever field he tilled, he sowed dragon's teeth and armed men seemed to spring from the soil to form an organization and correct the abuses or stimulate the virtues he had discovered ... Michael Young was a remarkable example of the merits of the education at Dartington Hall. He knew neither what a groove was nor the meaning of orthodoxy.<sup>1</sup>

Michael Young described Labour's post-war programme in its reconstructive 1945 election manifesto as 'Beveridge plus Keynes plus socialism'.<sup>2</sup> Although Young is perhaps most famous for his principal contribution to Labour's seminal 1945 election document, his was subsequently an uneasy relationship with the Labour Party and state socialism as a vehicle for the decentred, participatory, community and consumer-based social democracy he favoured.<sup>3</sup> He always claimed to be 'motivated by opposition' and 'moved by ... the wonderful potential in all of us that isn't being realised' or recognised by large and remote state enterprise. This was supplemented by a communitarian and collaborative ethos of mutual aid, believing that smaller-scale 'co-operatives were on principle the best sort of organisation for economic and social purposes' (although conscious that even a large retail Co-operative movement could display tell-tale signs of bureaucratic centralism and consumer restriction).<sup>4</sup> His problematic relationship with the Labour Party was evident soon after the emphatic post-war election victory he helped to create. While the Attlee government was busy 'constructing huge state corporations', from as early as 1948 Young was emphasising the 'need to think smaller, at community and family level, if liberty and humanity were to be the driving forces of a truly social democratic society'.<sup>5</sup> In this and further contributions to the output of Labour's Research Department, he was keen to emphasise the role of smaller units of organisation in the family and community in policy-making, as well as wider issues of individual choice and greater gender equality within the context of the development of a mass consumer society. Increasingly, he came to regard Labour's dominant state-centric notion that 'big is beautiful' as an imperfect vehicle for a wider progressive vision of the better society in which the concerns of large bureaucratic and impersonal institutions – in the economy, industry and the workplace, government and the state and even the 'great city' – were not privileged over

small-scale organisation and the associations and ‘interests of ordinary people’ in their local and community settings, ‘who suffered collectively as a result’.<sup>6</sup>

Writing only three years after drafting Labour’s celebrated 1945 manifesto, the means and mechanisms of its implementation made Young nervous of the implications of a highly centralising bureaucracy associated with an extreme Westminster model notion of the state and citizenship.<sup>7</sup> He was also concerned to move beyond a simple binary choice for the post-war Labour Party between a ‘fundamentalist’ attachment to wide-scale public ownership and a narrowly-conceived ‘revisionist’ equality, pursued exclusively through central state mechanisms. Along with Labour’s revisionists, he was concerned at the party’s apparent impasse after 1950 when ‘few members of the Labour Party now define Socialism as public ownership’ and there is a need to consider ‘what to put in the place of nationalisation’; but he believed this should incorporate wider principles and interests of socialist democracy. This should include ‘community at work ... reviving pride in work; giving the worker a sense of importance, industrial democracy, leadership in industry’. It should also include ‘community at home, creating new patterns of urban life, with families belonging to small-scale social groups; relevance of town planning ... relations between small groups and the great society; participation of people in their own government’. Moreover, as new aims were formulated, more guidance should be sought from a wider range of social science disciplines beyond economics. New insights of the human social sciences would offer a ‘new approach to the problem of liberating people’s potentialities for leading a full life’.<sup>8</sup> In subsequent revisionist debates between a species of Croslandite social democratic centralism and his own decentred, local and participatory vision of the future of socialism, Young lost the implicit battle of ideas that essentially defined Labour’s long-term ethos and trajectory and left the party. By this stage he regarded Labour’s 1945 election manifesto as largely a mistake in terms of its exclusive promotion of the state across the policy spectrum.<sup>9</sup> But already in 1974, he considered the manifesto to read ‘as a rather old-fashioned document’. Young reflected that the state occupied ‘every line of the political agenda. The state was to do this for welfare (through the Beveridge reforms) and that for the economy (through nationalisation and exchange controls). It was all very well at the time: a great deal was achieved. But attitudes to the state have changed a great deal since’.<sup>10</sup>

This chapter charts the trajectory of Michael Young’s ‘post-socialist’ development and assesses his contribution to thinking about social democratic and progressive alternatives to

Labour's more traditionally state socialist concerns, perspectives and presentation. It suggests that Young was an early post-war pioneer of the kind of non-statist, decentred, participatory and community-based brand of liberal socialism that was to reappear in Labour's 'post-revisionist' social democracy from the mid-1970s and in the Social Democratic Party (SDP) after 1981 and its legacy. This was part of a much longer tradition of British socialism (including G.D.H. Cole's Guild Socialism) concerned with decentralised and devolved, associational and participatory forms of social and political organisation, which has been marginalised by the dominant paradigm and narratives of Labour's state-centred development.<sup>11</sup> Young's ideas and proposals represented a pre-emptive strike at symptoms of David Marquand's 'progressive dilemma', core themes of which became pressing for liberal social democrats such as Marquand, John Macintosh and Evan Luard from the 1970s. British socialism and social democracy, dominated by a 'focus on policy and neglect of process' in which development was 'not underpinned by the necessary social and political citizenship', had failed to convey the 'case for non-statist, decentralist, participatory forms of public intervention' and had become a largely 'technocratic philosophy rather than a political one'. A sense of community and the potential of 'politics [as] a process through which a political community agrees its common purpose' was largely forgotten in the creation of a society of passive individuals.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, after his relatively early tentative steps to advance the case for an alternative centre-left consumers' party, Young was a convert to the SDP.

### **At the Labour Party's Research Department: challenging state socialism from within**

British socialism owed more to Methodism than Marxism. But also, in its beginnings, it owed much less to doctrines of public ownership than to mutual aid and self-help, as represented in the Victorian Friendly Society, the Sick Club, the State Club, the Co-operative Society, the Trade Union and (God help us) the Building Society – but, above all, in the everyday exchanges of mutual aid in every working-class community in the land.<sup>13</sup>

At the party's Research Department between 1945 and 1950, Michael Young was principal author, along with Herbert Morrison, Ellen Wilkinson and Patrick Gordon Walker, of Labour's 1945 election blueprint of the 'new Jerusalem', but did not subsequently feel constrained by keystones of socialist orthodoxy.<sup>14</sup> As early as his formative 1948 pamphlet, Young argued that it would be imperative for Labour to create the conditions in which it would be possible 'for the people to run the new and the old institutions of our society,

participating at all levels as active members – workers, consumers, citizens – of an active democracy’, with the integrative and participatory features of the family and small group model as its cornerstone.<sup>15</sup> He was prepared to challenge state socialist orthodoxies at a relatively early stage of post-war development, particularly in the forms of what he perceived to be the navel-gazing and increasingly archaic obsession with nationalisation; the restrictions of individual freedom and liberty in the ‘centralizing and dehumanizing, tendencies of socialist state planning’; and in the associated restrictive practices and progressive limits of trade unionism.<sup>16</sup>

Linked to his scepticism about further large-scale nationalisation, he developed an early critique of trade unionism as both exclusively producer-oriented and increasingly statist in its organisation and outlook. He believed that if a majority of industries ‘were transferred to this kind of ‘public’ or ‘common’ ownership’, they would resemble a ‘Trade Union state, run by corporate bodies whose ascendancy would then be complete’. While the unions still performed a valuable function in the economy to ‘help the small man to improve his wages and conditions’, many are ‘afflicted with the trouble to which all organisations are liable – the man at the bottom feels insignificant, the leaders at the top are remote’. This became part of a general view of the dangers of ‘domination’ by any large vested interest or set of interests, whether of the labour or business variety, including the potential elitism and exclusivity inherent in institutionalised arrangements such as bargained corporatism. As industrial relations graduated to ‘apparent chaos’, he would support successive government attempts to restore order and discipline to trade unionism and, like some Socialist Union colleagues, would also support incomes policy or more ‘unorthodox’ solutions to combat pressures of inflation. Such insights then emerged more widely in later liberal social democratic critiques of the so-called ‘trade union question’.<sup>17</sup>

A particular point of disjuncture for Young was his frustration with what he saw as the strict limits on individual freedom and liberty imposed by ‘Labour’s blinkered vision of socialist planning’, which he believed ignored fundamental transformations in society. While he travelled broadly in parallel with Crosland along the revisionist route, he was perhaps even more acutely aware of Labour’s inability to respond to profound economic and social changes, particularly those prompted by increasing affluence, rising living standards and emergent mass consumerism. Labour’s restrictive command-driven tendencies had singularly failed to adapt to the ‘fundamental shift in people’s outlook from one of production to one of

consumption'. In the process of three successive election defeats, he would reflect along with other social scientists whether Labour was fated to lose in the new culture of 'affluence'. While he hoped that the party would eventually adopt a consumerist outlook, he believed that if Labour failed to take account of fundamental new interests and concerns of citizens its programme and appeal would become increasingly irrelevant and a new consumer-oriented party would emerge or be required. Any new progressive consumers' party would then, as the SDP eventually did, follow the perception of consumers as liberal individuals ready to challenge the narrow and restrictive corporatist economic sectionalism that tied government and the major parties to their respective economic interest groups.<sup>18</sup>

Nor did Young shy away from the application of his core analysis to totemic institutions of Labour's post-war state. He further targeted prevailing one-dimensional perspectives of Labour's iconic new Welfare State. It is perceptible that the specific concept of a 'Welfare State' was absent from the (draft) manifesto document in favour of broader promises of social and economic improvement for working and middle class people who had experienced painful unemployment and insecurity in the years between the two world wars. Young was to become increasingly hostile to a simplified and state-centric concept of the 'Welfare State', identifying it with bureaucratic and impersonal centralisation and discouragement of active participation by users in decision-making processes that directly affected their own lives. Not unlike Beveridge himself, and contrary to Labour's emerging standard operating procedures, Young saw an important role for non-state organisations, provided they were publicly accountable, in partnership with state services.<sup>19</sup> Greater decentralisation and diffusion of welfare provision across sectors offered more scope for genuine participation and articulation of precise service needs and, again like Beveridge, Young saw wider 'voluntary action' in welfare as a means of checking central state power. Ideas of decentralised and inclusive organisation of welfare gained little purchase on Labour's thought processes, dominated as they were by the 'new, post-war world order of state-led planning' and antipathy to the intrusion in welfare of voluntary action and organisations previously associated with pre-war notions of 'charity' and stark inequalities.

The seemingly unfashionable (or premature) recommendations of Young (and Beveridge) that non-governmental and voluntary action might effectively and popularly supplement the work of state welfare remained a largely alien concept in mainstream Labour policy-making. In common with contemporaries such as G.D.H. Cole and Richard Crossman, Young viewed

the highly centralised management and administration of the welfare state by post-war Labour governments as indicative of the neglect of earlier and alternative principles and practices of ‘reciprocity, mutuality and solidarity’ that promoted active participation, co-operation and mutual responsibility. It was also ‘undemocratic’ in the sense of failing to confront ‘unjust concentrations of power and wealth’ of one sort or another. In this view, Labour ‘after 1945...forgot about redistribution of assets and power’ and became concerned largely with ‘collective ownership and money transfers’. Ultimately, the indubitable ‘common good’ of welfare institutions was undermined when ‘something went awry in the way that Labour spoke about them’.<sup>20</sup> The leadership’s rejection of Young’s notion of a role for voluntary non-state organisations in a community-level, multi-agency approach to the delivery of public policy, might also suggest that Labour’s post-war welfare policies were perhaps less systematically driven by the full Beveridge blueprint than is commonly thought.<sup>21</sup>

Although sharing common ground with Labour revisionism, Young more explicitly and consistently articulated the perspective that socialism should involve more than narrow questions of economic management and material redistribution. His output from Labour’s Research Department and related Labour Party and Fabian work between 1948 and 1950 served to articulate his sustained critique of the narrow concern of traditional socialism with ‘questions of [control of] economic power and material improvement’.<sup>22</sup> First and perhaps most notably, his National Executive Committee (NEC)-commissioned discussion pamphlet of 1948 addressed potentially abstract or theoretical questions of how the technical advantages of ‘bigness’ of large-scale industrial and social structures could be harnessed to the human advantages of ‘smallness’ and relatively new explorations into the means by which ordinary people, as workers, consumers or citizens, could play a larger, participatory role in running socialist democracy.<sup>23</sup>

His memorandum to the NEC Policy Committee a year later was designed to promote the utility of other social science disciplines such as social psychology, sociology and anthropology to supplement the principal focus on ‘modern economics’ in the party’s programme. It represented a critique of the dominant Fabian tradition in British socialism, whose disproportionate emphasis on economics, efficiency and the central state was insufficiently attentive to essential non-material themes and needs of ‘human relations’, family life, human psychology, development and emotional fulfilment. To revive and develop

earlier ethical conceptions of ‘dignity’ and ‘brotherhood’ in British socialism would require Labour’s future social policy to heed the research of the human social sciences in aspects of the ‘human relations’ question. This supplementary emphasis on seemingly more esoteric, non-state themes acted as a corrective to the revisionists’ substantive neglect of them. Young’s memorandum on the merits of a wider social science programme was perhaps ‘unique in its ambitious range of suggestions and its considerable use of new academic disciplines’ for its essential argument, shared by other intellectuals such as Tawney and Cole, that Labour should pursue improvements in the quality of life in its widest sense, rather than merely restrict its ambition to the transfer of economic power and the distribution of material resources through the state.<sup>24</sup>

In a further influential contribution to the Fabian ‘Problems Ahead’ series of conferences, Young developed the core themes of this NEC submission. He tactfully toned down his critique of the centralising and bureaucratic tendencies of the dominant Fabian tradition, but reaffirmed his belief that the threat of ‘too much State power is very real’. He addressed what he thought should be current concerns of socialist democracy with ‘smaller’ less tangible issues of ‘human relations’. Specifically, he argued for an opportunity for socialism and the Labour Party to expand its repertoire in this sphere by helping to satisfy emotional needs through provision of improved and accessible leisure facilities and the reconfiguration of working patterns, in the pursuit of life balance and emotional fulfilment.<sup>25</sup> G.D.H. Cole’s summary questioned Young’s concept of ‘brotherhood’ as insufficiently substantive and expressive of the party’s philosophy and programme, and indicated Labour’s potential inexperience in the application of this more intimate notion of socialist organisation. However, it also revealed broad agreement with Young’s main idea of promoting ‘social reintegration’ through a more localised ‘spirit of community’. Young’s identification of the relationship between ‘small groups and the great society’ clearly found favour with Cole, as did his advocacy of the ‘participation of people in their own government’, through concepts such as the ‘community at work’, giving the worker a ‘sense of importance’ and wider function, and the ‘community at home’, linking the central unit of the family with ‘small-scale social groups’. He urged further discussion for Labour to consider wider themes as diverse as leisure provision, the emotional and psychological dimensions of political activity and the ‘promotion of individual freedom and happiness’.<sup>26</sup> Although there was considerable doubt among senior Labour figures that his ‘abstract’ themes and ideas were practicable and easily applicable to socialist practice, Young had initiated a wider agenda and dialogue that

was to be addressed and taken up, though still on the margins of the party, by a number of Labour intellectuals, including Crossman and Austen Albu.<sup>27</sup>

While in the Research Department, Young fell intellectually foul of more traditional senior party figures on more than one occasion. Innovative thinking on a social science research programme and child-centred society was vetoed early by Herbert Morrison, together with Young's unusual but characteristic idea to have an empty chair at cabinet meetings representing the 'unknown constituent'. His desire to challenge sacred cows from within continued in clear criticism of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in proposals on the need to restrain wages, which almost resulted in expulsion from the department in 1947. He also invited the objections of both Morrison and Bevan to his 1948 pamphlet concerned with industrial democracy, in which he advocated far greater 'power to the [individual rank-and-file] worker' in relation to both the trade union leadership and industrial managers, lingering on notions of more active and direct workers' control. He believed that 'in a democracy those who were led elected their leaders', which should be a principle applied to industry as it was the political system. It ended with a clarion call to 'educate our children as democrats so that they...want to become active ... Let us add to our knowledge about human relations in industry'. Young's view could have been seen as following the line set by Emanuel Shinwell at the 1948 party conference when he said that 'nationalisation without democracy is not Socialism. We cannot claim that an industry or service is socialised unless and until the principles of social and economic democracy are implicit in its day-to-day conduct'. However, the opposition from the party's big beasts indicated to Young that he had overstepped the established mark even in the more restrained conditions of nationalisation of 1948; and it brought him the troublesome revelation that the problem of making nationalisation work more effectively would ultimately turn, not on social liberation and participation from below, but on political decision-making and control from above.<sup>28</sup>

The recommendation of his 1949 memorandum to the NEC to 'now reconsider aims in light of developments of other social sciences' beyond the prescribed interests and accomplishments of 'modern economics' was derived from a sense that some 'socialists have realised that State socialism, while achieving greater productivity at expense of dehumanisation of work, would not necessarily achieve other aims associated with [full conceptions of] 'dignity' and 'brotherhood''. He emphasised the need for national social science organisation on the model of the natural sciences to support qualitative research into



ways of enhancing the utilitarian socialist objective of the ‘greatest happiness of [the] greatest number’ beyond the largely realised ‘elimination of poverty and material security regarded as chief means to this end, and consequently...the chief concern of [the] Party’. Young would later become the first chairman of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) when Tony Crosland was eventually persuaded to set it up in 1965, but he finally departed his post in Labour’s Research Department in 1950 because he believed ‘the party had run out of ideas’. While he had almost single-handedly drafted the party’s 1945 election manifesto, he already considered Labour’s programme to be ‘nothing very visionary, but very detailed because we had so much time to plan’.<sup>29</sup>

### **Contributions to social democratic revisionism: equality and fraternity**

Michael Young’s problematic relationship with the Labour Party was compounded by the development of the conceptual basis of the party’s post-war doctrines, particularly the revisionist social democratic dictum that socialism was about a narrowly-defined ‘equality’, pursued through largely statist means, in contrast to his own preference for ‘a smaller-scale politics-of-cooperation’. While not fundamentally opposed to the central place of ‘equality’ in Labour’s ideological prospectus, he was aware of the dangers of an unmediated ‘equality of opportunity’ as perhaps his most famous work, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, demonstrates in savage satire. He believed that ‘fraternity’ was at least as important as ‘equality’ and, ‘without fraternity, equality of opportunity could end up creating a heartless meritocracy without a trace of *noblesse oblige* and dismissive of the needs and claims of those who failed to make the grade’. Without taking into account the potential dangers of meritocracy, society would succeed only in substituting elites: damaging inequalities and divisions would remain, now based on the potentially more pernicious distinction of biological and psychological characteristics, rather than purely social grounds of hereditary status. He expressed clear reservations about the relative emphasis of ‘equality’ and ‘fraternity’ in revisionist social democratic thought when he reflected that ‘socialism...is about fraternity...Crosland said socialism is about equality. I think he got it wrong. It is about equality, but only secondary to being about fraternity’.<sup>30</sup>

By 1950, Young had already established intellectual distance between himself and the Crosland line. In the Fabian Society series of conferences on ‘Problems Ahead’, he argued for the need to ‘re-define ends as well as means’. The ends of socialism should have two main aspirations – the ‘assertion of human dignity and the achievement of a sense of

community', bound up in the wider concept of 'brotherhood'. Equality represented only part of the 'broader concept of human dignity'. Similarly, there needed to be increased emphasis on a sense of reciprocal 'community' offering the opportunity to participate and contribute to an active democracy beyond the realm of politics. Young offered a strand of social democratic thought distinct from mainstream Labour revisionism: it was idealistic and less constrained by party and political concerns, but also more unequivocally forward-looking and cutting much more explicitly and responsively with the grain of social trends. He appeared much readier to shed the socialist state ascription in a rapidly changing socio-economic context that he perceived to be outstripping even a Croslandite revisionist analysis. Young appeared to be willing to draw together concepts and ideas otherwise considered contradictory to establish a clear link between notions of (traditional working class) community and (new) individualist consumerism. This willingness to acknowledge and fuse new social and consumer developments with core concepts also suggested a more openly appreciative view of the role of the market in society.<sup>31</sup>

Young's departure from mainstream Labour revisionism was also evident in his links with Socialist Union and its journal, *Socialist Commentary*, following its broadly revisionist ethical socialist line. Its emphasis on principles of 'fellowship' was close to Young's own view of the primacy of concepts of fraternity and brotherhood in progressive socialist thought. The explicit communitarianism of Socialist Union, advocating the link between fellowship and a broader vision of equality, reflected the emerging distinction of revisionist social democracy between 'those primarily focused on [simple] distributive goals' and those who 'defended the importance of creating a more co-operative society' founded on 'values of co-operation and mutual service'. In Young's case, this involved a 'commitment to a communitarian ideal that pictured the family as the germ of the egalitarian society'. The notion of the central and organic influence of the family in his vision of smaller-scale communitarian and co-operative socialist organisation is arguably the most distinctive theme of Young's social analysis. Traditionally, 'socialists have ignored the family or they have openly tried to weaken it – alleging nepotism and the restrictions placed upon human fulfilment by family ties', and the dominant strand of Labour thought and practice appeared to view the state as virtually an alternative channel of socialisation, based on the premise that the 'gentleman in Whitehall' and professionals 'know best'.<sup>32</sup> His sustained critique of the dominant Fabian tradition led him to reject the limits and 'danger of too much State power' in favour of the notion that a mature sense of equality for socialists should include a society

enabled by a spirit of community pursued through ‘principles of brotherhood, comradeship and fellowship, observed in the good family’. Young’s decentred and associational perspective, mirroring earlier ideals of the ‘libertarian’ G.D.H. Cole, was premised on the notion that ‘individuals will find their highest fulfilment and their greatest freedom through co-operation with others’ in a ‘fully democratic society’ beyond the state and public services. This should be reflected in participatory and ‘democratic community’ in the workplace, for the consumer and in the local community as a counter to the ‘dangers of bigness’ and a ‘State [that] is too remote’.<sup>33</sup>

Those who favoured a ‘qualitative socialist’ approach employed wider notions of ‘fellowship’ or ‘fraternity’ to illuminate the egalitarian future. In contrast to the dominant ‘Keynesian socialist’ emphasis of a ‘classless society of social, if not economic, equals enjoying a broad equality of opportunity’, they envisaged a ‘good society’ of equality of ‘right relationships’, in which ‘human beings were equal in dignity and worth, and in which opportunities existed not to rise above others but to develop the personal potential with which different individuals were endowed’. A Labour Party of limited ‘sentimental egalitarianism’ based on narrow standardised ‘merit’ and Morrisonian ‘technical efficiency’ could not be the ‘crucible’ for a more inclusive and decentred notion of the ‘classless society’, in which a ‘diversity of values’ – individual, family, neighbourhood and communitarian – prospered.<sup>34</sup>

While broadly sympathetic to the wider revisionist prospectus, Young was interested to go further and deeper in his interrogation of Labour’s entrenched state-centric compass. He agreed that the general objective of ‘greater social and economic equality’ in the context of downgraded public ownership in a mixed economy was the correct one as far as it went, but contested the pursuit of merely this end solely through the state. Thus Crosland’s ‘main omission’ was to neglect ‘ways of ‘redistributing’ or ‘equalising’ the power of the state [itself] and other bureaucracies like the trade unions’. Young believed that Crosland was weaker on social policy than economic policy and, in areas such as housing, planning and education, he nearly always came to narrower and ‘rather too negative conclusions for my taste. He was an intellectual not an innovator’. Central state mechanisms and power were used almost exclusively to advance equality and to promote freedom without thought to the ‘right treatment of the one privilege’ that appeared to be required ‘for everything else’. Consequently, ‘forms of equality had been fostered only by concentrating more power in the state’.<sup>35</sup>

### **Founding the Consumers' Association: 'from the politics of production to the politics of consumption'**

Originally supportive of targeted public ownership and 'largely responsible for the shopping list of industries' for Labour's 1945 manifesto, Young's rapid disenchantment was fuelled by seemingly indiscriminate adoption of further nationalisation proposals driven by the 'fundamentalist' left and the disruptive influence of 'Bevanism' in the 1950s.<sup>36</sup> It was his reaction to Labour's apparent preoccupation with the 'politics of production' and his own sensitivity to the new consumerism and formal representation of consumers that prompted him to propose the formation of a new centre-left progressive political party beyond the confines of the Labour Party in 1960. Increasingly, he believed that the collectivist, state-centric Labour Party was 'no longer the undisputed party of reform', and that centre-left progressives and revisionist social democrats should think in terms of an alternative reformist vehicle, either in the form of realignment with a partly revived Liberal Party or even 'an entirely...new reforming party'. He argued that Labour's chances of maintaining the 'progressive vote' would depend on it satisfying 'the conditions that any genuine party of reform needs to satisfy' in coming to terms with contemporary developments. For Young, the major domestic political challenge was the 'shift of interests from production to consumption' in society, which represented a change of 'revolutionary significance, requiring...complementary adaption from the "politics of production" to the "politics of consumption"'. For this purpose, he considered the Labour Party based on an increasingly out-dated and largely anti-European 'politics of production' singularly ill-suited. A new progressive party 'would be a party to press for the unity of consumers in the world and the interests of consumers at home'; it would offer a centre-left consumers' party in contrast to Labour's centre-left producers' movement.<sup>37</sup> Thus, while Young was not to be formally involved in a new alternative centre-left political party until the formation of the SDP twenty years later, he was among the first on the left to recognise and respond to the seismic shift in social trends.

As the post-war Labour Party and revisionist social democracy agonised over the merits and correct levels of public ownership, Young identified the increasing importance and implications of consumerism for society and politics. He founded *Which?* magazine and subsequently the Consumers' Association to recognise and empower citizens as consumers in the new market places shadowing the shift to mass affluence. The Consumers' Association

was finally established in late 1957 in direct response to the shifting values and challenges of post-war affluence at a point of rapid changes in product markets and consumer behaviour and a corresponding increase in disreputable trading practices. Young had previously attempted to respond to these new challenges from within Labour's Research Department by inserting the idea of a Consumer Advisory Service into the 1950 manifesto, although the notion was rejected out-of-hand as 'hopeless' by Harold Wilson at the Board of Trade. The charge against Young's proposal was that 'insofar as there needs to be anything done, it's being done already by the Automobile Association, the Good Housekeeping Institute and the British Standards Institution'. Nonetheless, the results of a Gallup Poll evaluating the popularity of the proposals in Labour's manifesto ranked the idea of a consumer service top of the list, and prompted Young to persist in setting up the Consumers' Association.

Once established with characteristic perseverance, Young recognised the implicit dualism of the Consumers' Association, emblematic of the notion of consumerism itself, between a neo-liberal and a social democratic ethos. He eschewed the former to urge a conception of consumers beyond that of mere 'servants of the washing machine'. He offered a 'broader socio-political notion of consumerism' and consumers as 'progressive, socially aware and committed to their duties as well as their rights as citizens'. Ideologically, he saw the Consumers' Association as a social movement travelling broadly in parallel with revisionist social democracy, but was always ready to push the case further and more independently than its mainstream advocates. If the Labour Party was unable to make the journey, he saw the programme of any new progressive consumers' party mirroring the enlightened image of consumers as not 'merely acquisitive and materialist' but broad-minded internationalists and Europeans in foreign affairs and supporters of liberal freedoms and lifestyles and progressive public services at home. In its non-sectional aspect and appeal to voters from across the political spectrum, Young envisaged the emergence of a genuinely 'one nation' party to arrest Britain's economic decline as the demands of a mass army of discerning consumers would improve production quality and competitiveness of industry and offset the wage-price spiral of inflation in a way the two main producer parties could not.<sup>38</sup> He recognised that the state was required to reach poorer consumers and even revived the combination of self-help and mutual aid principles of co-operatives, but regarded a movement for consumers as a vital 'third force' in society. His core belief that a 'progressive party should place the consumer at centre stage' represented and remained a 'continuous thread in his work' right through to joining the SDP.<sup>39</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that Young's 'dangerous' proposal for a 'new progressive party' of the consumer interest was rejected for publication by the Fabian Society in 1960. Crosland was a 'tolerant' if 'amused' reviewer, but Shirley Williams as incumbent general secretary was tasked to arbitrate the different views of its 'merits' and appeared unwilling to accept this leap of faith.<sup>40</sup> Young also later floated the idea of a 'Reform League' as a 'centre' or 'think tank' with interests in a range of reform wider than just 'consumerism', which would be attractive to 'potential reformers of various kinds' unhappy with the 'present mood of political sadness [which] goes with apathy about our society'. This included 'considering almost any proposal within the capacity of private enterprise for putting life into the Welfare State'. Industry and the economy would have to be 'largely though not entirely ruled out, to begin with at any rate', but he emphasised that economic growth would be 'vital to the general success of our kind of ideas' and suggested that maybe others should be invited 'to start industrial reform movements'. He identified a characteristically ambitious and innovative set of proposals premised on the notion of decentring both the state and the London focus of British institutions and amenities. These included a National Extension College following his idea of an 'open university'; an *Ecole Polytechnique* for the higher civil service and management and a Harvard-style 'post-graduate Business School'; 'New Model' trade unionism; regional urban renewal; a new and effective system of apprenticeship and the notion of 'sheltered workshops' to re-employ those forced into 'mad' compulsory retirement; sessions of parliament in provincial cities; municipal theatre and regional branches of the British Museum.

The underlying theme was 'effective modernisation of Britain', which required both 'much more effective government' and 'a 'release' of creative energy at the periphery'. He believed the reason why the latter had not flourished was that 'Socialists and Conservatives [had] both trusted the top'. Socialists 'have believed that the way to get reform is through the State', and therefore those 'not at the top have been discouraged by this attitude from doing what little they might have tried to do'. With a further contribution drafted as *The New Radicalism* in 1969, he was in effect developing a manifesto for later post-revisionist social democratic critiques of Labour's hitherto collectivist state philosophy and affinities, including a 'discriminating approach to the State' in which the 'power of the state [would be] reduced, not scrapped, or even limited, to that re-weighting of bargaining power between rich and poor'. A fuller sense of freedom from the state would need to be developed, somewhere close

to Mill's proposition that any 'increase in the power of the State is prejudicial to liberty, and a reduction enhances it'. He recognised that 'the State still has its most vital role to perform in reducing inequality, itself a means of enhancing freedom', but its 'Robin Hood role' should be an application of a wider principle that 'power in the State may be justified wherever it can prevent the freedom of individuals and of groups being cut down by other more powerful individuals and groups'. The state is correctly 'an arbiter we must have' but, while there are 'many services which need to be supplied collectively', notions of greater and wider 'participation' in 'social organisation' and a 'great unloosing of individual energy' must be a possibility to combat the dangers of a 'more paternalist State'.<sup>41</sup>

### **Ongoing social entrepreneurship: a life beyond state socialism**

Young's approach was too individualistic for him to settle quietly into party politics...His ideas were not in tune with the trade union-based, male-oriented Labour Party...He was more interested in defending the rights of the individual and bringing people together at local level than in the statism that then dominated the Labour Party.<sup>42</sup>

Having failed to persuade Labour, among other things, of the relevance of his idea of a consumer advisory service, Young parted formal company with the party shortly after.<sup>43</sup> In addition to his seminal contributions to academic sociological research and publication, and his foundation of the Consumers' Association, he went on to create the Open University and more than fifty other social initiatives and charities for a wide range of public causes located within what now might be termed the 'third sector', between profit-based private enterprise and the traditional central state. Through early concrete initiatives beyond the restrictions of post-war Labour socialism and orthodox revisionist social democracy (including establishment of an Institute of Community Studies in London's East End and early moral and institutional support for the principle and utility of 'social entrepreneurship') he was able to pursue alternative means of achieving a less parochial set of goals aimed at demonstrating the value of 'family and community' in action. According to his former colleague at Transport House and future collaborator in research on the social anthropology of the east end of London, Peter Willmott, the creation of the Institute of Community Studies in January 1954, based in the community setting of Bethnal Green, had been an attempt to 'resolve the dilemma of bigness' that had plagued Young since his later years in the Research Department. It would offer 'a base from which to challenge the giant of statism which had

stolen the heart of the Party' in the realisation that impetus for necessary reforms was more likely to come from outside governments and political parties.<sup>44</sup>

Young's proposal argued that the welfare state focused on tactics for the relief of material stress, but there was much less appreciation of strategies to prevent it. An Institute of Community Studies would fill the gap in research and action on social categories and issues reflecting unchartered dimensions of family and kinship experience, largely ignored or subsumed within the hierarchical command structures and processes of the leviathan state. Studies of working-class families and communities would close the 'communications gap' within the 'great society' and 'act as guides to social policy'. He believed that if 'those who draw up policy for the social services do not appreciate the needs of working-class people, those services will fail to achieve their purpose'. Community self-help was also a prominent theme. It was 'hoped that local action will follow the research' to promote 'action by the local community itself to relieve the distress which exists among its members'. Close contact would be maintained with local voluntary and statutory services for advice on the direction of the research and help in applying its recommendations. The Institute of Community Studies would represent a 'new kind of experiment in the association of high-standard research with a particular local community'.<sup>45</sup>

The Institute of Community Studies provided the base from which many of the subsequent social innovations and institutions developed by Young were launched, aspiring to challenge the recurrent focus of socialism and social democracy on the central state. These included citizen-centred and educational initiatives such as the National (and International) Extension College in 1963 as the 'nucleus' of the Open University in 1969, and later the Open College of the Arts and the University of the Third Age, promoting distance learning as a sense of 'education without institution' and 'learning while earning'. Then, more recently in 1997, the School for Social Entrepreneurs to help develop 'entrepreneurial' individuals with ideas 'to meet social need'. These might include a way to improve a local neighbourhood or a scheme to reduce unemployment in a particular region. His support of the notion of 'social entrepreneurship', culminating in the creation of this School at the outset of the New Labour era, presented intellectual and empirical evidence of a 'third way' between the centralising, bureaucratic and often inefficient 'big' undifferentiated state and the unfettered market tendency to deplete the 'moral economy' and 'moral capital of society'. With altruistic voluntary bodies as an 'indispensable ally', advocates of the 'social entrepreneurship' of the



‘non-business sector’ ‘hoped to add a bit [back] to it’ in once again reconfiguring the ‘moral climate’ and enhancing the ‘common wealth’.<sup>46</sup>

All these initiatives reflected the same central idea that alternatives to the paternalistic state were required in independent local institutions able to voice the needs of individuals, families and neighbourhoods on a smaller scale and provide them with the knowledge to enhance their lives in the way they wished to live. As a result, Michael Young was later lauded by representatives of New Labour converted to the notion and products of ‘social entrepreneurship’, perhaps believing the party had missed a trick in neglecting his earlier attempts to persuade it to move in wider progressive directions. He was then presented as ‘a seminal figure of the centre-left’ and as a non-dogmatic and non-doctrinaire example of the rare combination of ‘not just a great thinker but a great doer’. He represented a model of a public ‘intellectual...who grounded his arguments in lived experience’, and whose influence ran ‘like a silver thread’ through the history of broader progressive thought and practice. He demonstrated a qualified Fabian enthusiasm for empirical research, but with a practical desire for new forms of social organisation and enterprise which largely bypassed Labour’s instinctive reliance on the mechanisms and delivery of the central state. Young was perhaps less sanguine that even New Labour had moved much beyond rhetorical endorsement of independent social enterprise. Although he did return to the fold of the party, he continued to question the radical credentials of Labour’s social ambitions. He acknowledged the concerted move towards a programme based on the importance of work, revived community life and value of education under Gordon Brown at the Treasury, but remained cautious of the tendency of every Labour government to be ‘slow to look outside itself’ and recognise the potential contribution of the ‘third sector’ of ‘social entrepreneurs, self-motivated communities and small-scale operators’.<sup>47</sup>

A further theme of disjuncture with New Labour centred on its apparent misuse of his (initially satirical) concept of ‘meritocracy’. In his 1958 satire, he had imagined a fictional future society characterised by the emergence of a new class fuelled through the engine of the post-war tri-partite state education system and its intrinsic early competitive selection process. Through satire, he had attempted to warn of the consequences of a society developed on meritocratic principles. Rather than remove elitism and barriers to attainment, the resulting ‘meritocracy’ would simply produce a change in the pattern of inequalities, more pervasive, pernicious and divisive than previous class distinctions: an unequal society would remain and

broader egalitarian principles would be left unsatisfied. Young intended the concept to warn against a new elitism based on a 'narrow band of values', but was concerned to see it embraced by Tony Blair and New Labour as a positive egalitarian philosophy and guide to public policy. While it might be 'good sense to appoint individual people to jobs on their merit', it is 'the opposite when those are judged to have merit of a particular kind harden into a new social class without room in it for others'. Moreover, for Young a meritocratic elite tends to feel they are much more entitled to the privileges they enjoy, that 'their advancement comes from their own merits, and they deserve what they can get'. They can even come to believe that 'they have morality on their side', while the underclass in a meritocracy can be made to feel more deserving of its misfortune. This can breed feelings of hopelessness, as it is 'hard indeed in a society that makes so much of merit to be judged as having none. No underclass has ever been left as morally naked as that'. Unlike New Labour (and Conservative) advocates of the 'classless society', Young believed that meritocracy 'narrows potential rather than widens it; treats the less intelligent as inferior, rather than as individuals with their own [different] talents'.<sup>48</sup>

Young advocated a broader, more inclusive and participatory, egalitarian philosophy. Later restating and reaffirming his 1958 vision of the pluralistic 'classless society', he sought to promote organisation of society in which we 'evaluate people, not only according to their intelligence and their education, their occupations and their power, but according to their kindness and their courage, their imagination and sensitivity, their sympathy and their generosity'. In this type of association, 'there would be no overall inequalities of the sort we have got used to', and much less emphasis on class. Who would say that 'the scientist was superior to the porter with admirable qualities as a father, the civil servant to the lorry-driver with unusual skills', the academic to the carer or nurse etc. etc. A 'pluralistic society would also be a tolerant', diverse and non-conformist society, in which 'individual differences were actively encouraged...in which full meaning was at last given to the dignity of man. Every human being would then have equal opportunity, not to rise up in the world in the light of any mathematical measure, but to develop his or her own special capacities for leading a full life which is also a noble life led for the benefit of others as well as the self'. Of these criteria, the record suggests that Young's own contribution should be judged a 'noble one', designed and delivered 'for the benefit of others as well as the self'.<sup>49</sup>

## **Progressive Alternatives: the Social Democratic Party and back to (New) Labour**

The core of the SDP is ex-Labour. But it does not follow that we are ex-socialists. Most of us still consider ourselves socialists, democratic socialists, and as such we are in a different tradition from the great liberal tradition in British society over the last centuries...one of our most significant characteristics is that we are devoted to equality. This was Tawney's main message...Though we lean more heavily towards equality we are committed to the maintenance and extension of human liberty, or rather liberties. But while we know that equality without liberty would be slavery, liberty without equality would be a society not so different from...today. Though liberty can never be sacrificed, it is equality which provides...the thrust behind reform. The great problem...is how to move towards more equality without enhancing the power of the State. We need to make equality march with decentralisation.<sup>50</sup>

Temporarily at least, Young saw some of the potential for these developments through the finally formal alternative social democratic vehicle of the SDP. A sense of consistency, or perhaps inevitability, could be identified in his political realignment. Not for him the claims of inconsistency and betrayal on joining the SDP in 1981, having previously floated the idea of a new consumer-oriented progressive party as an alternative to Labour's state-centric 'politics of production', planning and public ownership. His surprise in the emergence of the SDP was only that it had 'taken rather longer than I expected'. Equally, his endorsement of support for 'democratic socialism but...socialism without the state, or at least as much of the state as we have had in the past', and calls for a programme of a 'richer and more diverse set of interests' for a political party and political ideology, reflected his earlier concerns with Labour's narrow sectional interests and appeal and parochial strategic operation. In close alliance with unreformed trade unionism, the 'Labour Party [had] gradually ceased to be the party of reform'. Nothing had changed; there appeared to be a continued 'anti-consumer' bias in British government and, while he believed Labour 'would patch up its differences', he wondered 'on what basis'. The emergence of the SDP facilitated his long interest in a 'new party' theoretically less wedded to the central state.<sup>51</sup>

Although he was cautious not to attempt unnecessarily to 'amputate the SDP from its roots in the long tradition of democratic socialist or social democratic thought', he hoped the new party would adopt historic and marginalised traditions of the ideology based on a smaller-scale politics of community to counter dominant identification with the large-scale

centralising trends of state power as the instrument of social ownership and redistribution. While he was not advocating a right-wing libertarian position, he supported the ‘fundamental liberal principle that, in any contest between the rights of the individual and the interests of some large collective body, individual rights are paramount’, with the ‘most important corollary: a liberal and democratic society is based on the individual’s right to choose for oneself’. With the important ideological proviso (and distinction) that unrestricted freedom of individual choice is socially fair only if consumers have more equal resources and that ‘choice for all demands redistribution of income and wealth’, he was attempting to absorb for social democracy a new socially just emphasis on the talents of the individual and their close networks that reflected changes in the pattern of economic and social relationships and organisation. As for others, it was Labour’s inability to convince Young that it could achieve the social democratic fusion of ‘equality along with greater liberty’ that led him to the SDP as the ‘only hope for achieving the sort of democratic socialism’ merging both libertarian and egalitarian traditions to which he aspired. Changes in the structure of the economy and society had ‘robbed...old-style collectivism – *one out, all out* – of its wide appeal’. The foundations of the new party ‘must lie in a richer and more diverse set of interests which does not rule out a coherent set of beliefs’, and the ‘new political class’ he saw the SDP representing should ‘look beyond their own interests to those of society as a whole’.<sup>52</sup>

R.H. Tawney and a longer strand of decentralist, community-based and co-operative socialism was to provide the guiding light. At Young’s suggestion, the party’s ‘in-house’ think tank, the SDP’s equivalent of the Fabian Society, was named the Tawney Society, which allegedly sent previously Tawney-phobic Labour members into ‘a state of near-apoplexy’.<sup>53</sup> The ‘trade union party’ had long ‘ceased to be the party of reform’ of the sort envisaged by Tawney and Young himself, with traditions and principles of co-operative mutual aid and blend of enlightened self-interest and altruism to the fore, instead consolidating its ‘steady attachment...to Statism’. He regarded the SDP to be ‘in a great tradition...of socialism without the state, or at any rate without the heavy reliance upon the state which has marked the latter day-phases of the Labour Movement’. Although not without distinct differences of accent, the formation of the SDP also offered a natural adjunct to the ‘Liberals in their modern form’. Consequently, there was a need in the SDP for ‘an emphasis on co-operatives, formal and informal, on the importance of community politics as a means of reintegrating alienated and forgotten people into society, and also on creating and supporting new voluntary bodies which fit as well with the needs of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century as those others did to the 19<sup>th</sup> century'. He felt that Labour's latent antipathy, as it developed in the twentieth century, to notions and ideas of 'philanthropy and altruism and its determined belief in economic self-interest as the driving dynamic of society has done it grievous harm'. The subsequent lack of commitment to principles of altruism, community organisation and mutual aid suggested that the SDP, to develop community politics and stimulate old and new voluntary organisations, should pursue practical policies that delivered a 'whole host of new services which don't necessarily have to be provided by the state'.<sup>54</sup>

Ultimately, Young was to be frustrated by the internal schisms of the SDP. He considered the 'Owenites' to be 'too right-wing', but so too were the 'colleagues who have gone the other way'. Equivocally, he still held out most hope for 'more scope for innovative ideas in the Owenite camp' in the unlikely prospect of a 'fully-fledged and straightforward political party'.<sup>55</sup> He also worried about the potential and sustainable support base of the SDP in the same way the critical electoral issue had demanded an explicit defence in his 1960 proposal for a 'new progressive party'. Only half in jest, he suggested that at points the new party was receiving 'about the same support in the public opinion polls as my imaginary Consumers Party'.<sup>56</sup> After 'many an alliance and parting of the ways', Young decided to re-join the Labour Party in 1989 as it finally emerged out of long years of in-fighting and programmatic renewal to rival the Conservatives in the opinion polls as a potential party of government. It could now claim to reflect the required 'modernisation of socialism which lagged so badly since...Crosland', to represent a variant of the 'old theme' of greater equality that has to remain Labour's 'big idea' and to include 'proposals for a consumer oriented democracy' and a more pluralistic constitutional and political framework.<sup>57</sup> Young returned full-circle by leaving the SDP on 14 June 1989 and taking the Labour whip in the House of Lords.<sup>58</sup>

## **Conclusions**

The relevance of Michael Young's ideas and deeds to contemporary notions of meaningful and active civil society, as an alternative to historic attachment to the structure and mechanisms of the central state, seem finally to have taken root across the political spectrum in Conservative conceptions of the 'Big Society' and debates between 'Blue Labour' and 'One-Nation Labour'. However, Young belongs to a much longer liberal pluralistic tradition of British socialism. The radical non-state perspective of the socialist pluralists criticised statist models of social reform, endorsed participatory democracy and firmly defended associational forms of social organisation and action. It found its most systematic

representation in the guild socialism of G.D.H. Cole, Harold Laski and R.H. Tawney, which reflected an earlier liberal emphasis on individual human freedom, as opposed to absorption into a large collective, as a route to voluntary associational and communal forms of organisation.<sup>59</sup>

With his own model located firmly in the form and networks of the extended family unit, Young favoured bottom-up communitarian and co-operative responses to ‘social reform and social revolution’ as opposed to exclusively hierarchical top-down statist solutions. The ‘utopian tradition’ of Robert Owen and particularly William Morris, through to Cole and Tawney, bequeathed its legacy of the ‘institutional model...the friendly society or small-scale co-operative, itself embodying many of the principles of the extended family’. Through practical initiatives such as the Mutual Aid Centre, Young believed and demonstrated that the model could be extended to, for instance, neighbourhood ‘social service co-operatives’, replacing some of the functions of and reducing dependency on the state, while enhancing community strength and solidarity.<sup>60</sup> Similar to others of this ideological ‘liberal socialist’ lineage, particularly Cole, Young also remained deeply mistrustful of the strictures of the central state. His consistent belief in the need to limit and supplement its functions in the social arena in pursuit of a broader conception of equality based on values of ‘human brotherhood’ and community, greater diffusion of power, responsibility and active participation, echoed Cole. And his prolific innovation and creation of social organisations reflected a political conviction that citizens require a strong buffer against the state in the form of dynamic civil society. His unique contribution was that he ‘added to the sum of civil society by launching new entrants to it. By empowering individuals through new forms of organization, he hoped to build new forms of egalitarian community’.<sup>61</sup>

From Attlee to Blair and beyond, Labour’s post-war social democracy appears to have neglected these lessons to its cost, and the intellectual debate in the party continues in attempts to locate a response to the Conservative variant of the ‘little platoons’ of the ‘Big Society’ in the decentralist or federalist roots of its own wider socialist tradition. Those at the heart of Labour’s current attempts at political renewal in times of financial constraint have begun to reflect that the critical revisionist debates of the 1950s over the future of socialism and the Labour Party presented a choice between Crosland’s espousal of the ‘old centralism with a bit of local agency delivery and consultation’, and Young’s clarion call for ‘radical devolution of economic and political power to people in their neighbourhoods and

workplaces'. Crosland won and 'Labour remain[ed] wedded to the Croslandite political economy'.<sup>62</sup> Despite their own frequent 'year zero' claims, New Labour 'flirted with the ethos of Young but ultimately chose betrothal to Crosland' in terms of attachment to and dependence on the central state, and the big choice for Labour between being a 'radical decentralist' or a 'central uniformist' party remains pivotal to its current deliberations. It is perhaps unsurprising to witness Young's core liberal themes of decentralised and devolved, small-scale and local organisation informing contemporary debates and perspectives of a 'One Nation' Labour Party in a 'Big Society'. Rather than return simply to the high statism of so-called 'Old' Labour, there have been significant calls for the post-New Labour Party to revisit the decentralising traditions of its past in the 'non-statist strand' of its ideological milieu and the variants of the 'federalist' view of socialism proffered by the likes of Cole and Young. In this tradition socialism is not the same as the state, for it emphasises the 'redistribution of power to individuals and local communities at [the] heart' of a wider 'progressive agenda'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Noel Annan, *Our Age: The Generation that Made Post-war Britain* (London, Fontana, 1991), pp. 348-349.

<sup>2</sup> See Peter Hennessy, 'Michael Young and the Labour Party', *Contemporary British History*, 19 (3), 2005, p. 282.

<sup>3</sup> See Jackie Ashley, 'The fine art of being a social entrepreneur', *New Statesman*, 18 December 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge, Churchill College, Michael Young Papers YUNG 8/2, Christian Tyler, 'Breakfast with a one-man welfare state', *Financial Times*, 25 June 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Hennessy, 'Michael young', pp. 281, 282-3; Michael Young, *Small Man: Big World: A discussion of socialist democracy*, Towards Tomorrow, No. 4, London, Labour Party, 1948.

<sup>6</sup> Young, *Small Man*; Young Papers YUNG 2/1/1, 'For Richer, For Poorer: Essays on Family, Community and Socialism', Report Presented to the Labour Party Policy Committee, November 1952; Peter Willmott, 'The ballad of Bethnal Green', *The Guardian*, 16 January, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> This continues to present a dilemma in the post-New Labour era for those who seek to move social democracy and Labour decisively beyond the 'old centralised command state' to a 'more pluralist and decentralised polity': see Patrick Diamond, 'Beyond the Westminster Model', *Renewal: A Journal of Social Democracy*, 19 (1), 2011.

<sup>8</sup> London, British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES), Fabian Society Papers G50/3, Fabian Society Second Conference on 'Problems Ahead', Session II, Michael Young, 'The British Socialist Way of Life. Notes by Michael Young', Oxford, 31 March–2 April 1950.

<sup>9</sup> See Jon Cruddas, 'Power and One Nation', Speech to the New Local Government Network Annual Conference, 12 February 2014; Anthony Painter, 'A late triumph for Michael Young?', *ProgressOnline*, 12 February 2014, available at: <http://www.progressonline.org.uk/2014/02/12/a-late-triumph-for-michael-young> [accessed 20/02/2014].

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Young, 'Why the SDP are the true inheritors of Tawney's libertarian legacy', *The Guardian*, 10 May, 1982; Young Papers YUNG 6/39, Michael Young to T.D. W. Reid, 28 October 1974; YUNG 2/2/2, Michael Young, *The Chipped White Cups of Dover: a discussion of the possibility of a new progressive party* (London, Unit 2, 1960), pp. 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> See Stephen Meredith and Philip Catney, 'New Labour and Associative Democracy: Old Debates in New Times?', *British Politics*, 2 (3), 2007, pp. 347-348, 352-355; Marc Stears, 'Guild Socialism and Ideological Diversity on the British Left, 1914-1926', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 3 (3), 1998, pp. 289-290; 'Guild Socialism', in Mark Bevir (ed.), *Modern Pluralism: Anglo-American Debates Since 1880* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 40-44.

<sup>12</sup> David Marquand, *The Progressive Dilemma: From Lloyd George to Kinnock* (London, Heinemann, 1991), pp. 216, 217, 220; also see Simon Lee and Matt Beech (eds.), *The Cameron-Clegg Government: Coalition Politics in an Age of Austerity* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2011), pp. 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> Young Papers YUNG 8/1, Michael Young and Gerard Lemos, 'Roots of revival', *The Guardian*, 19 March 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Young to T.D.W. Reid; Young Papers YUNG 6/39, Michael Young to Henry Pelling, 3 August 1981; Malcolm Dean, 'Lord Young of Dartington', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2002; John Gray, 'A reputation of merit', *New Statesman*, 15 October 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Young, *Small Man*, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew Hilton, 'The Fable of the Sheep, or Private Virtues, Public Vices: the Consumer Revolution of the Twentieth Century' *Past and Present*, 176 (1), 2002, p.241; Young, *Small Man*; Michael Young, *Labour's Plan for Plenty* (London, Left Book Club), 1947.

<sup>17</sup> Young Papers YUNG 2/1/3, Michael Young, 'Prospects Ahead', n.d; YUNG 6/30, Michael Young, 'Fully Adjusted Value: A new approach to inflation as a phenomenon with which we've got to live', 26 December 1970; also see Lewis Minkin, *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press), 1991, pp. 208-209.

<sup>18</sup> See Mark Abrams and Richard Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (London, Penguin, 1960); Kate Gavron, 'Michael Young: a man of the century', *openDemocracy*, 6 February 2002, available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/node/288> [accessed 24/01/2011]; Hilton, 'The Fable of the Sheep', pp. 241-242; Ben Jackson, *Equality and the British Left: A study in progressive political thought, 1900-64* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), pp. 194-195; Trevor Smith and Alison Young, 'Politics and Michael Young', in Geoff Dench, Tony Flower and Kate Gavron (eds.), *Michael Young at Eighty: The prolific public life of Michael Young* (Manchester, Carcanet Press), pp. 137-138; Young, *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 9, 11, 19.

<sup>19</sup> LHASC, Labour Party Papers, General Election Material, Draft Manifesto, 'The People's Party Appeals to the People', 1945; Pat Thane, 'The 'Big Society' and the 'Big State': Creative Tension or Crowding Out?', *Twentieth Century British History*, 23 (3), 2012, p. 423.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Crossman, 'Towards a Philosophy of Socialism', in Crossman (ed.), *New Fabian Essays* (London, Turnstile Press), pp. 25-29; also see Maurice Glasman, Jonathan Rutherford, Marc Stears and Stuart White (eds.), *The Labour Tradition and the Politics of Paradox* (London, Lawrence & Wishart), particularly the essay by Glasman himself, *Labour as a Radical Tradition*, pp. 14-34; Jonathan Derbyshire, 'The Labour Tradition and the Politics of Paradox: A New Road Map for the British Left', *New Statesman*, 25 July 2011; Robert Philpot (ed.), *The Purple Book: A Progressive Future for Labour* (London, Biteback), 2011.

<sup>21</sup> See Thane, 'Big Society', pp. 423-424; Pat Thane, 'Michael Young and Welfare', *Contemporary British History*, 19 (3), 2005, pp. 293-299; Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nicholas Crowson and Jean-Francois Mouhot, 'The Big Society': civic participation and the



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state in modern Britain', *History & Policy*, June 2010; also see Young, *Small Man*; Michael Young and Marianne Rigge, *Mutual Aid in a Selfish Society: A Plea for Strengthening the Co-operative Movement* (London, Mutual Aid Centre), 1979. He was later to develop some of these ideas in projects to 'explore the extent to which the powers and duties of the state and para-state bodies...can properly be...contracted out to non-statutory bodies at the local level...giving special attention to the social services'. In these, he claimed to be 'influenced by the zeitgeist [of] the new localism', which reflected the 'value placed on local initiatives and responsibility, the growth of citizens' movements which draw adherents from all ordinary political parties and from none': Young Papers YUNG 1/6/8, Michael Young, Dartington Institute of Community Studies, 'Project on the Local State', October 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Francis, *Ideas and Policies Under Labour, 1945-51: Building a New Britain* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), 1997, pp. 19-20; 'Economics and Ethics: The Nature of Labour's Socialism, 1945-1951', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6 (2), 1995, pp. 222, 234.

<sup>23</sup> Young, *Small Man*; p. 14; Labour Party, Labour Party Annual Conference Report (LPACR), London, Labour Party, 1950, p.29; Francis, 'Economics and Ethics', p. 240.

<sup>24</sup> Exeter, Devon Record Office, Dartington Archives, Papers of Leonard Knight Elmhirst LKE/G/35/D, Michael Young 1956-1961, Michael Young, 'Social Science and the Labour Party Programme', 1949; Francis, 'Economics and Ethics', pp. 235-237, 242; Geoff Dench, 'Family, Community and Politics: The Fertile Legacy of Michael Young', *Critical Social Policy*, 28 (3), 2008, p. 335; Jackson, *Equality*, p. 189; Jeremy Nuttall, *Psychological Socialism: The Labour Party and Qualities of Mind and Character, 1931 to the Present* (Manchester, Manchester University Press), 2006, pp. 90, 159.

<sup>25</sup> Young, 'British Socialist Way of Life'.

<sup>26</sup> Fabian Society Conference, 'Problems Ahead', Session II, G.D.H. Cole, 'Summary of Points'.

<sup>27</sup> Francis, 'Economic and Ethics', p. 235, 237-238, 240.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Young, *What is a Socialised Industry?* (London, Fabian Society and Gollancz), 1948, pp.13-19; *Small Man*, pp. 12-16; also see Dean, 'Lord Young'; David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London, Bloomsbury), pp. 225-226, 539-540; *Family Britain 1951-1957* (London, Bloomsbury), 2009, p. 252.

<sup>29</sup> Young, 'Social Science'; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, 'Controversial head for social science research', *The Guardian*, 6 August 1965.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy 1870-2033: An Essay on Education and Equality* (London, Penguin, 1961 [1958]), pp. 15-16; 'Anthony Crosland and Socialism', in Dick Leonard (ed.), *Crosland and New Labour* (London, Macmillan, 1999), pp. 51-52; Hennessy, 'Michael Young', p. 283.

<sup>31</sup> Fabian Society Conference, 'Problems Ahead', Session II, Michael Young, pp. 11-12; G.D.H. Cole, 'Summary of Points'.

<sup>32</sup> Fabian Society Conference, 'Problems Ahead', Session II, Allan Flanders, p. 11; Nicholas Ellison, *Egalitarian Thought and Labour Politics* (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 114-125; Jackson, *Equality*, pp. 183-196, 211; John Kelly, *Ethical Socialism and the Trade Unions: Allan Flanders and British Industrial Relations Reform* (London, Routledge, 2010), p. 62; also see Peter Hennessy, 'The 1945 General Election and the Post-war Period Remembered: Peter Hennessy Interviews Michael Young' *Contemporary Record*, 9 (1), 1995, pp. 88, 97; Young, *Small Man*, pp. 3-4, 13-14.

<sup>33</sup> Young, 'British Socialist Way of Life'; Manchester, Labour History Archive and Study Centre (LHASC), Labour Party Research Department, RD353, Michael Young, 'A Plea for

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Restatement of Socialism: notes on next Election manifesto', April 1950, pp. 1-2; Francis, *Ideas and Policies*, p. 53; Francis, 'Economics and Ethics', p.238.

<sup>34</sup> BLPES, Crosland Papers 13/23, Fabian Society Fourth Conference on 'Problems Ahead', Anthony Crosland, 'The Nature of Capitalist Crisis', Oxford, 14-15 October 1950; Young, *Rise of the Meritocracy*, pp. 40-42; Young, 'For Richer, For Poorer'; also see Asa Briggs, 'The Labour Party as Crucible', in Geoff Dench (ed.), *The Rise and Rise of Meritocracy* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), pp. 17-26; Ellison, *Egalitarian Thought*, pp. ix-xiii, 91, 126, 248.

<sup>35</sup> Young, 'Anthony Crosland'; Crosland Papers 13/8, Michael Young to Tony Crosland, accompanying notes on *The Future of Socialism*, headed 'Chapter 10. The Nature of Class', 30 January 1956; Young Papers YUNG 6/39, Michael Young to Nicholas Deakin, 13 February 1981; also see Jackson, *Equality*, pp. 186-187, 191-192.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Young to Henry Pelling; YUNG 2/1/2, Michael Young, 'Mr Bevan and the Middle Classes', n.d; Michael Young, 'The Leadership, the Rank and File, and Mr Bevan', *Political Quarterly*, 24 (1), January-March, 1953, pp. 99-107; also see Asa Briggs, *Michael Young: Social Entrepreneur* (London, Palgrave, 2001), pp. 83, 87, 89, 101, 115, 155, 90; Hennessy, 'Michael Young', pp. 281, 282-283.

<sup>37</sup> Young, *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 1-3, 9-14, 18ff; also see Hennessy, 'Michael Young', pp. 281, 283. Young argued that, while workplace inequalities persist, productive class cleavages will remain, but 'outside work the great divide is being bridged... The emphasis is slowly changing and class based on production is slowly giving way to status based on consumption as the centre of social gravity'. A reforming party of the centre-left would need to adapt its policies to 'appeal to this new consumer interest'. Such policies would include standing for 'immediate entry into the European Common Market', with 'all the advantages this would in the long run bring the consumer... through the greater competition it would promote'. The present political parties have been reticent to do so, partly for fear of offending hitherto dominant producer interests. It would also include recognition that public service provision should be more responsive to the wishes and choices of the consumer (in a similar way to private enterprise), and instigate 'an attack on the monopolies and restrictive practices by which Britain is more ridden than any other country' or, as Hennessy puts it, 'make the case for a kind of full enjoyment policy', allowing a more varied and divergent pattern of social life organised around the consumer rather than producers and manufacturers.

<sup>38</sup> Young Papers YUNG 10/1, Research Institute for Consumer Affairs, 'The Early Days of Consumers' Association: Interviews with CA's Founders and Those Who Carried On Their Work', Interview with Michael Young, 22 October 1984, p. 22; YUNG 6/39, Michael Young to Edith Rudlinger [Consumers' Association], 6 September 1982, p. 21; Michael Young to Henry Pelling; Young, *Chipped White Cups*, p. 19; Matthew Hilton, 'Michael Young and the Consumer Movement', *Contemporary British History*, 19 (3), 2005, p. 313; Clare Matheson, 'Profile: Which? The Golden Years', *BBC News*, 7 October 2007, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7029593.stm> [accessed 07/07/2014]; Paul Richards, 'Michael Young: socialism as social entrepreneurship', *LabourList*, 11 November 2010, available at <http://www.labourlist.org/michael-young-socialism-as-social-entrepreneurship> [accessed 19/01/2011].

<sup>39</sup> Young, *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 19-20; Michael Young, *The Chipped White Cups of Steel*, London, Unit 2, 1987; Young Papers YUNG 2/2/1, Michael Young, 'The Future of Consumer Affluence', paper delivered to the International Organisation of Consumers' Unions (IOCU) Conference, Baden, Germany, 30 June 1970; Lawrence Black, 'Consumerism in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Search for a Historical Movement', Economic History Association, available at: <http://eh.net/book-reviews/consumerism-twentieth-century-britain-search-historical-movement> [accessed 24/01/11]; 'Which?craft in

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Post-War Britain: The Consumers' Association and the Politics of Affluence', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 36 (1), 2004, p. 78; Briggs, *Michael Young*, p. 303; Hilton, 'Michael Young'; Smith and Young, 'Politics and Michael Young', p. 138; Ashley, 'fine art'.

<sup>40</sup> Fabian Society Papers E132/2, Note on merits of publication of Michael Young's pamphlet, *Chipped White Cups*, n.d; Note headed meeting with Michael Young, 1 September 1964; Shirley Williams to John Diamond, 23 September 1960; Margaret Cole to *The Economist*, 16 October 1960 Young, 'Anthony Crosland', p. 50.

<sup>41</sup> Young Papers YUNG 6/30, Michael Young, 'Note on a possible Reform League', n.d; YUNG 2/1/4, Michael Young, 'The New Radicalism, 25 April 1969, pp. 7, 9, 10, 31, 40; The Open Group, 'Social Reform in the Centrifugal Society', 10 September 1969, pp. 6-15.

<sup>42</sup> Ashley, 'fine art'.

<sup>43</sup> Hennessy, 'Michael Young', p. 282.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Willmott, 'Resolving the Dilemma of Bigness', in Dench, *Michael Young*, p. 1; Geoff Dench, Tony Flower and Kate Gavron, 'Introduction', in Dench, *Michael Young*, p. iii; Michael Young, *Social Scientist as Innovator* (Cambridge Massachusetts, Abt Books), 1983; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, Anthony Lewis, 'Learning to Think Small', *New York Times*, 31 May 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Young Papers YUNG 6/30, Michael Young, 'Proposal for Establishing a London Institute of Community Studies', July 1953.

<sup>46</sup> Ashley, 'fine art'; Malcolm Dean, 'Social reformer in FDR's image', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2001; Richards, 'Michael Young'; Research Institute for Consumer Affairs, 'Early Days of Consumers' Association', p.22; Tyler, 'Breakfast with a one-man welfare state'; Michael Young to Edith Rudlinger; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, 'Institute of Community Studies', *Sunday Times*, 2 August 1964; YUNG 2/1/3, Michael Young, 'Announcing the National Extension College', *Where?*, No. 14, 1963; YUNG 10/4, Michael Young, 'The Prospects for Open Learning', Lecture to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Open University, Churchill College, Cambridge, 15 April 1994; YUNG 6/39, Michael Young, 'Education for the New Work', n.d; YUNG 8/1, Michael Young, 'Do-gooder inc.', *The Guardian*, 16 June 1999; YUNG 6/30, Michael Young, 'School for Social Entrepreneurs', n.d.

<sup>47</sup> Young Papers YUNG 8/1, Michael Young, 'Do-gooders with savvy', *New Statesman*, 21 February 1997; Michael Young, 'Ghosts in a manifesto', *The Guardian*, 12 September 2000; also see Ashley, 'fine art'; Peter Cox, 'The other Mr Motivator', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 17 November 1995; Gavron, 'Michael Young'; Michael White, 'Innovative Thinker', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2002; Peter Wilby, 'Inspired by the father of Thatcherism', *Times Educational Supplement*, 21 October 2005; Willmott, 'ballad of Bethnal Green'.

<sup>48</sup> Young, *Rise of the Meritocracy*; Michael Young, 'Down with meritocracy', *The Guardian*, 29 June 2001; Young Papers YUNG 8/2, Malcolm Dean, 'The social disorder of merit', *The Guardian*, 31 December 1990; YUNG 8/1, Paul Barker, 'Meritocracy rules. OK?', *Independent on Sunday*, 6 August 1995; Roy Hattersley, 'It's no longer my party', *The Observer*, 24 June 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Young, *Rise of the Meritocracy*, p. 169; Michael Young, 'Middle England again', Part three of Lord Young's speech, 'Equality and Public Service', *The Guardian*, 11 September 2000; Richards, 'Michael Young'. In this society, greater power and assets would be devolved to citizens 'to boost a thriving civil society...and not simply add new arms to the state'.

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<sup>50</sup> University of Liverpool, David Owen Papers D709 3/23/6/15, Michael Young, *To Merge or Not to Merge*, London, Tawney Society, 1983, pp. 5, 7, 13-14; also see David Marquand, 'Inquest on a movement: Labour's defeat and its consequences', *Encounter*, July 1979, pp. 17-18.

<sup>51</sup> Young Papers YUNG 5/36, Jennifer Jenkins to Michael Young, 4 February 1981; Michael Young to Jennifer Jenkins, 10 June 1981; YUNG 6/39, Michael Young to Secretary, Tower Hamlets Labour Party, 27 March 1981; YUNG 3/1/2, Michael Young, 'The SDP's Roots in History', address to the inaugural meeting of the Manchester Tawney Society, 21 May 1982; Young, *To Merge or Not to Merge*, pp. 5-6; *Chipped White Cups*, pp. 9, 11, 18-19.

<sup>52</sup> Young, 'Why the SDP'; *To Merge or Not to Merge*, pp. 10, 13-14; Michael Young, *The SDP's Roots in History*, London, The Tawney Society, 1982, pp. 1-2; Michael Young and Peter Hall (ed.), *The Middle of the Night: Suggestions towards the Election Manifesto* (London, The Tawney Society, 1982), pp. 2-9; Evan Luard, *Socialism Without the State* (London, Macmillan, 1979); Stephen Mennell, *On Social Democracy* (London, The Tawney Society, 1983), pp. 3-4, 9-10; Shirley Williams, Interview, House of Lords, 25 June 2002.

<sup>53</sup> The Tawney Society was housed within Young's Institute of Community Studies base at 18 Victoria Park Square in Bethnal Green, and he became its first chairman.

<sup>54</sup> Young, 'The SDP's Roots in History'; *To Merge or Not to Merge*, pp. 10-13; Young Papers YUNG 3/1/2, Michael Young, 'Small Politics is Not Always Beautiful', talk given at a seminar at Haselby Castle, 22 August 1980; 'Democratic Socialism: What's left?', Fabian Centennial Weekend, Oxford, 8 January 1984.

<sup>55</sup> Young Papers YUNG 5/36, Michael Young to Roy Jenkins, 15 March 1988.

<sup>56</sup> Young, *Chipped White Cups*, p. 20; Michael Young to Nicholas Deakin.

<sup>57</sup> Young Papers 8/1, Michael Young, 'What do they stand for now?', *The Guardian*, 16 April 1990; 'Socialist chance of a lifetime', *The Guardian*, 10 September 1991.

<sup>58</sup> Young Papers YUNG 6/38, Note headed 'The Lord Young of Dartington', n.d.; Joyce Gould to Michael Young, 7 August 1989.

<sup>59</sup> See Ben Jackson, 'Corporatism and its Discontents: Pluralism, Anti-Pluralism and Anglo-American Industrial Relations, c. 1930-80', in Bevir, *Modern Pluralism*, p. 105; Stears, 'Guild Socialism', pp. 296-300; Paul Richards, 'Back to the Future: The Decentralist Tradition and Labour's Way Forward' in Philpot, *Purple Book*, p. 49; G.D. H. Cole, *Labour and the Commonwealth: A Book for the Younger Generation Common-Wealth* (London, Headley Bros, 1918), p. 37.

<sup>60</sup> Young, 'Small Politics'; Young Papers YUNG 3/1/1, Michael Young, 'Is Equality a Dream?', draft typescript of lecture, n.d. [November 1972].

<sup>61</sup> Richards, 'Michael Young'.

<sup>62</sup> Cruddas, 'Power and One Nation'; Jon Cruddas and Jonathan Rutherford, *One Nation: Labour's political renewal* (London, One Nation Register, 2014), pp.8-9, 12-13;

<sup>63</sup> Painter, 'A late triumph'; Richards, 'Back to the Future', pp. 46, 48-49, 59.