the phrase *Universal Man* to sum them up. Keynes was not a man for all times nor was he a man for all places. He was most certainly a multi-faceted and multi-talented human being (surely Davenport-Hines' object in deploying the term *universal*), but Keynes was also an Englishman, and an Englishman from a particular era. Keynes was an Edwardian Englishman. He was – as we all are – a product of his place and his times, even if he was often at odds with England's insularity and conservatism. He was the champion of an ethical outlook that was the very antithesis of values that had come to be associated with Victorian Britain, the world into which he had been born. But Keynes' embrace of individualism, his love of the arts and support for the avant-garde, rarely meant he was rejected by his English peers and contemporaries, or that he rejected them. They appear to have accepted him as the possessor of a fine English soul and of great English sensibilities – even though he often articulated radical notions and endorsed unconventional morals. It is hard to imagine that such a prominent public figure could, in twenty-first-century Britain, have enjoyed the degree of freedom Keynes enjoyed from media curiosity and intrusion.

This is a book about a truly remarkable man, not a renaissance man or a superman or even a universal man. I thoroughly recommend it as a most enjoyable and informative read.

Ed Randall is a retired academic and former Liberal Democrat councillor. His publications include A Union for Health: Strengthening the European Union's role in health*;* Food, Risk and Politics: Scare, scandal and crisis – insights into the risk politics of food safety*;* How and How Not to Face the Future: A response to the Liberal Democrats' Facing the Future*. He was joint editor of the* Dictionary of Liberal Thought *with Duncan Brack.*

Social democracy versus socialism

Patrick Bell, *The Labour Party in Opposition 1970–1974* (Routledge, 2016)
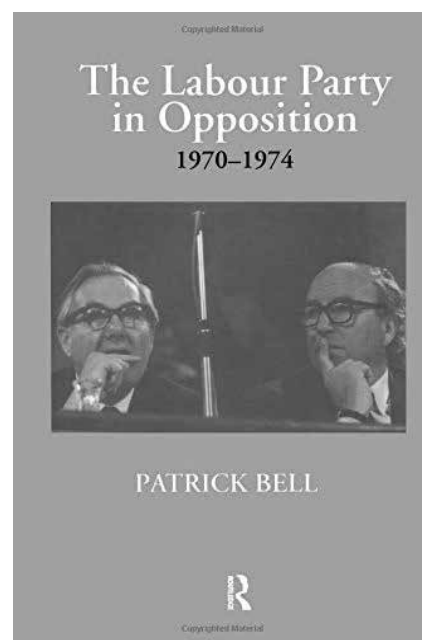
Review by **Michael Meadowcroft**

PERCEPTIONS OF HOW a party copes with the years of opposition usually rely on statements, interviews and its efforts to present a favourable and united front, illuminated from time to time by leaks and lobbying by dissidents. The value of an examination of the Opposition through a specific parliament is that, if rigorous, it draws aside the curtain and exposes the factions and tensions. Patrick Bell has done a very thorough job of trawling through all the available committee papers and interviewing key individuals. The result is that the reader gets a vivid picture of the deep left–right split at all levels of the party and the great skill of Harold Wilson as leader in keeping the whole show on the road. Bell also shows how senior staff at Labour headquarters were themselves partisan and on occasion resorted to somewhat underhand tactics in the preparation and timing of documents in order to pursue their views.

The roots of the struggle within the Labour Party between social democracy and hegemonic socialism were planted during its time in opposition. The balance of power within the party shifted significantly from the parliamentary party to the membership and, often separately, to the major trade unions. Patrick Bell painstakingly traces the movement in policy via papers prepared for the national executive committees and, finally, to the party conference. With the accession of Jack Jones to the leadership of the Transport & General Workers' Union – the largest in the country – and with Hugh Scanlon heading up the engineering workers union, there were powerful figures on the left of the party who were ready and able to demonstrate their clout by going direct to the party conference with their block votes rather than participate in the deliberative committee process.

Tony Benn's skilful manoeuvring as de facto leader of the left is traced through his attention to committee detail and his ability to produce the apposite excoriating phrase, as when

Heath abandoned his antipathy to 'lame ducks' by, in effect, nationalising Rolls Royce within five months of taking office. Benn later enjoyed describing the Labour Party programme of 1972 as 'The most radical and comprehensive programme ever produced by the Labour Party', which guaranteed a great embarrassment to the then deputy leader, Roy Jenkins. According to Harold Wilson, Jenkins held the 'lead position' as the putative leader of the party to follow Wilson until his resignation from the deputy leadership and from the Shadow Cabinet in April 1972. There is long detail on the on the events leading up to his resignation, with Wilson undermining him by changing his mind over a referendum on the Common Market.

Not all those on the right of the party were followers of Jenkins: there were some who hankered after Antony Crosland, but he never stirred himself to follow up his seminal book, *The Future of Socialism*, and thus disappointed his acolytes. Bill Rodgers – later the most effective operator of the SDP's 'Gang of Four' – applied his organisational and 'fixing' skills to the Campaign for Democratic Socialism in an attempt to make Jenkins' role more effective.

It is interesting that the Liberals do not rate even a footnote in this narrative. In different circumstances, such as during the Lib–Lab Pact of 1977–8, the Liberals might have had influence as a second opposition party making life more difficult for Edward Heath. However, the Liberals had polled just 7.5 per cent at the 1970 general election,

electing only six MPs. They hardly figured on the electoral scene, slowly clambering up to 10 per cent in the polls by April 1972, but dropping back to 8 per cent in October 1972. Less than eighteen months later, at the February 1974 general election, the Liberals polled 19.3 per cent – equivalent to some 23 per cent if all the seats had been contested. What transformed the party into such an influential force? It was simply a run of by-election successes starting with Cyril Smith winning Rochdale in late October 1972, almost doubling the party's poll rating overnight. This was followed by gains in Sutton and Cheam, Ripon, the Isle of Ely and Berwick. These pushed the poll rating up to 28 per cent, but, with the lack of winnable seats thereafter, it slipped back to 20 per cent immediately before the February 1974 general election. On such electoral vagaries do the Liberal Party's fortunes depend!

Michael Meadowcroft was MP for Leeds West, 1983–87.

From liberal to authoritarian

Paul Lendvai, *Orbán: Europe's New Strongman* (C. Hurst & Co., 2017)
Review by **David Steel**

THIS NEW BIOGRAPHY of Hungary's prime minister outlines his transition from young Liberal firebrand, in 1989 demanding the removal of all Russian troops, to the present-day right-wing autocratic ruler of his country and pal of President Putin. It is an astonishing story, told here in remarkable detail.

I first met Orbán together with his young Fidesz party colleagues in the dying days of the communist regime. They were an attractive and idealistic bunch and duly joined Liberal International very much under the tutelage of its then president, the former German economics minister Otto Graf Lambsdorff. Indeed Orbán, as the newly elected leader of his party, hosted a memorable congress of Liberal International (LI) in Budapest in 1993. Shortly afterwards, I was president of LI and hosting a meeting of the organisation's bureau at home in Aikwood Tower in my Scottish Borders constituency. We took over the next-door farmhouse to accommodate some of them, but in the tower we had Lambsdorff and the prime ministers of the Netherlands and Iceland. I told Orbán that, as he was both the youngest and the smallest, he would have to make do with the sofa bed in my study. He first became prime minister of Hungary in 1998–2002, and during that first period I called on him saying that now he was prime minister he could have a bed if he ever came back. But he never did, relinquishing his party's membership of LI and preparing for his eventual return to office in 2010.

Lendvai chronicles all his splits with former friends and colleagues, his embracing of the church as a former atheist, his steady garrotting of free newspapers and broadcast media, his ending of an independent judiciary, his anti-refugee rhetoric and successful manipulation of the electoral system and the country's constitution. He cites his popular football following with the dry comment that Orbán 'always wanted to be the referee, the linesman, the centre-forward and the goalkeeper all at once.' He also quotes his Hungarian biographer as being 'a man who almost automatically believes in the veracity of whatever he considers to be politically useful to him' (reminds me of a current cabinet minister here!) and an American political scientist describing his strategy as 'a highly centralised, partially illiberal democracy, which systematically undermines the structures of checks and balances'.

The author clearly has come to hate his subject – his detailing of financial manipulation is one thing, but his hints at personal corruption lack substance. What is especially sad is that Orbán, who began his climb of the ladder with a Soros scholarship, has now run a virulent campaign against George Soros and his endowed Central European University. Altogether this is an alarming, worrying and illuminating tale.

David Steel (Lord Steel of Aikwood) was MP for Roxburgh, Selkirk & Peebles / Tweeddale, Ettrick & Lauderdale 1965–97, and Leader of the Liberal Party 1976–88.