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Beyond the patronage state



by Tony Wright

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Beyond the patronage state

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Preface

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There is a growing sense that something is badly wrong with the way Britain is governed. Even those who loudly proclaim their loyalty to the Ancient Constitution seem moved more by habit than conviction. The cause of political reform has ceased to live at the periphery of debate and now occupies centre stage. The establishment of the Nolan Committee on a standing basis, whatever the original intention and eventual outcome, is an official admission that business as usual is no longer an option.

So what's wrong? In short, that governments have too much power and those who should hold them to account too little. I have, elsewhere, described this system as a 'dominocracy'. In the name of parliamentary sovereignty, Parliament has become the pathetic creature of the executive. In the name of ministerial responsibility, real accountability is dissolved. The constitution is what is made up as governments go along. This endangers liberties, erodes legitimacy, encourages bad legislation and threatens the integrity of all intermediate institutions. A modern Bagehot might describe the efficient secret of British politics as the ability of ministers to do what they can get away with in exchange for being shouted at once a fortnight in the House of Commons.

Orthodoxy

This system was not invented in 1979. Orthodoxy of both Left and Right has traditionally supported it. What has happened since 1979 is that the essential nature of the system has been thrown into sharp relief as one party has ruthlessly exploited its potential. The period has provided a crash course of constitutional education; and its lasting legacy may well be to have nourished the cause of reform. The challenge for Labour is not to inherit this system but to change it. Its task is to constitutionalise a more democratic British state.

The issue of patronage is central to the reform agenda. At its heart is the secretive and unscrutinised appropriation by government ministers of the

power of appointment. It is the apotheosis of a whole system of political self-regulation which is now falling apart at the seams. Again, it was not invented in 1979 but it has been dramatically exploited and highlighted in the new world of contracted-out government inhabited by agency chiefs and quango kings. The argument in this pamphlet is that the democratic reform of patronage is a central part of the larger project to constitutionalise the British state.

This argument is developed by bringing together the evidence on the current abuse of patronage power (chapter 1); suggesting that the issue raises some challenging questions, not least for the Labour Party, which go beyond a mere preference for election over appointment (chapter 2); and exploring some of the defining features of the new patronage state (chapter 3). This is followed by a review of recent official discussion of the public appointments issue (chapter 4) and some of the main evidence on how the current system for making public appointments works (chapter 5). Proposals for reform are then discussed (chapter 6).

It would have been possible to leave the argument there and some may even wish I had done so. The final two chapters deliberately seek to widen the argument. First, by suggesting that the taming of patronage should be seen as an opportunity to develop new forms of civic participation (chapter 7) and, second, by linking the patronage power of ministers to other forms of patronage and to the larger project of political renewal (chapter 8). It is important that the excesses of the new patronage state are remedied. It is even more important, though, that the system of which it is an expression is attended to. A genuinely new politics demands no less.

The new patronage state

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When Baroness Denton said that she could not remember "knowingly appointing a Labour sympathiser" to any of the hundreds of public appointments in her gift (*Independent on Sunday*, 28 March 1993) she provided instant illumination of the new patronage state.

So too, but less unwittingly, did Baroness Robson during a House of Lords debate on quangos in January 1994: "When I retired from the regional health authority for family reasons in 1982, I was asked if I had any suggestions to make about who might be my successor. I went to see the then Secretary of State to recommend a man whom he might approve. I expected to be questioned about why I was putting that person forward. When I saw the Secretary of State he asked me whether I knew what the man's political opinions were. I said, "No, I am afraid that I have not asked him. I think that it is irrelevant". The Secretary of State said, "But you do realise that almost every MP in your region is a Tory MP and we have to make certain that there is compatibility?" (*Official Report*, 18 January, 1994, col. 620).

This doctrine of political "compatibility" would raise a hollow laugh in Wales, where the absence of elected Conservatives has been met by an imposition of appointed Conservatives of assorted kinds. The Welsh 'quango kings' (such as Sir Donald Walters, Dr. Gwyn Jones, Mr. Glyn Davies and Sir Geoffrey Inkin) typically hold a range of public appointments bestowed by a Conservative Secretary of State, without external scrutiny or in at least one case even references, preside over key public institutions and vast amounts of public money, the stewardship of which in the case of the Development Board for Rural Wales and the Welsh Development Agency has been distinguished by financial irregularities of a high order (K. Morgan and E. Roberts, *The Democratic Deficit*, Cardiff University, Department of City and Regional Planning, 1993). In Wales a minority party has set out to make itself into a majority party not through election but through its control of the public appointment process.

The same process is at work in every major activity of government. The NHS 'reforms' have been characterised by the removal of elected representatives from health authorities and their replacement by ministerial appointees, while the new provider trusts have required their trustees in the form of chairs and non-executive directors who are congenial to the appointing minister. Just how

congenial has been revealed by a raft of surveys: one looked at 185 trust chairs and found that 62 had "clear links" with the Conservative Party (*Independent*, 17 March 1994) while nearly three quarters of all trust chairs had their background in private business. A recent survey by the independent Labour Research Department of all 482 NHS Trusts found that 121 trusts – a quarter of the total – had someone associated with the Conservative Party among their non-executive members (LRD, October 1994). A sprinkling of spouses of Conservative MPs have been discovered on trust boards.

When the country's largest health authority, the West Midlands Regional Health Authority, hit the rocks it was chaired by a former chairman of the Federation of University Conservative Associations; he was succeeded by the president of Chester Conservative Association.

Hands on

After World War Two, members of the Central Advisory Council on Education were told by the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education, John Maud, that their duty was "to die in the last ditch if the politicians tried to get their hands on education". The new patronage state has made such heroism unnecessary, as new bodies and new people have simply swept aside the old. When appointees are insufficiently compliant or exhibit excessive independence of mind (as with Duncan Graham, when chair of the National Curriculum Council and Philip Halsey at the School Examinations and Assessment Council) they are replaced. Thus it was that Lord Griffiths of Fforesfach, whose only qualification was that he had been head of Mrs. Thatcher's Downing Street policy unit, was installed as chairman of the Schools Examinations and Assessment Council in 1991-93. Nor has such crudely partisan patronage disappeared with Mrs. Thatcher; far from it. The recently formed Funding Agency for Schools (which the Government would like to see as the eventual replacement for local education authorities) has as its chairman Sir Christopher Benson, also chairman of the Sun Alliance Group (which has given £280,000 to the Conservative Party over the last six years) as well as a director of the MEPC property group and the chairman of the Costain property group (both also donors to the Conservative Party). With him on the Funding Council are Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons (which donated £25,000 to the Conservatives in 1992); Edward Lister, the Conservative Leader of Wandsworth council; and Sir Robert Balchin, chairman of the South East Conservative Party. The new Teacher Training Agency has been blessed with the appointment of ideological zealots of the educational right (in the shape of Baroness Cox and Professor Anthony O'Hear).

Other areas tell the same story. There is the saga of the Prisons Ombudsman, where the Home Secretary (whose further ambition, it will be recalled, was to appoint the members of new local police authorities) abandoned a selection procedure involving the Civil Service Commission and public advertising, rejected all three of the distinguished candidates produced by this process as

ideologically unsound (this for a post recommended by the Woolf Report as requiring clear independence) and proceeded to take control of the appointment back into the Home Office. Sometimes the patronage is at one remove. Thus it was that Ian Byatt, the water industry regulator (and himself a patronage appointment), not only removed consumer champion Mrs. Diana Scott from the chair of the Yorkshire consumer committee, but appeared to have lubricated the consumer service committees with friends and water industry contacts: "People appointed include an old school friend, a construction company director whose firm has received millions of pounds worth of contracts from water companies, and the wife of a former Treasury colleague. Others included the former director of a bank holding water company accounts and a professor who was also a paid consultant to Ofwat" (*Daily Telegraph*, 13 April 1994).

Tories to a man...and woman

Trawls through the names of those at the head of the major quangos reveal a consistent picture. One survey of the largest 38 quangos found that 40% of those people running them had links of some kind with the Conservative Party – "a picture of party patronage reminiscent of the rotten boroughs of the eighteenth century" (*The Observer*, 4 July, 1993). An analysis by the *Financial Times* of the chairs of the 10 largest NHS quangos and the 30 largest non-NHS quangos found a dominance of businessmen (most of whom had attended public schools) and the only identifiable political allegiance was to the Conservatives: "If there is a new elite running Britain's public services...it appears the best qualifications to join are to be a businessman with Conservative leanings" (Patronage determines who serves at the top, *FT*, January 14, 1993). The BBC *Here and Now* programme has revealed that 24 spouses of Conservative MPs and peers have been given quango jobs, as have 33 unsuccessful Conservative candidates from the last election (2 November, 1994); and directors of companies which donate to the Conservative Party are three times as likely to have jobs on quangos than those of companies which do not donate (30 November, 1994).

This is the new patronage state. Its manifest lack of legitimacy is corroding the foundations of our public services and institutions. Its lack of accountability amounts to a major democratic deficit (and, as the recent devastating report from the Public Accounts Committee confirmed, there is a financial and probity deficit too). Britain's leading historian of Italy, Denis Mack Smith, finds comparisons between the two countries: "there has obviously been patronage and clientism on a huge scale" (*Independent on Sunday*, 3 April, 1994). A similar public reaction is also evident, with 61 percent in a recent Gallup poll (*Daily Telegraph*, 10 October, 1994) agreeing that the Conservatives now gave the impression of being "very sleazy and disreputable". This is bad news for the Conservatives; but it is worse news for our politics. The temptation for Labour is merely to inherit the resources of the patronage state. The public interest task is to reform it.

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Beyond the rhetoric

Patronage is as old as politics, so it is well to be clear about what is "new" about the new patronage. It is sometimes pointed out that Labour governments of the past also used the patronage powers of ministers to appoint their friends and allies to public bodies.

This is undoubtedly so (12 of the 40 chairmen of the largest public bodies in 1978-9 were Labour supporters, with members of the General Council of the TUC in particularly heavy demand as utility players across the quango park) and serves as a useful reminder that we are dealing with an issue of more than transient significance. It is also worth saying at the outset that vast tracts of the world of public appointments continue to be occupied by people who receive no payment for their public service and whose only reference point is a sense of public interest. When patronage is abused, such people suffer guilt by improper association.

We are accustomed to regarding free elections as the defining characteristic of democratic political systems, but this can easily lead us to overlook the fact that there is a considerable variety of ways in which people can come to occupy public offices of responsibility within such formally democratic systems. It may be convenient to pretend that the "government" of the country is represented by those few hundred members of the majority party returned in elections every four or five years, or even by the smaller number amongst them who become office holders, supplemented at local level by the thousands of elected councillors; but the reality is that the daily government of the country is done by many thousands of other people who are not elected but who nevertheless exercise enormous power and responsibility. Indeed elections may be seen as a legitimating trigger mechanism, enabling those (few) who are elected to bestow governing functions on those (many) who are not.

Elections matter, but not just for the reasons traditionally supposed.

Consider some of the ways in which people come to occupy public offices. There is lot, or random selection (now sometimes called statistical representation), the hallmark of classical Athenian democracy which regarded lot as far superior to election as a democratic device and still in evidence in jury selection. There is inheritance, now largely eclipsed by the advance of democracy but surviving institutionally in the House of Lords and the monarchy.

There is competition (of which election is of course a variant) and this is the method which, since the reforms of the last century, has been used for recruitment to the civil service. Then there is patronage, where a patron has the right to appoint those of his choice to public offices. This right may be more or less extensive; constrained or unconstrained; and exercised properly or improperly. In Britain the patronage powers of ministers are vast, the constraints minimal and the dangers enormous.

Old story

Yet in modern times patronage has received remarkably little attention. A PEP study in 1960 noted that the "growth in appointment amounts almost to a new patronage" and suggested that "the time has come to examine it, to document it, to regularise it and to establish for it public standards of propriety and good practice" (*Government by Appointment*, Political and Economic Planning, July 1960). The time may have come but, characteristically, it also went. There was a full-length academic survey at the same period, which is worth recalling for its intriguing conclusion: "At present the abuses are not grave due to adequate ethical standards in the conduct of public business. Perhaps the greatest danger for the future is the possibility that one party will exercise uninterrupted power for too long a period. Temptations would grow as security bred carelessness" (Peter Richards, *Patronage In British Government*, 1963, p. 257). A Labour MP, Maurice Edelman, took up the issue in the early 1970s, keeping an eagle eye on public appointments and arguing that "the Patronage State has sneaked its way back behind the planned society" (*The Patronage Explosion*, *New Statesman*, 11 July, 1975). But this was a lone crusade, at odds with the prevailing corporatism and it found its more authentic voice in those on the political right – notably the Conservative MP Philip Holland – who could integrate their assault on quangos and the associated patronage with the larger ideological assault on the 'big' state itself. Quangos had become "the outriders of the corporate state", encouraging "an abuse of patronage" and exploiting "a new kind of nominated power extracted, largely unnoticed, from the people's elected representatives" (Philip Holland, *The Governance of Quangos*, 1981, p. 27).

This brief review should be enough to indicate that here is an issue that is not quite as straightforward as it may seem. It requires analysis as well as rhetoric and raises some of the most basic and challenging questions about the nature of government. The fact that patronage power in Britain has remained largely unexamined and undisciplined tells a larger story about the character of our constitutional arrangements; and it therefore has to be connected to that larger story.

The argument here is that patronage has to be constitutionalized; but so does the state itself. The further fact that a decade and more ago the political attack on patronage came from the Right, but has now been taken up by the Left, suggests that it is necessary to establish exactly what is being attacked and

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why and what remedies are being proposed. It is also necessary to consider the variety of ways in which people may come to occupy public offices and the appropriateness of different routes in relation to different offices. This requires some hard thinking, an irreverence toward routine assumptions and an infusion of political imagination.

There is a particular challenge for the Left here, or rather several related challenges. The problem with the current attack on quangos and patronage is that it is too easy; at some point it will be necessary to go further. It is simply not plausible to say that quangos will be 'abolished' or that they will be 'taken over' by local authorities. It is worth recalling that the previous wave of assault on quangos came from the Right and was part of that wider counter-revolution against the activities of the modern state. As such it was entirely consistent and plausible; but it can scarcely serve as the argument of a Left that wants to use public power for public purposes. The real challenge is to find effective and accountable forms of extended government, not to pretend that extended government can or should be rolled back. This means identifying the defects of current arrangements, of which unconstrained patronage is certainly one (which is why the term 'patronage body' is in many ways preferable to the ubiquitous 'quango').

Nor is it enough to repeat a simple liturgy about election (good) and appointment (bad). Even apart from its basic inadequacy, it inhibits fresh thinking about new mechanisms of representation and accountability which are badly needed. This theme will be returned to later. It is also useful to recall that, at least on one view and once upon time, quangos could be seen as providing a quasi-independent buffer (the BBC, or the UGC) against the depredations of the state, carrying with them a culture of public interest and public service as well as extending participation (for a sturdy statement of this view see Richard Hoggart, *An Imagined Life*, 1993, pp. 271-2). As events have shown, this underestimates their constitutional fragility, but remains an important aspiration nevertheless. It should not be necessary to add, though possibly still is, that the challenge for Labour is not simply to substitute one kind of patronage for another.

The excesses of the Conservative years in this respect are not to be regarded as an alluring example of what is possible (although they do provide this), but as a compelling argument for reform. Attacking the patronage state is the easy bit; the real test for a new politics is the preparedness to change it.

Patronage – old and new

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The scale of the task is formidable. Although patronage may be inseparable from politics, this elementary observation should not be allowed to diminish the significance of the New Patronage that has now established itself in Britain.

It is different in both scale and character from the routine patronage that preceded it. The kind of picture glimpsed in the first section here is more reminiscent of the Old Patronage (and the Old Corruption) that was a hallmark of eighteenth century politics and which finally issued in the great political and administrative reforms of the nineteenth century. One kind of patronage was squeezed out of the system; but another kind has squeezed its way back in. Its reform will require no less energy and vigour.

The age of Walpole had patronage as its lubricant, so too did the age of Thatcher (and her successor). The former age provoked the reforming endeavours of Stafford Northcote and Charles Trevelyan, who set about transforming a civil service distinguished by nepotism and jobbery into one rooted in open competition and canons of public service. The latter age needs to provoke an equivalent response. In a memorandum to Gladstone in 1854 Trevelyan urged that "the bearing of Patronage upon the public service...demands serious attention" and continued: "From the broken down spendthrift who is sent to repair his fortune in a Colonial Government, or the infirm, incompetent General who covers our name with disgrace and increases the horror of war a hundred-fold, or the Admiral of notoriously impracticable temper who goads our sailors into mutiny, to the idle useless young man who is provided for in a Public Office because he is unfit to earn a livelihood in any of the open professions the efficiency of the Public Establishments is habitually sacrificed to this system. Patronage in all its varied forms is the great abuse and scandal of the present age..." (*Thoughts on Patronage*, quoted in Richards, p. 45-6). So it is of our age. Perhaps the nearest contemporary echo of Trevelyan's words is to be found in the verdict of the Public Accounts Committee, after producing a catalogue of irregularities and inefficiencies, that there is "a departure from the standards of public conduct which have mainly been established during the past 140 years" (Eighth Report, 1994).

Leviathan

How has this come about? Its backcloth and precondition is the modern growth in the state and the public administration to service it. The reforms of the last century meant that, from about 1870 onwards, the civil service ceased to be a patronage service; but from the same period, and accelerating in the course of the twentieth century, new public bodies, boards and agencies were created and these provided the terrain for a new patronage. However, this remained relatively limited, uncontested and benign, until the developments of the post-1979 period. The potential for abuse was already there, but it required a particular conjuncture of conditions and circumstances to translate potential into practice. Three factors are of crucial significance in the construction of this new patronage state.

First (and anticipated in the warnings from a generation ago) is the fact that one party has exercised power including the power of appointment over such a prolonged period. Without the shuffling of the pack that comes from regular changes of government, the personnel of the appointive state have come to be formed in the image of the ruling regime. On one side, those doing the appointing have grown accustomed to confusing their stewardship of government with ownership of the state, increasingly careless of traditional constraints. On the other side, those who are appointed (along with many of those who are governed) come to reflect and accept a culture of hegemony. These are the dangers inherent in any period of extended rule by one party; but the patronage state constructed in recent years, with all its abuses and excesses, has also needed a second factor to produce its particular character.

This is the extent to which the party in power has seen itself as engaged upon an ideological mission to change the character of the state and so needing its army of shock troops to engage with the enemy on every front. Patronage was seen as a powerful weapon, providing the means whereby non-believers could be despatched and those of true faith installed, giving a new character to public institutions and new directions to state activities. The ruthlessly partisan deployment of patronage power became endemic. As *The Times* (arguing for "a more tolerant use of patronage" after the 1992 election) put it: "Mrs. Thatcher's approach to patronage was the simple rule: "Those who are not with me are against me" (*Not One of Us*, 14 April, 1992). This approach had a further aspect, with considerable significance of its own, for the partisans who were deployed from the private to the public sectors were frequently uninhibited by public service traditions or conventional public interest baggage. Thus they differed sharply from the old Great and the Good (memorably chronicled by Peter Hennessy, *The Great And The Good*, PSI, 1986) who had staffed the post-war appointive state. They were (to amend Philip Holland's phrase) the private outriders of the rolled-back state. If there often seemed to be a clash of cultures (some of which provided material for public auditors), it is because

there was. Their mission was not to serve a traditional concept of the public interest but to subvert it.

The third and crucial factor in the construction of the new patronage state has been the extension of government by appointment and the contraction of government by election over a range of key state activities, especially those activities formerly the responsibility of local authorities but increasingly the province of a 'new magistracy'.

At the same time, the conversion of much central government activity into agencies with their own chief executives has raised parallel issues about appointments and accountability. What we are witnessing is "the pernicious growth of government patronage that has accompanied the spread of quangos" (*The Economist*, 6 August, 1994). The quango state is necessarily also the patronage state. The extent and character of this development is now well charted: that there are no less than 5,521 executive quangos swallowing up nearly a third of annual central government spending and with inadequate and contradictory arrangements for accountability and governance (*Ego Trip: Extra-governmental Organizations in the United Kingdom and their Accountability*, Democratic Audit/Charter 88, 1994; also J. Plummer, *The Governance Gap: Quangos and Accountability*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Demos, 1994). Not only is this profoundly embarrassing for a government which promised a quango cull (so embarrassing, it seems, that some appearance at least of remedial action is now promised), but it betrays a wider purpose. Whereas "the post-war G and G were deployed almost exclusively on advisory tasks, not executive" (Hennessy, 1986, p. 57), the new patronage class is a product of a political project to replace elective with appointive government over wide tracts of executive territory in order to advance the ideological purposes of the party in power without having to recognise rival legitimacies or the pluralities of mediating institutions. It is scarcely surprising that this should provoke cries of anguish from those (like John Gray, *The Undoing of Conservatism*, Social Market Foundation, 1994) who had believed that conservatism was a political tradition of a different kind.

For present purposes, though, it is enough to record that the potential for a new patronage state was always there, in a political system that gave enormous and unconstrained powers to governing politicians but depended upon a play-the-game political culture to stop them abusing these powers. However, in the conjuncture of conditions described here, the restraints fell away and the system revealed its awesome potential. That is why it is necessary to attend to the system as well as to expose the abuses. A useful start is by looking at how public appointments are made.

5 Public appointments: the official view

The simple and essential fact is that patronage belongs to ministers. Its transmission line fuses the power of appointment inherited by the executive from the Crown with the additional powers taken by ministers for themselves.

It is true that in some cases ministers have a duty to consult about appointments and in certain other cases that appointees have a devolved responsibility for making further appointments; but these are no more than glosses on the face of ministerial patronage (for example, official advice to Regional Chairmen on NHS Trust nominations emphasizes the need for nominations to "reflect the views of MPs consulted" and that "ministers will wish to be advised of any potential political problems"). Furthermore, patronage power is merely the expression in one area of a larger constitutional truth about the nature of the polity and any serious reform (as distinct from the kind of cosmetic adjustments presently being considered to assuage political embarrassment) will have to connect with a similarly large reform agenda aimed at constitutionalising the British state.

What is most interesting, because most characteristic, about official discussion of the public appointments system over many years is precisely the fact that its most fundamental aspect the patronage power of ministers has been treated as a no-go area. This is rather like confining a visit to London to a tour of the outer suburbs. Thus we have this priceless pronouncement from a 1974 inter-departmental working party on key public appointments: "We were required to suggest only those modifications which retained the 'letter and substance' of individual Ministerial responsibility for appointments. We thought that Ministers' present freedom to choose a means of selection suitable to circumstances without commitment to any fixed procedures was, in any case, a condition precedent" (*Key Appointments in the Public Sector*, Report of Special Review Team, December 1974). So patronage was, in that memorable phrase, "a condition precedent" and any procedural changes had to be framed within it.

This 1974 review had been commissioned by the Prime Minister, confined its attention almost exclusively to nationalised industry appointments (as the

first stage of a wider review that never materialised) and is noticeable only because it supported the idea of a central unit concerned with appointments – the genesis of the Public Appointments Unit established in 1975. This was in no sense intended to be a radical initiative. In the hilarious civil service prose of the review, while a central unit might act as a focal point for names "this would perhaps best come about by a deliberate policy not to disguise its existence rather than by actively publicising it: the object would be to let it become known to those who were seriously interested rather than risk the frivolous applications which might come from wide advertisement". It is scarcely surprising that a unit rooted in the clarion call of "a deliberate policy not to disguise its existence" was not destined to change the world of public appointments, nor that the issue would need to be returned to.

New thinking?

It was returned to, though only tangentially, in the report prepared by Sir Leo Pliatzky in 1980 when the new Conservative Government was in quango-hunting mode.

Arguing that quangos were to be regarded as non-departmental and certainly not as non-governmental, the report pointed out that "one of the reasons given for concern about them is that they may represent not only a spread of patronage but a concealed growth of government" (*Report on Non-Departmental Public Bodies*, 1980). However the doctrine of "condition precedent" ruled out further discussion of the patronage implications and Pliatzky confined his attention to the taxonomy of public bodies.

It was not until the end of the Thatcher era that the whole issue of public appointments was again reviewed and this time in a comprehensive and systematic way by a Cabinet Office official (*Review of Public Appointments Procedures*, 1989). This is a most revealing and interesting report. It repeats the fact that the principle of ministerial appointment is "taken as given"; but it also registers the "sharp contrast" between this system of "largely unfettered patronage" and "the requirement for 'fair and open competition' applicable to civil service appointments, and to appointments to the staff of many of the bodies overseen by public appointees". That is indeed the crucial and indefensible contrast. Although it is, necessarily, accepted and defended in this report, it is important that it should be identified and emphasised. The report builds on it to suggest a variety of ways in which the public appointments process could be improved (from a position in which "most public appointees are middle-aged, male and white" and are in the personal orbit of ministers, officials and existing appointees). Recommendations include more advertising ("an under-used technique"), executive search, greater coherence in departmental procedures, positive action to increase the representation of younger people, women and ethnic minorities, improvements to the central list and an enhanced role for the Public Appointments Unit ("mainly used for second rank and part-time posts").

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There is a further respect in which this 1989 review is particularly interesting and reflective of the changing context in which ministerial patronage had come to be exercised. Noting that there were 51,000 public appointments, with ministers making 10,000 new appointments or re-appointments each year, not only was this a major function of government but "new appointments are often the most effective means at Ministers' disposal for changing the direction of arms' length public bodies". In other words, patronage was to be seen as a crucial engine of policy, with appointees no longer charged with the task merely of running public bodies but with a mission to redirect them in line with the prevailing ideology. There was a "general...trend, especially in executive bodies, away from a consensual approach" and this meant that "departments have needed to take a closer direct interest in appointments to public bodies for which they are responsible". Thus there was a shift from an earlier position when appointments involved a largely passive receipt of nominees from external bodies such as the CBI and the TUC to a position of active departmental and ministerial engagement with the appointments process (and where "the current focus of attention lies mainly with those with a business/management background"). This movement from nominees to appointees captures the changing face of patronage.

What emerges from this recent history of official thinking about the public appointments process is a continuing recognition of the need to make reforms in the interests of efficiency but within the parameters firmly set by the patronage power of ministers, which includes the power to use public appointments to change the character and direction of public bodies. The current internal text for government departments, the *Guide on Public Appointments Procedures* produced by the Cabinet Office (last issue, September 1992), reflects this framework in giving "how to do it" instructions and advice to departments. But it is, inevitably, a framework of tension and conflict, as the ambition to widen the appointments process collides with the iron grip of patronage. That tension has to be removed; and that means attending to patronage itself.

Mapping the system

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Before considering how patronage can be reformed, there is still a little more to be said about how it works. We have seen that ministerial patronage is the fundamental principle of the public appointments process, colouring and conditioning everything it touches, but some flesh needs to be put on this bone.

This is far from an easy or straightforward task. Anchored as it is in secrecy and patronage, information on the appointments process is fragmentary and elusive. There is no official register of public appointees (though one has been produced for Wales by the Welsh Office), no public information about the nature of appointments or the extent of multiple appointments, while even the raw data on numbers contained in the official annual Public Bodies is seriously flawed. Such information as we do have has come largely by private enterprise, especially the assiduous enterprise of parliamentary questions, and some of this is drawn on here.

The tables at the end pull together some of the details, but I want to use them here to illustrate aspects of the main story.

Daunting

The volume and variety of ministerial appointments is vast. The most recent edition of Public Bodies has a total figure of nearly 43,000; the 1989 Cabinet Office review figure was 50,000 (a discrepancy explained by the fact that Public Bodies is a register albeit an incomplete one of public bodies, not of ministerial appointments). On the official figures, executive bodies account for just over 4,000 appointments and NHS bodies a similar number, advisory bodies for about 10,000 appointments, tribunals for around 22,000 appointments, with a small balance of assorted other appointments. The figures assembled (Table 1) provide a numerical map of the terrain of ministerial appointments. Finding suitable people for this scale and range of posts is a daunting enterprise for departments, which is why the issue has been a continuing theme within government. It is also a reminder that reform of the appointments process has to meet the twin tests of efficiency and democracy, even though the chief concern here is with the latter.

Appointments are emphatically the business of departments rather than of government as a whole. Departments keep their own lists of names (more or less extensive) and these provide the standing reservoirs for ministerial choice, with their source of supply in the network of official and ministerial contacts. But actual appointments are not confined to those on such lists, and major appointments are likely to be made from outside them. Despite the various recommendations and exhortations over the years, advertising and executive search plays no significant role in this process (Tables 2 & 3). This is indicative of the way in which the process has remained an internal one, protected by ministerial patronage from external incursions of all kinds.

Even quasi-external incursion, in the shape of the Public Appointments Unit (PAU), has remained marginal to the business of ministerial appointments. Now twenty years old, the PAU services the system in a variety of ways but (despite initiatives such as the encouragement of self-nomination) has not provided a major channel for appointments. It maintains a central list of around 5,000 names (with a largely passive reserve list of four times that number), but what is striking is how few actual appointments come from names on the PAU list (Table 4) and how even fewer of these are significant appointments.

Relatively little is known officially about the profile of public appointees themselves, beyond the data on women and ethnic minorities collected as part of initiatives to increase their numbers (an initiative launched in 1991 to increase the number of women in public bodies saw the figure increase from 23 to 28% by 1993, which may help to explain the recent discovery of wives of Conservative MPs and other prominent Conservative women on public bodies).

Rather more is known about the profile of the PAU list, even though the names on it are not made public. For example, it shows a pronounced bias towards the south-east and the over-50s (Tables 5 & 6) and in these respects at least is likely to be representative of public appointees themselves.

One of us

If the patronage power of ministers underpins the entire system of public appointments, it is in relation to key appointments that its operation is most significant. These are mainly to executive bodies (although the political importance of some advisory appointments should not be overlooked) and offer ample scope to put friends, supporters, donors and partisans into positions of considerable influence. It is these appointments that engage keen ministerial and departmental attention to ensure that appropriate candidates are found and the "right" appointments made. Yet for the most critical appointments this also has to include a further stage, taking the trail into Downing Street itself.

The Prime Minister sits at the apex of the pyramid of patronage. He wields extensive patronage power of his own (rooted in the inheritance of Crown prerogative) and is heavily involved in the most important patronage appointments of departmental ministers, thereby giving central political direction to

the whole process. The range of appointments on which ministers have to involve the Prime Minister is set out in paragraphs 49 and 50 of Questions of Procedure for Ministers and includes commissions, committees, chairmen (and deputy chairmen) of public boards; and board and committee members "in cases where the appointment is likely to have political significance". Ministers are told to "take a wide view of what constitutes political significance".

What this makes clear is that Downing Street is firmly placed in control of the most significant aspects of the public appointments process. The Prime Minister's direct power of appointment is formidable enough (in 1977 James Callaghan's listing of the appointments at his disposal ran to more than four Hansard columns and then was only a partial list), but it becomes much more formidable when his role in important ministerial appointments is included too.

From parliamentary questions to departmental ministers, it has been possible to identify the large number of ministerial appointments each year in which the Prime Minister has a role (Table 7). Not only this, but the overtly political character of the appointments system is further emphasised by the fact that the Chief Whip (once known as Patronage Secretary) has an officially recognised role too. The *Guide on Public Appointments Procedures* instructs ministers that the Chief Whip's Office should be notified in advance of all significant appointments (including "any appointments of political importance") and "the list of candidates held by the Chief Whip's Office should be consulted before Ministers make or recommend appointments to significant Committees, Commissions, and other public bodies, in case there are any names the Chief Whip would wish to be considered with other candidates". All parliamentary requests for information about the role of the Chief Whip's office in appointments have been refused.

The system of public appointments thus has its basis in the patronage power of ministers, restrained only by a nebulous doctrine of responsibility to Parliament, and reinforced in its political dimension by the role of Downing Street and party managers. Not only does this make it difficult to carry through many of the oft-suggested improvements to the process in the interests of efficiency, but it is inconsistent with open and pluralistic democracy. It needs reform.

7 What kind of reform?

But what kind of reform? Some changes are clearly on their way. The issue of public appointments (there is still a political reluctance to use the language of "patronage") is now part of the embarrassing mire of sleaze in which the Conservatives have found themselves embedded and from which they are desperately trying to make a political escape. We now know (although it was not announced at the time) that as long ago as May 1994 Mr. Major set up an interdepartmental review to examine the system of appointments to public bodies; and the Nolan Committee on standards in public life to which this internal review will now be submitted also has this as a central part of its remit.

It is not difficult to predict the likely recommendations from this sudden flurry of activity. The real issue about quangos has always been the need to constitutionalize them, by placing them within a coherent framework of administrative rules and procedural accountability (the set text on this remains Anthony Barker (ed), *Quangos in Britain*, 1982) and it is sadly typical that it has taken mounting political embarrassment and assorted scandals to focus attention on this. In terms of appointments, we may expect public registers of appointees, rules about the declaration of interests and other matters, information about multiple appointments and political affiliations, along with some familiar suggestions for improving the efficiency and visibility of the system. These are all obviously necessary reforms and should have been in place long since. But they are not enough, because they do not engage with the nature of patronage itself.

A further reform may be proposed, which would at least nibble at the coarsest edge of the patronage state. The Political Honours Scrutiny Committee, set up in 1925 in the wake of Lloyd George's sale of the century, is designed to check the worst excesses of patronage in relation to honours. It is not an adequate or

satisfactory mechanism (totally secretive, dealing in the spurious currency of "fit and proper persons", unable to enforce its judgments and impotent in the face of the notorious Wilson resignation honours list and the equally notorious rewards to Conservative Party donors of the Thatcher-Major years), but it is at least a mechanism that recognises by its existence a public interest in the matter of patronage than can properly restrain its crudest manifestation. It would be possible to build on this, through an expanded Political Honours and Public Appointments Scrutiny Committee with a clear remit and sufficient clout.

This might check the grossest abuses of patronage and provide some public reassurance on the issue. As such it might commend itself to the purveyors of patronage. But this should not be enough to commend it to the rest of us, for it would leave routine patronage power (including routine political honours, such as the traditional distribution of knighthoods to Conservative MPs) unchecked. The central anomaly would remain, that whereas public appointments in the civil service are governed by rules of procedural fairness, appointments to public bodies of all kinds are governed only by the patronage power of ministers. The declaration in the Fulton Report (1968) on the civil service that "the selection of recruits should be, and should be seen to be, independent of any form of patronage" should apply equally to other public appointments. On this point it should be noticed that the Government's recent decision to open up senior posts in the civil service to outside competition has been accompanied by emphatic assurances that there will be no improper political intervention in such appointments; but this merely confirms the anomaly. If open competition and public advertising are the prerequisites for some public appointments, they should not be excluded from others.

Public Appointments Commission

What is distinctive, and objectionable, about patronage as a process of selection is precisely that it is not subject to procedural rules. It inhabits a world of absolute discretion, maximum secrecy and minimum accountability, lacking the grounds for scrutiny or challenge. Any reform that does not confront its essential character will remain a democratic evasion. Nor is it enough to make improvements to the business of finding a field of candidates while leaving the power of selection untouched. It has sometimes been suggested (for example, by Richards (1963)) that ministers must retain the power of appointment in order for them to be responsible to Parliament for their actions; yet this is clearly not the case in relation to their departmental civil servants on which the whole doctrine of ministerial responsibility is founded.

There is a strong case for an independent Public Appointments Commission to take over this entire activity. It would open up and manage the process in coherent and innovative ways, but it would also have the responsibility for making appointments. Ministers would be able to make nominations and these

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would carry due weight, just as there would be heavy departmental involvement in the preparation of job specifications and related matters; but appointments would no longer be a function of patronage. Advertisement and competition will replace secrecy and cronyism. Support for such a body has recently come from the British Medical Association (Accountability in the NHS, BMA, December 1994). The new Commission would subsume the existing Public Appointments Unit and the central anomaly in current arrangements would be removed.

Parliament

It is also sometimes suggested that Parliament should have a role of some kind in relation to major appointments, either through the departmental select committees or a new standing committee for this purpose. The analogy with the Senate confirmation process in the United States is clear. In 1920 the Webbs suggested in their Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain that appointments should be made by the appropriate standing committee of a new Social Parliament; while in 1952 the Churchill Government suggested that the independence of the BBC from political interference might best be guaranteed by giving the power to appoint and remove Governors to a special committee of leading parliamentarians. There is renewed interest in such ideas again now.

A relevant precedent might be the current procedure whereby the chairman of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has to be consulted about the appointment of the Comptroller and Auditor General, Parliament's guardian of the public purse.

I do not believe (though I once did) that any general arrangements of this kind are feasible, or even desirable. The House of Commons is simply not equipped to perform this role, certainly in its present form. Its partisan character will always triumph over its collegiate character, while its dismal performance of its present functions (not least in relation to the world of public bodies) does not suggest an ability to undertake new tasks of scrutiny. What Parliament can do, and should do, is to put in place the machinery to perform constitutional tasks that it cannot itself perform but which urgently require to be done. One such task is the reform of patronage in the public interest.

What this suggests is that the Public Appointments Commission proposed here should be the creation of Parliament itself, though with a robustly independent basis. This status would make it different from the Civil Service Commission, which otherwise it would resemble, in not being appointed by Order in Council and not being rooted in the royal prerogative. This would represent constitutional progress. It would sit alongside Parliament's own other successful creations, the National Audit Office and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman), both performing crucial functions for Parliament that it cannot perform adequately without them, though it once

pretended it could. Like these other bodies, it could have its own Select Committee of the House to which it would report.

The commissioners of this new body, likely to be a mixture of full-time executive and part-time supervisory posts, should be chosen by agreement between the parties with the Speaker presiding. They would be persons of distinction and sturdy independence – and certainly not drawn only from the ranks of senior politicians and privy councillors. Like the Civil Service Commission, the task would be to combine direct responsibility for the most important appointments with a general oversight of the process of routine appointments to ensure that this was conducted on a proper basis.

It would even be possible to go further, by extending the role and functions of this new body to encompass many of the other elements of the Nolan agenda on the conduct of public life. Equipped with investigatory powers of the kind possessed by the Ombudsman for the pursuit of maladministration, the commission (on this model now enlarged as a Public Appointments and Public Life Commission) would be able to police the world of political conduct in the public interest and on the basis of new rules. The arrival of such a body would be a departure from the tradition of political self-regulation. As that tradition is now thoroughly discredited, this is much to be welcomed.

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From patronage to participation

It is tempting to stop here, with patronage tamed and a new piece of constitutional machinery in place. However, I want to take the discussion a little further and to suggest that the public appointments system should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen and extend participation in public life. This should be seen as a positive challenge for a new politics. But it also means confronting difficult questions.

Even assuming that a new politics worthy of the name does not want simply to replace "their" people with "our" people (hence the need to reform the patronage system itself), there remain important issues about the governance of public bodies and services. There is a view in some quarters that the only real task is to replace appointment with election and, in relation to the whole range of public bodies concerned with local services, to bring these bodies within elected local government. Thus a recent document from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities declares as the fundamental principle that "those who hold public office should be elected to it, and removable from it, by the public" (*Changing the Face of Quangos*, AMA, October 1994). This is surely far too simplistic and, as such, unhelpful.

It is certainly the case that we need urgently to renew local democracy; and to ensure that elected local authorities have a strategic responsibility for the range of services and functions delivered to their populations. There is currently a vacuum of public accountability in key services, most conspicuously in the health service where the roles of chairman and chief executive, and of executive and non-executive directors, are hopelessly confused. The process of marginalisation of local government must be reversed in the interests both of coherence and of democracy. However this is likely to involve an assortment of approaches, frequently on a case-by-case basis, and a rich mixture of organisational arrangements. This cannot be explored further here, except to say that the question of the century-long growth of extended government is unlikely to be contained

within the parameters of a simple preference for election over appointment, especially when this is made synonymous with a preference for familiar over unfamiliar structures.

It is too easy to identify elective government with accountable government. Elections involve a rude and bottom-line accountability of an indispensably democratic kind, whereby people can rid themselves of rulers they do not like, but they do not by themselves entail a continuing practice of accountability. Indeed one study of appointees and elected representatives across a number of public bodies found that, whereas the elected representatives simply assumed that issues about their accountability and legitimacy did not arise because of their elected status, the appointees saw the practice of accountability as a continuous obligation (P. Day & R. Klein, *Accountabilities: Five Public Services*, 1987). This is not an argument against election or for appointment; but it is a caution against making election synonymous with accountability.

Nor, similarly, should election be identified with representativeness. It is convenient to pretend that they are the same, but they are not (for a whole variety of reasons that cannot be discussed here). What this means in terms of the present argument is that it is perfectly possible to find ways of representing people that do not involve elections. For example it would be worth exploring how lot or random selection might be developed as a way of representing people on some public bodies; and also how schemes of functional representation could be used to represent consumers and stakeholders in services. On a different front, I should like to see a range of such techniques used in the composition of a new second chamber (which should be advisory and not elected).

Accountability

What should matter in discussing all forms of governance should be accountability and representation (as well as effectiveness of course). Instead of rolling these up effortlessly into familiar concepts and structures, the challenge is to explore new devices and techniques to develop them. The argument here is that the reform of the patronage system provides an opportunity to do just this.

There is a challenge for local government here too. It is also a purveyor of local patronage (as in political nominations as magistrates and appointment of school governors) and there is a strong case for opening this process up. Local government is distinctive in giving a formal status to political parties and groups and these act as the conduit for appointments. In the cases mentioned, making the magistracy a creature of political patronage is highly dubious, while making party affiliation rather than a commitment to education the passport to school governorship is not obviously a recipe for effective schools. Or consider this view of the local authority all-purpose representative as seen by the socialist writer Raymond Williams: "The councillor or official who becomes a member of a regional arts association has virtually never been elected or nominated to represent any publicly discussed or even announced policy on the

arts. As in so much else, the elected councillor is an all-purpose representative, without either the fact or the duty of specific representation of public views on the matter being decided. This endlessly displaced and deflected mode of public representation, this virtually unargued and untraceable translation of a general occasional vote into an apparent authority to decide highly specific issues is, of course, a central problem of representative democracy in many fields". (The Arts Council in *Resources of Hope*, 1989). Thus the need to find ways to convert an omnibus and undifferentiated accountability and representation into more actively specific forms is a challenge for local government too. There is no reason, for example, why local government services should not have their own user councils, based upon a mixture of representational modes and with functions ranging from the merely consultative to a role in service delivery; or why there should not be experiments in local direct democracy or directly elected boards or bodies of hybrid composition; nor even why there should not be a local public appointments commission to involve local people in their public services on a basis other than that of political patronage. The most enterprising parts of the world of local government are already wanting to engage with at least some issues of this kind in their ambition to renew local democracy.

New politics

This raises a final point, which is both simple and fundamental. To insist on traditional forms of election as the only entry point to public service would be to exclude almost the entire population from such participation. For that entry is effectively open only to those in possession of party cards and this is a tiny (and diminishing) section of the population. While we should do all we can to increase party membership, for much of the activity of democracy depends on the vitality of parties, we should also recognize that the age of mass parties has gone and is unlikely to return. Nor is this just loss, in so far as it has been replaced in some measure by wider forms of civic participation, as with the growth of the environmental movement and other kinds of issue politics.

In this situation the kind of party that can genuinely offer a new politics will be one which faces open and outwards and seeks to engage with people in quite new ways, not on its terms but on theirs. Within the traditional framework of party government and electoral democracy, this will require the development of new forms of representation, participation and accountability. The aim should be to nourish these, not to demand conformity with the old structures. That is why, in terms of the taming of patronage, I look forward to the day when newspapers carry lists of public appointments to be filled and applications are actively solicited from all those who think they have something to offer. Labour has begun the task of becoming this new kind of party. But this is only the precondition for the wider task of nourishing a new civic culture – and a new kind of politics.

Towards a new politics

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There remains one further part of the story. The focus here has been on the patronage power of ministers. Much of this is routine bureaucratic labour for departments. As Pliatzky put it (in his 1980 report): "Ministers and Permanent Secretaries already find the filling of some important posts not an exercise in patronage but an onerous responsibility for securing scarce talent and ability". While an important point (though made before the excesses of the past decade and a half), it reinforces the case for opening the whole process up through advertising and open competition based upon a new commission. It is a large and demanding task and deserves to be taken seriously.

Yet to approach the matter merely in this way is to miss the real significance of the patronage question for politics in Britain. Not only is it of political more than administrative importance, but it is not a discrete issue either. Patronage illuminates much else about the nature of the political system; and its reform therefore necessarily connects with a much larger reform agenda. The golden rule about constitutional reform is that one damn thing always leads to another and the patronage question exemplifies this. Unfettered ministerial patronage is a direct and central expression of a political system that is poorly constitutionalised, lacking a secure framework of checks and balances, giving too much power to governments and too little power to those who should hold governments to account (a theme developed in my *Citizens and Subjects*, Routledge, 1993). What this means is that any assault on patronage is also an engagement with these wider issues.

Even patronage goes much wider than the terrain identified here; and reform should be no less wide. It is a nonsense that the Prime Minister should be responsible for ecclesiastical appointments. It is wrong that judicial appoint-

ments (in the past a notorious arena for the exercise of patronage) should be in the hands of a government minister. Both these areas require their own independent machinery. So, too, does the honours system, which has always had a pivotal role in the operation of political patronage. It is not a coincidence that regular Honours Lists first started appearing in the late Victorian period when the development of mass democracy posed funding problems for parties, nor that trafficking in honours has been a continuing issue. Thus one recent study found that "heads of big firms have a 50% greater chance of being honoured if their companies donate to Tory party funds" (*Sunday Times*, 27 Sept. 1992). It is essential that the honours business, along with the funding of political parties, should be vigorously examined by the Nolan Committee.

Knights of the shires

Directly political honours are a scandalously blatant instrument of patronage, whereby compliance is traded for baubles. A detailed analysis a generation ago of political honours found a picture "of loyal Conservative supporters queuing up for a place in the ration made available to their party organisers", with an honour being "almost inevitable for those Conservative backbenchers who stay in Parliament long enough" (Richards, 1963). This latter point was confirmed in a study of the 321 Conservative MPs elected in 1951 during the following thirteen years in power (K. Sainsbury, *Patronage, Honours and Parliament, Parliamentary Affairs*, Winter 1965-66). An article in *The Times* (17 March, 1992) surveyed the recent evidence on the award of knighthoods to Conservative MPs and concluded that those Tory MPs elected in 1992 would have "a 72% chance of becoming a frontbencher or a knight" if they stayed in the Commons for a reasonable length of time. A recent Parliamentary Answer (2 December, 1994) contained the information that no less than 115 Conservative MPs have received knighthoods since 1979, a figure now increased to 119 since the New Year Honours list.

This kind of patronage matters. It goes a long way to explain why the House of Commons has become so supine, depleted in vigour and independence (recent events notwithstanding). This is especially so when combined with a further extension of patronage in Parliament. The House of Commons Disqualification Act (1975) is the current statute limiting the number of office-holders who may sit in the Commons and the traditional device for protecting the independence of the legislature. Yet the growth in the unpaid posts of assistant Whip and Parliamentary Private Secretary makes a mockery of such protection, for these are also 'payroll' posts in the sense that they are governed by the loyalty doctrine of collective responsibility. In 1900 the total number of MPs on the effective payroll vote was 42; it is now over 130, between a third and a half of the governing party. The combined effect of honours and office-holding, the twin props of patronage, is to sap the vigour of the Commons. Until patronage within Parliament is remedied through new rules to restrict office-holding and to

control the award of political honours, it will not be possible for it to play its part in the wider reform of the patronage system advocated here.

Yet such reform will itself need to be only one element in a much larger process of political renewal. Patronage exists, on the scale and in the forms that it does, because of the particular nature of the political system; and any serious attempt to tackle it will inevitably have consequences for the system as a whole. This is much to be welcomed. For what patronage expresses is a way of governing that has endowed the executive power with a huge political arsenal and has put in place insufficient controls on its deployment. Where these do exist, informal arrangements and ad hoc adjustments have been preferred to a framework of rules. In the name of parliamentary sovereignty, the executive has been able to call the shots. A boast about strong government has concealed a condition of perilously weak accountability.

The consequences of such a system are only too evident. They are to be seen in legislation that is poorly scrutinised and in the general infirmities of Parliament as an institution of accountability. The press and the judiciary increasingly take on this role, leaving Parliament as onlooker and echo-chamber. There is a mounting sense that this process is reaching a point of crisis, no longer amenable merely to the usual running repair of fraying edges, and that something fundamental is now required. The establishment of the Nolan Committee on a standing basis may turn out to be an important (if unintended) moment in this process, the harbinger of greater constitutional things to come under a Labour government committed to radical institutional reform.

For the novelty of the Nolan Committee is that it is intended to be a permanent piece of constitutional machinery, though only of an advisory kind. Not only is this a departure from a defunct tradition of political self-regulation, but it begins to occupy the spaces where a robust pluralism should be. The contaminating hand of the executive in Britain has prevented the development of secure mediating institutions of all kinds, able to define and defend public interests even against the government of the day. Such institutions would elsewhere be called a constitution. In arguing here for an attack on patronage, and its replacement with an institution of this kind, the connection with this larger agenda of reform is clear. The end of patronage is also the beginning of a new constitution.

Table 1

Ministerial appointments to Executive, Advisory, NHS, and other bodies					
Department	Exec	Adv	NHS	Others	Total
Agriculture & Food	227	401	-	492	1,120
Defence *	66	336	-	-	402
Duchy of Lancaster	95	53	-	-	148
Education **	270	19	-	87	361
Employment	110	782	-	2,048	2,940
Environment	438	166	-	2,871	3,475
Foreign Office	58	25	-	20	103
Health	139	558	4,143	469	5,309
Home Office *	111	2,372	-	1,825	4,308
Inland Revenue *	-	-	-	4,489	4,489
Lord Chancellor	14	2,061	-	413	2,488
National Heritage	393	144	-	53	590
Northern Ireland Office *	618	486	185	1,187	2,476
N.M.G.D.s ***	127	264	-	-	391
Scottish Office *	684	886	183	1,876	3,629
Social Security	11	876	-	7,667	8,554
Trade	440	279	-	216	935
Transport	5	73	-	214	292
Treasury	27	113	-	186	326
Welsh Office	235	170	320	83	808
Total	4,053	10,064	4,831	24,196	43,144

Source: Parliamentary Answers & Public Bodies 1993

(Departments were asked to provide figures for all ministerial appointments. When this was not given, the relevant figure in Public Bodies 1993 was used instead. For a small number of public bodies the figures were not available from either source. The totals should therefore be regarded as a best approximation).

* Figures from Public Bodies 1993

** Excludes appointments to Education Associations

*** Non-ministerial Government Departments as defined in Public Bodies 1993 (includes the utility regulators).

Table 2**Public appointments advertised
(April 1993-December 1993)**

Department	Number Advertised
Agriculture and Food	0
Defence	0
Duchy of Lancaster	'not held centrally'
Education	0
Employment	5
Environment	1
Foreign Office	0
Health	2*
Home Office	2
Lord Chancellor	6
National Heritage	1
Northern Ireland Office	2
Scottish Office	0
Social Security	0
Trade	3
Transport	5
Treasury	1
Welsh Office	2
Total	30

* Excludes advertisements for appointees to NHS authorities and Trusts - information on these are 'not available centrally'.

Table 3

**Public appointments: use of executive search consultants (ESC)
(April 1992-December 1993)**

Department	Number of appointments where ESCs used	Cost (£)
Agriculture and Food	0	-
Defence	0	-
Duchy of Lancaster	4	78,960
Education	1	27,000
Employment	3	58,085
Environment	1	21,811
Foreign Office	0	-
Health	'no details available centrally'	
Home Office	2	32,500
Lord Chancellor	0	-
National Heritage	1	19,550
Northern Ireland Office	0	-
Scottish Office	0	-
Social Security	0	-
Trade	no answer given	
Transport	*4	103,428
Treasury	0	-
Welsh Office	*0	-
Total	16	341,334

* ESCs may be, or have been, used by self-appointing public bodies which fall within the Department's remit.

Table 4**Public appointments in public bodies 1992 from public appointments unit (PAU) list**

Department		Use of PAU
Agriculture and Food	3	(since April 1992)
Defence	7	
Education	6	
Employment	17	(since Jan 1991)
Environment	15	(in total not single year)
Foreign Office	3	
Health	n/a	('disproportionate cost')
Home Office	n/a	('not readily available')
Lord Chancellor	6	
National Heritage	n/a	('disproportionate cost')
Northern Ireland Office	0	
Scottish Office	n/a	('makes limited use' of PAU)
Social Security	0	
Trade	15	(since April 1992)
Transport	12	
Treasury	n/a	('no records kept')
Welsh Office	n/a	('not held centrally')
Total	84	

Table 5**PAU List: by Region (1993)**

Region	Number	% of List	% of UK Pop.
East Anglia	653	11.0	3.5
East Midlands	233	3.9	6.9
West Midlands	290	4.9	9.1
South East	3,339	56.6	30.5
Northern	155	2.6	5.3
North West	307	5.2	11.1
South West	350	5.9	8.2
Yorkshire & H'side	258	4.4	8.5
Northern Ireland	11	0.2	2.8
Scotland	157	2.7	8.9
Wales	107	1.8	5.0
Elsewhere	42	0.7	-

Table 6

P.A.U. List: by age (1990-3)				
Age range	1990(%)	1991(%)	1992(%)	1993(%)
Under 40	279(5)	260(5)	249(4)	238(5)
41-50	1201(20)	1180(21)	1172(21)	1124(24)
51-60	2314(39)	2282(40)	2259(40)	2069(44)
61 and over	2121(36)	1967(35)	1982(35)	1266(27)
Not known	11(0.2)	10(0.2)	9(0.2)	16(0.3)

Table 7

Public appointments: referral to Prime Minister (1992)	
Department	Referrals
Agriculture and Food	3
Defence	1
Duchy of Lancaster	12
Education	5
Employment	7
Environment	27
Foreign Office	1
Health	10
Home Office	8
Lord Chancellor	3
National Heritage	6
Northern Ireland Office	5
Scottish Office	24
Social Security	2
Trade	17
Transport	3
Treasury	9
Welsh Office	(no answer)
Total	137

bodies - unspecified appts.

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