

# Tony Benn, Fabian

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Today the Fabian Society mourns the passing of Tony Benn, one of our longest serving members. Tony joined the society in June 1943 and was a member for over 70 years. He was chair in 1964–65 and wrote three Fabian pamphlets, available online at the LSE Fabian Society archive:

- [The Privy Council as a Second Chamber](#) (1957)
- [Where?](#) (1959)
- [The New Politics: A Socialist Reconnaissance](#) (1970)

In the 1990s we used to sum up the pluralism of the Fabians with a simple phrase: 'from Tony Blair to Tony Benn'. For the society has always been a home for Labour voices from every wing of the party. Today, in the spirit of Tony Benn, we continue to believe in a politics of passion and principle, but also of dialogue and disagreement.

In the late 1970s and 1980s Tony was a divisive figure within the Fabian Society as he was in the Labour Party. Historians will continue to debate whether the Bennites or the SDP did more to undermine Labour's challenge to Thatcherism in the 1980s. But Tony was always respected for his sincerity and compassion.

In more recent times he was a less polarising figure, not because of the mellowing effects of old age, but because he became the figurehead for opposition to the Iraq war, which so many people in the Labour movement believed was wrong. In that cause he represented the views of people from every political persuasion and every walk of life.

For 70 years Tony Benn was a true servant of the Labour movement and of the Fabian Society. We will remember him.

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