

Labour needs to promote community, care and cooperation

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Billy Bragg, [writing in the Guardian has said](#):

In trying to understand how it lost 4 million working-class voters between 1997 and 2010, the Labour party has found itself in strange waters. The notion of "Blue Labour" put forward by [Maurice Glasman](#) is already being used by some to propose a socially conservative, economically liberal agenda, which, with its appeals to flag, faith and family, sounds more like something that would go down well on doorsteps in Birmingham, Alabama, rather than in its West Midlands namesake.

I think he's over-reacting. I don't think Blue-Labour (not that I like the term) is about 3 Fs. I think it's about three Cs:

- Community
- Care
- Cooperation.

Now that's very different. Community is vital: much of what is said and written about the family by the right is myth based on something that was happening when I was a child - that a little nuclear unit lived in a house where dad worked, there were three children and mum went quietly mad in the isolation and desperation of it all.

Community is what we need: families are meant to be extended and when geography eliminates that possibility now community replaces it.

Care underpins relationships: it is the foundation of trust, for provision for those less able and compassion for those in need. This is a bedrock of left wing thinking that differentiates its sense of the individual free to function in the community libertarianism from the right's vision of individuals acting alone.

And cooperation is surely another bedrock - the basis for our vision of enterprise? Isn't it by common effort that we build wealth?

These are old values. These are traditional values. These are values Labour lost for too long. These are surely what Maurice Glasman is talking about?

Yes there may be some overlap with faith - in my case there is - but please don't let the fact that some have faith get in the way. Never forget (and those of faith should never forget) faith is a choice, the right to which needs defending but which is optional. It's part of liberty - but all of faith should accept the option of no faith is also a completely valid option.

And let's move on and on the left build that broad church around the positives of community, care and cooperation that we need to underpin what our society so badly wants - a compassionate government in a world that needs leadership.