

# 'Will I ever join the Labour Party?'

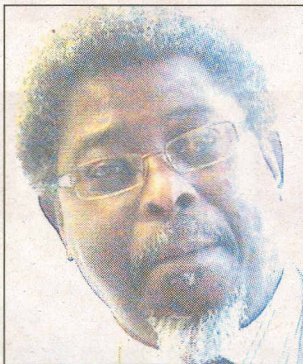
IT WOULD take a lot of persuasion from Gordon Brown for me to join the Labour Party, because I have not seen much difference between the policies of Labour and those of the Conservatives.

I came to Britain near the start of the Thatcher years, having been accepted to business school. Fees for overseas students were doubled as soon as Margaret Thatcher came into power, so I was quite ready for the rough ride of monetarism.

When Labour lost the 1983 election, there were three million unemployed people. Their main concerns then were unilateral nuclear disarmament, and whether black politicians in the Labour Party could or could not form their own sections. At that point I realised that Labour was playing the paternalistic imperialist, something it still tries to do. So, though I continued to vote for it, I did not join the party.

After Neil Kinnock took over, he transformed the party and, though he lost the election of 1987, he started making Labour electorally viable. But, it took the elections of 1992, after Margaret Thatcher had been thrown out by her party in 1990, for Labour to make a surge.

After the great work that



CHALLENGE: Ade Sawyerr

Kinnock had done in modernising the party - kicking out the Militant Tendency and purging some of the 'loony Left' ideologies - he handed over smoothly to John Smith. After Smith came Tony Blair.

## INDEPENDENCE

When Blair led the party to a spectacular election victory in 1997, I did not worry too much that Labour were taxing the super rich corporations to pay for the National Health Service, or that they had given the Bank of England its independence. I was actually impressed that they had promised the country that Labour was taxing the super rich corporations to pay for the National Health Service, or that they had given the Bank of England its independence. I was actually impressed that they had promised the country that Labour was taxing the super rich corporations to pay for the National Health Service, or that they had given the Bank of England its independence. I was actually impressed that they had promised the country that Labour was taxing the super rich corporations to pay for the National Health Service, or that they had given the Bank of England its independence.

But Blair could not deliver

## Writer Ade Sawyerr wonders if Gordon can get him to sign up

on tackling poverty, nor deliver on housing, and though they claimed that they were for education, the party did not solve the problem of inner city schools.

After two election victories, Labour became arrogant and replaced the truth with spin.

The events leading up to the Iraq war were too much for me; the lies were obvious from the start. We all knew that it was an unjustified war, and when Blair got Britain involved despite the huge public outcry, he turned into a tyrant in a civilised country. He lost the moral high ground and with it the respect I had for him.

After the lies of Iraq, Blair had to go.

Now Brown is established in the driving seat he must move firmly to dispel the impression that Labour is tainted with corruption, and ensure that rules about funding of parties are complied with.

Brown needs to focus on the issues of poverty and educa-

tion. There needs to be enough jobs offering a liveable wage.

A Labour government should also deal with representation issues. The number of black political representatives needs to be increased. Brown should embrace diversity and include more black people in his government.

Just as Blair worked to increase the representation of women in politics, Brown should ensure that black people are involved in the running of this country.

## EQUALITY

If he can take on these issues, I will know that there is equality of opportunity and I will have no excuse for not joining the Labour Party.

I wonder if Brown is up to my challenge!

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NEW PM: Gordon Brown

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