



The Labour Party in Opposition 1970-1974

(British Politics and Society)

Patrick Bell



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1970 to 1974 was a pivotal period in the history of the Labour Party. This book shows how the Labour Party responded to electoral defeat in 1970 and to what extent its political and policy activity in opposition was directed to the recovery of power at the following general election. At a point in Labour's history when social democracy had apparently failed, this book considers what the party came up with in its place.

The story of the Labour Party in opposition, 1970-1974, is shown to be one of a major political party sustaining policy activity of limited relevance to its electoral requirements. Not only that, but Labour regained office in 1974 with policies on wages and industrial relations whose unworkability led to the failure of the Labour government 1974-1979, and the Labour Party's irrelevance to so many voters after 1979.

Using primary sources, the author documents and explains how this happened, focusing on the party's response to defeat in 1970 and the behaviour of key individuals in the parliamentary leadership in response to pressure for a review of policy.



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