## The British Labour movement and the campaign for democratic and human rights in Iraq, 1984-2010

## Project description

The project addresses an important topic in contemporary Welsh, British and International Politics in the light of the recent acquisition by the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales of an extensive archive donated by Ann Clwyd, Labour MP for Cynon Valley from 1984-2019. A significant part of this collection is comprised of papers and correspondence relating to Clwyd’s role as a campaigner for Kurdish national and human rights and as the longstanding chair of the Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq. Both the archival collection and the opportunity to work with Ann Clwyd herself provide a unique opportunity for doctoral research exploring the evolution of Labour movement activism and campaigning in relation to human rights in Iraq, and to analyse Labour’s emergence as a party of government committed to a renewed emphasis on the ethical dimensions of foreign policy. The project will develop important insights into the relationship between British-Iraqi human rights activism and the Blair government’s path towards the 2003 Iraq War.

The successful applicant will analyse British Labour movement activism and campaigning for Kurdish and Iraqi democratic and human rights in the broader context of Labour Party policy towards Iraq. It will make important and original contributions to debates about Labour Party internationalism and foreign policy, as well as public controversies about the justifiability and effectiveness of the 2003 Iraq War. Key research questions include:

• How important were campaigns for Iraqi human and democratic rights in shaping Labour Party policy, in opposition and in Government, towards the Iraqi regime and the Kurdish question?

• What kind of political relationship emerged between British-Iraqi campaign groups and the Labour governments of 1997-2010, especially in relation to the justification of the 2003 Iraq War and subsequent reconstruction projects in Iraq?

The project will be based on archival research at the National Library of Wales with privileged access to the Ann Clwyd collection. It is expected that additional research will be undertaken at the UK National Archives, the Labour History Archive and Study Centre, and relevant collections of private papers. Additionally, the successful applicant will conduct fieldwork interviews with key figures from the British Labour movement as well as Kurdish and Iraqi political figures.

## Collaboration

The project is designed as collaborative research with the National Library of Wales, which will be involved in the following ways:

* The head of the Welsh Political Archive at NLW will be part of the project's supervisory team alongside Dr James Vaughan from the Department of International Politics.
* The studentship holder will work alongside an archivist employed by NLW to arrange and catalogue the papers of the former Labour MP, Ann Clwyd. This collaboration will benefit NLW’s organising and appraisal work and the enrichment of the catalogue record, providing lasting benefits by way of public access to the collection and enhanced understanding of the material within it. NLW will provide professional archival training on skills including cataloguing, conservation, data protection and freedom of information legislation.
* The studentship holder will collaborate in NLW’s public engagement work; contributing to the Library’s collection blog and to *Maniffesto: The Welsh Political Archive Annual Newsletter*, establishing the studentship holder as a public expert in their field providing subject-specific expertise to NLW’s programme of outreach and engagement events and ensuring that the Ann Clwyd collection reaches new audiences.

## Organisational partner

The Welsh Political Archive Is a dedicated programme within the National Library to collect, store, catalogue and promote archival material which reflects the political life of Wales. Many of the political archives held are personal collections of well-known political figures - Members of Parliament, Lords, Members of the European Parliament and Assembly Members, as well as the formal records of a large number of political organisations including the main political parties, campaign groups, referendum campaigns, business and labour groups. Ann Clwyd donated a substantial archive to the National Library of Wales between 2015 and 2021. These papers cover a large range of topics reflecting her political interests and focus on subjects such as human rights, international development and Iraq.  The archive is of international significance and will attract interest from researchers across the globe. NLW will provide the successful applicant with professional training in archival skills, conservation, ethical issues relating to data protection and freedom of information concerns; public outreach and knowledge exchange activities.

## Supervisors

The lead supervisor on the project will be Dr James Vaughan, of the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University. His areas of specialisation include the history of Labour Party foreign policy with a particular focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East. He has a long-standing record of successful involvement in doctoral research projects funded by ESRC and AHRC.