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Labour's wrong to get rid of Brown

A new leader will carry the burden of the party's mistakes but won't have Brown's expertise in protecting Britain's economy



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It is a mistake for Labour to purge itself of Gordon Brown. It matters little whether Labour decides to join the execrable Lib Dems in some sort of coalition to the joy of euro-loving Peter Mandelson, or moves somewhat more elegantly into opposition. In either case, the party will be preparing for a general election in a relatively few months.

The new man or woman at the helm will carry the burden of the party's record but be unable to offer the expertise to cope with the future. Yes, Brown failed to understand the social consequences of excessive immigration in his quest to keep UK labour costs competitive. Yes, he failed to support the military with the kit it needed. Yes, he allowed Ed Balls to so centralise control of the education system that teachers have become mere puppets dancing on Whitehall strings. There is more, but you get the idea. But Brown did not act alone. He had accomplices in the party: every member now being considered a possible successor supported these failed policies. The voters know that, and will remember.

But they also know that the immediate problems are the appalling fiscal situation, the lingering threat of contagion from euroland, and the need to reform the global financial system in co-operation with the US. Other policies need to be put in place, but none has the urgency of these three.

In my view, Labour's continuing expansion of the role of the state is a serious mistake, and not only because it is fiscally unsustainable and the nation would be better served by a reforming Conservative government.

But if Labour wants another chance to persuade voters it has the right answers to the nation's woes, many of which it created, it cannot offer a mere young suit of well-pressed clothes to replace the rumpled suit containing a man of substance whom the party could have argued knows how to get the country through the next few years. Remember: Brown kept Britain out of the euro, and granted

independence to the Bank of England – perhaps the two things that have kept the rating agencies from treating Britain as it is treating Greece. So far.