IDEOLOGY AND THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Politics is fundamentally a competition for power. Attempts to gain power and the exercise of power are intertwined. The desire for, and responsibility of, political power exerts pressure upon organizations to modify their goals and methods in order to achieve such power. These modifications may result in the abandonment of fundamental belief systems or ideologies.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of traditional British socialist ideology upon the foreign policies of the British Labour Party since World War II. It is concerned with one political party's experience during the last three decades. The party's experiences in governing the nation, together with its successes and failures in elections, should result in modifications to its basic value system. The analysis should reveal the party's abandonment of its traditional socialist ideology as a desirable base for foreign policy. The abandoned ideology should be replaced with a pragmatic decision-making process which incorporates the diverse viewpoints of various interest groups within the party structure.

The changes outlined above suggest an increased role for the Party Conference in the determination of foreign

policy. The conference provides a forum for competing interest groups. By reason of its varied membership, representing all affiliated organizations and geographic regions, it is in a position to function as a "broker."

Its ability to perform this function is limited by three considerations. First, the relationship between the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party is ill-defined. The primacy of the Party Conference was written into the 1918 Constitution, denied by Clement Attlee in 1945;[1] acknowledged and "explained away" in 1960.[2] Second, the trade unions possess the right to a majority of the delegates and votes at the conference. Finally, the conference meets on an annual basis. While special conferences have been held, the size and complexity of organizing such events limit them to extraordinary occasions. In view of such limitations the Party Conference's role in determining foreign policy should be confined to adoption of general principles, leaving the specific details to its National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Labour Party leadership.

Perhaps the most familiar frame for depicting broad political change is movement along a left-right spectrum.

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[1]Carl F. Brand, The British Labour Party (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 293.

[2]Leon D. Epstein, Political Parties in Western Democracies (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 302, citing 59th Annual Report of the Labour Conference, pp. 159-60. See also Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, The Growth of the British Party System, II (London: John Baker, 1967), p. 247.

Such a frame is an ideological yardstick along which individuals, factions and parties can be located and along which they may alter their positions. These positions and alterations can be determined from the policies which the actors adopt on issues confronting them.

Political change is very seldom conclusively evidenced by policies adopted on a single issue. Its occurrence is most often illustrated through policies taken toward several issues. Issues can be arrayed in any of several schema. One of the more common divisions is that of domestic and foreign issues. These are not mutually exclusive categories. Issues interact with each other and some issues can clearly be properly assigned to both divisions. British membership in the European Economic Community is an example of such an issue. This paper is concerned with foreign policy issues. However, to rigidly exclude domestic overtones from consideration would have been totally unrealistic.

Ideology is variously defined. Webster's definition of ideology as "the doctrines, opinions, or way of thinking of an individual, class, etc."[1] fails to do adequate justice to the pejorative connotation which has befallen the concept. That it has been cast in such a light by most writers can be illustrated by the following passage written by Dante Germino:

> Where theory is characterized by a built-in sense of limit and is antisystematic in nature, ideology overthrows

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[1] Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged, 2d ed. (Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Company, 1960), p. 902.

> on principle the very idea of limit. To the ideologist, reality has at last bared her secrets and the world is waiting for conquest by those who have the necessary knowledge that man himself is the ultimate creator of reality. Knowledge and power are joined in ideology in such a way that the only knowledge deserving of the name is that which is instrumental to attaining power and dominion over the environment and, ultimately, over man himself in his innermost being. Reality to ideological thought is something that needs to be "made up" rather than "made out." Man must recognize that he creates reality; given the application of sufficient intelligence, reality conforms to him, not he to it.[1]

Clifford Geertz argued that the social sciences have not yet developed a genuinely nonevaluative conception of ideology and that the conception of ideology in the social sciences is thoroughly pejorative.[2] If this is indeed the case, one is entitled to inquire what such a concept is doing in the "sciences."

It is possible to limit the meaning of ideology to "something shady" and thereby dismiss the problem as being one of semantics. However, if this approach is followed one is left with an almost meaningless analytic tool. Even if it were possible to drop the term from scientific studies completely such a course would deprive the social science--especially the political science--community of scholars of what must be, judged by its usage, an incisive means of analysis. What remains then is to use the tool with an awareness of the inherent weaknesses it contains.

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[1]Dante Germino, Beyond Ideology (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 46.

[2]Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in David E. Apter, ed., Ideology and Discontent (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 49.

The concept of ideology used here is that advanced by Geertz, namely the "schematic images of social order."[1] Ideology serves as a symbolic template that renders communicable the attitudes and sentiments held by individuals in the community. Its function, according to Geertz, is "to make an autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful, the suasive images by means of which it can be sensibly grasped."[2] Ideology is convincing, at least in part, because it facilitates a logical grasp of events and situations. Willard Mullins held that ideology "informs political action" and "is inclined to simplify alternatives, to reduce complex situations to understandable proportions so that action is possible."[3]

Ideology is important for politics because it has the power to communicate ideas, evaluations and purposes among members of groups, especially groups such as political parties. Ideology enables these members to appraise their political conditions and future prospects. In so doing it facilitates the "pooling" of resources in common actions. "The significance of ideology in mobilization is not that it 'causes one to do' but that it 'gives one cause for doing'."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 63.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Willard A. Mullins, "On the Concept of Ideology in Political Science," American Political Science Review, 66 (June 1972), p. 507.

[4] Ibid., p. 509.

James Christoph advanced two definitions of British political ideology. One referred to the "more traditional meaning of ideology" which he characterized as "a 'comprehensive, consistent, closed system of knowledge, to which its adherents turn to get answers to all their questions, solutions to all their problems'."[1] Christoph meant "total ideology." His second definition referred to a more or less institutionalized set of beliefs about man and society; having a moral and normative content. These beliefs will most likely be fragmented, limited and perhaps even inconsistent. They consist of man's perceptions of the proper goals to strive for and the means which are properly employed to achieve the goals.[2]

The historical and social conditions which Christoph believed were conducive to the growth of "total ideology" did not emerge in Great Britain. He noted that the British have shown a marked disinclination to espouse "total ideologies" and concluded that the reason for this can be found in the absence of violent class warfare throughout Britain's history. The presence of classes and their contending for political power was accomodated within the existing governing structure.

Christoph argued that pragmatism is Britain's ideology. Pragmatism had been elevated into what amounted to a national

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[1]James B. Christoph, "Consensus and Cleavage in British Political Ideology," in Henry S. Albinski and Lawrence K. Pettit, eds., European Political Processes (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968), pp. 13-14.

[2]Ibid.

cult. It was viewed with a sense of pride and considered to be a particularly British virtue.

> Thus pragmatism easily becomes imbued with nationalistic affect, and preference for it is supported by other values into which Britons are socialized. The content of this socialization is both positive and negative in character: positive in the sense that Britons learn, both from formal teaching and from informally picking up the views of those around them, that the success and stability of the British parliamentary system is due in large part to the pragmatic frame of mind displayed by its practitioners; and negative in the sense that they also learn that the turbulent, unstable and often grotesque pattern of Continental politics derives from the European habit of looking at the world through the distorting spectacles of total ideologism. What they have learned may be a caricature, but it has had consequences. It has, for example, affected the British Labour Party's relationship with the European socialist movement; it has been partly responsible for the lack of enthusiasm for venturing too fully into experiments in European integration, and undoubtedly it has helped strengthen Britain's relationships with the United States and the older Commonwealth--peoples reputed to be fellow pragmatists under the white skin.[1]

Christoph's characterization of the British political culture indicates no support for a fundamental belief system containing principles which conflict with national and partisan political self-interest. The influence of traditional British socialist ideology upon the foreign policies of the British Labour Party since 1945 can serve to evaluate the extent to which the party has abandoned socialist ideology and adopted a pragmatic decision-making process in its place.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

CHAPTER II

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The content of decisions made by the political system depends on who makes the decisions. An elitist model would stipulate that in an organization as large as the Labour Party the leadership would determine the policies and pronounce the party's "doctrine." This model would recognize the existence of several layers or echelons of elites between the mass membership and the designated party leader. The model raises the question of the role played by the Labour Party Conference in determining party policy. Can the conference, comprised of many delegates and representing various factions of the party, exert significant influence or do the parliamentary and trade union leaders make these decisions?

The pluralist model would suggest that the Labour Party is a coalition of groups, each with its particular aim or goal, and that party policy is the result of compromise of these interests. Such a model suggests that the socialists are one of several factions in the party and that their goals are distinct from the goals of other factions--for example, the trade unions. There is some overlapping but no distinctive common purpose or ideology. Pluralism would refute the concept of the party as committed to an ideologically oriented view of

its aims. It would portray it rather as pragmatically adjusting and compromising its various factional aims into acceptable generalities supported by all interests.

Both elitist and pluralist models minimize ideology as a source of party goals or policies. Socialism, in contrast, accords ideology a prominent role in the determination of party policy. All policies should have as their aim the realization of what has been termed the Socialist Commonwealth. For socialism there is one great cause of all society's grievances, capitalism, and it must be replaced by the Socialist Commonwealth. Attlee reflected this outlook when he wrote, "The aim of the Labour Party is the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth."[1]

Leon Epstein consigned the socialist ideology of the British Labour Party to the graveyard of history with these words:

> Much of the shift in party posture in Britain . . . has been in the form of a continued dilution, now almost liquidation, of traditional socialist doctrine.[2]

This judgment of the diminished role of socialist ideology in the Labour Party was supported by several other writers. Richard Rose reflected the pluralist viewpoint when he wrote:

> Political developments since the Second World War have reduced the utility of the word "Socialism" as a description

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[1]Clement R. Attlee, The Labour Party in Perspective (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), p. 137.

[2]Epstein, Political Parties, p. 156.

> of a tangible set of political principles or policies. . . . Its [Labour Party] program, however, is the hybrid product of the ideas of socialists, trade union officials, and reformers.[1]

Was Epstein's consignment premature of does socialist doctrine continue to call forth support in a significant faction of the Labour Party? If indeed it does, what does such support portend for the continued existence of the party as a viable actor in British politics?

Answers to the foregoing questions depend upon the definitions ascribed to certain key phrases. What constitutes a significant faction of the party? What should be considered socialist doctrine in Great Britain? Consideration of British socialist doctrine will be explored and its principles, with special reference to foreign policy, developed in the next chapter. In this paper, a significant faction of the party enjoys a certain elastisity of meaning. It can be a few key individuals in the elite structure or a sizable segment of the mass membership.

Following development of British socialist doctrine in Chapter III the paper will present a series of foreign policy case studies. Each of these will assess the influence of socialist doctrine upon party policy. Cases were selected which extended over more than one leadership period, permitted analysis of party action as Government and Opposition, and

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[1]Richard Rose, Politics in England (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), p. 54.

allowed assessment of internationalism and anti-militarism on foreign policy. Chapter IV deals with the party's policy toward security alliances through the vehicle of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Chapter V explores the party's policy regarding nuclear weapons and unilateralism; in Chapter VI the Suez crisis is examined. Chapter VII investigates the dilemma of colored immigration, and Chapter VIII is devoted to the question of party policy toward European integration efforts. Chapter IX contains summaries and conclusions.

"Policy" has been used in a wide sense and was developed through study of the debates at the annual party conferences, debates in Parliament, speeches by the party's elites, books and articles written by them and decisions taken by the party leadership. Where data was available, the attitude of the party's mass membership and general public opinion was compared to the party's policy.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH SOCIALIST DOCTRINE

Much of the research since 1950 characterized the Labour Party as a broad coalition of interest groups which included the socialists.[1] The logical deduction derived from this pluralist viewpoint would be that Labour could be expected to proceed on the same general assumptions as its Conservative counterpart. There would be no consistent support for socialist principles; foreign policy in particular would remain based upon considerations of geography, economic and strategic needs, and national independence and sovereignty.

Samuel Beer adopted a different view. While he did not discount the pluralism of the party, he envisioned something more:

> Knitting together the pluralism of views, there is something that can be called an orthodoxy, a unified doctrine, even a system of thought, which not only pervades the party, but also, still more surprisingly, persists without fundamental change throughout the interwar period and into the years after 1945.[2]

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[1]See, among others, Samuel E. Finer, "Great Britain," in Roy C. Macridis and Robert E. Ward, eds., Modern Political Systems: Europe, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 83-91.

[2]Samuel H. Beer, British Politics in the Collectivist Age, Vintage Books (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 126.

Traditional British foreign policy was over a century old at the birth of the Labour Party. Its precepts had been followed by leaders such as Peel, Disraeli and Gladstone. This policy was canonized into something approaching eternal wisdom. Vastly simplified, it required defense of a global empire and companion commercial network, maintenance of a European balance of power favorable to British security, and promotion of national interests above all conflicting demands. The use of force, whenever necessary, was condoned by traditional foreign policy. Certain fundamental principles underlay this policy, the most important of which was the "balance of power" in Europe. In conjunction with this touchstone was the principle of supremacy of the seas. These permitted the principle of divide and rule in the Empire and all were administered through another: flexibility and self-restraint. Such a style of pragmatic deportment merely reflected the practice followed in domestic matters. It can properly be said that this was an example of successful power politics.

Socialist foreign policy did not accept the "eternal wisdom" of the traditional foreign policy outlined above. It was emphatic in its disagreement. Attlee, writing in 1937, capsulated this difference in the following passage:

> It [Labour Party] does not agree that there is some policy to be pursued by this country irrespective of what party is in power, . . . There is a deep difference of opinion between the Labour Party and the Capitalist parties on foreign as well as on home policy, . . . It may on particular occasions take action in foreign affairs with which the Labour Party agrees, . . . but such particular instances of action which can be approved by Socialists do not affect

> the truth of the general proposition that there is no agreement on foreign policy between a Labour Opposition and a Capitalist Government.[1]

What principles underlay the Socialist foreign policy advocated by the Labour Party? How did Socialist foreign policy differ from traditional foreign policy? Answers to these questions pose some difficulties since the Labour Party's socialism was never reduced to a sharply defined, authoritative, "totalistic" doctrine.

Michael Gordon identified four principles of British socialist foreign policy by generalizations inferred from the historical behavior of Labour Party members.[2] Internationalism, international working-class solidarity, anti-capitalism and anti-militarism were the foundation upon which a distinct socialist orthodoxy in matters of foreign policy was grounded. While there were differences in the party over application of these principles to specific circumstances, the basic orthodoxy was not seriously questioned before 1939 according to Gordon.[3] Attlee reflected this commitment when he said in 1934 that "ultimately we shall not get peace until we have world Socialism"; nevertheless, "we have to deal with things as they are today."[4] What was disagreed upon were means, not ends.

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[1]Attlee, The Labour Party, pp. 226-27.

[2]Michael R. Gordon, Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy, 1914-1965 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 13-43.

[3]Ibid., pp. 43-44. Beer placed the end of agreement even later. Beer, British Politics, p. 126.

[4]Quoted in Gordon, Conflict and Consensus, p. 44.

The nationalistic content of traditional foreign policy stood condemned in Labour eyes. The concept of national interests was considered a ruse which permitted justification of almost any action at the discretion of the government. As long as each national government remained completely sovereign no progress toward a socialist world community was possible; only turmoil and conflict could occur in endless profusion.

The party doctrine firmly supported the ideal of internationalism. Among the party's objects, set out in 1918, was "co-operate with the Labour and Socialist organisations in other countries and to assist in organising a Federation of Nations for the maintenance of Freedom and Peace, ..."[1] Attlee considered the Labour Party as the British expression of a world-wide movement.[2]

Attlee described the official policy of the party as being composed of seven principal points. These were contained in the 1934 statement entitled War and Peace and consisted of (1) a collective peace system through the League of Nations, (2) the rejection of balance of power politics and subordination of national sovereignty to world obligations, (3) world control in economic and financial matters, (4) disarmament, (5) an international police force, (6) the need for world loyalty as opposed to national loyalty, and (7) war resistance as the

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[1]Attlee, The Labour Party, p. 46.

[2]Ibid., pp. 15, 20.

duty of every citizen.[1] He went on to claim in 1937 that:

> The Party is agreed in its rejection of the policy of the balance of power and the use of force as an instrument of policy. It is agreed on the objective of a World Co-operative Commonwealth. It aims at the subordination of national sovereignty to world loyalty, the reduction of all national armaments to the lowest possible level by international agreement, and to the substitution of arbitration for war. All agree on the need for removing private profit in the manufacture of and trade in arms. Equally, there is no difference of opinion as to the vital necessity of removing the economic causes of war and of basing the new world order on firm economic foundations as well as on political institutions.[2]

The Labour orthodoxy in foreign policy up to the beginning of the Second World War consisted in great part of commitment to internationalism. There could be no peace as long as the existing world order of nation-states continued to control the affairs of man. Balance of power must be replaced with the cooperation and control a world socialist community would usher into being. Closely linked to internationalism was the principle of anti-militarism. The case studies which follow will illustrate the degree to which these principles continued to characterize foreign policy after World War II in the Labour Party.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 211-12.

[2] Ibid., pp. 213-14.

CHAPTER IV

THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

On May 12, 1949, by a vote of 333 Ayes to 6 Noes, Britain's ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty was accomplished.[1] The initiative for the treaty came from the Labour Government.[2] It was negotiated by the Labour Government and received the overwhelming support of a Parliament dominated by Labour Party Members. There were, however, a high number of abstentions by Labour Members on the division. Despite a three-line party whip, there were more than 100 who abstained.[3]

Gordon characterized this policy as a break with socialist principles: ". . . the Atlantic Alliance represented a form of collective defense, a traditional alignment of nations which, fearing for their security, agreed to band together for mutual protection."[4] Beer voiced the same theme

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[1] 464 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 2128 (May 12, 1949).

[2] Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. II, Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956), pp. 244-45.

[3] Gordon, Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 162.

[4] Ibid., p. 126.

when he wrote:

> A Labour Government, therefore, found itself compelled to resort to the detested tactics of balance of power, backed up by military force and directed to the service of vital national interests. These realities challenged fundamentals of Labour's orthodoxy in international affairs, reluctant as many sectors of the party were to admit it and to draw the necessary conclusions for the modification of party outlook.[1]

Did the North Atlantic Treaty represent an abandonment of socialist principles and adoption of "traditional foreign policy" by the Labour Party? The answer can only be found in the party's perceptions of its policy with respect to NATO and its subsequent actions after the treaty came into effect.

The Labour Party had displayed a continued faith in international organization and a rejection of "balance of power politics" since its experience of World War I. These themes can be traced in party statements from the Memorandum on War Aims of 1917 to The International Post-War Settlement of 1944. The party's history was one of long-standing commitment to collective security under the League of Nations. Labour demanded that the League be made the core of all British foreign policy. The extent of this belief was voiced by Attlee in 1933 when he told the House of Commons, "You have to put loyalty to the League of Nations above loyalty to your country."[2] This faith, grounded in the socialist principle of internationlism,

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[1]Beer, British Politics, p. 189.

[2]281 H.C. Deb., 148 (November 7, 1933), cited in Gordon, Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 16.

was transferred to the United Nations which many viewed as the heir of the League.

During his speech opening the debate on the treaty, Ernest Bevin, Labour's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, made several points. Among these were that the real purpose of the pact was to act as a deterrent to agression; that since it was clear that the United Nations was not going to be allowed to work effectively the organization of NATO was essential; that the pact did not abandon the idea of one world security system; and that it was designed for no other purpose than to give security and peace to those who came within it. Throughout his 43-minute speech Bevin consistently referred to the treaty using the term "self-defense;" not once was the term "collective security" used in reference to the pact.[1]

In his efforts to relate the treaty to Labour's socialist foreign policy ancestory Bevin raised its supposed impulse toward European unity. "The Atlantic Pact has greatly contributed to the confidence which has led to the establishment of the European Council, which sooner or later will grow into a very effective organism."[2] This was tempered by the subsequent remark that "there is no loss of independence or sovereignty for the member nations [of the pact]."[3]

In the ensuing debate only three speakers were highly critical of the pact. Mr. Rhys Davis, a pacifist, expressed

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[1]464 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 2011-22 (May 12, 1949).

[2]Ibid., 2017.

[3]Ibid.

his disagreement in part with both sides "in this contest of words."[1] He regarded the pact as a treaty of retaliation against the Soviets and their satellites. Mr. Zilliacus, a Labour Member, staged a determined attack upon the treaty:

> The fundamental assumption of the Atlantic Pact, as was made quite clear by the Foreign Secretary in his speech, as had been made clear by the State Department White Paper on the subject and by His Majesty's Government's White Paper on the subject, is that the Soviet Union is potentially aggressive and we must organise force--Anglo-American and Western European force--so as to be able to contain the Soviet Union and generally to deal with that country in terms of power. The collective security system of the North Atlantic Treaty is based on this fundamental political assumption. . . . The Atlantic Treaty is . . . contrary to Labour Party policy and the Labour Party's mandate to make peace.[2]

Mr. Piratin also attacked the treaty in a similar vein.[3]

It would be risky to view the endorsement of NATO by Labour as evidence of whole-hearted support. The high number of abstentions previously noted attests to a lack of enthusiasm on the part of many. Furthermore, although the alliance was plainly directed at the containment of Soviet Communism within Eastern Europe, international conditions remained fairly stable until the outbreak of the Korean War. NATO, prior to 1950, existed mainly on paper. There were few concrete obligations arising from it, especially expensive obligations such

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[1] Ibid., 2064.

[2] Ibid., 2076, 2079. For his complete speech see 2073-83. The Labour National Executive Committee expelled Zilliacus on the charge that his sympathies were more attuned to the Communist than to the Labour Party. Gordon, British Foreign Policy, p. 141.

[3] 464 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 2098-2107 (May 12, 1949).

as rearmament. The conflict in Korea changed this situation completely.

The Korean War posed a choice to Labour. Required was a decision between its principle of rejecting power politics and continued support of a government program which called for a large-scale rearmament. Rearmament made sense, of course, only if one believed in a concrete world-wide Soviet threat. The results were disastrous for party unity.

In July, 1950, the NATO allies were requested by the United States "to help to establish and to maintain the common strength of the United States and other free nations at an adequate level."[1] The Labour Government agreed, without hesitation, to introduce large-scale rearmament measures. Gordon calculated that within a six-month period the Labour Government responded by more than doubling its pre-Korean defense effort.[2]

In addition to the cost of rearmament the Korean War brought to a head the problem of German rearmament. In September, 1950, Bevin agreed in principle to a German contribution to European defense efforts.[3] In February, 1951, Attlee informed the Commons that Labour's support of German rearmament was based on three prior conditions: (1) the prior rearmament of the Atlantic Pact nations, (2) West German

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[1]Statement made by Prime Minister Attlee in summarizing the appeal. 478 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 595 (September 12, 1950).

[2]Gordon, Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 225.

[3]Ibid., p. 231.

agreement to their rearmament, and (3) the integration of German military units with other national forces.[1] Aneurin Bevan resigned from the Labour Government in mid-April, 1951, ostensibly over charges for health services items, and the battle within the Labour Party was joined in public and in earnest. The party's 1951 defeat at the polls removed the last restraint.

The bitter disputes within the party divided it into two camps. The Bevanites did not restrict their criticism to economic matters but called into question the Government's position on the Korean War, Soviet intentions, the American alliance, and the conflicting claims of rearmament and domestic welfare. This criticism was founded in socialist principles.

Repeatedly, from late 1945 on, the critics charged that the Labour Government, and Bevin in particular, had deliberately abandoned socialist principles in the conduct of foreign policy. Over and over they labeled the Government's foreign policy as naked power politics, indistinguishable from what Churchill called for in his "iron curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri.[2] The resentment and sense of betrayal was expressed in the comment of a Labour Member who said: "it is

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[1] 484 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 67 (February 12, 1951).

[2] Gordon, Labour's Foreign Policy, pp. 116-17, quoting from the Manchester Guardian, March 12, 1946.

felt that when our policy meets with such hearty approval from the Opposition, there must be something wrong with it. It is felt that if the Tories applaud, it cannot be Socialist Foreign Policy."[1]

The disputes over foreign policy issues related to NATO raged for the next decade. For example, the Transport Workers Union moved a resolution at the 1960 annual conference which called for "a complete rejection of any defense policy based on the threat of the use of strategic or tactical nuclear weapons."[2] Such a policy would have resulted in Britain's withdrawal from NATO, which based its defense policy on the use of these weapons. In 1961 at the annual conference in Blackpool, the Executive statement on foreign policy and defense carried by 4,526,000 to 1,756,000 votes while resolutions opposing the training of German troops on British soil as a NATO exercise and opposing American Polaris submarine bases in Great Britain passed with majorities of about 800,000 each.[3] The party thus reaffirmed its support of NATO and simultaneously rejected two specific NATO policies.

Britain's membership in NATO was not seriously contended within the party after 1962 except for a small number of pacificists. The main elements within the party were agreed

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[1]419 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 1322 (February 21, 1946).

[2]The Times (London), October 6, 1960, p. 18.

[3]Gordon, Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 277, quoting from Labour Party Conference Report 1961, p. 194.

that the nation must remain in NATO and such contention as existed concerned specific policies adopted by the alliance.

What of the mass membership opinion? Little data is available. However, the following poll results may serve to shed some light, albeit obliquely, upon mass membership opinion toward NATO. In a poll taken in late summer, 1949, 69 per cent of Labour voters were in favor of an alliance with the United States.[1] It can be advanced that party members would be less in favor because the active Labour Party membership is more ideologically oriented than the Labour electorate. Another survey, conducted between September 30 and October 4, 1960, revealed 34 per cent of Labour voters were in favor of Britain's continuing to produce nuclear weapons; 26 per cent wanted Britain to pool her weapons within NATO.[2] Approximately 60 per cent of Labour voters in 1960 can be said to have been favorable to NATO therefore. The only conclusion which can be safely drawn from these figures is that issues related to NATO did not command overwhelming support in the Labour electorate.

It can be seen that, beginning in mid-1945 and continuing into the 1960s, two fundamentally opposed positions with respect to NATO and related foreign policy vied for support of the Labour Party. One, advocated by the Labour Government,

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[1]Ibid., p. 162, quoting from International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research, (Summer, 1949), pp. 288-89.

[2]Stephen Haseler, The Gaitskellites (London: Macmillan and Company, 1969), p. 150, quoting Gallup Political Index, (October, 1960), Report Number 10.

was a continuation of the "power politics" tradition of British foreign policy. Characterized by balancing alliances such as NATO, it discounted utilization of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace in the new bi-polar world of the nuclear age. Its supporters regarded themselves as pragmatists, in touch with the world of reality. Labour opponents of the Government's foreign policy retained their faith in socialist principles.

That the Labour Government's espousal and support of NATO, Bevin's remarks in the 1949 debate notwithstanding, represented an abandonment of socialist principles of foreign policy and continuation of traditional British foreign policy cannot be gainsaid. The impetus for the course pursued seemingly lay in the wartime experiences of Labour leaders as highly placed officials in the Coalition Government. Until this event they had been free of the responsibilities of office, free to formulate lofty foreign policy without having to implement it, and free to attack the purposes and morals of those who held power.

This freedom and lack of experience disappeared when they joined the coalition. Their responsibilities during the war forced them to keep ideas of British power, security and national interest in the forefront of considerations. They were compelled to adjust their beliefs to the reality of the international scene. Socialist principles had to be adjusted

to the facts of power. Morrison expressed this idea in 1951:

> It is one of the first things one learns when one becomes a Minister . . . that you bump up against lots of facts which you wish you did not, but that is part of learning the facts of government.[1]

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[1]Gordon, Labour's Foreign Policy, p. 92, quoting from Labour Party Conference Report 1951, p. 127.

CHAPTER V

UNILATERALISM

The policy of an independent British nuclear deterrent caused the birth of a movement committed to unilateralism in the Labour Party which first surfaced in 1955, severely challenged the party's leadership in 1960, and by 1961 had ceased to be important as an issue of foreign policy.

The Conservative Government announced in 1955 that Britain would manufacture the hydrogen bomb.[1] This decision was accepted by Labour although they did question the Government's efficiency in the conduct of the nation's defense. Labour moved an amendment on defense which contained the following key phrase:

> . . . while recognising that thermonuclear weapons have effected a revolution in the character of warfare, and that until effective world disarmament has been achieved it is necessary as a deterrent to aggression to rely on the threat of using thermonuclear weapons, . . . [2]

There was an indication of dissatisfaction by some Labour Members with this policy of a British nuclear deterrent.[3]

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[1] 537 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 1894 (March 1, 1955).

[2] Ibid., 1917.

[3] Sixty-two backbench Labour Members abstained during the vote on the Opposition amendment. Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 134.

At the annual party conference in 1955 a composite resolution was moved which opposed the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb and all nuclear weapons by Great Britain. The motion was defeated by 5,300,000 to 1,174,000.[1] The 1956 party conference accepted a composite resolution which expressed opposition to the continued testing of nuclear weapons and requested Labour to work toward abolition of all atomic weapons but which did not call for unilateral disarmament by Britain.[2] The issue of unilateralism remained a concern of a small minority until the 1957 conference.

Unilateralism became a full-fledged party struggle in 1957. A motion calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament was moved at the annual conference. It was soundly defeated, 5,836,000 to 781,000, but this marked the joining of battle in earnest.[3]

The leadership's opposition to unilateralism was grounded in its belief that to surrender Britain's arsenal of nuclear weapons was tautamount to surrender of the country's influence in the world-wide cause of peace. The unilateralists' arguments that Britain should lead "by example" failed to impress the leadership. They were convinced it would have no

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[1]The Times (London), October 12, 1955, p. 5.

[2]Ibid., October 4, 1956, p. 5.

[3]Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 179, citing Labour Party Annual Conference Report 1957, Composite Motion Number 24, p. 165.

effect on the actions of other nations, especially Russia and the United States. Philip Noel-Baker,[1] a champion of general and complete disarmament, consistently opposed unilateralism. He stated that "unilateral disarmament would mean surrendering Britain's influence in the world-wide struggle to de-militarise the world."[2] Bevan argued in 1957 that unilateral disarmament would send a British Foreign Secretary naked into the conference chamber; able to only preach sermons. When he pointed out that such unilateral action would not necessarily secure Britain from the hydrogen bomb some delegates to the party conference shouted that Nehru [India's Prime Minister] had no bomb. Bevan agreed, but his rejoinder, "ask him to dismantle the whole of his police forces in relation to Pakistan and see what Nehru will tell you," clearly indicated the concern of the leadership with preservation of British power.[3]

Although arguments in support of multilateralism were sometimes couched in the language of power politics, as evidenced by Bevan's 1957 speech, the leadership's support of this policy cannot be automatically ascribed to their belief in such theories. It is doubtful that many held such beliefs. The theme which underlay multilateralism was that only a

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[1]Noel-Baker was President of the Socialist Campaign for Multilateral Disarmament, primarily a Parliamentary group which provided speakers on defense as needed.

[2]Quoted in Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 182.

[3]The Times (London), October 4, 1957, p. 4.

collectivist approach to world peace offered a realistic chance of success. Emanuel Shinwell, a former Minister of Defense, illustrated this theme in an exchange of letters with Bertrand Russell which were printed in The Times:

> I invite Russell to address himself to the question: "Would British renunciation of nuclear weapons encourage the Russians and the Americans to do the same?" Suppose they refuse, what follows? Unless the gesture meets with success it has no value. Of course we shall ascend to a high moral plane, but if Russell believes that it will impress either of the principals in this affair he deceives himself.[1]

Multilateralism remained the party's official policy until 1960. At the 1958 party conference Hugh Gaitskell repeated the oft-heard argument that no evidence existed to show that, if Britain adopted unilateral disarmament, America and other members of NATO would do the same. A disarmament resolution was defeated by the lopsided vote of 5,611,000 to 890,000.[2] However, as it had done in 1956, the conference advocated the halt of nuclear testing.

Despite the one-sided margins of victory the leadership remained under attack by the unilateralists. In 1959 the passage of an outright unilateralist resolution, although by a minority vote of all who were entitled to be delegates, by the National Union of General and Municipal Workers pointed to

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[1] Ibid., March 7, 1958, p. 11.

[2] Ibid., October 3, 1958, p. 4.

increasing displeasure with the official policy.[1] Bevan responded to this pressure when he pledged in Commons that a Labour Government would halt all nuclear testing.[2] Although this position was advocated in the 1958 party policy its announcement in Commons indicated that the leadership was aware of the need for some response, at least in some measure, to the unilateralists' demands.

The party's policy position was amended in July, 1959, with the publication of The Next Step, a joint statement by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions Congress. This statement still rejected any British unilateral disarmament but departed from previous policy in that multilateral disarmament need not include Russia and the United States. The key provision of the document read:

> The objective which the Government should set itself is an agreement, preferable under the auspices of the UN, signed by every nation with the exception of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. [Italics added.] Under this agreement each nation would pledge itself not to test, manufacture or to possess nuclear weapons. . . . The Government should be prepared to announce now that, if such an agreement could be successfully negotiated, Great Britain would not only cease the manufacture of nuclear weapons, but also deprive herself of their possession.[3]

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[1]Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 188, citing NUGMW 44th Congress Report (1959), Motion 233, p. 337. The motion passed 150 to 126 with 75 absent or abstaining.

[2]Ibid., p. 188, quoting Hansard (April 27, 1959), column 915.

[3]Ibid., p. 186, quoting Disarmament and Nuclear War--The Next Step (June 24, 1959), p. 7.

Because of the general election no conference was held by Labour in 1959. Indications of continuing support for the party's official policy can be found in the activities of the large Transport and General Workers Union. At their annual conference a resolution demanding that Britain stop the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons and never be the first to use such weapons was defeated 5,133,000 to 2,795,000.[1] The margins of victory were smaller than before however, indicating increasing unilateralist support.

The official party policy remained in favor of an independent British nuclear deterrent and multilateralism until July, 1960. However, it can be argued that such a position did not entail support for the bomb as a matter of principle. The July, 1959, adoption of a "non-nuclear club" concept would indicate a willingness to reject nuclear weapons, if all except the United States and Russia would agree to do likewise.[2] Gaitskell, as early as 1958, had expressed his concern with the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons and the need to prevent this occurrence:

> It is a terrible prospect that nuclear weapons should come into the hands of more and more . . . governments. If it were really a choice, if we in government knew for certain that only our contriving to manufacture these weapons stopped this agreement which would finally freeze . . . the distribution of nuclear weapons to the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. . . . I would regard it as a very powerful argument indeed . . .[3]

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[1] The Times (London), September 10, 1959, p. 12.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 188, quoting from a 1958 Conference speech contained in The Next Step, pp. 6-7.

The seeds of the "non-nuclear club" concept are clearly evident in Gaitskell's speech and directly linked to his concern with proliferation.

The defeat of Labour in the 1959 General Election, its third successive loss, caused a searching re-appraisal of its organization and policies. The Tory Government's decision to cancel the Blue Streak rocket program insured that nuclear weapons policy would be included in any such re-appraisal. The debate now turned on the question of policy toward existing nuclear weapons in Britain's arsenal. Should they be abandoned now or later? Although the rocket program had been cancelled the V-bomber force was still operational and effective at the time.

Both George Brown and Harold Wilson, speaking in Commons during a defense debate on April 27, 1960, opposed an independent nuclear deterrent under the altered conditions. Wilson said, "What we have seen today . . . is the end of the independent nuclear deterrent."[1]

Gaitskell was attending an international socialist meeting in Israel at the time of the debate. He subsequently tried to downgrade the statements by Brown and Wilson and to stem the increasing tide of unilateralism during a speech at Leeds in which he said:

> Nothing said by Labour's official spokesmen could possibly be understood as meaning that they wanted Britain

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[1] Ibid., p. 190, quoting Hansard (April 27, 1960), column 329.

> to disarm unilaterally, give up NATO, and become neutralist. They did not say that we should give up our existing nuclear weapons. They were concerned solely with the future, of what Britain's position was to be in five years' time. Multilateral disarmament was the only answer.[1]

That this was not a correct assessment, at least with respect to Wilson, was made plain in October, 1960. On the eve of the annual party conference Wilson said, "In the debate on the Blue Streak fiasco, George Brown and I made it plain on behalf of the party that there could now be no question of an independent nuclear deterrent for Britain . . ."[2]

Gaitskell signaled the abandonment of an independent nuclear deterrent for Britain in his Leeds speech, however, when he stated that "we have never committed ourselves to going on indefinitely with our own independent deterrent."[3] This was not an about face on his part; previous statements as far back as 1958 had indicated that possession of a British bomb was not a principle of party policy. The Times of April 25, 1960, noted that he had granted a powerful case existed against Britain's independent deterrent on grounds of cost and risk of proliferation.[4] Gaitskell had made much the same point in

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[1] The Times (London), May 2, 1960, p. 12.

[2] Ibid., October 3, 1960, p. 4.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., April 25, 1960, p. 6. Gaitskell claimed these were matters of balance on which he found it impossible to say that it was absolutely clear one way or the other. The real case for a British deterrent was fear of excessive dependence on the U.S.A.

March, 1960.[1] In his speech to the 1960 conference Gaitskell continued the same line of argument:

> It is not, in my opinion, a matter of principle but a matter of balance of arguments, economic, military and technical, on which a cool re-examination and reappraisal was necessary from time to time.[2]

Clearly, by the 1960 annual party conference the question was not would Britain have an independent nuclear deterrent but for how long? Phrased differently, the choice was between unilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union moved the following resolution at the 1960 conference:

> This conference considers that world peace and nuclear disarmament are imperative. . . . Conference demands that the Government should press for an international agreement on nuclear disarmament and, in the meantime, demands the unilateral renunciation of the testing, manufacture, stock-piling, and basing of all nuclear weapons in Great Britain.[3]

The resolution was strongly opposed by the party's Parliamentary leadership. It also opposed a resolution moved by the Transport Workers Union which called for "a complete rejection of any defense policy based on the threat of the use of strategic or tactical nuclear weapons."[4] This resolution [as noted in Chapter IV] posed the additional threat of advocating a policy

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[1]Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 192, citing Hansard (March 1, 1960), column 1135.

[2]Ibid., pp. 191-92, citing Labour Party Annual Conference Report 1960, p. 197.

[3]The Times (London), October 6, 1960, p. 18.

[4]Ibid.

which would require withdrawal from NATO. The official defense policy proposal surrendered the independent British nuclear deterrent but sought to fulfil Britain's obligations to her allies. This policy included continued membership in NATO, among other things, where use of nuclear weapons was the accepted doctrine. A fourth resolution, by the Woodworkers Union, supported the leadership's policy and continued British membership in NATO.[1] The results were as follow:

TABLE 1
1960 CONFERENCE DEFENSE POLICY VOTING RESULTS

	Official Policy Resolution	TWU Resolution	AEU Resolution	Woodworkers Resolution
For	3,042,000	3,282,000	3,303,000	2,999,000
Against	3,339,000	3,239,000	2,896,000	3,331,000
Majority	(297,000)	43,000	407,000	(332,000)

Source: The Times (London), October 6, 1960, p. 14.

The majorities for the unilateralists were only about half as large as had been anticipated. After the results were studied the leadership explained the smaller than expected majorities as a result of support for the official defense statement by about 75 per cent of the constituency parties.[2]

The defeat of the official policy by the conference and its adoption of unilateralism provoked a split between the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party. The Times estimated that about four in five of the Labour Members would support the leadership and its position rather than

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 14.

the conference result.[1] Gaitskell told the conference that:

> There are some of us who will fight and fight and fight again . . . What sort of people do you think we are? Do you think we can simply accept a decision of this kind? Do you think we can become overnight the pacifist, unilateralist, and fellow travellers that other people are?[2]

The leadership launched its efforts to counter the unilateralist victory by coupling unilateralism and neutralism. During the 1957 and 1958 conference debates no effort was made to paint unilateralists as neutralists. By 1960 this tactic changed. Gaitskell suggested that the unilateralist resolutions, if carried to their logical conclusions, would result in a neutralist Britain.[3]

Perhaps this charge was an exaggeration but Gaitskell certainly had grounds for his concern. The Transport Workers Union resolution rejected a defense policy based on the threat to use nuclear weapons--exactly the policy employed by NATO. Gaitskell attacked this by saying that:

> . . . the implication was clear enough--is that Britain went to NATO and said: "Give up your weapons unilaterally, even if the Soviet Union retain theirs, and if you do not we withdraw from the alliance."[4]

The debate, thus widened, weakened the unilateralist support. Those who viewed Russian Communism with concern were reluctant to support a policy which could result in withdrawal

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 18.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

from NATO. There were suggestions that the unilateralist resolutions might not have been adopted had the trade union delegates not been compelled by union rules to vote as directed during union conferences.[1]

In early 1961 the National Executive Committee set up a "Committee of 12" to draft a defense policy statement. Three major drafts were submitted to the National Executive Committee and none of them advocated Britain withdrawing from NATO. The Gaitskell-Healey draft became the "official" National Executive Committee policy and it insisted that Britain must stay a member of NATO and try to change it from the inside.[2] This same document pledged the party to "cease to attempt to remain an independent nuclear power, since this neither strengthens the alliance nor is it now a sensible use of our limited resources."[3] While this was not the same policy advocated by the 1960 conference, the whole party was now unilateralist in terms of British nuclear weapons.

The 1961 annual party conference marked the end of the debate. A Transport Workers Union resolution which opposed any policy based on nuclear weapons was defeated 4,309,000 to 1,891,000 votes. The official policy document Policy For Peace

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

[2] Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 198.

[3] Ibid., quoting Clause 5 of the draft. The draft was later presented to the party conference as Policy For Peace.

was adopted 4,526,000 to 1,756,000.[1] Unilateralism and neutralism ceased to be issues of important contention. Neutralism was defeated and unilateralism accepted.

The "Gaitskellites" were not products of the wartime Coalition Government experience. Their rejection of "socialist" foreign policies was not the result of such a process. Rather, they were products of the postwar Labour Government experience. The election defeats which followed that experience convinced them that success at the ballot box would come only when the party increased its appeal in the British middle class. This could only occur, in their opinion, when the specter of "socialism" was removed from the Labour Party and its image altered in the minds of the voters. What was required was a thorough revision of the party's orthodoxy.

In contrast, the unilateralists blamed the party's electoral failures upon the very fact that it had abandoned its socialist principles when it was returned in 1945. Therefore, these principles must be reinstated and adhered to before the party's political fortunes could be improved.

The unilateralist victory hardly represented the triumph of socialist anti-militarism over detested balance of power politics. The independent British nuclear deterrent was abandoned by the leadership upon grounds of cost and danger of proliferation. These were pragmatic concerns, not matters of principle. Support of NATO remained strong. Neutralism was thoroughly rejected by the party.

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[1] The Times (London), October 5, 1961, p. 8.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUEZ CRISIS

On July 26, 1956, President Nasser, incensed over the withdrawal of American and British financial aid for the projected Aswan Dam, nationalized the Suez Canal and thereby set in motion a chain of events which led to the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt. The crisis in British foreign policy centered upon this issue extended from July, 1956, until December, 1956, witnessed the presence of a United Nations emergency force along the canal, and Anglo-French-Israeli withdrawal of their forces. It is not intended to examine the history and sequence of events of these actions,[1] but to focus upon British Labour Party policy toward the crisis. How well did the party's policy coincide with its socialist principles of internationalism and anti-militarism?

It would be well to recall at this time the party's viewpoint that so long as the nation-state refused to accept

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[1]See, among others, Leon D. Epstein, British Politics in the Suez Crisis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), and James B. Christoph, "The Suez Crisis," in James B. Christoph and Bernard E. Brown, eds., Cases in Comparative Politics, 2d ed., (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969).

any higher authority over its arbitrary will, the international system would remain in turmoil and conflict. Beginning with World War I, it had displayed a faith in international organization and a rejection of "balance of power" politics, lasting into at least the late 1940s. Complementing this was the strong anti-militaristic and pacifist leanings of many party members.

Nasser's action unleashed a storm of resentment in Great Britain. At the beginning both Conservatives and Labourites reacted in much the same manner. Both viewed the seizure of the canal as wrong on Egypt's part and felt the canal must be removed from Egyptian control. The Labour Party raised no official opposition to the calling up of the reserves by the Conservative Government. Gaitskell reflected this when he told Commons, "I believe that we were right to react sharply to this move. If nothing at all were done, it would have very serious consequences for all of us, especially for the Western powers."[1]

Even while denouncing Nasser's action ,however, Gaitskell made one stipulation concerning the use of force to redress the wrong. After having said there were "circumstances in which we might be compelled to use force, in self-defence or as part of some collective defence measures," he went on to add:

> I must, however, remind the House that we are members of the United Nations, that we are signatories to the

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[1]557 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 1617 (August 2, 1956).

> United Nations Charter, and that for many years in British policy we have steadfastly avoided any international action which would be in breach of international law or, indeed, contrary to the public opinion of the world. We must not, therefore, allow ourselves to get into a position where we might be denounced in the Security Council as aggressors, or where the majority of the Assembly were against us.[1]

By September 12, 1956, it had become apparent that Eden was actively considering the use of force. Parliament had been called into special session and Eden told the House:

> In that event [attempts at international settlement fail] Her Majesty's Government and others concerned will be free to take such further steps as seem to be required either through the United Nations or by other means [italics added] for the assertion of their rights.[2]

When queried by Labour about the "other means" Eden refused to assure Commons that the Government would not use force without United Nations sanction.

From this point forward the Labour Party's position hardened. By mid-September Labour's opposition to the Government's Suez policy was established. Gaitskell made it clear that the Government could not expect restraint on the part of the Opposition.[3] Throughout the debate in Commons on September 12-13, Labour speakers expressed their opposition to the use of force, especially outside the auspices of the United Nations.[4]

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[1] Ibid., 1616-17.

[2] 558 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 11 (September 12, 1956).

[3] Ibid., 15-18.

[4] Epstein, British Politics, pp. 67-68.

The Anglo-French ultimatum to Egypt on October 30 signaled the unleashing of a storm of Labour criticism of the Government's actions. Following an extended evening debate Labour compelled a parliamentary vote. The results--270 to 218--demonstrated that the Government's military action was not supported by the Labour Opposition.[1] Gaitskell articulated the Labour policy when he told the Commons during debate on October 31, "I must now tell the Government and the country that we cannot support the action they have taken and that we shall feel bound by every constitutional means at our disposal to oppose it."[2] He outlined the course of action to be followed when he said Labour would seek "through the influence of public opinion, to bring every pressure to bear upon the Government to withdraw from the impossible situation into which they have put us."[3]

By restricting its opposition to "every constitutional means" at its disposal Labour ruled out the use of a general strike or other efforts outside the legitimate political field, such as appeals for disruption of shipments of troops and materials. Gaitskell made this clear on the day of the invasion when he told Commons: "We shall, of course, make no

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[1]558 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 1341-82 (October 30, 1956).

[2]Ibid., 1462 (October 31, 1956).

[3]Ibid.

attempt to dissuade anybody from carrying out the orders of the government . . ."[1]

This course of action appears to have been chosen as offering the least amount of damage to the party's image in the public eye. Failure to support the war effort would certainly be viewed as unpatriotic and any attempt at general strikes or illegal disruption of social order could only increase that unfavorable image. Totally opposed to the Government's course of action the party leadership might be, but they were also concerned with maintaining the party's position as the "Loyal Opposition," capable of responsible action and deserving of the electorate's trust.

What this policy of constitutional opposition meant was that Labour, in order to succeed in reversing the Government's policy, would have to win enough Conservative support to bring down the Government or to pose such a strong threat that Eden would have to alter the policy. The solidarity of the Labour Members was impressive. This was an issue upon which all the factions of the party could unite. Pacifists, supporters of international organizations and anti-imperialists could all aline behind Gaitskell.

Solid in their opposition they might be, but Labour was not able to win over sufficient Tory support in Parliament. Nor was it successful in its bid for public support in a degree sufficient to influence the Government's course of action.

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[1] Ibid.

A considerable amount of public opinion data relating to Suez is available. This data was collected by sample surveys taken by the British Institute of Public Opinion [the British Gallup organization] and was analyzed by Epstein.[1] The public was almost evenly divided throughout the crisis period on the desirability of military action. A survey conducted on September 5-6 revealed that 34 per cent approved of an ultimatum to Egypt and 49 per cent disapproved. A survey on November 1-2 disclosed 37 per cent believed it right to take military action against Egypt and 44 per cent believed it wrong. Respondents whose voting intentions were Labour did not exceed 30 per cent in favor of military action at any time between August 16, 1956, and October 1, 1957. By contrast, voters of Conservative inclination ranged from 43 per cent in August, 1956, to a high of 81 per cent in November, 1956, and receeded only two percentage points in October, 1957.[2]

Epstein concluded that there were more Labour defections in the pro-Suez military action direction than Conservative voter defections to Labour's position. However, he emphasized that pro-Suez support remained in a definite minority among Labour voters.[3] At any rate, the Conservative leadership did not perceive any threat to its policy from public opinion among British voters.

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[1]Epstein, British Politics, pp. 139-52.

[2]Ibid., p. 142. All percentages were taken from Table 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 149.

The Labour Party policy toward Suez can be summed up in one word--opposition. At no point did it propose any realistic alternative. To have limited the use of force to that possible under United Nations auspices was to, in effect, deny Britain the use of force. Action in the Security Council was blocked by the Russian veto and in the General Assembly by the Asian-African opposition.[1] This amounted to nothing more than a policy of inaction.

In December, 1956, during debate over the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt, Gaitskell stated that Labour's policy would have been to warn Israel against any aggression. If Israel had ignored the warning and attacked, Labour would have supported a Security Council resolution against Israel and would have been in a position to propose an international force and to have been a part of it.[2] It must be emphasized that this policy was outlined after the events had occurred.

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[1]Sir Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1960), pp. 496-97.

[2]561 H.C. Deb., 5 s., 1563-64 (December 6, 1956).

CHAPTER VII

COLORED IMMIGRATION

It is often asserted that the speech by Enoch Powell at irmingham on April 20, 1968, introduced the era of racialist olitics in Britain. However, colored immigration from the ommonwealth was the subject of political action as early s 1961.[1]

In April, 1961, Members of Parliament, concerned over ncreasing rates of immigration, asked the Conservative overnment's Home Secretary, R. A. Butler, if controls would e introduced. The Government spokesman replied that the overnment had no plans at present to introduce legislation imed at bringing a halt to immigration from any Commonwealth ountry.[2] The Government's reply did not satisfy those who elieved that some restriction was necessary and they continued o press the Government for some form of restriction. The overnment continued to reply to questions about controls on migration with the assurance that the matter was under

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[1]See, among others, J. Harold Wilson, A Personal Record: he Labour Government 1964-1970 (Boston: Little, Brown and ompany, 1971), pp. 524-25.

[2]The Times (London), April 22, 1961, p. 6.

constant Government study.[1]

The Labour Party's position at this point was that controls were unnecessary and that those Conservative Members who called for controls were concerned with excluding immigrants on the basis of color. Under Labour questioning on June 15, 1961, in Commons, the Home Secretary pledged that "there will certainly be no legislation directed against colour and based on prejudice."[2]

The mounting pressure could not be resisted. Faced with an increasing wave of immigration from the West Indies and Asian Commonwealth nations, Butler announced that legislation to control, but not to stop, immigration into Britain would be introduced. In his speech to the Conservative Party Conference he emphasized that care would be taken to avoid race or color prejudice and the measure would be based on the principle that those immigrants without independent means would be required to have a job or to show a need for their services.[3] The conference, by a show of hands, overwhelmingly passed a motion which asked for quick actions of the problems "being created by the uncontrolled number of immigrants flowing into the United Kingdom."[4]

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[1] Ibid., June 2, 1961, p. 20.

[2] Quoted in Ibid., June 16, 1961, p. 21.

[3] Ibid., October 12, 1961, p. 12.

[4] Quoted in Ibid.

Labour's hostile attitude to the Bill subsequently introduced was indicated by their pressure to have the measure proceed through its committee stage on the floor of the House of Commons, rather than the usual procedure of a standing committee and by suggesting a Commonwealth conference on migration before introducing legislation.[1] Their objection to the Bill was grounded in the principle of internationalism, expressed as support for the Commonwealth. Gaitskell told the Commons that:

> The withdrawal of the right of free entry of Commonwealth citizens to this country is a very vital change in the Commonwealth. . . . Some of us at least regard the right of free entry to the mother country as something of very special importance to the Commonwealth, . . .[2]

Prime Minister Macmillan refused to delay submission of the Bill and it came before Commons for debate on November 16, 1961. Labour launched a two-phase attack against the Bill. Four amendments were tabled which, if adopted, would have in effect killed the Bill. A second set of amendments was then introduced which were designed to limit the effect of the Bill by permitting appeal, removing requirements for work permits prior to entry, allowing dependents of immigrants into the country under liberal conditions, and limiting the period of the Bill's operation.[3]

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[1] Ibid., November 14, 1961, p. 4.

[2] Quoted in Ibid., November 15, 1961, p. 18.

[3] Ibid., November 25, 1961, p. 5.

In the debate Labour continued its attack upon the measure as being racialist in origin. Gaitskell said:

> Why did the Government want to keep them [immigrants] out? They all knew the answer: because they were coloured--and because, in consequence of that, there was a fear of racial disorder and friction. . . . The Bill was a plain anti-Commonwealth measure in theory, and a plain anti-colour measure in practice.[1]

Labour failed to halt the enactment of the Bill into law, although it was successful in limiting its period to one year at a time. The vote was 283 to 200 in favor--a majority of 83.[2] The Act received the Royal Assent in 1962.

The issue was revived by introduction of the annual Expiring Laws Continuance Bill in 1963, which provided for the extension of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, among others, for a further 12 months. Labour Members' views varied sharply. Some wanted an open-door policy, more wanted control of some kind, and a few wanted more control than the Act was providing. The new Labour leader, Harold Wilson, moved an amendment to delete the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962. It was understood that unless the Conservative Government would agree to search for a new way of controlling immigration the amendment would be pressed to a vote. If the agreement were given then the amendment would be withdrawn. The Government refused to agree to enter into such negotiations and a vote was forced. During

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[1]Quoted in Ibid., November 17, 1961, p. 19.

[2]Ibid.

the debate Wilson told the House that:

> We do not contest the need for control of immigration. What we suggest ought to happen, and what a Labour Government would do if in power, is to enter into negotiations with Commonwealth countries for the purpose of working out agreed quotas, and arrangements for their implementation, by effective control over the numbers leaving the country.[1]

Labour's amendment was rejected by 181 votes to 131. However, indicative of the variance among Labour Members was a statement by one during the debate that ". . . controlled immigration was in the interests of the country and of those wishing to come here . . . We cannot afford to be the welfare state for the whole of the Commonwealth."[2]

Immigration was an issue in the 1964 General Election. The Labour Party's election manifesto, The New Britain, outlined the party's policy if it were to be elected:

> . . . a Labour Government will legislate against racial discriminations and incitement in public places and give special help to local authorities in areas where immigrants have settled. Labour accepts that the number of immigrants entering the United Kingdom must be limited. Until a satisfactory agreement covering this can be negotiated with the Commonwealth a Labour Government will retain immigration control.[3]

As the campaign got underway the subject of immigration lurked ominously in the background. Both parties attempted to keep the color problem out of the election. But, despite their

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[1]Quoted in Ibid., November 28, 1963, p. 9.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Cited in Ibid., September 12, 1964, p. 6.

efforts, it became an issue in certain local campaigns. The Prime Minister brought Commonwealth immigration into the election on October 6 during a speech at Yorkshire. He claimed that perhaps a million immigrants would have flooded into Britain except for the Conservative Government's controls.[1] Given the importance and impact of immigration in certain areas this type of claim was perhaps impossible to avoid.

Gallup poll results in July, 1964, showed that 40 per cent of those surveyed were in favor of controlling entry by quotas fixed by the British Government, 28 per cent by quotas fixed by discussion with Commonwealth countries, 20 per cent for total exclusion, and 10 per cent for free entry.[2] It can be argued that poll results such as these influenced the Labour Party's election pledge cited above.

Although Labour won the election with an overall majority of six seats it suffered losses which were attributed to the immigration issue. Mr. P. Gordon-Walker, shadow Foreign Secretary, was one such loss and he said, "There can be only one explanation--a dirty campaign based on immigration."[3] Another Labour loss was Mr. Fenner Brockway, who was also closely bound up with immigration and the color problem.[4]

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[1] Ibid., October 7, 1964, p. 12.

[2] Ibid., September 17, 1964, p. 13.

[3] Quoted in Ibid., October 16, 1964, p. 12.

[4] Ibid.

From the moment he became Prime Minister, Wilson hinted that immigration must be kept out of politics. But he had no false illusions on such a possibility. One of his first tasks as Labour leader had been to wean away the Shadow Cabinet from Gaitskell's commitment of outright opposition to the Commonwealth Immigration Act. His success in this was evident in the party's election platform. And in August, 1965, a Government White Paper on immigration was announced which indicated a further shift to the right by the Government. Controls were to be increased, fewer immigrants would gain entry, and those who entered illegally would be repatriated.[1] Presenting the report of the Parliamentary Labour Party to the annual conference Wilson asserted that the White Paper decisions were a collective Government decision taken after the fullest consideration by the highest authority of the system of government. He went on to say:

> I want to say to you with all the emphasis at my command that the Government take the view that we have a duty to act here and failure to fulfil that duty might lead in a very short time to a social explosion in this country of the kind we have seen abroad.[2]

This policy did not go unchallenged within the party ranks. A resolution urging the withdrawal of the White Paper was defeated 4,736,000 to 1,581,000.[3] The large majority was

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[1] Ibid., August 3, 1965, p. 5.

[2] Ibid., September 29, 1965, p. 5.

[3] Ibid., September 30, 1965, pp. 12-13.

a result of block trade union voting. The debate was more evenly balanced. A Times editorial described the Government's record in immigration as ambivalent. Many Members were said to be opposed to the White Paper. It also asserted that the scale and methods of control could be called reactionary coming from a party which had attacked the Conservative Government's Bill from a liberal standpoint.[1]

Following the party's conference a motion criticizing the White Paper was tabled in Commons by 30 Labour Members. The opposition to the White Paper claimed the legislation was unnecessary because other laws existed which would achieve the same results. It was asserted that the White Paper was illiberal in two ways. First, it foreshadowed a sharp reduction in the number of Commonwealth citizens who would be admitted for settlement and proposed a wide extension of discretionary power over the person of those admitted. Second, it contained provisions for deportation. What it proposed was to give the Home Secretary a general power to repatriate Commonwealth citizens of less than five years residence who evaded the proposed stricter controls. This power was thought to be without adequate judicial protection for the persons affected.[2]

The Conservatives, aware of Labour divisions over the White Paper, moved an amendment to the Expiring Laws Continuance

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[1]Ibid., p. 9.

[2]Ibid., October 28, 1965, pp. 12-13.

Bill and forced some debate on the Government's policy by seeking the alteration of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962.[1] Wilson was said to have stated on November 4 that the White Paper would not be withdrawn but the Queen's Speech five days later effectively withdrew all the legislative proposals. A Labour spokesman refused to guarantee that legislation would be introduced during that session of Parliament. During the debate the Labour Minister of Labour cautioned against removing controls and Michael Foot expressed his opposition to any form of legislation, especially Labour introduced, which involved an element of color bar.[2]

To exclude the problems of racial discrimination within Britain from a study of colored immigration was impossible. They were too interwoven to permit such treatment. The question of immigration was bound up with problems of discrimination in the mind of both politicians and the public and were addressed as aspects of the same social malady.

The Labour Government passed the Race Relations Act, 1965, to deal with racial discrimination in Britain. The problems of colored immigration were not solved by these measures, however, and they continued to fester beneath the surface of British political life. In a speech in May, 1966, Roy Jenkins,

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[1] Ibid., November 24, 1965, p. 16.

[2] Ibid.

Labour Home Secretary, indicated that "his mind was far from closed against future changes in the [Race Relations] Act."[1] The 1966 Labour Party election manifesto, Time For Decision, was published on March 8. It committed the party to "continue realistic controls, flexibly administered, combined with an imaginative and determined programme to ensure racial equality."[2] Only three sentences were devoted to immigration and racial relations.[3] The report submitted to the annual party conference that Fall contained one brief paragraph on the Race Relations Act, 1965, and no mention of immigration.[4]

The Times carried a report that new legislation on immigration was being prepared for Parliament in June, 1967.[5] This resulted in a new round of public statements. Duncan Sandys, Conservative Shadow Cabinet Minister, called for a halt to immigration and Government aid in the return to their homelands of those who desired it.[6] A Government spokesman with special responsibility for immigration cautioned against violence and hinted at impending legislation.[7] Two days later it

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[1]Labour Party, Annual Conference Report, 1966 (London: Transport House, 1966), p. 95.

[2]The Times (London), March 8, 1966, p. 7.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Labour Party, Annual Conference Report, 1966, p. 95.

[5]The Times (London), June 24, 1967, p. 2.

[6]Ibid., July 25, 1967, p. 2.

[7]Ibid.

was announced that the Race Relations Act was to be extended to cover discrimination in employment, housing, insurance and credit facilities.[1] Thereafter the tempo of public and Parliamentary exchanges on the subject of colored immigration and related racial problems increased markedly.

Heath put forward a four-point charter for better race relations which contained calls for strict controls on new entries and Government aid for those who wished to return home.[2] The Queen's Speech opening Parliament included the pledge that "legislation will be introduced to extend the scope of the Race Relations Act."[3]

However, it was Enoch Powell, Conservative Shadow Minister of Defense, who acted as a catalyst in the bringing of racial matters into the center of the political arena. He spoke at Deal in October, 1967, on the problem of Asian immigrants from Kenya and called for amendment of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 to close a loophole which Kenya's independence had created.[4] During a speech at Wolverhampton in December, 1967, he criticized the folly of immigration.[5] In February, 1968, he spoke again at Walsall on the problem of

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[1] Ibid., July 27, 1967, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., September 30, 1967, p. 2.

[3] Quoted in Ibid., November 1, 1967, p. 5.

[4] Tom Stacey, Immigration and Enoch Powell (London: Tom Stacey Limited, 1970), pp. 77-79.

[5] The Times (London), December 9, 1967, p. 1.

racial assimulation and colored immigration.[1] On April 20, 1968, he delivered his famous speech at Birmingham which resulted in his removal from the Shadow Cabinet and made it virtually impossible to disregard the problem of immigration.[2]

The Labour Government took no further action on immigration until February, 1968. Faced then with the problem of a massive influx of immigrants from Kenya the Government announced that it was submitting an emergency Bill to limit the number of Asians immigrating from East Africa. This action came as a shock to some Labour backbench Members.[3] The Bill was forced through Parliament in haste. Commons approved the Bill after a 15 hour 25 minute non-stop debate by a vote of 145 to 31.[4] However, an earlier vote on the Bill's second reading was 372 to 62. In that vote it was estimated that 35 Labour Members voted against the measure and about 30 Labour Members abstained.[5]

The Times editorialized that this was a serious matter for the Labour Party which in 1962 had argued against the Commonwealth Immigrants Act and promised to repeal it when re-

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[1]Stacey, Immigration, pp. 79-83.

[2]Ibid., pp. 83-93. For Prime Minister Wilson's response see Wilson, A Personal Record, pp. 524-27.

[3]The Times (London), February 23, 1968, p. 1.

[4]Ibid., March 1, 1968, p. 4.

[5]Ibid., February 28, 1968, pp. 7, 10.

turned to power. It added, "there is no doubt that today's Bill is a complete breach of the traditional attitudes of the Labour Party towards questions of race and colour."[1]

On April 9, 1968, the Government's previously forecast Race Relations Bill was published. It proposed to make racial discrimination in housing, employment and services such as insurance and credit facilities illegal.[2] The Conservative leadership decided to oppose the Bill. It was shortly thereafter that Powell gave his Birmingham speech and Heath dismissed him. The Bill was given its second reading by a vote of 313 to 209 with about 12 to 24 Labour Members abstaining.[3] It received the Royal Assent on October 25, 1968.[4]

At the annual party conference the Parliamentary Report asserted that the Government had"maintained a balanced policy by taking a number of steps, . . . to reduce the number of Commonwealth citizens entering the United Kingdom for settlement but also introducing increased power to ensure that immigrants already here are treated in the same way as the indigenous population."[5] In his speech to the delegates Wilson devoted only three sentences to the Race Relations Bill and

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[1]Ibid., February 27, 1968, p. 9.

[2]Ibid., April 10, 1968, p. 10.

[3]Ibid., April 24, 1968, p. 1.

[4]Ibid., October 26, 1968, p. 7.

[5]Labour Party, Annual Conference Report, 1968 (London: Transport House, 1968), p. 86.

made no mention of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act.[1] A composite resolution [Number 38] calling for, in part, "a national policy for immigration based not on colour but on the social and economic needs of the country" was carried by a show of hands.[2] Speaking for the National Executive Committee which recommended acceptance of the resolution, Miss Joan Lestor said, "What we want to do is to take the question of colour out of the issue of immigration, . . ."[3]

Powell made his second major speech on immigration on November 16, 1968.[4] In an effort to discredit Powell, the Labour Party's Research Department published a pamphlet, Powell And His Allies, in which the accuracy of his statistics and the validity of his stories were challenged.[5] Labour spokesmen had attacked Powell on these grounds before.

The only reference to immigration at the 1969 annual conference was in the Parliamentary Report which noted the actions taken under the Race Relations Act and the establishment of an immigration appeal system.[6] There was no debate on the party's policy.

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[1] Ibid., p. 111.

[2] Ibid., pp. 283, 287.

[3] Ibid., p. 287.

[4] Stacey, Immigration, pp. 96-114.

[5] Labour Research Department, Powell And His Allies (London: LRD Publications Limited, 1969), passim.

[6] Labour Party, Annual Conference Report, 1969 (London: Transport House, 1969), p. 101.

With the decision by Wilson to hold a general election in June, 1970, immigration again became an election issue. The Conservative Party's election manifesto promised that future immigration would be allowed only in strictly defined special cases. There was to be no further large scale permanent immigration if the Tories won. The Labour manifesto promised, with the rate of immigration under firm control, to concentrate the resources in the major task of securing good race relations. It proposed to review the law relating to citizenship and to give the Race Relations Board powers of discretion in taking up complaints.[1]

Following the Conservative victory the Queen's Speech opening Parliament indicated that "legislation will be introduced on Commonwealth immigration."[2] The promised Bill finally was introduced in a White Paper published on March 5, 1971.[3] The Parliamentary Labour Party decided to oppose the Bill on the grounds that it was unnecessary.[4]

During debate over the Bill at its second reading stage one Labour speaker characterized it as "wretched and racialist and . . . biased in favour of whites."[5] Despite Labour oppo-

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[1]British Information Services, Election Manifestos 1970, reproduced from The Times (London).

[2]Quoted in The Times (London), July 3, 1970, p. 7.

[3]Ibid., March 6, 1971, p. 2.

[4]Ibid., March 4, 1971, p. 2.

[5]Quoted in Ibid., March 9, 1971, p. 8.

sition the second reading motion was passed by a vote of 295 to 265. Efforts by Labour to have the committee stage taken on the floor of the House failed by a vote of 296 to 263.[1] The Bill received the Royal Assent on October 28, 1971.[2]

Following its election loss, Labour attempted to determine the causes of its defeat and prepare for the next election by developing policies on issues. The annual conference passed a resolution condemming racial discrimination and calling on the National Executive Committee to prepare a "Socialist alternative policy."[3] One of the speakers on Composite Resolution Number 7 said:

> In spite of what we did to the Kenyan-Asians in 1968, to the dispair of many, we must insist that this Party opposes root and branch any change in immigration legislation proposed by the Conservative Government.[4]

The National Executive Committee urged acceptance of the resolution and it was carried without dissent.[5]

A Fabian Society pamphlet, Immigration And Race Relations, published November 1, 1970, contended Labour failed to make any meaningful attempt to "disabuse" the public of immigration myths and at every turn approved more and more

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid., November 18, 1971, p. 1.

[3]Labour Party, Annual Conference Report, 1970 (London: Transport House, 1970), p. 330.

[4]Ibid., p. 206.

[5]Ibid., p. 209.

administrative Acts to "tighten the screw."[1] The 1971 annual conference was devoid of debate on racial and immigration matters. The Parliamentary Report to the conference merely cited the opposition to the Bill on second reading and in committee.[2]

In April, 1972, the report of a study group on immigration was issued. It attacked the policies toward the British Asians in 1968 [introduced by Labour] and proposed that "United Kingdom citizens of overseas origins with no colonial, dual or other citizenship should have the right to free entry to Britain on the same basis as other United Kingdom citizens."[3] The report also proposed an urgent Government inquiry into all aspects of citizenship which should lead to a new citizenship Act.[4]

The immigration problem was highlighted once again in August, 1972. President Idi Amin of Uganda declared some 60,000 Asians must leave Uganda within 90 days.[5] Some 50,000 of these Asians held British passports and the explusion threatened to upset the strict quota system that had been imposed in 1968 on African Asians leaving Kenya. The British Foreign Minister

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[1]Reviewed in The Times (London), November 2, 1970, p. 3.

[2]Labour Party, Annual Conference Report, 1971 (London: Transport House, 1971), p. 93.

[3]Quoted in The Times (London), April 15, 1972, p. 3.

[4]Ibid.

[5]"Uganda: The Unwanted," Time, August 21, 1972, pp. 22-23.

conceded Britain's special obligation to holders of British passports but expressed hope London's duty could be fulfilled by an orderly quota arrangement over the years.[1] He hinted in Parliament that Britain might cut off development aid to Uganda but Amin brushed the threat aside.[2] The official view that most of the Ugandan Asians could be absorbed into the British economy was not matched by the highly critical popular reaction to more colored immigrants.[3] The Labour Party response is not yet known.

The immigration or color problem in Britain is one of the few issues which is really capable of arousing deep-seated political passions. Responsible leaders in both parties have been most reluctant to let these passions loose. Gaitskell, while leader of the Labour Party, deeply opposed the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill in 1961. However, Wilson won the party over to support for controls by 1964. The proposal for additional controls in 1965 encountered strong party resistance and was allowed to expire at the prospect of a general election. Faced with a massive influx of Asians from Kenya, the Labour Government--in an action which shocked a sizeable segment of the party--rammed an emergency Bill through Parliament. This represented

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Britain: We Don't Need Any More," Newsweek, September 11, 1972, p. 30.

[3] "Black Racism In Uganda--White Man's Burden For Britain," U.S. News and World Report, September 4, 1972, pp. 48-49.

a complete about face for the party's attitude. Following the Conservative majority in the 1970 election Labour opposed action to extend the immigration controls.

Labour Party policies toward immigration, except for the 1968 Kenya episode, were generally in accordance with its traditional principle of internationalism. The party consistently opposed immigration controls based on race or color. It insisted that any controls needed be applied to Commonwealth and "foreign" citizens alike. However, it must be recalled that immigration controls were accepted as a necessity after Wilson became the party leader. It was desired that controls be obtained through mutual agreement and enforced at the source of immigration. This policy was unobtainable.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

No foreign policy issue since the end of World War II has called into question so clearly and directly Labour's commitment to the socialist principle of internationalism as has British membership in the European Economic Community, more widely known as the Common Market. Here was an attempt to create a regional commonwealth larger than the individual nation-state. How did the Labour Party react?

A detailed examination of Labour's positions on British Common Market membership issues is clearly beyond the scope of this effort and will not be attempted. What follows is an attempt to probe beneath the day-to-day pronouncements on individual issues and to develop the basic viewpoint of the party. A general knowledge of the development of the Common Market following World War II by the reader is assumed.

The Labour Party came into power in 1945 with one of the largest majorities in modern Parliamentary history. It was returned with what it considered a mandate from the electorate to change British society. This domestic social revolution had top priority, any other consideration must give way. The Government of 1945-1951 could not agree to membership in any organization which would possess even limited control of its

ability to exercise the controls necessary to achieve "democratic socialism."[1]

From 1945 to 1950 a number of European bodies were proposed or established. The Brussels Treaty was signed in 1947, followed by the establishment of NATO in 1949. The Marshall Plan resulted in the formation of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation in 1948. The Council of Europe came into being in 1949. The Labour Government associated Great Britain with all of these organizations.

The Schuman Plan, advanced in 1950, proposed that "the entire French-German production of coal and steel be placed under a common High Authority, in an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe."[2] It encountered Labour opposition to British membership. Prime Minister Attlee observed to Parliament that the Government was not able to accept conditions required by the French in advance and therefore found it impossible to take part in the negotiations.[3] The party's National Executive Committee rejected the proposal more bluntly, stating that "no Socialist government

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[1]Labour Party, European Unity, A Statement by the National Executive Committee, (May, 1950), p. 8, cited in Robert J. Lieber, British Politics and European Unity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 19.

[2]Quoted in William Diebold, Jr., The Schuman Plan (New York: Praeger, 1959), p. 1.

[3]476 H.C. Deb., 5s., 35-36 (June 13, 1950).

in Europe could submit to the authority of a body whose policies were decided by an anti-Socialist majority."[1]

Plans for a European Defense Community met a fate similar to the Schuman Plan at the hands of the Labour Government. Labour gave support to the concept but refused to participate because it found the proposed EDC excessively federal in structure and insufficiently Atlantic.[2]

As a result of the general election of 1951 Labour passed into opposition and remained there for the next 13 years. During this period the Common Market was born and began to flourish. The impression developed from a study of materials pertaining to the British reaction to the efforts of the Six is that of indifference. The relationship of Britain to the Common Market was viewed as an economic, not a political, question and almost no debate between the parties concerning it took place.[3]

The Labour Party was not committed to any policy in the beginning. The Parliamentary Labour Party abstained during the vote following Prime Minister Macmillan's announcement of Britain's membership bid. It was estimated that approximately one-third of the 258 Labour Members supported British member-

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[1]Lieber, British Politics, p. 22, quoting Arthur Koestler in Lewis Galantiere, ed., America and the Mind of Europe (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), pp. 53-54.

[2]Lieber, British Politics, p. 23.

[3]Ibid., Chapter 6 et passim.

ship; one-third opposed it and the remainder were undecided.[1] At the 1961 annual conference the party adopted a motion stating that Labour would not approve British entry unless guarantees were obtained for agriculture, horticulture, the European Free Trade Association, the Commonwealth, and Britain's right to retain the power of nationalization and economic planning.[2] Thereafter, Labour moved more and more toward a policy of opposing membership.

One of the values debated between the right and left factions of the party concerned internationalism. The Campaign For Democratic Socialism group argued that Britain remaining outside the Common Market was a rejection of internationalism:

> The concept of socialism is incompatible with insularity. If we could only achieve our goals by cutting ourselves off from the world, there would be something wrong with the goals . . . Those who are most suspicious of foreigners are most nervous of change.[3]

Countering this argument, a spokesman for the right argued that what was more important was how Britain could best work for agreement between Russia and the United States and integrate the newly emerged nations into the international community; not how to settle relations with Europe.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 170.

[2] Ibid., p. 171.

[3] Haseler, The Gaitskellites, p. 233, quoting Campaign, 18 (July, 1962).

[4] Ibid., quoting Denis Healey, "Political Objectives to British Entry into the Common Market," Observer, (May 25, 1961).

The party's policy on Common Market membership was finally articulated at the annual conference in 1962. The core of this policy became known as the famous or infamous five conditions:

1. Strong and binding safeguards for the trade and other interests of our friends and partners in the Commonwealth.
2. Freedom as at present to pursue our own foreign policy.
3. Fulfillment of the Government's pledge to our associates in the EFTA.
4. The right to plan our own economy.
5. Guarantees to safeguard the position of British agriculture.[1]

Together with Gaitskell's address to the party conference, these conditions set the tone of the party's anti-Common Market policy. Initially a "Yes, if . . ." policy it later shifted toward "No, unless . . ." and had the effect of focusing attention on the Conservative Government's actions while maintaining that Labour favored entry in principle but could not support the unsatisfactory conditions negotiated by the Tories.[2]

Public opinion during this period reflected no clear preference on British membership in the Common Market. In September, 1962, 46 per cent of Gallup Poll respondents said they would approve of entry while 30 per cent said they would disapprove. Twenty-four per cent had no opinion. In the same poll, Labour voters indicated disapproval by 37 per cent to

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[1]Lieber, British Politics, p. 173, quoting The Guardian, "The Labour Party Conference, 1962."

[2]The characterizations are Lieber's. Lieber, British Politics, p. 178.

32 per cent in favor.[1] Surveys conducted by Butler and Stokes in the summer of 1963 and the autumn of 1964 disclosed that fully half of the sample each time had no opinion concerning Britain's entry into Europe. They concluded that:

> The most reasonable interpretation of the remarkable instability of responses is that Britain's policy towards the Common Market was in 1963-64 a matter on which the mass public had formed attitudes to only a very limited degree.[2]

Following President de Gaulle's "veto" of British membership on January 14, 1963, the issue remained quiescent for more than two years. It was hardly mentioned in the October, 1964, general election. Only eight per cent of the Labour candidates mentioned EFTA or the Common Market.[3] Labour's election manifesto stated that although it would seek "closer links with our European neighbors, the Labour Party is convinced that the first responsibility of a British Government is still to the Commonwealth."[4]

The five conditions remained Labour's official policy after its election victory in 1964. However, by the 1965 annual

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[1] Ibid., pp. 181-82, quoting Gallup Political Index, Number 33 (September, 1962), p. 160.

[2] David Butler and Donald Stokes, Political Change in Britain (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 176-77.

[3] David Butler and Anthony King, The British General Election of 1964 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1965), p. 143. The analysis was from a random sample of one-fourth of the constituencies in England, Scotland, and Wales.

[4] F. W. S. Craig, comp. and ed., British General Election Manifestos 1918-1966 (Chichester: Political Reference Publications, 1970), p. 242.

conference the Foreign Secretary was showing some signs of softening these conditions and by the end of the year only agriculture remained a major block to Common Market membership.[1]

In November, 1966, Prime Minister Wilson revealed the extent to which Labour had altered its position. He announced to Parliament the Government would hold talks with the individual heads of government of the Common Market countries to determine "whether it appears likely that essential British and Commonwealth interests could be safeguarded if Britain were to accept the Treaty of Rome and join EEC."[2] Following these talks and cabinet review of the results, Wilson announced to Parliament on May 2, 1967, that the Government had decided to make formal application for membership in the Common Market, the European Coal and Steel Community, and Euratom.[3] Parliament approved the membership bid[4] but President de Gaulle did not. He announced his second "veto" on November 27, 1967.

Public opinion toward membership had changed during this period as well. Butler and Stokes noted that the fairly even division of 1963-1964 had shifted to three-quarters of those voicing an opinion in 1966 being in favor of British membership.[5]

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[1]Lieber, British Politics, pp. 243-44.

[2]Ibid., p. 247, quoting The Times (London), November 11, 1966.

[3]Ibid., p. 248.

[4]The party was still split over the issue, however. Despite a three-line whip 36 Labour Members voted against the Government and about 50 abstained. Ibid., p. 248.

[5]Butler and Stokes, Political Change, p. 225.

Between August, 1966, and January, 1967, the Gallup Poll found majorities of at least four to one in favor. However, one year later, even before de Gaulle's "veto", the polls reflected the public evenly divided on membership once again.[1]

Labour's policy of seeking membership continued. On February 25, 1970, Prime Minister Wilson stated the Labour Government's position. Britain intended to re-submit its application and was ready for immediate negotiations with the Common Market members. She would be willing to fully accept all responsibilities of membership providing terms were acceptable and a suitable transition period was provided.

Wilson was not able to negotiate with the Europeans, however. Attempting to capitalize on surging popularity in public opinion polls, he called a snap election in June, 1970, and was rewarded with a stunning defeat. Emphasizing the Conservative-Labour agreement upon membership desirability was the absence of emphasis upon the issue in the 1970 election manifestos. The Conservatives devoted seven sentences in three paragraphs to the question while Labour made only one oblique reference to it:

> . . . In the last five years Labour has:--
> . . .
> Underlined our desire to play a full part in the future political and economic development of our continent.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 356.

[2] British Information Services, Election Manifestos 1970 reproduced from The Times (London).

Agreement had been reached prior to the election that negotiations would begin June 30, 1970. These opened as scheduled with the new Conservative Government acting for Britain. As noted above, Labour continued its conditional support of membership through the fall of 1970. These sessions continued throughout 1970 and into 1971. A major turning point was reached in May, 1971. Settlement of the agriculture and Commonwealth sugar issues was announced.[1] This was followed by the June 23, 1971, announcement of Britain's acceptance by the Common Market:

> The Commission of the European Communities considers that the negotiations with Great Britain on its application for membership in the European Economic Community have now been completed at a political level.[2]

With the successful conclusion of negotiations by the Conservative Government, the Labour Party switched to opposition. In September, 1971, the National Executive Committee issued a 13,000-word background paper for delegates to the annual conference, stating that it opposed entry because of dissatisfaction with the terms negotiated.[3]

This switch of position revealed a deep cleavage in the party. The National Executive Committee's statement was rejected by the Labour Committee For Europe, a group of party members in

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[1]"British Negotiations: the Breakthrough," European Community, Number 146 (June, 1971), p. 17.

[2]"Common Market Accepts United Kingdom," European Community, Number 147 (July-August, 1971), p. 10.

[3]European Community, Number 149 (October, 1971), p. 7.

favor of entry. They saw the terms of entry as supportable by Socialists and not to be rejected automatically because they were negotiated by a Conservative Government.[1] Support for the National Executive Committee's position came from the Trade Unions Congress which voted on September 8 against entry and demanded a general election before a decision was made.[2]

The Commons, after a seven-day debate on October 28, 1971, approved the principle of British entry into the Common Market.[3] In the division, 69 Labour Members voted with the Government for entry and against their party's position. In addition, 20 abstained.[4] The debate, longest on a single subject since World War II, featured 176 speakers. Michael Foot suggested that Britain should not join on any terms. Peter Shore, a former Labour Minister, said the people were against membership. Labour Party National Chairman Anthony Wedgewood Benn dwelled on the theme that the people had not been consulted and signature of the treaty would precipitate a major crisis. In contrast, Michael Stewart, former Labour Foreign Secretary, expressed the view that entry terms could not be substantially improved.[5]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

[3] Robert Sheaf, "Parliament Votes 'For'," European Community, Number 151 (December, 1971), pp. 11-14.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Labour attempted to delay signature of the treaty of accession but failed in a Commons vote of 296 to 276.[1] Shore, speaking on an earlier occasion, had stated that Labour would reject the treaty and would not be bound by it.[2] Benn had voiced the same threat during the October, 1971, debate.[3] Wilson, speaking in Bonn on February 4, 1972, said that a future Labour Government would withdraw from the Common Market if it could not satisfactorily renegotiate the terms of British membership.[4]

The split in the Labour Party over entry continued. Ray Gunter, former Labour Cabinet Minister, resigned from the Parliamentary Labour Party on February 16, 1972, because of its position of opposing entry.[5] This was on the eve of a vote on the enabling legislation in Commons which the Government carried by a majority of eight votes. Five Labour Members abstained and three were absent.[6] Wilson promptly demanded an election on the issue which was refused. The Parliamentary Labour Party Steering Committee of the Shadow

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[1]The Times (London), January 21, 1972, p. 4.

[2]Ibid., January 6, 1972, p. 4.

[3]Sheaf, "Parliament Votes 'For'," European Community, pp. 11-14.

[4]The Times (London), February 5, 1972, p. 4.

[5]Ibid., February 17, 1972, p. 1.

[6]Ibid., February 18, 1972, p. 8.

Cabinet was reorganized and it included no Members favorable to Common Market entry.[1]

Benn said again in April that the Common Market issue must be settled through a general election or referendum.[2] The Co-operative Party at its annual conference voted overwhelmingly for a general election or referendum on entry and called on all Labour Members to vote with the Parliamentary Party on that issue.[3] A survey carried out by National Opinion Polls between March 24-27 found 78 per cent of the sample thought that Britain should have a referendum on entry.[4] Wilson and nearly all of the Labour leaders except Benn had consistently gone on record as opponents of referendums in Britain until April, 1972. However, with Wilson, Jenkins and Callaghan absent, Benn secured a vote of 13 to 11 in the National Executive Committee for a referendum.[5]

On March 29, at a Shadow Cabinet meeting, Wilson and others changed their minds. A plan was developed to press an opposition amendment for a general election before entry and, when that failed, to three-line whip the Labour vote behind

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[1] Ibid., February 25, 1972, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., April 3, 1972, p. 2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., April 11, 1972, p. 4.

another amendment for a consultative referendum, which had been tabled by Conservative backbenchers earlier.[1]

Deputy Party Leader Roy Jenkins, Shadow Defense Minister George Thomson, and Harold Lever, Shadow Minister for Fuel, Steel and Company Law, resigned over this decision to ask for a referendum on entry. Shirley Williams, Shadow Home Secretary, wrote Wilson she would resign if a more constructive approach to British entry were not adopted.[2] There were three more resignations from the Shadow Government on April 12.[3] Also indicative of the deep split was a Parliamentary Labour Party majority of only 33 on the proposal to support the referendum amendment. The vote was 129 to 96 with 58 Members absent or not voting. Another member of the Shadow Government also resigned.[4]

More than 60 Labour Members abstained in the votes on amendments calling for an election and a referendum prior to Britain's entry. Several of Wilson's pro-Market frontbenchers refused to vote despite the two-line whip which was substituted for the three-line whip first planned. There were at least seven frontbench Members who abstained. The amendment calling

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

[3] Ibid., April 12, 1972, p. 1.

[4] Ibid., April 13, 1972, p. 1.

for a general election failed 301 to 272 and the referendum amendment failed 284 to 235.[1]

A Fabian pamphlet, British Entry: Labour's Nemesis, launched a bitter attack on the collective Labour leadership. It charged that the Labour Party had no European policy at all and that chauvinism had shaped Labour's attitudes to Europe since 1949. The rejection of Europe, it added, after "an unqualified acceptance of the political notion of a United Europe" was a return to "the bastion of limited nationalism."[2] Wilson tried to combat such claims by asserting that the party was not opposed to the European Economic Community in principle but fought the Conservative Government's Bill on two counts. First, it constituted an outrage of Parliamentary institutions and due process and second, the entry terms were inimical to Britain's interests.[3]

It will be recalled that public opinion was almost evenly divided over entry at President de Gaulle's second veto. In February, 1970, poll results published by The Sunday Times of London showed 72 per cent were against entry.[4] By November, 1970, the percentage opposed had fallen to 64 per cent.[5] By September, 1971, data from the Opinion Research Center showed

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[1]Ibid., April 19, 1972, pp. 1-2, 12.

[2]Reviewed in Ibid., May 30, 1972, p. 2.

[3]Ibid., June 12, 1972, p. 4.

[4]Time, May 1, 1972, p. 26.

[5]European Community, Number 141 (January, 1971), p. 23.

a shift back to a rather evenly divided public. It showed 44 per cent favoring entry and 41 per cent opposed.[1] This can hardly be interpreted as majority support for Labour's policy.

In summary, the Labour Party policy on British membership in the Common Market fails to reflect a continuing commitment to the principle of internationalism. While in power in 1950 it opposed British membership in the proposed coal and steel community. While in opposition during the 1950s it generally ignored the question. In 1961 it began a move toward a policy of opposition, marked by its advancement of five conditions for membership. Returned to power in 1964, Labour reversed its policy and sought membership. The Wilson Government made application to join the Common Market in 1967. Wilson, speaking at Strasbourg on January 23, 1967, said the application followed the Government's examination in depth of "every aspect of the Treaty of Rome itself, . . . and all the implications and consequences which might be expected to flow from British entry."[2] Consigned to opposition by Wilson's error of judgement in 1970, the party once more opposed entry. Although he claimed not to be against entry in principle, Wilson's actions, together with the statements of other Labour leaders such as Shore and Benn, indicated a deep reluctance toward British membership. Such reluctance appeared to be

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[1] Ibid., Number 149 (October, 1971), p. 7.

[2] Quoted in The Times (London), January 31, 1972, p. 13.

grounded in domestic and partisan political concerns. The depth of the split in the Labour Party over entry was underlined by the resignation of Jenkins as Deputy Leader of the party and of others from its leadership.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has attempted to examine five examples of Labour's foreign policy since 1945 in order to determine the party's commitment to the socialist ideological principles of internationalism and anti-militarism. The party's espousal of that orthodoxy can be traced back to the beginning of Labour's existance as an independent political force and was not generally questioned by adherents before 1945.

From mid-1945 into the 1960s two fundamentally opposed positions with respect to Britain's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization competed for support within the Labour Party. The Labour Government, many of whose leaders had served in the wartime Churchill Coalition Government, was pragmatic in outlook. They discounted the possibility of using the United Nations for the maintenance of peace in the bi-polar world which emerged following World War II. These individuals viewed balancing alliances such as NATO as the only realistic means to protect British interests and preserve the nation's security against the interests of the Soviet Union. Labour opponents of this foreign policy characterized it as continuing the "power politics" tradition of centuries of British foreign policy and not according with the socialist

principles of internationalism and anti-militarism.

As long as the British membership entailed few concrete obligations and did not infringe domestic programs, it was not seriously contested by its opponents. With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea in 1950, and the resulting high costs of armaments, opposition to it became intense. Party unity suffered. The critics repeatedly charged that the Labour Government had deliberately abandoned socialist principles in the conduct of foreign policy. The disputes raged until 1961. Thereafter, what was questioned was not Britain's membership in the alliance per se but the direction the organization's policies were taking. Means, not ends, became questionable. The Labour Government's espousal and support of NATO clearly represented an abandonment of socialist principles. Equally clear is a party cleavage along the left-right spectrum of the ideological "yardstick."

The issue of unilateralism reinforces the belief in the existence of such a cleavage in the party. The conflict which raged in the Labour Party from 1957 to 1961 over nuclear weapons produced substantial evidence of division among its members with respect to the suitability of socialist principles as a basis for foreign policy. The rejection of socialist foreign policies by the "Gaitskellites" cannot be attributed to their wartime experience. They were products of the postwar Labour Government. Failure to win elections because the party did not appeal to the middle class, in their viewpoint, necessitated

the abandonment of socialism. The orthodoxy was a liability at the ballot box. Although the unilateralists blamed the party's electoral failures upon its abandonment of socialist principles during the late 1940s its victory over the party leadership was not really a triumph of socialist ideological principles.

This cleavage within the party was also disclosed by the issue of British membership in the European Economic Community. Britain's bid for Common Market membership called into question clearly and directly the Labour Party's commitment to the socialist principle of internationalism. Again the party divided on the policy to be followed. The policies of the leadership failed to reflect any continuing commitment to internationalism. The postwar Labour Government opposed British membership in early European integration efforts. While in opposition during the 1950s it generally ignored the question during the Common Market's beginning. By 1961, under Gaitskell, the party began its policy of opposition, characterized by the unacceptable five conditions. These indicated a desire to be in the Common Market while retaining Britain's "special relationship" with the United States and the Commonwealth, or in other words, her position as a world power. Given the responsibility of governing once again in 1964, Labour reversed its policy and began to court the Common Market. It claimed to accept without reservation all the aims and objectives of membership and its intention to implement them upon acceptance. Following its defeat in 1970, the party once

again shifted to opposition to British entry. The issue revealed the depth of the division in the party. Several of its leadership, including the deputy party leader, resigned in protest over the party's policy change. The "intellectual" arm of the party, the Fabian Society, launched a bitter attack against the party's policy.

The question of colored immigration did not disclose the deep cleavages which NATO, unilateralism and the Common Market revealed. The party initially opposed controls on immigration as being unnecessary and racialist in origin. They felt that controls were an assault on the idea of the Commonwealth. Faced, however, with the increasing influx of immigrants and the resulting racial tensions in certain British communities, they shifted their policy to accept the need for controls. In so doing they advocated negotiations with the Commonwealth countries in order to work out agreed quotas which would then be enforced by the country of origin. The leadership accepted controls because of their fear that continued colored immigration would lead to conditions resulting in a social explosion, but they did not want the image of anti-Commonwealth or nationalism which was almost certain to attach to such controls. The party was able to restrict disagreement with its policies by emphasizing positive policies with respect to racial integration and race relations in Britain.

The party acted out of character with respect to its normal policies on one occasion in 1968 and this came as a

shock to many of its members. The 1968 immigration Bill to control the Kenyan-Asian problem, rammed through Parliament in haste, did not originate in the socialist principle of internationalism but appeared to be an ill-judged reaction to an unexpected crisis by the party leadership, in response to wide-spread public concern and fear. The party's immigration policy, except for the 1968 aberration, represented an adherence to the socialist principle of internationalism within the bounds imposed by realistic alternatives.

The Suez crisis represented a unique experience in Labour Party foreign policy. The unanimity evidenced over Suez was the result of unique circumstances; the party's policy was one solely of opposition to the Conservative Government. Labour offered no realistic alternative to the Government's policy of military intervention. Labour's opposition does represent a commitment to the socialist principle of anti-militarism but it is doubtful that the policy was based on such a consideration.

On three of the five issues examined in this paper Labour was deeply divided and there were lesser divisions on a fourth. These divisions provided the leadership an incentive to caution, ambiguity and dissembling and what resulted were policies strikingly akin to those of the Conservatives.

The party leadership after 1945 discarded the principle of internationalism and anti-militarism as a basis for its foreign policy. Policy was dominated by considerations of

geography, military capabilities, economic conditions, and national habits and traditions. The post-war leadership did not view the world through socialist glasses. It was concerned with the balance of power in the world and its foreign policy reflected this fact. Party leaders may have resorted at times to socialist symbols in seeking support for their programs, but their considerations were grounded in questions of gaining and wielding influence.

Conflict over foreign policy divided the party into left and right factions. To the left or fundamentalist wing, socialist principles were as valid as ever. To the right or revisionist wing, these principles were outdated, utopian, and in need of major reformulation. This split resulted in stalemate. Attempting to maintain unity the leadership often resorted to compromises that obscured the issues, rather than forcing a clear decision and risking thereby the destruction of the party. In his decision to oppose entry into the European Economic Community in 1971, Harold Wilson may have finally forced a confrontation between the party factions which does risk the party's unity as a national entity. Only events occurring after the completion of this paper will reveal the depth of the cleavage. The responsibility of governing, followed by the desire for the return of that responsibility, exerted a powerful incentive for the party's leadership to adapt the socialist principles of the party's orthodoxy to the realities of daily existence.

Many observers, Christoph included, have not traced Labour's cleavage to its ideology. They view the party as pragmatic, flexible and adaptive, discounting any ideological heritage as having been long since repudiated by Labour. The cases examined in this paper do not support such a conclusion for the entire party. The fundamentalist or left wing remains loyal to socialist principles in the formulation of foreign policy. Based upon the examination of the five issues covered by this paper, it appears reasonable to conclude that ideology does call forth meaningful support among an important segment of the British Labour Party.

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IDEOLOGY AND THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by

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The paper seeks to examine the relationship between political ideology and political behavior, and to explore the change which the desire for, and responsibility of, political power exerts upon party policy. Ideology is seen as a symbolic template that renders communicable the attitudes and sentiments held by individuals in the community. It facilitates a logical grasp of events and situations, informs political action, and is important because it has the power to communicate ideas, evaluations and purposes among members of groups such as political parties.

The foreign policy of the British Labour Party since the end of the Second World War is examined in five case studies to determine the effect of the ideological principles of internationalism and anti-militarism upon its formulation. Elitist theory, stipulating that the party elites would determine the policies, calls into question the role of the Labour Party Conference in policy determination. Pluralism suggests that the socialists are only one of several groups in the party and the party functions as a "broker," pragmatically adjusting and compromising factional aims into acceptable generalities supported by all interests. Both elitist and pluralist models minimize ideology as a source of party goals.

Much of the research during the 1950s and afterward characterized the Labour Party as a broad coalition of interest groups which included the socialists. However, it is possible to identify a viewpoint or system of thought which pervaded the party during the years between World War I and World War II

and which persisted into the postwar years. This orthodoxy or doctrine firmly supported the ideas of internationalism and anti-militarism. "Balance of power" policies should be replaced with the cooperation and control a world socialist community would usher into being.

Two fundamentally opposed positions with respect to Britain's membership in NATO competed for support within the Labour Party from mid-1945 until 1961. The leadership viewed balancing alliances such as NATO as the only realistic means of protecting British interests. Labour opponents of this foreign policy characterized it as a continuation of "power politics" and not socialist foreign policy. After 1961 Britain's participation in NATO was not seriously questioned; specific NATO policies were.

Unilateralism reinforces belief in the existance of a cleavage in the party. This dispute, which raged in the party's ranks from 1957 to 1961, produced substantial evidence of division among its members with respect to the suitability of socialist principles as a basis for foreign policy. The victory of the unilateralists at the 1960 annual conference did not represent a triumph of socialist principles and it was not accepted by the leadership in Parliament, thereby calling into question the policy-making role of the conference. The leadership abandoned the policy of a British nuclear deterrent on the grounds of cost and the dangers of proliferation.

British membership in the European Economic Community also provided evidence of an ideological cleavage in the Labour

Party. This issue called into question clearly and directly the party's commitment to the principle of internationalism. As in the two previous cases, the party leadership failed to reflect any continuing support of socialist principles. The official party position shifted from opposition, to qualified acceptance, to unqualified acceptance, and back to opposition. This issue, more than any other, revealed the depth of the division in the party. Several party elites, including the deputy party leader, resigned over the party's policy change.

The issue of colored immigration did not disclose the deep cleavages which NATO, unilateralism and the European Economic Community revealed. The leadership was able to restrict existing disagreement with its policies by emphasizing positive policies pertaining to racial integration and race relations. Although it advocated controls, it insisted that they be applied to all immigrants without regard to race, color, or nation of origin.

The Suez crisis represented a unique experience. The unanimity evidenced was the result of unique circumstances. The party offered no realistic alternative to the Conservative Government's policy.

On three of the five issues examined Labour was deeply divided and there were lesser divisions on a fourth. The leadership after 1945 discarded the principles of internationalism and anti-militarism as a basis for its foreign policy. Policy was dominated by considerations of geography, military

capabilities, economic conditions, and national habits and traditions. Conflict over foreign policy divided the party into left and right wings. To the left, socialist principles were as valid as ever. To the right, these principles were outdated, utopian, and in need of major reformulation. The cases examined do not support the conclusion that the party as a whole is pragmatic, flexible and adaptive, having discarded any ideological heritage. Based on these cases, it appears reasonable to conclude that ideology does call forth meaningful support among an important segment of the British Labour Party.