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Ideology and policy in the Labour Party: 1951--1959.

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IDEOLOGY AND POLICY IN THE LABOUR PARTY:

1951-1959

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to attempt to show that ideology acted as a motive force of significant importance on political action in the 1950s. The argument is not general; instead, it is specifically limited to the British Labour party during the years from 1951 to 1959. It thus covers the life span of only two parliaments.

It will be maintained in Chapter II that the important socialist theories, dealt with in Chapter I, were the primary base upon which the rival party factions, fundamentalists and revisionists, formulated their desired policy aims. In Chapter III it will be argued that these factions were able to influence the party leadership to a significant degree. The analysis will show that the policy of a major Western political party was heavily influenced by previously formulated theories and ideologies.

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INTRODUCTION

It has become fashionable in recent years among socio-
logists and political scientists of the behavioral persuasion
to deprecate the influence of ideology on political action.
Over the last decade several works have been published which
deal extensively with what their authors see as the end of
ideological influence on political action in the West. The
theorists responsible for this argument first became promi-
nent in the mid-1950's. Edward Shils' article, "The End of
Ideology?" published in the Nov., 1955 issue of Encounter
and Lewis Feuer's article, "Beyond Ideology" published in
the same year reached almost identical conclusions.[1] Shils'
essay resulted from "The Future of Freedom" Conference held
in Milan, Italy in Sept. of 1955 under the auspices of the
Congress for Cultural Freedom. It was attended by various
intellectuals and politicians from North America and Europe.

> The ideological issues dividing left and right had
> been reduced [by the majority of those attending
> the conference] to a little more or a little less
> government ownership and economic planning. No one
> seemed to believe that it really made much dif-
> ference which political party controlled the domes-
> tic policy of individual nations.[2]

The reasons given for the decline of ideological influence
centered around man's proven ability to solve the political

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1 Encounter, 5 (Nov., 1955), 52-58. and Psychoanalysis
and Ethics (Springfield, 1955), 126-130.

2 S.M. Lipset, Political Man (New York, 1963), p. 441.

1

and social problems of the Industrial Revolution. Such factors as the conservative acceptance of the Welfare State, the decline of class distinctions, and the reduction of economic inequalities and privileges are examples of the factors cited as being at work. Daniel Bell has argued along similar lines:

> In the Western world, therefore, there is today a rough consensus ... on political issues: the acceptance of a Welfare State; the desirability of decentralized power; a system of mixed economy and of political pluralism ... the ideological age has ended.[3]

The purpose of this thesis is very limited in scope when compared with that of the theory dealt with above; although it does have as its object the desire to discover whether ideology had any influence on policy formation in the 1950s. The argument is not general; instead, it is specifically limited to the British Labour party during the years from 1951 to 1959. It thus covers the life span of only two parliaments. The argument presented is in no way meant to be a total refutation of the general "End of Ideology" theory. Instead, its purpose is simply to show that ideological influences on policy formation were, in this one case, of significant importance. It will be maintained that the general socialist theories dealt with in the early sections were the primary base upon which the rival factions in the party formulated their desired policy aims. It will be further argued that these factions were able to influence the party

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[3] Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (New York, 1962) p. 402.

leadership and, as a result, the official policy of the party; thus illustrating that the policy of a major Western political party was heavily influenced by previously formulated theories and ideologies.[4]

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[4] The policies of the factions, the revisionists and fundamentalists, are dealt with, at length, in Chapter II.

CHAPTER I

THE LABOUR PARTY AND SOCIALIST THEORY

The passage of time inevitably distorts the commentator's
understanding of political ideas as a result of cultural and
group socialization. Yet, at the same time, it aids analysis
by providing a conceptual framework and a certain amount of
detachment. The political theorist himself is limited in a
similar way; he is at the same time moulded by and the mould-
er of his environment. And, as a result, his primary aim is
often the justification of a specific policy; only then comes
statistical and historical evidence in support. Although it
has become fashionable since the publication of David Easton's
The Political System in 1953 to decry historicism in politi-
cal theory, it is not unprofitable for the commentator to
attempt to isolate core ideas and examine them in their re-
lation to given circumstances, as well as using them as a
tool of analysis in determining one's own moral preconceptions
or determining the validity of the theory.[5] Ideas can serve
as a primary motive force in political activity and any at-
tempt to isolate the causes of such activity must, of neces-
sity, include a certain type of research which Easton would
lable historical.

"The power of the philosopher lies in that he can stir
up great waves of feeling and agitation. His helplessness

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5 New York, 1953.

4

is due to his inability to control the farther waves of his thought."[6] As an instrument of historical causality a theory becomes important when emotions and interests can be given shape and support through it. There is no guarantee that the most logical or best suited theory will find large scale acceptance. Instead, influence on political action depends on the theory's appeal to ethical needs. When such comes to be the case the theory tends to become an ideology and this leads to a significant increase in its influence on political behavior.[7] The degree of influence of any ideology is a function of its ability to enlist support and this, in turn, is a function of organization.

British Socialism provides a relevant area for the study of political theory in this light. The connection here between theory and influence is striking. No attempt will be made to give a critique of various theories; information as to where such analysis can be found is provided in several notes. Rather, an attempt will be made to trace the development of socialist thought from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century and to isolate the core of the theories. Secondly, an attempt will be made to

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6 Adam Ulam, The Philosophical Foundations of English Socialism (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 130.

7 Ideology is here defined as a pattern of beliefs which imply an end for political action and which require an irrational commitment to certain ideas as being absolute. This definition is adopted from Eugene J. Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1960), p. 1.

show what core values became the basis for ideology.[8] The

purpose of this is to isolate the ideas which had a signifi-

cant effect on the ideological direction of the fundamentalist

and revisionist factions in the Labour party during the 1951-

1959 period. The present chapter provides an explication of

the core values of the major influential schools of British

Socialist thought. Chapter II discusses the conditions sur-

rounding the development of the factions and provides an

explanation of the basic positions of these groups. The lat-

ter were derived, in the main, from the theories dealt with

in Chapter I.

It should be noted that the elements embodied in the

Socialism of the Labour party sprang from many diverse and

independent sources which are not dealt with here. And while

all of these, in some respect, had a degree of influence on the

factions in some cases it was marginal, while in others many

of the earlier significant strands of thought were filtered,

refined, and modified by the later groups. It is sufficient,

therefore, for present purposes to take up the story of

Socialist development with T.H. Green.

The Pre-War Theorists

It should first be noted that despite the diversity of

theory, the similarity of core values within the elements in

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8 A note of caution should be added concerning the dif-
ferences between theory and ideology. While ideology obviously
derives from theory and becomes only a crude representation of
it, a precise line between the two is difficult to draw.

the party, tempered by British pragmatism, led to a remarkable cohesion in policy formation during the inter-war period. This should be kept in mind in order to provide a proper perspective, as differences among Socialist theorists did not necessarily reflect corresponding cleavages among major elements in the party. It was only with the Keynsian generation that the means-end controversy in British socialism came to the fore in a significant way. Aside from the above factors, it was perhaps the early fervor of a new creed, the exclusion from office in the form of majority government, the fact that not even basic policy had been implemented, and the sobering effect of government with a majority in the 1945-51 period which postponed the ideological controversy until the 1950s.

After 1951 the revisionists sought to claim that Socialism was primarily a social ethic, but the Labour party's commitment to Socialism had been far more than that, as it united a social ethic with a definite view of the nature of the existing social system and the means which had to be taken to transform it. Central to the whole concept was fellowship, which went far beyond radicalism and reformism; collectivism had begun to make significant advancement in its replacement of individualism. Emphasis was put on the welfare and happiness of the community, as in the new society the isolation of self would be abolished. It would be incorrect to argue that the bulk of the party went this far but this was definitely the direction of the re-orientation of thought. In addition to restating the values of the community such an ethical theory became part of the

principle guiding lines of Socialist economics; the profit

motive was to be replaced by fellowship. It was 'the system'

which was at fault and common ownership was the answer to the

existing ills of society. As a result, 1918 saw the adoption

of the party constitution with its much criticized and lauded

Clause 4.[9] There are numerous references available to prove

that this was part of the basic beliefs of all Socialists. In

1909 Ernest Bevin stated:

> ... you will realize the chaos, misery and degrada-
> tion brought upon us by the private ownership of the
> means of life. I claim that Socialism which is the
> common ownership of these means, is the only solu-
> tion of such evils.[10]

In 1933 Herbert Morrison (later Lord Morrison) wrote:

> The function of Labour Governments in the future
> will rather be to secure the socialization of in-
> dustry after industry under a management which can
> be broadly relied upon to go on with its work.[11]

The party wanted drastic change but it was, at the same time,

gradualist and devoted to parliamentary means; further, in

Parliament the large bulk of its policies were reformist and

brought with them the hope of immediate material benefits.

However, throughout the inter-war period in its three major

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9 "To secure for the producers by hand and brain the full
fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution
thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common own-
ership of the means of production and the best obtainable sys-
tem of popular administration and control of each industry or
service." Quoted in Henry Pelling, A Short History of the
Labour Party (London, 1965), p. 44.

10 Quoted in Alan Bullock, The Life and Times of Ernest
Bevin (London, 1960), p. 21

11 Quoted in S.H. Beer, British Politics in the Collecti-
vist Age (New York, 1965), p. 140.

policy statements Labour reiterated its belief in the necessity of nationalization for the realization of the Socialist Commonwealth.

T.H. Green's revision of liberal theory resulted in the obliteration of the usual lines of demarcation between politics and economics; economic phenomena had great relevance, Green argued, as social factors influencing human behavior and they should be considered in their ethical relationship to man in society. Green's influence, along with Mill's, brought liberalism from its negative view of the state to a positive one. The effect of legislation on the welfare of the community now became the standard of judgement. In a sense, however, the change was not so drastic when it is viewed as an extension of the utilitarian theory of the greatest happiness suitably modified by Mill.[12] Green's theory of liberalism had a certain affinity to a moderate brand of Socialism and the Oxford Idealist and Fabian movements probably represented a social reaction against the same inefficiencies in the system.

Although it is difficult to call certain elements in political theory Fabian because of the diversity of views held by the most prominent members of that group, there can be little doubt that utilitarian influences were substantial. Logically enough, the utilitarian trend led to a significant emphasis being placed on efficiency at the expense of social justice.

Equality was at least as important as fraternity in Fabian

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12 For a more detailed account of the influence of T.H. Green see George Sabine, A History of Political Theory (New York, 1961), pp. 735-40.

thought and this becomes strikingly apparent when one compares the Fabian society with such groups as the Independent Labour Party (ILP). Fabianism tended to be far more middle class and rationalistic. Liberty played its role in Fabian theory, but it was connected with an organic conception of society, having heavy Platonic and Hegelian overtones. This organic character of Fabian Socialism should not be seen as being similar to Fascism. The whole organic concept of society in evolution, due in no small part to Darwinian influences, was widely accepted at the time, and it is only in connection with positive recommendations that such thought can be labelled totalitarian or democratic. It was, in large part, as a reaction against individualistic liberalism that the Fabians stressed social unity. But at the same time it was usually maintained that liberty was intimately related to leisure. Work, Bernard Shaw maintained, was compulsory; and if hours of work could be shortened liberty would thereby be increased. This argument and its implications regarding the governmental sphere of activity shows that Fabian socialism was in no sense totalitarian. Further, it illustrates a curious ambivalence with regard to the idea of freedom. Both freedom as the absence of restraint and freedom as autonomy exist side by side throughout British socialist thought, forming a curious mixture of collectivism and individualism, one predominating in some cases the other in others.

The Fabians' dislike of capitalism did not lead them to support abrupt or violent measures; rather, it is difficult to

overemphasize the caution with which they advocated change. Sidney Webb argued that change must be democratic, gradual, constitutional, and morally acceptable to the masses. However there could be no doubt that the expropriators of economic rent were to be abolished as a class by means of taxation and that the ownership of major industries was to be taken over by the state. Yet, in the bulk of Fabian proposals there are few propositions which are not in the mainstream of, or a logical result of previous developments in Radical thought.

In 1889 the Fabian Essays in Socialism were published.[13] This volume served to establish the Society as an important force and to distinguish it from Marxism and the semi-anarchism of the Socialist League. Fabian theory saw Socialism as inevitable because of the nature of economic evolution. The pressure of the electorate, it was argued in the Essays, would speed up this tendency especially as the masses became increasingly aware of their power to mould society. Progress already made by means of public awareness and the ballot were sufficient to show that this would continue to be the case in the future. The transition from feudalism to capitalism had been one of long, slow progress just as the present transition was and would be. Similarity to Marxism is found in the emphasis on economic concentration which, for the Fabians however, served to bring closer and make easier the transfer of mono-

13 Sidney Webb, et al., Fabian Essays in Socialism (London, 1889).

polies and oligopolies to the public sector not through re-
volution but through a mixture of nationalization, taxation,
and compensation. Part of the argument was based on social
justice, the other on utility (in the sense of increased
efficiency) in an effort to gain the support of the elec-
torate for such a move. Since Socialism was to be attained
only gradually, compensation seemed normal, but it was to be
paid out of taxes on economic rent so that the collectivity
would not have to suffer. Land was to be taken over by local
public agencies rather than a national one, while in other
fields these local agencies were to establish enterprises in
competition with the private sector. It was felt that since
these government owned enterprises would not be concerned
with profit, they would be able to undercut capitalist prices;
and, because they would offer better conditions of work, the
best labour would drift towards them. The idea that workers
in the public sector should control their industries was re-
jected; instead, public boards or commissions were to be
established.[14] The central criticism of capitalist society
seemed to be not that the rich were rich and the poor were
poor but rather, that economic control gave vast power to a
small number of individuals.

The ILP, which came to the fore in the Liberal-Labour

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14 G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought (London,
1953-58), III, pp. 118-119. Hereafter cited as Socialist
Thought.

period, was formed by members of several diverse groups, particularly the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), the Fabians, and elements in the Scottish Labour party. The trade unions remained cool despite continued attempts by the party to convince them that membership would be to their interest. But the ILP began to make advances in the same manner the Fabians had, by running candidates in local elections and using its position on the councils to advocate concrete and immediate reforms in such fields as education and slum clearance. It was this type of policy that gained support for the party as it came to be seen as a reform group rather than a revolutionary movement. In the short run Radical measures were the aim but the ILP never abandoned its Socialist purpose, which it defined at its Bradford Conference of 1893 as "the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange."[15] Yet the party's immersion in reform led it to make a distinction between such short-run partial reforms, and long-run structural reforms which required the abolition of capitalism for their implementation. Thus, while the state should attempt to find work for the unemployed, the elimination of unemployment was not possible under capitalism, and while slums might be cleared the elimination of poverty would require the adoption of a collectivist position and the abolition of the profit motive.

The stress in this period tended, however, to be ethical

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15 Ibid., pp. 157-158.

rather than economic. The whole movement was utopian in aspiration, concerned with the betterment of the bottom stratum of society. It was a movement almost totally devoid of doctrine and, thus, while party theorists listened to the Fabians with their explanations concerning the efficiency of nationalization their major concern was social justice.

> This ILP type of Socialism was part of a much wider
> movement, for the most part not Socialist at all,
> of revulsion against the manifest evils of indus-
> trial society and, in particular, against the sharp
> contrast between the rapidly growing wealth of
> British society, regarded as a whole, and the appal-
> ling squalor and wretchedness of a large section of
> the population in London and other great cities.[16]

Guild Socialism which came to prominence/the same period
in
as the ILP, was part of a general European trend of thought in the pre-World War I era. This pluralism or theory of decentralized authority has been described as "the last significant attempt in political theory to deny the importance of the state."[17] While atomistic individualism once held sway, it was rapidly declining, and pluralism was seen to be a compromise between this individualism and pure collectivism. Certain ideas in pluralist thought were particularly appealing because of their attempt to combine the security of collectivism with the fear of state authority. Such a position, however, neglects significant social needs and by itself constitutes a rather weak argument in favour of the re-organization of society. But when combined with elements characteristic of

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16 _Ibid._, p. 179.

17 Jlam, p. 81.

other types of what was then contemporary, and particularly socialist, thought it attains a much greater degree of significance. Thus Harold Laski in his early period attempted to reconcile group interests and thereby prevent the evils of individualism appearing in a new form. Laski admitted that allegiance to the state was more important than allegiance to the group, but argued that alternative loyalties were necessary. If the will of groups and government conflicted, it was argued, the victor should be the party whose interests were directed towards the common good. The means used to identify the body which had the common good in mind was, interestingly enough, never revealed.

Guild Socialism aimed at replacing centralized economic controls with local ones. It gained the bulk of its importance after World War I and was primarily the result of intellectual inspiration. Fabians, Christian Socialists, anarchists, and Oxford intellectuals were all represented in this group, whose central aim seemed to be based on a desire to preserve the personality of the individual worker. The model was the autonomous medieval guild, which was seen as a system which permitted men to belong to groups and at the same time contribute to society. The community was viewed as a spiritual entity, "a mode of feeling of a number of human beings living together under the conditions of social life. Society, on the other hand, is a group of centres of deliberation and planning".[18] The state would become simply a group of economic organizations and

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18 _Ibid._, p. 88

would be devoid of coercive power, which was seen as the root of all disturbances in society. Once the state was abolished, the argument ran, the co-operative principle would reassert itself and serve as an agent for bringing forth man's best qualities, which capitalism had stifled.

The best and most concise precentation of the thought of the Guild Socialists is G.D.H. Cole's <u>Guild Socialism Restated</u>.[19] Cole begins by outlining certain assumptions: democracy ought to prevail in every aspect of life, and democracy attains reality only when it is dealt with vis-a-vis function. In large communities representative government is needed, but representation ceases to be democratic when it involves the substitution of the will of one for the will of many. Parliamentary representation violates the fundamentals of democracy in two ways: in the first place, the elector has almost no control over his MP, and when the infrequent occasion arises to change him or vote on his conduct the choice of candidates is severely limited; secondly, only one man represents the elector on every conceivable range of topics and it is highly unlikely that there could be complete agreement over the whole sphere of human activity. Essential to democratic representation, the argument runs, are the requirements that the electors have frequent contact with and a large measure of control over their representatives, and that representation should be functional. Human beings cannot be

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[19] Chicago, 1964.

represented, only viewpoints. The two central types of functional bonds, Cole states, are production and consumption orientated; in any industry the sets of controls desired by the two groups would be different. For example: the coal miners are primarily concerned with the conditions of work and the like, while consumers are primarily concerned with quality and quantity of the product. Guild Socialism maintains that internal management and control, as a trust given by the community, should belong to the workers, although safeguards should be added for the consumer. This would give workers a psychological feeling of freedom and self-government. Indirect control through parliamentary representatives conveys no such feeling.

Guild Socialism, however, was a passing phenomenon, and went into an early decline but not without having influenced trade union and Socialist ideas. Post-war demands for workers' control put forward by the trade unions, can in some measure be attributed to the influence of the Guild Socialists. The Sankey Commission on the coal mines, which reported in 1919, argued for nationalization and, in addition, stated "it is in the interests of the country that the colliery worker shall in the future have an effective voice in the direction of the mines."[20]

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20 Quoted in Socialist Thought, IV, pp. 417-418.

Socialist Theory in the Inter-War Years

The themes of equality and fellowship were paramount with Green and the other Oxford idealists and were further developed in the inter-war years by A.D. Lindsay. The philosophical basis of Lindsay's socialism was clearly shown in his 1928 debate with Laski. Lindsay's thought is primarily philosophical and moral; he goes back to Rousseau's General Will, disregarding any organic interpretation and viewing the moral will as general, arguing that man is motivated by both selfish and altruistic instincts. Man wants to be freed from his selfishness by participation in the community, and, further, pluralism is a device which could be used as an intermediary to bring the citizen into his full relationship with the state. Laski countered by arguing that the state is only a collection of individuals, and in itself it is without any moral or ethical importance. The will of the state, then, is simply the will of those individuals who have been able to gain enough power to control it. It is a purely utilitarian device. Lindsay replied, arguing that the state could undertake the performance of wide ranging reforms while at the same time preserving its democratic nature only if it could be proven that the state is no more than the instrument of select interests. The state can fulfill its proper role only once the altruistic instincts of its citizens are realized.

Lindsay concerned himself with democracy in a manner more

than faintly reminiscent of John Stuart Mill. He deprecated

forms and emphasized the necessity of spiritual reality. To

bring this into being, the social and economic basis of the

state must be changed to bring about equality, as it is im-

possible to have real political democracy without social and

economic democracy. Although leadership is necessary in any

state, there should be continuous participation by the masses

and, in order to attain this, men must be made politically

aware.

> It is by living together that men learn what they
> want and conceive purposes to which they will de-
> vote themselves, by playing complementary parts in
> a society of which they are all members.[21]

Once all inequalities in the system are seen to come from

functional distinctions democracy will work. Socialism in

Lindsay is divorced from material considerations and dialec-

tical inevitability; it becomes instead a moral necessity.[22]

The grand theorists of English Socialism owe little to

Marx, and it now becomes necessary to offer some reason for

this. England was the only European society which by the end

of the nineteenth century had a preponderance of industry

over agriculture and which had correspondingly progressive

political and social institutions. Although this was the

first country in which revolution should logically have taken

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21 A.D. Lindsay, The Modern Democratic State, (London,
1959), p. 260.

22 A critique of Lindsay's position is given in Ulam,
pp. 96-120.

place, Marxism was unable to attract any significant sector
of the population, as its appeal rests on a feeling of
grievance and alienation which was not, relatively speaking,
widespread in the England of the 1890s. Concern for the
class war could not thrive on a franchise that was as broad
as that which existed in Britain. Further, the strength of
the trade unions within the existing social structure saw to
it that there was not as great a misunderstanding of the facts
of industrial life as there was in other countries and that
there was some involvement by workers in the politics of the
day, which facilitated concern with piecemeal reform rather
than revolutionary action. Trade union biases mirrored the
attitude of the workers: the separateness but not the alien-
ation that accompanied it in other countries. They accepted
the industrial system but not capitalism.[23]

Marxism had to wait until the 1930s, with the depression
and the rise of Fascism, before it made any significant head-
way into the British Socialist movement. But it then became
a predominant influence in the thought of many socialists, in
large measure intellectuals such as Laski and John Strachey
and persons in the party leadership such as Aneurin Bevan and
Sir Stafford Cripps. Indeed, even the Webbs and G.D.H. Cole
were strongly influenced by Marx in this period.[24]

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[23] Adam Ulam, The Unfinished Revolution: An Essay on the
Sources of Influence of Marxism and Communism (New York, 1960),
p. 143

[24] See G.D.H. Cole, What Marx Really Meant (London, 1934).

> A very few socialist thinkers stood outside the
> Marxist stream, and a number of non-analytical
> works of a practical reformist nature were still
> being written. But Marxism was the dominant in-
> tellectual influence, and it made a profound im-
> pact on my generation of socialists in their
> formative years ... It is easy to forget today,
> not merely how unanimous socialist writers were
> in anticipating the collapse of capitalism, but
> how completely their analytical systems, their
> prophecies, and their recommendations, all
> hinged on this belief.[25]

Of the major Socialist works produced in this period John

Strachey's writings were most significant in the economic

sphere, while Harold Laski's works were perhaps most signi-

ficant in the political sphere.[26]

Laski rejects pluralism, state sovereignty being a neces-

sity if the state is to fulfill its function of ensuring a

certain system of class relations. Laski defines the state

as simply "the executive instrument of the class in society

which owns the means of production."[27] In order to limit the

power of the state, as the pluralist wants to do, the class

structure of society must first be destroyed. Every society

before the advent of a socialist utopia, must sustain some

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25 C.A.R. Crosland, The Future of Socialism (London, 1964), pp. 2-4.

26 John Strachey, The Coming Struggle for Power (London, 1934), and The Nature of Capitalist Crisis (London, 1936), and for Laski see particularly The State in Theory and Practice (New York, 1935), The Rise of European Liberalism (London, 1936), Democracy in Crisis (Chapel Hill, 1933), and Liberty in the Modern State (New York, 1930).

27 Quoted in Herbert A. Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold J. Laski (New York, 1954), p. 154.

system of relationships between classes and the means of
production, and the sovereign state serves as a coercive in-
strument to attain that end. All struggles within the state
are struggles of economic classes trying to obtain the sov-
ereign power. The emergence of Fascism, Laski argues, proves
the validity of the Marxist theory of the state. The unity
of capitalism and political democracy is a phenomenon of the
expansionist stage of capitalism, but when contraction sets
in the contradictions become apparent, and in order for de-
mocracy to survive, capitalism must be replaced by socialism.
But Fascism appears to save the former. While benefits may
be grudgingly granted to workers in the expansionist stage
of capitalism, these must be severely limited or entirely
curtailed in the contractory phase as they become a threat to
profits. The masses obey the forces of capitalism because
during its period of expansion it is able to offer them cer-
tain benefits; as a result, many become semi-bourgeois. As
long as capitalism results in a betterment of the worker's
position he will accept its authority but when it can no
longer fulfill these expectations the danger of revolution
arises.

Laski believed that political power derives from economic
power; and the former, in itself, is totally unable to deal
with the latter. It is, therefore, a waste of time to at-
tempt to limit economic power by legal and political means.
The Socialist state should possess all the power it needs to
reshape society, and this duty must not be hampered by

limitations on government.[28] Guild Socialist schemes are, therefore, of no real value. In its simplest form this viewpoint maintains that, if a parliamentary minority refuses to accept the decision of the parliamentary majority there is no possibility of a peaceful transformation.[29]

If Fascism comes to Britain in the contractory phase there will be revolutions from below and if this brings a socialist government, Laski argues, freedom would have to be sharply curtailed to deal with transitional problems. Even

> if its policy met with peaceful acceptance, the continuance of parliamentary government would depend upon its possession of guarantees from the Conservative Party that its work of transformation would not be disrupted by repeal in the event of a defeat at the polls.[30]

Further, if policy were to be opposed by business interests constitutional government would have to be suspended; and, although Laski feared physical violence, he maintained that the blame would not be on the majority but rather the minority. Liberty may temporarily have to be surpressed in order to attain the greater freedom of the age of socialism. It might happen that the ruling class would meet a socialist parlia-

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28 A table concerning party attitudes towards cultural norms and symbols in Richard Rose, Politics in England (Boston, 1964), p. 56, shows that while the Conservative and Liberal parties strongly support limits on government the Labour party is subject to sharp intra-party divisions ranging from partial support to complete rejection.

29 Deane, p. 171.

30. Laski, Democracy in Crisis, p. 87.

mentary victory by instituting a class dictatorship neces-
sitating revolution. However, Laski cautioned, Socialists
should continue to use constitutional means until the capi-
talists tried to smash their movement.[31]

Last among the varied influences on English Socialist
thought are the writings of two prominent Liberals: J.M.
Keynes (later Lord Keynes) and Sir William Beveridge (later
Lord Beveridge). It was the depression which provided the
chief spur to their thought as it had doubtless done for
Laski.

The idea of freedom as a positive rather than negative
quantity lead to the evolution of a new type of political
economy. The ills of such a highly developed industrial so-
ciety as Britain's were the result, Keynes felt, of a mal-
distribution of income and a resulting propensity to oversave.
The economic postulates of this new thought bore a close re-
semblance to certain Socialist ideas. Indeed, there was
nothing opposed to Socialism and much that was congenial to
it in its encouragement of high levels of mass consumption
and its advocacy of a significant redistribution of income by
the use of fiscal policy.[32] But such a policy not only

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31 Sir Stafford Cripps, later Chancellor of the Exchequer,
took a similar view when he stated: "If the Socialists come to
the conclusion that there was any real danger of such a step
being taken, it would probably be better and more conducive to
the general peace and welfare of the country for the Socialist
government to make itself temporarily into a dictatorship until
the matter could again be put to test at the polls." Quoted in
Ulam, The Philosophical Foundations of English Socialism, p. 73.

32 Ibid., p. 136

results in increased interference by government in the affairs of society but forces the criterion of short-run economic policy to be one thing: an increase or at least the maintenance of the current level of the standard of living. The primary goal becomes security and comfort for the collectivity, an undesirable goal to the fundamentalist when it becomes an end not a means. The fundamentalist advocates the abolition of capitalism not primarily because it is an inefficient method of production or even because of its effect on the distribution of goods, but because it is seen as involving an unjust and immoral system of private property and social differentiation. The ethical ideas of equality and fellowship were inseparably connected with the abolition of capitalism by means of nationalization. Some might think it questionable, therefore, as to how far Keynsian thought is compatible with the long-run aims of Socialism. When this type of thought is coupled with the short-run interests of a Labour government there is a danger that the long-run aims will be forgotten. The immediate possibility of curing the worst aspects of the existing society and changing important priorities in its operation may well have had preponderant influence over long-run aspirations which have as yet not proven their effectiveness.[33]

One of Beveridge's central goals was the attainment of

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[33] For a critique of reform theory from the Fabians to Beveridge see Ibid., pp. 121-161.

full employment which required that certain powers be in the
hands of government to enable it to modify and adjust the
operation of the market.[34] In order to maintain relatively
full employment total outlay had to be subject to some meas-
ure of government control and the mobility of the labour
force had to be significantly increased. Continuing high
taxes, national insurance schemes, a national health service,
a national nutrition policy, and adult education were other
significant recommendations. There can be little doubt that
the implications of the Beveridge Report are socialist, al-
though in its moderate sense. It provided a general analysis
of economic and social policy under capitalism, and its re-
commendations call for severe modifications in the system
which, when backed by certain ethical premises could be call-
ed socialist.

> The list of essential liberties given above does
> not include liberty of a private citizen to own
> means of production and to employ other citizens
> in operating them at wage. Whether private owner-
> ship of means of production to be operated by
> others is a good economic device or not, it must
> be judged as a device. It is not an essential
> liberty in Britain, because it is not and never
> has been enjoyed by more than a very small pro-
> portion of the British people.[35]

The thought of the major party factions in the 1950s was
heavily coloured by the political theory of the pre-war English
socialists. And although, strong Guild Socialist and Neo-

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[34] The main proposals were embodied in _The Report on
Social Insurance and Allied Services_ (New York, 1942).

[35] Sir William Beveridge, _Full Employment in a Free So-
ciety_ (New York, 1945), p. 23.

Idealist elements can be found on the left and strong Fabian elements on the right, the two most immediate and primary influences were the Marxism of thinkers like Laski and Strachey on the one hand, and the Welfare State ideology of Beveridge and Keynes on the other.

THE LABOUR PARTY: FUNDAMENTALISM AND REVISIONISM

Labour in the post-war government carried out many of the Beveridge proposals, but it was not long before sharp divisions arose regarding the party's purpose and policies, and Bevan's resignation as Minister of Health served simply to dramatize this deep conflict over the fundamental aims of the party. The party, of course, had always been pluralistic and had long had various tendencies but the debate in previous years had taken place within a certain ideological consensus. The critical period in the transformation of the party ran from 1947 to 1950. Post-war plans were made and reconstruction begun with faith in the old Socialism, but the experience of office caused a swing in party attitudes. The most significant and vital change in policy was the trend away from the idea of the Socialist Commonwealth and the acceptance of the Welfare State and planned economy as the basis for government action. Attlee's government was forced to make a decision between the continued use of the market as a basis for economic policy and its abolition. In its decision, the government was heavily influenced by Keynes and Beveridge and by the system of quantitative planning using physical controls which had been a central method of resource allocation during the war.

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The Post-War Transformation

In the initial post-war years the Labour government con-
tinued to emphasize physical planning and give financial
policy a second place. However, it should be noted, the use
of physical planning was not totally the result of socialist
ideology but would have, in any event, played a significant
role whatever party had held power. In dealing with post-
war inflationary pressure the government tried to hold prices
down by using direct controls. But the 1947-1950 period saw
sharp changes with the greatly increased use of financial
policy in the form of deflationary analysis accompanied by a
corresponding decrease in the use of physical controls,
particularly in the area of labour mobility. The significant
factor here was the realization that it was not a labour
shortage that was the cause of Britian's economic ills but
rather suppressed inflation and that this prevented the flow
of labour to certain industries. This labour immobility led
to a seeming misallocation of resources. What was needed,
according to Keynsian analysis, was a surplus budget and
greater use of the market. Pressure had been for some time
put on the government by various economists, economic jour-
nalists, and MPs but the government did not retreat full
force from physical planning concepts. In fact, in 1947 it
enlarged the planning sphere because certain factions in the
party, particularly the Keep Left group of MPs (most notably
R.H.S. Crossman, Michael Foot, and Ian Mikardo), which ad-
vocated nationalization of every industry which had any degree

of control over the economy as well as the extensive use of physical planning, were strongly critical of deflationary policy.[36] By 1950, however, the physical planning principle had been abandoned, and Cripps in his budget of that year called for the full use of financial policy citing it as the most important means of government control over the economy. This approach could not help but bring into doubt the value of large scale nationalization and even the traditional socialist conception of fellowship, for such policies required the maintenance of a modified form of capitalism and, indeed, had to rely, in large part, for their effectiveness on self-interest and the profit motive.

Quite aside from any value financial controls might have over physical planning in a pure economic sense, the abandonment of controls was particularly influenced by the unfavorable attitude of the trade unions towards a high degree of government direction over the organization and movement of labour. As the problem of inflation became more acute critics began to call for some type of wage policy, but as such a policy would have interfered with collective bargaining the unions opposed it. In the early months of 1948 a compromise solution was reached. As a result, the policy of wage re-restraint was to remain effective for three years; union

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36 See particularly Thomas Balogh, "Britain's Economic Problems," Quarterly Journal of Economics, LXIII, no. 1 (Feb., 1949), 32-67.

agreement, however, being tentative upon the government's ability to keep prices and profits down at the same time. The pound was devalued in 1949 resulting in price increases in 1950 and, as a result, the General Council of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) passed a resolution opposing wage restraint. The government tried to reach some agreement with the unions but to no avail.

This served to show exactly what the unions would and would not do; they refused to accept government control over manpower and showed their determination to maintain their traditional functional role and position. In effect, they refused to accept the Socialist Commonwealth. A greater number of changes had occurred since the inter-war years. The material welfare of the workers had improved immensely, especially in relation to other classes, and the power of the unions had undergone a drastic increase through Labour's membership in the coalition government and its increased contacts with ministers and civil servants.[37] The unions were no longer primarily dependent on a particular party being in power, and this increased the feeling of participation in major policy decisions and led to a greater sense of acceptance, a more pragmatic attitude, and a greater willingness

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[37] C.A.R. Crosland, "The Future of the Left," Encounter, XIV, no. 3 (March, 1960), 3-12.

to compromise.[38]

The experience and responsibility of office alone would
have caused a realignment of policy. Inflationary diffi-
culties, coupled with the balance of payments crisis neces-
sitated a reorientation in Socialist thought, and this led
to the necessary conclusion that it was production, not dis-
tribution, that was the central problem in the economic sys-
tem. Nationalization had hitherto been the most important
single item in party policy.

> As a program it was justified in diverse and often
> contradictory ways but while it remained merely a
> program, it served admirably to unite different
> interests within the party.[39]

The policy of nationalization was put in the hands of a group
of ministers led by Herbert Morrison who saw it as being pri-
marily a means of increasing economic efficiency. Other
groups within the party objected sharply when they saw that
nationalized industries, run on the lines of strict pursuit of
commercial practice, were difficult to hold accountable to
Parliament and failed to allow for workers' participation.

The 1951 election defeat prompted, on the part of numer-
ous Labourites, an analysis of the causes of the disaster.

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38 The bulk of this analysis is based on S.H. Beer, pp.
188-216. For a more detailed analysis of financial and eco-
nomic policy see his Treasury Control: The Co-ordination of
Financial and Economic Policy in Great Britain (Oxford, 1957).

39 Gerhard Loewenberg, "The Transformation of the British
Labour Party Since 1945," Journal of Politics, XXI, no. 3
(May, 1959), 244.

A major reason for the defeat was seen to be the inability
of Labour candidates to pick up a significant number of
Liberal votes where for the first time there was no Liberal
candidate.[40] Several studies showed that the party's sup-
port was heterogeneous and not divided on strict class
lines.[41] The party, or rather certain sections of it, were
increasingly tempted to aim their appeal at the marginal
voter in the centre of the political spectrum, rather than at
their most ardent supporters who were, they felt, sure to
support it in any case because of the lack of any realistic
alternative. The revisionists then, accepted what they saw
as the need for change and were ready to change doctrine to
accommodate it, but a significant segment of the party op-
posed this.

The revisionist view that the Labour party must grope
for the middle ground in order to obtain the margin of vic-
tory seems to have been empirically validated. Further, elec-
tions are decided by the overall change in voting behavior and
from 1945 to 1959 the total movement towards the Conservatives
was 7.3 percent while between 1950 and 1959 it was only 4 per-
cent. Thus a relatively small change in attitude during the
latter period could have wiped out the Conservative majority

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[40] H.G. Nicholas, The British General Election of 1950
(London, 1951), pp. 296, 320-21.

[41] Most notably see Mark Penney, A.P. Gray, and R.H.
Pear, How People Vote (London, 1956), pp. 175-189.

and brought back a Labour government.[42] Table 1 on the next page explains this. From the evidence provided it seems fair to deduce that about 85 percent of the voters were or appeared to be absolutely stable in their attitudes. However, certain qualifications must be added. Not all those who vote at any one election vote at the next; there is an influx of new voters and a decrease in the number of old voters, as about one half million die each year. In this way one sixth of the electorate is replaced every ten years. Further, if abstainers can be induced to support a given party this can provide the margin of victory. If a third party candidate enters the race this can effect the margin of votes decisively. Lastly, the swing vote is only overall; there is always a minority that vote against the trend. Thus, it is estimated that about one quarter of the electorate can, in fact, be classified as floating.

The revisionist theory of long-term shifts in the electorate's attitudes is particularly significant, although it must be seen as part of a general tendency and caution must be exercised so that the argument is not overstated. Generally, affluence detracts from Labour support to the benefit of the Conservatives, and although this is the pattern as it developed in the 1950s it could be reversed in the future. Despite this, since the opinion of Labour and Conservative

[42] Jean Blondel, Voters, Parties and Leaders: The Social Fabric of British Politics (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 69.

Table I

Voting in Post-War General Elections: 1945-59

Year	Electors	Voters	Conservatives	Labour	Liberal	Other
			(thousands)			
1945	32,836	24,083	9,578	11,633	2,197	675
1950	34,270	28,773	12,503	13,267	2,622	381
1951	34,646	28,596	13,718	13,949	731	198
1955	34,858	26,760	13,287	12,405	722	346
1959	35,297	27,859	13,750	12,216	1,639	255

Source: Jean Blondel, Voters, Parties and Leaders: The Social
Fabric of British Politics (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 69

electors were not radically different, it was an exception to

see a voter support his party consistently on all issues.

Gallup polls indicate "that the majority and the minority on

each issue cut across party lines as much as they follow

them."[43]   Thus, while Labour electors were more leftist than

Conservative, both groups were very close to the national

average. Partisanship was usually about 30 percent with a

maximum of 45 percent and there was therefore always a sub-

stantial minority of Labour (or Conservative) electors sup-

porting the opposite view. Figure I on the following page

indicates the degree of cohesion of the attitudes of electors

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43. Ibid., p. 75

Figure I

Proportion of Electors of the Two Main Parties Favoring a
Rightwing Answer on Individual Issues

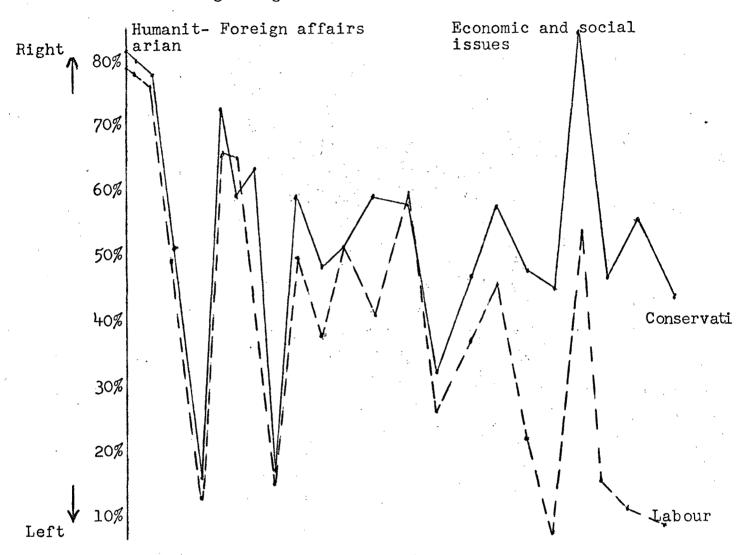

Source: Jean Blondel, <u>Voters, Parties and Leaders: The Social
Fabric of British Politics</u> (Harmondsworth, 196·), p. 78.

towards policy issues.[44]

The electoral supporters of both parties seldom agree with all major policy lines, but select issues in themselves do not seem to form the basis of party loyalty. Electors tend to choose not between programmes but rather between images such as the Welfare State and free enterprise. Images are generally influenced by issues over time, by party leadership and by party dynamism. It was the pre-war image of Labour that the post-war revisionists sought to change. While in 1949 twenty-seven percent of the public favored further

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[44] The numbers running along the horizontal line represent specific policy issues as follows:

1 Humanitarianism: capital punishment
2   : corporal punishment
3 Liberal   : reform of licensing laws
4   : reform of the House of Lords to enable peers
                    to stand for the Commons
5 Foreign Affairs: nuclear disarmament
6   : testing of nuclear weapons by the West
7   : setting of nuclear bases in Britain
8   : recognition of East Germany
9   : opinion of Spain
10   : opinion on South Africa
11   : opinion on the U.N.
12   : entry into the Common Market
13 Economic and
   Social Issues : taxes: satisfaction with the level of taxation
14   : choice between taxes and social services
15   : raising the level or surtax
16   : abolition of Schedule A tax
17   : introduction of a capital gains tax
18   : increase in National Health Service charges
19   : further nationalization measures
20   : industrial relations : resist wage claims
21   :   : sympathy with workers
                                            on strike
22   : responsibility for cost-
                                            of-living increase with
                                            government or trade
                                            unions

nationalization, by 1960 this had declined to eleven percent.[45]
Such statistics clearly bothered segments of the party who
were determined to modernize it and make it more responsive
to the electorate, upon whom its ultimate survival depended.
Such a change, they felt, would be comparable to changes made
by the Conservative party, which had at first opposed many
Labour policies and then moved further towards the centre by
accepting them. This flexibility in attitude, in the Con-
servative party, which results from the party's overriding
concern with gaining office, was one of the primary reasons
the Conservatives formed the government during the entire
1951-1959 period. Crosland's comment sums up the revisionist
position: "If British Socialism succeeds in adapting itself
and its doctrines to the mid-twentieth century, it might even
get back into power, and have a chance to implement them."[46]

Two factors then, the change in economic planning and the
change in the electorate's attitudes, were the chief influences
on the development of the revisionist and fundamentalist fac-
tions that were the protagonists in the struggle of the 1950s.

Revisionism

The argument of the revisionists during the 1950s was that
the ethical aspects of Socialism were of the essence. It was

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[45] S.H. Beer, British Politics in the Collectivist Age
(New York, 1965), p. 217.

[46] C.A.R. Crosland, p. 12.

held that the significant factors were equality of opportunity and, trailing at a respectful distance, fellowship, and that while these ends were all important the means of attainment were constantly in flux and the party had to adopt itself to the age it was living in. Thus, complete support of certain ethical ends was to be combined with an extremely flexible concept of means. The revisionists wrote that early socialism with its desire to do away with capitalism had continually lost support as the basic economy theory on which the principles stood had been undermined. What was left, they felt, was simply a remnant from the past.[47] The difficulty was that the early Socialist belief in the social ethic was inseparably connected with a certain view of the operation of the social and economic forces in society. Indeed, it is questionable if the social ethic and the theory of social forces can be separated. Revisionist theory left an important private sphere in which self-interest was the motivating force and while, under such a system equality and a limited amount of fellowship might be attained, it is highly questionable whether a complete transition to the Socialist Commonwealth can ever be made. It could be argued that the social ethic had itself been changed, that man could never be a purely selfless being and that therefore, one must adjust one's views to the essential nature of man. In essence, this was the most signi-

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47 Socialist Union, _Twentieth Century Socialism_ (Harmondsworth, 1956), p. 12.

ficant and underlying change that revisionism necessitated.

C.A.R. Crosland's The Future of Socialism is a pithy and succinct statement of revisionism as outlined by its leading theorist.[48] Crosland maintains that the most characteristic and offensive aspects of nineteenth century capitalism have either been completely eliminated or have become so modified as to be almost unrecognizable and that, as a result, a nineteenth-century analysis of the system has little relevance for the 1950s. Further, certain aspects of the system, such as the separation of the workers from the means of production which had previously been connected with and ascribed to private ownership had been found to stem from the intricacies of large scale organization. Crosland enlarged on this maintaining that conditions were slowly changing and increasingly separating ownership and control, and arguing that it was function that determined class, not ownership.

The variety of sources of Socialist doctrine, Crosland maintains, make it impossible to find a central orthodox view to serve as a guide to future action. The differences between Socialist theories are numerous and with many of them it is not a case of priorities; they are just mutually incompatible. With this, the argument runs, all that can be done is to make an attempt to isolate certain themes that have had a predominant influence, which have occurred in several of varied schools, and which are of relevance to contemporary

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[48] (London, 1964).

society. Further, a sharp distinction has to be made between ends and means. Ethical goals then become the only significant link between all Socialsts. These are: a desire to alleviate the conditions of the workers under capitalism, social welfare, equality, fellowship and opposition to certain defects in the system, most significantly unemployment.[49] The first and last of these, Crosland maintains, are becoming unimportant as capitalism is transformed, and this leaves fellowship, equality, and social welfare as the chief ethical goals of society.

It proves difficult to create, Crosland argues, any permanent feelings of fellowship in a full sense. The goal of co-operation has, of course, been partially reached as any comparison with the situation of a century ago well illustrates. The competitive instinct has suffered severe blows yet full co-operation has by no means been achieved. Although self-interest remains a vital factor in individual decision making and its importance might be further diminished, there is no means of telling if this would be the case and no practical plan exists which might be followed in order to make it so, without the strong risk of serious detrimental effects being felt in the search for the attainment of other desirable ends such as the standard of living, privacy, and equal-

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[49] Crosland mentions that he has included only economic and social values and has deleted political ones as concern for the latter permeates the whole of the political culture. Ibid., p. 68.

ity. Crosland continues:

> While, therefore, I realize that as a matter of
> verbal precision the co-operative ideal is cer-
> tainly embraced by the word 'socialism', and
> while I accept that it would clearly be in some
> sense 'better' if there were a more general
> awareness of a common social purpose. I do not
> feel able, in what is intended to be a reason-
> ably definite and practical statement of social-
> ist aims, to include this as part of the goal.[50]

Thus, the central theme of inter-war Socialism is relegated

to the background.

Social welfare and equality remain, but neither of them

is primarily economic in nature; although the greatest abuses

have formerly been in the economic sphere. But these have

been largely remedied. With the present rate of growth,

Crosland states, the economic sphere will require even less

attention and socialism will be able to turn to the social

and psychological causes of distress. Economic factors are

no longer considered the sole determinants of class; educa-

tion, style of life and occupational status have now become

matters of primary concern. In the pre-1939 period there was

a definite need for the levelling of income; but in the 1950s

any further redistribution would have been ineffective in the

sense of having a significant bearing on the standard of

living of the masses. The bitterness present in Britain is

sociological not economic in origin; in a period where all

are relatively well off social discrimination is rampant.

Industrial disputes then become not so much matters of wages

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50 Ibid., p. 76.

and conditions of work but of prestige and power.

There is a strong ethical basis in the quest for greater equality in that it would lead to the realization of a greater degree of social justice, decrease resentment, and increase contentment. The existing inequalities which offend against social justice are the educational system, the small segment of citizens in the upper stratum of society who monopolize inherited wealth, the power of the bureaucrat in industry, nepotism, and class favoritism. Crosland argues that means should be taken to limit the power of elites and to establish a more cohesive and harmonious society through the elimination of class differences with their great reinforcing effect on social stratification. Crosland concludes:

> ... as we approach the socialist goals described
> above, the reformer will bend his energies more
> and more to issues which cannot be classified as
> specifically socialist or non-socialist, but which
> lie in other fields altogether ... the freedom of
> personal and leisure life and social responsibili-
> ty for cultural values.[51]

Fundamentalism

A significant group of Socialists were not willing to accept this change which meant the de facto abandonment of nationalization and the relegation of fellowship to a subsidiary place vis-a-vis equality. There was considerable support for the editors of the semi-official organ of the Left,

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51 *Ibid.*, p. 353

Tribune, when in its July 11, 1952 issue it rejected innovations in theory because it

> consists not in producing new ideas or fresh approaches, but in watering down distinctive socialist ideas ... The dynamic socialism of industrial society made fifty or one hundred years ago ... is infinitely more modern and more relevant to the problems of our day.[52]

The Left's attitude toward the Keynsian revolution was best summed up by R.H.S. Crossman: "Keynsianism may have undermined the old fashioned economic case for Socialism but it has left the political and moral case for it completely unaffected."[53] This does not mean the fundamentalists were united on all things; although their position as a minority group in the party tended to increase cohesion. Even though fundamentalist policies were, to a large extent, similar in the inter-war years diversity in detail was great. But there tended to be basis agreement on two of the most significant aspects of Socialism: nationalization and fellowship.

Defining the Labour Left is difficult, if not impossible, as relatively few of those who styled themselves as leftists were thoroughgoing Marxists. But many had definite Marxist leanings mixed with a type of socialist humanism. Aside from the few hard core Marxists those who styled themselves as leftists tended to rely increasingly on the writings of a few prominent American intellectuals, most notably C. Wright Mills

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52 Quoted in Gerhard Loewenberg, p. 238.

53 R.H.S. Crossman, Socialism and the New Despotism (London, 1956), p. 5.

and J.K. Galbraith. Even within the PLP it would have been
almost an impossibility to find a definitely structured and
coherent system except among the hard core of some fifty
members who were consistently on the Left. A substantial
number of core leftists were and are journalists, intellec-
tuals, and teachers. The journalists tended to be seen as
the leading element both within and without the PLP and the
list of such members is long.[54] The Left gained a substan-
tial margin of its strength from its influence through the
mass media; this provided a continuous flow of information
to the faithful and a strong element of continuity.

The Marxist flavor of the Left was very noticeable.

The Left uses a number of stereotypes or concepts
of Marxist provenance: a stereotype of capitalism,
the concept of 'economic power', the conception of
class as an economic category; and with these goes
the notion of class-war and the belief that funda-
mentally all social relationships are determined
by economic forces. In some instances, these no-
tions are articulated together and held quite
cosciously in a kind of Marxist system. In most
cases, however, they are floating notions, hardly
held together by any systematic philosophy -
vestiges and residues of Marxism, often held un-
consciously as presuppositions or assumptions.[55]

From this vantage point came a distrust and suspicion of
American motives and actions and a sympathy for the Soviet
Union. The distrust of America stemmed from its being the

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[54] Eugene J. Meehan, The British Left Wing and Foreign
Policy (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1960), pp. 27-31.

[55] S.E. Finer, H.B. Berrington and D.J. Bartholomew,
Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons: 1955-1959 (London,
1961), p. 52. For a particularly good example see R.H.S.
Crossman, "The Spectre of Revisionism," Encounter, XIV, no. 4
(April, 1960), 24-28.

last stronghold of 'pure' capitalism, its materialism, and
its hegemony over the British economy and over Britain as a
political entity in the world power struggle. Feeling toward
the Soviet Union was sympathetic. Many were initially con-
fident that Britain was well suited to establish good rela-
tions with Russia and while this attitude fell by the wayside
in the centre and on the right in the early post-war years it
continued to be cardinal to the left. Laski went to great
lengths to argue that Russia's main aim was security, and
that once this had been attained brutality and policies like
those in Eastern Europe would quickly disappear.[56] There is
certainly a grain of truth in this; but more moderate was
Bevan's attitude.

> The dominating position of the U.S. would have been
> much easier to accept if there had been a clear
> idea of what she wanted to do with it. Of that
> there was no clue, except, of course, that she was
> against communism. It was also obvious from many
> of the speeches of her principle spokesmen that she
> was almost as strongly opposed to British Socialism.[57]

In addition, the Left tended to be pacifistic. But this has
had a long tradition in British politics, particularly during
the inter-war years and significantly, most strongly in the
Labour party. It should be kept in mind that although the
Left placed much emphasis on foreign policy that Socialist
views in that area tend to be applications of theories already
developed in the domestic sphere.

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56 See Herbert A. Deane, The Political Ideas of Harold
J. Laski (New York, 1954), pp. 320-324 for a discussion of
Laski's views on the Soviet Union.

57 Aneuran Bevan, In Place of Fear (London, 1952), pp.
125-126.

Anti-colonialism and views toward foreign aid were
particularly significant in this light. The Left maintained
that armaments alone were not enough to keep the peace. In-
stead of peace being primarily dependent on arms, it was
felt that poverty was one of the primary causes of interna-
tional tensions. The preservation of peace, then, was seen
as being a political, economic, and social matter. Foreign
aid, as well as being a necessity if world peace were to be
maintained, was seen as being a direct application of the
socialist goal of fellowship. The Left argued, in a parti-
cularly strong manner, that the money being spent on British
armaments should have been spent on the much more immediate
and stronger need of aid to underdeveloped countries.

Socialism and the New Despotism, by R.H.S. Crossman,
presents a theory of social organization which is a represen-
tative statement of views concerning domestic affairs that
found wide acceptance on the left. Crossman argues that
Labour has been losing support because of its association with
war-time and post-war controls, bureaucratic control of so-
cialized industry, the feeling that the Socialist revolution
was not in fact increasing freedom but rather moving towards
a managerial society, and the equation, in some circles, of
British and Soviet Socialism.

Before 1945 the major problem was seen as mass unemploy-
ment but the Keynsian revolution gave an effective solution
to this. Keynes stated, Crossman goes on, that his solution
would resolve the contradiction of capitalism; in line

with this it can be seen that the least dogmatic parts of the 1945-50 Labour government's programme were the most successful. The Welfare State was an unmitigated success but nationalization did not go all the way expected in improving the conditions of the workers in the industries concerned. Britain, Crossman feels, is getting the worst of both worlds (East and West) because oligopoly not monopoly or perfect competition prevails.[58] This oligopoly, he maintains, is protected by a monolithic bureaucracy which stifles competition and, as a result, does not create the desired equilibrium which is present in the United States. Thus, while it might seem that there are only two choices open, it would be incorrect to base Socialism, which is essentially a moral protest against injustice, on any specific economic theory. Social and political aspects attain, therefore, great importance in economic organization.

Tawney proved, Crossman maintains, that political democracy and political freedom are attainable only when they are combined with social control of the economy; public control may be no easier to work with but without it freedom is impossible.[59] Tawney's analysis became steadily more relevant

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[58] It is difficult to understand how Crossman can see the situation in the U.S. as approximating perfect competition or even as being significantly less oligopolistic than Britain.

[59] See particularly R.H. Tawney, The Acquisitive Society (New York, 1920).

because of the increasing oligarchical and oligopolistic trends in industry. However, it is not private companies alone which threaten freedom; Imperial Chemicals and the Coal Board are very similar in their effect. The latter is just as concerned with its balance sheet as I.C.I. and thus, it cannot pursue a price policy based on the national interest. It is not fully accountable to Parliament, and the degree of worker's participation is no more than that in progressive private companies. It may, in fact, be more difficult for technicians and the like to work for the Coal Board. Nationalization, as it has been carried out, has benefits in the government's control of capital investment and broad policy and in the increased stability which results from a decrease in unearned incomes and capital gains, but it was very far from Tawney's goal. Further, the growth of the state bureaucracy is another threat to democracy. Those possessing power through economic concentration should be made fully accountable. Crossman adds:

> Our Socialism is based on the traditional Radical demand for a society of free and equal citizens, reinforced by the empirical postulate that great concentrations of power become a menace to freedom and equality unless they are subjected to public control.[60]

Crossman maintains that the democratic socialist must carry the trade unionists along with him even if this slows forward progress. The trade unions, being a product of as well as a

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60 Crossman, p. 7.

reaction against capitalism, inherited some of the latter's characteristics. Thus, while the primary aim of a socialist might be the extension of public ownership, the necessary primary aim of the trade union leader is to improve wages and conditions of work from within a given economic system, even if this means giving the system added support. There is always a danger that the party will lose its Socialism and become merely an agent of trade union interests. Socialists should not expect the initiative in modern Socialism to come from either the trade unions or co-operatives, Crossman adds. Instead, it must come from the Labour party and it must be based not on economic ideas alone but also on political ones such as freedom and responsibility. Since oligarchy is inevitable, one must either permit the oligopolies to operate as they do, or subject them to public control; and to ensure public control public ownership is necessary.

Since the general populace is not convinced of the merit of large scale nationalization the best method to proceed with, Crossman feels, is government takeover of those sectors of the economy where the beneficial results of public ownership would be most obvious. But, in addition, every nationalized industry should be responsible to Parliament. Crossman's second aim is to make industries subject to some measure of worker's control. The only way trade unions in Britain would favor the continued nationalization of industry is if they see it in an increase in their own status.

Civil servants, who, in fact, control government depart-

ments should be divested of such power. Such control should be returned to the elected representatives of the people by allowing Ministers to gain complete control of their departments by bringing with them a 'brain trust' of three or four advisors as a sort of departmental cabinet. In addition, ministers must be made more responsible to Parliament, and the electorate. Ministerial responsibility to Parliament, Crossman argues, is largely a matter of fiction; further, the position of the individual MP has been hampered as he is no longer primarily responsible to the electorate but to the party. There is a need for the democratization of Parliament. Such things as standing committes responsible for each nationalized industry could increase democracy and the status of the backbencher.

The post-war economic and social situation led to the development of two factions within the Labour party which served as the central forces in the ideological struggle of the 1950s. The positions of the two groups began to be seen, by their members, as being irreconcilable and this led to the creation of a situation where compromise was regarded as treason. This split severely damaged the party as a whole, particularly its standing in the country. It was only once a general compromise was arrived at and relative unity restored that Labour was able to gain office.

CHAPTER III

THE LABOUR PARTY AND POLICY FORMATION

Normally, one of the primary aims of party leadership
in the two party system is to increase support among the
electorate to the extent that this will result in its ob-
taining the margin of victory.[61] This is one of the central
concerns of most party members, but it is more important to
the party leader as his role makes him particularly sensi-
tive to the views of the electorate, as he has the distinct
possibility of becoming Prime Minister. The knowledge that
stress and cleavage within the party hinder electoral pros-
pects and seriously undermine party strength by adversely
affecting the party image among the general populace lead
him to attempt to increase this strength by increasing co-
hesion and decreasing cleavage and, as a result, stress.
But, at the same time, in Labour's case, too sharp a swing to
the left would tend to alienate a significant number of vo-
ters in the centre of the political spectrum who provide the
party with the necessary margin of victory. As a result,
there is usually a tendency to balance concessions to the

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61 The term leadership needs some clarification. While
in its broad sense it includes all centres where a signifi-
cant power locus exists in certain contexts it refers to the
majority leadership in the party which during the period under
study was substantially moderate and/or revisionist. Similar-
ily the party leader was throughout the period moderate and/or
revisionist and references to the role of leader presume that
such was the case.

left and concessions to the centre to obtain maximum returns in the sense of increased electoral strength. This would entail moving to the left on some issues where it was felt there would only be marginal losses of support in the centre and to the right on those issues where it was felt there would be only a marginal decrease in party strength through increased cleavage.

The Labour Party: 1951-1959

The 1945 election manifesto of the Labour Party serves as a starting point for the following analysis, as it illustrates both the extent and the limits of Left-Wing influence on the formation of party policy. At the December, 1944 Labour party conference, Ian Mikardo moved an amendment to commit the party in its election manifesto to the nationalization of "land, large-scale building, heavy industry, and all forms of banking, transport, and fuel and power."[62] The National Executive Committee (NEC) asked him not to press the matter to a vote. He did, and it was carried by such a majority that a card vote was not thought necessary. The Conference vote did, in fact, have its effect on the manifesto. Although there was little sympathy on the NEC for the nationalization of banks and the building industry, the manifesto promised that the banks would be 'harmonized' in their operation with the industrial sector and that 'drastic

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[62] Labour Party, Report of the Annual Conference (London, 1944), p. 160.

action' would be taken to ensure the efficiency of the building industry. It is likely that the inclusion of iron and steel nationalization was decisively brought about by the Conference resolution, as the previous chances for its inclusion had neither been particularly bad nor good. The NEC subcommittee set up to prepare for the election had made no move to include iron and steel, but Hugh Dalton threatened to bring the whole matter up at Conference, "and then Morrison and Greenwood could explain to the delegates why this item, which had been enthusiastically adopted by the Conference only last December, had now vanished."[63] Morrison acquiesced. It must, however, be remembered that Conference had this degree of influence only because there was support for such a move on the NEC. Mikardo himself seemed pleased enough with the result of his resolution:

> Of course, I wasn't ... much disturbed by the fact that some points covered by my resolution were not included in Let Us Face the Future. When one defeats the NEC one is quite happy with a ninety percent victory.[64]

Of the 1945-46 session, though, Dalton said: "Yes, we were all in step then."[65]

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[63] Hugh Dalton, The Fateful Years (London, 1957), pp. 432-433.

[64] Quoted in S.H. Beer, British Politics in the Collectivist Age (New York, 1965), p. 178.

[65] Hugh Dalton, High Tide and After (London, 1962), p. 47

The Left first began to gain real prominence in the public eye over foreign affairs with its opposition to Ernest Bevin's foreign policy. The main element in the group were the 'Keep Left' MPs, who began holding regular meetings in 1946. They were led by R.H.S. Crossman, Michael Foot, and Ian Mikardo who were chiefly responsible for the pamphlet Keep Left, which was published in May 1947 and which provided a statement of principles. The pamphlet's central argument was that the government's policy was not a socialist foreign policy but rather, one of continuity. Following the 1947 Conference, in which Bevin obtained overwhelming support for his policy, the 'Keep Left' revolt virtually came to an end. With its demise, the party again seemed to regain some of its cohesiveness, probably because of its absorption in the implementation of policy that had already been developed and the fear of damaging the party's chances of again forming the government after the next election. This is not to say that there were not differences, but simply that they were largely hidden from the general public.

The 1950's saw the outbreak of severe internal strife, much of which took place in public and greatly weakened the position of the party in the country. In April 1951, both Bevan and Harold Wilson resigned from the cabinet, allegedly over the putting of a charge on dentures and spectacles. The real causes, however, went far deeper. In the first place,

Bevan had been passed over at the Exchequer and the Foreign Office. Secondly, there was Morrison's determination to push the party to the right, for which he received strong support from Sir Arthur Deakin, Sir William Lawther, and Sir Thomas Williamson, the leading trade union leaders. Their attitudes towards the Left were at least, if not more, vociferous than those of the Left towards them. Bevan's position was clearly stated: "I am not interested in the election of another Labour Government. I am interested in the election of a Government that will make Britain a socialist country."[66] Morrison, however, was in a better position to influence policy because of his position as Chairman of the policy sub-committee of the NEC and because of significant union support at Conference. He did not want a specific list of industries to be nationalized, rather, he wanted certain criteria laid down which could be used as a guide in future takeovers. Nevertheless, Bevan's pressure was partially successful. The 1950 election programme included proposals to take over sugar, cement and water, to nationalize cold storage, and to look into the possibility of taking over the chemical industry and agricultural land which was being inefficiently farmed, as well as to establish public firms to compete with private ones in sectors of the economy which

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66 Quoted in Leslie Hunter, The Road to Brighton Pier (London, 1957), p. 22.

were lagging.[67] However, Morrison, after the election, gained support and, further, the Labour majority was too small to push through any controversial legislation.

The split, an ideological one, was compounded by Bevan's struggle for power in the party. The Bevanite revolt continued for six years until the 1957 reconciliation with Gaitskell, when Bevan became shadow Foreign Secretary. Yet, this eliminated only one of the sources of conflict; the ideological cleavage remained. The party was still split, with from one quarter to one fifth of the PLP considering themselves on the left and continuing to retain an array of capable and intelligent spokesmen. The Bevanite struggle, although serving to illuminate the factions in the party, must be viewed in perspective as simply one phase of the continuing struggle for influence in the party. In fact, it could be argued that the Left's influence was less than it otherwise would have been during this period, especially after the election of Gaitskell to the party leadership. Bevan and Gaitskell's intransigence lessened the probability of arriving at workable compromises. It facilitated emotional involvement but not understanding. Gaitskell's attempt to combine the leadership of the party with the leadership of a faction and Bevan's attempt to combine the leadership of a faction with the role of heir apparent resulted in an intransigence where compromise was equated with betrayal. The influence of

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67 *Ibid.*, p. 23

Deakin, Lawther, and Williamson pressed Gaitskell further to
the right; these men were far less willing to compromise than
most groups in the party and the very intensity of the strug-
gle over Clause IV illustrates this.[68] It might be asked how
important the rephrasing of the clause to show that national-
ization was only one of a number of means leading to the
attainment of Socialism really was. It might be argued that
its emotional value to certain elements on the left was suf-
ficient to let it stand, and that the certain damage the
party would suffer as the result of a long and protracted
struggle would be reason enough to let the matter lie.
Gaitskell, obviously, rejected this line of reasoning and
again involved himself in another divisive struggle in which
he was defeated.

There could be no greater contrast than that of Gaitskell
and Attlee. The latter managed to hold his party together as
a relatively cohesive whole for some time. The 'Keep Left'
group had advocated the establishment of a Ministry of Economic
Affairs, while a letter to the New Statesman by Percy Daine,
MP, which was published anonymously, started an 'Attlee must
go' movement. Cripps tried to assume the leadership of this
group, but Attlee avoided letting things get too far out of
hand and decided to create a Ministry of Economic Affairs to
offer to Cripps. "Not for the first time Attlee had shown
his ability to bend just enough with the wind to avoid being

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68 See Chapter I, p. 5, note 9.

torn up by his roots."[69] Attlee was the man of compromise
and, as a result, he managed to maintain a party which ap-
peared to be relatively cohesive, thus increasing the party's
power as a whole at the expense of concessions to factions in
the party. Gaitskell's policy was the opposite, he refused
to compromise. His tenure as party leader exacerbated the
most serious rift that had ever occurred within Labour's
ranks. The personality of a leader can be decisive in
policy formation and party cohesiveness.

The central phases of the conflict were marked by the
general elections of 1951, 1955, and 1959. When elections
were at its doorstep the party made an effort to plaster over
the cracks and put up a united front, but each time it went
down to defeat the conflict would rise again to its full
height.[70] Bevan led a strong faction which had representa-
tives from all the most important sectors of the party. The
chief figures were Wilson, Crossman, Driberg, Mikardo,
Barbara Castle and, of course, Bevan himself. Further, sup-
port was strong among such unions as the Engineers and the
Shop and Distributive workers, and the constituency parties
lent a strong contingent. Although support was somewhat less
in the PLP than at Conference, the Left could usually count
on from one quarter to one fifth of all MPs and on important

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69 Hunter, p. 19.

70 For a detailed historical account of the party split
in the 1950s see Hunter and Carl F. Brand, The British Labour
Party (Stanford, 1964), pp. 267-297.

issues this could be raised to almost half.[71]

Robert Michels submitted the theory of the iron law of oligarchy, which can in certain respects be considered substantially correct. But a look at the Labour party during the period under study suggests that the horizontal split between leadership and mass membership, which Michels suggested was the norm, may in fact be an abnormal occurrence.[72] In fact, the Labour party's history suggests a vertical split which results from the competition of elites within the party, whose ties with MPs and members generally are stronger than those enjoyed with other segments of the leadership. The story of the Labour party during these crisis years presents a picture of competing factions; one of which was heavily represented on the Parliamentary Committee, as well as in the remaining sectors of the party, and the other, with substantial support in the PLP and the mass organization, occupying a position of seeming opposition to the Parliamentary Committee.[73]

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71 For instance, on Feb. 23/54 the Parliamentary Party agreed by a vote of 113 to 109 to support German rearmament. A motion opposing German rearmament introduced by Wilson lost by a vote of 109-111. See S.H. Beer, p. 221.

72 Robert Michels, Political Parties (New York, 1962).

73 The fact that the Parliamentary Committee was overwhelmingly composed of moderates and revisionists should not suggest that a Labour cabinet would follow the same pattern. The Parliamentary Committee is elected by MPs and a majority of them consistently place moderates on the front benches. Once in office, however, the party leader chooses his cabinet with an eye to maximizing his support and as a result, the Left gains significant though minority representation.

Although the revisionists were usually able to gain majority support, this was done only by means of substantial concessions to leftist views.

The theory that there is a leadership-membership split in the Labour party is usually accompanied by the argument that the parliamentary leadership by using trade union support is able to assure passage of its policies both in the PLP and at Conference.[74] But over the period under consideration, the trade unions did not form a cohesive bloc; rather they were divided in their support. Elitist analysis distorts several factors, the most important of which is the fact that Aneurin Bevan, whether on the Parliamentary Committee or not, was a member of the highest echelon of party leadership, and with his associates was extremely influential in a number of different sectors of the party.

> The conflict did not consist in a struggle between elites but in the clash of two currents of opinion, each running strongly throughout the party. During the Bevanite period the conflict was exacerbated by 'A ferocious struggle for the succession.' But the clash of opinion had already begun before Bevan made his bid for power and it rose to new heights of intensity after Bevan had made his peace with Gaitskell in 1957. The initiative in conducting the conflict was not monopolized by the leadership of the respective factions, but was widely diffused in the various sectors and at various levels of the party - not only at Conference, but

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74 See particularly Jean Blondel, Voters, Parties and Leaders: the Social Fabric of British Politics (Harmondsworth, 1963), pp. 151-152, and R.T. McKenzie, British Political Parties (London, 1955).

on the NEC, PLP and Parliamentary Committee as well.[75]

The Party Conference

In theory, Conference is the supreme policy making organ of the party. While the vast majority of pluralists, as well as elitists, would reject this view and, although numerous commentators on the British political scene, both analytical and historical, show that this is not the case, the myth persists among certain sectors of the Labour party. Yet it can be argued that the mood of Conference can play its role in affecting party policy. The important fact here is that Conference decisions are binding in the sense that they should not be contravened.[76] The NEC is by no means assured of an absolute majority at Conference and, therefore, in formulating its policy submissions it must take into account the mood of Conference. Although there are no means by which Conference can make the NEC accept its decisions, since the latter could not go on indefinitely facing a hostile Conference and since, on the other hand, it could not be publicly forced to change its position in deference to Conference, the only real alter-

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75 S.H. Beer, p. 232. For historical accounts of the major policy disputes see Henry Pelling, A Short History of The Labour Party (London, 1965), Leslie Hunter, The Road to Brighton Pier, Carl F. Brand, The British Labour Party, S.H. Beer, British Politics in the Collectivist Age and Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, The Growth of the British Party System (London, 1965).

76 Saul Rose, "Policy Decision in Opposition," Political Studies, IV, no. 2 (June, 1956), 130.

native once informal pre-Conference means have been exhausted is to secure support for a policy by compromise.

While the McKenzie thesis concerning Conference-NEC relationships is in part true, he overstates his case. Even if the thesis demonstrates that Conference cannot force its policies down the throat of the leadership, this does not prove that the Labour party in its organization, is basically similar to its Conservative counterpart. The party leadership is not prepared to accept defeat on the floor, as a continuance of defeats on important issues could not help, but rather, undermine its support at Conference, among the PLP, and among the electorate. "Normally the NEC is careful to prepare its victories."[77] One of the most important means at hand to accomplish this is a policy of compromise. Even if all other arguments are dismissed, Conference still retains a degree of influence simply because many delegates refuse to accept the theory that it is impotent. The Labour party is forced to work within a system in which all major items and policies will be discussed and on which a vote will be taken. The necessity of discussing policy issues in public forces the leadership to try to obtain as impressive a majority as possible. As long as the Labour tradition concerning Conference is such as it was in the 1950s, and as long as issues must be aired in public, the leadership is

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[77] Martin Harrison, *Trade Unions and the Labour Party Since 1945* (London, 1960), p. 204.

going to continually concern itself with obtaining the support of as large a section of the party as is reasonably possible.

Of the two most important groupings at Conference, the unions and the constituency organizations, the unions refuse to accent adverse Conference decisions in matters that concern them directly. And on the most important industrial questions, such as wages and the conditions of work, discussion is barred by mutual consent. This gives the unions a greater freedom of manoeuvre and isolates them, in this respect, from the glare of publicity. Nevertheless, it has not been the habit of the unions to abstain on matters of concern to the constituency organizations, such as discipline and organization. But they do tend to leave the initiative on major issues to the leadership on the Conference floor. Yet the leadership itself goes to great pains in order to assure itself of adequate support on the floor by means of prior private consultation with the heads of the major unions, thus barring the chance of defeat and the appearance of being out of step with the membership. What significant trade union interference there was in the 1952-55 period was the result of fear on the part of Deakin and other right-wing trade unionists that the danger from the Bevanites was so serious that intervention was mandatory.

The agenda from which the Conference works seems to be extremist and suggests a leftist rank and file. Union par-

ticipation is insignificant compared with the constituencies, as unions usually turn for policy leads to the TUC and further, they usually have their say before Conference when the NEC is looking for a means to secure its majority. In addition, the unions are heavily represented on the NEC.

A substantial number of unions vote fairly consistently with the leftists in the constituencies. Among them are the Electrical Trades Union, the Fire Brigades Union, and the Foundry Workers. They were able to add considerable support to leftists in the constituences.

> Up to 1956, 2.8 million votes regularly supported the NEC, 1.8 million were solidly on the left, and one million were unpredictable ... Since 1956 the blocks of left and right wing union votes have been even less cohesive.[78]

Conference votes consistently show this trend. However, there are a substantial number of unions which submit no resolutions at Conference, most of them being relatively small. Some of the larger unions, particularly the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, put down what might be called 'loyal resolutions', some of them even being initiated by the NEC.[79]

Since the constituencies use about one third of the Conference time, and the unions somewhat less than half that,

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78 _Ibid._, p. 230. For an analysis of the position of individual trade unions on major policy issues during the post-war period see pp. 195-261.

79 A significant portion of the above discussion has been based on Harrison's book.

the myth grew that the unions were conservative and the constituencies radical, this representing the great division in the party. Upon analysis, this view proves to be drastically oversimplified. A study by Richard Rose done in 1962 states:

> The analysis immediately reveals that the description of local parties as a force constantly pressing extremist views upon national party leaders is false ... constituency parties are nearly as apt to be voicing views derived from general cultural values or from interest group links as they are to voice those clearly associated with a partisan ideology.[80]

The following table illustrates this.

Table 2

Total Scores of Labour Constituency Resolutions[81]

Year	Left	Partisan	Right	Non-Partisan	Total
1955	123	98	5	198	424
1956	109	119	5	169	402
1957	127	140	4	172	443
1958	173	89	6	160	428
1959	152	73	3	186	414
1960	209	91	12	216	528
Total No.	893	610	35	1101	2639
Percent	34	23	1	42	100

Source: Richard Rose, "The Political Ideas of English Party Activists", The American Political Science Review, LVI, (June, 1962), 364.

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80 Richard Rose, "The Political Ideas of English Party Activists," The American Political Science Review, LVI, no. 2 (June, 1962), 364.

81 Partisan is defined as the "enumeration of an agreed party policy which is opposed to that of the other party and

Somewhat less than one quarter of the constituency organizations press partisan views consistently as the following table indicates.

Table 3

Partisanship in Labour Constituencies[82]

Category	No.	Percent
No partisan resolutions	88	18
Low (12.5 - 40%) partisanship	83	17
Average (41 - 75%) partisanship	208	42
High (above 75%) partisanship	113	23

Source: Richard Rose, "The Political Ideas of English Party Activists", The American Political Science Review, LVI, (June, 1962), 364.

Partisanship, since it reflects only differences in attitudes between the Labour and other parties, is not a factor in party cohesiveness except as a possible positive force. By definition, the leadership would share the attitudes put forth in the resolutions. On the other hand, ideological extremism might be a significant factor in lessening cohesion in the party but Rose's findings indicate that this is not nearly as widespread as is sometimes thought.

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which has an ideological basis." Non-partisan is defined as "the enumeration of a policy which is not the subject of controversy along party lines." See Rose, p. 362.

82 Constituencies presenting only a single resolution and that partisan are omitted.

Table 4

Extremism in Labour Parties[83]

Category	No.	Percent
No extremist resolutions	191	38
Low extremism (20% or less)	47	9
Average (25 - 50%) extremism	172	35
High (above 50%) extremism	87	18

Source: Richard Rose, "The Political Ideas of English Party Activists", The American Political Science Review, LVI, (June, 1962), 336.

The findings show that only one extremist resolution will be brought to the floor per constituency every six years. Further examination shows that pressure and interest group ties were far stronger in a significant number of areas than were ideological or even simple partisan ones.[84] With regard to education, welfare services, transport and pensions, lack of partisan and extremist positions was particularly noticeable as the table on page 69 shows.

It seems there was considerable diversity and flexibility in the attitudes of party activists. Simply because they were interested and active, is not cause enough to label them extremists. It is in comparison with the apathy of the trade unions, a very small percentage of whose members took part in party and Conference activities, that the constituency parties

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83 Ibid.

84 Rose, p. 366.

Table 5

Topics for Labour Resolutions

Topic	Left	Partisan	Right	Non-Partisan	Total
Foreign policy, defence	594	145	14	20	773
Economic affairs	117	141	10	188	456
Housing and land	10	85	–	80	175
Party organization	14	4	1	130	148
Pensions	2	1	–	143	146
Welfare services	9	31	–	94	132
Education	17	19	–	64	100
Commonwealth & colonies	8	82	3	1	94
Local government	7	43	–	44	94
Socialist principles	57	15	2	5	79
Transportation	4	3	–	56	63
Party unity	18	2	1	31	52
Industrial relations	6	13	–	–	19
Miscellaneous	32	26	4	245	306

Source: Richard Rose, "The Political Ideas of English Party
Activists," The American Political Science Review,
LVI, (June, 1962), 367.

appear to be extremely partisan. In fact, if the left-wing
activists had to rely solely on the support they could muster
among the constituency parties, support for their resolutions
would be insignificant. In 1960, constituency members con-
trolled only thirteen percent of the vote. This had declined
for some years from seventeen percent in 1952.[85] Almost all
other votes are controlled by the trade unions. It should be
clear that the ideological lines in the party were vertical

85 These figures are taken from Leon D. Epstein, "Who
Makes Party Policy: British Labour 1960-61," Midwest Journal
of Political Science, VI, no. 2 (May, 1962), 167.

and not horizontal; although certain views tended to prevail in one sector of the party to a greater degree than they did in others. This, however, is simply a function of time and place.

Over the span of its history there has been a tendency on the part of the party to move away from the left. But tradition can still be an important variable exercising a restraining influence on the public expression of policy which is notably right-wing. As a result, the leadership tended to be closer to the middle in the party than often seemed to be the case. Although certain major unions had occasion to disagree with the policies of the NEC, a number of unions are more than likely to acquiesce.[86] However, about twelve unions usually found themselves on the extreme left; a few of these were under a degree of Communist influence, their leadership being forced to take extreme positions in order to maintain office.[87] During the Bevanite period, fairly consistent support was given by the moderate left to the Bevanites. But the dissolution of the revolt gave way to a somewhat more

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[86] The National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers, the National Society of Pattern Workers, the Prudential Staff unions, the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees and the Scottish Baker's union.

[87] The Electrical Trades Union, the National Union of Vehicle Builders, the Constructional Engineering Union, the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers, the National Society of Metal Mechanics, the United Society of Boilermakers, Shipbuilders and Structural Workers, the Chemical Worker's Union, The Tobacco Workers union and the Fire Brigades union.

flexible attitude. Other unions, such as the Post Office Workers, have floated continually between opposition and support of the NEC.[88]

It was the Transport and General Workers Union, under Frank Cousins, that first brought home the fact that the NEC could not be assured of a majority at Conference. Therefore, official policy had to be shaped in such a way as to obtain at a minimum, a bare majority. Of the six largest unions in the TUC, it was invariable that two or three should be found in the opposition ranks. The unions have always had a progressive element, but not to the same extent as the constituency parties. It was the very fact of division in the unions that enabled the Left to muster the degree of support it did, and thus to compel the leadership, on numerous occasions, to adjust its policy accordingly.

The Parliamentary Party and the Leadership

The PLP assumes a far greater role in policy formation than does Conference; and the leadership must carefully weigh the strength of various factions and tendencies when formulating party policy. However, to fully understand the process it is best to begin with an analysis of the positions and

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[88] The Amalgamated Engineering Union, the National Union of Railwaymen, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, the National Union of Furniture Trade Operatives, the Plumbing Trades Union, the Association of Engineering and Ship-building Draughtsmen and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

attitudes of the members of the PLP, the Labour MPs. In attempting to ascertain attitudes, the division lists are of no use because of the effectiveness of whipping. However, Early Day motions (EDMs) are available for analysis. They are "spontaneous unwhipped backbench manifestos"[89] which any MP can table, and to which any can add their names in support. The freedom to sign a backbench manifesto is the same as the freedom to ask questions. However, from 1952 to 1959, the Labour whips had to be informed of a members intention to table such a motion. But the motions were regarded as the exclusive right of the backbencher. The EDMs indicate what views backbenchers have freely committed themselves to; but the haphazard method employed to collect signatures may well affect the degree of professed support. Nevertheless, the results of the tests show that there is a highly significant correlation between the type of member and the views expressed. Frontbenchers and whips were exluded because they were not in a position to freely express their opinion. Therefore, of the 277 Labour MPs, only 236 were classified as backbenchers.

The type of member was determined by the use of three main categories: occupation, education and sponsorship.

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89 S.E. Finer, H.B. Berrington and D.J. Bartholomew, Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons (London, 1961), p. 7. This excellent study is the only one of its type available but it is unfortunately confined to the life of the 1955-1959 Parliament. However, the authors maintain that attitudes in tne 1951-55 Parliament were very similar to those of their successor, p. 131.

Occupation was broken down into three groupings: workers
(including full time union officials, of whom there were 79
or 33 percent), the professions (including lawyers, doctors
and teachers, of whom there were 73 or 31 percent) and the
miscellaneous occupations (a residuary category composed of
various white collar workers, such as publishers, journal-
ists and party organizers, for whom politics was the chief
activity, and of whom there were 61 or 26 percent).[90]
Sponsorship was similarly broken down into three groupings.
Seventy eight or 30 percent of the backbenchers were spon-
sored by the trade unions, 21 or 9 percent were sponsored by
the co-operatives, and 137 or 58 percent were sponsored by
the constituency organizations. Educational groupings were:
elementary (77 or 32 percent of the members), secondary (58
or 25 percent), and university (93 or 39 percent).

Two wings emerged: working class and professional, with
the miscellaneous occupations in the centre having character-
istics similar to both. Using sponsorship as a category, nine
percent of the professions were sponsored by the trade unions,
54 by the constituencies, and 24 by the co-operatives. Re-
garding trade unionists, 80 percent were sponsored by the
trade unions, and ten percent each by the co-operatives and
the constituencies. The miscellaneous occupations were the

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90 The Labour party has a fourth occupational category,
businessmen. But it so small that it was left out of the
general analysis; however, its exclusion tends to distort some
of the figures.

most highly represented in the co-operative groups with 52 percent, while six percent were sponsored by the trade unions and 33 percent by the constituencies.

Regarding education, 71 percent of the trade unionists had elementary schooling, 27 percent secondary, and one percent university. Seventeen percent of the miscellaneous occupations had elementary schooling, 46 percent secondary, and 22 percent university. In the professions, eight percent received only elementary education, eight percent secondary and 67 percent university. Of the workers, then, the bulk had only elementary schooling; of the miscellaneous occupations, the bulk had secondary; and of the professions, the bulk had university. From this it is possible to conclude that the correspondence between occupation and education tended to be close.

Several major policy issues will be discussed below. Foreign policy, and in particular, attitudes towards the hydrogen bomb and pacifism will be dealt with first. The table on the following page serves to illustrate attitudes towards the latter.

The correlation between occupation and pacifism indicated that the miscellaneous occupations were the most leftist and that the workers and professions had views which tended to be both right-wing and similar. Analysis of sponsorship groupings indicated that those sponsored by the co-operatives were the most pacifist and that those sponsored by the trade unions and the constituencies held views that tended to coincide. There was no significant correlation in the general occupational categories; but those who graduated from Redbrick

Table 6

Backbench Labour Views on Pacifism and the Hydrogen Bomb

Category	No.	Percent
Left: unilateral renunciation of tests and/ or manufacturing of the bomb	45	19
Centre: those not in the category above but opposing American hydrogen bomb patrols and/or missile bases	68	29
Right: those in neither of the above categories but favoring disarmament	82	35
Uncommitted: those expressing none of the previous attitudes	41	17
	236	100

Source: S.E. Finer et al. Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons (London, 1961), p. 26.

universities tended to support pacifism while those from Oxbridge tended to oppose it.

On German rearmament, 44 MPs could be classified as left-wing, 144 as centre, and 86 as right, while 62 failed to express any opinion. The only type classification in which a relationship could be established was sponsorship. Co-operative-sponsored MPs tended to be left, constituency-sponsored, centre, and trade union-sponsored, right. There was, in addition, a close correlation of views between the German rearmament issue and pacifism. The overlap of leftists on these issues was 60 percent. There were five motions dealing with anti-colonialism. The Left was here defined as being composed of those who signed three or more motions, that is, 28 MPs, the centre as

those who signed two motions (48), the right as those who signed one motion (103), while a further 103 refrained from signing. The miscellaneous occupations were again the most radical, the workers the least, while the professions stood midway. Co-operative and constituency members were equally left-wing, while trade union members occupied the right end of the scale. Education was not a significant variable on colonial matters.

On civil liberties, 27 MPs signed three or more motions which placed them on the left, 48 signed two motions which placed them in the centre, 68 signed only one which placed them on the right, while 93 signed no motions. But a good case can be made for the argument that uncommitted members tended to stand further to the right than those who signed the motions, thus pushing the whole scale to the left. Educational analysis revealed that those with secondary education were the most enthusiastic, that university graduates stood midway, and that those with elementary education were the most conservative. The remaining two categories were not significant as far as their relationship with the issue was concerned.

Humanitarian issues revealed a similar split, with 45 MPs signing three or four motions and thus falling into the left-wing category, 84 signing two motions and thus falling into the centre grouping, 73 signing only one and thus being placed on the right, while 34 MPs signed no motions and were, therefore, categorized as uncommitted. In the occupational

groupings, the miscellaneous occupations were the furthest left, the professions were in the centre, while workers occupied a position on the right. In the sponsorship groupings, the co-operators were the most enthusiastic, the constituency members were split between left and centre, and the right was occupied by members sponsored by the trade unions. Education did not prove to be a significant variable.[91]

With regard to social welfare, in general, those signing five or six motions, of whom there were 45, were categorized as very keen, those signing three or four motions, of whom there were 80, were categorized as keen, those signing one or two motions, of whom there were 81, were categorized as moderate, while 25 MPs registered no opinion. As could be expected, the trade union sponsored members were strongest in support, the constituency sponsored members stood at the opposite extreme, while the co-operative sponsored members stood midway, half being keen and very keen and the other half moderate. The educational split followed expected lines. Those with only elementary education were the most keen, those with university education the least keen, and those with secondary education were themselves split, some being keen or very keen, some being moderate.

The table on page 78 helps to clarify the above by showing the correlation between attitudes in the PLP.

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91 All figures on backbench attitudes are taken from Finer: the H-bomb and pacifism, pp. 23-28; foreign affairs, pp. 28-38; anti-colonialsim, pp. 38-40; civil liberties, pp. 40-43; humanitarianism, pp. 43-44; and social welfare, pp. 44-48.

Table 7

Correlation Between Attitudes in the Labour Party[92]

	H	CL	FP	A-C	P	W	CL	H&E
Humanitar-ianism	1.00	0.41	0.32	0.30	0.35	0.21	0.22	0.13
Civil liberties		1.00	0.36	0.30	0.33	0.25	0.22	0.15
Foreign policy			1.00	0.36	0.39	0.23	0.27	0.21
Anti-colo-nialism				1.00	0.32	0.19	0.20	0.09
Pacifism					1.00	0.34	0.19	0.21
Welfare						1.00	0.33	0.29
Cost of living							1.00	0.33
Health & education								1.00

Source: S.E. Finer et al. Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons (London, 1961), p. 56.

As can be seen there is a strong correlation between some attitudes. The closer any two items stand on the scale, the closer is the correlation between the two. If a member was placed opposite the issue about which he felt strongest, the probability is that his next greatest concern would have been the item immediately above or below. As he progressed up or down the scale, the intensity of feeling would have tended to diminish. It is impossible to measure attitudes

92 Two important areas, nationalization and egalitarianism do not figure in the analysis as no motions were tabled on either topic. The letters on the horizontal scale represent the same issues, in the same order, as those on the vertical scale.

in absolute terms; all that is dealt with are tendencies. There is no means of weighing the intensity of radicalism for any one member, when one compares one area with another. Thus, while a member might appear to have been equally left on two given issues according to the EDM analysis, the intensity of feeling may have been much greater in one case than in the other.

Trade unionists tended to be right-wing on every ideological issue and radical on every material issue.[93] They formed a separate and relatively cohesive group in the House, where elementary education, trade union sponsorship and occupation tended to coincide. The professions and those with university education largely coincided and on material issues, the professions were at the opposite end from the workers. On pacifism their attitude was the same as the workers, while on all other issues their position was in the middle of the scale. The miscellaneous occupations were a counterweight to the workers: on material issues they took the same stand as the professions except on the high cost of living, which was in part, the result of the ideological phrasing of the motions. On every ideological issue the miscellaneous occupations were left-wing.

> The party is, broadly speaking, polarized on ideological matters between the left-wing Miscellaneous Occupations and the right-wing Workers. With

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93 The issues classed as ideological are: humanitarianism, civil liberties, foreign policy, anti-colonialism and pacifism; those classed as material are: welfare, cost of living and health and education. Finer, p. 57.

the Professions mainly taking the middle view; and on material matters between the left-wing Workers and the right-wing Professions and Miscellaneous Occupations.[94]

Sponsorship groupings show that the position of those members sponsored by the trade unions was similar to that of the workers. This was because of the 80 percent overlap. Eighty percent of the constituency members belonged to the miscellaneous occupations and professions. But their position tended to be similar to that of the professions; on material issues they were always right-wing and on ideological issues they shifted. Co-operative sponsored members showed no high degree of correlation either with occupational or educational groupings; although ten out of twenty one co-operative sponsored members belonged to the miscellaneous occupations, and tended to be more radical than the others.

Those with only elementary school were almost solely trade union sponsored members who were on the right on all ideological matters and on the left on all material issues. University education overlapped with both the miscellaneous occupations and the professions. Such members tended to be on the right on material issues. But there were numerous variations on ideological issues. The grammar schools produced more radical MPs than did the public schools, as did the Redbrick universities in comparison with Oxbridge.

On material issues the impetus for action came from members sponsored by the trade unionists, workers, and those

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[94] Ibid., pp. 62-63

with elementary school education. If these are all brought together they total 120, or one half of the backbench. This, however, is the outside limit; the core totals about 55 members. These members were simultaneously sponsored by the trade unions, were workers, and had only an elementary or secondary education. When ideology was concerned, this group tended to be right-wing. Here its chief opposition stemmed from members sponsored by the co-operative societies who belonged to the miscellaneous occupations and had secondary school and/or Redbrick university training. When brought together, the total reaches 85. Of the 13 backbench Labour revolts in the 1945-55 period, the average number of participants was about 50, although over 200 members were connected with at least one of the incidents.[95] The attitude of the professions seemed decisive. Whoever they sided with tended to gain a majority on the backbench; and therefore with unilateralism the correspondence of views between the trade unionists and professions was almost identical. But with regard to such matters as anti-colonialism, the professions have tended to support the views of the miscellaneous occupations.

There were several trends which began to appear in the period under study that may become significant. Although

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[95] See Peter G. Richards, Honourable Members: A Study of the British Backbencher (London, 1959), pp. 147-148 for more detailed information.

[96] Finer, pp. 74-75.

following the war there was a rise in the number of candidates sponsored by the trade unions, many such candidates were not workers. Further, the number of working class members with safe seats declined and the number with marginal seats increased. Partial explanations lie in the facts that the unions are unwilling to contest other than safe seats and that the increased strength of the constituency parties made it harder for trade unionists to win nominations. One of the main difficulties is that the trade unions are not willing to sponsor men that have the qualifications the Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) are looking for. Although the trade union leadership could provide the CLPs with the type of members that would benefit it, the unwillingness of such officials to leave their trade union posts precludes this on an extensive scale.[97] This results in a tendency for the professions and the miscellaneous occupations to increase their membership in the PLP. There is a further tendency for trade union members to be older and to have entered the House at an earlier date than members in the other groupings. Age was not a significant factor as far as material issues went. But on certain ideological matters there was a tendency for younger members to be more radical, indicating that in the future such matters as anti-colonialism and humanitarianism are likely to receive a wider range of support.[98]

97 Harrison, pp. 262-306, provides an extensive analysis of the problem.

98 Finer, pp. 72-73.

Comparatively little can be done on the floor of the House to influence policy decisions. Concerning the formation of a cabinet, Herbert Morrison stated:

> There is a tendency, therefore, for the leading and most influential members of the party to find a place, and even for the deliberate inclusion of varying political temperaments and approaches provided there are fair prospects of their being able to work together, in order that the maximum goodwill of all elements of the parliamentary party may be obtained ...In a sense the two great parties are each coalitions of opinion within themselves.[99]

The same principle applies to a party in opposition. To go to the polls with divided ranks, particularly if the other party were able to present a stronger and more cohesive image, would be to invite defeat. It is far easier for the Conservative party to do this because of the amount of deference afforded the party leader and the higher degree of concern for the attainment and maintenance of office. This again increases the necessity of Labour making significant efforts to increase cohesion. A Parliamentary Committee or cabinet which attempted to drive its policies down the throats of its backbenchers would, before long, be faced with a significant degree of discontent and resentment which might culminate in a backbench revolt. This spirit of discontent, Morrison maintains, flows back to the constituency parties, where it dampens enthusiasm and hinders co-operation. This was specifically the case in the months preceding the 1951 electoral campaign. This factor played its part in the electoral de-

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[99] Herbert Morrison, Government and Parliament (London, 1964), p. 43.

feat of that year.

There are numerous channels through which the leadership is made aware of backbench feeling. Meetings between ministers and members are frequent; appointments can be arranged with ministers; conversations can take place in the environs of the House; the whips and the EDMs keep the front benches informed of the attitudes of members; and discussions in the subject committees of the party are influential. Influence on policy is generally organized in a more subtle way than change on the floor of the House. The leadership usually tries to anticipate party reaction before policy is made public, and adjust it, if it feels it can, accordingly.[100] Michael Foot, one of the Left's chief spokesmen, stated:

> The Labour MP who seeks to change or effect great decisions must persuade his colleagues in the secret conclave of the party meeting. True, he will have had the chance of pressing his view at an earlier meeting of a specialized official group. But if his powers of advocacy fail there or if the political crisis in which he is concerned breaks suddenly, as most important crises do, it is in the party meeting - not the floor of the House of Commons - that he will have the only opportunity to determine action.[101]

The Political Correspondent of the _Times_ said in a June 27, 1960 article that "this [the backbench committee] is where things are being said and done that are more politically meaningful than a great deal that passes in the Chamber it

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100 The most extensive discussion of this type of influence available is in Richards, pp. 90-142.

101 Quoted in Finer, p. 3.

self." He maintained that to prove this empirically would be fascinating but then added that it was "humanly impossible. Privacy is the essence of the backbench committee system."[102]

Parties must be sharply distinguished in two facets of their operations: as electoral machines and as policy making institutions. Differences within parties are often just as important as differences between parties. This is certainly the case in twentieth-century British political history. The strongest intraparty divisions have usually been vertical, not horizontal. Three elements can be isolated within the Labour party when this line of reasoning is pursued: factions, tendencies and non-aligned partisans.[103] A faction is defined as a "group of individuals based on representatives in Parliament who seek to further a broad range of policies through consciously organized political activity."[104] A faction is a definite grouping which serves to bring direct influence to bear on the policy making process. A tendency refers to certain attitudes spanning a large area of policy objectives which are joined by a general view of society. The number of supporters of a tendency on any given issue will vary, and there is never any self-conscious organization. Non-aligned partisans tend to support the general principles of the party

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102 *Ibid.*, p. 4

103 The ensuing analysis has been adopted from Richard Rose, "Parties, Factions and Tendencies in Britain," *Political Studies*, XII, no. 1 (Feb., 1964), 33-46.

104 *Ibid.*

rather than those of any specific subgroup within it. It is
these non-aligned partisans that the factions and tendencies
attempt to mobilize in support of their policy objectives
when differences within the party became significant. Policy
parties are neither totally factions or tendencies; instead,
the two tend to combine to become the former. Thus, the
Bevanite faction often relied on the support of those with
leftist tendencies. These policy parties do not tend to
operate regularly. Instead, they come to the fore as co-
hesiveness diminishes.

> The chief features of the policy party, parti-
> cularly a consciously organized faction, appear
> to be an ideology, leadership, limited technical
> expertise, cadres, a communications network, and
> rewards whether material or psychological.[105]

During the Bevanite period the left-wing faction held regular
meetings with an agenda and minutes, conducted political in-
formation campaigns through its own periodicals, and held re-
gular meetings in the constituencies. Further, because
factions were particularly strong in the Labour party, the
support of non-aligned partisans gained increased importance.
Their support of lack of it was often the decisive factor in
policy disputes.

Accuracy of information is of vital importance if the
leadership is going to be able to balance the factions with
any degree of success and this, in turn, limits the leadership's
freedom of action. In addition, personality influences the

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105 _Ibid._, p. 39.

degree to which a leader will head a united front. Attlee
began his career as a very weak leader and usually exercised
a degree of deference to Cripps and Bevin. His personal
authority tended to increase when both of the above left
office in 1951. But by 1955, when he retired, it had again
diminished. Gaitskell, in contrast to Attlee, who had
usually attempted to arrange some type of compromise, assumed
office as the leader of a faction. This combination of roles
led to a number of bitterly divisive struggles.

A last possible source of policy is the NEC, which is
theoretically the administrative arm of Conference. Professor
McKenzie claims that it is heavily influenced by the trade
unions and that as long as the parliamentary leadership re-
tains the confidence of the trade union leaders they will have
no difficulty controlling the policy recommendations of the
NEC.[106] Again it appears that McKenzie's analysis is slight-
ly oversimplified. The NEC consists of 26 members, 12 of whom
are trade unionists. But there is no guarantee that all trade
unionists will support the leadership. Although, if the pat-
tern of policy decisions in the PLP is any indication, it
would be safe to assume that there would be a strong tendency
for the majority, at a minimum, to do so.

The relationship between the PLP and the NEC tends to
fluctuate but there is seldom open conflict. The constitution
states:

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106 McKenzie, pp. 519-524.

> The National Executive Committee and the Execu-
> tive Committee of the PLP shall decide which
> items from the Party Programme shall be included
> in the Manifesto which shall be issued by the
> NEC prior to the General Election.[107]

The NEC has a majority here. This is not to say that the PLP is subservient to it or that the NEC is more important than the PLP, but simply that the relationship is not always simple. Although the PLP is doubltess the focal point for policy when Parliament is sitting, when in recess the NEC plays a larger role as it usually meets every month. Some commentators have argued that when the PLP has been dead-locked the NEC tended to intervene.[108] If a policy question arises in parliament, it has been the custom to leave its determination to the PLP. If questions are raised concerning this policy in the NEC the party leader or deputy leader who are both ex-officio members of the NEC, usually present a defence and explanation of the policy and it is left at that. There are occasions, however, when the NEC can exert a degree of independent influence, as in the case of German rearmament. But it might be correct to argue that the areas of independent policy initiative left to the NEC are few and that, since the composition of both the NEC and PLP, as far as policy attitudes go, is usually very similar, the likelihood of divergent and irreconcilable opinions emerging is small. When divergent

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107 Rose, p. 134.

108 The bulk of the following analysis is adopted from Saul Rose, "Policy Decision in Opposition", Political Studies, IV, no. 2 (June, 1956), 128-138.

opinions do emerge they are not usually on matters of fundamental policy and can therefore be easily reconciled.

CONCLUSION

After World War I, the Labour party made a series of decisions that resulted in a full-scale commitment to the achievement of the Socialist Commonwealth; equality and fraternity were to be sought through the public ownership and control of the means of production. The environment in which such a transformation could take place had been developing throughout the last half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century. Although the party was pluralistic there were unified core views that gave it a degree of unity which persisted into the post-World War II era. Thus, throughout the inter-war years all troubles could be traced to one cause: capitalism. But social reformers fall into a serious error in assuming that structural changes in society are accompanied by what they suppose must be necessary changes in human motivation. "Men are conceived of as entirely rational and endowed with a passion for equality. Free them from the domination of interests and the degradation of a social system which bars equality, and you will have a great outpouring of constructive social endeavor".[109] This political naivete was even carried to the extreme by the Fabians, of considering the possibility of the public ownership of the newspapers to ensure objective reporting.

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109 Adam Ulam, The Philosophical Foundations of English Socialism (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 130.

Doubtless, the realization that the above was not the case played its role in the revisionist reformulation. Revisionism has made great inroads into Socialist theory, to the extent that it is now the dominant theme in British post-war Socialist thought. This does not mean that other viewpoints are insignificant, but it does show that fraternity and public ownership as values in the Labour party are no longer the most widely accepted core values. In fact, it could be argued that core values have been reduced to one: equality; although revisionist spokesmen do not rule out the possible value of fraternity and public ownership.

This ideological division resulted in the formation of two factions within the party which throughout the 1950s conducted a struggle for dominance. Of course, ideological factors were strongly reinforced by considerations of power; but this does not detract from the major role played by doctrine in the conflict.

The nature of the political party as a form of social organization operating in the British environment necessitates a significant degree of responsiveness, on the part of the leadership, to factional demands. Eastonian analysis, if adopted, can serve to clarify the general argument. Easton's recent work, A Systems Analysis of Political Life,[110] can be adopted, with certain important modifications, to the analysis of political parties and the Labour party in particular. Since

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110 (New York, 1965).

Easton's work is so abstract and general, when an attempt is
made to apply it to a given political party in a given en-
vironment many arguments which are particularly relevant when
a broad scope is desired lose their salience.

Demands, Easton argues, can range from very narrow and
specific ones to those which are very broad in scope.[111]
These will be directed at those members of the party who those
making the demands believe have the power to satisfy them.
In Labour's case demands are clearly articulated and are
directed towards the leadership in general, and the leader in
particular, by the various factions and tendencies in the
party. General ideologies or vague preferences are not in-
cluded in the term "demand", but these form the basis from
which real demands emanate. Further, such demands serve a
functional purpose for the leadership, by providing part of
the raw material for policy formation and directing the at-
tention of the leadership towards problems of real importance.
Most demands are the result of experience gained in the non-
political sphere; whether such demands will be brought into
the political sphere depends on the probability of their being
fulfilled outside it. Once demands are introduced into the
political system they act as stresses on the party; if they
are not fulfilled support for the leadership and even the

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111 Demands are defined as "an expression of opinion that
an authoritative allocation with regard to a particular sub-
ject matter should or should not be made by those responsible
for doing so." Ibid., p. 38.

party diminishes. There are likely to be more demands than resources; that is, all groups making the demands will not be able to receive satisfaction because of the limited values available for allocation. If the demands of a significant section of the party are not met consistently, support for the leadership and the party will be undermined both within the party and within the system.

A minimum level of support is necessary if the party is to maintain its position in the system or to have a realistic chance of forming the next government, as loss of support in the party affects party morale and undermines public confidence in the party as a viable institution by questioning its ability to govern in a manner comparable to its competitor. If support is persistently below this level, then, the party's survival in its existing form is called into question and steps must be taken to reverse this trend. The loss of support for the leadership by party members is a major cause of stress, and this tends to undermine electoral strength. The actions of the leadership play a significant part in building up or undermining support. If it cannot or will not provide adequate output in the form of policy as called for by significant factions and tendencies, cleavage will appear and this will result in stress.[112] When demands

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112 Cleavage is defined "either as differences in attitudes, opinions and ways of life or as conflict among groups ... attitude cleavage and political cleavage." Ibid., p. 263.

are not met support will decline and discontent will manifest itself. Important implications can be drawn from this. A simple balancing of interests such as that presented by the group process theorists would satisfy neither of the major factions; to do this the leadership must swing towards the revisionists on some issues and towards the fundamentalists on others so that at least a minimum number of the demands of both groups will be satisfied. Secondly, the leadership must balance the support and strength gained in the party, which indirectly contributes to electoral strength, against the possible loss of support in the centre of the electoral spectrum when policy becomes too extreme. Two elements are necessary: compromise with the Left and compromise with the revisionists and/or that section of the electorate which gives Labour its margin of victory. The degree to which the leadership will lean one way or the other depends on many factors, one of the most important being the personality of the members of the top leadership echelon, as the case of Gaitskell aptly demonstrates.

The greater the degree of internal dissension and conflict between party members, the greater will be the degree of cleavage. Cleavage can become so great that compromise on output becomes impossible; this is an important factor in output failure and it destorys support among the electorate. While this points out, sharpens and eases identification of differences in demand, it increases both the occurrence and potentiality for occurrence of conflict. Cleavage results in output failure, which produces discontent and stress.

Competing individuals align themselves with like members and separate themselves from unlike members, forming factions and tendencies; and this interferes with the course of compromise and co-operation.

If the leadership is to take any political demand and transform it into a policy, and the operation is to be relatively smooth, the co-operation, or at least the acquiescence, of the major factions is required. Cleavage lessens the probability of a successful transformation from input to output. If there is no mechanism for the adjustment of cleavages in the party, then disintegration will result if these continue to increase. Attitudes become excessively rigid and compromise becomes increasingly improbable. At the extreme, there may be no means of agreeing on who should fill the positions of authority, or it may be felt by the factions that common membership no longer serves any useful purpose. This is a situation which the leadership desires to avoid. In addition, the factions compete for loyalty with the party and this serves to diminish the effectiveness of and support for the party.

Unless there is an effective means of dealing with cleavages, stress will increase. Changes in structure may facilitate its decrease. Representation may serve as a tool to placate members of a faction, and the increased ease with which the factions can reach power centres facilitates understanding and flexibility. Representation, formal or informal, offers an opportunity to solve differences, assuming that

communication will serve to facilitate a decrease in cleavage. Norms may also have a moderating effect on stress if the factions are convinced they must continue to operate within the structure. But most important is demand satisfaction.

> We can expect that direct satisfaction for demands will at least generate specific support; and the longer such satisfactions are felt, the more likely it is that a higher level of political goodwill can develop. If members continually perceive that their demands are being met on a day-to-day basis, their loyalty to objects can naturally be expected to increase.[113]

As mentioned above, a cancelling out of the desired policies of the various factions and tendencies in an effort to balance, as the theorists of the group process maintain, would not really solve the problem. And it might, in fact, hinder the chances of obtaining a greater degree of cohesiveness. The leadership would simply be acting as a clerical staff while, in reality, they adjust demands or put forth new demands which are intended to gain support in the party and among the electorate. The leadership evaluates given demands but also takes part in the formulation and interpretation of demands in the light of which they feel they will gain maximum utility. The policies generated and adjusted by the leadership may have several purposes: the maintenance of their position vis-a-vis competitors, the increase in electoral support as part of the struggle for power, or the

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113 Ibid., p. 275.

ensurance of maximum benefit for the party. But whether the leadership holds one or all of these, it is almost certain the major factor is the maintenance of a certain level of support for themselves; and the type of output has the major influence on this.

As pointed out before, some leaders, for instance Gaitskell, may attempt to maximize support by appealing solely to the electors who provide the margin of victory, as opposed to other leaders who would tend to place greater emphasis on increasing support generally through increasing support among party members, believing that the level of support among the electors is a function of the level of support in the party.

If, of course, the outputs are favorable to a given faction, the leadership will likely go to great lengths to point out that this is the case, and the member's perceptions of what is being done for them will influence the degree of their support for the leadership. If the policy appears to be favorable to certain members, their support for the leadership will increase; if not, support will remain static or decrease. No matter what the real effect, the leadership is likely to make attempts at persuading the factions that their demands have been sufficiently met in the past. Misperception may be induced by the leadership; and it may involve symbolic gratification in place of real outputs. These methods, however, are likely to be relatively unsuccessful in Labour's case, given the highly sophisticated

nature of the society and the party. In fact, such methods may tend to irritate members, inducing loss of support. The relative importance of output is therefore higher than it would be in other circumstances.

If the leadership cannot maintain a certain degree of support it will no longer be in a position to attain the reins of office. Even men with a substantial degree of power are not sure how far they can carry their will. Generally, the holders of power "are reluctant to test their strength any more frequently than is absolutely essential; every failure in its use chips away at its future effectiveness".[114] But historical, social and psychological circumstances in the political culture and in the environment influence the degree of responsiveness which tends to be in almost constant flux.

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[114] Ibid., p. 436.

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