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Britain's Labour Party and the EEC Decision

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
INTRODUCTION	2
CHAPTER I. LABOUR'S IDEOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY	4
CHAPTER II. LABOUR'S SOCIALIST OUTLOOK ON THE EEC	37
CHAPTER III. FROM THE DEBATE TO THE REFERENDUM	62
CONCLUSION	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY	85

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the rift that developed between 1964-1975 in Britain's Labour Party over the question of entry into the European Economic Community can be credited to the traditional ideological differences that exist within the party.

An assessment of Labour's traditional ideology and foreign policy positions over time revealed that the party's internal divisiveness, particularly the struggle of the rebellious left-wing for a more "socialist" agenda, was more likely to manifest itself when Labour was in Opposition than when the party was in power. The roots of the party's ideological split were reflected in the party's several international outlooks.

Upon examination of the arguments advanced within the party between 1964 and 1975 over the specific party policy on the Common Market, it was discovered that the debates were primarily ideological in content. But it was a lack of ideological definition that was at least partially responsible for the split that developed over the issue.

The decision to hold a referendum in 1975 was used as a device by Labour leaders to avoid a vote on EEC entry that could have led to the dismantling of the entire party. Holding a referendum was the policy that divided the party the least.

Each appraisal leads to the final conclusion that the dissension that broke out within the party over Common Market entry is not distinctly illustrative of the traditional ideological split in Britain's Labour Party.

BRITAIN'S LABOUR PARTY AND THE DECISION TO ENTER THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, two of the remaining non-member EEC countries of Western Europe, Spain and Portugal, will officially enter the European Economic Community, thereby creating a Single European Market with an economic power that will be rivaled only by the United States. The decision to join the EEC was certainly one of the most important and sensitive questions to confront Great Britain in the 20th century. It also proved to be no easy choice for a party of the left with a history of ideological problems and confused, often controversial, foreign policy outlooks. Britain's Labour Party suffers from the same problems as many other mass "Socialist" parties. In order to be electorally more appealing, mass parties must be broad-based and must encompass a wide variety of beliefs and opinions. In the process, the party must often sacrifice unity and coherence for votes. From the beginning, the Labour Party has been split between left and right, but for some reason it seems to have had greater difficulty in maintaining party unity than have its "Socialist" European counterparts.

The failure of the Labour Party to gain office since 1979 in a time of British economic uncertainty and oscillating Conservative popularity, is attributed by many to the fact that bitter internal disputes over ideologically-based differences continue to prevent the party from presenting a united front to the British electorate. In order to understand the present-day implications of the inability of Labour supporters to agree amongst themselves, it would be of some value to examine Labour's various positions toward one of the most challenging issues to face the party in its short history, that of entry into the Common Market, to determine if the split that developed in the party between 1964-1975 over this issue is a reflection of the traditional ideological split within the party.

In order to define the party's traditional left-right split, an assessment of Labour's traditional ideology and foreign policy will be made. This will be followed by an examination of the arguments advanced within the party between 1964 and 1975 over the specific party policy on the Common Market. A final consideration will be given to the devisive problems that developed prior to, and as a result of, Labour's decision to hold a referendum on the EEC issue.

CHAPTER I

LABOUR'S IDEOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Historically, the link between Labour's ideology and foreign policy has been inconsistent. This inconsistency is reflected in the party's in-fighting and extremely broad-based attempts by party leaders to find consensus policies. This is not a new problem for politicians in Britain. Discrepancies between word and deed in the Labour Party can be traced as far back as the early 1900's. One appropriate modern example can be found in Labour's actions toward Chile in 1973.

In its "Programme," set out at the annual conference in October 1973, the Labour Party renewed itself as a "democratic Socialist Party", prepared to follow socialist principles in bringing about the fulfillment of such socialist goals as economic and social equality, the elimination of poverty, the workers' ownership of the means of production, and the achievement of full employment. Yet six weeks after the conference, a newly installed Labour Government approved the sale of warships to Chile, where the democratically elected Marxist Government of Salvador Allende had recently been overthrown in a bloody military coup. Allende's ambassador to Britain had earlier requested and received Labour's support against Pinochet's military insurgency--the very regime that Britain was presently supplying with arms. The decision to send warships to a regime that had already tortured and killed thousands of Chilean socialists was in direct conflict with Labour's ideology and rhetoric. The fact that the Labour Party historically has not been able, when in office, to live up to the commitments it made in opposition, reveals much about the power of the radical fringe of the party, and Labour's prospects for offering a viable alternative to Conservative capitalist policies

and establishing a new social order.[1]

Any discussion of a nation's foreign policy must involve a discussion of the ruling party's ideology, as the two concepts are intricately connected, one usually being a function of the other. It is necessary to discover why the Labour Party in Britain appeared to be a notable exception. This paper will attempt to assess Labour's traditional ideology and its traditional view of foreign policy, and will ask why the party's decisions have not always been consistent with basic socialist goals in the international arena.

Ideology

It is difficult to point to a specifically Labour Party ideology due to the lack of any agreed upon ideological limits within the party. The party rarely feels the need to parallel its actions in and out of government with any structured theory. Rather, the Labour Party devises specific policies to tackle specific problems, and only occassionally asks theoretical questions.[2]

The Labour Party has contained many minority stands in its history, many of them remote from the mainstream of Labour thinking, so that an attempt to record and incorporate every minority belief in the party would inevitably be incoherent. It would confuse the otherwise relatively clear distinctions between right and left within the party. Nonetheless, the party manifesto is used to rally all the main factions of the party at election times and, because there are so many factions, it must be written in a sufficiently vague form to satisfy a range of views from left to right.[3]

Can one identify the fundamental similarity of ideas which has united the disparate groups in one political party since 1900? The diverse factions have somehow been able to find a uniting factor, a factor that could be described as 'labourist'.[4]

Labour and the Unions

The Labour Party was established primarily as the political extension of the trade unions. The party would express such trade union ideals as the protection of a decent standard of living for the workers. The party is financially and politically dependent on the unions, but it is often forced to attack them when in office.[5] Nonetheless, as David Coates argues, "The Labour Party was founded in 1900 to pursue the interests of the unions in the parliamentary sphere, and it cannot escape from this obligation without threatening its power base. The social and political relationship between the Labour Party and the unions is therefore crucial. It is what makes the Labour Party a labour party."[6] Because it is difficult to translate such trade union aspirations as shorter hours, higher wages and better working conditions into a theory of society, it is difficult to pinpoint "labourism" as an elaborated ideology.[7] The clearest hint can be found in the foundation conference in 1900 that agreed to work for a distinct Labour group in Parliament, one with its own whips, an agreed policy, and a willingness to cooperate with any party which was engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of labour.

H. M. Drucker defines the term "ideology"--in the case of the Labour Party and appropriately for this discussion--in much broader terms than is common amongst political scientists. Typically, political scientists and commentators on the Labour Party such as R.T. McKenzie in British Political Parties (1963), R. Miliband in Parliamentary Socialism (1964), and David Coates in The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism (1975), have concentrated on what Drucker terms the doctrinal aspects of an ideology. These include the description of the party's behaviour "as an

institution as if it were a machine for the creation and propogation of socialist doctrine and the translation of the doctrine into policy, legislation, and practice."[8] Drucker expands his definition of ideology to include such aspects as traditions, beliefs, characteristic procedures and feelings which help to animate the members of the party. This dimension he terms "ethos," expressions of which are found in the party's formality of practices (embodied in written, often detailed rules), its demands for sacrifices from its leaders, and its unwillingness to sack its leaders.[9] According to Drucker, this "ethos" has played a major role in Labour's ideology throughout the years. Labourism is not exactly an ideology, but it is necessary to look behind the socialist face worn by the party throughout its history to see it for pure and simple trade union politics. It was in 1825 that labourism was first presented as a theory.

Labourism

In 1825, Thomas Hodgskins wrote a pamphlet entitled Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital that was seen as the manifesto of the emerging labour movement. He presented labourism as a clear-cut theory and defined it, Foote writes, as "a set of assumptions governing political motivations of established trade union leaders."[10] These assumptions have survived into the different conditions of the 20th century.

There were five articles of labourism, according to Hodgskins, the first being the belief that the labourers or working people were denied their just share of the nation's wealth. The second characteristic, therefore, was a demand for the redistribution of wealth to those people who created it. The third was that the workers were opposed to capitalists, the people who would personally profit at the expense of the poor, but not to capitalism as a social and economic system, as long as profits were reinvested in the

system and distributed equally among the workers. This article is in contrast to Marx who saw the capitalists themselves, and not the capitalist system, as the enemy. Marx also criticized Hodgskin for failing to recognize the gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth as a result of wage labour. Therefore, according to Marx, labourists were simply attacking the symptoms, and not the cause of inequality--the disease of wage labour.[11] The fourth article of the labourist theory promoted the independence and self -reliance of workers as a class.This is also different from Marx, who never regarded trade unions as ends in themselves, as Hodgskins did, and who felt the unions were only partially effective at best.[12] In short, the political and economic ideas enumerated by Marx were fundamentally opposed to the labourism of the British trade unions. Hodgskins final article was the worker's right over workers from other nations to hold jobs in Britain .[13] These articles were flexible enough to encompass a large number of different political ideas, yet were distinct enough to exclude the Liberal party to the right and various revolutionary factions on the left, although ideas representative of both can be found inside the party and compete for party attention and support.

Labourism--Its Limits

The core of the Labour Party ideology consists, therefore, of the trade union politics espoused by Hodgskins in 1825. Its ideological boundaries are broad enough to absorb and modify ideologies as diverse as militant syndicalism and moderate liberalism. Different interest groups compete for different policies within this ideological framework, and different political theories evolve. If one of the diverse groups within Labour's boundaries assumes a position that goes against the dominant trade union section of the party, however, it risks cutting itself off from the mainstream of Labour

thinking. If the ideological faction wishes to have consistent success, it will adapt itself to the labourism of the trade unions.[14] Geoffrey Foote argues, "Labour tends to be more compatible with gradual and piecemeal solutions to problems than it is with radical and fundamental solutions. The socialist ideology which Labour had accepted since 1918 has generally been interpreted in a gradualist manner."[15] Thus, Labour's ideological limits, though flexible, are capable of making a distinction between the left and right in the political spectrum. The party is often ideologically likened to a "broad church" incorporating diverse ideas, but not so broad as to incorporate the revolutionary left or reactionary right.

Labour's Ideology in this Century

The Reform Bill of 1867 increased the number of voters in the working classes in Great Britain, but it was not until later in the century that the Labour Party began to take shape under the leadership of such groups as the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party (ILP), culminating in 1900, with the formation of a Labour Representation Committee which included representatives of socialist groups and trade unions.

David Coates argues that the Labour Party had never been a socialist party in the 'continental' or 'Marxist' sense, but only a social democratic party, at least as that term came to be understood, following the split in the international working class movement brought about by the Russian Revolution. Coates maintains that the meaning of the term 'social democrat' is closely tied with the development of the international labour movement. As Russia and Western Europe industrialized after 1870, working class parties emerged which subscribed to some variant of Marxist philosophy. They came

together in what was known as the Second International, which in the late 1890's met regularly to discuss socialist tactics and strategies.[16]

This Second International identified itself as a social democratic organization, yet the British Labour Party had only a tenuous connection with it through the Independent Labour Party. Coates suggests that this is a reason for the Labour Party being 'different' from 'continental' and 'Marxist' working class parties. The Second International split under the impact of the WWI and the Russian Revolution. A third Communist International, made up of national communist parties loyal to Moscow, emerged, as did a Social Democratic International, made up of parties seeking socialist change through constitutional channels. Coates states that the Labour Party has always subscribed to, and operated within, the theory and practice of the post-1919 social democratic Labour and Socialist International, of which, from the beginning, it was a leading member.[17] After the war, the party openly declared itself in favor of socialism. From this basis, the idea of democratic socialism developed.

In his theory of democratic socialism, R.H. Tawney argues that the criterion of social function ought to be more important than that of wealth, because the application of function is based on service, rather than on the privilege and power which accumultes from the dependence on profit.[18] In short, democratic socialism seeks to transform society through denying privilege for its own sake, and is based on the abhorrence of the poor quality of life brought about by capitalism.

The mainstream ideology of the party was firmly established by the early 1920's. It consisted of, Ian Taylor argues, "a gradualist, collectivist-based reformist type of socialism in which the State was the main agent of social and economic change."[19] Fabians, such as Sidney Webb, favored such a scheme of gradualness. They believed that

their opponents failed to grasp the inevitability of this non-revolutionary approach, which has not only reflected the development of the party's mainstream ideology to date, but has also to this day symbolized the impact of Fabianism on the Labour Party.[20] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in their book A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain (1st ed.,1920), stated that the first step in achieving political democracy is to sort out the issues and to establish the Common Will of the people through the reformation of Britain's institutions. According to them, the people of their generation owed an immense debt of gratitude "to the political thinkers, leaders and parties who have, during the last ninety years, carried through the gradua democratisation of our community."[21] The writings of many leading politicians as well as several party documents reflected this ideology. Throughout the '20's, the mainstream ideology, disproportionately influenced by Fabianism, advocated the creation of a socialist society step-by-step. In order to ensure the passage of its program, the party's first goal was to gain a majority of seats in the House of Commons. Once this goal was attained, the party could begin, legislatively, to implement its policies of state control and ownership of the means of production and the provision of a wide range of social services. State ownerhip and control reflected the Fabian influence, and indicated that the form that public ownership was likely to take would be State and municipal, not participatory control by the workers themselves as advocated by Marxists.[22] With the dominance ot Fabianism, the limited objectives of M.P.'s and trade unionists, and the lack of a revolutionary left-wing intellectual group, deviations from the mainstream ideology were unlikely.[23]

In the 1920's there was a consistency between the Labour Party's ideological stance and its policies. For example, as noted earlier, radical deviations from the

mainstream were unlikely. Therefore, when the British Communist Party requested affiliation with the Labour Party in the 1920's, it was turned down. But until it gained a substantial majority in the Commons, it would be impossible for the Party to advance its socialist agenda.[24] In 1924, Ramsay MacDonald formed the first Labour Government. But as the Party remained dependent on Liberal votes for its majority in the House of Commons it had little chance to implement independent policies. By 1931, MacDonald, along with several other Labour M.P.'s, abandoned the party to form the "National" government with the Conservative Party, in order to combat the deepening depression. The National Government proved to be incompetent and self-defeating, and MacDonald resigned as Prime Minister in 1935.

During the 1930's, opposition and dissent within the party increased, giving the leaders a chance to define the party's intentions in several documents, policy statements, and pamphlets. The 1930's were important with regard to the relationship between ideology and policy. Many socialist principles were re-emphasized. It was stressed that "a Labour Government should plan in future through economic controls, nationalisation of basic industries and services, extension of the social services and the promotion of international cooperation."[25] The policies that eventually emerged reflected a mixed version of the broadly interpreted trade union "labourism" and the revolutionary socialism of Marxism. Nevertheless, Fabianism (or moderate socialism, where the State is seen as being fundamentally neutral) remained the dominant strand in the mainstream ideology.[26] Members of this group included Hugh Dalton, Clement Atlee, Herbert Morrison and G.D.H. Cole.

In view of the difficulties that the first minority Labour government faced, the Labour Party of the 1930's thought it best to set-out specific guidelines, objectives, and

priorities that would exclude the possibilities of coalition government, but would not be "left-wing" enough to antagonize the moderates among potential Labour voters.[27] Following World War II, the mainstream ideology of the Labour Party came under three successive challenges; from the revisionists on the right, the Bennites on the left, and in the 1970's from the corporatists.

Revisionists

It was during the prosperous years of the 1950's and 1960's that the Revisionists came to the forefront of the Labour Party. Their main goal was to redefine British socialism with some revisionists wishing to break away from Labour completely. Ian Taylor records that, "Labour's defeat in the 1959 General Election was the precursor to a short period of paranoia during which the conflict between revisionism and mainstream traditionalism reached its peak."[28] Although revisionists like Anthony Crosland challenged the relevance of such traditional objectives as Clause 4 of Labour's constitution (which committed the party to public ownership), it did not lead to any significant changes in ideology or policy. It merely blurred the lines of distinction between the right and left groups in the party, making it more difficult to identify the mainstream ideology. It was not a marked deviation from Labour's traditional democratic socialism, but it did challenge traditional ways of doing things in the party, particularly the power of trade union leaders in the party.[29] Geoffrey Foote argues,

> The revisionist challenge culminated in the technocratic, class-neutral ideology of the Wilson era, but the strains this led to with the Unions at a time of increasing economic recession resulted in the defeat of revisionism. As an ideology more suited to prosperity and full employment, revisionism seemed out of date and irrelevant to Labour in

the new conditions of the 1970's.[30]

The trade union leaders, now moved somewhat to the left in the party, reasserted themselves in the 1970's, prompting a new challenge from revisionists on the right which evolved into a new ideological variant, social democracy, and resulted in the defection of four highly respected Labour leaders in 1980 to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

The Left

The Keep Left movement of the 1940's was the first organized challenge to the Labour leadership by a group that was commited to public ownership. This movement particularly tried to persuade the leaders to pursue an independent international role for Britain, but was unsuccessful.[31] However, the leftists gained momentum in 1951 when three Labour Ministers resigned over Gaitskell's decision to charge for prescriptions under the National Health Service. The ministers felt that Gaitskell and others who had supported the decision were sacrificing a basic socialist principle, that health care should be provided equally to all, regardless of ability to pay. A second major victory was the 1959 decision at the annual conference to support unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Anthony Wedgewood Benn emerged in the 1960's and early 1970's as a politician of considerable influence on the left. In his book The New Politics (1970) he argues for a review of various issues arising from the technical and industrial changes of the 1960's, and for a move toward more open government. He was instrumental in channelling the leftist agenda into the party policy in the early 1980's.[32] Some examples of Benn's influence can be found in the annual conferences in the 1970's and early 1980's, when the party commited itself to the nationalisation of land, insurance,

and banking, as well as the abolition of private schools, and unilateral nuclear disarmament. Benn continues to contest elections for the party leadership today. In addition to Benn, corporate socialism became increasingly popular within the Labour Party during the 1970's.

Corporate Socialism

According to Henry Drucker, corporate socialists believe that "socialism cannot be understood as any particular policy or doctrine but, rather, as whatever policies the TUC leadership and Labour Cabinet agree are in the national interest at the moment."[33] In effect, during the 1970's, public policy was the result of agreements between the government and the unions, an arrangement which collapsed in the labour strikes of the so-called "winter of discontent," which brought about the collapse of the Labour government of James Callaghan in 1979. This type of socialism is primarily procedural in that it has no clear goals other than to protect a decent standard of living for all working class people. This view does not advocate the necessity for large levels of nationalisation or public expenditure. It is in this way that corporate socialism differs from labourism. The labourists main concern is the economic security of the working class and the redistribution of wealth as determined by the workers themselves. These concerns manifested themselves mainly through the views of the union leaders. Corporate socialism, on the other hand, is simply a way of thinking about how and by whom decisions are made--through agreements made between representatives of Britains two largest "corporations," the General Council of the TUC and the Labour Party leadership. It can be said that one of the reasons why the unions were not adverse to this "corporatist" method of combating economic recession was because they saw such an

arrangement as a way of increasing their bargaining power.[34] This became the operating principle of the party during its period in office in the 1970's, and is quite similar to the position held by the Labour Party before 1914.

Foote argues "Labourism--its flexibility and limits--is the key to the variety of political ideas adopted by Labour in the last eighty years. The ability of new ideologies to fit into the labourist framework determines their chance of political success in the party."[35] Despite the diversity of ideas so evident in the party, continuity has been maintained, mainly due to the strong link between the party and the unions which is the essence of labourism. Many members in the party would prefer to weaken that link, and have attempted to do so, but so far have been relatively unsuccessful. This continuity has been periodically shaken by attempts to remove Clause 4 from the Labour Party Constitution--which commits the party to the public ownership of the means of production--a cornerstone of traditional British socialism. More generally, the core consensus has been challenged from the left (more nationalisation, socialism, etc.) and the right (less socialism, eliminate Clause 4).

In sum, the schools of thought within the Labour Party since its inception included the radical "Socialists" on the left, the labourists, Fabians and corporatists each as the mainstream of thought at one time, and the social democrats on the right. Some of these ideological conflicts can be identified in the party's controversies over foreign policy.

Foreign Policy

Throughout the Labour Party's history, questions concerning foreign policy matters have been dealt with by the party in different ways. Each decade has seen the left

wing of the party struggling to gain control of the initiative in determining the party's programme. Many members of the party's leadership, including several devout left-wingers, played vital roles in the foreign policy process in the post-World War I years--in a period which witnessed Britain's transformation from the world's economic and military hegemon into a nation with grave economic and social difficulties, heavily dependent on the United States for its national security. It would be most productive to examine Labour's foreign policy decisions during periods of internal disunity and tumult--occurring usually while in Opposition--in order to accurately assess the resulting party programme for action.

The History of Leftist Challenges: 1930's and 1940's

The Labour Party was divided on foreign policy as early as World War I when it split on whether to support the war. There were at least three elements.; the pacifists, the international socialists who argued that the international working class should stop the war by refusing to participate, and the "traditionalists" who supported the wartime coalition government.

Politics in Britain during the 1930's was characterized by the rigid adherence to party alignments by both parties. Despite the mounting threat in Europe, members felt that it was undesirable to challenge parliamentary policies or the policies of the party machines. In January of 1937, however, the members of the party left-wing grew frustrated with compliance, and decided it was time to put an end to party loyalty taking precedence over all other matters. Therefore, following what was to them a very frustrating and ineffectual Party Conference at Edinburgh, the leftists joined together and launched what became known as the Unity Campaign. Stafford Cripps, the leader of

the campaign, began talks with the Socialist League, the Independent Labour Party (ILP), and the Communist Party in an attempt to unite the groups which he felt, together, could gain a greater voice and more representation in Parliament for members of the working class. Although this proved difficult at first, due to long-standing suspicion and lack of trust between the groups, common ground was eventually found to exist, with all the groups fiercely opposing the Government's rearmament programme, its foreign policy position of non-intervention in Europe, and most importantly, the "betrayal" of Socialism in Spain by a British government that was unwilling to intervene on behalf of the loyalists who were fighting Franco and fascism . The project was pushed forward by William Mellor and Aneurin Bevan. The campaign was presented as "one 'to revitalize the activity and transform the policy of the Labour movement'; to seek, as the campaign manifesto said, 'Unity within the framework of the Labour party and the trade unions'."[36]

No one protested more forcibly than Aneurin Bevan that the Government's rearmament programme should be opposed and the resources reallocated to domestic programs. The period was one of social unrest and anger in the economically distressed areas of the U.K.. Marches and demonstrations were becoming frequent and emotional. Bevan, whose goal in the '30's was to bridge the gap between the politics of the people and the politics at Westminster, put his great skill as an orator to use, and verbally attacked the Labour Party Executive for their inaction and submission to the Conservative Government.

When the Spanish Civil War began in July of 1936, the Labour Executive's official position towards Spain was one of non-intervention. Although non-intervention was a poor alternative at best, they felt that to support involvement in Spain outright

would increase the difficulties of the non-interventionist Socialist Blum Government in France, and most likely bring about its collapse.

According to Ralph Miliband, there were no fewer than four positions with regard to rearmament within the Labour movement in 1936. The first view was the straightforward pacifist view. The second, which was still the majority view, was "a belief in Labour's traditional programme of disarmament by international agreement coupled with an increasingly inconsistent acceptance of the obligation of collective action in defence of Labour's principles, and support for the League of Nations."[37] The third view, of which Ernest Bevin and Hugh Dalton were the main proponents, held that Labour had no choice but to support British rearmament. The fourth view was that of the Labour left. This view, the most "ideological" of the four, demanded resistance to Fascist aggression but refused to support the government's programme on the ground that the government could not be trusted to use arms for anything but its own reactionary purposes.[38] The resolution presented by the National Executive at the 1936 Labour Party Conference was one of uneasy compromise between the second and third views. The Labour Party's policy was to maintain its defence forces in accord with its responsibilities as a member of the League of Nations, to protect the people's rights and liberties, the continuance of democratic institutions, and the observance of International Law.[39] However, the party did reserve the right, based on the incompetence and dismal record of the government, to disclaim any responsibility for a competitive rearmament policy.

In early 1937, Hugh Dalton, the Chairman of the Executive, and Ernest Bevin, then Chairman of the TUC, refused to move for a new policy towards Spain, where democracy was fighting for survival, and they supported the government's active

rearmament and recruiting programme that year. Bevan and the leftists, however, became increasingly hostile to the goverment, believing that it could not be trusted to use armaments in the international interests of the working-class, or of peace.[40] Party biographers and autobiographers have since argued that, after a brief period of indecision at the Edinburgh conference in 1937, the Labour Party leaders, recognizing that non-intervention was hypocritical, set about rallying the nation in support of the Spanish Republic as an example of resistence to the Fascist onslaught in Europe.[41] In truth, it was the leftists who exposed the pitfalls of a non-interventionist policy. Ernest Bevin was portrayed as the leader of this crusade, when in reality it was known that he had vigorously defended the continuance of non-intervention in articles he had written for the *Daily Herald*. Such contradictions increased the bitterness of the internal party dispute.

At the time, Hugh Dalton felt that valid judgements about the situation in Europe were impossible to make without precise information, and he was outraged by Bevan's assault on the considered views and reservations of the Labour leadership. But to Bevan and the majority of the rank and file of the party, a world crisis was imminent. He held that the party was unacceptably constrained by the unifying edict of the Edinburgh Conference, which forbade any association with Communists. This edict was invoked to subdue the Unity Campaign. The opposition began to line up. Cripps, Bevan, William Mellor, George Strauss, Harold Laski, and other principal signatories of the Unity Manifesto began organizing mass meetings on a scale larger than anything seen in years. Cripps spoke out in Fabian Society lectures against the Government's rearmament policy, characterizing it as policy by the privileged few to protect their interests while rallying the poor workers to support their cause through empty promises of improved

industrial conditions and more employment through mobilisation.[42]

Bevan, who was certainly no pacifist, continued his criticisms of the Government. His primary complaint against the LabourParty leaders was that they pitched their criticisms too modestly; the Party had too much reverence for parliamentary decisions. It should take into account all views by allowing more outspokeness by factions and extremists, and by having party members voice their own as well as the party's concerns, complaints, and criticisms. But as a result of the Edinburgh Conference, which had forbidden any association with not only Communists, but also with sympathizers outside the Communist Party, Dalton, Bevin, and the Executive crushed the leftist rebellion by disaffiliating the Socialist League from the Party.[43] At its Whitsun Conference in Leicester, the Executive delivered the ultimatum to the Socialist League--either end the Unity Campaign or be expelled from the Party. The League chose to dissolve, and the "Left" found itself without any effective organization within the party to challenge a united Executive. The Campaign for Unity would be permitted to continue within the party, with a committee composed only of Labour members, but with many of its most dedicated supporters now excluded.

The Executive scored another victory at the Bournemouth Annual Conference in 1937, receiving decisive support for its international and defence policies, and the Left suffered another blow in July of that year when Hugh Dalton succeeded in altering the PLP's attitude on the Defence Estimates, by persuading the Party not to vote against the provision of arms to the French.[44] But the Left did secure one victory at the Bournemouth Conference, the unanimous denunciation of the policy of non-intervention in Spain, along with a resolution supporting the Spanish Republic. Oddly enough, both the right and left found the decisions at Bournemouth agreeable. The Conference marked a

new stage of hope in the struggle for working-class unity.

Bevan's ideological views determined his outlook on foreign policy and also defined the leftist position towards international policy prior to the war. He proposed a quite different course of action from the old doctrine of surrendering party principles for party unity. He maintained:

> We should conduct throughout the country such a campaign against the National Government, against its armament programme and against its foreign policy, as will make our position clear; we should say to the country we are prepared to make whatever sacrifices are necessary, to give whatever aims are necessary in order to fight fascist powers and in order to consolidate world peace, but we are not going to put the sword in the hands of our enemies that may be used to cut off our own heads. There is no other way in which the movement can save its soul.[45]

According to Bevan, it was impossible to deny the Government the right to govern until its Labour opponents were themselves strong enough to form a Government. Should this happen, the left wing of the party would be prepared to provide whatever support necessary to carry out a Socialist international policy, but he and his supporters were not willing to tie the movement to a coalition, a National Government which held office from 1931 to 1937, which they felt would betray their policies.[46] Therefore, for Bevan, the main argument was not over the specific issue of rearmament, but the political strategy on the Left in the thirties.[47]

Bevan's opportunity never came in the 1930's because the Conservative government of Neville Chamberlain succeeded the conservative-dominated National Government in 1937. The Conservatives took the country into World War II and Labour, opposed only by a small number of its pacifist members, fully supported the war effort, joining with the Conservatives in Churchill's coalition government from May 1940.

In the post-World War II years, according to James Callaghan, the Labour

government's European policy came under two criticisms within the Labour Party. The first came from the Keep Left Group, which criticised Britain's foreign policy as too pro American, and argued that it was the unaccommodating western attitude towards the Soviet Union that had caused the rift between the former wartime allies. Early in November 1945, 100 Labour M.P.'s abstained in a vote on foreign policy for similar reasons. This criticism weakened after the Marshall Plan was implemented, bringing American economic aid to rebuild a shattered Europe.[48]

The second criticism was that Britain had thrown away the golden opportunity to take the lead in restructuring Europe. But following the war, Britain's financial problems were so severe that not only was Labour's economic programme damaged, but wartime rationing was continued into the next decade. In the 1940's, the British concentrated on rebuilding their shattered economy. They also had commitments to the British Commonwealth, along with other responsibilities, including the problems in Palestine, to occupy them. Britain would assist Europe, but from the outside, as junior partner with the U.S.. Ernest Bevin, then Foreign Secretary, believed that the United States was Western Europe's only possible source of defence and economic support, given the Soviets great fear of Germany, their belief that the West would invade Eastern Europe, and their assumption that there must always be antagonism between communist and capitalists nations. Although Bevin desired good relations with Russia, he believed that the Soviets would accept no grey area--if a country was not marching towards communism, then it was capitalist.[49]

1950's-1960's

As a result of the economic devastation of Europe, there emerged in the late

1940's a group of idealists who wished to establish a European Federal Union. They believed that the basic issues of all European nations should be decided by a supra-national government.[50] Although Britain did cooperate in the first of the idealists' organizations, the Council of Europe, she was unprepared to accept any other plans for European integration. She had just emerged, weak but victorious, from the war, and could not quite escape from the traditional goals of British foreign policy: to safeguard her connections with her colonies, oppose the unification of Europe under a hostile power, and maintain a position of strength towards her largest challengers in Europe. Therefore, it was believed by the leaders of both major parties that membership in integrated European institutions would conflict with Britain's foreign policy objectives and interests.[51] From 1945 to 1951, Labour was in power, and there was little, if any, dissent heard from within the party on the subject of European integration.

The Schuman Plan of 1951 proposed the creation of a European coal and steel community (ECSC). There was a split at the plan's very inception between the so-called 'federalists', such as France and Germany, who favored one supranational governing body for members of the community as a whole, and those who favored the functional approach through the creation of several 'specialised authorities' for the member nations with much more limited powers. These specialised authorities would be "established by means of industrial and other across-border activities."[52] James Callaghan and Ernest Bevin, who were 'functionalists', felt that the Schuman Plan would be an appropriate project and urged Britain to take part in the negotiations to establish the community. But there were two serious objections. First, the Labour government had just recently emerged victorious in their struggle to nationalise the basic industries of electricity, gas, coal and steel, and were not about to delegate their new-found authority to an international

body. Second, Jean Monnet, the true author of the Plan, wanted to bind the French and German coal and steel industries because of his fear that the German industries would become more efficient and would grow faster than the French industries. His primary concern was to inhibit a German military revival and he encouraged Britain's membership only if it would accept the federal concept, which neither Labour nor the Conservatives would.[53]

Another argument broke out in Europe between the 'maximalists'; who favored the establishment of a coal and steel community only if Britain and Scandanavia would participate and agree to federalism, and the 'regionalists' who were ready to proceed with only a limited number of countries. British leaders made it known to the regionalists that their going ahead with the plan without Britain would be understandable, because federation would not be acceptable to them or Scandinavia, but most in the Labour Government felt that the discussion of the establishment of functional specialised authorities in which Britain could take part would be more useful.[54]

Another integrating measure, that of a European Army, was proposed by France as a protective action against a possible German revival. The United States wanted to incorporate West Germany into NATO and France did not want to cope with the possibility of a new German army becoming a menace through rearmament. The French proposal was to "set up a European Defence Community (EDC) as a means of integrating a German contingent into a combined Armed Force at the level of the smallest possible unit, so as to achieve a complete merger under a single military and political authority."[55] It was to be known simply as the European Army. The Labour Government was lobbied hard by the United State's Embassy, but its members believed a European Army would be impractical for either a Labour or Conservative Government. At the time, the issue of a

European Defence Community was being discussed as an entity that would fall under the direction ot the Council of Europe. The Cabinet informed the rank and file that they need not oppose the principle of having a European Army, but should oppose it on the grounds that the subject of defence was excluded from the European Assembly's powers in the Statute of the Council of Europe.[56]

Following the Labour Party's defeat in the general election of October 1951, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Party became more amenable to the idea of a European Defence Community, beginning to see it as the best way of reintegrating a rearmed, peaceful Germany into Europe. As it turned out, the European Defence Community was killed by the French Assembly itself in 1954, with both the Communists on the left and the Gaullists on the right voting against the treaty.

As is the case with any political party, a series of defeats, particularly defeats of a magnitude which the Labour Party suffered during the 1950's, is likely to breed rebellions against the leadership of the party among politicians starved of office and power. However, not all of Labour's difficulties could be attributed to electoral failures. By the 1950's the party could no longer evade the "ideological" dilemma which every Social Democratic party had to face in the post-war period.[57] According to R.T. McKenzie, the reality of the issue was this:

> Can a Socialist party accept, as permanent, a mixed economy and content itself with controlling and planning that economy, and with introducing further social legislation designed to increase "social justice" and "social equality"? Or must any Socialist party press on, stage by stage, until it has achieved a society "based on the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" (declared aim of the Labour Party Constitution)?[58]

This debate was illustrated in Britain during the early 1950's by the bitter personal

battle that took place between Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan for the succession to Clement Atlee. The main foreign policy issue of dispute was whether a party of the left could advocate full membership in collective defence pacts (i.e. NATO) which were based on the threat of the use of nuclear weapons and which involved both the rearmament of Western Germany and the presence of American bases in Britain.[59]

Each of the rivals, in McKenzie's view, became "the spokesmen for the conflicting views within the party, both on the nature of Socialism and on the defence and foreign policies which the Labour Party should adopt."[60] The centre and right-wing elements, including a majority of the Parliamentary Party, sided with Gaitskell who consistently defeated the Bevanite faction.

The Parliamentary leadership came closest to defeat on the issue of rearmament of Germany at the 1954 Party Conference, but although the Left managed to rally more support on German rearmament than on any comparable issue for a generation, Gaitskell and his supporters were able to pull out a victory by a very slim margin.

By 1956, the Left had gained even more ground. The new head of the large Transport and General Workers Union, Frank Cousins, stood well to the left of his predecessors, Deakin and Ernest Bevin. It was around this time that almost all of the seven "constituency" seats on the NEC were snatched by rebel M.P.'s who supported Bevan, both in his bid for the leadership and in his campaign to swing the party to the left. McKenzie maintains that in foreign affairs, "Labour remained throughout the 1950's firmly committed to collective security and to the British retention of nuclear weapons until general disarmament was achieved. But the policies advocated by the Parliamentary leaders were continually disputed in one organ or another of the Party organization."[61]

By the late 1950's the party, still in opposition, was torn--left to right--on the issue of unilateral disarmament. In the four years following the 1956 Conference, the Labour leadership made no major concessions to the militant Left within the party, but prior to the 1959 election, a surprising reversal took place. Almost all of the rebels who had fought most bitterly in the past against Gaitskell, now made their peace with him and campaigned loyally by his side during the 1959 election. The most astounding of these converts was Anuerin Bevan. At the Labour Party Conference in Brighton in 1957, Bevan went so far as to play a leading role in defeating a call for a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. McKenzie offers two reasons for this sudden reversal. The first explanation is that even the most ideologically preoccupied members of the party could not fail to ignore the voters primary concern with choosing the best "team" to form a Government. If the party could not desist from internal conflict, the "team" image would be destroyed and there would be few prospects for electoral victory. The second reason was the lure of Ministerial posts, to be appointed by Gaitskell as reward to his supporters should Labour return to power.[62]

With Bevan at his side as a firm opponent of unilateral diarmament, Gaitskell's next challenge came unexpectedly from Frank Cousins and the unions, following a vote to support unilateralism at a May 1959 Annual Conference of the General and Municipal Workers Union (GMWU). There was no great fear at that time that the party policy would be overthrown in favor of unilateralism, but the newspapers exaggerated the conflict into a personal contest between Gaitskell and Cousins. Once again the old process of policy decision-making within the party was in disarray, with the inevitable outcome that Labour was presented to the electorate as a party badly split on an issue of international importance.

Later in 1959, instead of following the Conservative example and re-examining Labour's party organization, Gaitskell launched an attack on Clause 4 of the Labour Party Constitution which pledged the party to work for the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Although the most specific of all pledges in the Constitution, Clause 4 was, according to Gaitskell, an electoral liability. He was dealt the first of two defeats the day after the Party Conference in 1960, when the NEC decided not to proceed with the amendments or additions to Clause 4 which he had recommended. Gaitskell's other defeat came at the 1960 Party Conference in Scarborough, when the Conference decided to adopt both the TGWU and the Engineer's resolutions in favor of a policy of unilateral diarmament. Despite the efforts of representatives of the PLP, the NEC, and the Trade Union Congress to produce a new and viable joint defence statement (which included Britain as a supporter of NATO but not as an independent nuclear power), the unilateralists emerged victorious, but by a very slim margin.[63]

Gaitskell immediately set out to campaign for a reversal of this decision. He mobilized his support through an organization called the Campaign for Democratic Socialism (CDS) which worked to secure the defeat of unilateralists in local party elections and also to win local support for the campaign to reverse the Scarborough decision. A very bitter internal party struggle ensued. The unilateralists launched their own campaign during 1960-61. Gaitskell and his followers attempted to convince key unions that they should throw their support behind the Parliamentary leadership. It was an appeal to "save the Party," to which certain unions eventually responded. Thus, the 1961 Annual Conference reversed itself on unilateralism. The ease with which the CDS recaptured the support of the unionists suggests that the Labour party organization can

be manipulated by a few political activists, whether of the right, centre, or left.[64]

The struggle between Bevan and Gaitskell was representative of two conflicting views of the future of democratic socialism. Such struggles can be witnessed in every other socialist party in the democratic world, but what was unique in the experience of Britain's Labour Party was the apparent inability of the Party either to stem or resolve its ideological conflicts. "This," according to McKenzie, "almost certainly was the direct consequence of the party's unique constitutional arrangements with the almost unlimited opportunity they provide for the perpetuation of internal party disputes."[65]

During the Party Conference in October of 1962, Gaitskell consolidated his power in the party in what was to be his greatest and final speech, when he all but committed the party to outright opposition to Britain's entry into the Common Market on any terms, to the delight of his old enemies on the Left.

1st Application to the Common Market

It is often noted by scholars that in the case of membership of other integrated European institutions, such as the European Economic Community (EEC), Britain's entry was precluded by its outlook on foreign affairs. For Britain to have accepted the Rome Treaty and joined the Common Market in 1961, a fundamental shift in policy would have had to occurred. Britain was very tentative toward further efforts at European integration, and wished to avoid the creation of new institutions that might duplicate the work already done by the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC).

Until 1961, Britain refused to consider Common Market membership because it was incompatible with the more important commitments to the Commonwealth. On

November 26, 1956, in a House of Commons debate, Harold Macmillan, as Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Conservative Government, suggested that entry into the EEC would mean sacrificing the preferential treatment Britain was receiving from the Commonwealth nations. This protectionist attitude was echoed by the Labour Party, in direct contrast with what would be expected from the party. Its rhetoric would have led one to believe that Labour would be in favor of breaking down barriers to trade. The refusal to consider Common Market membership is also ironic considering the fact that the Commonwealth nations no longer accepted Britain's leadership and did not all support Britain during the Suez crisis of 1956.[66] Britain--Labour or Conservative--was, Pfaltzgraff argues, "unwilling to participate in an integrative scheme which embodied the institutional arrangements of the EEC. Britain was not prepared to adapt her social, economic, and agricultural policies to those envisaged by the Six."[67] Yet by May of 1967, Harold Wilson, as Prime Minister and as an experienced parliamentarian who had played a leading role in the Party's civil wars for over a decade, led the Labour Government to apply for membership in the European Ecomonic Community.

Impact of Leftist Challenges

The impact of the left on the foreign policy decisions of the Labour Party has been varied. Most moderates, or those who constitute the bulk of the party, would say that the leftists, in pursuing their radical ideals, have caused internal divisiveness in the party which has resulted in electoral defeat. In government, particularly from 1945-1951, there was little dissent heard from within the party. I think it would be correct to say that the foreign policy decisions of the Labour Party were an amalgamation of the competing factions within the party, and as such, were much less controversial when

made in office, when there is a need to satisfy the great majority of views within the Party. At least until the debate erupted over a proposed referendum on the EEC issue during Wilson's second period as Prime Minister, the policies that eventually emerged were "watered down". In contrast, party members were permitted to speak out much more freely while in opposition, when the fear of losing electoral support is at its lowest. The greatest period of controversy in the mature Labour Party was in the 1930's when it was in opposition. This assessment leads to the conclusion that the Labour party's international policies are illustrative of the roots of the Party's ideological division. Next, I will examine more specifially Labour's outlook on the question of Common Market entry in order to determine whether or not Labour's battle over ideology was at the core of the decisions that were made in the Party concerning the issue.

Notes for Chapter I

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[51] Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr. Britain Faces Europe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 2.

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64 Ibid., 622-623.

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CHAPTER II

LABOUR'S SOCIALIST OUTLOOK ON THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Britain first applied for entry into the Common Market in August of 1961, under the auspices of the Macmillan Conservative Government. Because Britain had more complex external economic relationships than those of the six founding members of the EEC, she was confronted with the problems of reconciling her overseas commitments with the Treaty of Rome. As it turned out, Macmillan's cabinet was unable to convince both the leaders of the Commonwealth countries and many in Britain that their interests would be safeguarded. The negotiations in Brussels over the terms of entry eventually broke down in the face of domestic and Commonwealth opposition to the Common Market's agricultural policy and its tariff against manufactured imports.

The Labour Party opposed entry on terms that it regarded as disadvantageous, but in the end, it was Charles de Gaulle, and not the Labour Party, who dashed the immediate hopes for European unity by vetoing Britain's bid for entry in January of 1963. Four years later Labour's own application for entry failed because many within this so-called "internationalist" party continued to oppose entry even when most Labour leaders were of the opinion that the major difficulties in the Treaty had been overcome and that the terms were favourable to Britain's entry. This chapter will consider the debate that occurred within the Labour Party over the EEC issue from 1964, when a new Labour Government took office, until the time when the idea of a referendum was initially proposed as a feasible alternative for making a final decision on the issue. This chapter will also attempt to discover whether or not the lack of ideological consensus

within the party was responsible for the split that developed internally over the question of Common Market entry.

The Labour Government 1964-1970

Prior to Labour taking office in 1964, Harold Wilson had often criticized Macmillan's decision to enter Europe in 1961 at a time when Britain was economically weak. Wilson had stressed the importance of first facing, and then working towards a solution to, the problems that were posed by Britain's entry. In 1962, at its annual conference, the Labour Party itemized these problems as the Common Agricultural Policy, the increase in the cost of living for the British citizen as a result of entry, an increase in the British balance of payments deficit, the economic implications of British entry to the Commonwealth countries, capital movements, and regional policies, all issues that would have to be satisfied on Labour's terms before Britain could join the Common Market.[1] Once Wilson realized that Labour's conditions could not be met, there was no option left but officially to oppose Britain's entry on the terms set out by the Brussels negotiations. Wilson was willing to discuss the idea of political integration with the Six, but turned toward EFTA (European Free Trade Association) for negotiations regarding the reduction of trade barriers between the Six and Britain. It is interesting to note that at this time it was being said by political journalists that the party could claim to be as doctrinally and personally united as it had been in 1945.[2]

Wilson's first priority as Prime Minister was to lay the groundwork of a new structure designed for economic expansion in Britain. He was viewed as being oddly anti-European. According to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Wilson exaggerated both the political and economic (i.e. trading) roles of the Commonwealth. He also saw as Britain's greatest need to make her influence felt in Washington, at the heart of the Atlantic

Alliance, where he believed the vital decisions about Britain's future would be taken.[3]

Critics of the Labour Party have often overrated the chances of a crippling party split on the issue of the EEC. A split did not occur in 1959, when the party officially adopted a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, and was even less likely to happen in 1964, when Wilson tended to put party unity before policy innovation. In 1965, however, intra-party conflict began to reemerge. Some members of Wilson's government became more concerned with making policies to meet public needs than with worrying over whether or not such policies were "Socialist" enough. Other government members tended to ask what the Socialist line was first, and then tried to make the policy fit. The majority of Labour party members outside the Government judged all policies on the basis of their "Socialist" content.[4]

By 1965, Wilson's position had shifted slightly. The Labour Government was faced with an immediate balance of payments crisis. The last time Britain was faced with such a crisis, Macmillan's government was about to announce its decision to enter the EEC. This time, in order to combat the problem, the Government sponsored a supplementary budget in Parliament that included a 15 percent temporary tariff on imports of manufactured goods, regardless of their source. Britain's EFTA partners criticized these trade restrictions as violating Britain's obligation under the EFTA Convention and Association Agreement. However, according to Pfaltzgraff, it was Britain's chronic economic difficulties, particularly her balance of payments problems, that contributed to the strengthening of support within the parliamentary Labour party for Common Market membership.[5]

By October, Wilson was again stressing the need for the right conditions, but suggested that an agreement expressing the willingness of the EEC to provide safeguards

for Britain's EFTA partners was close to being reached. Wilson believed the major obstacles to entry at the time consisted of the financial burdens that would be imposed on Britain by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the replacement of Britain's extremely important trade with the Commonwealth. Britain's balance of payments needed to be a lot healthier before it could carry these additional burdens, and it was this sad state of the economy that brought negotiations with the EEC to a stalemate by 1966. It was routinely reported by political journalists at the time that the key to successful negotiations would be the Government's pressing forward with "contingency planning both for eventual entry to the EEC and also for membership of a looser European free trade area," in order to keep interest in some form of European association alive in the interval between the deadlock of 1966 and mid-1968, when it was hoped that the economy would be restored to health and fresh negotiations would begin.[6]

The official Government policy for Europe in 1966 was still that Britain had the political will to join the EEC provided it's "essential interests" were met. The phrase "essential interests" was so open to various, and broad, interpretations that it brought Cabinet differences to a head at a secret weekend meeting of ministers at Chequers, Wilson's country residence. Of the 16 ministers at the meeting, five were outspokenly pro-Market, including George Brown (Foreign Secretary), Roy Jenkins (Home Secretary), Anthony Crossland (Minister of Education), Lord Longford (Lord Privy Seal), and George Thompson (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster). Five others were equally outspokenly anti-Market, including Douglas Jay (President of the Board of Trade), Denis Healey (Defence), Fred Peart (Agriculture), Barbara Castle (Transport), and Richard Marsh (Power). Of the remainder, the leader of the House of Commons, Richard Crossman, tended to lean towards the anti-Market argument, along

with Anthony Wedgewood Benn (Technology). George Stewart (Secretary of Economic Affairs), and James Callaghan (Chancellor of the Exchequer), both converted to the pro -Market side in 1966. It was not known what opinion Lord Gardiner, as Lord Chancellor, held.[7]

The final and most important person on the list, Wilson himself, seemed to have succeded, according to Ian Aitken, in "giving private comfort to both schools of thought over a period of nearly two years."[8] The pro-Europeans believed that he had converted to their way of thinking. The anti-Europeans were convinced that he remained loyal to their views. It seems reasonable to say that Wilson cleverly held the party together by playing one side off the other at a time when he knew mounting unemployment and financial difficulties would make Britain's European prospects negligible anyway.

Economic and Political Arguments

In September of 1967, Douglas Jay wrote a series of articles in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* examining the consequences for Britain if she were to enter the EEC. Jay, in his economic argument, used the prospect of a worsening balance of payments problem, which would be brought on by the implementation of the CAP, were Britain to enter the EEC, as his reason for opposing Britain's entry into the Common Market. To him, the costs of the increase in food prices, the rise in living costs, the loss of Commonwealth and EFTA preference rights, import increases, and subsequently the large amount of capital outflow, far outweighed any benefits that might result from entry. The only real advantage, in his opinion, would be access to the wider tariff-free market in the Six--a tariff that would be cut by the Kennedy round anyway. Jay maintained that it was common sense to avoid a situation that would cause lasting damage

to Britain's balance of payments and from which it would be impossible to recover.[9]

Jay's political arguments for staying out of the EEC were threefold. First, there would be the weakening of Britain's political strength in the world caused by the damage to her balance of payments. In this case the political and economic arguments were linked. Stated Jay, "A country that is repeatedly asking for financial help cannot exert much political influence on others."[10] Secondly, if ties (political as well as economic) with Commonwealth and EFTA countries were cut down, Britain would inevitably end up in the position of junior partner to Germany in the EEC. There was no evidence at the time to show that a junior member of a big block had more influence in the the world than a small, more independent state. Thirdly, joining a Community where a "Commission has a power of legislating for the internal affairs of member countries" would be handing over to an "outside undemocratic body the power to legislate on unknown internal issues in the future."[11] This would be a disastrous sacrifice of sovereignty. The best policy, in Jay's opinion, lay in association with the EEC rather than outright membership, thus enabling Britain to continue to trade freely with an enlarged Europe, but to contract out of the restrictive and undemocratic aspects of the Rome Treaty and CAP.[12]

In October of 1967, the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough solidly supported entering Europe. Although almost a third of the voting strength was cast against entry, half of that opposition was accounted for by Frank Cousins' Transport and General Workers Union. Cousins was joined by fellow rebels Douglas Jay and Joseph Shinwell. The pro-Market Foreign Secretary, George Brown, emphasized in his Conference speech that many of the problems voiced by the delegates were not problems. He said that "Socialist' interests were not being hampered. Agricultural policies were

due to be renegotiated, and independent foreign policies were possible."[13] He also claimed that Britain's influence, combined with that of Europe, would allow Britain to play a very large role in the world. It was Britain's duty to see that the EEC did not become an "inward looking rich man's club."[14] Following Wilson's speech on the state of the economy, which ended in a standing ovation, all but a few delegates accepted the image of their Government as a reforming force.[15] The Conference effectively squelched the previously growing idea of an Atlantic Alliance as an alternative to the EEC, and agreed that it was better for Britain to play a leading role in Europe than to become, in effect, the fifty-first State.

The case for Europe was argued in another series of articles in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* by George Brown in 1969. He contended, in his economic argument, that the time was right to join, as far as agricultural and food prices were concerned, and that the costs of staying out of the market were greater than the costs of going in, particularly the loss of jobs for British workers. He also believed that as long as Britain remained outside the EEC, British companies would be confronted with tariff barriers that would prevent them from expanding their trade with Common Market countries. Brown used statistics from the Board of Trade to support his argument that entering Europe would mean productivity and income increases as well as expanded export markets for Britain. Clearly, according to Brown, the fundamental advantage from EEC entry would be a healthier industrial economy. To him, although the economic costs were agreed to be finely balanced, even if the worst-case scenario were to develop, it would only affect Britain for a handful of years. However, not joining the Community would have a permanent dead hand on what the Government could do for the British people for the rest of the century.[16]

In his subsequent political argument in the *Guardian* series, Brown maintained that a united Europe, in a more equal partnership with the U.S. within NATO, was the most prominent political issue for Britain in 1969. He referred to the possibility of the U.S. withdrawing its troops from Europe in the hope of lessening its military commitments overseas, following its disastrous involvement in Vietnam. If Europe were not united in anticipation of such an event, Western Europe would be in very big trouble. In Brown's view, an integrated Western Europe would play an enormous role in world affairs. As economic policy must be politically directed, an integrated Europe would need a common economic policy, and therefore a political authority to establish such a policy and carry it out. In recognizing the power of multinational corporation, he saw the need to build up giant European-based firms able to face their American counterparts in world markets, and the need to control the political authority of these corporations, whether based in the United States or based in Europe. These needs could be satisfied only through common European policies. George Brown's bottom line was that as Britain was already a part of Europe, she could become more effective in Europe's decisions only by entering the Common Market.[17]

Douglas Jay countered with a rebuttal in another article one week later entitled, "The One Sure Way to Ruin Britain." He reemphasized the points he had made two years earlier, stating that the case against Britain's entry, at least in terms of her balance of payments, had been grossly underestimated. In his opinion, the gap between EEC and British food prices had dramatically widened, thereby enormously increasing the economic advantages to the U. K. of staying out. He predicted that entry costs would be permanent as long as the CAP continued in its present form, that agricultural protection was so deeply embedded in the histories of France, Germany, and Italy that changes to

CAP would be extremely unlikely, and finally, that the market would not be enlarged, but rather narrowed, by the decrease in British exports and the increase in competitive imports. Jay maintained that although Britain's true interest did lie in greater all-European cooperation (political as well as economic), the EEC was not the correct or sensible vehicle for reaching such a goal.[18]

Despite the party's decision to enter the EEC on the right conditions at its 1967 Conference, it was obvious by 1969 that much opposition still existed. In the face of predictions of an improved economic climate and increased Labour support, the Labour Government lost the election in 1970 and was replaced by Edward Heath's Conservative Government. It was, typically, a Labour Party in opposition that began to bring the debate onto a different level with such ideological arguments as what a "socialist" or "social democratic" party required, and what the policy toward EEC entry should be in order to make it consistent with Socialist ideology.

The Ideological Dilemma

H.M Drucker contends in his book, Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party, that all Labour Ministers, as "Socialist" Ministers, face an ideological dilemma that is inherent in any mass Socialist party. That dilemma is democratic socialism. Socialism is of great importance to the ethos of the party, but cannot be used as a fixed guide to policy. According to Drucker, Labour's form of democratic socialism is not a theory of politics or any coherent idea of how the government works. Instead, Drucker chooses to describe the Labour Party's adaptation of a radical theory of politics to the ethos of the working class as "manifestoism."[19] This ideology assumes the sovereignty of the annual conference. Drucker states, "Manifestoism is an attempt to control an executive . . . and

make it responsive to the ideas and wishes of the party. It fits neatly into the radical theory of the constitution which emphasizes the sovereignty of Parliament and grounds that sovereignty on democratic election. It is about representation first of all and only secondarily, and indirectly, about governing."[20] Manifestoism makes no concessions of principle to adjust to changing circumstances. It is a populist ideology with policies that are occasionally contradictory, frequently vague, and rarely put in any order of priority. In reality, the details of manifestos are so badly worked out that a Labour Cabinet can often present any actions as consistent with the manifesto.[21]

Drucker suggests that if manifestoism were really a theory, rather than simply an attempt to control Labour's elected leaders, there would be "a much better worked -out conception of how the manifesto was to be implemented. It would also require some method of enforcing accountability to the annual conference."[22] He also suggests that we have seen in recent years just how sadly lacking the procedure is, and what a high price the party pays for it. The next section will attempt to illustrate Labour's fundamental weakness--that of not knowing what it wants--by looking at the debates that took place within the Labour Party while it was in opposition over, arguably, the most important decision ever to confront Britain in her history - the question of entry into the EEC.

The Conference Debates

As previously described, the EEC issue was mainly argued in economic and political terms, not ideological terms, while Labour was in office. But for the idealogues within the party, the primary issue was always Socialism. Since the idealogues are more comfortable in opposition, where they are held responsible for little more than their speeches, the arguments for creating a Socialist Europe came to the forefront of conference debates in 1971, after Labour had left office, and succeeded in further

splitting the party between the idealogues on the left and the party leaders on the right. But in this case the split widened over irreconcilable interpretations of what Socialism called for concerning the EEC.

The Special Conference on the Common Market

A Special Conference on the Common Market was held on July 17, 1971. The goal of the Conference was to agree on a definitive EEC resolution that would be submitted to the annual conference. An examination of the debates that took place at the Special Conference is needed in order to more accurately determine their ideological content. The Special Conference elicited more ideological arguments on the pro-Market side than on the anti-Market side, even though it was conducted in such a way as to allow the same number of delegates to speak on both sides.

Some of the arguments in favor of entry were justified in economic terms. Paul Whiteley (Colchester, C.L.P.) questioned whether the issue should be argued at the Socialist or anti-Socialist level. He argued that "the fact that the parties are split in such a peculiar way and that people's values about what is Left and what is Right have been split over the Common Market, is indicative of the fact that [the Labour Party] ought to look at things like the economic gains and economic costs."[23] Whitely personally felt that the gains outweighed the costs, but hoped that both arguments would be given serious consideration. Michael Buckley (Halesowen and Stourbridge C.L.P.) admitted to the difficulties of stop-go unemployment and the balance of payments problems. But he emphasized the need to look at the realities of the world, which meant looking at the trading arrangements available to Britain, and the need to work within them, despite the fact that they are not necessarily Socialist arrangements. Just because some Socialists

may not approve of them, does not mean that such arrangements do not exist.[24] One delegate (Roger Evans, Society Of Labour Lawyers), took the point of view that the Treaty of Rome offered Socialists in Europe a perfectly adequate political framework for the achievement of a Socialist future. He argued that capital could be controlled by nationalisation, which is not forbidden by the Treaty of Rome. Regional grants, and the power to take unilateral action without the consultation of others when threatened by an outflow of capital or balance of payment problem, were perfectly possible within the Treaty. Also, the Treaty does not forbid the use of the major tools of Socialism - the government payments to individuals, housing subsidies, and the financing of the health system, housing and welfare.[25]

Some of the economic opponents to entry presented the following arguments at the Special Conference. Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers' Union stated that anyone who had studied the situation in detail knew full well that food prices and the cost of living would increase dramatically upon entry, and that British employers were not going to turn into Santa Claus overnight to meet the differences in living costs with big wage increases.[26] The Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, M.P., criticized the abandonment of the 120 year-old policy of cheap food for Britain, and the switching from traditional low-cost Commonwealth suppliers to the high-cost, inefficient farms of Western Europe.[27] And the Rt. Hon. Douglas Jay, M.P., in character with his earlier position, argued against membership on the basis that control of the economy, particularly coal and steel which the Labour Movement had fought for 50 years to bring under the control of the British people, would be largely handed over to an unelected body overseas.[28]

The "Socialist" arguments for entry were put forward in varied, sometimes vague and puzzling, forms. Bob Edwards from the Chemical Workers' Union, who wrote a

book entitled The United Socialist States of Europe, argued that the Socialist movement actually began in Europe in 1947, when the countries of Europe came together after the war with the simple realization that they could not develop on their own. Since, to most members of the party, the roots of Labour's "socialism" were traced back to Karl Marx, such a statement could have only added to the confusion of the party over the distinctions of their ideology. Edwards went on to suggest that his "Comrades" take a look at how Democratic Socialism could be developed. They would come to the conclusion that it could include a very large area of Europe. He ended with an appeal for the party's active support for Socialist ideas and Socialist institutions by entering Europe.[29] Cryptic references were also periodically used in support of arguments for entry, such as Richard Hoyle's citation of Nye Bevan's statement, "A good Socialist cannot be an isolationist, nor even a nationalist; he must at all times be an internationalist," in support of his argument for entry.[30]

Helen Brown (Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire C.L.P.) called for entry with, she said, the sort of exciting, dynamic Socialist thinking which had inspired so many people in the country in the past.[31] (She failed to elucidate exactly what Socialist principles she was referring to.) And finally, the Rt. Hon. George Thompson, M.P., a devout pro-Marketeer, defined the Labour Party as, above all, an internationalist party. He voiced his hope that insular fear of change should not cause Britain to turn her back on the Socialist Parties and democratic trade unions of Europe. He conceded the desire to tame capitalism, but added that, at that time, capitalism could only be controlled on an international basis.[32]

The ideological arguments against entry were equally as muddled as their pro-EEC counterparts. Many delegates, such as F. K. Hedderwick (North East Derbyshire

C.L.P.), resisted entry on the grounds that the EEC was not big enough, and rejected the allegation that the only internationalists in the party were those who supported entry. Those people who subscribed to Hedderwick's view saw the rest of the world as including EFTA, North America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe - not just Western Europe.[33] Stan Orme, M.P., voiced his reservations about all the pro-Market propaganda that was going on. He believed that the party should be working out a policy of growth and expansion, and instead of taking a little-Europe approach, the party should accept his vision of internationalism and include the United Nations and the Third World in its approach.[34]

Another obscure allusion surfaced when Gordon Parry (Penbroke, C.L.P.) referred to an article written by Aneurin Bevan in *Tribune* in the late 50's in support of his argument against membership. Bevan had said that you do not tame the forces of the jungle by planting more trees. It was Parry's belief that it was extremely important for Labour members, as Socialists, to tame the forces of capitalism before they can build a Socialist society. If they were to put their own nation at risk by going in, then Britain would find herself unable to control the play of forces.[35] Parry failed to ascertain precisely how the forces of capitalism were to be tamed.

Other ideologues were more specific. Jim Sillars, M.P., declared that he was commited to opposing entry because the ethic of capitalism was enshrined within the Treaty of Rome. He believed that "to employ the relevance of Socialism we (the Labour Party) must control the source and flow of the vast residual power that is contained within capital. To do that means purposeful control. We (the Labour Party) cannot do that in the EEC."[36] Eric Heffer, M.P., asked the Conference to examine the realities of the situation and pointed to the fact that the party's first responsibility is to the British

people, and to the British working class above everyone else. And in Heffer's opinion, the British working class would suffer considerably by joining the EEC.[37] Anthony Judge (Surbiton C.L.P.) was quite vehement in his critique of pro-Marketeers when he told the Special Conference that the last person to tell Britain that it could not go it alone was Adolf Hitler. To him, the alternative to the EEC was a British Socialist Government committed to Socialist planning - politically, economically and fiscally.[38]

As an interesting final note, a young Neil Kinnock, M.P., of the Transport and General Workers Union, spoke against entry, but did not mention any ideologically related reasons for his oppostion. Instead, he simply claimed that because he was a member of the Labour Party, and because he was a trade unionist, he was willing to use any weapon available to him to beat the Tories and get them out of office.[39]

Amongst the pro-Market speakers there were 14 delegates of Constituency Labour Parties, 5 of trade unions, 4 *ex-officio* delegates and one from a Socialist Society, totaling 24. The anti-Marketeers numbered 14 speakers from C.L.P.'s, 7 from trade unions, and 4 *ex-officio* delegates, making a total of 25.[40]

Harold Wilson, as Leader of the Party, gave the closing remarks. His speech detailed many of the economic and political pro's and cons of entry already debated at great length, but most of his time was devoted to attacking the Tories and reiterating, time and again, how the Labour Party's policy has been consistent over the years. He tactfully turned his neutral position into a unifying speech. He claimed, "The position of this Party has remained consistent over this whole period. Our application was in. It remained in. If the negotiations produced the necessary safeguards, the Labour Government would have recommended entry to Parliament. In default of adequate safeguards we would have had confidence in our newly-gained economic strength to

sustain us outside the Common Market."[41] But the statement that fairly summed up Wilson's position at the time, and the statement that received much applause from the Conference, was his rejection of the idea that to be considered a good European, one had to be willing to subsidise inefficiency at great cost; that the very desirable objective of greater political unity in Europe, for which so many in the party had worked, should not be achieved at the cost of a 500 million pound subsidy to French agriculture.[42] Wilson ended his speech by stating the party's main objective - that of removing the Tories from office. Only once the Labour Party again gained office could they have any chance or hope of fulfilling their pledges and reaching their ideals. The final vote of the conference resulted in a very large majority decision to support the N.E.C. statement which opposed British entry to the Common Market on the terms negotiated by the Conservative Government, and favored submitting the question of entry to the British people at a general election.

The 1971 Conference

At Labour's Seventieth Annual Conference at Brighton in the fall of 1971, following the July Special Conference , all Labour delegates supported the decision to call for a General Election on the issue of EEC entry. It was continually brought to the attention of the Conference that the credibility of democratic institutions would be damaged if the Tories were allowed to continue to impose their will on a reluctant people, as they had made no commitment on the common market issue during the 1970 election campaign, and therefore had no mandate.

Most of the economic arguments at the 1971 Conference were lined up again in opposition to entry. D. Hughes (Liverpool, Walton C.L.P.), the sponsor of Composite

Resolution 35 calling for the withdrawal of Britain's application to join the EEC, stated in his speech that increases in rates, rents, fares and unemployment were the reality of living in a capitalist society, and that, in or out, the Common Market was not the answer to the problems of working class life. Hughes added that big businesses might profit from entry, but the labour-intensive industries would be adversely affected and there would be even more unemployment.[43] Patrick Craven (Lambeth, Norwood C.L.P.) concurred in the view that the Tories sudden decision to embark upon this so-called exercise in internationalism was simply the Conservatives doing the bidding of their paymasters, which include the large corporations, ICI and British Leyland. These were big financial enterprises that would benefit most from Britain's entry. Craven even criticized those who, along with him, opposed entry, and argued that Labour's anti-Market supporters who claimed to be the true bearers of the Socialist and internationalist traditions of the Labour Party were simply adopting the Tory arguments of yesterday. He stated, "Instead of putting a clear Socialist answer to the EEC they have merely fallen back on talk about the Commonwealth and the Parliamentary sovereignty of Britain."[44]

James Callaghan, speaking for the national Executive Committee and presenting economic arguments against entry in the final speech of the Conference, criticized the CAP and emphasized the need for safeguards and renegotiated terms. He warned the Conference that to go into a Europe, where decisions would be taken by a Commission in Brussels elected by no one and responsible to no one, would not be his idea of international cooperation based on mutual interest - which was exactly what Britain needed and wanted. He stated, "The future for the Labour Movement, the future for workers everywhere, the future for the developing countries and for the people who are striving to raise their standards of life, is not in regional defensive blocs. It is in a true

international system. It is in an open world, in breaking down the barriers."[45]

The main issue, however, was the debate on ideology, as evidenced at both the Special Conference and the Annual Conference in 1971. The ideological arguments presented at the1971 Conference in favor of entry, such as those raised by Douglas McEwan (Clackmannan and East Stirling, C.L.P.), suggested that the claim that the EEC was an inward looking capitalist block is not supported by the facts, and that even though all the Socialist parties of the Six had serious doubts about joining the Market, none had regretted their decision. All wanted Britain in.[46] Other C.L.P. delegates agreed that the Socialists of Europe did not consider the EEC a capitalist plot and were reaping the benefits of entry in the form of increased productivity, expanded export markets, and more jobs for the working class. Another proponent of EEC entry at the Conference said that economic expansion through the EEC was the only was to ensure an adequate welfare state.[47] In the case of the 1971 conference, most of those in the party who supported entry on ideological grounds did so by pointing to the amount of growth and success the other socialist countries of Europe enjoyed as a result of membership in the Common Market.

On the other hand, those in the party who opposed membership on ideological grounds did so by stressing the cost of forfeiting one of Labour's most necessary "socialist" principles, that of sovereignty. For example, Gordon Oakes (*Ex-officio*, Widnes) believed that entry should be resisted on constitutional grounds, because, in his opinion, acceding to the Treaty of Rome would turn the House of Commons into a parish council. The House would have no power to alter a policy it felt was not in the best interests of British citizens because such decision-making powers (sovereignty) would lie with the Council of Ministers in Europe.[48] R. Wright of the Amalgamated Union of

Engineering Workers, spoke out against the Treaty of Rome as a betrayal of Socialism. He declared that "the very nature of the Treaty and those elements within it that subject the right of an independent Government to determine on public ownership, undermine all those issues which we hold dear in this movement."[49]

Lawrence Daly of the National Union of Mineworkers told the Conference that those who claimed that opponents to entry were in some way denying Labour's socialist and internationalist principles were far off the mark. In Daly's opinion, it is because they are socialists and internationalists that they see Britain's role as socialists within a very much larger community than that proposed by the Common Market. His union did not feel that the advantage to be gained in the EEC, by threatening the markets of the Polish as well as American miners, would be the truly Socialist thing to do.[50]

Yet others stressed the democratic argument. Hammond, for example, of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications Union, who contended that "on this most important issue no one has the right to speak on another citizen's behalf, no Prime Minister, no Member of Parliament and no General Secretary, without the citizen's or member's own manifest decision and consent."[51] It was at this Annual Conference that the notion of holding a national referendum on the issue of Common Market membership began to take shape.

The opponents to entry at the Conference were in the majority, strongly carrying Resolution 16 that opposed entry on the terms negotiated by the Conservative Government. Composite Resolution 35, which opposed entry on any terms was lost, but not by a large margin. Of the 31 speakers at the Conference, only 6 favored entry with the terms set out by the Tories (including George Brown), while the other 25 united against them. The majority of those 25 opposing speakers favored letting the people

decide through a referendum. Only two of the eight trade union spokesmen cast their votes for entry.[52]

It is relevant to note at this time that the party had just undergone the largest shift to the left in its history following the 1970 election. As the trade unions on the left, and most Labour members considered to be leftists, consistently voted against membership to the Community, the outcome on Resolution 16 was hardly surprising. The question is whether the traditional ideological split in the party between left and right was evident here. As both proponents and opponents to Britain's entry used "socialist" values and goals in support and defence of their arguments, it is too difficult to draw any adequate conclusions without some further investigation into the debates, such as those offered at the Annual Conference that was held the following year in October of 1972.

The Annual Conference of 1972

It would be remiss to exclude some account of the way in which the debate ensued in 1972. Resolution 43, of the Labour Party's Annual Conference in 1972, which stated that Britain had a major role to play in the European Community and which urged the creation of a working party by the NEC to cooperate with Britain's Comrades on the continent in an attempt to create a democratic Socialist Europe, was overwhelmingly defeated. Composite 44, which called for opposition to the EEC on the Tory terms, and indicated the specific policy changes that would make entry acceptable to a Labour Government, was carried by a slight margin. The final resolution, number 45, which declared complete opposition to entry on any terms, was also soundly defeated.[53]

At this Conference, the arguments were similar, but appeared to become more

heated and intense. Some suggested that the only planning envisaged by the Treaty of Rome was supranational planning for the one purpose of enhancing free competition. One delegate maintained that the argument about entry was not just about ideology. The arguments are also about political and economic facts.[54] Accusations of breaking ranks and saving the Tory Government were also leveled, and statements blaming members for the disunity in the party were more frequent. Even the phrasing of the speeches took a harsher tone. For example, it was common to hear such phrases as "to connive in the dismantling of the power of the British people" and "suicidal for our Movement to take up a position of complete and utter hostility to the Market."[55] There is no lack of examples. Michael Foot even suggested that to deny the people the right to decide the issue would be a betrayal of democracy, perhaps because he realized the party was beginning to split wide open and a device might soon be needed to prevent the whole party from collapsing. Harold Wilson, who at this point was straining his unifying talents to the limit, again devoted his speaking time to attacking Heath. He also challenged the pro-Market newpapers (whose editors were attending the Conference) to print the 635 words from the Cabinet papers quoted in Hansard which listed demands that he, as Prime Minister, and the Foreign Secretary had told the Heads of Government of the Six would have to be met before Britain would enter. He asked the editors to say whether they honestly thought the Tory Government had met those terms. Wilson ended this Conference by saying that the issue was not one of personalities, and he was not about to let it become one, once again stressing the consistency of the party and the need to renegotiate the terms of entry.[56]

Conclusion

The arguments heard from within the Labour Party between 1964 and 1975 over British membership in the Common Market show that, since both sides used ideological Socialist arguments, it was, perhaps, the lack of ideological definition that was at least partially responsible for the split that developed and widened over the issue. The failure of the party to unite on EEC entry can be blamed on the same reaons R.H. Tawney gives for the failure of the 1929-31 government. He believed then that "The gravest weakness of British Labour is one which it shares with the greater part of the world, outside Russia. . . . It lacks a creed. . . It does not achieve what it could, because it does not know what it wants . . . This weakness is fundamental. If it continues uncorrected, there neither is nor ought to be, a future for the Labour Party."[57]

Notes for Chapter II

[1] Harold Wilson, Report of the Seventy-first Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Brighton, 1972 (London: Labour Party, 1972), 210.

[2] "Parties, Policies, and Personalities," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 10 October 1963, 1.

[3] "Will Labour Ruin It," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 15 October 1964, 8.

[4] Francis Boyd, "Labour's Tactics Take Shape," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 7 October 1965, 4.

[5] Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Britain Faces Europe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 172.

[6] "View of Europe from an Offshore Island," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 6 October 1966, 1.

[7] Ian Aitken, "Ministers Draw a Veil Over Europe," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 27 October 1966, 4.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Douglas Jay, "The European Burden," Mancehester Guardian Weekly, 28 September 1967, 7.

[10] Douglas Jay, "Loss on the Market," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 5 October 1967, 7.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] John Torode, "Labour Backs Common Market Overtures," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 12 October 1967, 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] George Brown, "The Case For Europe," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 13 September 1969, 8. It is interesting to note that the source of Mr. Brown's statistics was the Board of Trade - whose former President was Mr. Douglas Jay, one of the party's most avid opponents to Europe.

17 George Brown, "Beyond the Six," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 20 September 1969, 8.

18 Douglas Jay, "The One Sure Way to Ruin Britain," Manchester Guardian Weekly, 27 September 1969, 10.

19 H. M. Drucker, Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), 92.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 93.

23 Paul Whitely, The Labour Party Report of the Special Conference on the Common Market, Westminster, 1971 (London: Labour Party, 1971), 345.

24 Michael Buckley, Special Conference, 331.

25 Roger Evans, Special Conference, 336-337.

26 Jack Jones, Special Conference, 326.

27 Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, Special Conference, 328.

28 Rt. Hon. Douglas Jay, Special Conference, 350.

29 Bob Edwards, Special Conference, 350.

30 Richard Hoyle, Special Conference, 330.

31 Helen Brown, Special Conference, 324.

32 Rt. Hon. George Thompson, Special Conference, 323.

33 F. K. Hedderwick, Special Conference, 333.

34 Stan Orme, Special Conference, 347.

35 Gordon Parry, Special Conference, 322.

36 Jim Sillars, Special Conference, 320.

37 Eric Heffer, Special Conference, 338.

[38] Anthony Judge, Special Conference, 335.

[39] Neil Kinnock, Special Conference, 348.

[40] Special Conference, 352.

[41] Harold Wilson, Special Conference, 354.

[42] Ibid., 356.

[43] D. Hughes, Report of the Seventieth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Brighton, 1971 (London: Labour Party, 1971), 119.

[44] Patrick Craven, Seventieth Annual Conference, 120.

[45] James Callaghan, Seventieth Annual Conference, 142-143.

[46] Douglas McEwan, Seventieth Annual Conference, 121.

[47] Seventieth Annual Conference, 121-221

[48] Gordon Oakes, Seventieth Annual Conference, 124.

[49] R. Wright, Seventieth Annual Conference, 136.

[50] Lawrence Daly, Seventieth Annual Conference, 138.

[51] Mr. Hammond, Seventieth Annual Conference, 123.

[52] Seventieth Annual Conference, 114-144.

[53] Report of the Seventy-first Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Brighton, 1972 (London: Labour Party, 1972), 217-219.

[54] Ann Taylor, Seventy-first Annual Conference, 204.

[55] Jack Peel and Peter Shore, Seventy-first Annual Conference, 202, 205.

[56] Harold Wilson, Seventy-first Annual Conference, 212-215.

[57] R. H. Tawney in H. M. Drucker, Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party, 27-28.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE DEBATE TO THE REFERENDUM: PRESERVING LABOUR'S UNITY

On October 28th 1971, on the vote of principle on British entry into the European Economic Community, 131 members of Parliament, that is one in five, rebelled against their party leaders.[1] The vote showed the extent of factionalism that had developed within Britain's two parties over the volatile issue of joining the Common Market. The controversy between and among Conservative and Labour M.P.'s continued unabated until 1975, when the Wilson Labour Government decided to put the question to the British people. This chapter will attempt to determine if the referendum of 1975 was used as a device by the Labour Party to avoid a split in the party over the issue of Britain's entry into the EEC.

The Labour Party and Europe: A Four-Way Split

Opinion within the Labour Party over entry into the EEC can be divided in four ways, according to Anthony King. First, there were the "pro-Europeans," or those who strongly favored entry into the EEC. This group accounted for about one-quarter of Labour M.P.'s in the House of Commons. They had substantial trade union support. The third largest union in the country, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, with 650,000 members, consistently supported Britain's entry into Europe.[2] The leader of this group was Roy Jenkins, who had, King argues, "a personality that was in itself to prove a factor in the internal party struggle."[3] The second group, referred to as the Tribune Group and numbering about one-quarter of the parliamentary

Labour party (PLP), was the left-wing of the party, most of whom opposed British membership in the Common Market. Their best-known spokesman was the "acid-tongued platform orator," Michael Foot.[4] The two largest unions in the country were members of this group. Not all of Labour's anti-Europeans were left-wingers. The third group, King notes, were anti-European party moderates:

> A substantial minority of the party's moderates were passionately hostile to Europe . . . . They worked together with the left on the European issue - and their presence made it possible for the left to claim, with justice, that the European debate was not just another manifestation of the age-old struggle between right and left for the party's soul.[5]

There were two leaders of the moderate anti-Europeans; Douglas Jay, an economist, and Peter Shore, a man who had served in Harold Wilson's cabinet since 1967.

The final group was residual. It was composed of M.P.'s who may have been for or against going into Europe, or may have been completely neutral. Whatever their views, they believed that maintaining party unity was of much more importance than achieving any specific results over the issue of Europe.[6] This group included Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. It would be considered the "swing" group because it was crucial in determining the balance of power in the party. The M.P.s in this group were particularly sensitive to public opinion, constituency concerns, and the party conference manifesto. "These were the M.P.s most prone to follow a pro-European lead if it were given by a Labour Government, most prone to be hostile if the Conservatives were in power."[7] These are the people who were likely to claim that it was the terms of entry that they were most concerned with. They would be in favor of entry on the right terms, against it on the wrong ones.

An Ideologically Divided Party

Listening to the debate going on in the Labour Party during the sixties and early seventies, it would be difficult to believe that the individual arguments advanced were an M.P.'s only motives. The issue does not appear, in retrospect, to have warranted the fervor, detail, or importance that was expressed over it. King suggests that, beneath the surface economic arguments over the future of the balance of power in Europe and its prospects for growth, lay the recurrent problem of an ideologically divided party.

The roots of factions can be traced to the leftist movements of the 1940's, such as the Keep Left movement, and the much older Fabian Society. The prospect of the development of a large and rebellious block was signalled by the resignation of three ministers back in 1951 over Gaitskell's decision, as Minister of Health, to charge for prescriptions under the National Health Service. Those who resigned did so because they believed the party leaders were sacrificing basic principles. The leftist faction in the 60's favored policies of unilateral nuclear disarmament and greater public ownership of industry. It resisted the idea of the mixed economy. For its members, the interests of the working class should be protected by the welfare state at all costs, and through such socialist practices as the worker's ownership of the means of production. The leftists continued to pick up momentum in the 60's and early 70's under the influence of Anthony Wedgewood Benn, who saw British entry into the EEC as a betrayal of socialism. King argues, "The left-wingers were seized of an idea . . . . that the countries of the Six were somehow inherently 'capitalist' and that, if Britain joined the EEC, it would be joining a capitalist power bloc from which it could never escape."[8] Essentially, the EEC is a kind of controlled capitalism. Full participation would deny Britain the right to manage the British economy by a policy of direct controls (e.g. import quotas). By forcing open the British economy to the free flow of goods and services, the EEC

necessarily forces Britain to use fiscal and monetary policy to manage the economy, tools favored more by Conservatives than by Labour, which traditionally, and on the left, favors direct controls on imports and exports. Actually, full integration would ultimately eliminate monetary policy too, leaving economic management to fiscal means (taxes) alone. The divisions in the party were thus not just divisions over policy. They were divisions of ideology, of political views, and of personal preferences. It was not certain after 1970 that the party could survive such divisions.[9]

Wilson's Change of Heart

The Labour Party's election manifesto in 1970 was, if anything, more positive about EEC entry than was the Conservative's. When the Parliamentary Party reassembled at Westminster that year, it had lost 11 former members and gained 52 new members. In Kitzingers view, the Party that emerged from the election was slightly more pro-European in composition than at the dissolution.[10] When Labour was in opposition in 1961-63 it was against entry. When Labour came to power in 1964, it made Britain's first and only unconditional application for entry, in 1967. Back in opposition in 1970, Labour once again turned against entry on Conservative terms, and by mid-1972 it looked as if the party was going to decide to withdraw from Europe. "But then such large generalizations hide internal differences which -- as in almost any party of the Left -- tend to be not only more interesting but also more obtrusive than the unifying factors," Kitzinger argued.[11] He added that although, on the surface, it seemed as if the terms of entry determined support and opposition, the key explanations must be found in the grass roots distrust of the EEC, in the volleying of the leadership from Opposition to Government and back again, and in the internal divisions that arose

between the most active trade union leaders and the parliamentary leadership.[12]

Whether or not Wilson's change of position at that time was an actual change of belief is difficult to determine. Kitzinger advances four theories that could account for Harold Wilson's dramatic conversion to EEC entry in 1966. The first concerns personnel policy. George Brown, Wilson's Secretary of State and one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Common Market entry in the Cabinet, had threatened to resign in July of 1966 over the economic crisis that had hit Britain. Wilson's good friend and confidante at the time, Lord Wigg, believed that Wilson's conversion was not due to conviction. It was a result of the fact that he had to keep Brown and Callaghan in check and hold the Cabinet together in the shadow of the July crisis. The Prime Minister had to produce a device that looked workable and sounded decisive.[13] Wilson needed to move his position towards favoring entry in order to be perceived as less one-sided by the pro-Market members of his Cabinet. On the other hand, his assurance that an application would only be made given the "right terms" was the device he used to pacify the anti-Market members of his Cabinet. This stratagem also succeeded in calming the fears of George Brown and James Callaghan, who believed the solution to Britain's economic woes lay in Britain's becoming part of the European Community.

Another theory sees Harold Wilson's conversion as a result of the economic crisis of July 1966 itself. In his Bristol speech in March of the same year, Wilson stated that Britain was prepared to join under the right terms. He recollects, "The main stress was on our hopes of what entry into the EEC on the right terms could mean for Britain and Europe, in particular in technology, where we had a strong lead to give."[14] The right terms obviously must have been agreed upon within the next year, because the Labour Government applied for entry in 1967. The dating is important here and would discount

the theory that Britain's economic troubles caused the change in policy. Wilson's speech signalled a change in attitude months before the economic crisis. After all, Kitzinger would say, before the crisis there was no great conviction anywhere that the economic effects of entry would clearly benefit the country.[15]

A third theory concerned Harold Wilson's realization of problems which were the result of Britain continuing to play the role of world policeman.[16] On October 22, 1966, in a meeting at Chequers to discuss European policy, George Brown and Michael Stewart presented a paper "that argued the case for entry into the EEC almost entirely in political terms - as an issue of Britain's whole place in the world."[17] Wilson was obviously influenced by the argument that no one would take Britain seriously unless she applied to be a part of the new Europe.

This theory can be considered subordinate to the final theory which views Wilson's conversion mainly in terms of domestic party politics. It was believed that public discussion of entry possibilities, and switching public attention to an international stage, would take people's minds off economic failure at home, and at the same time (as interpreted by Labour anti-Marketeers) take the wind out of the sails of the opposition, thus effectively removing a potentially divisive issue from the arena of party controversy.[18] Also, Wilson's surprise decision to tour the "Six" capitals in November of 1966 was seen as an effort to reassure the pro-Marketeers that George Brown was not actually running the show, and to show them that Wilson himself was very serious about entering. It is ironic that Brown ended up in the role of brakeman to Wilson's rush towards an unconditional bid for membership at that time.

After the 1970 election, which Labour lost, the trade unions began to take a much clearer anti-Market stand. At the Party Conference in September of 1970, the

former Prime Minister's European policy was under heavy attack. The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) brought in a motion "opposing entry on any terms that threatened employment, the cost of living, or the independence of political, economic and foreign policies."[19] The TGWU resolution was defeated by a majority of only 95,000 votes. As the year drew to a close the anti-Marketeers in the party gained further ground, and prepared to move the party away from its position when next in government. Anthony Wedgewood Benn and Douglas Jay both began calling for a referendum. The National Executive voted the proposal down, though Jim Callaghan described it as "a life-raft into which the whole party may one day have to climb". A late December National Executive meeting, by a vote of 15 to 1 on the old TGWU resolution calling for a referendum, decided that a special party conference should be held before Parliament decided on the issue.[20] A debate took place a week later after which Wilson stated that "though strong reservations, indeed outright opposition, were expressed from a minoirity on both sides of the Commons, we were able to feel that we had been given a fair wind for our initiative" to consider the possibilities of holding a national referendum.[21]

The "Slide" from Europe

The formal position of the Labour Government as it left office in 1970 was a commitment to British entry into the EEC. At the Labour Party Conference that year, Wilson maintained that the party "would be prepared to accept the Treaty of Rome, subject to the necessary adjustments consequent upon the accession of a new member and provided that we receive satisfaction on the points about which we see difficulty."[22] But between June of 1970 and the fall of 1972 there was a drastic change in the Labour

Party's position. The National Executive Committee, the PLP, and the annual conference all came to renounce the terms of entry negotiated by the Conservative Government. In addition, the terms of entry that might be acceptable to a future Labour Government were set out in such a rigorous way as to amount to a rejection of the British committment to enter the EEC.

The "slide" from Europe began after the general election in 1970. Labour's annual conference that year narrowly passed a motion reaffirming the commitment to entry, though not unconditionally. But as soon as the terms of the negotiations were made known by the Conservative Government in early 1971, Harold Wilson, in a speech at the Special Conference on the Common Market (July 1971), made it known that they would be unacceptable to a Labour Government. Consulting the Labour Government White Paper of 1967, Wilson stated that the party had set out the four principle condtions that needed to be met before Britain could enter the EEC then, and that those same conditions still needed to be satisfied in 1971. The first condition concerned the burden on Britain's balance of payments. The Labour Party claimed that there would be definite damage to many of Britain's large, traditional export markets as a result of being required to adopt the Community's rules. The Conservative Government, on the other hand, was willing to permit the British taxpayers to bear the burden, which by 1971, was much greater than estimated in 1967.[23]

Labour's second condition concerned the question of capital movements. The Party believed that sudden movements of capital, even with safeguards and a strong balance of payments surplus, would endanger Britain's reserves, her employment position, and her ability to build up capital investment in industry. Labour accused the Conservative Government of negotiating away all the necessary safeguards against large capital

movements.[24]

The third issue stressed Labour's commitment to safeguarding the sugar producers of the Commonwealth. The Conservatives, to Labour's indignation, sought no guarantees from the Six on Commonwealth sugar. The fourth condition, somewhat similar to the third, was Labour's obligation to New Zealand's cheap food producers. Heath's Conservative Government again failed to get binding assurances on New Zealand written into the agreement at the EEC negotiations.[25]

Soon after the Special Conference, the National Executive publicly condemned the Tory terms of entry and called upon the PLP to unite in opposition to the Government policy. Later, at the 1971 annual conference in October, the NEC's view was accepted by a large majority. It was around this time that nearly half of the PLP signed the House of Commons motion stating that entry into the EEC on the terms set out so far would not be in the best interests of the country.[26] King records that when the House of Commons took the vote on the issue of entry on October 28th, a great majority of the parliamentary Labour party, 198 members, voted with Wilson to reject the Tories' terms. But 69 Labour members, led by Roy Jenkins, George Brown's successor as the deputy leader of the party, abandoned the party on this issue and defied both the party conference decision and a three-line whip by voting with the Conservative Government. Another twenty pro-Europeans abstained. Along with the deputy leader, the chairman of the PLP, Douglas Houghton, and three members of the Shadow Cabinet, Harold Lever, Shirley Williams, and George Thompson, also defected, and in so doing, staged a rebellion on a scale unprecedented in the history of the party.[27] Only nine members of Wilson's seventeen former cabinet members still voted with him. Some of the rebels were highly respected members of the party of long-standing. Others were some of the youngest and

most talented members of the party who would almost certainly play vital roles in future Labour Governments.[28] But the Labour rebels soon realized that to go on rebelling would be political suicide. Therefore, during the time the European Communities Bill was passing through the Commons, pro- and anti-Marketeers reluctantly joined forces to vote down provisions of the bill. "Renegotiate" rather than "withdraw" became the party theme, and was adopted as party policy at Labour's 1971 annual conference. King maintains, "The slide from Europe considerably embarassed the Labour Party, which was pilloried in the press as irresponsible, inconsistent, and opportunistic. It evidently embarassed Harold Wilson, who was repeatedly at pains to claim that, despite everything, he had not really shifted his position."[29]

Accounting for Labour's Split

What, then, accounted for Labour's divisions? First, it should be noted again that there had always been a great deal of opposition to entry within the party. The two votes in 1967 merely concealed its extent. King suggests that Wilson's success in rallying enough of his party to support an application to the EEC in 1967 was a result of the simple fact that Labour was in power.[30] However, when the Labour Government of 1967 took such a tough position on the terms of entry, even doubtful Labour M.P.'s were convinced to go along with the Government. But by 1971, the slide began to accelerate when Labour was no longer in power, the Tory terms were made known, and the Treaty was about to be signed.

Another contributing factor was the attitude of Edward Heath. He continuously offended the trade unions so that Labour M.P.'s who favored entry into the EEC but opposed the government on everything else would find it difficult to vote with him for

fear of being labeled traitors.

The factor that could be considered most important in explaining the Labour Party split, however, was the greatest shift to the left in the Labour Party's history, which occurred between 1970 and 1972. In contrast to Kitzinger's observation that the PLP emerged from the 1970 election as slightly more European, King believed that in the two years following the election, pro-Market sympathies began to sway to the left. King states,

> This shift to the left was brought about by an increase in the number of left-wing Labour M.P.'s and, more particularly, by a shift in the balance of power from right to left inside the trade unions. As the unions moved to the left, so too did the annual conference and the National Executive, both of which the unions, directly or indirectly, controlled.[31]

Most attribute the shift to the failure of Wilson's moderate policies of 1964-1970. Consequently, the years 1970-1972 were particularly difficult years for the party moderates and for the causes for which they fought, including Europe. Labour's retreat from Europe was part of a general movement towards policies more extreme than any the party had experienced in the past.[32]

Wilson had to develop a strategy that would enable him to retain his position as party leader, and at the same time present a united and credible party to the country. He emphasized his duties as leader of the party in his July 1971 speech to the party's special conference:

> I charge this Movement, as I have the right and duty to do, so to conduct this debate as to respect and honour the views of all members of the Party, and indeed of others, regardless of what those views may be. We must recognize that what divides us is an important policy issue, not an article of faith.[33]

Wilson had never meant to be neutral and sided with the pro-Marketeers, who were in the minority by the 1970's, in order to balance out the opposition. He did not wish the

party to completely reverse itself and come out against Common Market membership, but he never seemed to lose sight of the fact that the party was in opposition. Therefore, he played for time. He knew that if he forced the issue, the party would split and the anti Europeans would win. Thus, his policy was not to press the issue. The party's internal battle was permitted to continue to a certain extent. Wilson realized that, as a party in Opposition, Labour could risk the conference resolutions and NEC statements that lacked the power and bite of Government decisions in order to maintain some semblence of party democracy. He also understood that it could be years before the party returned to power, by which time Britain's EEC membership would be irreversible.[34] It was not until later, in 1972, that Wilson seemed to realize that a referendum might constitute another possible element in his strategy.

Decision to Hold a Referendum

"The decision to hold a referendum was a direct outcome of Labour's internal struggle over Europe. The Conservatives played almost no part in the decision," according to Anthony King.[35] It was quite commonly believed that if someone was in favor of having a referendum he was an anti-Marketeer, simply because opinion polls at the time showed that the electorate, given the opportunity, would vote against membership in the Common Market. Therefore, it follows that the pro-Marketeers were against holding a referendum. The moderates leaned toward the referendum to prevent the party from splitting.

It appears that Tony Benn is the one individual most responsible for the Labour Party's decision to hold the referendum. Although originally a supporter of British membership, Benn was to change his position to the extent of becoming the most avid

proponent of referenda in general, not just on the Common Market issue. Another Labour figure and anti-Marketeer, Douglas Jay, maintained that if Britain were to relinquish some of its sovereign power to the European Community, the independence of the nation would be in jeopardy. Therefore the British people must be directly consulted. According to King,

> Parliament would be giving up a substantial part of its power to an outside body over which it could have little control. And the decision would be irreversible; Parliament could not bind its successors in theory, but in practice it was clear that, once such substantial powers had been given up, they could never be recovered.[36]

Motions in favor of a referendum were put to the National Executive by the Transport and General Workers Union in 1970, and again at the party conference in October of 1971, where they were defeated by large margins. Nonetheless, the obvious advantage for the anti-Marketeers of holding a referendum was in the opportunity it would provide to prevent Britain joining, or to withdraw if Britain were already a member.[37] The advantages for Wilson and the other middle-of-the-roaders was also apparent. A referendum would, King argued;

> make it possible for the party to present itself to the electorate as more democratic than the Conservatives: it would enable the party to avoid having to take the ultimate decision on the European issue, which divided it so deeply; and it would buy time, since the party need not come to a final view on the issue, even in the form of a recommendation to the electorate, until the eve of any referendum campaign.[38]

Wilson was used to referring to the referendum as "a free vote of the British people". King notes that it is precisely on issues that internally divide the major political parties that free votes are most likely to be held in the British House of Commons.[39]

Those who resisted the idea of a referendum were undermined by the fact that Norway, Denmark and Ireland had already decided to hold referenda on their country's

entries into the EEC. Britain was beginning to look like the only country whose people would not be consulted directly on the issue.[40] The National Executive, on March 22nd 1972, reversed its policy by a slim majority vote for which Wilson, Callaghan, and Roy Jenkins were all absent. The vote prompted the resignation of 3 top Labour leaders who were pro-Marketeers; Roy Jenkins, George Thompson, and Harold Lever.[41]

Wilson discovered that, despite the resignations, there was still a respectable number of pro-Europeans on the Labour front benches. Therefore, he was determined not to permit the party to come out flatly against EEC membership in principle. At the annual conference in October of 1972, the National Executive carried a resolution by a two-thirds majority that the decision on entry into the EEC would be put to the electorate, if renegotiation were successful. "What had emerged," says King, "was that the policy of consulting the people was the policy that divided the party least."[42] Even Roy Jenkins agreed to return to the fold and successfully stood for Shadow Cabinet reelection in 1973. Once the party had made the final decision in 1972 to consult the people by means of a referendum, it was inevitable that a referendum would be held if the Labour Party were ever to gain office while the option to withdraw from the Common Market still existed.[43] Labour's decision to hold a referendum and to renegotiate Britain's terms of entry with EEC members, was taken while the party was in opposition. By the end of 1974, Labour had been returned to office with an overall parliamentary majority. The renegotiations had begun. The decision to hold a referendum had been made.[44]

Debate Over the Referendum

Once Labour was back in office, the anti-Marketeers found seven Cabinet

ministers publicly on their side, together with about thirty other ministers and a majority of Labour backbenchers. But they had to face the reality of a Labour Prime Minister, two-thirds of his cabinet, and a minority each of backbenchers, the constituency parties, and the trade unions, who were all committed to a "Yes" vote on the referendum. Yet Butler maintains that even the hard-line anti-Marketeers were reluctant to split the party too deeply.[45]

The first battle between the pro-Market and anti-Market factions came on March 26, 1974, when the National Executive Committee, Labour's administrative authority, approved a statement on the EEC negotiations which said, "The National Executive Committee believes that on both economic and democratic grounds, the best interests of the British people would be served by a 'No' vote in the coming referendum."[46] Because it was left unclear what arguments were to be put to the party and to the electorate, the Transport House Research Department, headed by anti-Marketeer Geoff Bish, issued a statement for approval by the NEC. When the statement came before a sub-committee, on April 23rd, and subsequently when it came to the full NEC, pro-Marketeer James Callaghan submitted 297 amendments, describing the statement as "a disgrace to the name of research."[47] (The document was issued to all delegates at the Special Conference only 'for information' and without the NEC's endorsement.) Also on April 23rd, the NEC decided that Bryan Stanley (to Benn's displeasure) and Michael Foot would respectively open and close the anti-Market case at the Special Conference. On the pro side, it was to be Harold Wilson and James Callaghan to present the opening and closing remarks. At that conference held on April 26th, 1974, to determine the fate of the NEC pronouncement, the Conference voted 3,724,000 to 1,986,000 to support the NEC statement opposing continued membership.[48]

When the NEC next assembled on May 1st, Ron Hayward, the General Secretary, made it plain that there would be no anti-Market campaign. He explained that there was no money to spare and some pro-Market trade unions had indicated that they would take it ill if their affiliation fees were applied to anti-Market propaganda.[49] He also stated that "a large number of constituency parties and Transport House staff, together with most of the regional organisers, had expressed dismay at the divisive situation."[50] As General Secretary he did not want to do anything that would tear the party to pieces.

No one seems to know exactly what happened between April 26th and May 1st to neutralize the party organization after the anti-Europe motion was adopted by the NEC. Some spoke of heavy pressure on the party from Downing Street. Some even suggest that a secret agreement was reached between the party leadership and leftist anti-Market leaders, Tony Benn and Ian Mikardo, in order to present a united Labour Party to the public. Whatever means were used, following the abortive Special Conference on April 26th, Butler and Kitzinger argue, "everyone professed himself satisfied: each side had been reassured that the other would not over-reach itself."[51] The Labour Party, by way of official statements, would oppose continued membership in the EEC, but would not initiate a campaign for withdrawal throughout the country.

The press chose to interpret the affair as a triumph for the pro-Marketeers. Thus, many of the anti-Marketeers felt the Conference had a negative effect. They thought that the politicking before and after the Conference had helped to contribute to the neutralizing of local Labour parties.[52] It took the dissenting ministers awhile to realize that it would be impossible for them to oppose entry through the Labour Party. They probably could have pushed the Special Executive on May 1st to begin a mobilizing campaign, but they soon saw that such a campaign would be counter-productive. "The

party's resources were limited and the loyalties of its staff and its supporters were divided. Any attempt to run a 'No' campaign like a Labour Party general election campaign was doomed to failure."[53] Therefore, during the referendum campaign, some of the ministers worked quietly and independently. Others worked through the National Referendum Committee (NRC). They faced a number of problems. Butler and Kitzinger explain, "They did not all think alike. They were in greater or lesser degree inhibited by the fact that Harold Wilson would still be presiding over the cabinet after the referendum. They were reluctant to be accused of personal attacks or boat-rocking."[54] The main brunt of the campaign was borne by Peter Shore and Tony Benn. On the whole, the anti-Market ministers did not try to take over NRC activities. They more of less 'did their own thing'. They did make speeches and attend press conferences when requested. The activites of what was left of the official anti-referendum campaign were not very closely coordinated, and therefore the campaign itself cannot be considered a product of the efforts of its leading actors.[55]

Conclusion

On June 5th 1975, 64.5% of the electorate turned out to vote. The overwhelming majority of voters, 17,378,581, said "Yes" to Britain's remaining in the EEC. Only 8,470,073 voted in favor of withdrawal.[56] All of the evidence supports the conclusion that, although other factors played a role, the decision to hold a referendum was made by Labour Party leaders in order to avoid a vote on the issue that would have split the party wide open. Butler and Kitzinger concluded, "When the referendum was over, the issue ceased to divide the country. The decision to stay in the EEC was accepted; and to that extent, the device fulfilled precisely the purpose it had been assigned."[57]

Notes for Chapter III

[1] Uwe Kitzinger, Diplomacy and Persuasion: How Britain Joined the Common Market (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 400.

[2] Anthony King, Britain Says Yes (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977), 33-34.

[3] Ibid., 33-34.

[4] Ibid., 34.

[5] Ibid., 35.

[6] Ibid., 35.

[7] Ibid., 35.

[8] Ibid., 37.

[9] Ibid., 40.

[10] Kitzinger, Diplomacy and Persuasion, 293.

[11] Ibid., 278.

[12] Ibid., 278.

[13] Ibid., 280.

[14] Harold Wilson, The Labour Government 1964-1970: A Personal Record (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), 300.

[15] Kitzinger, Diplomacy and Persuasion, 284.

[16] Ibid., 282.

[17] Ibid., 283.

[18] Ibid., 281.

[19] Ibid., 295.

[20] Ibid., 296.

[21] Wilson, The Labour Government 1964-1970, 299.

[22] Membership of the European Communities, Cmnd. 3269 (May 1967), 3.

[23] Harold Wilson, The Labour Party Report of the Special Conference to the Common Market, Westminster, 1971 (London: Labour Party, 1971), 354-355.

[24] Ibid., 355.

[25] Ibid., 355-356.

[26] Kitzinger, Diplomacy and Persuasion, 297.

[27] King, Britain Says Yes, 42.

[28] Ibid., 42.

[29] Ibid., 45.

[30] Ibid., 45.

[31] Ibid., 47.

[32] Ibid., 47-48.

[33] Harold Wilson, The Labour Party Report of the Special Conference on the Common Market, 360.

[34] King, Britain Says Yes, 52.

[35] Ibid., 55.

[36] Ibid., 57.

[37] Ibid., 58.

[38] Ibid., 58-59.

[39] Ibid., 59.

[40] Ibid., 61.

[41] Ibid., 63.

[42] Ibid., 65.

[43] Ibid., 67.

[44] Ibid., 69.

[45] David E. Butler and Uwe Kitzinger, The 1975 Referendum (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1976), 111.

[46] Ibid., 111.

[47] Ibid., 112.

[48] Ibid., 112.

[49] Ibid., 113.

[50] Ibid., 114.

[51] Ibid., 114.

[52] Ibid., 114.

[53] Ibid., 114.

[54] Ibid., 114.

[55] Ibid., 115.

[56] Ibid., 264.

[57] Ibid., 279.

CONCLUSION

The traditional ideological split between left and right in the Labour Party developed as a result of the different views and ideas among members of the party of what it meant to be a "Socialist." Although the majority of Labour members could agree on such admirable and lofty goals as full employment, social and economic equality, and the elimination of poverty, few could agree on how to achieve them. As different individual priorities emerged, members began to fight it out in the arenas of the media and the annual conference.

Throughout this study, the fact that has continually resurfaced is that most of Labour's problems resulted from the absence of a well-defined ideology . Nowhere was this more evident than in the debates that took place within the party over entry into the European Community (EC). Many important economic arguments were put forth concerning such "Socialist" objectives as the creation of jobs, economic controls, and breaking down barriers to trade, but it was primarily ideological arguments that prevailed on the EEC isuue, arguments provoked in large part by the absence of a consensus on Socialism itself.

Socialist goals often came into direct conflict during debates on Common Market entry, mainly due to the party's ideological vagueness. For example, some ideologues claimed that the true "Socialist" must at all times be an "internationalist," and that therefore the Labour Party should take Britain into the EEC where she could join her "Socialist" allies in the fight for social and economic equality. Other ideologues argued that because "Socialism" advocates government control, going into a Europe, where Britain would lose her sovereignty to a higher European authority, should be considered "anti-Socialist." As the debates intensified they became reminiscent of past arguments

over such foreign policy decisions as unilateral disarmament and facism in Spain when the meaning of Socialism was also questioned. There was, however, a difference that appeared in the debate over the issue of EEC entry. Although the debates on past foreign policy issues had previously reflected a traditional ideological left-right division, the split that occurred in the party over the Common Market question was not so clear-cut. The ideologues fought on both sides, giving weight to the argument that not only was there a split between left and right, but also there was no consensus among Labour's left on what the party's official stance should be on the issue. This inherent problem of confusion and dissent can be traced back to Labour's ideological vacuity.

In the end, Harold Wilson decided that a national referendum would be the best solution to the problem of party unity because not only would it settle the issue of entry once and for all, it would also make the Labour Party appear more democratic. From this evidence, it can be concluded that the split that developed in the Labour Party over the question of Britain's entry into the EEC is not distinctly representative of the traditional ideological split within the party.

As 1992 approaches, it will be interesting to see how the party reacts to being a member of the Single Market, particularly if Labour assumes power. Recent party statements and policy reports have called for Labour to "meet the challenge and make the change" in Europe in the 1990's. The party proposes to focus on overcoming the barriers which divide East and West and to move towards a new relationship which will bring together the whole of Europe. It also proposes to give a strong priority to social and regional concerns and to the promotion of actions by the EC to deal with the problems in the Third World. Most importantly, the party wishes to concentrate on three EEC issues in the near future: enlargement of the Community, trans-European political co-

operation, and the development of accountable, more democratic European Community institutions (i.e. Council of Ministers, European Parliament). To the Labour Party of the 1990's, this is the socialist vision of the European Community.

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