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The British Labour Party (1906-1994)

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To my dear parents

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Abstract

L'apparition du Parti travailliste britannique au début du 20ème siècle a été le résultat d'une longue tradition de la politique de la classe ouvrière. Au cours des premières années de son existence, Le Parti n'a pas pu obtenir une large adhésion à l'échelle du pays, mais il a continué à survivre jusqu'au déclenchement de la Première Guerre mondiale en 1914. Après la fin de cette guerre, il a adopté sa constitution qui l'a engagée au socialisme et l'a rendue plus indépendant des libéraux. L'année 1922 a vu l'apparition du Parti travailliste comme la principale opposition aux conservateurs. Il a également eu plusieurs passages dans le gouvernement britannique en 1924, 1929-1931, 1945-1951, 1964-170 et 1974-1979. Néanmoins, le Labour (le Parti) a aussi connu plusieurs défaites électorales aggravées par l'effondrement de ses fortunes électorales tout au long des années 1930, 1950, 1980 et au début des années 1990. Au fur et à mesure de l'évolution du Parti travailliste, de nombreuses évolutions ont eu lieu en ce qui concerne ses mécanismes. Ces développements internes ont été la réponse à plusieurs événements externes qui ont à leur tour influencé les électeurs et leurs opinions sur la politique. De même, cette influence a exigé un changement de l'image du Parti, sa structure et ses politiques. De 1906 à 1994, Le Labour a progressivement passé d'un parti radicale de gauche à parti centriste en Grande-Bretagne.

ABSTRACT

The emergence of the British Labour Party in the turn of the twentieth century was the result of a long tradition of working class politics. During its early years, Labour was unable to secure a nation-wide membership, but it continued to survive to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. After the War, it adopted its constitution which committed it to socialism and made it more independent from the Liberals. The year 1922 witnessed the emergence of Labour as the main opposition Party to the Conservatives. It had also several stints in government in 1924, 1929-1931, 1945-1951, 1964-1970 and 1974-1979. Nevertheless, the Party went through many electoral defeats compounded with a collapse in its electoral fortunes throughout the 1930s, 1950s 1980s and early 1990s. As the Labour Party evolved, a lot of developments took place with regard to its machinery. These internal developments were fostered in response to many external events which in turn had affected the voters' opinions on politics. In the same respect, that influence entails a change in the Party's image, structure and policies. From 1906 to 1994, Labour had gradually moved from being a radical Left Party in Britain into being a centrist one.

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List of Abbreviations

A. E. S.	Alternative Economic Strategy
B.I.B.	British Investment Bank
CGs	Constituency General Committees
C.L.P.	Constituency Labour Parties
E.E.C.	European Economic Community
E.R.M.	European Exchange Rate Mechanism
G.L.C.	Greater London Council
I. L. P.	Independent Labour Party
I.M.F.	International Monetary Fund
I.R.A.	Irish Republican Army
I. W. C.	Institute of Workers Control
L.C.C.	Labour Coordinating Committee
L. R. C.	Labour Representative Committee
N.A.T.O.	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
N.E.B.	National Enterprise Board
N.E.C.	National Executive Committee
N.P.F.	National Policy Forum
N.U.M.	National Union of Mineworkers
N.U.P.E.	National Union of Public Employees
OMOV	One Member, One Vote
P.L.P.	Parliamentary Labour Party
P.R.G.	Policy Review Group
S. D. F.	Socialist Democratic Federation
S.D.P.	Social Democratic Party
S.N.P.	Scottish National Party

T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
U.S.S.R.	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
V.A.T.	Value Added Tax

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Introduction

In most countries, political parties exist. They are organized groups with the aim of gaining and exerting power within the society in which they operate. They take responsibility for law and order, economic and social policies. In liberal democracy, this means organizing into groupings to win mass support in the elections by securing people's votes. Each political party has its own ideology, a set of ideas at the basis of the party's political and economic system. This ideology is proper for the party and differentiates it from others.

Antonio Gramsci claimed that "to write the history of a party is to write the general history of a country from a monographic point of view." Hence, studying the history of the British Labour Party from 1906 to 1994- via discussing economic, social and cultural policies whether in office or in opposition, analyzing its structure and interpreting its electoral performance throughout the twentieth century- can simply turn into a historical analysis of British politics and society during that century. However, this purpose cannot be obtained without reference to the context from which the Labour Party had evolved and developed later. Similarly, the aim of examining the Party's electoral performance cannot be achieved and understood without considering the strategies and internal life of the Party.

In Britain, the two and the only long-established political parties were the Conservative and the Liberal parties before 1906. These two were mainly class-based parties, the Conservatives representing the landed interests and the Liberals representing urban industrialists. They adopted capitalism as the basis for their principles. However, within this system, the interests of the working-class seemed to be completely ignored. The Conservatives and the Liberals refused to respond to the masses' aspirations. Amid this ignorance and the bad living and working conditions that the workers endured, the working class members became aware of the need for a radical change. This awareness had culminated in the rise of political consciousness among the masses. With the emergence of socialism in the eighteenth century as a new ideology that promotes social justice, cooperation, progress, public ownership of the means of production and distribution, and the extension of the franchise to the working-class, the trade union movement began to see the necessity of

presenting the working-class voters by working-class MPs through establishing a political party. This, in turn, gave birth to the Labour Party, in 1900, which adopted its official name in 1906.

So, unlike the other British political parties, Labour appeared first as a political movement which originated outside Parliament. Its origins in the nineteenth century involved the coming together of diverse groups who sought workers' representation in Parliament independently of the Liberals. By studying the history of the Labour Party, this research work is an attempt to shed light on the political change that the Party had undergone from its inception to the arrival of J. Smith at the leadership. This political change encompasses ideological, constitutional, strategic, organizational and policy reforms that Labour leaders had led to make the Party more attractive to the electorate. For most of its history, however, the Labour Party had been dominated by two opposing tendencies; the Right and the Left wings. Each tendency had tried to drive the Party to its extreme. The Right sought to introduce new forms and ideas to the Party's apparatus to adjust it to the changing national and international conditions, whereas the Left was against any political change and tried to stick to its old socialist beliefs enumerated in the Party's constitution. The two groups also disagreed on the means to achieve the socialist goals. This resulted in an internal dispute that had distracted the Party for a long time, most particular for the period from 1951 to 1983 with special reference to the 1970s and early 1980s when the Left wing of the Labour Party pushed for a stronger role.

This paper enquires into the evolution of the Labour Party machinery from 1906 to 1994, and the difficulties the Party encountered in trying to meet its electoral needs. It also attempts to provide an answer to the following question: to what extent did the existence of two antagonistic views within the Party undermine its electoral performance? The scope of the study, however, does not extend to a consideration of the era of Tony Blair because of lack of time.

This memoire will contain three chapters. The introductory chapter tries to describe how the Labour Party came into existence. The origins of the Labour Party trace back to the rise of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and its impacts on the British society, particularly the working-class during the nineteenth century. This involves dealing with the formation of the trade unions and the emergence of socialist associations, which led eventually to the birth of the Labour Party. The chapter also explores the development of the party from being a

trade union party into gradually being a second party in the British political system (1906-1951).

The second chapter explores the decline in Labour's popularity after 1951 and the attempt of H. Wilson to 'modernize' the Party and repealing Clause IV from the constitution of the Party. The internal disagreements between the Party members and Labour's leftward move especially under Michael Foot's leadership are highlighted here in this chapter.

The last chapter will focus on the political change of the Labour Party under N. Kinnock and J. Smith. This entails dealing with the different ideological and organizational changes that led to the gradual improvement of Labour's electoral fortunes in the 1980s and 1990s. This part of the work also covers the impact of Thatcherism on Labour.

This research paper is based on official documents, Official Parliamentary Papers, which provide facts and statistics about the Labour Party, and secondary resources including books, articles, encyclopedias and dictionaries.

CHAPTER ONE:

The Evolution of the Labour Party to 1951

When the Labour Party was formed in 1900 as the Labour Representation Committee, it began as a loose federation that combined a number of trade unions and several socialist organizations for the purpose of increasing working class representation in Parliament in an attempt to improve their living and working conditions. This chapter contains three sections. The first one refers to the origins of the Labour Party dating back to the late eighteenth century. Two major events during the period under review were the end of the First World War, which marked a turning point in the history of the Party as it adopted a new constitution which made it more independent of the Liberals, and the 1922 election when Labour became the main opposition Party in Britain. These events are highlighted in the second section of this chapter, while the third part covers the period of time from 1945 to 1951 when Labour was in office under the leadership of Clement Attlee. Nevertheless, the emergence of Labour was not all of a sudden, but it was the product of evolutionary factors.

I.1. Factors Leading to the Emergence of the Labour Party:

The Industrial Revolution in Britain created the factory system, which was largely responsible for the rise of the modern city. Large numbers of workers were brought together in one place and had suffered great injustices from their employers, who were encouraged by the *laissez-faire* system in that it allowed them freedom in dealing with their employees. The new conditions led to the emergence of new ideas among the workers, who began to feel a sense of unity and common interests. Consequently, nineteenth century Britain was characterized by major changes in the political field. In the last part of the century, as the trade unions had already developed, leaders of the working class started to form different socialist organizations aiming at advancing their rights. It is in these struggles that the Labour Party had its roots.

I.1.1. The Impact of the Industrial Revolution on the Working Class:

One of the important events in British history is the Industrial Revolution that covers roughly the period between 1760 and 1850. It transformed the country from being largely an agricultural nation, depending on manual labour, into an industrial one through

machine-based manufacturing.[1] The change was the result of the technological advances and the development of the steam-powered machinery that led eventually to vast changes in different fields such as agriculture, transport and mining. Its impact on society was considerable.[2]

During this era, different industries were developed besides other new ones which were brought into existence. Thus, life for the mass of the people became easier. However, this was not the case for the whole population in Britain. Although, the Industrial Revolution carried many advantages, its changes had some bad impacts on other sections of the society, mainly the workers for whom life became a hard struggle. New factories were set up, and provided a source of employment for ordinary people who were willing to work there. Nevertheless, the miserable working conditions and the long hours of work with low wages and irregular payment characterized the effects of the Industrial Revolution.

One main social effect of the Industrial Revolution was the new phenomenon of child labour. Children were forced to work in the coal mines and textile factories for 12-16 hours per day for their work was exceptionally valuable to factory owners.[3] Women also were sent out to work, because they represented cheap labour force for many employers. Accidents in factories with children and female workers were regular. As a result, the working class often associated the Industrial Revolution with poverty and misery.

Indeed, with the development of industrialization the new conditions brought new ideas and witnessed great changes in the political climate. Under the doctrine of *laissez-faire,* which became prevalent in the late eighteenth century, employers and industrialists were allowed freedom in controlling their workers without restrictions. The exploitation of workers was usually most intensive in the smaller factories where the owners were more haunted by the desire to accumulate capital.[4] Under the capitalist system employment and wages were also controlled by the law of supply and demand. This aggravated the situation of the workers as their working and living conditions became worse. Therefore, the only way for the workers to defend their rights and protect their interests against the employers was by uniting together and forming trade unions. The latter were organizations of wage earners of any activity that were set up to undertake collective bargaining with employers to improve the working conditions and rates of pay of their members. These combinations were opposed by

[1] D. McDowall, An Illustrated History of Britain, Great Britain, Longman, 1989, p. 121.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 123.
[3] F. Beddall, A History of Britain, England, Pearson Education Limited, 2006, p. 26.
[4] J. H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century, England, Penguin Books, 1963, p. 150.

employers who regarded them as attacks on property and threats to their position. This hostility on the part of the employers presented a great obstacle in the development of trade unionism. The British government at that time supported the employers because ministers in most cases knew little about the lives and feelings of workers, and the government's only answer for unemployment and poverty was the workhouse.[1] It had also regarded the trade unions with increasing alarm and opposed their formation for it feared that they would become centres of political agitation. Hence, the 1799 and 1800 Combination Acts were passed to outlaw trade unionism in Britain. Under these laws, workmen could be imprisoned for joining together to claim for improving working conditions or wages. The ban lasted till the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and any attempt by the workers to demand better status was punishable.

Meanwhile, the changes of the Industrial Revolution and the restrictions imposed by the government put many pressures on the working class people. These pressures, besides the fact that workers were not allowed to have access to Parliament to help advance their interests, had pushed the workers to react in different ways. Some workers resorted to violence and machine breaking through organizing underground movements. The worst of these outbursts was Luddism, which took place in 1811 in the Midlands and the North. Workers began to revolt when employers started to cut wages and increase frame rents as food prices went up. They broke into factories and destroyed machines and mills. However, the government, which declared frame-breaking as a capital offence, intervened to end this revolt by arrest and military action in 1812. Other workers found riots and strikes as another way to protest against their conditions. An example of that is the Peterloo Massacre of 1819. In an attempt to disperse a public meeting gathering to demand better working conditions and universal suffrage, the army killed eleven of the demonstrators and the event became known by this name.[2]

Unrest continued and workers continued to express their discontent in other sectors of Britain. Such riots and uprising provided the background for political action and paved the way for the members of the working class to press their demands for reforms.

[1] *Ibid*., p. 151.
[2] H. Martin, Britain since 1700, London, Longman Group LTD, 1968, p. 204.

I.1.2. The Rise of Working Class Political Consciousness:

As the industrialization of Britain extended, its national wealth increased. In spite of this, the years following 1815 proved to be more difficult for the workers and their poor social conditions went largely ignored by the ruling class. The working class people were still regarded as merely means of production and not as individuals with rights and claims. As a result, political consciousness rose among the working class and this period was a period of political unrest in the industrial areas.

Until 1832, workers and new middle classmen had been excluded from Parliament. This was an obstacle which prevented the workers from reforming their social conditions in Britain. For a long time, getting representation in British Parliament was limited to people who owned property worth forty shillings.[1] Moreover, the Tories who had been governing the country since 1815 were totally opposed to any reform of Parliament. However, unemployment and discontent on the part of middle class and working class reformers, stemming from the economic depression of 1829 and fearing that this would lead to revolutionary outbreaks, forced the Tories who had initially opposed the reform to give way. In 1832, the middle class got the vote, but no vote was granted to the working class.

The 1832 Reform Act did not satisfy the working class radicals. Workingmen, whose support had helped to compel Parliament into passing the Act, were ignored. Consequently, they turned to politics to further the cause of parliamentary reform in order to solve their problems. One of the political movements that rose at that time was the Chartist movement. It was the first large scale organised working class movement that called for political equality and social justice. Its demands were enumerated in a Charter written in 1838 by William Lovett. The latter was the secretary of the London Working Men's Association that was formed in 1836 with the aim of improving the economic conditions of the workers especially after the run of bad harvests. At a national convention of workingmen's organizations in August 1838, the Chartists agreed to adopt the Charter as its official paper. "Annual Parliaments, the vote for all men, equal electoral districts, removal of the property qualification for MPs, the secret ballot and payment of MPs" were the points included in the Chartist programme that generally called for changes in the parliamentary system.[2] Although it was not a revolutionary movement, Chartism was a popular one among the working classes

[1] D. McDowall, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
[2] M. Bruce, The Coming of the Welfare State, Great Britain, B. T. Batsford LTD, 1968, p. 83.

particularly in Northern England where the worst evils of industrialization occurred. Different groups of workers were engaged in this movement representing different interests. Improving the working conditions was the main concern of the factory workers. Handloom weavers, however, were struggling to overcome unemployment, whereas agricultural workers were fighting to get rid of poverty. The working classes, in addition, were angry at the imposition of the workhouse system under the New Poor Law of 1834. Therefore, the main aim of Chartism was to achieve a system of government responsive to the needs of the working people, because it was argued that workers could not expect justice until the House of Commons represented their interests.[1]

As a movement of general protest, Chartism had changed and developed through the course of time. In February 1839, the Chartist convention met in London. The attendants delivered their first petition to Parliament which was rejected by the House of Commons in July of the same year. Following this, a Chartist rising took place in Newport in November ending in a confrontation between the Chartists and the soldiers. Consequently, most of the movement's leaders were arrested. Despite this, Chartism continued to exist throughout the economic crisis in 1841. In 1842, another petition with over 3,000,000 signatures was rejected by the Commons.[2] As a result, people in the industrial areas rioted and struck. The years 1846, 1847 and 1848 saw bad harvests, high prices and a commercial crisis that hit the industry and it was in this period that Chartism was most active. After a great demonstration in London, a third Chartist petition was presented in 1848, but it was again rejected.

This was the end of Chartism as a mass movement. It lost its strength for many reasons. One among these was the poor leadership and splits in the body of the movement over its aims. The lack of support on the part of the middle class and MPs was also an obstacle in front of the movement's progress. Besides, the late 1840s witnessed improving conditions for the working class, which meant less social discontent and bitterness. Though it failed to realize its goals, the Chartist movement was generally diverse and orderly and at the basis of generating some ideas that were later essential to the process of parliamentary reform.

After 1850, Britain overcame its economic crisis and entered a period of prosperity. Most people enjoyed better conditions and thus the popular demand for parliamentary reform became a dead issue in the country. Generally speaking, no serious attempt towards reform was made until 1866. That year was the end of the economic boom and the beginning of

[1] J. Plowright, The Routledge Dictionary of Modern British History, Great Britain, Routledge, 2006, p. 62.
[2] H., Martin, *op. cit.*, pp.214-15.

another financial crisis that led to the collapse of important banks in England. This provided a good opportunity for the National Reform League, formed in 1864 to seek universal male suffrage, and reinforce its demands. The organization succeeded in agitating the popular support for reform. This in turn culminated in serious disturbances that caused widespread consternation, including the Hyde Park Riots in London in 1867 when demonstrators for reform were prevented from meeting in the Park. Meanwhile, the politicians had taken over the initiative to discuss how to settle the problem. Attempting to increase its popularity, the Conservative Government led by Lord Derby and Benjamin Disraeli came out in 1867 with a Reform Act that gave the vote to all borough householders. For the first time, workingmen in the industrial districts had the right to vote. Despite this, agricultural labourers were still disenfranchised. The deficiency of the Second Reform Act was corrected by the third Reform Act of 1884, which extended the term of the franchise to householders of the countryside and divided the country into constituencies equal in size. Eventually, the pressures imposed first by the Chartists and then by the workers to gain their democratic rights were contained.

The extension of the franchise granted workers the right to vote, but other rights such as the right to strike still were not permitted. The second half of the nineteenth century saw more labour organizations claiming for their rights and enabling them to have their autonomy. During this period, the trade unions had made great progress.

In 1851, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers was formed as the first of New Model Unionism. The latter was a merged union for skilled men organised at a national level. The aim of this union was to gain recognition for the status of its members and legal protection. This meant that the unions, or more specifically the workers, became more conscious that there was a need for a national organization, which would unite them and present their common interests. Effectively, in 1868 thirty-four delegates representing 118.000 trade unionists met in Manchester and agreed that annual meetings should be held for the purpose of developing class solidarity among the workers and securing a say in the political matters that concerned labour as a whole.[1] This body was established under the name of the Trades Union Congress (T. U. C) and was accepted as the mouthpiece of trade unionism that would take the lead in applying political pressure.

Responding to the T. U. C. activities, William Gladstone's Liberal Government enacted two acts, in 1871, in favour of the trade unions which became more powerful to express their grievances. Under the Trade Union Act and Criminal Law Amendment Act, the

[1]H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, Great Britain, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 4.

trade unions were made legal and were given the right to protect their funds, but at the same time, they were prevented from picketing. Following this, the agricultural labourers and the railwaymen organised themselves to form their own unions. Moreover, in 1875 the Conservative Government gave the trade unions the legal protection they needed through two acts which allowed peaceful picketing and did not regard the breach of contract as a criminal offence.

Coinciding with the trade depression that began in the late 1870s, the membership of the unions represented in the T. U. C. collapsed dramatically.[1] However, starting from 1888 mass new unionism of unskilled workers began to be founded. This was a transitional phase during which the T. U. C. was transformed from a body that had represented respectable skilled workingmen seeking to improve their status in the economy, to an organization acting for the benefit of the whole working class. An example of this kind of unions was the Gas workers and General Labourer Union that was formed in 1889. As the boundaries of trade unionism widened, the T. U. C. became stronger and in a position that allowed it to emphasize its demands. The T. U. C. expressed its support for the dockers when they held a strike in 1889 to protest against the low wages and the long working hours. Consequently, the strikers succeeded in getting their claims (working for eight hours per day) fulfilled and this was considered a great victory for them.

In fact, it was the need for social change that enhanced the rise of political consciousness among the working class men. The formation of the trade unions was a good example that showed how workers became aware that their rights could be achieved only by getting representation in Parliament. To this end, the leading trade unions set up some national bodies like the Labour Representation League in 1869 and the Labour Electoral Association in 1889, whereby they might secure entry into Parliament for labour spokesmen, but neither body obtained the substantial backing of the movement.[2] The demand for the parliamentary representation of the organized working class, which had been voiced since the 1860s, grew louder as the number of trade unions recruited in the T. U. C. increased rapidly.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.
[2] G. Phillips, The Rise of the Labour Party 1893-1931, London, Routledge, 1992, p. 4.
[3] M. Davis, Comrade or Brother? A History of the British Labour Movement (1789-1951), London, Pluto Press, Second Edition, 2009, 115.

I.1.3. The Birth of the Labour Party:

The creation of the Labour Party was the outcome of a long nineteenth-century tradition of working-class politics that had repeatedly struggled to defend the workers' rights and improve their living conditions through organized trade unions and socialist societies. The idea of common class interest dominated the organized working class throughout the last quarter of that century.

The widening of the franchise in 1867 and 1884 to city and countryside workers was expected to lead to great changes in government since workingmen constituted a majority of the electorate. However, labour was not yet represented in Parliament let alone being allowed to form an effective party acting in their name and interest. Even the few working people who stood in the 1868 election were heavily defeated at the polls.[1] Parliament remained dominated by the existing political groups; the Conservatives and the Liberals. Despite the lack of financial backings and support, attempts were made later by some workers to put up in the parliamentary election working class candidates, however they were unsuccessful. Their failures were also due to the unwillingness of the Whigs and the middle class men to be represented by working men. Increasingly, activists in the trade union movement became convinced and more interested to move to the political field to defend their interests and to act on behalf of the whole social class. Consequently, the unions accepted political dependence on the Liberals. In 1874, the Liberal Party endorsed some trade union sponsored candidates; Alexander MacDonald and Thomas Burst, both of whom were miners. Later they were joined by other workers and were all known as Liberal-Labour or Lib-Labs. These MPs were expected to give loyal support to the Liberal causes and administrations.[2] In the same respect, they and the union movement from which they sprang believed clearly and consciously that the interests of the working men could be advanced within the Liberal Party. This was how the battles of trade unions became political.

As far as the economy was concerned, considerable change took place in the course of the 1880s. The main point was the 1873 economic depression, the repercussions of which lasted till the end of the nineteenth century. The *laissez-faire* capitalism, that had permitted a steady increase of wealth to the country, was put into question as the industrial profits were reduced due to foreign competition. Economic prosperity became a thing of the past, and thus poverty prevailed. Henceforth, this period brought about widespread unemployment and great

[1] G. Phillips, *op.cit*., p. 2.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 5.

distress. The existence of bad living and working conditions could no longer be ignored despite the fact that it was not worse compared to the earlier times. This resulted in the fall of the popularity of capitalism.

Influenced by the impacts of the "Great Depression", the period was marked by a transformation in the economic thought. There was an advance towards socialism; the doctrine that promotes more state influence, social justice and cooperative progress in order to have a self-sufficient community. One of the most important ancestors of socialism in Great Britain and often considered as its pioneer was Robert Owen.[1] The latter was the owner of the New Lanark cotton mills who believed that labour was at the basis of making good profits, and therefore providing better working conditions, wages and shorter hours would be productive. He tried to apply this into his industry in the 1820s and 1830s. Although his ideas did not emphasize public ownership of the means of production, they paved the way for the growth of socialism in the following decades. Indeed, the socialist revival in the 1880s came after realizing the need for labour to break up of the Liberal Party in favour of founding a new independent party, based on collectivism and which would secure direct parliamentary representation of labour.

In order to address the social problems at home, various socialist organizations were established. One of these was the Socialist Democratic Federation (S. D. F.), founded in 1881 by H. M. Hyndman who was influenced by the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.[2] K. Marx and F. Engels held the view that communism based on social equality would occur through revolution of the working classes against the controlling classes. The S. D. F. succeeded in exerting an influence on many young artisans in London due to its socialist programme, which included among other points, attention to labour interests and the common ownership of land.[3] Among them were two members of the Amalgamated Engineers; Tom Mann and John Burns. In his pamphlet, T. Mann appealed for the trade unions to adopt another policy in order to help defend the workers' interests. He stated:

> **To trade unionists, I desired to make a special appeal. How long, how long will you be content with the present half-hearted policy of your unions?... None of the important societies have any policy other than endeavouring to keep wages from falling... in fact the average unionist of today is a man**

[1] "Socialisme." Encyclopédie Encarta, Microsoft with Encarta, 2009, (DVD).
[2] M. Davis, *op. cit.,* p. 66.
[3] H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

with a fossilized intellect, either hopelessly apathetic, or supporting a policy that plays directly into the hands of capitalist exploiter.[1]

More important was H. H. Champion, a member who in 1888 launched a weekly paper; the Labour Elector, to advocate a policy of forming an independent labour party.

The S. D. F. played a prominent role in the unemployment riots in London in the years 1886 and 1887, but this was doomed to failure when many of its members including Hyndman were arrested. In the 1890s, Mann and Burns with other trade unionists left the organization for they felt ignored. This reduced the S. D. F. to a small group. Nevertheless, it was considered as the first step in independent class politics and class struggle to form a political party proper to represent labour.

Another organization that had an important part in spreading and developing the socialist ideas and also in paving the way later to the establishment of the Labour Party was the Fabian Society. It was formed in London in 1884 under the leadership of Frank Padmore. According to the view of its future secretary Edward R. Pease, the Fabian Society was set up against the revolutionary views expressed by the S. D. F.[2] Instead, it was for socialist change which could be attained through constitutional means. Immediately upon its conception, it began to attract many prominent middle class and intellectual figures like G. B. Shaw, Sidney Webb, Sydney Olivier, Annie Besant, and Ramsay MacDonald. They all aimed at setting up a democratic socialist state in Britain by trying to convince people and educating them along socialist lines by means of meetings, lectures, publishing books and pamphlets. Therefore, under their influence, the Fabian Society developed a distinctive policy of its own.[3]

The emergence of such socialist societies in Britain encouraged the working class struggle to be politically independent because the socialists had become essential to their vitality.[4] Indeed, because of the similarity of interests, trade unionists began to turn against liberal employers, particularly in the industrial centers, in the struggle for a living wage and improved rights and working conditions. In addition, the senior-councils of the Liberal Party proved unresponsive to the trade union movement's growing need for legal protection in the face of a hostile judiciary.[5] Moreover, many voters and Liberals believed that working men did not fit to be MPs. The weakness of the Liberal Party, stemming from the internal

[1] H.Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, Great Britain, Penguin, Books LTD, 1963, p. 84.
[2] H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 37.
[4] G. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[5] D., Coates, The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 8.

dissention after Gladstone's retirement as Prime Minister in 1894, was another reason for the unions not to depend on the Liberals to push forward labour interests. Accordingly, the political alliance between the trade unions and the Liberal Party that had begun to erode, broke down eventually. The unions drifted towards creating an independent working class political party, which sought "the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange."[1] On the top of these groups of men was Keir Hardie, a miners' leader who was determined to maintain his independence as a representative of the working class. He became an MP in 1892 and one year later he established with others the Independent Labour Party (I. L. P.). Socialists and trade unionists joined together aiming, in the first place, at forming a distinct class party which would be independent of the Liberal and the Conservative parties and which would be able to support its candidates at parliamentary and local elections. The I. L. P. did not have a large membership and was defeated in the 1895 general election. K. Hardie concluded that it would be necessary to join other left-wing groups (T. U. C. and the Fabians) in order to secure the majority of votes in the future parliamentary elections.

Eventually, this was put into practice on 27th February 1900 when a special conference of all representative groups of the labour movement (the I. L. P., the S. D. F., the Fabian Society, trade union representatives) met in London' s Memorial Hall to form a Labour Representative Committee (L. R. C.) with the aim of establishing:

> **A distinct labour group in Parliament who shall have their own whips and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to cooperate with any party which for the time being may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of Labour…**[2]

This committee was composed of two members from the I. L. P., two from the S. D. F., one member of the Fabian Society and several trade unionists. In the election of that year, the L. R. C. put up fifteen candidates and only two of them were elected to the House of Commons. Regarding its objectives, acting on labour's behalf, the Committee's membership raised to 861,000 by 1903.[3] In the 1906 general election, the L. R. C. put forward 50 candidates among whom 29 members were elected as MPs. The same year the L. R. C. was renamed the Labour Party.

This was how the Labour Party came into existence by establishing itself as the political voice of the working-class. Trade unions had played an important part first in leading

[1] G. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[2] H. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
[3] H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

the labour movement and determining its political objectives, and second in the formation of the Labour Party by sponsoring it. The Party had no well-defined programme and no 'officially accepted socialist commitment', but rather it represented the parliamentary expression of trade union aspirations to improve their legal position within capitalism and to protect and advance the immediate and tangible interests of the working class. These interests were also determined by the trade union leadership because for most of the Party's members socialist causes were not of great urgency.

I.2. The Labour Party: from Consolidation to Forming Parliamentary Majority:

As a new British political party, the Labour Party evolved and consolidated due to its constitution that strengthened its position and enabled it to hold office in the second decade of the twentieth century. After the adoption of the 1918 Party programme, Labour leadership hoped to gain a wider following from other classes instead of being simply a vehicle of working class interests. The Party had secured recognition as a potential party of government after the end of the First World War.

II.2.1. The Socialist Commitment and the Surge to Second Party Status 1906-1922:

From its beginnings, the Labour Party was a coalition that included various groups, such as trade unions and reformers with special concerns, each component with its distinctive goals. Its leaders were more committed to hold that coalition together, and at the same time trying to attract other groups to its support. With this purpose in view, Labour wanted to establish its own political identity in order to defend its own causes and policies.

However, during those days the Party was upset by many problems, among which was the lack of the unifying influence of a leader, particularly when there were differences of opinion in Parliament. Divisions also between members of the Party often happened over some issues such as education and women suffrage. Broadly speaking, the distinctive aims of the coalition centered on the organizational interests of unions. To quote S. H. Beer, union leaders regarded the Party as "primarily a body representing the interests of organized labour-a pressure group on the floor of the House of Commons rather than a national political

party with aspirations of governing the country."[1] Therefore, it was more important for the Party to advance the interests of the working class. These priorities laid in seeking better legal protection and immediate improvements in their conditions of life and employment. The coalition also consisted of a minority of socialists, especially from the I.L.P., which occupied positions of power in it and often urged the Party to adopt a programme. The S. D. F, on its part, also wanted the new party to commit itself to a Marxist programme, but its demands were neglected. During its first decade and a half, the Party avoided committing itself to socialism, for its MPs or conference delegates did not regard socialist causes of great urgency, and accepted the domination of trade union politics under the control of the Parliamentary Committee of the T. U. C.

As a new political Party, the Labour Party was very much an outsider in the elections of 1906 and 1910. At that time, the Party still could not dissociate itself from the Liberals and Labour leaders worked closely with the 1904-14 Liberal Governments. To avoid the electoral defeat, the L. R. C. signed in 1903 with the Liberals a secret electoral pact, which stated that Liberal and Labour candidates would not run against each other in the 1906 general election.[2] This agreement was intended to give the L. R. C. an opportunity to increase its parliamentary representation, because it was promised the extensive support of Liberal votes to defeat the Conservative opponents. To some extent, this agreement bound the Labour Party to the radical wing of the Liberal Party, because the former was still a small Party.

From 1906 to 1908, Labour attempted to assert to some extent its independence by adopting issues which were of interest to the working class constituency. Early Labour MPs, including R. MacDonald, A. Henderson, K. Hardie, J. Clynes and P. Snowden, acted to promote the interests of the unions through some social reforms. They successfully persuaded the Liberal Government to pass the Trade Disputes Act in 1906, which reversed the Taff Vale judgment of 1902. The 1906 decision restored the unions' right to strike and exempted them from financial penalties for offences arising out of strike activity. In 1908, Labour MPs pressed for workers' compensation, and for Factory Act Reform which gave the miners a statutory working day of eight hours. The Labour Party also supported some major and constructive measures of social reform, which were carried by the Liberal Government. The first of these reforms was the Old Age Pensions Act providing for pensions under prescribed conditions to people over 70. The second reform was the Wages Board Act of 1909 which

[1] S. H. Beer, Modern British Politics, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1969, p. 113.
[2] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

intended to fix wages in designated industries where trade unions were weak. Moreover, the Labour Exchanges Act of 1909 was enacted as an endeavour to reduce unemployment and increase mobility, while the 1911 decision was an attempt to establish a system of health and unemployment insurance.[1] Labour agreed as well on the introduction of the 1909 Lloyd George Budget to carry on the Liberal legislative schemes, yet this was rejected by the Conservative majority in the House of Lords. The Liberals also gained the approval of Labour on the issues of Irish home rule and free trade.[2] Thus, the Labour Party found itself no longer pressing for its own proposals (like economic issues and unemployment), but rather following the footsteps of the Liberals.[3]

In all this, the Party MPs were criticised within Parliament, by some elements of the I. L. P in particular, for their low parliamentary impact and their blind support to the Liberal cause.[4] Besides, in the years up to 1914, the electoral situation of the Party was unsatisfactory. The I. L. P. dissidents wanted the Party to be more organized by committing it to socialism, so that it would attract more members to make converts to the socialist faith.[5] One of them wrote in 1913:

> **By the Labour alliance the Socialists set out to permeate the trade union ranks. It was a game at which two could play ... There is ground today [1913] for maintaining that the Labour Party is becoming, in fact, whatever it be in name, merely a wing of the Liberal Party, like its precursor the Trade Union Group.[6]**

Some of these discontented members called for a hostile attitude towards the Liberal Government and more efforts to gain new parliamentary seats, the thing that brought them into conflict with the Party leader R. MacDonald. The latter considered their proposition as a threat to the protected seats because he regarded the Labour Party as not yet able to compete with the other large and powerful political engines on equal grounds; the Liberals and the Conservatives.

To this point, the Labour Party had not a distinct ideology or social philosophy, but rather its purposes were simply those of trade union politics. In G. Phillips' view, the Party could be, thus, credited for being the party of trade unions, and it was for this reason that it

[1] "The Return of the Liberals." Encyclopedia Britannica, Deluxe Edition, 2009, (DVD).
[2] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[3] G. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[4] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[5] G. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[6] *Ibid*.

could be said to have formed a political identity of its own before embracing a specific programme.[1] In general, it did not largely increase its representation until after W. W. I.

The period of the Great War represented a turning point in the history of the Labour Party. The War occurred between the capitalist countries in the world. This, in turn, caused the capitalist system to be unpopular among people who believed that this system was responsible for the waste and inefficiency of the modern economy and created unequal competition. Those people, among whom the socialists formed a majority, also agreed that the root of the conflict was inherent in capitalism (the private ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, which enabled the profit of the few). Moreover, this period saw the Labour Party's break with the Liberals, because the latter failed to represent the interests and answer the demands of the working class in general and the trade unions in particular. The years preceding the War witnessed a decline in the conditions of the working class as real wages and the share of the national income reserved for employees fell down. Accordingly, this caused labour unrest in the industrial areas and turned them against the Liberal Government that failed in satisfying their demands. Thus, disillusioned with the Liberal cooperative plan, the unions eventually sided with the socialist wing of the Labour Party, which considered a change in the system as the solution for their grievances and needs.

This crucial shift in trade union opinion took place during the War. The basic factor that contributed to that was the intense rise in trade union membership since 1914 (over 900,000 that year), which in turn led to the growth of the Labour Party and the expansion of its membership across the country.[2] The War had also brought more secure employment to some groups of workers, but these wage-earners feared the return to unemployment after the end of the War. Therefore, they developed an increasing interest to be represented by a political party that would voice their claims against putting restrictions and barriers in front of their well-being. Seeking fulfilment of their wishes, they were attracted by the Labour Party as a defender of a policy of nationalization.

These factors encouraged the Party to split from the Liberals to pursue power independently. Indeed to do so, the Party was in need for a well-defined ideology that would specify its principles and distinguish it from other political parties. Therefore, socialism presented itself as the only functional ideology that would be compatible with what Labour leaders aimed at and with what the working people including unionists had longed for. It was

[1] *Ibid*., p. 25.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 20.

also as a means to create a society where the self-development of each would be related to the development of the whole community. It is worth mentioning that the commitment to socialism was in great part due to the breach of the Liberal-Labour pact. Though it was still a third party dominated by the Liberals and the Conservatives, the Labour Party became a large one with its membership rising from nearly 2.1 million by the beginning of 1915 to 3,5 million by early 1919.[1]

As it has been explained above, the situation of the Party was transformed by W. W. I. This latter caused the disintegration of the Liberals on the one hand, and on the other, it gave the trade unions an impetus to grow stronger than before. The former political consequence had appeared when Lloyd George displaced Asquith as Prime Minister in December 1916, and therefore the decision had been extended. The period after the conflict witnessed also the extension of the franchise to all men over 21 and all women over 30 under the Representation Act of 1918. This, in turn, increased the number and proportion of working class voters. Therefore, the Labour Party's leadership regarded the beginning of the decline of the Liberal Party as a good opportunity to appeal for the newly enfranchised voters.

These developments encouraged Labour leaders to act on a national basis by splitting from the Liberals and drafting the Party's constitution in 1918, stating its objectives and principles as a parliamentary socialist party. Clause IV of the new constitution summarizes the socialist objective of the Party. It committed Labour *"to secure the workers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production."*[2] These words reflect those used by the I. L. P in 1893 to state its object. According to A. Henderson and his collaborators, the Labour Party was to become a national party similar to its older rivals in terms of scale and ambitions.[3]

In the same conference, the Party also adopted a new socialist programme, *Labour and the New Social Order*, which endorsed a set of 27 resolutions, designed by Henderson with the help of Sidney Webb to enable the resources of the nation to be planned for attaining the maximum of the general well-being. The programme was also collectivist in tendency. Via this programme, the Labour Party appealed to its working class electorate for the first time in its history as a socialist party. Moreover, it was against any attempt to revive private capitalism again, which was according to it; associated to chaos, misery and degradation.

[1] *Ibid*., p. 27.
[2] Quoted by D., Coates, *op. cit*., p. 14.
[3] G. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Instead, the Party was for the creation of a 'new social order' based on fraternity and economic equality. The programme promised a series of policies among them: maintaining minimum standards of health, leisure, education, avoiding the dangers of unemployment, nationalizing some industries such as railways, mines, canals and electricity which had been under state control during the War.[1] Based on the socialist Leftists' view, the purpose behind the policy of nationalization was the transformation of power from the upper classes to the working class. For the moderate men who drafted the programme, nationalization was rather the key to national productivity.

The 1918 Party constitution was ultimately to strengthen its position. Not only did the Party change its orientation and interests, but it reviewed also its structure. The socialist societies that held positions of power in the Party in the pre-war period were replaced by trade unions as the major institutional power within the Party's Conference and National Executive Committee (N.E.C.) after 1918. The unions had numerical and financial strength inside the Party. They kept providing the Party and the majority of its MPs with financial support throughout the 1920s. Their leadership position was established to protect their interest.

The constitution marked Labour's transformation into a national organization with branches across the country. Form 1918 the Party's position changed rapidly, in that it became the major opposition party contrary to the modest 29 seats it had achieved in 1906. It was estimated that the percentage of total vote won by Labour in the election of 1918 rose to 20.8 per cent, continuing up to 29.7 per cent in 1922.[2] Labour had emerged as the second largest party in Parliament, and its Chairman, R. MacDonald, became therefore Leader of the Opposition.[3] To this point, the Party succeeded in establishing itself as a force in national politics and this in turn marked one of the major shifts in its evolution.

II.2.2. Progress and Collapse in Labour's Electoral Fortunes 1922- 1945:

Through framing the new constitution, the intention of the Labour Party leaders, like A. Henderson and S. Webb, was to make the Party an independent effective national force in British politics. To achieve this, Labour declared its readiness to establish a government programme based on the goals stated in the 1918 constitution, among which were "public

[1] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 14-15.
[2] A. Thorpe, A History of the British Labour Party, England, Palgrave Macmillan, third edition, 2008, p. 298.
[3] R. T. McKenwie, British Political Parties, ST Martin's Press INC, New York, 1955, p. 306.

ownership and industrial democracy."[1] Consequently and by the end of the 1920s, Labour's appeals exerted an influence on the industrial working class and attracted certain middle class voters as well. Its parliamentary elections' vote expanded steadily throughout the first half of the inter-war years. The Party of the interwar years was different from its early years in terms of interests and emphasis of policy purposes, reflecting and responding to the changing circumstances.

Throughout the period between 1918 and the manifesto of 1945, the Party remained loyal to the socialist ideology and the gradualist strategy. This is clearly observed through the remarkable similarity of detail between the statements of the Party programmes. More than one historian of the Party had referred to this similarity. G. D. H. Cole asserted:

> **Labour and the New Social Order...is seen to contain in substance by far the greater part of what has been put forward in respect of home policy in subsequent Labour Programmes, and of the actual policy which in Labour Government of 1945 began vigorously to carry into effect.[2]**

In the same respect, Henry Pelling wrote in his book A Short History of the Labour Party, *"Labour and the Social Order...was the great importance because it formed the basis of the Labour Party for over thirty years- in fact, until the general election of 1950."*[3] It is worth mentioning that, there were slight changes in the Party's purposes over the years as some items were added or deleted, despite the fact that it kept its promises of social transformation alive.

Indeed, in 1925 'national reconstruction' was the dominant issue in the Party programme of that year to assert once again its socialist faith, which in the words of MacDonald in 1928 had been referred to by *"transforming Capitalism into Socialism...in order to lay the foundation of a new social order."*[4] By 1927, 'socialism' which the Labour Party's leadership sought, was simply defined as state intervention in industry and society, and the Party had abandoned any pretence of challenging the private ownership of some sectors of industry and finance like: chemicals, armaments and private banking.[5] After nineteen years from the Party's 1918 constitution, and in spite of these alterations, the Labour

[1] A., Gamble, Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy and the British State, Macmillan Education LTD, 1985, p. 90.
[2] Quoted in S. H. Beer, *op. cit*, p.155.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Party's leader, Clement Attlee, declared: *"The evils of capitalism differ in intensity in different countries... The cause is the private prosperity; the remedy is public ownership."*[1] His fidelity to the socialist principles was also stressed in the annual Conference of 1946 and this time as Prime Minister and leader of the Party. But how far could this be put on the ground once Labour was in office?

Broadly speaking, in the post-war years from 1918 to 1924, Labour had superseded the Liberals in working class parliamentary constituencies throughout most of Britain.[2] During the 1920s, it twice held office under R. MacDonald. The first Labour administration was in January 1924. However, it was a minority government with 191 seats in the Commons, and was dependent on the support of the Liberal MPs. In this election, the Conservatives still formed the largest party, but having lost, they could hardly retain office. In forming his Cabinet, MacDonald faced different difficulties because his party was a minority Party and short of administrative experience and talent. To overcome this, he, therefore, called upon some figures from outside the Party to enter his Cabinet like: Lord Haldane, the former Liberal Minister, Lord Pamoor, a former Conservative MP, and the Conservative Lord Chelmsford.

Out of twenty members, only seven trade unionists were represented in the Cabinet. The relationship between MacDonald's Government and the trade union movement as a whole was not very special despite the organic link between the two (like any other government). His attitude was apparent when he ordered the use of troops to settle a strike of 110,000 dock workers, taking place few days after the formation of the Labour Government.[3]

During its term in office, the Labour achievements at home were largely dominated by the issues of housing and unemployment, which had represented the major social problems. It increased the rate of benefits paid to the unemployed and their families. With the objective of giving more working class children the chance to attend secondary schools, it increased expenditure on education. In any case, the 1924 Labour Government had not been able to pass any important domestic legislation, and the level of unemployment remained high.[4] Consequently, it was heavily defeated by the Conservatives who won a considerable success

[1] Quoted in S. H. Beer, *op. cit*, p.134.
[2] G. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[3] H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
[4] *Ibid.*, 160.

in the general election of November 1924, gaining a majority of 412 seats and reducing the Labour Party to a total of 151.[1]

To prove its "fitness to govern", Labour knew well that there was a need for class collaboration. If the Party was to fully exploit the national resources, as it had repeatedly promised, it needed the cooperation of the industrialists and financers. Therefore, in an attempt to gain more middle class voters, R. MacDonald pursued the policy of presenting the Labour Party as a moderate force in politics. He refused to support the 1926 General Strike called by the Trades Union Congress in support for the miners who claimed for more comfortable conditions. He did that because he was convinced that social reforms could also be obtained through parliamentary elections instead of strikes.

Due to its leader's stance and to the decrease in the popularity of the Conservative government, Labour won the general election of 1929 with 37,1 per cent of votes cast.[2] However, faced with the world financial Depression of 1929 and the increasing rate of unemployment which was one of the fundamental problems, R. MacDonald found it almost impossible to handle such problems. The Labour Government's failure to ease the burden of unemployment and to overcome its financial difficulties contributed largely to its eventual collapse. R. MacDonald, eventually, left the Party and formed a so- called National Government with the Conservatives against Labour, reducing this latter to 52 seats in the 1931 general election.

According to Labour leaders, the Party's minority position once in office in 1924 and between 1929 and 1931 was at the root of its failure to implement its electoral pledges.[3] When in government, the Labour leaders sometimes refrained from taking on new measures. Instead, they embarked on applying some policies that resembled measures already carried out by other parties that had been tried and experienced before. For them, unemployment represented one of the evils of capitalism, and the only permanent remedy was a socialist reconstruction of the economy. So, in the hope to solve the country's problems, especially that of mass unemployment, Labour adopted in 1934 'For Socialism and Peace' programme. This latter committed the Party to nationalization of some industries. Yet, the Party failed to secure power, which remained in the hands of the National Government.

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
[2] S., Fielding, The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the Making of New Labour, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 20.
[3] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

Nonetheless, the failures of the 1929-1931 Labour Government played an important part in producing and preparing the more clear-sighted and realistic outlook of the Labour Government elected in 1945.[1] True, Labour leaders waited on a parliamentary majority to launch and pursue its constitutional road to socialism.

Amongst other factors, the break of another world war (W.W.II.) in 1939 gave Labour the chance to implement its programme. The War weakened the National Government and the new Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided to form a wartime coalition by inviting the main parties to join the Government. Clement Attlee, the Labour leader, and Arthur Greewood, the Labour deputy leader, entered Churchill's Cabinet as Labour's representatives during the War.

Labour recognized the need for British intervention in the Second World War. The nature of Adolf Hitler's policies of expansionism, racial discrimination and anti-unionism pushed the Party to consider his regime as a common enemy, and thus it supported the war effort.[2] During the war years, Labour had held a strong position in the Cabinet. C. Attlee who was Lord Privacy Seal became in 1943 Lord President of the Council. In May 1940, Ernest Bevin, the former leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union, was appointed as Minister of Labour and National Service. This appointment was crucial in the sense that it illustrated the Prime Minister's renewed interest in trade unions and their importance in wartime.[3] Other Labour figures that joined the war Cabinet were H. Morrison, the Leftist Sir S. Cripps, A. V. Alexander and H. Dalton who were appointed as Home Secretary, Minister of Aircraft Production, First Lord of the Admiralty and Minister of Economic Warfare respectively. This in turn enabled Labour leaders to gain more experience in ministerial posts.

As far as British trade unionism was concerned, the war exerted an influence on the unions, and this had major implications for the Labour Party. The intense rise of trade union membership in 1914 was followed by a gradual decrease in the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, the number of trade union members affiliated to the Labour Party plummeted from 4,317,537 in 1920 to 1,857,524 in 1934.[4] However, as W.W.II. approached the T.U.C. membership began to rise quickly to peak at 6,642,317 during the wartime.[5] This figure reached 7,540,397

[1] G. Phillips, *op. cit.,* p. 64.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 123.
[3] *Ibid.,* pp. 107-108.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 110.
[5] H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, *op. cit*., p. 304.

in 1946.[1] This rapid increase was due to two main causes. The first of these factors was the increased demand for labour to cope with the high levels of production required by the war. Indeed, in 1941 the unemployment level fell below a million to reach only 151,000 by the end of that same year, and full employment was maintained for the remainder of the war.[2] The second cause was the decision of the Amalgamated Engineering Union to admit, for the first time, over 100,000 women in 1943.[3] The growing union membership led to a continuing trade union affiliation to the Labour Party. Accordingly, this meant giving a major boost to the Party's finances.

Another consequence of the war on the Labour Party was the revision of its policy. Throughout the early years of the war, Labour emphasized the need for economic planning and controls and social reform by publishing various reports. Moreover, it argued that the post-war British government should be committed to the goals of full employment, social security, reconstruction and reforms of education and health. The Conservatives within the Coalition Government, however, did not agree on Labour's proposals. Confronted with strong opposition from the Conservatives, the Party was forced to backtrack on some of its proposals for the remainder of the war. This was evident in the 1942 Beveridge Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services and the 1944 White Paper on Employment which were published by the Party.[4] The first document called for 'comprehensive state welfare', whereas the second replaced the former objective of full employment by committing the State to the maintenance of a 'high and stable level of employment'.[5] The Conservatives, for their part, accepted some of Labour's demands especially in the area of education. One of the proposals that were passed was the Education Act of 1944 which introduced the secondary education system and abolished fees for secondary schooling. Other issues of health, social insurance and local government remained still open to debate within the war Cabinet.

When the War in Europe ended after Germany's surrender in May 1945, a general election took place in July. The British people were willing to escape unemployment and other social problems caused by the depression and the war. Labour with its manifesto 'Let Us Face the Future' tapped the electorate's aspirations for major changes in British society.[6]

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p.110.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

Therefore, it presented itself as the appropriate alternative for change. The result was a landslide victory to Labour which won 47,8 per cent of the vote with a Commons majority of 145 seats. This marked Labour's first-ever majority Government under C. Attlee, which gave it the opportunity to push forward radical social changes.

British foreign investment had been used to pay for the war. Britain, therefore, received a financial assistance from the U. S. A. under the Lend-Lease provision and later the Marshall Aid of 1948. These loans had contributed largely to solve the critical position of Britain after the sterling crisis. Even so, another sterling crisis took place during the spring of 1949, and as a consequence the balance of payments position had worsened gradually. In such a weak situation, the Labour government was able, nonetheless, to proceed with its economic and social policies for reform, and this again shows how remarkable were these policies once achieved.

I.3. The Attlee Governments 1945-51:

The 1945 manifesto proposed the creation of a national health service and the state-sponsored pursuit of employment. It also promised the nationalization of the Bank of England and certain industries such as the fuel and power industries, inland transport, iron and steel. Moreover, it put the achievement of maximum production and the creation of a new social contract of price-controlled housing among the priorities of the next Labour government.

True to its pledges, the Government introduced many radical social reforms including nationalization of twenty per cent of the economy despite the intense political and industrial opposition of the Conservatives. This system of nationalization guaranteed the owners 'a fair compensation' paid to them and the employees a proper status and conditions of work. In 1946, the Bank of England was nationalized, while coal, iron, road haulage and cable and wireless were nationalized in 1947 and electricity and gas in 1948. Other industries, particularly coal and rail, were taken by the state for their previous performance in private hands was poor and had retarded the national growth.[1] In other words, they were in bad internal conditions and required a vast investment programme which was believed that only

[1] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

the state could provide. Herbert Morrison, Labour Lord President, pointed out in the first year of Labour's term that:

> **Nationalized industries were not ends in themselves …the object [rather] is to make possible organization of a more efficient industry, rendering more public service, and because of its efficiency and increased productivity enabled to do progressively better for its workers.**[1]

Critically, nationalization left the advanced and the high profit industries in private hands, because it was associated with the industrial decay. This resulted, on the one hand, in weakening the status of nationalization and giving it a bad image among the party electors, and on the other, nationalization elevated the status of the capitalist groups by leaving for them the responsibility over the basic industries. In addition, there was an opposition on the part of the industrialists to state intervention and this again posed a problem for Labour once it came to power, because full cooperation of all sides of industry was required in order to keep the balance of payments position healthy.

Labour was in favour of the redistribution of wealth to reduce inequality through implementing a high level of taxation. The aim of this reform was to increase economic efficiency and to have an equal society through state intervention. To prove its ability to handle the economy, Labour kept inflation under control accompanied by a wage freeze between 1948 and 1950.

The great achievement of the Labour Government in social policy was the unprecedented National Health Service. This service came formally into operation after a great deal of dispute concerning its exact nature and scope. A bill to nationalize hospitals was ratified by the Cabinet in late 1945. This would take the hospitals out of control of local authorities and voluntary bodies into regional boards. However, there were substantial concessions to the medical profession, including the preservation of capitation fees instead of the introduction of salaries for doctors.[2] This upset the doctors and drove them into conflict with the Minister of Health, Aneurin Bevan. To put an end to this, the latter announced in April 1948 that there was no way to move towards a salaried medical profession.

Labour's record in social security was crowned by the 1946 National Insurance Act, under which workers profited from flat-rate pensions, sickness benefit, unemployment benefit and funeral benefit, on condition that they paid a flat-rate insurance contribution. In 1948, a National Assistance Act was followed to support financially those subjected to

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

unemployment, ill-health, industrial accidents disablement, infirmity and old age. The insurance principle was regarded by the Government as being generally fair since money was not wasted. The Labour Government also considered these two Acts as a great advance compared to the interwar years.

Education was no exception. School leaving age was raised to fifteen while secondary education continued to be guaranteed, all under the 1944 Education Act. Labour's performance in social policy was generally sound especially with the creation of the National Health Service and the welfare state. The latter system improved the life-chances of most of the population.

The issue of housing posed a real problem for Labour after the end of the War because the situation was serious. Many buildings were destroyed and others were not completed because of the War which lasted for five years. This created a massive shortage of housing units, which Labour had promised to overcome. However, Labour failed to fulfill its promise. In Hull, for example, only 1766 permanent dwellings were built instead of 5,000 in the year 1946, and this was due to the lack of materials and labour.[1] So, although Labour had made little progress, there was a shortfall of over a million houses units by 1951.

At the level of Parliamentary Government, Labour also launched some reforms. The first was the reformation of the local government franchise which was extended to all adults instead of being restricted to ratepayers and their spouses. Additionally, the Government in charge reduced in 1949 the delaying powers of the House of Lords from two years to one. It also succeeded in inserting some new Labour peers into the House of Lords. On the whole, it did nothing to reform the electoral system because, admittedly, there was little demand for this. Instead, Labour gave more importance to centralization. In 1945, a piece of legislation was enacted making the Treasury's approval necessary to all local authority loan issues. This resulted in a massive concentration of power at the centre.

As far as the relationship between the Attlee Government and the trade unions was concerned, Labour ministers had been provided with a strong support from the union leaders. This Labour Government, in contrast to that of 1929-30, delivered much of what the unions wanted. It repealed in 1946 the Trade disputes Act of 1927[2], maintained high level of

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[2] The 1927 Trade Union and Trade Disputes Act allowed unions to levy contribution for political purposes only with the explicit assent of individual members. It also declared illegal any sympathetic strike action in furtherance of a trade dispute except from 'within the trade or industry in which the strikes are engaged'. Its immediate effect was reducing the Labour Party's income from trade-union affiliation fees by a third. H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

employment and rising working class living standards, and implemented social reform. During this term of office, unemployment was hardly ever above 500,000.[1] The key demands of many individual unions such as the nationalization of coal mining were also fulfilled.

The Attlee Government's achievements in domestic policy were generally new. The same could be said in foreign policy. The period after the end of the Second World War was characterized by the rise of the Cold War and its developments throughout the century. So, in a world dominated by two superpowers, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Britain found itself in a position to choose either to co-operate with the two countries as it had been during the wartime, or to establish a European "third force" to stand between the two.[2] But the U.S.S.R.'s strong intention to spread Communism in the countries of its sphere (eastern and central Europe) made the latter option, more or less, impossible. In reality, Britain took a hostile attitude towards the U.S.S.R. and an anti-Communist feeling was developed between Labourites, especially after the Soviet victories in Czechoslovakia and China and the development of the Soviet Union's atomic weapons. This led gradually to the deterioration of Britain-USSR relations. Meanwhile, relations with the U.S.A. were improved. These were fortified with the American financial help (the Lend-Lease and the Marshall Aid) given to Britain to overcome its difficulties in the aftermath of W.W.II. This was put into a formal way by the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (N.A.T.O.) in 1949. This body has bound for the first time Britain and the U.S.A. together in a peacetime alliance, providing legal protection against external aggression. In his book A History of the British Labour Party, A. Thorpe points out that Labour had played a leading role in establishing the system of alliances that dominated the world until the end of the Cold War.[3]

The nature of British relations with continental Europe after W.W.II. was a debatable issue for Labour. The Party was divided into two groups; those who supported European cooperation for they saw it as a key factor to avoid future wars and those who wanted no internationalism at all. The opposition was partly due to British improved relations with the U.S.A., which in turn distracted Britain from thinking of establishing close relations in Europe.

The Labour Government showed no intention to expand the British Empire or to maintain its colonies, in Asia particularly. This was mainly due to the fear that the Empire

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*,p. 123.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 132.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

would become an economic burden, given Britain's post-war economic circumstances.[1] Taking the case of India, the British rule was breaking down rapidly. Consequently, Labour led the British withdrawal from India in 1947 and Palestine in 1948. This retreat, however, did not mark the end of the British Empire. On the contrary, Labour followed a different policy with the African colonies. It regarded them, if developed and fully exploited, as important economic resources that would enable Britain to strengthen its position in the world. Effectively, the Labour Government had attempted to convert the colonies into markets and sources of raw materials. It also gave special care to colonial agriculture. It was made obvious that the profits obtained from these developments would all pour into Britain's own benefit.[2]

Members of the Party hoped that these reforms would lead to the creation of what their manifesto described as a *"socialist commonwealth of Great Britain-free, democratic, efficient, progressive, public spirited, its material resources organized in the service of the British people."*[3] Yet, they knew well that socialism could not be achieved overnight, but rather it would be a long process.

Steven Fielding claimed that while Labour's measures reduced inequality, the Attlee Government failed to make any significant progress towards the creation of its promise of "socialist commonwealth."[4] One of the reasons that contributed to that was the unpreparedness of its parliamentary leadership. Once Labour came to power, its leaders were determined to solve the problems of the inter-war period such as unemployment and underconsumption, but they were faced instead by new problems of underproduction and excess demand for which they were not prepared yet. Besides, the Labour Government inherited in 1945 a weak economy because of the War and Britain's dependence on imports from overseas. This, in turn, kept Britain some way from the "socialist commonwealth." Yet, this did not prevent the Party from going again to the electorate rejecting capitalism and committing itself, in 1950, to socialism because in all cases it would be judged on its record. The Labour Party was in good shape to nominate itself for the next general election. Its individual membership rose from 487,000 in 1945 to 729,000 in 1949, while union-affiliated

[1] *Ibid*., p. 135.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 136.
[3] I., Dale, (ed.), Labour Party General Election Manifestos 1900-1997, London, Routledge,2000., p. 55.
[4] S., Fielding, *op.cit*., p. 22.

membership doubled to 4,946,000 over the same period.[1] It also did well at the by-elections and in local elections as well.[2]

In that year's manifesto, the Party emphasized the use of other economic control than public ownership with proposals for further nationalization confined to sugar, cement and water supply. Meanwhile, the Conservatives had begun to recover by improving their organization greatly and winning again the support of the middle-class voters.

Amid the growing Conservative opposition, Labour leaders were divided by the end of their term in office, over the future direction the Party chose to consolidate (more specifically about the intensive nationalization). Moreover, Labour had come into tension with its own trade union movement. Although the 1945 Government was consolidated with a strong trade union support and massive working class backing at its early years, its relationship with the trade union leadership had become shaky over the last years in office. The explanation of why this happened led to the fact that union leaders opposed Labour policies concerning the managerial structures of the nationalized industries.[3] In addition, the cost of living was rising rapidly owing to the effects of devaluation and the international impact of the Korean War. Thus, for the sake of stability of the domestic price level and the encouragement of exports, the Government imposed wage restraints in 1948. Restricting wage increases was crucial for national recovery. This decision drove the unions against the Government.[4] This was made worse by the Labour Government's use of troops in strikes that affected national production and export.

Despite this, Labour won the 1950 general election with an overall majority cut to just five seats with 315 to the Conservatives'298. With 46.1 per cent of votes cast, the Party was some way ahead of the 43.1 per cent of the Conservatives.[5] Faced with divisive issues (most noticeable at Cabinet level), Labour could not stand long. As the Government had begun to fall apart, a further election after only a few months was inevitable- in October 1951.

Labour's 1951 manifesto insisted on what the Party had achieved since 1945 and "declared it as most suited to maintain peace and full employment, to increase production, to reduce the cost of living and to 'build a just society' ".[6] Unlike the 1950 manifesto, this one did not contain any proposal to nationalize more industries. It, vaguely, promised to overcome

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] D., Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[4] H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
[5] S., Fielding, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
[6] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

the previous mistakes. On the whole, it tried to defend the Government's record and attempted to compare it with the Conservative legacy amid the poverty of the 1930s.[1]

With growing unpopularity of the Labour Party, the Conservatives won the election. Labour got 295 seats whereas the Conservative Party took 321. At the same election Labour attracted 13,948,605 votes which were in large part from the working class.[2] This meant that the Party lost further middle class support.[3]

As a result, the Labour Party found itself out of power. Once in office beginning from 1945, it had led to different changes and made new departures in both domestic and foreign policies with the aim of taking Britain into an era of prosperity. Yet the Labour Government left office in 1951 in increasing difficulties with its own trade union movement. It was clearly made that the Party had moved away from the policy of intensive nationalization into emphasizing, instead, the idea of public ownership with the moderate aim of accomplishing economic efficiency and national needs. So what would be the implication of this period on the future of the Labour Party?

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] S., Fielding, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

CHAPTER TWO :

The Labour Party and the Internal Disputes (1951-1983)

The unexpected defeat of the Labour Party in the 1951 general election was the start of a turbulent period of internal debate and disunity which kept it out of office for thirteen years. There are four main points, emphasized in this chapter. The first point covers the years up to 1970, which witnessed ideological battles about the overall aims and values of the Party and policy clashes over defense and nationalization even when Labour returned to power under the leadership of Harold Wilson. The following decade saw the revival of the Left wing and its endeavour to impose its ideas and thoughts on the Party. This point is the subject matter of the second section. Despite the internal dispute that had distracted the Party for a long time, Labour was again in office in 1974. Its policies and attitudes, once in government, form the centre of discussion in the third part of this chapter. The final section deals with the Party's further move to the Left and the consequent split. Of considerable importance were the events between 1951 and 1970 because they were to have long-term impact on the Labour Party after 1970.

II.1. The 'Thirteen Wasted Years' and the Arrival of Harold Wilson at Power (1951-1970):

The Party leaders in 1951 were expected to be returned to office on the next electoral swing. In fact, they were defeated in three general elections in succession, and each time its vote declined in size so that by 1959 it stood at 43.8 per cent.[1] It was not until 1964 that Labour returned to power, yet with an overall majority of only five. However, this period was important in the history of Labour in the sense that it witnessed a gradual retreat from what the C. Attlee Governments had achieved and an inclination towards adopting new policies which the Party had tried to implement in the years after 1964. The parameters of these policies were set under the so-called 'the revisionist approach'. The years in opposition, between 1951 and 1964, were ones of internal dispute within the Party.

Labour's prospects were weakened by the performance of W. Churchill's Government of 1952. The Conservatives had now adjusted their policies to a major acceptance of the mixed economy and the welfare state.[2] Their administration witnessed slow economic growth, yet with low rate of unemployment and growing material affluence.[3] This successful handling of the economy was helped by some factors like the increasing demands of post war

[1] S., Fielding, The Labour Party: Continuity and Change in the Making of New Labour, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 23.
[2] This was generally known as the 'post-war consensus.'
[33] A. Thorpe, A History of the British Labour Party, England, Palgrave Macmillan, third edition, 2008, p. 143.

rebuilding, the favourable terms of trade and the temporary lack of foreign competition in export markets. Compared to the previous stated areas, housing was the one in which the Conservatives were most successful. The Conservative Government was able to build 300,000 houses a year as it promised, in sharp contrast to Labour's performance in office.[1] Thus by the 1955 electoral campaign, the Conservatives' manifesto pointed to pledges fulfilled and to the prosperity achieved in their previous term and contrasted them with Labour's record during its time in office.

But, as mentioned above, events within the Labour Party also played a part. As the years passed, nationalization became increasingly unpopular even amongst sections of the working class electorate. The future direction of British socialism was one of the big problems that members of the Party confronted. In the event and so far as the internal politics of the Party is concerned, the period in opposition, or as it became to be known 'the thirteen wasted years', was one of the dismal periods for Labour because they were dominated by struggles between members of the Party over leadership, disagreement on causes of Labour's electoral failure, and hot debates over the future commitments of the Party. The leadership in this period was often indecisive, but found itself forced to settle disputes through temporary paper compromises since the Party was not in power.[2] In parallel with these internal struggles, there was a retreat from the Party's interwar desire to create the 'Socialist Commonwealth'.[3]

The Party lost the 1955 and the 1959 general elections to the Conservatives. This was partly due to the split among the Party's members over the issues of nationalization and state control, thus over the future direction of socialism. Those led by Aneurin Bevan opted for a more radical socialist position because they regarded the fact that the Party did not fully embrace greater level of state control as being the cause of Labour's electoral failure, whereas the second group, led by Hugh Gaitskell, opposed the former group's idea of moving the Party to the Left, and they wanted to adopt a more moderate social democratic position. This latter group, known as the revisionists, won the leadership election under H. Gaitskell in 1955. It argued that the basic socialist goals could be achieved by the use of Keynesian demand management other than the means of nationalization and planning.[4] To rid the Party of its dependence on state control and to make it less class-conscious, H. Gaitskell decided to

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] D., Coates, The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 76.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), New Labour, Old Labour : the Wilson and Callaghan Governments, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 19.

amend Clause IV of the Party' s constitution in 1959. However, he failed because of the trade unions' opposition to such a decision. Shortly after, H. Gaitskell resigned the leadership, to be succeeded by Harold Wilson.

The Party returned, eventually, to office in the wake of the 1964 general election after remaining out for thirteen years. H. Wilson was re-elected in 1966 with increased majority to 48% of votes cast.[1] Meanwhile, Britain was suffering a downturn in economy. To overcome this, H. Wilson directed his efforts to plan the economy through modernizing the industry by adopting new technology. He also introduced some other economic and social reforms like the nationalization of the steel industry in 1967 and the legalization of divorce, homosexuality and abortion. He also proposed in a paper entitled 'In Place of Strife' to put restrictions on trade unions through limiting wage rises and wildcat strikes. Nevertheless, the Trades Union Congress reacted angrily and forced H. Wilson to withdraw his proposals. Accordingly, the workers' discontent and disillusionment caused his failure to be elected for another term in the general election of 1970, which he lost for the Conservative Edward Heath.

In the immediate aftermath of this electoral defeat, Labour was again dominated by growing tensions between the Right and Left sections of the Party over some policy and strategic issues. The Left, which had opposed most of H. Wilson's policies, doubted the ability of the Party to survive the coming economic crises of the 1970s and thus tried to impose its way of thinking.

II.2. Labour's Left Wing Revival in the 1970s:

After the 1970 electoral defeat, Labour was back in opposition until 1974. In the intervening years, Britain witnessed some political, social and economic events that threatened its stability. These events, in turn, had their impact on the Labour Party as the latter sought to adjust its policies to the prevailing conditions amongst the 1973 economic crisis. However, there was a growing dissatisfaction among the Left wingers in the Party with the previous H. Wilson Governments' policies. As a result, this period was characterized by the growth of the Left influence within the Party. The Left dominated the policy agenda in the Party whose leftward shift culminated in the drafting of *the 1973 Programme*.

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 299.

II.2.1. Britain in the Early Seventies: the Domestic Context

Throughout the years between 1970 and 1974, some developments took place outside the Labour Party that in turn affected the internal structure of the Party and forced a change in its policies. The Party's internal changes were dictated by the social, economic and political circumstances in Britain throughout the seventies.

To start with the political problems, England was involved in what seemed to be an ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland. In response to a deteriorating political climate in Northern Ireland and to years of civil unrest and communal violence, the British Government introduced an internment policy in August 1971. This move was principally directed against the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) and meant that suspected terrorists should be arrested and imprisoned without being charged or put on trial. Despite this, violence arose again and fighting erupted in the streets between the I.R.A. and the British troops throughout the year 1972. Consequently, the Conservative Prime Minister suspended the Parliament of Northern Ireland which thereby ended Home Rule and restored direct rule from London.[1] Nonetheless, violence continued in spite of the fact that the Government had made several initiatives for settlement with a view to creating devolved institutions aiming at bringing political stability and facilitating economic revival.[2]

The period when E. Heath was in government, Britain was going through troubled times where both unemployment and inflation rose together. Unemployment reached a peak of 929,000 in January 1972, while inflation rose to an annual average of 8.6 per cent for 1971-73.[3] What fuelled inflation still more was the external pressures like the oil crisis of 1973, that followed the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War between Israel, and Egypt and Syria, as Arab states tried to put pressure on Western governments by raising oil prices. This resulted in increasing wage militancy on the part of the workers and a further deterioration in industrial relations.

The conflict over wages reflected in part the conflict that had been accumulating since the introduction of the Industrial Relations Act of 1971. The latter was a new bill published in December 1970 by the Conservative Government with the intention of bringing legal

[1] B. Barton, and P. J. Roche (ed.), The Question of Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 13.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 14.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

restrictions into trade union affairs.[1] In spite of Labour's bitter opposition, the bill was passed through Parliament in 1971. To state some of its provisions, the Act gave the new established court, the National Industrial Relations Court, a legal authority in most industrial disputes like imposing a conciliation pause in industrial disputes and also requiring a secret pre-strike ballot in cases of major importance. The Court had also the authority to impose fines on unions in case they undertook 'unfair industrial practices'. Moreover, a new Registrar of Trade Unions and Employees' Associations were set up for the unions to register with and thereby they would obtain some financial advantages, but on the condition that the Registrar would have the power to demand changes in union rule books to ensure the rights of the industrial worker. In August 1971, the bill became a law and this aroused massive union and Labour hostility.

Unsurprisingly, the General Council of the T.U.C reacted angrily against the bill. Pointing out to its dangers, it strongly urged the repeal of the Act and called the unions not to register, a decision that Labour backed. In practice, the General Council took some proceedings against the unions that complied with the Conservative Government's new Act. It suspended thirty two unions in 1972 and this meant losing the T.U.C's facilities and services, and finally expelling them in the following year.

Meanwhile, strike activity intensified between 1971 and 1973. In the view of the General Secretary of the T.U.C., Victor Feather, the principal aim of the 1971 Act which was to reduce strikes had not been achieved.[2] Indeed, the trade unions refused to register for the new Act, employees too refused to operate under its conditions. The result was serious industrial confrontations, and thus the Act created more problems than it solved.[3]

The strike that had a strong effect and created difficulties for E. Heath's Government was the miners' strike of 1972 and 1974, the first national strike since 1926. The miners pushed their £138 million pay claim hard, and this led E. Heath to declare a state of emergency and to put industry on a three day working week to conserve power supplies especially fuel following the increase of Middle East oil prices. Faced by power cuts, people had to check newspapers to find out when they would have electricity. Later in the year, strike activity widened to include train drivers and power workers among others. Thus, the Government found itself forced to establish a Court of Inquiry to inquire into the miners' claims. In fact, E. Heath was defeated by the trade unions which simply boycotted his

[1] J. Plowright, The Routledge Dictionary of Modern British History, Great Britain, Routledge, 2006, p. 150.
[2] H., Pelling, *op.cit.*, p. 268.
[3] K. Laybourn, Fifty Key Figures in Twentieth-Century British Politics, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 125.

industrial legislation. This in turn was a heavy setback for him because he considered depending upon wage claims as a solution to curb inflation.

Moreover, what antagonized the unions further was the growing Government pressure to restrict wage increases, culminating in the enactment of a statutory wages policy in 1972. This policy was directed at the control of inflation. The Conservatives at first were against compulsory incomes policy. In so doing, E. Heath opened the way for competition to keep prices down. However, this economic policy was not successful leading the Prime Minister to reverse it and undertake a compulsory incomes policy in the late of 1972. The new scheme consisted of three stages. Stage I, introduced in November, imposed a ninety-day freeze of pay, prices, rents and dividends. In January 1973, the Prime Minister announced the second stage of his incomes policy to begin to work in April. This stage strictly limited increases under the supervision of a new Prices Commission and a Pay Board. It was followed in October of the same year by stage III which was to run until November 1974. This proposed the limitation of wage increases to 7 per cent. K. Laybourn noted that stages I and II of the scheme worked well, but stage III was gravely damaged by the fourfold increase in oil prices, and it created more problems as the miners refused to comply with the wage guidelines implemented by E. Heath and decided to impose an overtime ban.[1]

According to the Labour Party interpretation, the problems stated above highlighted the weaknesses of the capitalist system. So what would be Labour's alternative solution to overcome such crises?

II.2.2. Party Politics Dominated by the Left:

These developments had an influence on the Labour Party as well. Under the pressure of events and economic changes, the Right wing of the Labour Party suggested that to face the crises in which Britain drowned and to overcome low economic growth it would be necessary to enter the European Economic Community (E.E.C.) In the same respect, it was a strong advocate of a statutory prices and incomes policy to control inflation. The problem with these two proposed solutions was that they aroused the hostility of the bulk of the Labour movement, particularly that of the trade unions which had rejected a statutory incomes policy and the curbs on their legal immunities. As a result, the historical link between the trade unions and the Party's Right wing broke up during the time of the 1970s economic crisis, just

[1] *Ibid.*

as that alliance had cracked under the pressure of the 1929 economic crises.[1] Here was the beginning of the isolation of the Right wing within the Party and the Party's leftward shift that continued throughout the 1970s and early 1980s.

The four years after 1970 were marked by changes in the internal structure of the Labour Party but this did not include the leadership in the Party. Members of the Party renewed their confidence with H. Wilson who remained Labour's leader in opposition. This was true of R. Jenkins and J. Callaghan who remained Chancellor and Home Secretary in the Shadow Cabinet respectively. One new Right member was Shirley Williams who became a popular figure in the Parliamentary Labour Party (P.L.P.) and who served as Shadow Home Secretary in 1972-73. On the other hand, the Left wing of the Party was fortified by the election of Michael Foot to the Shadow Cabinet in 1970. M. Foot competed with Roy Jenkins in 1971 for the position of Deputy Leader, but he lost.[2] He was a prominent figure with a leftist inclination who was promoted to Shadow Leader of the House of Commons in 1972.[3] Another outstanding political figure was Tony Benn. He was Minister of Technology in the previous Labour government, and had now emerged as a new more populist politician. He was well known for his advocacy of widespread nationalization of industries and for his strong opposition to British membership in the E.E.C.

Disillusionment with the previous Wilson's Government and anger at 'In Place of Strife', which proposed recasting the legal framework surrounding industrial relations, were also contributing factors in the radical drift of the unions. Crucially, a structural change within the trade unions was made by securing the Left-inclined unions a stronger position within the Party. A typical example of this was the Transport and General Workers Union and the Engineers which controlled 31 per cent of the vote at the Party Conference.[4] Consequently, this latter moved still further away from the P.L.P. and its leadership which suffered regular defeats from the Conference concerning different matters. The unions also elected new more combative leaders, like Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, who were ready to support Left wing demands.[5] This was shown by growing militancy of trade unionism evidenced by the growth of strikes during the early years of the 1970s.

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
[2] D. Butler, and G. Butler, British Political Facts, England, Palgrave Macmillan, tenth edition, 2011, p. 163.
[3] K. Laybourn, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[4] R. Plant, *et al.* (ed.), The Struggle for Labour's Soul: Understanding Labour's Political Thought since 1945, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 28.
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

The National Executive Committee (N.E.C.), where the Left began to assert itself, was no exception. It had been elected annually in the Party Conference and been subjected to its control and directions. Its function was to manage the work of the Party outside Parliament, involving a wide range of responsibilities. To cite but three of its duties, the N.E.C. made sure that Constituency Labour Parties, Central Labour Parties and Federations worked properly in every appropriate political area throughout the country. The second responsibility of the N.E.C. was to keep the Party officers and members at the national and local levels under supervision to ensure that their works conformed to the Party Constitution, and to the rules and the agreed orders dictated by the Party. Finally, the N.E.C. was in charge of giving a report on its own work to the annual Conference accompanied by policy statements to direct the Conference to the way it should take responding to the surrounding political circumstances.[1]

Out of the 28 members of the N. E. C, the unions had 12 direct representatives.[2] Therefore, it was unsurprisingly that trade union radicalization in the 1970s stemming from the prevailing circumstances in Britain was also reflected to some extent by the leftward shift of the N.E.C. The latter supported the initiative of the affiliated trade unions which became after 1970 more supportive of the Party's Left than they had been in the past.[3] As the Left became more prominent, the N.E.C. was of equal importance at a time when its balance was moving towards the Left as well. The N.E.C's leftward shift was evidenced by the two radical documents; *Labour's Programme for Britain* (1972) and *Labour's Programme 1973*, which contained various resolutions proposed and submitted by the N.E.C.[4]

The ongoing battle between the Left and the Right had consumed Labour for much of the 1970s and 1980s. This struggle was to result in a number of developments within and outside the Labour Party. Because the P.L.P. was the only body which had the right to elect the Party leader and Shadow Cabinet, the leadership and the P.L.P. remained safe from the Leftist pressures in the wider Party.[5] This was also guaranteed by the fact that it was illegal for a Constituency Labour Party to deselect its existing MPs by refusing to choose them as candidates at the next election. After 1970, however, what was remarkable was that the Left

[1] R. T. McKenwie, British Political Parties, , New York, ST Martin's Press INC, 1955, pp. 522-523.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 518.
[3] R. Plant, *et al.* (ed.), *op. cit*., p. 28.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
[5] *Ibid.*

had been growing in strength in constituency parties.[1] This was mainly as a result of the extra parliamentary activists' turn leftwards after the last electoral defeat, strengthening by this the position of the Leftists within the Party.[2]

From 1973 and onwards, these extra parliamentary activists found the Party context more favourable than in the past after the abolition of Labour's list of prescribed organizations, which had prevented those with non-democratic affiliations like those activists from being members in the Party. The 1973 abolition gave members of the non-democratic Left the right to be members within the Party (parliamentary members) rather than being extra parliamentary members. Moreover, the year 1973 saw the creation of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (C.L.P.D.) with the aim of granting the Party outside Parliament the right to vote in the leadership election.[3] This new body also set out to press for greater powers for the wider Party in the selection of the candidates and the writing of the Party manifesto. This would shift the battle ground away from the Right which constituted a majority inside the Party to outside the Party where the Left had greater chances.[4] These new organizational reforms would, in turn, pave the way for changes in the ideological views of the Party.

In the past years, Labour was unable to fulfill its promises of full employment and rising levels of social welfare provision using the traditional techniques of J. M. Keynes.[5] The The 1964-70 Labour Governments' inability to put an end to Britain's economic decline and the general failure of Keynesian system of demand and management to secure a trade-off between inflation and unemployment as both rose simultaneously, which was particularly the case in the early years of the Heath Government, had led both the liberal socialist Right wing and the Left wing of the Labour Party to reconsider the Party's post-war prolonged commitment to Keynesian social democratic approach in conducting the nation's economic affairs.[6] Although some policies, like indicative planning, were applied and proved successful successful to some extent, their failure to circumvent the constraints of rising inflation and balance of payments crises showed clearly that some hard thinking had to be done about what

[1] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), New Labour, Old Labour: the Blair, Wilson and Callaghan Governments, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 6.
[2] R. Plant, *et al.* (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[3] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] N. Thompson, Political Economy and the Labour Party: the Economics of Democratic Socialism 1884-2005, London, Routledge, second edition, 2006, p. 205.
[6] E. Shaw defines Keynesianism as "the kernel of revisionist social democracy in that it offered the means by which government could recycle the economic sulplus into welfare spending whilst at the same time pursuing growth and full employment as the chief goals of economic policy." For more details see: E. Shaw, The Labour Party since 1979: Crisis and Transformation, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p. 207.

planning entailed.[1] N. Thompson asserted that the economic failures of the Wilson Governments to effect any significant improvement in Britain's economic performance posed more profound problems for the socialist wing of the Party than for the 'revisionist' Left of the 1970s, because the latter had always argued that the pursuit of Keynesian policies and methods in managing economy was not enough.[2] Therefore, by the early 1970s, both wings of the Labour Party regarded revision of traditional doctrines and attitudes as crucial.[3]

During the 1950s, the revisionists owed much to Tony Crosland's *the Future of Socialism.* T. Crosland, besides Roy Jenkins and James Meade, had made a basic contribution to the thinking of socialist political economy in the postwar period.[4] Influenced by the changing economic circumstances that Britain was going through in the early 1970s, they all recognized the need to rethink their approach to liberal socialism. To take the case of T. Crosland, he published in 1974 *Socialism Now*, a sequel to his former essay, and made attempts to answer the following question: 'where stands the revisionist thesis in the light of the last ten years of experience?'[5] A concentrated effort was devoted in the first place to inflation which was seen as a growing obstacle in the way of progress of social reform. Inflation brought about an unequal redistribution of wealth and a reduction of real wages that triggered a confrontation in the area of industrial relations. Therefore, an incomes policy was presented as a solution by the 1970s liberal socialists. But this one was to be different from the one adopted by the previous Wilson Government, which was targeted solely at avoiding a balance of payments crisis at that time. The aim behind this policy was to achieve social justice for a longer term through providing full employment and stabilizing prices. However, these Right wingers were divided over the way this prices and incomes policy should be implemented.

Labour's Left, on the other hand, had found it easy to campaign, organize and put together new ideas, objectives and policies to achieve their goals thanks to the favourable Party context with the new organizational reforms. The Left wingers had assessed the policy performance of H. Wilson's administration (1964-70) and tried to identify the factors that were at the origin of its failures both in domestic matters, especially economic policy, and foreign affairs.[6] They regarded the adoption of new policy instruments as the only way for the

[1] N. Thompson, *op. cit.*,p. 205.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 190.
[4] R. Plant, *et al*. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 28-29..
[5]N. Thompson, o*p. cit*.,p. 205.
[6] R. Plant, *et al*. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 27.

the Party to achieve its socialist objectives. The first socialist aim was considerable social and economic equality which would be achieved via eliminating poverty and the redistribution of wealth and income. The second idea was realizing efficiency in the national production to attain a better rate of growth by adopting interventionist strategy in the economic policy. Democracy and participation that would enable workers to have a say in the decision-making process, which was of their concern and shaped the environment in which they worked, represented the third socialist point. The final goal was to achieve an internationalism that would promote disarmament and oppose British membership in the E.E.C. which would, according to most Left wingers, undermine national political and economic sovereignty.[1] These new policies were different from those advocated by Labour in the past. For the sake of enhancing economic growth, equality and democracy, the Left suggested using nationalization, planning and workers' control alongside Keynesian reflation to reduce the monopolization of the economy by the big and multinational firms, dominated by a business class that worked for its own interest instead of the society's general profit.

This new set of policy measures was defined by some theorists, like Stuart Holland, and organizations in many texts written by them. In terms of economic policy, S. Holland's *The Socialist Challenge*, published in 1975, was the influential account of the Left's economic thinking. It defined what it came to be known as the Alternative Economic Strategy (A. E. S.); a strategy that shaped many of the Labour Party's policies for the decade between 1973 and 1983. With regard to the civil society and domestic reform, Tony Benn's collected essays were of considerable importance. Noteworthy also was the material produced by the Institute of Workers Control (I. W. C.) which gave attention to the issue of industrial democracy among other matters. The Left's commitment to generate and organize ideas that would be the basis on which Labour should commit itself, if it was to win the next general election, was an important defining feature of the politics of the Left during the 1970s.[2]

The Left wing revival after 1970 was not to take place without the help of some individuals who grabbed the idea and encouraged its progress. The extra-parliamentary Left found a leader in T. Benn, a talented orator who was important in shaping the 'new' Left.[3] As he became disillusioned with the performance of the H. Wilson's Governments, T. Benn moved sharply Left in the aftermath. He was particularly important in the development of the Left through mobilizing and offering encouragement. His aid was important in the Left

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 32-34.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 31.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 30.

politics after 1970 to the extent that his name was associated with it and was called the Bennite Left. Next to Benn was S. Holland whose ideas, included in *The Socialist Challenge* as has been noted earlier, had direct impact upon the Left wing of the Labour Party. Michael Foot, Judith Hart, Joan Lester, Ian Mikardo and Brian Sedgemore were other Parliamentarians who were sympathetic to the ideas of the Left. The latter were also endorsed by the Party officials like Terry Pitt, Geoff Bish and Margaret Jackson.

Left wing sympathy lied firmly within and outside the Labour Party. To start with the extra-parliamentary organizations, the idea of import controls was approved and developed by members of the Cambridge Economic Policy Group while the case for workers' participation was backed up by members of the I. W. C. Besides, nationalization was supported by the Public Enterprise Group. From within the Party, support for the Left came from some of Labour's affiliated trade unions and other groupings like the C. L. P. D.

According to D. Coates' assessment, receiving support from different parts was a specific feature, not to say an advantage, which had characterized the Labour Left in the 1970s and early 1980s and made it different from the Left that had appeared along the previous forty years.[1] Most importantly was the fact that the former had not a theoretically coherent set of ideas for the domestic agenda and its concentration was directed towards matters of international concern as opposed to the latter which was more nationally oriented. A second and last point of contrast is that Labour's Left after 1970 realized the significance of establishing firmer links with the trade unions than in the past, and was able to capture control of the Party Conference by mobilizing an alliance between three sections- Left MPs, constituency activists and the votes of the delegation from the big unions- a thing that the Left had not enjoyed before 1970.[2]

Amid the events that were operating against the trade unions (the Industrial Relations Acts and the Conservative Government's decision to restrict wages) and the Party's leftward move, many unions remained loyal to Labour's leadership. This was evidenced by the 'Social Contract' which was adopted in 1973 as Party and T. U. C. policy. This helped repairing the breach between the Party and the unions. The breakdown of the relationship between the parliamentary and the industrial wings of the Labour movement can be traced back to the late 1950s when strike action increased resulting in poor industrial relations whereby affecting the unions' support for the Labour Party. The cause that led to this and that arose the unions'

[1] D., Coates, *op.cit.*, p. 208-209.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 209.

hostility was the Labour Government's decision to intervene in the processes of free collective bargaining for it was pushed by the need to bring inflation under control and its commitment to full employment.

There had been a controversy surrounding the origin of the idea of the 'Social Contract'. In his book From Bevan to Blair: Fifty Years' reporting from the Political Front Line, Geoffrey Goodman claims that it was Jack Jones, the Transport Union leader, who first came out with the idea. This was in 1971 in a speech to the Labour Party Conference when Jones proposed planning a kind of compromise or agreement between the Labour leadership and the trade unions for the purpose of carrying out economic and social reform.[1] According to Vernon Bogdanor, the writer of *"The Crisis of Old Labour"*, the idea of 'Social Contract' was first termed by T. Benn in his Fabian Pamphlet, *"The New Politics: A Socialist Reconnaissance"*, published in 1970.[2] However, the two authors did agree that the contract gained approval of the two concerned parts in 1972 when J. Callaghan declared at the Labour's Conference of that year that 'what Britain needs is a new Social Contract'.[3] Discussions over the provisions of the contract had been taking place along the year 1972 under the supervision of the Labour-T. U. C. Liaison Committee. It is worthy to mention here that these discussions continued at the same time as the negotiations between the Heath Government and the T. U. C. were conducted. The T. U. C. had been permitted to write a legislation which would invert E. Heath's Act. Moreover, introducing price controls, food and housing subsidies, increasing public expenditure, engineering wealth and income redistribution and securing a 'wide –ranging agreement' with the T. U. C. on other issues were all promises put forward by H. Wilson and the General Secretary of the T. U. C., V. Feather, in the 1973 policy document *"Economic Policy and the Cost of Living"* which provides the details of the compact whereby the next Labour government would commit itself.[4]

The Social Contract was the trump card that Labour appeared to play in the electoral campaign of 1974 to win the election. The campaign was based on the 1973 Party programme which marked the culmination of the Party's shift leftwards. All these factors led to a new development for the Labour Left and for the Party as a whole after 1970.

[1] For more details see: G. Goodman, From Bevan to Blair: Fifty Years' reporting from the Political Front Line, London, Pluto Press, 2003, pp. 164-165.
[2] For more details see : A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit*., pp. 6-7.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 7.
[4] *Ibid.*

II.2.3. Labour's Programme 1973: 'New Attitudes, New Policies'

The 1973 Programme was worked out by fifty policy committees with the support of the N. E. C.[1] In the words of D. Coates, the programme was "the most radical socialist document to be endorsed by a Labour Conference since 1934."[2] It committed the next Labour government to increased pensions reaffirming the Party's prior commitment to the poor and working people. Two areas that were given priorities were education and health.

The economic policies that were approved by the Party in the programme reflected the radical manifestation of the leftward shift of Labour. The programme stated Labour's adherence to the Social Contract, price controls and progressive taxation. It also promised the restoration of free collective bargaining accompanied with the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act, and the extension of industrial democracy. It introduced a widespread nationalization of twenty-five leading profitable companies in the economy which would be managed later by a new state holding company- the National Enterprise Board. Similarly, to have a more competitive, faster growing economy, it asserted the need to forge a compulsory planning agreement; a form of contract between companies and the State so that the latter would ensure greater control over the former's action.[3]

The N. E. C. had been divided on the last two issues that were proposed by the Left, and which did not enjoy the support of the largely-dominated Right wing leadership of the Labour Party, presented by H. Wilson, J. Callaghan, D. Healey and S. Williams besides others. The leaders suggested the ignorance of the two issues in the drafting of the next election manifesto.[4] This provoked the anger of the Left wing of the Party.

The issue of Europe, in turn, proved a divisive one in Labour Party politics. The Conservative Government was determined to take Britain into the Common Market. Labour Right wingers D. Healey and T. Crosland regarded the issue as one of principle which they approved. The Left, however, was against joining the E.E.C. and on top of this group were T. Benn, B. Castle and M. Foot. T. Crosland, himself, admitted that voting with the Conservative proposal to enter the Common Market would split the Party because a majority in the Party opposed this suggestion. In fact, this was what happened when the Right led by

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 189.
[2] D. Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
[3] R. Plant, *et al*. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

the deputy leader; Roy Jenkins, and other 69 Labour MPs ignored the Labour Party whips and voted with the Government in favour of accession to the E.E.C. Another 20 Labour MPs including T. Crosland abstained while other 198 voted against E.E.C. entry.[1] It is worthy to mention that without the support of Labour members E. Heath's proposal would have been lost.[2] On 22 January 1972, Britain signed for entry and in January 1973 it joined the Community with Ireland and Denmark. Despite the division that had occurred inside Labour over this issue, the majority of the Party did unite in criticism of the terms agreed to by the Government.[3] Therefore, the Shadow Cabinet accepted in March 1972 the proposal of T. Benn, Party Chairman for 1971-72, to hold a referendum on the proposed renegotiations over the terms of entry, although this suggestion was initially denounced by most of the front benchers. R. Jenkins and his colleagues George Thomson, Harold Lever and David Owen, however, strongly opposed the idea resulting in their resignation from the Shadow Cabinet.[4] The acceptance of the Shadow Cabinet members was explained on the grounds that they saw the referendum proposal as a way to avoid a permanent split in the Party. On the whole, the 1973 programme was approved by the Conference committing it to more radical economic proposals than before.[5]

Labour's Programme 1973 formed the basis of the 1974 manifesto in the electoral campaign. *Let Us Work Together: Labour's Way Out of the Crisis* was also described by the authors of the standard work as 'a decidedly radical document'.[6] It proposed the substantial extension of public enterprise. This included mineral rights, shipbuilding, ship repairing, ports, the manufacture of airframes and aero engines. Not only did Labour leaders promise to take sections of pharmaceuticals, road haulage, construction, machine tools and North Sea oil and gas into public ownership and control, but they also pledged to keep them under public holding companies. One of the principle socialist aims set out in the manifesto was bringing about "a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of the working people and their families."[7] By committing the Party to a set of policies more radical in tone and aspiration, Labour leaders and supporters saw this Left-wing programme

[1] R. Broad, Labour's European Dilemmas from Bevin to Blair, New York, Palgrave, 2001, p.XXI.
[2] K. Jefferys (ed.), Labour Forces from Ernie Bevan to Gordon Brown, London, I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2002, p. 122.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
[4] Jenkins was admitted into the shadow cabinet on Wilson's terms in October 1973. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[5] D. Coates, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[6] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit*., p. 11.
[7] Iain Dale (ed.), Labour Party General Election Manifestos 1900-1997, London, Routledge,2000, p. 192.

as a way on which the Party would actually return to office. Indeed, in January 1974, T. Benn had pointed out that:

> **If the Labour Party wins the election on the slogan 'Back to Work with Labour' … then the balance of power in the Labour Party is absolutely firmly on the Left; because one of the great arguments of the Right is that you can't win an election with a left-wing programme. If you have a leftwing programme and you win an election, then the Right will have lost that argument, and that will be a historic moment in the history of the British Labour movement.**[1]

Both the economic and political crises through which the United Kingdom was going, deepened further and a state of emergency was declared in the country. The question of 'who governs Britain?' was posed by E. Heath, who insisted that the country was in a state of crisis and had to confront the issue of growing union power and in particular the case of the National Union of Miners over their unwillingness to accept the constraints of the statutory income policy and their demand of a large pay increase as a price for ending an overtime ban. Faced by these problems with the miners who finally called for a general strike, E. Heath decided on 7 February 1974 to fight an election to bolster his position and try to defeat the miners.

The Conservatives were still under pressure because most of the promises that they gave in 1970 (amongst reducing unemployment and inflation) were not fulfilled, inducing a lack of confidence and fear within the electorate. Despite this, they were optimistic about the election taking into consideration their share in the Gallup polls of January 1974 which put them two points ahead compared to Labour.[2] Since the issues of union power were to be of central importance in the electoral campaign, Labour on the other hand appeared to play its trump card; 'the Social Contract' which was concluded by the time of the election although it was ambiguous in most of its pledges and statements.[3] However, the Party still looked at the election with a pessimistic view. A view that was shared by the people running Labour's campaign, and stemmed from the results of the by-elections in which Labour had lost Rochdale to the Liberals in October 1972 and a seat in Glasgow to the Scottish National Party

[1] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[3] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 12-13.

in November 1973, and the results of the opinion polls which were giving Labour only 38 per cent of the vote.[1]

Held on 28 February 1974, the general election gave Labour the lowest percentage vote since 1931. While Labour's share of the popular vote fell by almost six points to 37.2 per cent, the Conservatives' share dropped by over 9 points (from 46.4 to 37.9 per cent).[2] By contrast, the Liberal vote went up from 7.5 to 19.3 per cent and this had been a remarkable change that was particular to this election since 1945.[3] In terms of seats, Labour emerged with the biggest number of seats; 301 MPs to 297 for the Conservatives.[4] The balance of power was held by the Liberals who won 14 seats, Ulster Unionists 11 of the 12 Northern Ireland seats, Scottish Nationalists 7, the Welsh Plaid Cymru 2 and others 3.[5] A. Thorpe asserted that this election was the first inconclusive election since 1929 that gave no party an overall majority in Parliament.[6]

The west Midlands and western Lancashire were the areas where the Labour Party made its main gains. And though it returned to office, the fall of the percentage of the vote of Labour demonstrated one fact; that the Party was insufficiently popular this time even to command a majority in the House of Commons.

E. Heath tried to stay in office by forming a coalition government with the Liberals. Failing in persuading Jeremy Thorpe, the Liberal leader, E. Heath finally conceded defeat and resigned office on 4 March 1974. Harold Wilson was called upon to form his third administration.

II.3. Labour in Government under H. Wilson and J. Callaghan (1974-79):

The new Labour Government was formed to meet serious economic and financial challenges dominated by major social and industrial problems that Britain had faced since the Second World War. It was Britain's first Labour minority government since the Labour Government of 1929–31.[7] So how far would Labour be able to implement strong measures

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 191.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 299.
[3] D. Childs, Britain since 1945: A Political History, London and New York, Routledge, Fifth Edition, 2001, p. 169.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 192.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

like those embodied in the 1973 *Labour's Programme* to deal with the difficulties which it confronted amidst the lack of parliamentary majority compounded with the crisis?

II.3.1. The Government's Attempt to Hold to its Manifesto's Promises (1974-76):

Wilson's Cabinet of February 1974 was constructed around familiar faces the country used to see, and also contained few new faces. Denis Healey was nominated to the Exchequer, J. Callaghan to the Foreign Office and R. Jenkins to the Home Office. Other prominent members of the social democratic Right included T. Crosland who went to the Environment Department, and Mrs. Shirley Williams as a Secretary of State in the newly created Department of Prices and Consumer Protection. The Left was also well represented, and took some crucial posts. T. Benn was chosen to head the Department of Industry, B. Castle took over Health and Social Security Department and P. Shore became Secretary of State for Trade. Interestingly, M. Foot was appointed as Employment Secretary, a position that would involve close dealings with the trade unions particularly on the Social Contract. This Labour Government was determined to settle the country's economic and social problems particularly rapid inflation.

As far as the social policy was concerned, the new government passed six acts. Two of the early acts were to end the miners' strike, and to end the three day week in industry as a first step to keep its pre-election pledges subsumed under the Social Contract. Thirdly, the Conservatives' Industrial Relations Act[1] was repealed in 1974 and replaced by the Trade Unions and Labour Relation Act. This latter abolished the National Industrial Relations Court and the Pay Board. Although the standard rate of income tax was raised, the value added tax (VAT) was reduced from 10 to 8 per cent.[2] House rents increases were also frozen and mortgage interest rates held down. Finally, considerable food subsidies were introduced by Mrs. Williams who also promised to keep prices under strict control. Promises were also made to increase old-age pensions and social security and to negotiate moderate wage settlements. In the economic field, owing to budgetary changes introduced by D. Healey, the pressure of inflation was eased somewhat during the summer. The Labour Government

[1] Referred to in chapter two, p. 34.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

sought a stronger base to launch other policies and other discussions on economic policy like: the negotiation of the British terms of E.E.C. entry and devolution, therefore it delayed them until after the next general election, which would take place unexpectedly after few months, waiting to secure an overall majority in Parliament.

With Labour slightly ahead in the polls, H. Wilson called for an election on 10 October of the same year with some confidence that Labour would win.[1] Indeed, Labour got an overall majority but just of three. It had 319 seats while the Conservatives got 277 and the other parties totalled 39.[2] Labour's majority was based on regaining three seats in Lincoln,

Sheffield and Blyth. In this election, the electorate gave Labour 39,2 per cent of the votes, the Conservatives 35,8 per cent and the Liberals lost one per cent of their vote (18,3). 30.4 per cent share of the Scottish vote was registered for the Scottish National Party (S.N.P.) whose gains were at the expense of the Conservatives.[3] The remarkable advance made by the S.N.P. indicated the increasing strength of Scottish nationalism.

Labour's vote in this national swing was up by 2.2 per cent, but it was still less than 40 per cent of the national total.[4] Moreover its three seat majority would eventually disappear after a series of by-election defeats.[5] Therefore, the Party's parliamentary position was going to be difficult. With its weak position Labour would hardly assume the democratic authority to deal with the economic and industrial problems by implementing controversial new policies like those stated in the 1973 *Labour's Programme.* The reason behind this was that it was possible to all opposition MPs from the minor parties to combine at any time with the Conservatives to overthrow the newly formed government.[6]

One of the first problems facing H. Wilson was how to resolve the issue of Britain's E.E.C. membership. Although the Government's official line appeared to support continued membership, there were still wide disagreements on this issue, inside Parliament and within the Cabinet as well, between the pro-EEC minority (composed mainly by Labour's Right wingers) and the Leftist anti-EEC majority. Shortly after Labour's return to office, negotiations on Britain's terms of entry had been resumed. They were concluded in March

[1] H. Pelling, *op.cit.*, p. 273.
[2] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[6] D. Thomson, England in the Twentieth Century (1914-79), England, Penguin Books, 1981, p. 331.

1975 and a referendum was set for 5 June. Four main areas which were to be negotiated and given considerable interest during discussions were: "the common agricultural policy; the level of contributions to the E.E.C. budget; relations with the Commonwealth and developing states; and Britain's ability to pursue its own regional and industrial policies."[1] The Left considerably criticized the renegotiated terms for economic reasons and because it saw these terms as the inevitable shift of power from the elected Commons to the non-elected Commission and Council of Ministers in Brussels.[2] When the new terms were presented to Parliament in April, the Commons then voted by 396 in favour, against 170 including 145 Labour MPs amongst seven Cabinet ministers (T. Benn, B. Castle, M. Foot, W. Ross, P. Shore, J. Silkin and E. Varley), and 33 did not vote. However, the Labour special Conference of 26 April voted overwhelmingly against the terms. Only 137 MPs headed by H. Wilson, J. Callaghan, R. Jenkins and E. Short voted in favour. The European issue was eventually settled after the referendum was held resulting in a two-to-one majority in favour of continued membership in the E.E.C., however, on the new terms. It had distracted the Labour Party for a long time, but once it was resolved the Government turned its attention to other similar important matters, chief among which were the economic issues.

II.3.2. The Economic Problems and the Collapse of the Social Contract:

With Europe no longer dividing the Party, Wilson took the opportunity to remove T. Benn from the Department of Industry where he had begun to implement the Party's new radical industrial policies. T. Benn's industrial strategy focused on increased government intervention in industry by emphasizing three main issues: substantial extension of public ownership and control, compulsory planning agreements and the establishment of an Interventionist Enterprise Board. His appointment as Industry Secretary had seemed to guarantee the implementation of the 1973 radical industrial proposals. However, the 1974 August White Paper, which was issued by a Cabinet Committee under the title 'the Regeneration of British Industry', diluted T. Benn's proposals like planning agreements between the government and private industry which became voluntary.[3]

In A. Thorpe's view, this sceptical view of the Party's radical industrial policy that was held by H. Wilson and other leading ministers was based on the premise that those

[1] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
[2] For more details see: A. Gamble, Britain in Decline: Economic Policy, Political Strategy and the British State, London, Macmillan, Second Edition, 1985, p. 169.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

policies were still ambiguous and needed more elaboration contrary to what their advocates liked to suggest.[1] Besides, the leading figures believed that if those policy details were to be settled, then a real debate should be opened, a thing that the Party's leadership evaded. Second, a considerable distrust was aroused both inside and outside the Labour movement stemming from T. Benn's tactics and approaches with his radical speeches that had become increasingly embarrassing to the Premier. Indeed, T. Benn considered the Government's commitment to a mixed economy, as it was stated in the beginning of the White Paper, as a betrayal of the socialist policy that went in opposition to what the Labour movement aspired to and to what the *1973 Programme* proposed. His radical stance and his disapproval of the Cabinet's industrial policy urged H. Wilson to downgrade him as Secretary of Energy. Surprisingly, this was followed by H. Wilson's resignation on 16 March 1976 to be replaced by James Callaghan.

Another step far from the anti-capitalist proposals of 1973 (other than the White Paper) was the Industrial Bill which was published in January 1975. Under this act, the National Enterprise Board (N.E.B.) was set up in November 1975 under the chairmanship of Sir Donald Ryder. It was a state holding company whose chief role was to hold and administer the government's share in companies, acquire additional ones and sponsor businesses in trouble. The N.E.B. took 50 per cent of the ordinary voting shares of the electronics company; Ferranti, which managed to produce a profit.[2] It also succeeded in acquiring shares in other companies which needed the government's help and which were vital to the success of others, like the ailing car-manufacturer; British Leyland. The only planning agreement ever reached with a private company was with the American owned car manufacturer, Chrysler, in order to get massive cash injection to save jobs and avoid a total shut-down. The agreement, however, was broken in 1978. Generally speaking, the role of the N.E.B. was limited essentially to give support to industries which were on the road to collapse and it was thought that the industrial intervention of the state might save the situation.

A. Thorpe claimed that despite the fact that the 1974 White Paper dropped some elements of the *1973 Programme*, it proposed a number of nationalizations in the British industry.[3] He mentioned that these nationalizations included that of the ailing car manufacturer British Leyland (BL) and the shipbuilding industry whose collapse would have

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

had bad impacts on other already depressed areas as far as employment was concerned.[1] Plans were also put to create a British National Oil Corporation responsible for exploring and extracting the North Sea oil.[2] While these nationalization efforts were made, existing nationalization was widely falling backwards by the 1970s. As far as the Labour Party policy was concerned, this collapse meant that the Party lost another chance to show state ownership in a more favourable light as opposed to what it was stated in the *1973 programme*.

Correspondingly, these policies were aimed at securing industrial peace as well as reducing unemployment. After obtaining an overall majority in October 1974, the Labour Government tried to keep up with its pledges as they were enumerated in the Social Contract. It continued to introduce some other reforms in favour of the trade unions and the workers. The Employment Protection Act of 1975 and the 1976 amendment of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act guaranteed both workers greater protection against dismissal and their unions more legal immunities. The Government was, however, forced to backtrack on some of its promises to boost spending on public services when economic problems emerged.

The Labour Government's efforts to carry out its reforms were hindered by the economic and financial crises of 1976. As world price levels rose due to the oil crisis and wages rose in reaction, inflation went up reaching 19 per cent by December 1974 and hitting a peak in August 1975 with 26,9 per cent.[3] What caused this rise in inflation rate was partly that wage increases and public spending were running ahead of both prices and productivity. This in turn meant that wages would have to be controlled and public expenditure curbed if inflation was not to get any worse. However, the unions were unwilling to accept this and demanded further wage increases in response to the further price rises. The unions' increased wage militancy resulted in fuelling inflation rapidly, while expenditure and budget deficit was rising. Consequently, the Government found itself amid severe balance of payments difficulties and, eventually, a sterling crisis which it had to deal with to rescue the British economy from a downfall.

Thinking of a credible strategy on public finance following the rapid inflation of 1974-75 and the rise in tax burdens was the key question for the Labour Government from 1975 onwards. Deflation was the proposed solution suggested by the Chancellor, D. Healey,

[1] *Ibid*.
[2] D. Childs, *op. cit*., p. 197.
[3] *Ibid*.,p. 198.

in order to save the country from an economic slide. The Government, however, faced sustained opposition from its Left-wing supporters who argued that reductions in public spending would allow the transfer of resources to the private industry and might restrict growth in the economy as a whole. Instead, the Left resorted to the Alternative Economic Strategy which depended on two main elements; import controls and more interventionism in economy, as a way to maintain faster economic growth with more public spending.[1] Despite the Cabinet's division on the issue, D. Healey's decision to cut expenditure and increase taxation became effective from April 1975. Importantly, for many on Labour's Left, like T. Benn and P. Shore, D. Healey's deflationary measures marked an abandonment of Keynesianism because the Government was setting the aim of combating the galloping inflation before sustaining 'full' employment, and because the decision to maintain the proposed drastic cuts in expenditure went against the ideas and the purposes of the Social Contract and the manifesto as well.[2]

Meanwhile, discussions and considerable efforts by the Premier, D. Healey, M. Foot and key trade unionists had been made before an agreement between the Government and the T.U.C. over imposing a series of voluntary restraints on wages was secured. This time it appeared that the trade union leaders themselves (like Jack Jones; the General Secretary of the Transport and General' Workers' Union, and Hugh Scanlon of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers) were worried about the high level of inflation and its serious repercussions on the economy of the country. Worthy to mention is that the new agreement was not brought into operation without opposition from different parts. It was approved narrowly by the T.U.C. General Council, while Left-wing MPs came out against it in Parliament.[3] By the time this policy expired (August 1976), the average level of wage settlements reached 15 per cent compared with 26 per cent in 1975.[4] In essence, this policy was successful in bringing inflation effectively down to 12.9 per cent in July 1976.[5] Nevertheless, there was a big rise in unemployment which peaked at nearly 1.5 million in 1977.[6] Indeed, this sharp rise in unemployment, which was initially the result of the slump,

[1] R. Whiting, The Labour Party and Taxation: Party Identity and Political Purpose in Twentieth-Century Britain, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 246-247.
[2] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit*., p. 35.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] D. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
[6] D. Childs, *op. cit*., p. 192.

was perpetuated and aggravated by the expenditure cuts.[1] Thus, like the Conservatives in 1972, the Labour Government turned to curb inflation via incomes policy.

Along the period of the economic slump, the sterling remained under severe pressure. The pound plummeted from $2 at the beginning of the year 1976 to $1.6 in October.[2] To prop it up, therefore, the Government was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) to secure a loan. The I.M.F. demanded £5000 million of cuts in Government spending.[3] Six special meetings were held by the Cabinet during the crisis in order to debate the likely conditions which would be attached to the loan.[4] The Chancellor, D. Healey, and the Trade Secretary, Edmund Dell, besides J. Callaghan and other nine ministers were ready to accept D. Healey's proposal to secure the loan at the cost of cuts in public expenditure and thus giving in to the I.M.F. deflationary measures, whereas the Left headed by T. Benn and the social democratic Right around T. Crosland initially opposed the cuts. But the critics of the cuts failed to offer a convincing alternative. This fact was in favour of D. Healey's side and ultimately the Prime Minister agreed to the Chancellor's plan. Consequently, on 29 September 1976 the application for a loan of $3900 million was made. In return, it was agreed in December 1976 that the cuts in public spending were to be imposed. A cut of £1500 million for 1977-78 was announced plus further expenditure cuts of £1000 million in each of the next two years.[5]

Due largely to the I.M.F. assistance, the sterling was rising up again towards $2. The country had apparently started to recover from the 1974-76 recession and improvement in economic conditions had been marked according to inflation and unemployment statistics. In June 1978, the rate of inflation was down to 7.4 per cent, and so did unemployment which reached 1.3 million in the last quarter of 1978.[6] In the same respect, the British growth rate had risen to 3.5 per cent and the balance of payments had moved from deficiency into surplus.[7] For the economy as a whole, the period of sharp recession and instability was reversed into one of recovery and improvement despite the fact that the economy was still under strain.

Broadly speaking, the 1976 crisis marked a turning point in British post-war political economy. The electorate, who expected an increase in public spending, was disappointed with

[1] D. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 335.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
[4] J. Plowright, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
[7] J. Hollowell, (ed.), Britain since 1945, the United States, Blackwell Publisher, 2003, p. 386.

the Labour Government's decision to cut expenditure in 1975-76 because of the slump. Another change in policy at that time was the shift away from the objective of maintaining full employment (even at the cost of higher inflation as Keynesian policies suggested) to reducing inflation. Priority was given to reduce inflation when unemployment was high, and this marked for many historians like Andrew Thorpe and Kevin Hickson the end of post-war Keynesian consensus by abandoning full employment.[1] Labour's abandonment of Keynesian system of demand and management that had dominated economic thinking the previous thirty years was, however, a supporting factor to the position of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the new Conservative leader, who criticized the policy from the outset. In addition, the three main points[2] that formed the essence of the Social Contract, which in turn was central to Labour's *1973 Programme*, were abandoned. This signalled the collapse of the Social Contract and asserted, especially to Labour's Left wingers, the fact that this Labour Government was never a radical administration as it was argued by the Party members in the Party programme and the manifesto as well. The economic measures pursued by the Government and the end of the Social Contract would, ultimately, lead to unions' reaction.

II.3.3. 'Winter of Discontents':

The social circumstances following the crisis were not all good as the economic conditions indicated. The Government's record in social policy was not as expected by the electorate compared to what it was earlier referred to in the 1974 manifesto. While the level of industrial disputes especially about the wages issue remained high, the Government carried on with its cuts in public expenditure and with wage restraints. After considerable debate with the unions, which were unwilling to endorse a third year pay restraint, the Government announced in August 1978 a continuation of the incomes policy in its third stage. According to this settlement, which was valid for one year, wage increases were fixed at a maximum limit of 10 per cent.[3] Moreover, spending on personal social services was lowered in 1977-78. 78. But Labour still had made improvements in other areas that already formed part of the Social Contract. Old-age pensions and child benefits increased along with a freeze on council house rents and subsidies on some foodstuffs.

[1] A. Seldon, and K. Hickson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 34. *also* A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
[2] These three main points are: expensive public expenditure spent on social reforms and security, commitment to full employment and refrain from statutory incomes policy.
[3] D. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

Considering the importance of reducing inflation by relying on incomes policy as an alternative way to maintain that, the Labour Government went further more in July 1978 by declaring a 5 per cent limit to pay increases as the fourth stage of the incomes policy, providing that it would return to free collective bargaining.[1] The policy was rejected by both the T.U.C. and the Labour Party Conference of October by a large majority. The trade unions were determined to oppose it because the new limit at the 5 per cent point was breaking even the 10 per cent limit of stage III.[2] Truly, the wages guideline was first breached by Ford's car workers who after a long and costly strike were awarded 17 per cent increase in November.[3] Consequently, the Government attempted to impose sanctions against the company but its attempt was doomed to failure when the Government was challenged and defeated by the Conservatives in the House of Commons. This, in turn, encouraged other groups of workers in the public sector like lorry drivers, hospital workers, ambulance men, grave diggers and dustmen to go into strike claiming for further pay rises. This series of strikes took place during the first months of the year 1979 and became known as the 'Winter of Discontents'. Eventually, the situation was settled with immediate wage increases ranging from 9 to 10 per cent. The picketing did not, however, end without having bad political effects.

The 1979 strikes clearly showed that Labour could not 'handle' the unions as might the Social Contract suggested. Labour's failure to follow a pragmatic deal with the unions and to avoid the workers' strikes (especially those that affected essential services) impacted the popularity of the Labour Government. The polls showed that Labour was ahead by 5 points in November 1978, but three months later it fell back by 20 points.[4] Further, the approval rating of the Prime Minister, J. Callaghan, collapsed. Meanwhile in Parliament, Labour lost control of the Commons when the Liberals, the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, following the failure of the devolution referenda in Scotland and Wales, withdrew their support from the Government and joined the Conservatives, in passing a vote of no confidence in 28 March. As a result, J. Callaghan was forced to ask for the dissolution of Parliament, and an election was called for 3 May.

Labour ran the electoral campaign on the basis of a manifesto that promised in the main to increase government control of industry. However, it lost the election to the

[1] H. Pelling, *op.cit.*, p. 277.
[2] D. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 334.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 336.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

Conservatives who got 43.9 of the vote (7 per cent ahead of Labour).[1] Commentators like A. Thorpe had noted that Labour had lost support in most geographical areas and in all sectors of the population.[2] Moreover, the events of the previous winter had a bad influence on the Labour Party's share of vote among skilled workers of whom only 42 per cent voted Labour; compared to 49 per cent in the previous general election.[3]

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Party's loss of the election was primarily a result of an assessment of Labour's performance in office which was considered by most of the British people as a failure; an idea that the Conservative propaganda tried to use in convincing people.[4] The Left wing of the Party, too, criticized the Labour Government for its retreat from carrying out the radical commitments of the 1974 general election manifesto.[5] The Party's failure to adopt the radical industrial policy, indicated in the *1973 Programme*, was considered by the Left to be the underlying cause of the confrontation with the trade unions in the 'Winter of Discontents'.[6] From outside the P.L.P., the trade unions were angered angered by the Governments' shift from fulfilling its 1974 pledge to *"bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of the working people and their families"*, into moving in an opposite direction by calling for public expenditure cuts, reductions in direct taxation and extended periods of pay restraints.[7] These policies brought the workers few of the benefits promised in the Social Contract. The social democratic Right, on the other side, was on the edge of isolation because of the failure of revisionism and the increasing attempt of the Left to capture the Party's apparatus.[8] On the whole, the H. Wilson and J. Callaghan Governments of 1974-79 remained a central point that was to dominate the internal politics of the Labour Party in opposition and led finally to its split afterwards.

II.4. The Labour Party's Further Move to the Left (1979-1983):

[1] J. Black, Britain since the Seventies: Politics and society in the Consumer Age, London, Reaktion Books, 2004, p. 123-124.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 206.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 207.
[5] Robert Eccleshall, and Graham Walker (ed.), Biographical Dictionay of British Prime Ministers, London, Routledge, 1998, p. 352.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] A. Thorpe, *op.cit.,* p. 208.
[8] Robert Eccleshall, and Graham Walker (ed.), *op. cit.,* p. 351.

The 1979 major electoral defeat of the Labour Party and the accession of Margaret Thatcher to the premiership were to prove to be an event of enormous significance for the Labour Party, because the next four years would be turbulent ones in Labour's history. During these years, the Party experienced a period of internal tensions between the Left and the Right, encompassing organizational as well as ideological and policy matters which undermined its credibility, led to the breakaway of a section of its Right wing to form the Social Democratic Party in March 1981, and badly influenced the Party's fortunes in the 1983 general election.

II.4.1. The Internal Disputes and Division:

The economic and the political circumstances in Britain after 1979 were on the whole disappointing for most of the British who began to believe that the Conservatives had brought nothing new. Late in 1979, Britain was hit by a renewed world recession which lasted till 1982. Among the crisis' bad repercussions was the closure of more than 5000 factories between 1979 and 1982, which in turn led to an approximate loss of 25 per cent of Britain's manufacturing production capacity rendering the nation ever more dependent upon the provision of services.[1] After two years in office, unemployment stood at 2.7 million more than double what it had been in the last days of Labour, and rose further to reach 3.3 million in the winter of 1982-83.[2] The year 1980 was marked by a rapid rise in adult unemployment than any single year since 1930 (when the Wall Street Crash took place.)[3] Inflation, too, more more than doubled to peak at 22 per cent in May 1980.[4] For the Left wing of the Labour Party, these general factors could only expose the failure of the capitalist system to achieve positive economic growth. Therefore, the Labour Party especially the Leftists believed that the Conservative Government's policies would be unpopular because of their ineffectiveness to cope with Britain's economic and social problems and to bring about progress, and so electors would be then more willing to listen to arguments in favour of a 'socialist' alternative programme.

[1] E. J. Evans, Thatcher and Thatcherism, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 20.
[2] J. Black, *op.cit.*, p. 127.
[3] E. J. Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 18.

The Labour Party was, conversely, under pressure due to Thatcher's fierce attacks on socialism and everything socialist. To quote A. Thorpe, Mrs. Thatcher was particularly critical to *"Labour, trade unions, nationalized industries, the welfare state, high levels of public expenditure, council housing, Labour local authorities, high direct taxation and the redistribution of wealth downwards and full employment,"* which she thought were the causes of Britain's problems.[1] She also related Britain's decline to the ideas and policies of compromise and consensus which had been pursued by the previous governments.[2] She, instead, believed in the interests of free market participation and competition and attempted from her first year in office to make moves towards achieving economic freedom, notably the abolition of restrictions on the export and import of capital. Further, the Conservatives under the leadership of Mrs. Thatcher came out openly against the Labour Governments' interventionist strategy and committed themselves to the view that the independence of the free market would be constructive.

Taking into consideration the pressures of Mrs. Thatcher's attack on socialism, members of the Labour Party formulated various views about the future orientation of the Party. Labour's recent record in the 1970s governments and the Labour leadership's attitude towards the unions in the 'Winter of Discontents' had stirred up union criticism and hostility to the leadership, resulting eventually in driving the unions leftwards. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (C.L.P.D.), set up in 1973, was also of central importance in rising consciousness among Party members concerning a lot of issues and mobilizing support on these issues in addition to fomenting opposition to the leadership. After 1979, this body worked and coordinated its activities together with other left groups like the Labour Coordinating Committee (L.C.C.) and the Labour Party Young Socialists in the umbrella organization: Rank and File Mobilizing Committee.[3] Further, the failure of successive Labour governments to fulfill the Party manifestos and the Conference declarations had by 1979 convinced many activists that the parliamentary leadership was exercising the power in undemocratic way, and that the wider Party should have the power to compel a Labour Cabinet to put a programme into effect.

Overall, the Left concluded that defeat, disappointment and economic crisis needed a change in Party policy which in turn entailed constitutional changes in the whole structure of

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 210.
[2] J. Black, *op. cit*., p. 125-126.
[3] A. Mitchell, Four Years in the Death of the Labour Party, London, Methuen, 1983, p. 29.

authority within the Labour Party to ensure greater involvement of the Left wing in the policy process. The first point in the Left's campaign for constitutional reform was mandatory reselection of Labour MPs which targeted at renouncing the Labour MPs' automatic right to remain as representatives beyond the life of one Parliament. The second reform was a demand for the extension of the franchise to elect the Party leader beyond the P.L.P. to an electoral college compromising all elements of the Party. It aimed, in fact, to render the leader more responsive to Party and union opinion. To remove the leader's power of veto, the final element in the Left's reformation plan was the placing of the right to draft the election manifesto in the hands of the N.E.C. alone. Generally speaking, the constitutional reformers had put forward two interlinked aims to be achieved through the three items. These aims were: to end the P.L.P.'s independence and to weaken the Right wing's hold of the Party.[1] According to the reformers, these three reforms were inseparable to form a new approach to Party politics.

The campaign for constitutional change was run by the Rank and File Mobilizing Committee and headed by T. Benn. It should be mentioned here that the Left groups that constituted this organization were not held together by any common ideology, but by agreement over the pursuit of clearly-specified goals.[2] It was at the October 1979 Party Conference that mandatory reselection of MPs was adopted. This Conference also voted in favour of a resolution calling on the N.E.C. to submit proposals, concerning its demand to have control over the manifesto, to the 1980 Conference.[3] However, the proposals of the N.E.C. were rejected in the Conference of 1980. Moreover, the issue of the electoral college was settled in the special Conference of 1981 and for the first time a new method of electing the leader based on a Party-wide franchise was adopted giving 40 per cent of the votes to the unions and 30 per cent each for the P.L.P. and the constituencies.[4] There were other policies that were introduced in Labour Conferences from 1979 to 1981 including unilateralism, withdrawal from the E.E.C. and extending public ownership besides a resolution calling for Britain's withdrawal from the N.A.T.O., but it was heavily defeated.

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*,, p. 16.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 22.
[3]The 1979 Conference agenda contained all the three elements of the programme, and were voted in the following way: N.E.C. manifesto control carried 3.936.000 to 3.008.000, reselection carried 4.008.000 to 3.039.000, election of Party leader: beaten 4.010.000 to 3.039.000. A. Mitchell, *op. cit*., p. 41.
[4]H. Pelling, *op. cit*., p. 285.

These changes were seen by Labour's Right wing from different angles. The first group, which constituted the majority of the Right, believed that the triumph of the campaign for constitutional reform and the Conference's adoption of the policies that the left-led N.E.C. exposed from 1979 to 1981 were leading the Labour Party to an electoral disaster masterminded by the Left. Such point of view was also held by remarkable members like David Owen, Shirley Williams and Bill Rodgers who began to consider leaving the Party for they were worried by the success of the Left. The latter fact was not true anyhow for the Right's second group, who argued instead that the defeat of the manifesto proposal was clearly a defeat for the Left. In addition, the Left's share of votes on the electoral college was 50.7 per cent to 49.3 per cent, while on mandatory reselection it was 53.2 per cent to 46.8 per cent, and so this narrow victory meant that the Party was not all moving leftwards.[1]

For the Left, triumph for mandatory reselection and the electoral college was a victory because it demonstrated the popularity of the 'Bennite' Left's cause amongst the Party activists. Of equal importance to the Rank and File Mobilizing Committee was the N.E.C. which used its constitutional prerogatives to ensure that the process of constitutional reform would not be delayed or halted.[2] It was also due to the help of the left leaning N.E.C. that some controversial policy issues, like withdrawal from the E.E.C., were raised again in the Conference despite the leadership's fundamental opposition. J. Callaghan's disability to restrain the Conference from approving these constitutional reforms and adopting left-wing positions on major policies could only demonstrate the extent to which the authority of both the leader and the P.L.P. as a whole had been undermined.[3]

In the autumn of 1980, J. Callaghan announced his resignation. He retired from the leadership of the Labour Party in the hope that D. Healey would succeed him since the franchise was still in the hands of the Parliamentary Party only, and before putting the constitution of the electoral college into effect. Two other candidates who decided to stand for the leadership election were E. Shore and J. Silkin, both of whom had high experience in office. M. Foot, too, was nominated by Left wing MPs and union leaders because he was more likely to defeat D. Healey. The first ballot took place in November 1980 and gave D. Healey 112 votes while Foot got 83, J. Silkin 38 and E. Shore 32.[4] In the second ballot,

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., pp. 209-210.
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit*., p. 17.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 22.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 212.

M. Foot defeated D. Healey by 139 to 129, and thus he became the Labour Party's leader while D. Healey became a deputy leader.[1] E. Shore was appointed as the Shadow Chancellor and T. Benn as the Chairman of the Home Policy Committee and effectively the senior policy-maker on the N.E.C. In fact, among the members that backed M. Foot were Right and Centre MPs, who had already the intention of defecting to a new party. They did so on the grounds that in case M. Foot, well known for his Left-wing inclination,[2] won, this victory would be used as a convincing excuse to break away from a Party dominated by the Left.[3] In the last Labour Governments, M. Foot proved to be a good conciliator between the different parties of the Labour Party, and who regarded the Party's unity among his foremost priorities. So would he be able to maintain this unity once he became a leader of the Party?

The 1981 Conference's decision to ratify the proposal for the electoral college was followed by an immediate split in the Parliamentary Party. This split was led by thirteen Right wing Labour MPs, headed by R. Jenkins, S. Williams, D. Owen and W. Rodgers, who decided to secede from the Labour Party in favour of forming a new party called the Social Democratic Party (S.D.P.) on 26 March 1981. Most of the Party's members were ex-Cabinet ministers including the four ones that were mentioned earlier besides George Brown, Edmund Dell and Lord Diamond. Within a matter of weeks the membership of the S.D.P. reached over 50.000.[4] Most of the defectors had left the Labour Party to join the S.D.P. mainly because they felt that Labour was moving too far left especially after its adoption of the organizational changes advocated by the Left. These constitutional and policy changes, or in other words the Left's success, were seen by the defectors as likely to open the way to further radicalism since the Labour Left's objective was to render the Labour Party more responsive to its ideas and its members. Thus, amid all these developments within the Labour Party, the defectors found it hard to defend their ideals among which were the issues of the E.E.C. and defense. They wanted Britain to play a vital role in the E.E.C., N.A.T.O., the U. N. and the Commonwealth.[5] Yet still whatever the reasons of the split were, the advent of the S.D.P. reflected the internal struggle between the two wings of the Labour Party that dated back to the 1970s when the revisionist social democracy proved no longer effective coupled with the Left's attempt to

[1] D. Butler, and G.Butler, British Political Facts, England, Palgrave Macmillan, tenth edition, 2011, p. 163.
[2] M. Foot remained committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament , withdrawal from the E.E.C. and extensive development of public ownership. D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[3] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[4] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
[5] *Ibid*., 212.

overshadow the Right and its body of ideas, which consequently led to a self-isolation of a section of the Right within the Party.

Another shake to the Party was the deputy leadership contest between D. Healey and T. Benn which lasted for almost six months and characterized by severe bitterness from the two sides. It happened in a critical time when the Party was falling between the S.D.P. challenge and Mrs. Thatcher's pressures. T. Benn made the Rank and File Mobilizing Committee the organizing centre from which he launched his campaign. M. Foot, in fact, opposed the 'Bennite' move and the bitter dispute because he was convinced that this would do no good for the Party and its electoral performance. The election was held in September 1981, and J. Silkin was eliminated on the first ballot. The second ballot was decisive by nominating D. Healey for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party. It is noteworthy to mention that T. Benn was defeated by a margin of less than 1 per cent.[1] A major contributory factor in T. Benn's loss of the election was the decision of a number of Left MPs including N. Kinnock to withdraw their support for him. This contest had far-reaching consequences. One effect was that D. Healey's victory would restrict the advance of the Left within the Party.[2] Truly, many Left wingers lost their posts within the N.E.C. as they failed to be re-elected. A second implication of the bitter challenge over the deputy leadership was the reinforcement of the already existing internal conflict between the two camps as far as Labour's policy commitments and positions of power in the Party were concerned.

The Party's further move to the left continued, and this time it was manifested by the emergence of an extremist group within the Labour Party. Militant Tendency was a Trotskyite organization which secured by early 1982 entry to the Labour Party and sought to push its policy sharply leftwards and use it as a means of stirring up revolution in Britain.[3] Indeed, some members of Militant Tendency were nominated for parliamentary candidature and were assisted in this by mandatory reselection which enhanced powers for deselecting MPs. Militant Tendency's membership rose from 1800 in 1979 to 3500 in a matter of three years, and this meant that this body was constituting 'a party within a party'.[4] Associated with the *Militant* newspaper, this organization was growing and many centre and Right wing MPs were deeply alarmed. The Left wingers, however, were initially reluctant to act against

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 215.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] J. Plowright, *op. cit*., p. 199.
[4] *Ibid*.

Militant Tendency, fearing that banning it would weaken the Left's hold on the Party.[1] As pressures from the Right and centre-Left increased, the N.E.C. decided to hold an enquiry in 1981 in order to establish a register of approved groups. As a result, Militant Tendency was proscribed in December 1982 and some of its leaders were expelled from the Labour Party in February 1983, but its power had not diminished yet since the Party was busy preparing for the next general election.[2]

II.4.2. The Left's Electoral Strategy and the Electoral Crisis:

In his article 'The Labour Party and the Electorate', I. Crewe noted that the election of 1979 marked "the most emphatic rejection of the Labour Party for almost half a century."[3] In that election, the Party made heavy losses in terms of the number of voters amongst the working class who shifted to support the Conservatives and thus their policy stances.

Through analyzing the reasons for the decline in support for Labour, Labour's Right had arrived at the fact that public ownership, powerful trade unionism and social welfare had become less popular among Labour's voters.[4] Hence, it implied that to regain the lost support, the Party ought to shift to the Right. The Left, however, had another interpretation. It believed that the driving force behind the voters in casting their votes was their interests and how well they were served. It also claimed that the 'modest' record of the last Labour governments, Labour's inability to control unemployment; improve public services; and to achieve sustained economic recovery, and the events of the 'Winter of Discontents' had disillusioned millions of Labour voters.[5] These latter, therefore, began to lose confidence in the Labour Party and its ability and willingness to realize its policies and values, subsumed in its programme, once in power. Consequently, a problem of trust between the Party and its voters had arisen, as T. Benn put it forward:

> **If we keep faith with those we represent and if we keep our nerve, there is nothing that can stop us from restoring our society to a new and fairer**

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 217.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] Quoted in E. Shaw., *op. cit*., p. 23.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

> **basis… The greatest problem we face is not that our policies are unpopular. The problem is that many people don't believe what we say and don't know whether we would do it if we were elected.[1]**

From this analysis the Left drew some conclusions among which was that to overcome the problems of trust it would be necessary to create a leadership which could ensure the promotion and the implementation of a radical programme.[2] The latter goal, in turn, could only be guaranteed by limiting the autonomy of the P.L.P. from the extra-parliamentary Party. Instead of the P.L.P., a N.E.C. dependent on Party activists would be the responsible body for welding the policy resolutions, based on the activists' wishes and passed by the Party Conference, into a manifesto. This way would, according to the Left, make the manifesto a binding mandate that would be adopted and carried out to win popular support.

The essential purpose of the constitutional reforms that were carried by Labour Conferences of 1979 and 1982 was the transformation of power from the centre (namely the leader and the Parliamentary elite) to the extra-parliamentary activists (namely the constitutional parties and trade unions).[3] Of the two constitutional changes approved in 1979 and 1982, the Left attached great importance to mandatory reselection for it authorized constituency parties to deselect sitting MPs as official candidates.[4] The latter were deprived of their precedent independence and were made more subject to their local activists whose rights were, according to such a way, considerably enlarged.[5] Moreover, reselection had restricted the power of the leader. Many commentators like Eric Shaw agreed on the fact that by 1983 the power structure of the Labour Party had undergone a remarkable change. In the words of T. Benn: the success of the Left over the reselection and the electoral college had brought "an enormous change because the P.L.P., which has been the great centre of power in British politics, has had to yield to the movement that put members there."[6] Eric Shaw also quoted D. Denver who noted in his article 'Great Britain: From Opposition with a Capital "O" to Fragmented Opposition' edited in 1987, that: the early 1980s organizational changes had "decisively shifted power in the Party away from the P.L.P. to the constituency activists and the trade unions."[7]

[1] Quoted by: E.Shaw, *op.cit.*, p. 24.
[2] A. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] E.Shaw, *op.cit.*, p. 22.
[5] A. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[6] Quoted by: E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
[7] *Ibid.*

From its inception, the Labour Party derived its most power from the working class which had found a shared interest in the socialist programme presented by the Party and based on pledges to redistribute wealth and power, extend the welfare state and revive the economy through interventionist means. However, this had begun to change and class had appeared to fade as a spur to voting since the 1970s. According to E. Shaw's point of view, the Left argued that the reason for this retreat was that the working class interests had often been ignored by Labour Cabinets which denounced strikes and gave priority to national interest over class interests.[1] Thus, encouraging class solidarity and shared interests through supporting workers in dispute with their employers and spreading socialist ideas was the main step in the Left's political strategy to regain political support of the workers.

Nevertheless, things did not go as the Left hoped and planned for. The Left's political strategy was not built on a strong basis because it lacked the logical analysis of the factors that were the stimuli to the public political opinion (such as the impact of the mass media, the break-up of the working class and the changes in patterns of wage bargaining).[2] It continued, instead, to push on through a radical manifesto. In the same respect, its faith in the capacity of the Party to mobilize public opinion was illusionary because many of its central policies were out of line of public sentiment.[3] As a result, Labour failed to effectively convince the public who turned to support the Conservatives after their successful lead in the Falklands conflict. The Falklands issue had ended any hopes of the Left to recover and win public support.

After the favourable local elections results which were held at the height of the Falklands War (May 1982), Mrs. Thatcher decided on 5 May 1983 to call for an early election. The Conservatives' share in the poll increased from 31 per cent in April to 46 per cent in July.[4] Despite Labour's poor performance in the local elections, the Party gained a seat seat in Birmingham Northfield from the Conservatives. Further, the December poll rating of Labour had improved by putting the Party only seven points behind the Conservatives who had been ahead by 19 points. In the same Gallop poll, Labour had a 12 point lead over the Liberal-S.D.P. Alliance.[5] However, the tide was reversed in a by-election in 1983 where the

[1] *Ibid*,. p. 25.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 26.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 216.
[5] *Ibid*., pp. 216-217.

Labour Party lost a seat in Bermondsey. In the words of A. Gamble, the emergence of the S.D.P. and the internal conflicts had shattered Labour's standing in the polls.[1]

E. Shaw expressed the view that Labour had been distracted by the constitutional disputes and the deputy leadership contest, and so the manifesto was rushed out before it had been fine-tuned, and the electoral campaign was launched before it had been well-organized. Generally speaking, the manifesto contained a set of radical socialist collective proposals since the Party was dominated by a strong and united Left. It proposed a five year economic planning strategy in consultation with unions and employers[2], the promotion of industrial democracy and the renationalization of few industries which had so far been privatized. The manifesto's proposed policies subsumed also the reduction of unemployment to 'below a million,' together with an increase in public expenditure and social benefits. Promises to ban sex and racial discrimination were also part of the 1983 Labour manifesto. Concerning foreign policy, Labour promised to withdraw Britain from the E.E.C. and called for unilateral nuclear disarmament. The latter defense policy was not wholly agreed by the Party and remained a highly controversial issue between M. Foot and D. Healey, Shadow Foreign Secretary, who disagreed over its precise meaning.[3] In addition, the campaign was disorganized and the propaganda was poor. The Party's leader, M. Foot, was uncomfortable and confused when interviewed on T.V.[4] He also lacked the strong presence that was necessary to impress the electorate. Labour strategists were fully aware of this point and therefore tried to portray an image of collective leadership, but Mrs. Thatcher too realized that and attempted to criticize and mock it.[5] M. Foot was also attacked and ridiculed by the media, media, a fact that had bad impact on his poll ratings.

According to the assessment made by D. Childs, the results of the 1983 general election were devastating for Labour.[6] Only 209 seats were gained by Labour; its worst performance since 1935. Further, the Party's vote fell steeply to 27.6 per cent which was its lowest share since 1918.[7] In terms of votes cast per candidate, the Labour Party was nearly

[1] A. Gamble, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
[2] For more details see: E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-13.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 26.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 219.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] D. Childs, *op. cit*., p. 221-222.
[7] R. J. Johnston, *et al*, "The Role of Ecological Analysis in Electoral Geography: The Changing Pattern of Labour Voting in Great Britain 1983-1987," Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography, 1988, Vol. 70, N°. 3, p. 310.

two per cent more than the Liberal-S.D.P. Alliance, which meant that Labour was threatened to fall back to the third place. (see Appendix C) Socially speaking, Labour's share of the working class vote fell from 55 per cent in 1979 to 49 per cent. Labour attracted the support of just 38 per cent of skilled workers, only slightly ahead of the Conservatives who drew the support of 35 per cent.[1] Statistics also showed that workers in the south turned to support the Conservatives more than Labour. As a result of the dramatic fall in the working class vote in this general election and the previous one, Labour had been driven back to its old heartlands.[2] To take the geographical areas where Labour had lost, it was particularly and heavily in London, Southern England, the wider south east, eastern Lancashire, West Yorkshire and the east Midlands. Worse still was that the Alliance had occupied the second place before Labour in numerous constituencies in the area south of the Severn-Wash line.[3] Overall, at the 1983 general election, the Labour Party had its worst electoral performance since the First World War in terms of its share of total votes cast.[4]

Needless to say, there was a range of factors that contributed to this outcome. With regard to E. Shaw's point of view, the first factor laid in the fact that Labour's policies stated in the manifesto had become unpopular amongst the electorate.[5] The second fact was that the British society had undergone structural changes like the contraction of the working class and this affected negatively Labour's fortune in the election because the working class had been always the foremost source of support for Labour. Furthermore, the confusion that had dominated members of the Party over diverse matters throughout the previous four years coupled with M. Foot's behaviour on T.V. which was regarded by most of the electorate as lacking credibility and potential, had pushed Labour to the edge and finally out of the scene.[6] Moreover, what contributed to the Labour Party's loss in the election and shook its position were the ill-prepared electoral campaign and the emergence of the third force, the Liberal-S.D.P. in the British political system. The latter fact had remained an open question for Labour as to whether it could remove the Alliance threat.

These factors acted as constraints on the Party, its policies and its leadership during the period between 1979 and 1983, and hence these factors were at the origin of Labour's

[1] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 221-222.
[2] The areas from where the Labour Party drummed up its electoral strength, namely the traditional working class in: northern England, Scotland, and Wales. For more details see Appendix C.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
[4] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
[5] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[6] *Ibid.*

electoral crisis.[1] Still, this period was typical in the sense that the Party moved sharply to the Left on some policy issues. The severity of the election result would act as a catalyst for change in the Labour Party in the following years.

[1] J. Black, op. cit., p. 131.

CHAPTER THREE:

Modernizing the Labour Party: Organizational and Policy Changes (1983-1994)

The period from 1983 to 1994 witnessed dramatic changes inside the Labour Party, in terms of structure, policy and ideology. It was Labour's electoral defeat in 1983 that created the conditions for change. The Left wing of the Party was blamed for the fiasco in 1983, as the election was fought and lost on a manifesto famously described by Gerald Kaufman as "the longest suicide note in history."[1] Leading figures in the Labour Party argued that changes in British society forged by Mrs. Thatcher's new policies and the international economy meant that socialists had again to reconsider their policies and ideas.

This chapter covers the transformation of Labour's structure, strategy and policies under the leadership of N. Kinnock from 1983 to 1987. It attempts to examine the pressures impeding the process of modernizing the Party, its centrist move and the new professionalism of Labour's strategies in campaigning and communication. The miners' strike and the fragmentation of the Left are two major events in the evolution of the Labour Party and which are dealt with here. The chapter also examines N. Kinnock's Policy Review and the acceleration of the Party's programme of reform under the leadership of J. Smith.

III.1. Slow Road to Electoral Recovery (1983-1987):

When N. Kinnock took over the leadership, the Party was still divided especially over a programme that had been repudiated by the electorate. Thus, he held the view that to overcome the Party's weaknesses, there was a need for change in its policy and its internal structure. This, in turn, would facilitate his task of retaining the Party's unity. His agenda revolved around one main objective which was the revival of effective governance within the Labour Party. To this end, he wanted to end the paralysis of leadership power and re-establish its authority, hand again the responsibility over policy-making to the Parliamentary Party, move the Party to the centre and put an end to the Militant Tendency's influence within the Party and expel it eventually from Labour.

III.1.1. The Limits of Leadership (1983-85):

Shortly after the 1983 electoral defeat, M. Foot resigned the leadership. Four competitors took part in the leadership challenge within the Party. The centre-Left was represented by N. Kinnock who had been on the National Executive Committee (N.E.C.)

[1]D. Childs, Britain since 1945: A Political History, London and New York, Routledge, Fifth Edition, 2001, p. 221.

since 1978 and a front-bencher MP for 13 years. Two Right wing candidates were Roy Hattersley and Peter Shore. From the Left, after T. Benn lost his seat in Parliament and thus he could not stand for the leadership election, Eric Heffer was the standard-bearer of this wing together with Michael Meacher as a candidate for deputy leadership. Of all the four contestants, Kinnock was the most expected to win.[1] The personal popularity of N. Kinnock, the weakness of the Right and the widespread desire to end the internal fighting were the three factors that contributed to this expectation. Actually, N. Kinnock won the leadership taking the majority of the votes in all of the three sections of the electoral college (three quarters of the Union votes, more than nine tenths of the Constituency Labour Parties votes, and just under half of the MPs votes).[2] His share in the total vote reached almost 71 per cent.[3] In the event, R. Hattersley was elected as N. Kinnock's deputy leader when he defeated his Left opponent M. Meacher by nearly 67 per cent to 27.8 per cent.[4] What was remarkable in the leadership and deputy leadership elections was that much of the support for N. Kinnock and R. Hattersley was derived from the Constituency Labour Parties which had been seemingly Left-oriented particularly during the previous four years.[5] The result suggested, first, that the severity of the 1983 defeat had shocked some Party members into loosening their links with the Left wing, and yearning for peace and unity in the Labour Party.

On the way to realize his programme of change, the new leader faced a range of internal and external pressures that made his mission harder and this was particular for 1983 and 1985. In the second part of his first tenure lasting till 1987, N. Kinnock was able to achieve more progress in his efforts to alter the organization and policy of the Labour Party because most of the precious pressures eased.

N. Kinnock inherited a Party which was in difficulties and encumbered with an array of unpopular Left-wing policies. To avoid another electoral disaster like that of 1983, a central goal of N. Kinnock was to reassert the leadership power inside the Party and curtail the powers gained by the Party activists and Unionists in the 1970s and early 1980s. To this end, he sought to alter the system of mandatory reselection of MPs, adopted in 1979, which

[1] E. Shaw, The Labour Party since 1979: Crisis and Transformation, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p. 29.
[2] D. Butler, and G.Butler, British Political Facts, England, Palgrave Macmillan, tenth edition, 2011, p. 164.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] A. Thorpe, A History of the British Labour Party, England, Palgrave Macmillan, third edition, 2008, p. 221.

gave the local activists the right to remove sitting MPs and thus limiting their security. Indeed, this was to be the case for the three front-benchers; Peter Shore, Gerald Kaufman and John Silkin, who were in serious danger to lose their seats. Accordingly, many within the PLP including senior members of the Shadow Cabinet and Right-wing back benchers who had been opposed to this selecting system of MPs put pressure on the new Party leader to change the selection rules early in 1984.

N. Kinnock, eventually, chose to give in to the pressures. 'One Member, One Vote' (OMOV) was an alternative system to mandatory reselection, proposed by N. Kinnock and entailed the extension of individual membership rights in selecting and reselecting parliamentary candidates and in electing the leader and the deputy leader. This meant that via the 'OMOV' system, the right of Constituency General Committees (CGs) to select and deselect MPs was transferred to ordinary fee-paying members.[1] The activists and their Left union supporters stood largely against the 'OMOV' proposal for this latter would abolish mandatory reselection system which they considered as their foremost achievement. In addition, they argued that placing the right of selecting MPs in the hands of fee-paying members, most of whom were more 'moderate' than the activists, would undermine the Left's power.[2] In spite of the Left wing's opposition, N. Kinnock was able to secure a majority of the votes in the N.E.C. for his proposal. But still the proposal was not approved by the Transport and the General Workers' Union.[3] For this reason, it was rejected at the 1984 Party Conference. This rejection showed the degree of the strength of the internal resistance which acted as a constraint on N. Kinnock's efforts to realize his programme of change.

N. Kinnock's strategic attempts to shift the Labour Party to the Right for the goal of regaining power for the Party were also impeded by other externally generated problems. Chief among these were the continuing bitter confrontations between Mrs. Thatcher's Government and several Labour controlled authorities and the trade unions. This latter confrontation had ended in the miners' strike as it will be explained below.

The years between 1983 and 1987 had seen a steady economic growth in Britain contrary to those between 1979 and 1983. Except unemployment which continued to rise until

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit*., pp. 29-30.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[3] *Ibid*.

1986, peaking at 3.2 million, most other economic indicators were favourable.[1] Inflation whose control was the key economic objective of the Conservative Government remained relatively low, while Gross Domestic Product grew by 27 per cent between 1981 and 1988.[2] The value of North Sea Oil production rose greatly when oil prices were pushed up during the war between Iran and Iraq (1980-88).[3] The Government continued with its cuts in direct taxation, a policy that was popular. Mrs. Thatcher also continued to attack the policy of nationalization associated with Labour. This relative prosperity and the Conservatives' popularity would work against the Labour Party which would have real problem in attracting new voters.[4]

The Conservative Government's increase in popularity was gained at the expense of the Labour Party. Nationalization, which had always been supported and developed by the Labour Party, had come under Mrs. Thatcher's attack. This latter had become increasingly committed to privatization in the period 1983-87. This policy had three main forms, all designed to reduce the influence of state regulation and control.[5] The first form was the straightforward denationalization of publicly owned assets. These latter were sold at lower prices so that large number of people could buy them and to ensure that the share issues were fully subscribed. The companies that were privatized included British Aerospace, Cable and Wireless, the National Bus Company, British Telecom, British Gas, British Airways, British Steel, the electricity-generating industry and the water companies. The second aspect was subcontracting government-financed goods and services which involved reduction in public expenditure particularly on the welfare state (such as refusing collection and hospital meals provision.)[6] The Government also proceeded with reducing or removing state supervision or monopoly. This third aspect of privatization covered areas such as transport regulation and telecommunications licenses. Privatization encouraged foreign investment and proved to be a popular policy.[7] Mrs. Thatcher emphasized the importance of privatization and believed that this system was fundamental in improving Britain's performance. She claimed that: *"… Privatization was one of the central means of reversing the corrosive and corrupting*

[1] E. J. Evans, Thatcher and Thatcherism, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 29.
[2] *Ibid*.
[3] J. Black, Britain since the Seventies: Politics and society in the Consumer Age, London, Reaktion Books, 2004, p. 127.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 221.
[5] E. J. Evans, *op. cit*., p. 34.
[6] C. Collette and K. Laybourn (ed.), Modern Britain since 1979: a Reader, London, I.B.Tauris, 2003, p. 9.
[7] J. Black, *op. cit*., p. 134.

effects of socialism… through privatization... the state's power is reduced and the power of the people enhanced."[1] Through weakening the prospect of government economic management, Mrs. Thatcher had seen privatization as a vital means to dismantle the corporatist system that the Labour Party had tried to develop.

The Local government also came under sustained attack. Over the years, it had become a strong base for Labour. So in an attempt to dismantle the legacy of Labour, the Conservative Government moved forward to curb the powers of the local authority more directly. It enacted fifty acts of Parliament transferring power from the local government to the central one.[2] The first sign of the central government's intention to remove functions from the local authority control dated back to Mrs. Thatcher's first administration when the 1980 Housing Act allowed tenants to buy their council houses at cut prices seeking to increase owner-occupation. Centralization was taken further in 1988 with the Baker Education Act which took control over some schools away from the local education authorities. This Act was designed to create a national curriculum in order to raise standards.[3] Moreover, during the the years 1980-6 tighter controls on the local authority spending had been imposed culminating in the Rate Act of June 1984. This latter sanctioned the government to put a ceiling on the level of taxation that could be raised by a local government. As a result of this Act, 'overspending' councils would have to cut services and manpower.

In 1985-6, eighteen local authorities were rate-capped (i. e. were subject to financial penalties imposed by the central government.)[4] Most of these local authorities were controlled controlled by Labour. In response to the Conservative Government's Acts, the local governments jointly agreed to defy the Government by refusing to set a rate. Their aim was mobilizing mass opposition to rate-capping to force the Government to backtrack. The initiative was taken by prominent Left-wing local government leaders such as Ken Livingstone of the Greater London Council (G.L.C.), Ted Knight of Lambeth and David Blunkett of Sheffield. N. Kinnock and his front benchers, however, considered the strategy as illegal and hence they rejected it. Their opposition collapsed when the 1984 Conference approved officially a range of motions in favour of the Labour rate-capped councils. The first

[1] Quoted by E. J. Evans, *op. cit*., p. 35.
[2] J. Black, *op. cit*., p. 133.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 134.
[4] E. J. Evans, *op. cit*., p. 60.

of these motions was a promise to support any Labour council budgets which defended jobs and services. The second formal suggestion was proposed by Derek Hatton who was the deputy leader of Liverpool council and a leading member of Militant Tendency. According to this proposition, the councils which were forced to defy the Conservative Government's policies would have the full support of the Conference. The last proposal was a strong approval of the decision of the Liverpool council, which was under the control of the Militant Tendency, to breach the law of the Central Government. Reluctant though, N. Kinnock felt compelled to agree with the council leaders in their decision to stay in office to defend jobs and services.[1] He was compelled because of the intense pressure put on him by the Left-wing Labour local authorities in order to gain his support to challenge the Government's authority. N. Kinnock was also distracted by the two issues of reselection procedures and the 1984 miners' strike which will be explained later.

However, the opposition of the Left-wing councils to the new law faded away when K. Livingstone of the G.L.C. together with other councils voted to set a rate because the leaders were threatened to lose office and would be ordered to pay fines. Only Lambeth and Liverpool remained firmly in defiance. Broadly speaking, N. Kinnock's disability to master the Party had manifested itself again when the 1984 Conference agreed on the strategy drawn by the leaders of the local government despite his initial opposition. In addition, the failure of the strategy had created a crisis for the Labour Party, a crisis which N. Kinnock had been unable to avert.[2]

Not only did the nationalized industries and the local government come under the attack of the Conservative Government, but also the trade unions were. Like the former Conservative Prime Minister; E. Heath, Mrs. Thatcher's aim was to reduce the power of the trade unions. But unlike E. Heath who passed one huge Act (the Industrial Relations Act), she pushed ahead with a whole range of legislation over a number of years. Her Government introduced the 1980 and the 1982 Employments Acts which limited the right to picket, permitted trade union closed shops only with strict restrictions and made unions liable for damages if they were the cause of unlawful industrial actions.[3] Five further measures between 1984 and 1990 forced trade unions to hold secret ballots for strikes and industrial funds every

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 33.
[3] C. Collette, and K. Laybourn (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

five years if a union wanted to retain its immunity from civil action for damages, and banned pre-entry closed shops. The 1989 Employment Act, in particular, reduced the protection given to the unions and the industrial workers. It made it legal for women to work in coal mines. The trade unions were powerless to resist the Government's legislation when they were faced with rapidly rising unemployment. In general, these laws were designed to weaken the power of trade union movement and to deregulate economy since Mrs. Thatcher saw the unions as the defenders of government control and intervention in economy.[1]

As a result of all this, union membership fell dramatically throughout the eleven years of Conservative rule since 1979. In 1979, there were almost 13 million unionists whereas in 1991 there were about 9 million.[2] This, in turn, had three main effects on the Labour Party. First, the sharp decrease in union membership had badly affected the Party and its finance because the unions and the T.U.C. had been chief sponsors for the Labour Party. The second result was that the measures imposed by the Conservatives rendered the unions more hostile to a Government that challenged their rights and immunities. In relation to this, trade union leaders were keen to back the Labour Party and to commit a future Labour government to the repeal of these measures. Finally, Mrs. Thatcher's move against the trade unions had led both the Party and the unions to reconsider their position vis-à-vis the E.E.C., once it became apparent that the latter might be able to restore some of the rights that workers and unions had lost.[3]

With regard to the unions, the early part of N. Kinnock's leadership was largely eclipsed by the miners' strike which began in March 1984 and lasted nearly for a year. The strike was an important industrial conflict in the years of Conservative Government from 1979 to 1990, as it was a major problem N. Kinnock faced.[4] When less coal was needed in industry during the early 1980s the Government proposed the closure of twenty 'uneconomic' coal pits as the initial stage of a programme to cut coal output by four million tons and employment in the mines with a loss of 20.000 jobs.[5] In response to this, the National Union of Mineworkers (N.U.M.) imposed an overtime ban in October 1983 despite the willingness of approximately 50.000 miners to remain in work and their rejection of strike action in three

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Ibid*., p. 17.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 222.
[4] H.Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, Great Britain, Penguin, Books LTD, 1963, p. 287.
[5] *Ibid*., p. 288.

ballots.[1] Events culminated when the pits of Scotland and Yorkshire were notified of closure. The N.U.M. executive under its president, Arthur Scargill, gave official sanction to strikes beginning in Scotland and Yorkshire and authorized areas elsewhere to join in without holding a national ballot which would normally have preceded a strike. A. Scargill's refusal to call a ballot stemmed, in fact, from his fear that the ballot would prove negative. Attempts to persuade other working miners in other areas to stop working and join the dispute were made through flying pickets[2], which was a strategy ordered by the N.U.M. These attempts were met, however, by mass picketing with violence mainly in Nottinghamshire where the miners were willing to carry on working. For this reason, the Government urged police forces to interfere to control the situation and stop the movement of flying pickets. It, eventually, defeated the strikers by forcing them to return to work and imposing on the N.U.M. high fines.

There were mixed reactions to this strike. On the one hand, the miners' cause was overwhelmingly perceived by the Left wing of the Labour Party as a just one to claim for in the face of the Conservative Government which denied the strikers' rights.[3] A. Scargill himself won a personal widespread support of Left-wing union leaders at the 1984 T.U.C. Conference.[4] The N.E.C. too sympathized with the N.U.M. and expressed its solidarity on behalf the Party.[5] But on the other hand, the 1984-1985 miners' strike was disapproved by the the Labour Party's leadership. N. Kinnock believed that industrial disputes were electorally damaging because the working miners were overwhelmingly Labour voters. He, therefore, argued that the militancy of A. Scargill and his intention to bring down Mrs. Thatcher's Government by instituting the strike as a means to mobilize mass opposition would act as constraints on the Party.[6] A. Scargill was also criticized for his refusal to hold a national ballot ballot and his resort to violence which led to the breakdown of relations between him and the Labour leadership. The upshot was that N. Kinnock was caught between Left and Right wing opposing pressures. Accordingly, he publicly supported the miners' cause by arguing the

[1] J. Black, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
[2] A strategy involved going to different factories during a strike and trying to persuade workers to stop working.
[3] E. Shaw, *op.cit.*, p. 33.
[4] C. Collette, and K. Laybourn (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[5] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
[6] J. Hollowell (ed.), Britain since 1945, the United States, Blackwell Publisher, 2003, p. 51.

economic case against pit closures and by condemning the use and behaviour of the police during the strike, while he was reserved to debate the dispute in Parliament.[1]

The miners' strike posed a serious challenge to the Labour leadership because of its legacy and impact on the Labour Party. In the short term, the long dispute exacerbated divisions within the Labour movement. It caused the split of the N.U.M. with the Union of Democratic Mineworkers being set up by the non-striking miners in Nottinghamshire. In the longer term, it was a double-edged weapon. The one year strike had in the view of N. Kinnock distracted him from employing his strategy of transforming the policy and organization of the Party.[2] But the failure of the strike still benefited the Labour leadership in a way that would ease its task to restore leadership control of the Party and to recover ground lost since 1970. Therefore, the industrial dispute highlighted the dangers of 'Leftism' and emphasized the need to move Labour back to the centre.[3] On the whole, the miners' strike was to be proved as a major event in the Party's evolution.

III.1.2. Re-establishing the Leadership Power and the Internal Changes of the Party:

N. Kinnock was from the outset determined to shift the Labour Party to the Right so that it would be electable again. To this end, he intended to change the Party's organization, policy and strategy. By mid 1985, most of the previous external and internal pressures that had impeded his process of change eased. The defeat of the miners' strike and the collapse of resistance to rate-capping in 1985 were landmarks for the Party leader. The reason for this was that these two events had led to the discouragement and fragmentation of the Left wing, and thus contributed to the consolidation of the leader's power.

With the objective of re-establishing the authority of the leader, N. Kinnock seized the opportunity in the 1985 annual Conference to launch an attack on A. Scargill and his handling of the strike. He also used the defeat of the miners to generally criticize industrial militancy. The assault reflected his determination to acquire a firm hold on the Party.

With the end of the miners' strike, the power of the Left wing began to recede paving the way for the internal restraints to relax. Meanwhile, an increasing blame was attributed to the Left for the scale of the 1983 electoral defeat which was a function of electorally

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 225.
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit.,* p. 34.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.,* p. 225.

unpopular policies advanced by the Left. The result of the election deepened divisions within the Left which had been in place since 1981. Though the Left displayed an unprecedented unity[1] in its pursuit of constitutional reforms[2], it was split into various Left groupings once the constitutional goals were achieved between 1979 and 1981. Indeed, differences within the Left emerged when T. Benn decided to challenge D. Healey for deputy leadership in 1981.[3] Surprisingly, T. Benn was faced by a strong opposition from the Left wing itself. This opposition was maneuvered by several senior Left wing union leaders like Terry Duffy of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers and by MPs of the anti-Bennite Tribune Group including N. Kinnock. It served to widen the distance within the Left wing, on the one hand, and between the concerned union and the political Left, on the other.[4] The division of the Left was institutionalized with the establishment of the counterproductive Left group; the Campaign Group, by Bennite MPs in 1982. T. Benn's initiative led to the division of the Left wing of the Labour Party into two groups: the so-called 'soft' Left centred around the Tribune Group (headed by D. Blunkett, T. Sawyer, M. Meacher) and the so-called 'hard' Left centred around the Campaign Group. The differences between these two Left blocks lied on a wide range of policy, organizational and strategic matters. In short, unlike the 'hard' Left which considered the opposition to the Right and the leadership as a priority, the 'soft' Left undermined the value of this opposition and rather suggested a kind of compromise between the two wings of the Party to overcome Labour's electoral dilemma.

One specific issue of disagreement between the sections of the Left was the issue of reimbursement of the N.U.M. for fines levied against it and the reinstatement of all the fired miners that was submitted in the 1985 Conference. It was also in this Conference that N. Kinnock launched an attack on Militant Tendency, a problem that was a heavy blow to the old Bennite Left. Despite the 1983 Party's marches against Militant Tendency, the latter continued to grow as a revolutionary 'party within a party' throughout the two following years. An example of this advance was when the Militant leaders of Liverpool City Council issued in 1985 redundancy notices to all its 31.000 employees as a way to intensify pressure

[1] A good example about this unity was manifested by the formation of the Rank and File Mobilizing Committee under the leadership of T. Benn.
[2] Referred to in chapter two.
[3] D. Howell, "The Best and the Worst of Times: Rise of New Labour", Economic and Political Weekly, July, 1997, Vol. 32, N°. 28, p. 1698.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

on the Conservative Government.[1] This action angered the union leaders and members who considered it as a run against their belief in security of employment. As a result, N. Kinnock made a strong attack on the Trotskyite Liverpool Council's conduct in his speech in 1985 Party Conference. In February 1986, the district Labour Party was suspended and a decision of expulsions of leading Militants was supported by both the 'soft' Left and the Right, while the 'hard' Left denounced it but in the end it was launched.[2] Consequently, this helped solidifying the rift between the two groups of the Left wing. From this point on, a demoralized radical Labour Left was continually on the retreat as evidenced by the continued diminution of its representation on the N.E.C., and a coalition between the Right wing and the 'soft' Left around the Party leader was to emerge slowly.[3] In this regard, the 1985 Party Conference could be considered as a landmark for the leader because the attack on Militant Tendency (in combination with the attack on A. Scargill) augmented his control over the Party.

The division of the Left and the formation of a Right-soft Left coalition had provided the leadership, for the first time since the 1960s, with a firm basis of support in different Party arenas.[4] Further, looking for achieving Party unity, N. Kinnock maintained his commitment to unilateralism which was more exclusively associated with the Left.[5] The latter issue, adopted in 1981 and reaffirmed by an overwhelming majority at the 1984 Conference, had long been a controversial matter between the Right (especially in the Shadow Cabinet) and the Left. So through committing the Labour Party to unilateral nuclear disarmament, N. Kinnock in turn aimed at gaining mutual support from the 'soft' Left on other policy issues.[6] Worthy to mention is that by that time (i.e. by 1986-87) the 'hard' Left was alienated from the leader.

On the whole, the developments described above (the growing dissatisfaction with the policies of the Left which had become unpopular, the scale of the 1983 defeat, the internal schism of the Left, the changing attitudes on the part of the unions, and the realignment of the Left) had all combined to produce positive consequences for the leader. These changes were to help consolidating the leadership power within the Labour Party and to move Labour back

[1] *Ibid.*, p.226.
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
[6] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

to a more centrist position.[1] Indeed, by the time of the next general election N. Kinnock was able to oversee a transformation within the Party in the fields of both the internal structure of authority and policy of the Party.

In terms of Party organization, N. Kinnock's first step was to push through a reform in the machinery of policy formation. As early as December 1983, N. Kinnock wound up the N.E.C.'s subcommittees and study groups (consisting of large number of advisors) which were responsible for policy-making in the Party since 1970, and replaced them with a series of joint policy committees comprising an equal number of members from the N.E.C. and the Shadow Cabinet plus a few additional trade unionists and advisors.[2] The reports of the committees were to be submitted to both the N.E.C. and the Shadow Cabinet for amendment and approval. For the first time in Labour's history, this gave the front bench an institutionalized role by involving it directly in the policy-making machinery of the Party.[3] The aim was exerting a double influence over policy between the representatives of the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties. But in practice, such a way had stripped the N.E.C. of its domination over the policy-making process and thus transferred it into an adjunct of the Parliamentary leadership.[4] In the words of Thomas Quinn, N. Kinnock intended intended by his reform to policy-making structures after 1983 to weaken the unions and constituency activists' control of Party policy, and promote, instead, the role of the Shadow Cabinet in the process.[5]

Matters went further after the split of the Left took place and the rapprochement between the 'soft' Left and the Right emerged between 1983 and 1987. By 1986, the leader and senior Shadow Cabinet colleagues had largely assumed the responsibility for policy innovation.[6] Moreover, N. Kinnock developed the Leader's Office into a major seat of power within the Party. The Office played a key role in the field of campaigning, communication and electoral strategies, aided by other two bodies; the Campaigns and Communications Directorate and the Shadow Agency which provided the ideas and the means to put them into effect. Its staff constituted of front benchers, researchers and specialist advisors who were

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
[2] T. Quinn, Modernizing the Labour Party : Organizational Change since 1983, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 76.
[3] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[6] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

responsible for supervising the process of policy-making, gathering support for the leader and isolating critics.[1] On top of the staff were Charles Clarke who was in charge of N. Kinnock's private office and Peter Mandelson as Party Communication Director. In reaction to the failings of the 1983 campaign, they gave a considerable attention to packaging and presentation to alter mass perceptions of the Party stemmed from the memories of the 'Winter of Discontent', convince the electorate that Labour was 'fit and able to govern' and to earn its trust, and improve the Labour Party's public image.[2] As such, N. Kinnock bypassed the N.E.C. which was formally entrusted with managing electoral campaigns and dominated the procedures by which the manifesto of the Party was produced. His media-based communications strategy proved to be effective in the view of the surge in his approval rating.[3]

In the mean time, Party policy, too, had undergone changes. After the 1983 defeat and the damage of the Party's electoral fortune, N. Kinnock became convinced that it was necessary for Labour to return to the political mainstream if it was to regain the confidence of the electorate.[4] The process of policy transformation was rather a slow and gradual one. Its aim was essentially to influence the electorate by formulating more 'popular' and 'credible' policies.[5] The latter were designed to impress opinion-makers within industry and the media because Party strategists realized that the transitional state of policy entailed avoiding heavy reliance on detail in policy area.[6]

Concerning Britain's foreign relations, there was a broad consensus in the Party over reversing policy on opposition to membership of the European Community. As the 1987 election approached, Labour was not yet clear about its defense policy. With regard to this, plans to remove US nuclear bases from Britain were omitted though the Party remained committed to unilateralism.[7]

In the economic field and according to A. Thorpe's analysis, the Party abandoned the Alternative Economic Strategy, while proposals for planning, state intervention and public

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[2] *Ibid.*, 210-211.
[3] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
[4] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
[6] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[7] A. Gauhar, and N. Kinnock, "Neil Kinnock", Third World Quarterly, October, 1986, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 1141-1142.

participation in the investment process were diluted.[1] E. Shaw has noted that the Party proposed, instead, the establishment of a National (later re-entitled British) Investment Bank (BIB) which aimed at providing investors with long-term finance but the BIB's roles remained vague and not specified yet.[2] In addition, the retreat from planning indicated the Party's new interest in the role of the market. The reconsideration of the relationship between the state and the market was made obvious by N. Kinnock when he wrote in 1986 that: *"the market is potentially a powerful force for good. It can be a remarkable coordinating mechanism. It can stimulate innovation and productive efficiency, and provide an economic environment in which individuals can experiment."*[3] In relation to this, the 1987 manifesto suggested the re-imposition of 'social ownership', which was some form of nationalization, into gas and British Telecom but the details remained vague. Labour's spending policy was also modified, and by early 1987 pledges on large-scale increases in public expenditure particularly on welfare were generally avoided.

With regard to the government-trade union relationship, N. Kinnock was fair careful in adopting a stance against the unions taking into account the Left's sympathetic attitude to union interests.[4] Thus, there was a compromise solution to maintain the policy of repealing Conservative legislation but in parallel the unions would be compelled to hold ballots over strikes and for union executive elections.

Socially speaking, the target of full employment was replaced by a pledge to cut unemployment by one million over two years.[5] Moreover, opposition to council house sales was reversed. On the whole, the 1987 manifesto contained a series of policy modifications and other fundamental policies which the leadership hesitated to change. Partly, this hesitation was due to the restraints imposed by the need to maintain cooperation with the Left wing of the Party.[6]

Mrs. Thatcher announced on 11 May 1987 that a general election would take place after one month, an election about which Labour was optimistic. But in the view of Labour's performance in the by-elections and the 1984 European elections in which it stood far behind

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 47.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 45.
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
[6] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

the Conservatives, such feelings were to some extent irrational.[1] As late as March 1987, the polls showed the Alliance ahead of Labour. Accordingly, Labour's primary concern, by the time the election was called, was more or less to hold on to the second place in terms of votes because the Alliance appeared to be a strong challenger. Considerable effort was devoted to the electoral campaign in order not to repeat the mistakes of the previous one. Truly, this one was considered as Labour's most professional campaign ever though little was said on some key issues like the membership of the E.E.C., social ownership and spending plans.[2] Linked to this, some internal opponents complained that too much importance was given to image and not enough on policy.[3] Generally speaking and as A. Thorpe argued, ambiguity was the main theme of the 1987 manifesto despite the leader's efforts to alter policy and organization of the Party in order to render it more responsive and attractive to the electorate.[4]

Labour did well in the campaign, even though its share of the votes in the 1987 poll increased only by 3.2 points with a net gain of only 20 seats compared to the 1983 general election. There was a swing to Labour in east Midlands, Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire. (see Appendix D) These modest improvements on the 1983 result translated into a defeat of the S.D.P and thus Labour re-established itself as the principal opposition party.[5] Of the 229 seats seats gained by Labour, there were 21 women elected as MPs to the Commons.[6] The Party's share vote among non-manual workers was not largely improved, while skilled workers turned to support the Conservatives more than Labour (by a rate of 40 to 36 per cent respectively.)[7] This marked a growing disjuncture between the Party itself and its traditional base of support. Yet, Labour under N. Kinnock had fared little better than it had under M. Foot in 1983.[8]

This heralded the third successive electoral defeat for Labour. Though N. Kinnock was able to introduce organizational and programmatic changes to the Labour Party, he failed to build a strong base from which to challenge the Conservative Party. Shortly after the 1987 election, a study was made by the Party strategists to investigate the causes that were at the origin of Labour's electoral decline. For a long time, the Labour Party had been known to be

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[2] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[5] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. XVII.
[6] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
[7] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

the Party of the working class. However, the years after 1979 witnessed a social structural change in the British society. Employment in industries was shrinking fast while the size of the public sector was expanding rapidly.[1] The working class was also shattered due to the economic and technological trends and the consequent improvement in the standard of living of many workers. A. Thorpe remarked that many commentators saw the causes of the defeat as deeply rooted in the argument that a section of the working class which was considered to be 'natural' voters, had ceased to be so because they became affluent voters particularly skilled workers.[2] The latter found the Conservative policies and advantages like the income tax cuts and the council house sales, attractive. Therefore, most of these workers lost trust in the state's ability to protect collective social interests. Instead, they identified with the Conservative Party which served their interests and aspirations defined in terms of individual betterment.[3] This signalled the triumph of individualism over collectivism.

According to Labour's strategists, the social structural change and the contraction of the working class, generated by the economic changes, had all contributed to the loss of support for the Labour Party. From this analysis, those strategists gave two proposals in order to make Labour electable again. The first was to form an electoral pact with the Alliance, but it received little support within the Party. The second, which seemed more 'logical' for most of the Party members, was to move the Party further to the 'centre ground' of politics. The latter proposal was based on the premise of preparing opinion within the Party for sweeping changes in policy so that to brush up the Party's image as a 'divided, extremist, subservient to the unions and untrustworthy' and in the mean time to re-gain public support.[4] This culminated in the establishment of the Policy Review.

III.2. The Establishment of the Policy Review and the Organizational Transformation (1987-1992):

The 1987 result was in the words of the Labour Party, as stated in the N.E.C. Report of the same year, a 'devastatingly disappointing result' because taking into consideration the widely acclaimed efficiency and professionalism of its campaign, little advance was made

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
[3] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 81, 84.

compared to the 1983 election under the leadership of M. Foot.[1] Hence in order to improve Labour's electoral standing, N. Kinnock and his colleagues argued that the pace of the change that had been started before 1987 needed to increase. The years between 1987 and 1992 were characterized by a strong desire of Labour leader, N. Kinnock, to carry out programmatic and organizational changes to adapt the Labour Party to the changing economic and social conditions created by Thatcherism.[2] The period under review was dominated by N. Kinnock's Policy Review which sought to move the Party further to the centre of British politics.

In the aftermath of the 1987 defeat, there was a general consensus- bar the Left- throughout the Party about undertaking a wide-ranging reappraisal of policy.[3] In fact the proposal was brought forward by Tom Sawyer, a Deputy General Secretary of the National Union of Public Employees (N.U.P.E.) and chairman of the Home Policy sub-committee of the N.E.C. The upshot was the Policy Review. As part of a long-term attempt by the leadership to change the Labour Party, the Policy Review reflected the willingness of the leader, N. Kinnock, to adapt the Party doctrine and policy to the new social and economic realities of Britain in the 1990s (including the triumph of the market economy in the wake of the collapse of Communism). This purpose, in turn, entailed removing unpopular policies and replacing them by others more acceptable to the public at large and which could enjoy broader electoral appeal.

N. Kinnock announced in July 1987 the establishment of seven 'policy review' groups (PRGs) which would report to the 1989 Party Conference. Among the reports that were submitted was the one entitled *Meet the Challenge, Make the Change*. Certain policy departures and innovation were subsumed under this report. On the economy, the Party undermined the value of nationalization and the state economic planning. Instead, it acknowledged the virtues of the private sector and the market economy. Further, socialism which had formed the basis for Labour's ideology would not appear, as a word, in the 1992

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

[2] A. Gamble defines 'Thatcherism' as the distinctive ideology, political style and programme of policies with which the British Conservative Party has been identified under the leadership of M. Thatcher (1979-1991). He summarizes the word as the commitment to 'free economy and the strong state.' In such a way, Thatcherism means combining the Right's policy of minimal scale state intervention in the economy with strong leadership on matters such as law, order and defense. A., Gamble, The Free Economy and the Strong State: the Politics of Thatcherism, Macmillan Press LTD, 1988. pp. X, 20.

[3] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

manifesto.[1] Indeed, the latter did not contain a single pledge to extend public ownership.[2] For the first time in Labour's history, the Party detached itself from any commitment to modify existing property relationships, and thus accepted a mixed economy.[3] The report also argued that *"socialism would emerge from the redistribution of a growing surplus produced by an increasingly prosperous capitalism."*[4]

In the period between the 1987 and 1992 elections, other policies in other areas were generally moderated. On foreign policy, Labour modified its relations with the E.E.C. as withdrawal seemed increasingly to have no chance of succeeding.[5] So by the time of the 1992 general election, the Party would stand firmly as a pro-E.E.C. Party. On the issue of defense, the commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament was dropped. This step was a function of a progress in disarmament talks between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union, and later of the collapse of the Soviet bloc.[6]

The third change was in industrial relations policy. Since 1979, the trade unions were subject to restrictions and penalties that had curtailed their freedom of action. Prior to the 1987 election, Labour had pledged to repeal the bulk of Conservative anti-union legislation and to restore the unions' collective immunities that guaranteed their protection against prosecution and fines in civil actions in the Courts. But after the election, N. Kinnock decided to discard this policy for electoral reasons because most voters shifted to support the Conservatives for their strict attitudes towards the unions. In other words, he did this to demonstrate to voters that Labour would not take Britain back to the strikes of the 1970s. At first, several unions objected to the decision, but Tony Blair as Employment spokesman was able to secure an agreement with the unions to reverse Labour's traditional position on labour law, including tight restrictions on picketing and secondary action and the abolition of the closed shop. In fact the majority of union leaders recognized that Conservative laws were popular, and at the same time had prevented unions from doing things which made them unpopular with the wider public.[7] This led them to follow the Party leader on his call to modify Labour's position towards the unions. A final agreement was reached as the 1992

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

general election neared. The Labour Party committed itself to retaining most of the Thatcherite policies among which were restrictive formulae on sympathy action and picketing, and the liability of the trade unions to fines and damages.

Finally and linked to the social welfare, Labour tried to adapt its policies to changing times. Based on qualitative opinion surveys about taxation and social spending undertaken by the Shadow Communications Agency in 1987, the Party realized that its long-held policy of high taxes was unpopular among most voters who, instead, favoured substantial reduction under the Conservative Party.[1] In response to this, Labour reversed its plans of tax and social expenditure, after 1987, by setting limits to income tax. It was also agreed in the 1992 manifesto that public services would be improved, but this depended on the rate of economic growth whose surplus would act as a financial source to these services. Therefore, the Policy Review entailed the reassessment of a set of Party positions ranging from its attitude towards the capitalist system and the market economy to its stand on the social issues. As such, Labour during the second tenure of N. Kinnock became more or less sympathetic to the Thatcherite ideas.[2]

In his book, the Labour Party since 1979, E. Shaw compares N. Kinnock's Policy Review to H. Gaitskell's 'revisionist project' of the 1950's in their similar desire to adjust the Party's ideology and programme to the changing economic and social conditions in the 1990s and the post Second War era respectively.[3] However, the two differed from each other in the way they defined the type of social order they wanted and the programme which indicated how this could be built.[4] H. Gaitskell's or more precisely A. Crosland's social democratic ideology was based on the commitment to welfare, state intervention and full employment as a means of creating a society with greater social equality. In the case of the Policy Review, most of these values and crucially important the Keynesian welfare state and nationalization, were abandoned towards embracing new ones that accommodated the changes brought by the Thatcher Government. Finally, E. Shaw concludes that the Policy Review was not the

[1] *Ibid*. p. 101.
[2] S. McAnulla, British Politics, a Critical Introduction, London, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006, p.53.
[3] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
[4] *Ibid*., pp. 103-104.

outcome of an abrupt transformation in Labour's ideological thinking, but a result of the acceleration of processes of change that were already underway after 1983.[1]

Not only did this period witness a process of programmatic changes but also developments in the area of Party organization. As the Policy Review was formulated in reaction to external developments, the ability of the leader to implement it was a direct function of organizational reforms.[2] E. Shaw has also pointed out that to ensure that the implementation of the Policy Review would not encounter internal opposition, N. Kinnock led a change in the entire structure of authority within the Labour Party and which came to the fore after the 1987 election. Indeed, what is notable is that on the economic questions, a broad coalition within the Party agreed on the need for change, and on issues such as retaining the trade union legislation of the Conservatives, the unions were sympathetic to the Party's needs.[3] The organizational reforms promoted by the leadership also aimed at creating 'a more disciplined and cohesive' Party and undermining the power of the Left wing by means of more centralized policy-formation structure and the extension of direct membership enfranchisement.[4]

The first aspect of organizational change in the Labour Party after 1987, i. e. the extension of central control on the machinery of decision-making and still more of the leader, could be seen by the extent to which the Shadow Cabinet had become 'Kinnockite.'[5] Due to the changes of Party organization that took place before 1987, N. Kinnock was keen to hold front bench majority on the Shadow Cabinet. After 1987, the centralization of policy-making system went through distinct phases.[6] During the first phase of the Policy Review from 1987 to 1989, policy-making was concentrated in the hands of the Policy Review Groups (P.R.G.s) while the leadership control on the processes loosened.[7] Each P.R.G. consisted of about nine members drawn from the N.E.C. and the Shadow Cabinet besides union leaders. This was the first time that union leaders were assigned a direct role in making policy.[8] However, the

[1] *Ibid*., X.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 52.
[3] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[4] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. XII, XIV.
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 232.
[6] Centralization referred to the accumulation power, since 1985, by the Parliamentaryleadership (the leader and senion members of the Shadow Cabinet) at the expense of constituency Party organizations via forging a joint policy-making system which brought the N.E.C. and the Shadow Cabinet together.
[7] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.111.
[8] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Constituency Labour Parties (C.L.P.) were excluded from direct representation on the P.R.G.s. Thus, the P.R.G.s were under the parliamentary leadership and union domination, with MPs from the Shadow Cabinet assuming a greater presence over the N.E.C.'s MPs.[1]

Nevertheless, this pattern of policy-making was reversed during the second phase of the Policy Review beginning from 1989. E. Shaw suggested that because N. Kinnock was dissatisfied with the type of policy on key issues like unilateralism and economic matters which failed to conform to the ruling strategic imperatives, he decided to intervene by launching procedural changes that aimed at strengthening his position and that of the inner leadership circle in the policy process.[2] He dissolved most of the P.R.G.s and shifted the responsibility for drafting the later Policy Review reports (*Looking for the Future* of 1990 and *Opportunity Britain* of 1991) into the hands of smaller groups in which the influence of senior front benchers and leadership aides were paramount. The work of these groups was overseen by the Leader's Office. Moreover the Shadow Cabinet was subject to reshuffle with some front bench portfolios being appointed to forming policy in the areas that conceived to be more important.[3] N. Kinnock went further with his process of centralization by placing the responsibility over managing the policy agenda in the hands of advisors from the front bench and the Leader's Office. Those advisors were chosen by the Shadow Cabinet and the leader to whom they were close and loyal.[4] They operated independently of the N.E.C. Even on the issue of the election manifesto, N. Kinnock ensured that his own allies wrote the document, to be confirmed later by the Shadow Cabinet and the N.E.C. These groups all together (the front bench, the Shadow Cabinet and the Labour's Office) worked to drum up support for the leadership.

To make sure that the N.E.C. would not act as a rival to the parliamentary leadership, N. Kinnock was keen to extend the size of the front bench represented on the N.E.C. Meanwhile and in response to the rising influence of the Left wing on the N.E.C. during the 1970s and early 1980s, he gave the N.E.C. greater powers over candidate selection and reduced those of the C.L.P.s which had previously adopted parliamentary candidates considered unacceptable by the Party leadership.[5] The new rule was introduced in 1988 and

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.111-112
[3] *Ibid.*, p.112.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

offered the N.E.C. a major say in the process of selecting the by-election candidates. According to this procedure, the N.E.C. established a 'Parliamentary Selection Panel' comprising five N.E.C. members whose role was to set a short list of candidates to be submitted to the C.L.P. The latter, then, could select a nominee from the list. The new procedure was soon activated when Stuart Holland of Vauxhall resigned and thereafter a by election was called in May 1989. Vauxhall was a strongly Labour Left-wing constituency located in an area the majority of which was black population.[1] Two black candidates, Martha Osamoor and Russell Profitt, were excluded from the short list by the Parliamentary Selection Panel. The reason of their expulsion was that they were considered by the leadership as unsuitable to contest a by-election for their well-known and controversial Left wing orientation.[2] In response, Vauxhall in turn refused to accept the short list submitted by the Parliamentary Selection Panel. Then, the N.E.C. reacted by imposing Kate Hoey as a candidate and who later secured the seat because the Local Party refused to stand for the election.

Another by-election procedure that showed to what extent the N.E.C.'s powers were extended and how it had become more 'Kinnockite' was when the leader assigned the N.E.C. the task of removing a selected candidate and, if need be, impose a new one. In fact, this pattern was previously applied to Vauxhall but after that by-election it was officially adopted by the leadership despite the soft Left's objection. It was applied to the constituencies of Eastbourne and Hemsworth in 1990 and 1991 respectively. The aim of this rule was to sideline the hard Left candidates from the participation in the by-elections, despite the fact that in many cases they received a large number of nominations, because it was feared that their election would endanger Labour's chances of winning other constituency by-elections.[3] But still the broad objective remained to be the extinction of the political influence of the Left on the N.E.C. and the C.L.P.s by means of stringent central control of the selection process.[4] Therefore, as the N.E.C. swung back to the Right as in the 1950s and 1960s, it became once more a base from which interventionist disciplinary measures were taken to subject the Labour Local Parties to tighter central control.[5]

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.115.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid*., p. 116.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, 203.

A similar pattern of centralization (similar to that of the Shadow Cabinet and the N.E.C.) held true for the relationship between the Party's parliamentary leadership and the trade unions after 1987. The trend was towards achieving greater P.L.P. (Parliamentary Labour Party) autonomy. Generally, the union leaders resumed their historic role of allying and protecting the parliamentary leadership, and this was evident during the years of the Policy Review.[1] When the Party withdrew its earlier opposition to Conservative trade union legislation and abandoned other Left wing policies, the unions did not resist because they recognized the fact that new policies were required if Labour was to enter the government. Although the unions had taken a non-interventionist role, the P.L.P. went even further by dominating the policy-making process, especially with respect to the Policy Review. Partly this was due to the organizational changes that the Labour Party had undergone since 1985.

While N. Kinnock continued to integrate the Shadow Cabinet and the N.E.C. in the policy-making, he restricted the role of the Party Conference. In 1989, the Conference accepted the final reports of the P.R.G.s since it had little chance to reject them for rejection would reduce the two years strategic planning into ruins.[2] Also on their part, the unions which still held a majority in the Conference refused to vote against the P.R.G.s' reports because they were aware of the need to return Labour to power. Accordingly, they paved the way for the P.L.P. to lay down the parameters of Party policy. This reflected again the increased power of the Party leader particularly after 1987.

The second form of organizational transformation stemmed from the leadership's attempts to restructure its relationship with the Party activists and the wider Party membership. This entailed the extension of membership rights via the re-introduction of O.M.O.V. (one member, one vote). The latter's central goal was to extend democracy and curtail the powers gained by the Party activists in the late 1970s and early 1980s by enfranchising ordinary members from the constituencies. However, as E. Shaw pointed out that the hidden agenda behind O.M.O.V. decision was to weaken what was regarded as the main power-base of the hard Left, the Constituency Parties, through subjecting the activists to considerably tighter control.[3] As already mentioned, N. Kinnock's first attempt at reforming the parliamentary candidate selection was doomed to failure in 1984. As the trade unions

[1] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 79.
[3] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.117, 203-204.

realized that the reform would seriously undermine their local power, they became more hostile to O.M.O.V.[1] They insisted rather on retaining a say on who the Labour MP would be. N. Kinnock then opted for a compromise solution by proposing the establishment of a local electoral college which was given the right to choose parliamentary candidates. Under this arrangement, locally affiliated unions were given a maximum of 40 per cent of the total vote in the selection contest, with the rest of the vote to be cast by individual members who would vote on the basis of O.M.O.V. The college was overwhelmingly adopted by the Conference when it had the full backing of the unions.[2]

In the following years, O.M.O.V. appeared to be riddled with mistakes.[3] One of the problems that emerged was that candidates could lose for the sole reason of lacking sufficient union votes, though they won majority in the O.M.O.V. ballots. Another problem rose from the possibility of choosing candidates who failed to have the majority of the votes of individual members. These two problems had been encountered in different occasions, and thus raised the question about the legitimacy of the adopted candidate.[4] In either case, O.M.O.V. had opened the way for union manipulation over the process of candidate selection because it was applied to individual members and not to the unions.[5] The complex and the unwieldy nature of the electoral college led to its abolition in 1990. The upshot, however, was controversy within the Labour Party between supporters and opponents of O.M.O.V., which was not to be resolved until 1993.

All these developments in both the policy and strategic areas in the Labour Party reflected the extent to which N. Kinnock had established a firm grip over the Party at all levels.[6] According to E. Shaw, these Party changes stemmed from the leader's enhanced determination and conviction that Labour would not earn the confidence of the voters unless it was seen to be a 'respectable, orderly and united Party.'[7] To this end, N. Kinnock sought to marginalize the hard Left and reduce the influence exerted by the extra-parliamentary activists and the unions on the machinery of policy formation. All this, ultimately, led to a Left wing reaction. T. Benn and E. Heffer, both Left wingers, announced in March 1988 their

[1] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
[2] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.117-118.
[3] *Ibid*., p. 205.
[4] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] A. Thorpe, *op. cit*., p. 232.
[7] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.108.

candidatures for leadership and deputy leadership respectively.[1] The results were, however, disappointing for them. N. Kinnock was re-elected as Party leader, having won almost 89 per cent of the votes while R. Hattersley defeated both E. Heffer and John Prescott by taking almost 67 per cent of the votes for deputy leader.[2] According to A. Thorpe's point of view, the memories of the 1979-83 period were partly the driving force behind most voters' abstention from casting their votes for Left wing candidates.[3] Moreover, Left wing attempt to resist N. Kinnock's moderate stance of leadership was unsuccessful because the Left almost totally failed to attract the support of the trade unions which looked forward to winning the next general election.[4] In general terms, it exposed the weakness of the Left that had been underway after 1983, and the widespread desire of the different parties of the Party to move Labour rightwards.

By 1989, N. Kinnock assumed greater control of the Party than at any previous time in opposition.[5] The changes he had led all contributed to that. By the time of the 1992 general election, Labour was confident of winning.[6] However, these policy and organizational reforms did not save Labour a fourth successive electoral defeat. This happened despite the fact that the Labour Party had run a professional campaign similar to that of 1987 and had performed well in the Euro-elections and the 1989 and 1991 by-elections.[7] In the event, the Conservative Party, under its new leader John Major, won an overall majority of 21 with 336 seats and 41.9 per cent of the vote while Labour got 271 seats and 34.4 per cent of the vote. (see Appendix E) Although Labour's position in terms of votes and number of seats was improved compared to the elections of 1983 and 1987, the result was a bitter blow for the whole Party which anticipated victory.[8]

There were two factors that lay at the root of the defeat of the Labour Party. The first factor was that the Conservatives had got rid of their two assumed handicaps, Mrs. Thatcher and the poll tax, which Mrs. Thatcher had introduced as a way of financing the local

[1] After the loss of his seat, T. Benn returned to Parliament at a by-election in 1984.
[2] D. Butler, and G. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
[4] T. Benn got only 0.34 per cent of the unions' vote whilst E. Haffer 0.007 per cent. D. Butler, and G.Butler, *op.cit.*, p. 164.
[5] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. XVI.
[6] *Ibid*., p. XVII.
[7] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 233-234.
[8] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

government.[1] Amid the rising inflation and interest rates, Mrs. Thatcher had become unpopular and chose to resign. Her successor started with abolishing the unwanted poll tax and improving the economic conditions. Accordingly, the Conservatives were seen as more competent economic managers than Labour, a reputation that had a positive impact on the Conservatives' share of the vote in the 1992 election.[2] Second, while the Conservatives had increased the focus on taxation and strengthened their representation as the tax-cutting Party during the electoral campaign, they continued to criticize Labour's stance on this area.[3] They tried to convince the electorate, who was keen to retain the cuts in income tax introduced by Mrs. Thatcher, that taxes would raise sharply if Labour won.

In the aftermath of the 1992 election, N. Kinnock and R. Hattersley took responsibility for the defeat and resigned. [4] Worthy to mention was that though N. Kinnock was not able to return Labour into office, he succeeded in getting Labour back to the centre of British politics by pushing through policy and structural changes. D. Howell wrote in his article, "the Best and the Worst Times: Rise of New Labour" that 'the 1992 result was eloquent testimony to the size of the problem' of Labour's electoral weakness caused by adopting avoidable choices in the early 1980s and 'which diminished only slowly despite the growing strength of a modernization agenda under N. Kinnock's leadership.'[5] So would these reforms be retained by the next new Party leader? And could he accomplish what N. Kinnock could not?

III.3. John Smith as Party Leader (1992-1994):

Following N. Kinnock's announcement of resignation, two candidates stood for the leadership election; John Smith and Bryan Gould. The former was from the Right wing of the Party, who served as Trade Secretary in J. Callaghan's Cabinet from 1978 to 1979 and as Chancellor in N. Kinnock's Shadow Cabinet. He was also well-known for his strong support of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (E.R.M).[6] Bryan Gould, on the other hand, lacked lacked J. Smith experience in senior positions in the Party. As a Left winger, he held the view that fixed exchange rates would prevent a British Labour government from achieving

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[2] J. Black, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 144-145.
[4] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 266.
[5] D. Howell, *op. cit.*, p. 1698.
[6] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

Keynesian goals of full employment and social justice.[1] Therefore, he criticized J. Smith's position regarding this issue. In fact, B. Gould's opposition stemmed from his hostility to the E.E.C.[2] The election, which took place in July 1992, resulted in J. Smith's sweeping victory by getting 91 per cent per cent of the total vote of the electoral college.[3] J. Smith defeated B. Gould in all sections of the electoral college (trade unions, C.L.P.s, MPs). B. Gould was also defeated by Margaret Beckett in the ballot for the deputy leadership. Before shifting to emphasize the new leader's stance on Party policy and structure with regard to the domestic and international changes, it is, however, worthy to deal with these changing conditions and the problems that began to dog the J. Major Government in order to place J. Smith's reforms in context.

Soon after its election in 1992, the Conservative Government was beset by three main difficulties. Firstly, there was a simultaneous rise of unemployment and inflation. The former continued to increase throughout 1992 into the first quarter of 1993, while the latter hit the middle class people most of whom were considered to be Conservative voters.[4] Second, the Conservative Government had problems keeping Britain's profits and spending equal, and this led to budget deficit in 1993-4.[5] To resolve these economic problems, J. Major imposed increases in taxation and proposed to put value added taxes on domestic fuel, but this proposal was rejected by the Commons in 1994. This broke J. Major's pre-election pledge to reduce taxes. The third weakness of the Conservative Government was related to the issue of British membership in the E.R.M. which Britain had joined in 1990. The Conservative Party was already divided on this issue between supporters of J. Major and opponents who objected to the larger financial contribution that Britain would have to make to the E.E.C. and thus considered living the E.R.M. because it brought a commitment to greater integration in Europe.[6] In 1992, the pound fell under pressure on the markets and the German mark was overvalued.[7] The Prime Minister wanted to keep Britain within the E.R.M., and hence tried to to give massive support to the pound via raising interest rates from 10 to 15 per cent and

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] D. Butler, and G. Butler, *op.*cit., p. 165.
[4] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 237-238.
[5] J. Black, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
[6] C. Collette, and K. Laybourn (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[7] D. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

spending up to 10 billion.[1] However, his attempts failed and as a result Britain left the E.R.M. in September 1992. This whole affair had weakened the Conservatives and contributed to the loss of their reputation as being competent economic managers.[2]

The Conservatives' weakness provided Labour with a historic opportunity. However, some changes were needed in order to seize this opportunity. Like N. Kinnock, J. Smith held the view that the objective of creating a fairer society could be attained via dynamic economic growth based on low inflation rather than the means of high taxation and spending.[3] From his early months of Party leadership, J. Smith proceeded with a set of reforms to the policies and, still more, to the organization of the Labour Party. In the area of policy, J. Smith generally believed that N. Kinnock's Policy Review had settled many issues, but still he recognized the need to move the Party further to the centre on the economic and welfare issues. To this end, he established in 1992 the Commission on Social Justice whose members were academics, pressure group leaders and business people. The Commission's job was to look after policy innovation in respect to the changing national and international context.[4]

In the field of Party organization, among a number of changes, one reform was introduced to the rules of short listing. As a result of the 1980s increasing pressure for a greater representation of women at all levels of the Party, the 1993 Party Conference agreed on the adoption of the measure of all-women short lists for parliamentary candidatures. According to this principle, half of all vacant safe Labour seats (seats where the sitting MPs retired) and half of all marginal seats (Labour's Conservative marginal seats) should have a woman candidate in the following general election.[5] To achieve this target, many C.L.P.s would have all-women short lists so that they could choose from a number of women candidates. Indeed, this enabled more women candidates for seats gained by Labour.[6]

The second organizational change that J. Smith had led in the 1993 Party Conference was the adoption of O.M.O.V. in the process of candidate selection. Backed by senior members like T. Blair and Gordon Brown, the leader's intention was to undermine the unions'

[1] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
[2] H. D. Clarke, *et al.*, "New Models for New Labour: the Political Economy of Labour Party Support, January 1992-April 1997", The American Political Science Review, September, 1998, Vol. 92, N°. 3, 569.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
[4] Most of the Commission's reports were undertaken later by T. Blair to launch what he called the 'New' Labour Labour Party after 1994. *Ibid*., p. 240.
[5] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
[6] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

influence by reducing the significance of the union block vote. Nevertheless, he encountered stiff resistance from the unions led by the Transport and General Workers' Union and the General Municipal Boilmakers' Union, but the vote was won.[1] The Conference voted by 47.5 per cent to 44.4 in favour of the new system.[2] According to this procedure, N. Kinnock's electoral college to choose parliamentary candidates was no longer valid and all members' votes would be of equal value. As a result, O.M.O.V. which was applied to individual members was extended to include the unions as well. Moreover, the electoral college, which was adopted in 1981 to elect the Party leader by giving 40 per cent of the votes to the unions and 30 per cent each for the P.L.P. and the C.L.P.s, was modified in 1993 with the three sections having the same share of the vote.[3] The aim of the latter reform was to dismantle the early 1980s legacy of the Left.[4] The same Party Conference agreed that if MPs gained at least two thirds of the nominations, no candidate reselection was required.[5] Finally, in an attempt to to reduce the role of the unions in the Party Conference and to move the Labour Party further to the centre, the Party leader laid down plans to reduce the general voting power of the unions at Conference.

The final organizational change advocated by J. Smith was the establishment of a National Policy Forum (N.P.F.) in 1993. This was first suggested in a statement presented by the N.E.C. to the 1990 Party Conference, proposing to work alongside the existing institutions under one umbrella.[6] Because the role of the Conference in the process of policy making was weak and most resolutions submitted to it were not debated, the aim of the new body was to improve the efficiency of the policy-making system by involving together members representing all elements of the Party.[7] Those elected delegates were to discuss and develop policies away from the frantic media attention of the Party Conference. These policies would not officially be adopted by the Party unless they were agreed by the forum and backed later by Conference.[8] When the N.P.F. was first set up (in 1993), it consisted of 81 members.[9]

[1] E. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
[2] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
[3] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

T. Quinn claimed that the importance of the N.P.F. lay in the fact that its existence would restrict the role of the Conference, a step that had already been carried out by N. Kinnock.[1]

In fewer than two years, J. Smith was able to push through a series of reforms to Labour's policy and organization. He was, however, unable to lead Labour into a general election campaign because he died in May 1994 from a massive heart attack. During this period, Labour scored well against the Conservatives in the 1993 opinion polls and the 1994 local elections as well.[2]

In the immediate aftermath of J. Smith's death, a leadership election took place. The first contestant was T. Blair, as a Rightist figure, who served as Shadow Employment Secretary in N. Kinnock's tenure and as Shadow Home Secretary during the tenure of J. Smith. The second candidate, representing the Left wing, was M. Beckett who was the deputy leader of J. Smith, while J. Prescott was the last candidate who had already stood for the 1988 leadership election but failed to secure the post. Having a broad appeal among the Party's members, T. Blair won a comfortable victory in the leadership contest.[3] He took 57 per cent of the total vote of the electoral college, and more than half the votes cast in each section of the college.[4] In the event, J. Prescott won the ballot for deputy leadership. As a leading figure in the process of transformation of the Party's organization and policy under N. Kinnock and J. Smith, T. Blair was keen to resume the course his predecessors had pursued and accelerate the pace of reform in order to render Labour electable again.

[1] T. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
[2] A. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
[3] *Ibid.*, 245.
[4] D. Butler, and G. Butler, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the historical analysis of the Labour Party since its creation. One general point is that it was born at the turn of the twentieth century in confusing circumstances owing to the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the working class people who were disappointed at the failure of the Liberal Party to represent them in Parliament. During its early years, Labour was unable to secure a nation-wide membership, but it continued to survive throughout the past century.

A number of developments had taken place, which in turn made the Labour Party of 1906 different from that of 1994. When the Party was first formed, it was committed to socialism, trade unionism and social reform in favour of the working class. For most of the first half of the twentieth century, these commitments continued to act as unifying factors especially at tough times (W.W.I. and W.W.II.). However, the 'capitalist' nature of the British society had undermined the importance of these socialist commitments. This created divisions within the Party as its members argued over the role of the state and the local government, and industrial democracy besides other socialist issues. These difficulties and divisions were exacerbated during the years of the Cold War when 'collectivism' was less vital for a western country like Britain which had associated itself to the capitalist Western World. In the rise of individualism and anti-statist liberalism, Labour was obliged to reconsider its principles of collectivism. Through a transformation of its policies and its internal organization, the Labour Party began to restore its confidence and outlook under Neil Kinnock and consolidated under John Smith. Labour had been widely known to represent the radical Left in Britain, but it had moved largely to the centre of politics from 1983 to 1994. The gradual retreat from its socialist beliefs can better illustrate the political change that the Party had undergone.

The change of the Party was not only ideological but also organizational. In studying the evolution of the Party, it was important to take into account the constituent elements of the Party with their competing visions concerning the goals that it should adopt. Each section within the Party was convinced that ideological change would not to take place unless an organizational transformation occurred. The Right emphasized the need to remain in line with

the state of public opinion, and therefore shifted to abandon certain policies, including its relations with the trade unions, its attitudes towards Europe and the issues of defense, and adopt new ones. This entailed extending the power of the Right by increasing its dominance on the N.E.C. and the Conference. This was particularly the case for the 1950s, 1960s, 1980s and early 1990s. The Left, on the other hand, argued that to render the Party more responsive to its radical socialist ideas it was necessary to dominate positions of power in the Party. It launched several constitutional reforms to end the independence of the P.L.P., which was the power-base of the Right, and strengthen its hold of the Party. It emphasized the maintenance of the umbilical link with the unions, by giving the unions the largest share of the votes in the electoral college. In fact what mattered for the both wings was the adoption of some policies to be more adaptable to the perceived preferences of the electorate.

In a matter of few years (from 1906 to 1922), Labour had firmly established itself within British politics. But as it has been noticed above, the Party's advance was not without difficulties. This latter is due to the fact that to deal with the Labour Party is to deal with a party that had changed its ideology, organization and strategy to meet its electoral needs. Throughout its formative years, the Party attempted to keep up with the principles which its members had fought for during the nineteenth century. The internal tensions between the Left and the Right that the Party had experienced, had undermined its credibility, led to the breakaway of a section of its Right wing to form the Social Democratic Party in March 1981, and badly influenced the Party's fortunes in the elections. In the course of 88 years, the Labour Party had remained in office only for 21 years. Ultimately, the establishment of the Labour Party is a good example of how the masses could impose their will in society and then in politics, while the evolution of the Party is an illustrative example of the political change of parties.

Appendix A: Labour Prime Ministers (1906-1994)

J. Ramsay MacDonald	1924
J. Ramsay MacDonald	1929-1931
Attlee Clement	1945-1951
Harold Wilson	1964-1970
Harold Wilson	1974-1976
James Callaghan	1976-1979

Source: http://www.number10.gov.uk

Appendix B: Dates of General Elections (1945-1992)

Day of election	Government Elected
Thursday 5 July 1945	Labour
Thursday 23 February 1950	Labour
Thursday 25 October 1951	Conservative
Thursday 26 May 1955	Conservative
Thursday 8 October 1959	Conservative
Thursday 15 October 1964	Labour
Thursday 31 March 1966	Labour
Thursday 18 June 1970	Conservative
Thursday 28 February 1974	Labour
Thursday 10 October 1974	Labour
Thursday 3 May 1979	Conservative
Thursday 9 June 1983	Conservative
Thursday 11 June 1987	Conservative
Thursday 9 April 1992	Conservative

It is customary for an election to be held on a Thursday. The last General Election held on a day other than a Thursday was Tuesday 27 October 1931.

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Appendix C: General Election Results, 9 June 1983

TABLE 1 Summary of Voting

Party	Votes	% share of votes	Candidates	MPs elected	Lost deposits
Conservatives	13,012,316	42.4	633	397	5
Labour	8,456,934	27.6	633	209	119
Liberal/SDP Alliance	7,780,949	25.4	633 (b)	23 (b)	11 (b)
Scottish National	331,975	1.1	72	2	53
Plaid Cymur	125,309	0.4	38	2	32
Ecology	54,299	0.2	109	0	109
National Front	27,065	0.1	60	0	60
British National	14,621	0.0	54	0	54
Communist	11,606	0.0	35	0	35
Workers' Revolutionary	3,798	0.0	21	0	21
Northern Ireland parties (a)	764,474	2.5	94	17	45
Other	87,791	0.3	196	0	195
TOTAL	30,671,137	100.0	2,578	650	739

(a) All figures exclude the Ecology Party candidate in Antrim N who is included in the Ecology figures.

The figures break down as follows:

Party	Votes	% share of votes	Candidates	MPs elected	Lost deposits
Ulster unionist	259,952	34.0	16	11	1
Democratic Unionist	152,749	20.0	14	3	4
SOUP	137,012	17.9	17	1	7
Sinn Pain	102,701	13.4	14	1	7
Alliance	61,275	8.0	12	0	7
Workers Party	14,650	1.9	14	0	14
Others	36,135	4.7	7	1	5

(b) of which, Liberal candidates 322, MPs elected 17, lost deposits 5, SDP candidates 311, MR5 elected 6, lost deposits 6.

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

TABLE 2 Seats Won by Party and Standard Region

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE (a)	NAT (b)	OTHER	TOTAL
ENGLAND	362	148	13	-	-	523
North	8	26	2	-	-	36
Yorks & Humberside	24	28	2	-	-	54
East Midlands	34	8	-	-	-	42
East Anglia	18	1	1	-	-	20
South East (c)	162	27	3	-	-	192
South West	44	1	3	-	-	48
West Midlands	36	22	-	-	-	58
North West	36	35	2	-	-	73
WALES	14	20	2	2	-	38
SCOTLAND	21	41	8	2	-	72
NORTHERN IRELAND (d)	-	-	-	-	17	17
UNITED KINGDOM	397	209	23	4	17	650

(a) The SDP seats are distributed as follows:

North	1
South East	1
South West	1
Scotland	3

The Other 17 seats are held by Liberals

(b) Plaid Cymru and SNP only

(c) of which, Greater London

CON	56
LAB	26
ALLIANCE	2 (1 Lib, 1 SDP)
TOTAL	84

(d) See table 1 for breakdown

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

TABLE 3 Percentage Distribution of Votes Cast in Each Region by Main Party

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE	NAT (a)	OTHER	TOTAL
ENGLAND	46.0	26.9	26.4	-	0.7	100.0
North	34.6	40.2	25.0	-	0.1	100.0
Yorks & Humberside	38.7	35.3	25.5	-	0.5	100.0
East Midlands	47.2	28.0	24.1	-	0.8	100.0
East Anglia	51.0	20.5	28.2	-	0.3	100.0
South East (b)	50.5	21.1	27.4	-	1.0	100.0
South West	51.4	14.7	33.2	-	0.8	100.0
West Midiands	45.0	31.2	23.4	-	0.4	100.0
North West	40.0	36.0	23.4	-	0.7	100.0
WALES	31.0	37.5	23.2	7.8	0.4	100.0
SCOTLAND	28.4	35.1	24.5	11.8	0.3	100.0
NORTHERN IRELAND (c)		-	-	-	-	100.0
UNITED KINGDOM	42.4	27.6	25.4	1.50	3.1	100.0

(a) Plaid Cymru and SNP only

(b) of which, Greater London

CON	43.9
LAB	29.8
ALLIANCE	24.7
OTHER	1.6
TOTAL	100.0

(c) See Table 1 for breakdown (which excludes one Ecology Party candidate)

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

TABLE 4 Percentage Distribution of Seats Won n Each Region by Main Party

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE	OTHER	TOTAL
ENGLANI	69.2	28.3	2.5	..	100.0
North	22.2	72.2	5.6		100.0
Yorks & Eumberside	44.4	51.9	3.7		100.0
East Midlands	81.0	19.0			100.0
East Anglia	90.0	5.0	5.0		100.0
South East (a)	84.4	14.1	1.6		100.0
South West	91.7	2.1	6.3		100.0
West Midlands	62.1	38.0			100.0
North West	49.3	47.9	2.7		100.0
WALES	36.8	52.6	5.3	5.3	100.0
SCOTLAND	29.2	56.9	11.1	2.8	100.0
NORTHERN IRELAND		..		100.0	100.0
UNITED KINGDOM	61.1	32.2	3.5	3.2	100.0

(a) of which, Greater London

CON	67.7
LAB	31.0
ALLIANCE	2.4
TOTAL	100.0

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

TABLE 5 shows changes since May 1979 in the main parties' shares of the vote by region. Before the recent boundary changes, some constituencies overlapped regional boundaries and it was therefore necessary to allocate constituencies to regions on a 'best-fit' basis. The new constituencies do not cross regional (or county) boundaries.

The figures show how the Conservative Party's relatively small loss of votes was concentrated in the industrial regions. These are the regions in which Labour's losses were least, with their largest losses coming in East Anglia, the East Midlands and the South East. The Alliance's gains were widespread, with the highest increases in Scotland (largely at the expense of the SNP) and Wales.

TABLE 5:

Chances since May 1979 in Major Parties Share of Vote by Region (Percentages)

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE (a)	OTHER
ENGLAND	-1.2	-9.8	+11.5	0.5
North	-1.9	-9.2	+12.4	1.4
Yorks & Humberside	-0.8	-9.5	+10.7	0.4
East Midlands	+0.5	-10.2	+9.9	0.1
East Anglia	+0.2	-12.1	+12.2	0.3
South East (a)	-0.9	-10.7	+12.1	0.5
South West	-0.2	-9.9	+10.7	0.5
West Midlands	-2.1	-8.9	+11.9	0.9
North West	-3.6	-6.8	+10.5	
WALES	-1.2	-9.4	+12.6	-2.1 (c)
SCOTLAND	-3.0	-6.5	+15.5	-6.0 (e)
NORTHERN IRELAND	..	..	..	..
UNITED KINGDOM	-1.5	-9.3	+11.6	-0.8

(a) Compared with Liberal vote in 1979

(b) Of which, Greater London	CON	-2.1
	LAB	-9.8
	ALLIANCE	+12.8
	OTHER	-0.8

(c) The "other" vote in 1979 included the Speaker
(d) The Plaid Cymcru share fell by 0.2 per cent
(e) The SNP fell by 5.5 per cent

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Appendix D: General Election Results, 11 June 1987

Table 1: Summary of Voting

Party	Votes	% share of votes	Candidates	MPS elected	Lost Deposits
Speaker	24,188	0.1	1	1	..
Conservative	13,736,395	42.2	632	375	..
Total of above	13,760,583	42.3	633	376	..
Labour	10,029,807	30.8	633	229	..
Liberal/SDP Alliance (a)	7,341,633	22.6	63	22	1
Scottish National	416,473	1.3	71	3	1
Plaid Cymru	123,599	0.4	38	3	25
Green (b)	89,753	0.3	133	..	133
Northern Ireland parties (c)	730,152	2.2	77	17	23
Other	37,578	0.1	107	..	106
Total	32,529,578	100.0	2,325	650	289

(a) of which

	Votes	% share	Candidates	MPS elected	Lost Deposits
Liberal	4,173,450	12.8	327	17	1
SDP	3,168,183	9.7	306	5	..

(b) Excludes Ecology candidate in Londonderry East who is included in Northern Ireland totals.

of which

	Votes	% share	Candidates	MPS elected	Lost Deposits
Ulster Unionist	276,230	37.8	12	9	
Democratic Unionist	85,642	11.7	4	3	
Popular Unionist	18,420	2.5	1	1	
SDLP	154,087	21.1	13	3	
Sinn Fein	83,389	11.4	14	1	4
Alliance	72,671	10.0	16	..	5
Workers Party	19,294	2.6	14	..	13
Others	20,419	2.8	3	..	1

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Table 2: Percentage distribution of votes cast in each region by main party

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE	SNP/PC	Other	Total
ENGLAND	46.2 (a)	29.5	23.8	..	0.4	100.0
North	32.3	46.4	21.0	..	0.3	100.0
Yorks & Humberside	37.4	40.6	21.7	..	0.3	100.0
East Midlands	48.6	30.0	21.0	..	0.4	100.0
East Anglia	52.1	21.7	25.7	..	0.5	100.0
Greater London	46.5 (a)	31.5	21.3	..	0.7	100.0
Rest of South East	55.6	16.8	27.2	..	0.5	100.0
South West	50.6	15.9	33.0	..	0.5	100.0
West Midlands	45.5	33.3	20.8	..	0.4	100.0
North West	38.0	41.2	20.6	..	0.2	100.0
WALES	29.5	45.1	17.9	7.3	0.2	100.0
SCOTLAND	24.0	42	19.2	14.0	0.3	100.0
NORTHERN IRELAND	..	..	..	..	100.0 (b)	100.0

(a) Includes the Speaker who was opposed by Labour and SDP candidates

(b) See Table 1 for breakdown

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Table 3: Changes since June 1983 in major parties' share of vote by region (percent)

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE	OTHER
ENGLAND	+0.3 (a)	+2.6	-2.5	-0.3
North	-2.3	+6.2	-4.0	+0.1
Yorks & Humberside	-1.2	+5.3	-3.9	-0.2
East Midlands	+1.4	+2.1	-3.1	-0.4
East Anglia	+1.1	+1.2	-2.5	+0.2
Greater London	+2.6 (a)	+1.6	-3.4	-0.9
Rest of South East	+1.1	+0.9	-1.8	-0.2
South West	-0.8	+1.2	-0.1	-0.3
West Midlands	+0.5	+2.1	-2.6	-0.1
North West	-2.0	+5.2	-2.8	-0.4
WALES	-1.5	+7.5	-5.3	-0.7 (b)
SCOTLAND	-4.4	+7.3	5.3	+2.4 (c)
NORTHERN IRELAND	..	..	..	..
UNITED KINGDOM	-0.1	+3.3	-2.8	-0.3

(a) 1987 vote includes the Speaker who was opposed by Labour and SDP candidates

(b) The Plaid Cymru share fell by 0.5 per cent

(c) The SNP share rose by 2.3 per cent.

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Table 4: Seats won by party and standard region of Great Britain

	Speaker	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE (a)	SNP/PC	TOTAL
ENGLAND	1	357	155	10	..	523
North	..	8	27	1	..	36
Yorks & Humberside	..	21	33	..	..	54
East Midlands	..	31	11	..	..	42
East Anglia	..	19	1	..	..	20
Greater London	1	57	23	3	..	84
Rest of South East	..	107	1	..	..	108
South West	..	44	1	3	..	48
West Midlands	..	36	22	..	..	58
North West	..	34	36	3	..	73
WALES	..	8	24	3	3	38
SCOTLAND	..	10	50	9	3	72
GREAT BRITAIN	1	375	229	22	6	633

(a) The SDP seats were distributed as follows:

Greater London	2
South West	1
Scotland	2

The other 17 seats were held by Liberals.

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Table 5 shows the net change since 1983 in the number of seats won by each party in each region. Tables 6 shows the **gross** changes in seats, analysed by the party gaining and the party losing. It shows changes from the 1983 General Election.

Table 5: Change from 1983 in number of seats won by party and standard region

	CON	LAB	ALLIANCE	SNP/PC	TOTAL
ENGLAND	-4	+7	-3	..	..
North	..	+1	-1	..	..
Yorks & Humberside	-3	+5	-2	..	..
East Midlands	-3	+3	..	..	..
East Anglia	+1	..	-1	..	..
Greater London	+2 (a)	-3	+1	..	..
Rest of South East	+1	..	-1	..	..
South West	..	..	..	..	..
West Midlands	..	..	..	..	..
North West	-2	+1	+1	..	..
WALES	-6	+4	+1	+1	..
SCOTLAND	-11	+9	+1	+1	..
GREAT BRITAIN	-21	+20	-1	+2	..

(a) 1987 result includes the Speaker who was opposed by Labour and SDP candidates

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

Table 6: Changes in seats relative to June 1983

Party Losing	Party gaining							
	Con	Lab	Lib	SDP	SNP	PC	SDLP	Total
Con	..	22	4	..	3	1	..	30
Lab	5	..	..	1	..	..	..	6
Lib	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	4
SDP	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	2
SNP	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	2
PC	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0
UU	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2
Total	9	26	4	1	3	1	2	46

Party	Seats	Gains	Losses	Net gains
Con	376 (a)	9	30	-21
Lab	229	26	6	+20
Lib	17	4	4	0
SDP	5	1	2	-1
SNP	3	3	2	+1
PC	3	1	0	+1
UU	9	0	2	-2
DUP	3	0	0	0
SDW	3	2	0	+2
Pop	1	0	0	0
SF	1	0	0	0
	650	46	46	0

Note:
(a) Including Speaker

Source:
http://www.parliament.uk

Appendix E: General Election Results, 9 April 1992

Party	Votes	% share of votes	Candidates	MPs elected	Lost deposits
Conservative (a)	14,093,007	41.9%	645	336	4
Labour	11,560,484	34.4%	634	271	1
Liberal Democrat	5,999,606	17.8%	632	20	11
Scottish National	629,564	1.9%	72	3	-
Plaid Cymru (b)	156,796	0.5%	38	4	23
Green (b)	170,047	0.5%	253	-	253
Liberal	64,744	0.2%	73	-	72
Natural Law	62,888	0.2%	309	-	309
Ulster Unionist	271,049	0.8%	13	9	-
Democratic	103,039	0.3%	7	3	-
Popular Unionist	19,305	0.1%	1	1	-
SDLP	184,445	0.5%	13	4	-
Sinn Fein	78,291	0.2%	14	-	5
Alliance	68,665	0.2%	16	-	5
Others	152,144	0.5%	229	-	218
TOTAL	**33,614,074**	**100.0%**	**2,949**	**651**	**901**

(a) Includes 11 candidates in Northern Ireland, four of whom lost their deposits.

(b) Plaid Cymru totals include three joint Plaid Cymru/Green candidates.

The average turnout nationally was 77.7 per cent.

Source: http://www.parliament.uk

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