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ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Between 1983 and 1989 there were a series of important changes to Party organisation. Some of these were deliberately pursued, some were more unexpected. All were critical causes, effects and aspects of the transformation. Changes occurred in PLP whipping, Party finance, membership administration, disciplinary procedures, candidate selection, the policy-making process and, most famously, campaign organisation.

This chapter makes a number of assertions about this process of organisational change which are original and are inspired by and enhance the search for complexity.

It is argued that the organisational aspect of the transformation of the 1980s resulted from multiple causes and the inter-retroaction of those causes rather than from one over-riding cause. In particular, the existing literature has identified organisational reform as originating with a conscious pursuit by the core leadership of greater control over the Party (Heffernan and Marqusee 1992: *passim*; Shaw 1994: 108). This chapter asserts that while such conscious pursuit was one cause, other factors such as ad hoc responses to events, the growth of a presidential approach, the use of powers already in existence and the decline of oppositional forces acted as other causes. This emphasis upon multiple causes of change is clearly in keeping with the search for complexity.

This chapter also represents the first detailed outline and analysis of centralisation as it related not just to organisational matters but also to the issue of policy-making. In the same vein the chapter is particularly significant because it relates the centralisation of policy-making to policy reform as it occurred between 1983 and 1987 not just in relation to the Policy Review as is the approach of previous analyses. Once again this broadens, the transformation temporally, allowing for the augmentation of the causal processes involved in that transformation.

The important reform of OMOV is also dealt with. Previous analyses have tended to present the disputes over OMOV as largely a split between right and left or leadership and left (Shaw 1994: 31; Minkin 1991: 247) within the Party at least (of course, within the wider movement the issue is presented differently). In keeping with the method of multiplication as an aid to the search for complexity, this chapter presents evidence which shows that views on OMOV were multiple and changed over time. In particular, it is shown how many figures on the soft left had a diverse, fragmented and variable attitude to OMOV between 1983 and 1989.

The chapter also challenges the idea presented by Hughes and Wintour (1990: 7-8) that after the OMOV debacle of 1984, Kinnock radically improved his management style and that thus, his defeat over OMOV at that time was a crucial cause of the success of further change. This view is, of course, a function of the particularly rational and personal approach (see chapter three) to explaining change that Hughes and Wintour take. Rather it is suggested here that Kinnock's management style was always very mixed - sometimes effective, sometimes not - and that the success of his moves need to be seen as the result a far greater confluence of

many factors rather than largely in terms of a conscious, rational response to one particular event.

The chapter also deals with OMOV from an original angle, not dealt with in the other literature, by treating it not solely as an effect of leadership decisions to carry-out reform but also seeing OMOV as one element in an inter-retroactive causal process which at its most basic level means that OMOV must also be treated as a cause of change itself. In this respect it is argued that OMOV played a significant role in shaping the identity of Kinnock's agenda and the soft left. And that in this context the democratic appeal and content to Party members of Kinnock's agenda, of the soft left, and of OMOV itself resulted from an inter-retroactive relationship between the various elements. Furthermore, it is argued that the radical left was further isolated by failing to appreciate this democratic appeal of OMOV, preferring instead to react to it as though it were simply an attempt by the moderate wing to destroy the radical wing of the Party.

As a whole the chapter tries to place organisational reform in a more complex context both as an effect of multiple factors and as a cause of multiple others, as well as regarding it as playing an inter-retroactive role. This contrasts with previous analyses which tend to portray organisational change as largely the result of conscious decision-making on the part of the leadership with the simple effect of enhancing Party centralisation.

CENTRALISATION AND AUTHORITARIANISM

In many ways the centralisation and authoritarianism of the Party are the classic inter-retroactive factors. The concentration of power in the leader's office was made possible by the

weakening of the forces that might have opposed such a shift, while the increasing concentration further weakened just those forces. The combined effect of this centralisation and of the weakening of oppositional forces allowed the Kinnockite reforms to be pursued in areas spatially distinct from organisation such as policy and ideology. But the combined effect also allowed further reform in spatially similar areas (i.e. further centralisation and further assaults on the opposition to Kinnock). However, as was mentioned in chapter three, this actual inter-retroactive process itself was highly variable and uneven involving relatively successful periods of resistance and hostility to centralisation, the effects of which were rarely straightforward and on occasion actually enhanced, rather than limited, the power of the leader's office.

Such an awareness of this inter-retroactive process is extremely enlightening because it deepens and complexifies our understanding of this aspect of the Party which has often been treated in a highly simplistic way by existing analyses. In particular, Heffernan and Marqusee - who identify the centralisation of the Party as the most significant aspect of the transformation and as the prime condition of the other aspects of the transformation - regard the concentration of power in the leader's office as exclusively the effect of the core leadership's conscious decision to implement such a concentration and, secondarily, of the soft left's acquiescence in, and even active support of, such centralisation (1992: *passim*). While Shaw, although he largely regards centralisation as resulting directly from "goals consciously pursued by the leadership", does acknowledge that wide support did exist for some organisational reforms (1994: 108). However, what an inter-retroactive approach will display is that a wide variety of factors contributed to the centralisation that go beyond the simple rational, goal-oriented behaviour of the core leadership. In particular, it can be seen how

much of the centralisation occurred as a result of ad hoc responses to specific events, without any actual reform of the Party constitution and through the use of existing powers.

Ad Hoc Reforms

As was mentioned in chapter four, limited attempts were made in the earliest days of Kinnock's leadership to unify two central aspects of the Party's activity under singular bodies. Joint Policy Committees were established to oversee the policy process, while the Campaign Strategy Committee was to decide campaigning priorities and strategies. However, while both of these bodies caused some consternation at the time about centralisation and the withdrawal of powers from the conference and the NEC, their actual activity was limited by the more pressing issues of the 1984-1985 period which materialised only weeks after the bodies had been established.

In the following years, actual *formal* reforms by the core leadership designed to concentrate power and limit internal opposition were minor and usually ad hoc responses to specific events effecting an incremental process of centralisation. These reforms only began to occur after the 1985 conference when Kinnock felt himself to be in a marginally stronger position with regards to passing less popular motions through the Party's ruling bodies (Interview with Kinnock 1994a). In February of 1986, stricter rules of commons attendance were introduced by the whip's office after embarrassingly low turn-outs by MPs at crucial votes whose morale was extremely low in the face of the large government majority (Interview with Haworth 1995; Interview with Davies 1994; The Times, 5 February 1986). And in June of 1988, the percentage of Labour MP's nominations necessary for a leadership contest to be launched was raised in response to the Campaign Group and Prescott challenge (The Independent, 24 June

1988; see chapter eight). However, most of the ad hoc reforms which further centralised the Party arose directly out of the conflict with Militant. This conflict is a narrative of incremental centralisation and the increasingly habitual use of central power to marginalise the Tendency. It is worthwhile briefly recounting the narrative of the Militant expulsion to display just how ad hoc and contextual was the process of centralisation.

Following Kinnock's success at the 1985 conference, Ken Cure, Chairman of the Appeals and Mediations Committee, announced that he would ask the NEC to set-up a full inquiry into Militant infiltration (The Times, 4 December 1985).

The inquiry actually produced two reports by the end of February 1986. Alongside the majority report, Margaret Beckett and Audrey Wise produced a minority version. Both reports agreed that there had been intimidation by Militant in Liverpool, that Party rules had been abused and that the Liverpool DLP needed to be re-organised. However, on the question of expulsions the reports differed. The majority report recommended a number of people for expulsion including Derek Hatton while the Beckett/Wise report opposed expulsions on the grounds that they would cause local resentment and national disruption thus impeding any reforms to be made in Liverpool (The Guardian, 25 February 1986; The Times, 24 February 1986). However, the NEC went with the majority report agreeing by nineteen votes to ten to begin disciplinary proceedings against sixteen Militant supporters (NEC 7, 26 February 1986: 9). This was soon reduced to twelve due to lack of evidence against four of those picked by the inquiry for proceedings (NEC 8, 10 March 1986: 2).

However, the procedure ran immediately into difficulty as those facing disciplinary hearings asked the High Court for an injunction against the NEC on the grounds that they were not

receiving natural justice (The Guardian, 22 March 1986; The Times, 22 March 1986). Militant had already begun to revert to the courts in earlier weeks, to hinder the work of the inquiry and of CLPs carrying-out their own investigations and expulsions, as the political battle looked increasingly lost (The Guardian, 4 January 1986; The Times, 29 January 1986). The court vice-chancellor agreed that expulsions should not go ahead on the basis of confidential evidence and that the inquiry team, which to all intents and purposes had already found against the sixteen, should not be present at the hearing but he also stated that those facing the hearings had no absolute right to call witnesses. He ordered that the NEC pay half of the plaintiffs' costs (The Guardian, 25 March 1986; The Times, 22 March 1986).

The NEC meeting at which the hearings were to begin took place the next day and, in accordance with the high court's findings, excluded the members of the inquiry team and ignored evidence given in confidence (NEC 9, 26 March 1986: 1-4). However, during the early stages of the first hearing, seven members of the NEC, including Tony Benn and Eric Heffer, walked out leaving the meeting inquorate (NEC 9, 26 March 1986: 6). The news of this shambles reached the public alongside a picture of Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn waving victoriously from the window of Larry Whitty's office after having been placed there while waiting for the NEC to call them for their hearing (The Times, 27 March 1986; Crick 1986: 288). The embarrassments of the court's decision and the walk-out were particularly badly timed coming during a by-election in Fulham which was attracting great media interest as a test both of Kinnock's new-found confidence and a Government troubled by the Westland crisis.

However, the radicals' move backfired. On 18th April the NEC agreed a rule-change by eighteen votes to four to lower the necessary quorum for executive decisions.

After another one of the accused had the charges against him dropped "in view of legal complexities" (NEC Special Meeting, 21/22 May 1986: 2), the NEC finally managed to carry-out the job Kinnock was so keen for it to do. But it was only after a twenty-seven hour meeting involving endless procedural wrangling and no less than twenty-five votes (a number of which related to such vital issues as the times at which the meeting would adjourn and reconvene) that the NEC expelled three Militant supporters, including Tony Mulhearn, and dropped the charges against one after he agreed to end his involvement with Militant (NEC Special Meeting, 21/22 May 1986: 6-31). By the end of June, other attempts by the accused to win court injunctions had failed (The Times, 28 June 1986; Crick 1986: 292) and seven, now including Hatton, had been expelled, two cleared and two had yet to be heard (NEC Special Meeting, 12/13 June 1986: 5-20). Heffer's warnings of a civil war in the Party if expulsions went ahead, warnings which were echoed by some during a brief period of resistance to the expulsions by the affected CLPs and wards, totally failed to materialise.

However, the process of investigation and hearings had proved incredibly laborious and very public. As a result, Kinnock and his supporters started moves to make the whole process easier. In July, the NEC agreed to a new catch-all constitutional rule which made it an "offence to engage in a course of action prejudicial to the party" by twenty votes to five (NEC 13, 30 July 1986:3; The Times, 15 June 1986). It also agreed to set-up a new disciplinary body, the National Constitutional Committee, that would take on the responsibility for disputes and disciplinary proceedings with individual members. The latter was to be elected by conference and it was hoped would take the process of expulsion out of the limelight by removing it from the NEC, as well as saving the Executive a great many hours of laborious wrangling and discussion. Such an independent tribunal would also meet the court's demands

that natural justice could only be met if an unbiased body judged cases (Labour Weekly, 27th June 1986).

Thus we can see from this narrative that the reduction in the quorum necessary for NEC decisions, the establishment of the National Constitutional Committee and the agreement of the new rule which made it an "offence to engage in an action prejudicial to the Party" all developed as ad hoc responses to events linked to the Militant affair and placed unprecedented power in the hands of the core leadership. This clearly contrasts with the existing literature mentioned above which tends to focus upon a single causal process of organisational reform resulting from an analytical focus upon the conscious, rational decision-making of the core leadership. Centralisation of this sort was not limited to the area of disciplinary matters, although the powers and structures developed in this area provided the precedent and power for the core leadership to carry-out such institutional restructuring elsewhere.

In addition to the immediate effects of the expulsions, the Militant affair also became an example of what could be unleashed against those who took a consistently oppositional stance in relation to Kinnock. Considering the difficulty Kinnock had in expelling an entryist body like Militant, it is extremely unlikely that he could have taken similar concerted action against supporters of Tony Benn or black sections since such groups did not have the constitutional and organisational structures associated with a body like Militant. However, one only needs to observe the speed with which London local authority leaders scrambled to show obedience to the leader when his fire was turned on them in 1987 (see chapter seven) to understand the degree to which the assault on Militant had cowed many of those who took an openly oppositional position to Kinnock. As with this less substantive causal process, the Militant

debacle shows it was the more ethereal aspects of the Party's transformation that most significantly effected the centralisation rather than specific formal, constitutional reforms.

Centralisation Without Reform

Further moves towards centralisation occurred as a result of Kinnock's and his close associates' style of leadership; the emergence of a presidential approach; the willingness of the core leadership to use, in aggressive and robust fashion, powers and structures already in existence to achieve its goals; and the decline in power and influence of oppositional forces within the Party. The combination of these factors, outlined below, indicates that the process of centralisation resulted from an inter-retroactive context involving personal, institutional, ideological and contingent-political factors, and not solely from the cynical, rational calculations on the part of the core leadership identified by Heffernan and Marqusee and suggested by Shaw.

As has already been detailed above, Kinnock's personal style of leadership could be aggressive and authoritarian. He often relied heavily on the unconditional backing of his personal office during some very difficult times when it must have seemed, to a man who could be highly sensitive, that all of the Party was united in criticism of him. Apart from the period of extreme withdrawal in the months following the 1987 defeat (see chapter eight), Kinnock's tenure up to 1989 is punctuated with examples of intensely muscular leadership indicating an authoritarian temperament which did not take kindly to opposition or behaviour which the leader deemed to be weakness.

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His attitude to his backbench MPs was often angry and hostile. A senior figure in the PLP commented that Kinnock could sometimes be

> highly dismissive of rank and file Labour MPs ... he was prone to be extremely contemptuous and think they were a gutless lot and that as soon as anything went wrong their morale dropped, their heads went down, they'd got no spine. It was a "what a bloody shower" kind of attitude. ... He didn't really feel he had the support there that he felt he was entitled to (Interview with senior party figure).

This dismissive attitude meant that he often failed to respond to genuine grievances or consult those whom he felt were not worthy of his attention. It is shown in chapter seven how this attitude exacerbated the black sections dispute but his own comments about complaints that he had failed to consult the NEC about the new policies launched as part of the Freedom and Fairness campaign in Spring 1986 (see below) illuminate this aspect of his character:

> (T)here is this habit in the movement: ... a proposal for change comes up and people know they can't really resist the change, on any basis of logic or political common sense, but they've got to strike a position. And the position they strike, therefore, will be about procedure more than substance: "we should have been asked", "why did you spring this on us" - all these phrases are used. And they have a certain currency with the activists, people who describe themselves as rank and file - many of whom are neither rank nor file. The result is, of course, that more senior or leading figures in the Party have to patronise that

> constituency and they therefore will say "we're being bounced" or "why haven't we been told about this" or "it would have been better if we'd been brought into the consultations". But its only an excuse. It's not a real issue. It isn't about the substance of the thing. It isn't about policy - it's simply a way of leading from the back and it's something I've never been very keen on (Interview with Kinnock 1994a).

This attitude was sometimes extended to members of his own Shadow Cabinet. In particular Denzil Davies, the Shadow Defence Secretary from 1984 who had actually come third in the Shadow Cabinet elections of 1986, was largely absent from any of the consultation and discussions over defence policy despite the fact that he was clearly the most senior figure in the Party with respect to this area.

Davies was hardly the archetype of a media-conscious, ambitious Kinnockite. Looking more like an Oxford academic of the old-school, he once found himself on the end of a sharp note from Kinnock for producing a hand-written press release (Interview with Davies 1994). The defence secretary endeared himself even less to the leader after the 1987 Shadow Cabinet elections when he refused the post of Shadow Welsh Secretary hoping instead for Shadow Foreign Secretary. He ended-up back at defence.

Davies found himself increasingly excluded: despite regular requests he was unable to obtain a meeting with Kinnock; he was asked to speak by the media about press releases on defence of which he had been uninformed; and he was sidelined from any major input into the Policy Review when Gerald Kaufman was given responsibility for foreign policy *and* defence. His patience finally snapped after Kinnock gave a television interview which seemed to suggest a

shift on the unilateral policy without having first mentioned the move to his Defence Spokesman. As is now well-known, in the early hours of 14 June 1988 Davies phoned a senior journalist and announced his resignation from the Shadow Cabinet stating, apparently, that he was "fed-up with being humiliated" (Hughes & Wintour 1990: 89). With an understandable sense of vengeful irony, Davies had failed to consult the leader about his resignation.

Kinnock's treatment of some members of the PLP and his Shadow Cabinet are indications of his tendency to exclude and dismiss those he did not fully respect or agree with in a particularly authoritarian manner. Such an attitude alone may have been enough to have encouraged something of a concentration of power in the leader's office but it combined with two other factors which enhanced the concentration greatly.

Firstly, there was the emergence of a presidential approach within the Party. Despite the consistent doubts about his appeal to voters, Kinnock, from the day he won victory in the 1983 leadership contest had a strong presidential air. As the section on the leadership contest itself (see chapter three) shows, he was regarded by many as possessing personal qualities that would immediately enhance the appeal of the Party: charisma, powerful oratory, youth and determination. But in an even more profound way he came to personally symbolise the new direction of the Party being seen as someone who had cut his links with the dead-end of Bennism and was willing to change for the sake of power but simultaneously would still retain what was best in the old Labour traditions which had been previously embodied in figures such as Bevan. This personal symbolism was developed further by the New Strategic Thinking when Kinnock was used very consciously as the incarnation of the reformed Labour Party's strength of purpose and trustworthiness in government (see chapter eight). While the effect

such a campaigning strategy had on the public is questionable, some have felt that its real power lay in improving the leader's image within the Party itself (Interview with Hulme 1994) and hence making him an ever more presidential figure.

This notion of a great leader who was indispensable certainly had a greater impact upon the grassroots membership (Interviews with the following: Matheson 1994; O'Mara 1994; Edmonds 1994) than on those closer to the higher echelons but it was an extra factor which made Kinnock's position highly stable (despite the dissatisfaction amongst those higher echelons - see chapter eight) and hence allowed him to pursue his reform project relatively unopposed after 1985 and especially after 1987.

Secondly, there was a style of leadership which sometimes gripped Kinnock's office and his closest supporters and enhanced the tendency to a centralised unaccountability. This was the method of pursuing internal political battles through the use of secret press briefings against the individual who had incurred the core leadership's wrath.

This tactic was used more commonly in the years following the 1987 defeat. In particular, it was used when differences began to emerge between Bryan Gould and Kinnock's office during the Policy Review. The source of the dispute was the question of Europe with Gould taking a more 'eurosceptic' attitude while Kinnock, influenced by his chief economic adviser, John Eatwell, took an increasingly 'europhile' view ultimately committing Labour to a policy of ERM membership for Britain (Interview with Gould 1994; Interview with Party officer and activist; Interview with senior Party officer). However, the dispute soon took the form of stories in the press which claimed Gould was losing Kinnock's favour, that there was a fundamental difference between Gould on one side and Kinnock and Hattersley on the other

over the role of the market in Labour's economic policy, and that Gould was making various gaffes in public.

The Trade and Industry Spokesman was in no doubt that these stories were coming from sources close to the leader in a deliberate attempt to discredit him and damage his popularity in the PLP and the wider Party (Interview with Gould 1994). As one Party official commented of Gould:

> It's very easy to go from being a brave, interesting, innovative politician who's a brilliant communicator to being a gaffe-prone person with no political judgement; that was the effect of these cumulative briefings against him (Interview with Party Official 1994).

A more public condemnation of the tendency came from the leader of the TGWU who, in a controversial speech at the 1988 conference, commented

> My union is caricatured as a dinosaur ... We're told that we're out of touch, out of date. Opposition to deals that sell out the right to strike? Hopeless nonsense. Dislike of rip-off training schemes? Pure fundamentalism. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament? You're in a world of your own. We all expect that from The Daily Mail, but to hear it from your own side whispered into the odd journalistic ear, muttered by the same people that yesterday - and tomorrow - will seek out support, that grates. I resent it deeply (Todd 1988).

Clearly because this is a highly sensitive area, it is very difficult to assess the degree to which this weapon was used and with whom or with which body it originated. Certainly, during the Policy Review, hostile stories did appear in the press which were damaging to the credibility of a number of senior individuals and rumour usually identified Peter Mandelson as their source (Interview with Party official and activist). Certainly, even Charles Clarke, a man whose discretion with regards to the activity of the Kinnock leadership is great, admits that

> ... in my view Peter is too conspiratorial in the way he goes about things (Interview with Clarke 1994).

However, the extent to which Clarke and Kinnock himself used or acquiesced in the use of this tactic is unclear and it is an issue over which differing and contradictory views exist. Thus, unfortunately, few conclusions can be drawn about that particular aspect of this issue.

What it does seem fair to state is that following the 1987 election, certain political differences were fought out not in the NEC or at conference but increasingly through the medium of off-the-record briefings to the press. Such a tactic is, of course, by its very nature unaccountable and reliant upon the unique access certain senior Party figures had to the press - this, when combined with the other factors mentioned above, indicates an enhanced level of unaccountability and authoritarianism.

Enhanced Use Of Existing Powers

A growing authoritarianism and centralisation was also perceptible in the core leadership's willingness to use and develop, in an aggressive fashion, powers it already possessed to achieve its goals. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the imposition of candidates on CLPs in by-elections. The imposition of Kate Hoey on Vauxhall and Mohammed Aslam on Nottingham East (see chapter eight) are examples of the core leadership, with the backing of the NEC, using strong-arm tactics in the face of almost unanimous opposition from the CLP involved. A similar imposition occurred in Knowsley North when the NEC overturned the CLP's choice of the radical Les Huckfield and imposed George Howarth on the dubious pretext of a minor procedural fault in the selection process (NEC 14, 24 September 1986: 12-13; NEC 2, 22 October 1986: 10-11; The Independent, 22 October 1986).

A further area within which the core leadership used powers already in its possession was the pursuit of Militant prior to the establishment of the National Constitutional Committee and the adoption of the new disciplinary rule (see above). Particularly following the 1985 conference, the NEC's powers of expulsion and discipline were used to an extent unseen since the leadership's battles with the left in the 1950s. While this in itself was a sudden growth in the power of central authority in the Party and, as many claimed at the time, a sign of extreme intolerance of opposing views, it was clear from the judgements of the High Court that the NEC's respect for natural justice was not great (see chapter five). While the only published detailed account of one hearing, following adaptations to please the High Court, suggests that those leading the 'prosecution' rarely made a particularly conscientious attempt to produce conclusive evidence that individuals were actually 'members' rather than supporters of a proscribed organisation (McDermott 1986).

Thus we can clearly see that a purposeful, conscious, long-term project of increased centralisation and authoritarianism on the part of the core leadership, as identified by the existing literature mentioned above, did not play a major part in the organisational reform of the Party. While rational reform of the constitution did have some effect in this direction, the actual growth in centralised and authoritarian control rose as much out of the uncoordinated and ethereal factors of ad hoc response and personality as such rationalistic goals. However, one area in which *all* of the above causes and effects came fully into their own was that of the policy-making process.

THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS AND CENTRAL CONTROL

After the 1985 conference when major policy reform was once again back on the agenda, increasingly reform-oriented initiatives were announced which came directly from the leader's or front bench spokesperson's offices thus by-passing the NEC and Home Policy Committee. For example, Hattersley told delegates at the USDAW conference, without reference to any official body:

> I will not allow the next Labour Government to fall into the trap which engulfed our socialist colleagues in France. We are not going to attempt too much during the first two years and be forced to abandon our hopes, as well as our policies, during the second half of the Parliament. ... It will not be possible to fulfil all our aspirations in the lifetime of a single Parliament. That means, and we must accept that it

> means, that other programmes and policies, highly desirable in themselves, will have to take their place further back in the queue - or be financed by means which do not compete for the resources we must allocate to create new jobs (The Guardian, 29 April 1986; The Times, 29 April 1986).

Hattersley's speech came a week after the launch of the Freedom and Fairness Campaign. The campaign attracted most attention from the press and the rest of the Party for the intensely slick style of campaigning it launched involving a professional television broadcast, glossy leaflets focusing on the experiences of a nine-year old girl, and, most significantly, the jettisoning of the red flag symbol (The Guardian, 23 April 1986; The Times, 22 April 1986).

Freedom and Fairness was the first occasion on which most Party members became aware of the influence of the new campaigns director Peter Mandelson and his voluntary group of marketing and advertising specialists known as the Shadow Communications Agency.

The initiatives coming from the leader's and spokespersons' offices and the sudden involvement of unaccountable bodies such as the SCA led both radicals and soft left figures to complain about the lack of consultation. Soon after the launch of Freedom and Fairness, David Blunkett circulated a NEC discussion paper commenting that:

> Individuals are dealing with aspects which are central to our policies in a way which reflects their own views without reference to the home policy committee.

He went on to claim that if the party's parliamentary leaders did not work more closely with the NEC,

> we will end up with constant friction with the denouncement of campaigning on the one hand and somewhat elitist detachment from or contempt for the party on the other hand (The Times, 14 June 1986).

Blunkett's voice chimed in with constant, similar complaints from the radical wing about the by-passing of the NEC, such as Eric Heffer's concern, expressed in a letter to Larry Whitty, about press reports that a Shadow Cabinet meeting in July had discussed changes to party policy without reference to the executive (NEC minutes, 30 July 1986).

However, at the meeting of the Home Policy Committee and the NEC itself in July and September, a series of documents were presented that reflected recent public pronouncements on policy. If the radical wing thought they might be able to win back some control over the content of policy by demanding that the usual policy process be observed they were mistaken. The Home Policy Committee agreed all the documents, as did the NEC, easily voting down amendments to the documents from Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Eric Heffer (NEC 14, 24 September 1986: 9-11). The radicals' tactics may have succeeded in briefly re-asserting the constitutional procedures of the Labour Party but they also simultaneously legitimised policies with which they fundamentally disagreed. As with most radical initiatives at this time, the demand was a reflex response designed to embarrass the core leadership rather than achieve any longer term strategic goal.

One commentator, clearly more aware than those leading the radical wing, argued that policy processes in the party had now changed. Responding to claims that Roy Hattersley - the figure most commonly targeted by the radicals over policy changes - was constructing a new programme single-handed, he wrote:

> Policy is now made within the Shadow Cabinet and then announced in public to test the temperature. The joint committees of the Shadow Cabinet and NEC act as transmission belts to convey these policies into official documents and statements which can be presented to conference for endorsement. Thus Hattersley is basically correct to claim that his views on taxation, exchange controls and so on now represent the official party line (Wilson 1986).

However, the real test for the openness of the policy-making process came with the Policy Review. In September 1987, the NEC approved a broad outline of the structure of the Review process which proposed the establishment of a number of review groups to oversee different areas, which was drawn up by Sawyer and Bish with help from Sawyer's researcher, Adam Sharples. The pre-conference NEC also agreed to a series of events at which the party leadership would hear the views of the public known as 'Labour Listens', as well as a document entitled Moving Ahead which would argue the case for the review to conference (NEC 11, 23 September 1987: 8; The Independent, 15 September 1987; The Independent, 24 September 1987).

In his NEC paper Whitty had described the brief of the policy review as follows:

> (to) assess the policy issues and opportunities in the 1990s; make an assessment of the relevance and credibility of existing party policy matched against the need and concerns of groups of voters; and recommend broad themes of political strategy as well as policy areas in which more detailed examination is required (Hughes & Wintour 1990: 46).

A central feature of the review, hinted at by Whitty's paper was the linking of policy design to the surveying and marketing techniques of the advertising and business world which had its most ardent champions in the members of the Shadow Communication Agency. Most famously the SCA had presided over the Party's development of a new 'corporate image' which resulted in the dropping of the red flag and its ultimate replacement by the red rose logo (The Guardian, 23 April 1986; The Times, 22 April 1986). The agency had also started to oversee the production of the Party's television and radio broadcasts (Interview with Gau 1994). This activity was a feature of the influence of the active vote maximisation *value* articulated to the New Strategic Thinking. An articulation which had found its most ardent and active champions in the figures who dominated the SCA: Peter Mandelson, Patricia Hewitt and Philip Gould, the advertising executive who headed the Agency.

However, it was after the 1987 election that the Shadow Communications Agency began to have a decisive influence on policy-making itself. A feature which enhanced fears that elite groups loyal to the core leadership were setting the policy agenda and approving specific reforms rather than the constitutional bodies of the Party.

On the 20th November, a joint meeting of the NEC and the Shadow Cabinet saw a presentation by the SCA that was designed to show how political attitudes were changing and would continue to change into the nineties and how these attitudes related to the future strategy of the Party. Based as it was on analysis of existing survey material, the 'Labour and Britain in the 1990s' presentation said little that any Labour politician who read the newspapers could not have come across before: Labour was perceived as outdated, autocratic, patriarchal, and dominated by trade unionists and extremists; Labour's vote had declined because class structure had changed at the expense of working-class identity; some aspects of the Thatcherite agenda, such as home ownership, were more popular than others, such as absolute dominance of the market; Labour was not trusted on the economy and its defence and public ownership policies raised particular suspicions amongst voters; and the Tories real success was in their ability to provide a fair proportion of the electorate with a rising sense of prosperity (Hughes 1989; Hughes & Wintour 1990:60-63).

In fact, much of what the SCA presented to the meeting were precisely the themes and issues that had informed Government propaganda and which Labour had belatedly responded to in its 1987 election campaign. What was original was the implicit suggestion that these findings be directly linked to policy development - the suggestion that Labour's manifesto be designed to respond directly to the demands of voters mediated through the mechanisms of academic surveying and market research. However, Whitty, Sawyer and others deeply involved in the Review constantly denied that the SCA was guiding policy development. Sawyer stated:

> We don't take an opinion poll to see what the electorate thinks and then deliver it. It's to give us some idea where the electorate is going, what

> its values are, so that we can measure that against where we are, and see how we can bridge the gap (Sawyer & Kelly 1987).

Such disclaimers always appeared in the introductions to SCA productions such as the Labour and Britain in the 1990s presentation which became a Labour publication. But even Hughes and Wintour, who do their best to present the whole review process as eminently valuable and honourable admit that

> Hardly anyone involved in the review ever believed the rubric: they could see that, in the 'new model party', political demands would be inseparable from the communications imperative (Hughes and Wintour 1990: 63).

To respond to the growing fears that the Policy Review would be centrally controlled by unaccountable organisations such as the SCA, a consultation process with members of the Party and the public entitled Labour Listens was established. Tom Sawyer argued that the Review was being regarded as closed because of press reports which portrayed the process as a tool for Kinnock to move the party to the right. Labour Listens, he argued, would keep the Review open and democratic. He stated that:

> After previous general elections, little huddles have got together at Walworth Road or the House of Commons, and invited specialists in. It was a closed system. This is much more open, with a structure that builds the regions, the Shadow Cabinet, and the NEC into the policy

> review. That has been overlooked or misunderstood by a lot of people (Sawyer & Kelly 1987).

However as a Tribune editorial had rightly pointed out a few weeks earlier, there was little concrete about the Labour Listens plans, no formal structure had been proposed that would officially incorporate trade unions or CLPs (Tribune, 16 October 1987). Such doubts and cynicism was to be the popular response throughout the Party and PLP. One survey, carried out a few weeks from the start of the project, found that over 40% of Labour MPs were sceptical about the value of Labour Listens - a very high figure when one considers that a fair number of MPs would probably have denied scepticism simply to maintain a popular show of unity and support for the leadership (The Independent, 12 February 1988). A Tribune editorial caught the general attitude when it stated:

> The public face of such events was, as operated in the run-up to the general election campaign, little more than a political rally with a human face (Tribune, 16 October 1987).

This cynicism was sadly vindicated by events. Labour Listens did not prove a useful or effective consultation process. The main structure by which a check was supposed to be made upon centralisation and elitism in the Policy Review failed because it was ill-conceived from the very start. If a genuine consultation procedure was required then, being aware that there was considerable cynicism about the openness of the Review, Labour Listens should have been more tightly and convincingly organised. If the meetings had been constructed as genuinely representative bodies discussing a consultation document which would then have been amendable by conference the interest in the consultation process would almost certainly

have been great and enhanced internal democracy. However, there was no framework for the consultation: meetings had no clear format and thus became unfocused; they attracted an unrepresentative audience; and it was not clear how each meeting fitted into the broader Review process. As one senior Party officer admitted, you cannot just gather together a bunch of people and simply ask them what they want and expect anything very constructive to occur (Interview with Party official 1994). This failure only enhanced the cynicism and apathy which in turn further weakened the consultation process to the point where a whole series of extra consultation meetings, planned for early 1989, were cancelled due to lack of interest (Tribune, 20 January 1989).

John Edmonds, despite his close involvement with the Review, had a particularly cynical perspective on why Labour Listens was so poorly planned:

> A different process could have been opted for which would have been high risk but would have guaranteed to everyone that this was genuine consultation. But high risk wasn't what was wanted. Kinnock didn't want it. (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

Thus we can see that policy-making in the Party became less and less determined by genuine consultation or respect for the constitutional bodies of the Party and more by the ideological, contingent-political and the development of the personnel in certain favoured groups and elites within the Party, who were influenced in that development by far less transparent processes of general changes in *value*.

A further organisational change that was to have a major influence on the transformation, well beyond the sphere of organisational change itself, was that of One Member, One vote.

OMOV AND THE IDENTITY OF KINNOCKISM AND THE SOFT LEFT

The drive to have a one member, one vote system adopted for parliamentary candidate selection was important to the transformation in the sense that the changes it brought about in internal Party democracy were themselves a feature of the transformation. But OMOV was also important in that the dispute over the reform contributed to the development of both soft left and Kinnockite identities.

The issue had been raised during the leadership contest but first became a source of real dispute in early 1984 when Kinnock's office quietly briefed the press that the leader favoured the use of OMOV for the selection of prospective MPs (The Guardian, 3 March 1984; The Times, 2 March 1984). Under this system, the candidate would be selected by a ballot of individual Labour Party members rather than the existing process whereby the General Management Committees of CLPs - made up of branch, trade union and affiliated societies delegates - made the decision at a special meeting. By May, Kinnock had gone public on the issue openly stating his support for the use of OMOV (The Times, 24 May 1984).

The core leadership's decision to push for OMOV provoked a number of reactions. These were indications of multiplication in that they did not wholly reflect the radical-moderate spectrum although there was some congruency. A number of Bennites firmly opposed OMOV fearing that it was an attempt to undermine their powerbase in the GMCs and that it would

prove to be the first step in a phased reduction of the trade union link. There was also a strongly-held belief that OMOV would reduce rather than increase democracy in the Party: many felt it would allow the media to set the agenda for selections within the Labour Party since the majority of those voting would receive their information not from discussion at GMCs but from anti-Labour newspapers and television (Interview with Corbyn 1994; Interview with King 1994). As such, it was felt that OMOV would undermine the deliberative, educational democracy which, it was argued, was a historical feature of the Party. Such views were also held outside the ranks of firm Bennites. Jim Mortimer, who was in his last year as Party General Secretary, was opposed. He argued that

> ... democracy in the Labour Party depends upon rank and file participation which means you go along to a meeting and discuss. For twenty years I was a member of my union executive and a union official and this was the way we always operated - you took a decision and that stands in the name of the union. I don't regard that as undemocratic (Interview with Mortimer 1994).

On the other hand support for the reform was forthcoming from figures on the moderate wing. Many moderate MPs particularly welcomed the move feeling that it would seriously reduce the threat of deselection by the more radically inclined CLP activists. Rumours of potential deselections were rife in 1984 (the vast majority of which proved unfounded) and a speedy reform towards OMOV it was hoped would save a number of moderate MPs from unemployment at the next election. As one senior figure observed:

> Every time in the electoral cycle that reselection comes around MPs get terribly jittery. ... Often MPs who are in no difficulty whatsoever exaggerate the smallest little setback. They all go into the tea-room and talk themselves into a bit of a state - "two new people turned up in such and such a ward". But I certainly don't recall the PLP putting any pressure on Kinnock in any formal way, or even that there was any discussion at a PLP meeting about this (Interview with senior party figure 1995).

Support also came from some on the soft left. Jack Straw in particular backed the move arguing

> There were ... hundreds of CLPs which in last year's leadership contest, voted with their feet by introducing *ad hoc* one member, one vote systems. In doing so they were responding ... to a very wide consensus that movement towards a wider direct franchise within the Party was desirable (Straw 1984).

However, the response of many on the soft left was much more complex than simple support. In public, the LCC opposed OMOV in 1984. The group's executive issued a joint statement with the Campaign for Labour Democracy - the body which had worked for the constitutional reforms of the early 1980s and was increasingly identified with the radical wing - which argued

> Such experience as we had during the last Parliament suggests that mandatory reselection does the party no harm and that original fears about it were vastly exaggerated. ... A rule change sprung on the party so late in the day is bound to fuel suspicion that democratic rights of CLPs - long fought for - are being undermined. In particular, any rule change which does away with a selection conference or permits postal ballots is completely unacceptable (LCC/CLPD 1984).

However, while many members of the soft left did oppose OMOV for the same reasons as the radical wing, in private a large section of the LCC Executive supported the move but felt it was too early or too divisive to openly back the shift (Interviews with the following: Stanley 1994; Gilby 1994; Haworth 1995). In fact, the LCC Executive had written to Kinnock in April 1984 agreeing that existing reselection procedures were flawed and accepting that there was a strong case for change. But the letter argued for a greater period of consultation stating that

> while we appreciate the concern that a series of bitter re-selection contests could damage the Party's standing, we believe hurried, piece meal constitutional change would be likely to open old and more serious wounds (Denham 1984).

Or as one leading LCC activist put it:

> ... the view was: OMOV is going to come eventually but it's not worth the candle now (Stanley 1994).

The issue was debated at the 1984 conference and two card votes defeated motions that called for no change by 4,359,000 to 2,158,000 but also defeated by 3,992,000 votes to 3,041,000 Kinnock's specific proposals for adoption of OMOV (Labour Party 1984b: 66-67).

Hughes and Wintour argue that Kinnock's experience of the bitter disappointment of his defeat at the 1984 conference made him promise himself that he would carefully build majorities and ensure unanimity before embarking on any other major reform. According to their analysis, 1984 made him realise that he could not rely simply on loyalty to win support for change (Hughes and Wintour 1990: 7-8). As such, the OMOV defeat is portrayed as a turning-point in the transformation in that it was fundamentally instrumental in creating 'Kinnock the great Party manager'. However, as other sections in this thesis argue, Kinnock's management skills were inconsistent due to his distance as a leader and his personal ability to alienate even close supporters (see chapters seven and eight).

At certain times Kinnock and his office did display considerable skill in Party management. The leader's great success and his skilful manipulation of *value* at the 1985 conference over Militant (see chapter five), the success in saving the reform of the unilateral policy despite the opposition of the TGWU (see chapter nine), and Kinnock's own ability to charm both crowds and individuals with his humour and warmth (Interview with Edmonds 1994) are all indications that managerial talent did exist. But the application of this talent was very variable.

Despite Hughes and Wintour's claim, Kinnock's personal links to the unions were extremely fragile from 1985 through to 1989 (see chapter eight), there was little personal loyalty between the main wielders of the block vote and the chief executive of the Party. As such, the

defeat over OMOV was an indication of this managerial failing on Kinnock's part. What distinguished the period after the 1984 conference from the period before was not Kinnock's realisation that careful management was vital but the fact that the miners had been defeated and the resulting fear and trembling on the part of the trade union leaderships that Margaret Thatcher was now an unchallengeable anti-union force (see chapters four and five). The greatest part of Kinnock's support from the unions thus came from the latter's acknowledgement that a Labour government was their only possible salvation, it was not solely, or even primarily, the result of any great managerial talent exercised by the leader. As Minkin has pointed-out, for the Unions in the late 1980s:

> *The* Fundamental priority was the return of a Labour Government ...
>
> (Minkin 1991: 467; Minkin's italics)

There was no careful cultivation of union support, no meticulous building of trust by Kinnock. Indeed the mediocre personal management displayed in 1984 reappeared at various intervals throughout the 1980s (see chapter eight). Nevertheless, this must be contrasted with Minkin's observation that the Leader's office and the wider Party leadership (if not the Leader himself) made consistent efforts to maintain and improve good lines of consultation with the trade union leadership during the 1980s (Minkin 1991: 402; 468-9). Significantly, however, it is the good relationship between Charles Clarke and John Monks, as Deputy General Secretary of the TUC, that Minkin highlights as the pivotal one in upholding this consultation process, rather than that between Kinnock and any other senior trade union figure (Minkin 1991: 469). However, an important factor for the approach of this thesis is that if we reject the notion that Kinnock achieved many of his goals purely because of his excellent managerial skills, we are left with the possibility of a more complex approach which can explain how, despite

managerial failings, Kinnock was able to maintain such high levels of power. Within the context of this thesis the answer must be that there can be no one, or even a few cause/s to explain this power but that instead, the power of the leader resulted from the inter-retroaction of many factors.

Thus, the significance of OMOV is wider and more complex than a simple change of perspective on the part of the Party leader. In particular, OMOV acted as another issue around which the emerging identity of the soft left and of Kinnockism itself was forged.

Reform of the candidates selection process became an issue by which the soft left continued to distinguish itself from the radical wing of the Party. By the time Kinnock made another attempt at reforming the process in 1987, he won much wider backing for change including support from the LCC and leading soft left figures who had originally opposed the move (NEC Special Meeting, 15 September 1987: 2-5; LCC 1987a: 3-4). Thus a process of negative identity construction was underway as soon as the soft left committed themselves to OMOV and the radical wing continued its opposition.

The key feature of this process was that OMOV provided Kinnock and the soft left with a project which could allow them to appear as a force for radical, democratic empowerment within the Party; forces aiming to give power to the general membership as opposed to the activist core. Hence other factors similarly associated with Kinnockism, such as the active vote maximisation *value*, became associated as part of a wider project which was empowering and democratic. Through articulation, OMOV and Kinnockism became inter-retroactive. OMOV helped provide the Kinnockite and soft left projects with the feel of radicalism but

OMOV itself gained this more democratic *value* by its association with Kinnock and the soft left. When OMOV had largely been espoused by the moderate wing, it appeared as a ploy to undercut the radical activists and to stabilise the position of sitting MPs. However, once it became a cause of Kinnock and the soft left it took on a greater aura of democratic empowerment by its association with non-moderate figures who themselves had close links to the activist section of the Party. Despite the fact that the radical wing still did perceive OMOV as a moderate-style ploy by new right-wing converts, Kinnock and the soft left could effectively now portray their selection reforms, and hence their wider political approach, as true to the spirit of a radical democratic socialism. As such Charles Clarke claimed,

> (Kinnock) wasn't interested in the business of defending MPs, he was interested in trying to extend democracy in the Party by a whole series of different devices of which OMOV was one. He was interested in trying to ensure that the Party wasn't dominated by what he though was a very self-selecting group of political cliques of various descriptions - incidentally not just the left but right-wing little groups as well who made not only selection but the development of Party policy a question of playing with building-blocks of little caucuses. ... OMOV was a means of tackling that (Interview with Clarke 1994).

While the LCC argued for the reform on the grounds of good, democratic new agenda principles which drew, once again, on the mass party ideal:

> GCs are often unrepresentative of the wider Party membership. They are nearly always more male than the rank and file and almost certainly

> more white. Because of time demands they will tend to exclude shift workers or those with child or elderly relative care commitments ... Broadening the franchise in the reselection process fits in with the LCC's commitment to an open, campaigning mass Party (LCC 1987a).

For these reasons, Kinnock and the soft left were able to "mobilise a consensus for OMOV in the CLPs" (Interview with Hain 1994). This consensus could be built in a way that could not have been achieved if OMOV had remained the preserve of the moderates.

In this context OMOV played a further role in the transformation in that it helped to further marginalise the radical wing. By arguing against OMOV as a 'right-wing ploy' to undermine the power of the radicals, the trades unions and the activists, the Bennites underestimated the democratic appeal of OMOV (Interview with King 1994; Interview with Corbyn 1994). This was a serious error for many on the radical wing did actually support some kind of democratic reform in the Party, such as Tony Benn's call for a popular vote instead of the electoral college in leadership elections. But instead of picking-up on the democratising *value* sponsored by calls for OMOV and attempting to radicalise it further, many radicals simply argued against it on purely negative grounds. In particular the common argument that OMOV would in fact further centralise the Party by preventing informed decisions and benefiting high-profile figures, while possibly being true was a rather convoluted argument to communicate effectively in the face of the simple franchise-extending appeal of OMOV. As such, Jeremy Corbyn, chief organiser of the Campaign Group, admits:

> Kinnock very cleverly backed us into a corner. We always ended up defending a system that we had never benefited from. ... The mistake

> we made was in not proposing an agenda for change, we put out what was a perfectly valid critique of the OMOV idea ... but we weren't seen to be offering anything new, only a defence of the old (Interview with Corbyn 1994).

CONCLUSION

It is strange that a factor, as self-evidently involved in the transformation of other areas as organisational change, has become one of the most simplified and mono-causal in the existing explanations. This chapter has attempted to reclaim the complexity of organisational change in the 1980s by displaying that it is more than just the result of rational calculation and conscious reform on the part of the core leadership. It has been shown that the developing centralisation and authoritarianism of Labour was part of an inter-retroactive context characterised by 'less concrete' factors such as ad hoc responses to immediate problems, styles of leadership, the growth of a presidential approach, the use of existing powers by the core leadership, the influence of the Shadow Communications Agency, and the failure of the Policy Review consultation process. It has also been argued that one particular aspect of organisational change, the reform of the candidate selection process, became a central factor in the development of the identity of the soft left and of the broader notion of Kinnockism by processes of articulation and negative construction.

There is one highly significant factor of the inter-retroactive context of the above organisational changes which is ignored by existing analyses and which has not yet been mentioned in relation to centralisation and authoritarianism. This is the contingent-political situation within the Party during the 1980s. In particular, the fact that no major force existed

to challenge Kinnock's reforms and trajectory ensured that the central control and authority of the core leadership was strong. Despite the various structural reforms outlined above and the authoritarian style of Kinnock and his associates, the ability of the leader to achieve his goals so effectively would have been lessened had he not been able to win the increasingly certain support of the NEC and the conference. If radicals or anti-Kinnockites of whatever hue, had remained influential on those bodies, particularly the NEC, then the leader's ability to exercise his central control and authoritarian rule would have been much more limited. As such, a major factor in the growth of centralisation and authoritarianism was as much the contingent political situation which drew soft left and moderate strands close to Kinnock and weakened the radical wing, as it was a result of authoritarian personalities or conscious attempts to reform structures.

This observation introduces the full complexity of inter-retroaction into our understanding of Labour's transformation. Firstly, because such a contingent-political shift was clearly part of an inter-retroactive context which involved all other categories of causal process (such as ideological, personal and institutional), then it follows that the organisational changes cannot be fully understood without reference to all these other factors and their complex inter-retroaction. Secondly, since the core leadership was the most reform-minded body in the Party, the concentration of power in that office had its own effects in furthering the transformation in all other spatially distinct areas of the Party, which themselves then further enhanced the power of Kinnock and his office.

The clearest example of this is the Policy Review which was in part achieved because the core leadership were so supportive of the project and had the power to achieve it. However, once the review had been completed - in a form, of course, favoured by the core leadership - it

further enhanced the power of Kinnock. A leader, who had undertaken the most ambitious review of Party policy and had won overwhelming backing from conference, was not likely to be challenged before the next election. But, of course, his success in completing that Review was in large part due to his initial hold on a high degree of concentrated power. As such, multiple causes and inter-retroactions played a part in organisational reform and the broader transformation.

By such consideration we can hopefully appreciate the complexity of the organisational change and how a variety of factors - including the full range of personal, contingent-political, ideological and, of course, institutional - constituted the inter-retroactive context of this aspect of the transformation.

7

THE NEW AGENDA

In the search for complexity, a key task has been the augmentation of the causal processes of the transformation identified by the existing literature on this period. In this context, the issue of new agenda issues and, in particular, the conflicts over black sections and the 'London Effect' are particularly apposite. With the slim exception of Heffernan and Marqusee (1992: 70-78; 265-270) - who use these topics simply as a context within which to polemicise against Kinnock's leadership - these issues are all but ignored by the existing literature. As such, the very focus of this chapter contributes towards an enhanced complexity in the analysis of the process of transformation.

As a result this chapter makes a number of important and original observations about the nature of the new agenda issues in the Party during the 1980s and about the role they played in the wider transformation.

The chapter provides an analysis of why there was such hostility on the part of the core leadership to the black sections campaign. In keeping with complexity it argues that this hostility arose not solely out of the fear that black sections were electorally damaging to the Party as was asserted regularly at the time - although this was a factor - but also because black sections were regarded as a bastion of the radical wing of the Party, because there was an incommensurability of *values* between the leadership and the black sections campaigners,

and because there was little or nothing in Labour's history which provided a precedent for dealing with and explaining the demands of those campaigners. In this context it is also argued that due to the particular beliefs of those involved in the black sections campaign, the constant and successful attempts to defeat black sections proposals by the leadership at conference, in the NEC and in working parties only served to heighten anger and confirm the beliefs of the campaigners rather than demoralise them.

Most importantly it is shown, how the above conflicts played a vital role in the wider transformation. For various reasons, including Kinnock's hostility, many leading figures on the soft left deserted both black sections and the radical new agenda policies of London local authorities despite the fact that the mass party approach had highlighted the importance of supporting such new agenda campaigns and initiatives. This ended any practical continuation of the mass party approach and left a largely unchallenged version of Kinnock's more moderate New Strategic Thinking as the only alternative left open to many on the soft left. Thus new agenda issues played an important role in altering the identity of the soft left and shifting many in that grouping closer to Kinnock.

It is also argued that the above process was to a certain extent based upon a misperception of the black sections campaign by the soft left and the leadership. It is shown that relations between the black sections campaigners and the radical wing were never as close as many argued at the time. Indeed, although the radical wing was the only grouping within the Party to give any firm support to the black sections demand, the relationship between black activists and white radicals was often tense and sometimes conflictual. In this context, it is also shown how the condition of marginality, which afflicted both new agenda groups such as black sections and the radical wing had very different effects. For new agenda groups marginality

was the very condition that sponsored their existence and was the central feature of their self-image and, as such, continuing marginality confirmed beliefs and actually allowed them to function. For the radicals, the type of extreme and growing marginality which occurred in the 1980s was a new experience and contributed towards demoralisation, splits and further marginalisation. This highlights a particularly stark case of the multiple and differing effects one cause may have.

The chapter also highlights further complexity with regards to the issues of black sections through the use of the approach of multiplication. It is shown how the black sections campaign was itself riven by fissures of ideology, personality and strategy.

In addition to this, the study of new agenda issues and movements is valid within the context of an analysis that tries to avoid the simplification of an epiphenomenal approach to the transformation. For, although by 1989 the impact of the new agenda on doctrine was limited, the fact that previously non-existent disputes over black sections, the 'London effect', nuclear power and other issues were now so high profile and divisive - at a time when older conflicts were fading - means that in a non-epiphenomenal approach, we must take account of such a change as a valid aspect of the transformation. This may be why much of the existing analysis of Labour in the 1980s pays very little or no attention to new agenda issues, focused as they are upon an epiphenomenal appreciation of policy development.

This chapter will focus upon black sections and the 'London effect' as the highest profile aspects of the new agenda in the 1980s. However, there were a great number of new agenda issues developing in importance throughout the 1980s even though they did not reach the level of sustained controversy and depth of effect that black sections and the 'London effect'

had by 1989. As such brief comments on the issue of gay rights, nuclear power, women's rights and representation, and the poll tax non-payment campaign are made towards the end of the chapter.

THE NEW AGENDA AND THE CORE LEADERSHIP: A CLASH OF *VALUES*

The core leadership were implacably opposed to the black sections demand from its earliest appearance as an issue. It is necessary to trace briefly the series of obstructive tactics, unwarranted interventions and insensitive decisions of the core leadership before explaining why this opposition existed, if only because the leadership at the time claimed their actions to be based purely on rational and fair-minded considerations.

Despite the fact that the 1983 conference remission had established a working party to investigate the feasibility of black sections which had yet to report its findings (due by 1985), the core leadership and its supporters intervened to express its hostility. Most famously, Gerald Kaufman, in a television interview, had upset many by stating that the reform would create "some kind of ghetto" (The Guardian, 9 June 1984; The times 11 June 1984).

Despite the working party's final recommendation that black sections be established (The Guardian, 11 June 1985; The Times, 20 May 1985), Kinnock, Hattersley (Interview with Wadsworth 1994; The Times, 24 May 1985), the NEC (The Guardian, 11 June 1985; The Times, 11 June 1985) and conference (Labour Party 1985b: 30-31) all rejected the proposal. Instead the 1985 conference backed the establishment of a Black and Asian Advisory

Committee to oversee and encourage an improvement in black representation in the Party (Labour Party 1985b: 39).

A few weeks prior to the 1987 election, black campaigners held a rally in Birmingham, despite condemnation by local MPs (The Guardian, 8 April 1987; The Independent, 8 April 1987), at which Sharon Atkin, the black candidate in Nottingham East, was widely reported as stating that she did not "give a damn" about Neil Kinnock and the "racist Labour Party" (Benton 1987). The comments, which it seems were said as part of an attempt to calm an angry audience, led to the suspension of Atkin as a candidate and the imposition of Mohammed Aslam who did not support black sections (NEC 8, 29 April 1987: 6-10).

Following a rejection of a black sections motion at the 1987 conference - a pretty regular occurrence by this stage (The Guardian, 3 October 1987; The Times, 3 October 1987), moves were made by leading black figures to forge a compromise solution. Bill Morris called for the establishment of a black members' society which would work like an affiliate such as the Fabian Society and possess rights of nomination and representation in CLPs and have a place reserved on the NEC (Morris 1988). Kinnock responded cautiously but with a degree of favour and despite a poorly-timed attempt to prevent Atkin ever standing as a candidate again (The Independent, 29 February 1988; Heffernan & Marqusee 1992: 263), negotiations between Larry Whitty and Bernie Grant - the latter mandated by the black sections conference - began.

The negotiations led to the establishment of another working party by conference to determine the form of an affiliated society and how it could be set up (The Labour Party

1988c: 109). The response from black sections campaigners was hopeful but cool (The Independent, 6 October 1988).

In the Spring of 1989, the core leadership once again intervened in the issue before the working party had reported when the NEC proposed a federal body made up of separate and local black and asian organisations affiliated to the Party. The proposal was not even in line with the demands of moderates like Morris who had always made a unitary organisation their bottom line and the proposal was rejected by the black sections conference and soured the improving relations in the process (The Independent, 20 March 1989).

Matters deteriorated further when the NEC rejected a shortlist of nominees for a by-election candidacy in Vauxhall, a safe Labour constituency with a large black population. The NEC produced its own short-list which included only one black nominee who had no profile as a campaigner or even as a Party member. Particularly strong feelings were aroused by the fact that the front-runner on the original shortlist, Martha Osamor - a black women with strong links to the black community - was rejected out of hand (Interview with Wadsworth 1994; The Independent, 17 May 1989; 19 May 1989; Heffernan & Marqusee 1992: 266-7). The by-election was ultimately won by a white candidate, Kate Hoey, for Labour but the campaign was beset by boycotts and protests (The Guardian, 25 May 1989; The Independent, 25 May 1989).

Against this background of anger and dispute, further moves towards enhancing black representation broke down. The working party report proposed that a blacks-only affiliated society be established which would elect its own NEC representative once its membership had reached 3,000 (The Guardian, 27 July 1989; The Independent, 27 July 1989). Opposition on

the NEC to the report led by Roy Hattersley who objected to the blacks-only suggestion (The Guardian, 27 July 1989; The Independent, 26 September 1989), led to the executive proposing to conference that an affiliated society be established which white members could join with voting rights but without the right to stand for office or as delegates (The Independent, 28 September 1989). Black sections campaigners rejected the proposal (The Independent, 28 September 1989) as did the Party conference which came-up with no alternative (Labour Party 1989b: 49-50).

Outlining why and how this implacable opposition to black sections (and to a lesser extent the new agenda policies of local authorities) developed is significant in explaining the above processes. It also displays how a number of other causal factors beyond the contingent-political played a role in the dispute and thus complexifies the explanation.

Firstly, there is the explicit and official objections of the core leadership. These were two-fold. There was the fear that an attempt to write a definition of race into the Party's constitution could lead to "an absurd situation which would make the Party liable to ridicule" (Interview with Clarke 1994) and may even land the Party in the courts. But there was also the feeling that black sections were in some way racist not just in the sense that they would exclude white people from a constitutionally sanctioned association within the Party but that they would force black people into an apartheid style ghetto. As Kinnock commented:

> I'm not going to have divisions of race which are so prevalent in our society underscored and turned into constitutional effect. We have to find ways of reaching out to the black community and making them

> involved in the Party. Black sections is a cul-de-sac taking us nowhere fast (Sewell 1986).

Secondly, although only vaguely admitted (Interview with Clarke 1994), the possibility must be acknowledged that the leadership opposed black sections because they regarded the campaign as a bastion of the radical wing of the Party and because they feared the establishment of a new radical element in the constitutional processes of the Party that would undermine Kinnock's attempts to reform Labour. With regards to the radical wing the leadership may have been partially right. Black sections did draw much of their active support from the Campaign Group and grassroots organisations such as London Labour Briefing which had played a major role in organising the rates rebellion (Interview with Wadsworth 1994). However, such links to the radicals need not have been a foregone conclusion had the core leadership and the soft left responded in a more constructive fashion (see below).

Thirdly, and perhaps most fundamental to leadership opposition, was the fear that the Tories would use the issue to encourage a racist backlash against the Party which would adversely affect the active vote-maximisation project based upon a New Strategic Thinking approach. The fear was proved correct, when an issue of The Daily Mail, carried as its front page banner headline: "Kinnock Faces Race Rebellion" (The Daily Mail, 16 April 1985). While such reports struck terror into the hearts of a leadership desperate to woo the journalistic profession and aware of the fact that the middle market press often set the news agenda for the broadcast media; black sections campaigners felt that such racist slurs were to be resisted through forthright political action rather than the ultra-subtle game of the PR professionals (Interview with Wadsworth 1994). Of course, this particular problem of the media's response

was even more pronounced, and probably the key point for leadership opposition, in the case of the London effect.

Such opposition meant that the Labour Party's first major opportunity to adopt a profound expression of new agenda issues was lost. As this chapter will go on to show, in a number of other areas related to the new agenda, this loss of opportunity was consistent.

However, alongside the contingent-political and rational causes of the dispute was the ideological clash of *values*. This is more illustrative of the broader problem faced by the Party in adapting to new agenda demands in general and was characterised by an incommensurability between the *value* of the black sections and that of the core leadership and much of the Party as a whole.

Centuries of racism and imperialist brutality had bred a *value* of anger and a justifiable suspicion on the part of black activists, the likes of which Labour had not seen before. Many in the black sections, saw Labour itself as a guilty participant in those centuries of racism and brutality (Rogers 1987). This conflicted harshly with the New Strategic Thinking developing within the core leadership which aimed to present a non-controversial image that included nothing which might upset or frighten the press or the floating, middle ground voter. Unfortunately, little excited the hostility of the media more than an angry black activist denouncing Britain's racist past and present. The language of the black sections reflected their anger without shame thus exacerbating the mock-horror of the press and the despair of the core leadership. In one instance the press highlighted a discussion paper to be presented to the black sections annual conference which followed the conflicts of the Broadwater Farm Estate riot:

> Police use pickaxes as their calling card, and the bullet as a lasting reminder that our people have been marked out for 'special treatment'. Meanwhile murderous race attacks on our community go on with impunity. We are told they are not a criminal offence. ... Police atrocities against us go unpunished despite ample evidence of their lies and corruption. ... Police frame-ups of black people occur with sickening regularity. The tame judiciary respond by dishing out racist sentences based on concocted evidence (The Independent, 7 March 1987).

Even Bernie Grant, one of the most moderate and conciliatory figures within the black sections movement, acknowledged this anger and forthrightness, whilst also recognising that dealing with black issues could not fit into a strategy for seducing the press, by commenting:

> One reason (can be) given for the non-selection (by the NEC) of some of the black candidates who were selected by the local Labour Party. If one is a black politician worth one's salt, one has to be controversial, because this is a racist society. Any black person who attempts to represent black people and put forward black issues properly will be torn apart by the media. If uncontroversial black candidates put themselves forward, they will not be capable of being selected because they will be politically inexperienced and naive and they will certainly not have been involved in raising black issues in the public forum. To

> expect a non-controversial black candidate to be selected is nonsense (Hansard, column 695, 15 May - 26 May 1989).

In addition to this conflict, the Labour Party's traditional bureaucratic, legalistic and compromise-driven solution to internal disputes of this sort only enflamed the situation because it resounded of the imperialist past that had generated the angry, suspicious *value* of the black sections. The campaign was primarily a response to the old imperialist method of establishing consultative committees and working parties to 'consider' the grievances of independence movements - such as the Urban Advisory Councils and the African Provisional Councils - and which were inevitably tactics designed to divide and quell those movements rather than genuinely act upon their demands. Black sections was an attempt to move away from this, to provide a guaranteed structure within which black people could articulate their own needs and develop an agenda on their own terms - separate from the concerns of white people - on a long-term, secure basis (Interview with Wadsworth 1994; Sharma 1986).

Within this context, the annual conference's response of establishing yet more working parties and committees seemed merely a continuation of old imperialist habits. One leading figure commented

> The last twenty-five years have seen the leadership produce one advisory committee after another. All have come to nothing. Labour's policy-making and management bodies consist of delegates elected by various sections which make up the party. If women, youth and Jewish people (through Poale Zion) can elect members to represent them, why

> can't black people? Advisory committees to advise white policy-makers is not good enough. We don't just want a slice of the cake, we want access to the recipe (Sharma 1986).

This situation created another inter-retroactive and negative production of identity. The combination of black sections campaigners' suspicion of bureaucratic responses combined with their deeply-held belief that black people and black people alone should determine their own future, ensured that every time the annual conference, which was overwhelmingly white, rejected black demands to set-up yet another working party, the suspicious and angry *value* of the black campaigners was confirmed and even enhanced which in turn, of course, meant that the possibility of compromising on the fundamental principle of blacks-only sections became more distant.

Furthermore, Labour's history which had given rise to the Party's prevalent and contradictory *values* and programmatic stances provided no adequate guide to this particular dispute. The conflict over black sections was not one constructed around the clash of social democracy or revisionism with Bennite or revolutionary socialism. It was not a conflict that was primarily about the strategic or historical role of the white working class. Nor was it primarily about the linked issue of how the Party should relate to the trades unions or Parliament or the political establishment. The defining doctrinal statement of Labour's goals, Clause Four, which played such a significant role in the identity and development of the Party, seemed to have no self-evident relation or significant bearing on the demands of the black sections campaigners.

Black sections was an issue that developed out of the post-war, inner city politics of Britain and had its origins in the consciousness and identity movements of the 1960s and 1970. It was born of an agenda that not only developed fully, in organisational and political terms, after the great genesis of Labour in the period 1900-1945, but drew for its identity on the inspirational but tragic history of the colonised peoples which was not only utterly alien to many in the Party, but in which past Labour practice, structures and ideology were deeply implicated as an oppressive rather than oppressed force.

For example, a Tribune article by Narendra Makanji, a leading figure in the black sections campaign, concerned itself with identifying the long series of racist actions perpetrated by Labour governments and leaders. In particular, he highlighted as the "turning-point in the battle against racism", an anti-immigration speech by Bob Mellish, the *Labour* Chief Whip, which led to an increase in racist assaults and the consequent establishment of black self-defence groups. The article also displayed the different defining histories of black Party members and white Party members when Makanji commented that a significant feature of the 1976 events was the fact that they coincided with the Soweto uprisings (Makanji 1985) - an indication of the great importance that international and colonial events and histories played in black members' identities.

As a result, leading figures in the Party had great difficulty fully appreciating or understanding the feelings, *value* and demands of black sections. In truth they seemed to make little attempt to do so. Kinnock's comments on the issue indicate just how distant his understanding of the situation was from the black campaigners themselves. His responses usually simply expressed a clearly heart-felt but unconstructive hostility, as when he commented about the decision of the first working party's recommendation to establish black sections:

> I would not give a damn if the whole Labour Party were against me on this ... it is a matter of basic values (The Times, 24 May 1985; Interview with Wadsworth 1994).

On other occasions, and maybe more significantly, his comments revealed a gross naiveté . In response to the common argument that since women have their own sections, then black people should be accorded the same right, Kinnock made the astonishing observation that:

> Women's discrimination is based on history, property values and a notion of women's work. However, this does not relate to ridiculous superstitions about the nature of black skin (Sewell 1986).

Kinnock's failure to respond positively to the black members' protest was not improved upon by Hattersley. In fact, the deputy leader gained himself a distinct reputation for taking a patronising attitude to black people's demands and having a tendency to speak on behalf of black people. As in the following infamous statement which did nothing to calm the dispute:

> The overwhelming objection to black sections is that they divide us when we should be united. The idea of exclusively black groups holding separate meetings, sending their own delegates to the local Labour Party and organising their own conference is repugnant to the vast majority of my asian constituents (The Guardian, 24 September 1985; The Times, 24 September 1985).

The deputy leader went on to describe the black sections proposal as a "British apartheid" (The Guardian, 24 September 1985). A comment of astounding insensitivity at a time when the South African regime was reaching new heights of racist brutality during its state of emergency.

Other statements, in an interview with the Daily Jang, a Pakistani newspaper, reveal the deputy leader to have been not only ill-informed about the nature and effects of racism in Britain but clearly utterly unaware of quite how patronising his views appear:

> (o)ne of the astonishing things about Sparkbrook is that instead of the two communities turning on each other because they were visibly identifiable and saying that their problems were the result of the others' presence - the Asians saying that if it wasn't for white prejudice things wouldn't be so bad and the whites saying that it was the presence of Asians that has caused the hardship - they have hung together in adversity and they have realised they are all victims.

In the same interview he comments

> I do ... think that a sensible Pakistani family is going to go out of its way to make sure that all its members have got a working knowledge of English. This is one of the things which prevents my assistant and me from giving the assistance that we need to give straight away. The

> man who comes along who has been living here for fifteen years and who can barely make himself understood in English presents a strange paradox to me. He has gone to the trouble of coming here, raising the money to bring his family over, yet he has not gone to the trouble to learn English once he is here (Hattersley 1987b).

Such attitudes ensured that a highly-productive rumour mill operated amongst black sections activists regarding Hattersley's comments and attitudes. Most common was the claim that when chairing the panel which rejected the Vauxhall shortlist, the deputy leader had described Osamar as a "simple woman" under the control of extremists (Interview with Wadsworth 1994; The Independent, 23 May 1989; Grant in Hansard, column 695, 15 May- 26 May 1989; Heffernan and Marqusee 1992: 268). Such stories, unsurprisingly, did little to reassure black campaigners that the core leadership was serious about the issue or even fully understood their demands.

Thus there was clearly a fundamental conflict between the *values* of the core leadership and the black sections. The failure of the former to adapt their approach or understand how their bureaucratic attempts to ameliorate the situation only heightened the anger of black campaigners deeply affected the direction of the transformation and, as is explored below, left the leadership of a growing area of political activity to groups organising outside the Party.

The search for complexity and its rejection of a simple epiphenomenal approach encourages the analysts to look to areas of activity ignored by existing literature and analyse them in detail to understand their role in a process of change. It is clear from the above, and from further evidence below, that black sections and the "London effect" although ignored or dealt with

only sketchily by previous analyses played an important part in the overall transformation both as a cause and an effect of change. This key observation is both inspired by, and aids, the search for complexity.

THE NEW AGENDA AND THE SOFT LEFT

As has been displayed in chapter five many of those leading and active on the soft left had a strong commitment to new agenda issues and to a central principle of the mass party approach - forging links with the movements and groups both inside and outside the Party that fought around these issues. The black sections campaign, run largely by the Black Sections National Committee (Jenkins & Harris 1985), was undoubtedly one of these groups. Made-up exclusively of black people it had been established by the first conference of black Party members (The Guardian, 11 June 1984; The Times, 11 June 1984) following the 1983 conference's remission of a motion calling for black members to have their own, constitutionally recognised sections at all levels of the Party in which only black members would be able to take part, vote and hold positions (Labour Party 1983a: 260). As such, the campaign was committed to demolishing structures of discrimination both in the British establishment and in the labour movement. This, combined with its allegiance to the Party, would seem to have made black sections the ideal candidate for the development of the mass party approach.

However, a survey of candidates for the 1984 NEC carried out by the LCC asked, amongst other things, whether candidates supported black sections. Individuals still associated with the radical wing, Tony Benn, Clare Short, Frances Morrell and Diane Abbot were in full support but leading soft left figures such as Derrick Fullick (of ASLEF) and Robin Cook were

ambiguous while Michael Meacher and David Blunkett were opposed although they recognised, in Meacher's words, that "more effort need(ed) to be made to involve black people in the Party" (New Statesman, 28 September 1984).

This opposition and ambiguity on black sections on the part of leading members of the soft left, which continued throughout the 1980s, resulted in large part from the implacable opposition of Neil Kinnock and the core leadership (see below) to the constitutional reform. Such implacable opposition meant that many on the soft left were forced into a position of choosing between support or opposition to black sections which, of course, became synonymous with maintaining or losing some favour with the leader himself. Placed in this position, many on the soft left abandoned the guidance provided by the mass party approach and opted to oppose black sections thus weakening the feasibility of that approach itself; to cut links with the most organised explicitly political movement of black people in the Party (possibly even in Britain) could not but inherently weaken a strategy which called for the forging of close links with just such organisations. Of course, the weakening of the mass party approach amongst individuals committed to the active vote maximisation *value* could only enhance their identification with the only other strategy on offer for the fulfilment of that *value* - the New Strategic Thinking.

This process whereby figures in the soft left strand were placed in a position where they faced a stark choice between a forthright pursuit of new agenda issues or Kinnockism was thrown into even sharper relief during the "London effect" debacle.

Policies had been developed by Labour local authorities which had a series of new agenda inspired goals: to improve the 'image' of ethnic communities, gay people and women; to

improve equal opportunities; and to empower and resource organised groups active within disenfranchised groups (see Cooper 1994). Whatever the failings of these policies (see Gilroy 1987; Cooper 1994), the local authorities had constructed the only serious governmental response to the demands of the new agenda social movements outside of equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation.

However, the policies were met by one of the most sustained press attacks on a specific aspect of public policy since the war. Tabloid newspapers consciously undermined the credibility of Labour local authorities throughout 1986, especially the London councils of Haringey, Lambeth, Brent, Hackney and Camden.

The press campaign was based around ridicule and exaggeration of Labour local authorities' anti-sexist, anti-homophobic and anti-racist policies. A large number of stories appeared of which the most memorable were the claims that Haringey had ordered nursery schools to sing "baa, baa green sheep", as the original rhyme was deemed racist (The Daily Mail, 9 October 1986) and that the same council had replaced black binliners with a grey version for a similar reason (The Mail on Sunday, 2 March 1986). Both of the stories were false, the former leading to a libel writ (Jenkins 1987)[14].

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[14]The virulence of the "loony left" campaign may have been in part the result not just of Labour's improved position but also because Kinnock, himself, and the Party had taken a stance of opposition to News International's influential plans to restructure the newspaper industry around new technology, changed working conditions and a less militant workforce. The moves by the corporation which owned The Sun, probably the most enthusiastic participant in the "loony left" campaign, led to a strike and violent clashes outside the new production plant in Wapping. A boycott of News International publications linked to the strike was supported by Kinnock and other senior figures who did not invite journalists from News International to their press conferences for a number of months (The Guardian, 30 January 1986; The Times, 30 January 1986).

The damage done to Labour's image was great. A MORI poll in May 1986 had shown Labour with an eight percentage point lead (The Times, 28 May 1986), whereas a Harris poll carried out in January 1987 suggested, correctly as it turned out, that the Conservatives could expect a one-hundred seat majority (The Independent, 11 January 1987).

This damage was consolidated by the Government's willingness to use the theme of "loony" councils for its own campaigning. Nicholas Ridley, the Environment Secretary, launched less sensationalist but still factually dubious Parliamentary attacks on Labour councils, while Norman Tebbit, the Conservative Chairman, published a list of 143 "acts of lunacy" by left-wing local authorities (Jenkins 1987).

The initial response of the Labour leadership to this onslaught was to play-down the role of the "loony left" in defensive fashion. On 17th November, John Cunningham, the Shadow Environment Secretary, responding to a Parliamentary attack by his ministerial opposite stated that Ridley was only "talking about fewer than 0.1 of 1%" of all Labour councillors (Hansard, column 340, 12 Nov. - 21 Nov. 1986)). Two days later Kinnock followed this line by attacking the zealotry of some on the left but claimed that the press campaign ignored the hard work of 99.9% of decent councillors (The Guardian, 20 November 1986; The Independent, 20 November 1986). A few days later, Cunningham took the extraordinarily defensive step of publicly writing to over 500 Labour council groups requesting that they take care over the presentation of policy initiatives (The Independent, 24 November 1986). These moves did nothing to quell the campaign which continued with unaffected virulence but they left soft left and radical councillors largely unchallenged by the core leadership.

However, soft left supporters of the local authorities were placed in a far more difficult position when the press campaign found a new focus for its attention after a by-election was called in the marginal seat of Greenwich following the death of Labour MP Guy Barnett.

The press launched an extremely unpleasant campaign against the Labour candidate, Deirdre Wood, whose radical inclinations, large size and troubled family background provided easy targets for the tabloids. Despite polls which had placed Labour ahead in Greenwich at the start of the campaign (Kellner 1987a), the immediate beneficiary of the media frenzy was the SDP/Alliance candidate Rosie Barnes who overturned the Labour majority and won by 6,611 votes (The Independent, 27 February 1987).

The by-election result utterly destroyed any vestiges of the triumphant spirit of Labour's victory in another crucial London seat, Fulham, a year earlier (The Times, 11 April 1986). As with the redundancy crisis in Liverpool, the Greenwich result provided Kinnock with the reason, and possibly the personal courage, to launch a for more forthright attack on the sections of the Party which he regularly blamed for any defeat. Making much the same argument he had effectively used against Militant, he asked of the radical wing, on Radio Four's Analysis programme: "do they want to play, or do they want to win" and once again evoked the 'defend the people' *value* by arguing that the best way to achieve better resources for various communities was to work for a Labour Government, a goal that the left's self-indulgence and ill-discipline was "sabotaging" (The Guardian, 5 March 1987; The Independent, 5 March 1987).

The debate-cum-assault almost immediately began to focus on the role of the London local authorities with the leaking to the Sun of a letter from Patricia Hewitt to Frank Dobson, who

ran the Greenwich campaign. The letter claimed that the "London Effect" was now "very noticeable" in that extremism and the "gays and lesbians issue" was losing votes (The Sun, 4 March 1987).

And on the same day (6th March) that Labour saw its majority in the Euro-seat of Midlands West fall from 20,000 to 4,000, Kinnock called a large meeting to deal with the "sensational antics" of the London authorities (The Independent, 7 March 1987).

This sustained assault placed those on or close to the soft left strand into the position of facing a stark choice between opposing an implacable Kinnock or of cutting links with their previous sympathies and accepting the leader's point of view. As with black sections, although in a more immediate fashion, those close to a soft left perspective in London chose to reject their commitment to new agenda issues and policies and instead make a symbolic show of allegiance to Kinnock. Leading local authority figures in London who were historically close to the radical wing but were also developing as leading soft left figures - such as Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington Council and Frances Morrell, leader of ILEA - joined forces with firm Kinnock loyalists, Frank Dobson and Larry Whitty to establish a new steering committee designed to improve the image of the Party in London (The Independent, 9 March 1987).

Although the reasons why figures on the soft left developed and shifted through the 1980s were manifold, in the case of the rejection of a forthright pursuit of new agenda issues, the initial rationale was usually based around the argument that it was better to maintain some power and influence albeit on a more moderate platform rather than stick to radical principles and face powerless marginalisation; the former option it was felt may be a less pure or populist decision but it was regarded as the most mature and sensible from the perspective of

the good of the Party and the continuing influence of relatively radical views. As one leading figure in the LCC put it, the soft left *had* to respond to Kinnock's wishes when the leader's position was inflexible because there was simply "nowhere else to go at that time" (Interview with Haworth 1995).

This situation had its own inter-retroactive dynamic. If the leader denounced a certain strand within the Party and thus threatened marginalisation along the lines of that which befell Militant, those on the soft left would also reject that strand thus automatically isolating and marginalising the group making a more formal assault by Kinnock, akin to the Militant expulsions, unnecessary. The 'London Effect' was an indication of that more ethereal effect of the Militant affair dealt with in chapter seven.

This process of marginalisation ensured that black sections and the London effect played a continuing inter-retroactive role in the definition of Kinnockism which also tells us something about the process of the negative construction of identity in the Party. The very act by figures in the soft left of rejecting black sections' demands clearly pushed those figures closer to Kinnock's preferred option of the New Strategic Thinking over the mass party approach. This process distinguished the New Strategic Thinking from the goals of black sections which ensured that the closer one's identification with the New Strategic Thinking, the less one was likely to identify with black sections. In fact, opposition to black sections, especially - as the Sharon Atkin affair displayed - its angry, radical *value* and its tendency to be critical of racism within the Party, became one negative characteristic of an identity forged around not just the New Strategic Thinking but also the more basic active vote maximisation *value*. Hence a complex, inter-retroactive and negative process of enhancement of Kinnockism developed out of the black sections dispute in which rejection of black sections helped develop allegiance to

Kinnockism, negatively define Kinnockism and continue the rejection of black sections throughout the 1980s. In short, the opposition of the core leadership, constructed black sections as a 'constitutive outside' not just for the core leadership itself but also, due to more contingent-political reasons, for the soft left, as well.

THE NEW AGENDA AND THE RADICAL WING

It was mentioned above how the core leadership opposed black sections in part because the campaign was associated with the radical wing of the Party. However, the relationship between black sections and this wing was never simple and itself contributed to the transformation of the Party.

Tensions always existed between black sections and the radical wing. Many black campaigners felt that the support of the white radicals was shallow and tokenistic (Interview with Wadsworth 1994). For many, the Campaign Group leadership, seemed to display an unwillingness to listen. They often appeared too keen to advise and lead rather than take a supportive backseat on the issue of race. Features that were also characteristic of the Party's core leadership. Eric Heffer, in particular, had antagonised many black sections supporters by proposing an affiliated black socialist society as a compromise alternative to the black sections reform (see below) in 1985 (Jeffers 91: 72). He had also angered many younger members of the Black Sections by walking-off the platform of a public meeting about Broadwater Farm after a leading campaigner on the estate, Stafford Scott, described the Killing of PC Blakelock as an "unnecessary necessity" (Interview with Wadsworth 1994).

Alongside such tensions was the more explicit hostility of the largest Trotskyite group. Militant was uncompromising in its opposition to black sections arguing that it was a distraction from class politics, which the group saw as the only genuine way to fight racism. In particular, they argued that the campaign had been created as a vehicle to

> provide positions or possibly parliamentary careers for a handful of middle-class blacks (Bevins 1984).

Black sections campaigners saw Militant's stance as a Marxist form of racism (Interview with Wadsworth 1994) and this placed a further strain on links with the Campaign Group who were wary of publicly criticising Militant for fear of aiding Kinnock's attack upon the tendency.

As such, within the context of effecting transformation, black sections must be distinguished from the radical wing of the Party. The growth of the black sections movement was significant because although it did forge some links with the Bennite wing, it actually constructed a radical point of opposition to the bureaucracy and electoralism of the Party and movement that was distinct from that wing. It was distinct not solely because it drew on a different history and identity to those of the Bennites but also because of its development throughout the 1980s. While both black sections and the Bennite wing faced isolation, rejection and a virulent opposition from the core leadership, their demands and organisations had reached very different points by 1989. By that stage, the Campaign Group was isolated and shrinking; the traditional demands of the Bennite wing for renationalisation, repeal of trade union legislation, withdrawal from the EC, unilateral disarmament and for a rejection of the New

Strategic Thinking had largely been resolved in Kinnock's favour following the events of the 1980s and the acceptance of the Policy Review.

However, black sections and race were still vibrant issues, with a vociferous and effective lobby behind them, which was at no point close to resolution despite the fact that they had faced serious opposition from the leadership since 1983. This was also the case with a number of other new agenda issues at this time. While Bennism was a force that had suffered years of decline, movements and issues based on race, sexuality and gender maintained and, in fact, enhanced their influence over debate and development within the Party following the Policy Review (see below).

In this sense, the development of black sections, alongside other new agenda issues, weakened the traditional focus for radicalism in the form of Bennism, by establishing new points of opposition that did not owe allegiance to either the ideology, personalities or organisations of that strand. However, this is not to say that the Campaign Group and its supporters escaped the problems that beset the black sections movement. By offering its full but uneasy support to the sections campaign, another issue existed to drive a wedge between the soft left and the Bennites, a situation which isolated the latter rather than the former (see above), and meant that defeats for black sections were also viewed as defeats for the Bennites. However, while black activists and leaders fought on, casting these defeats as typical of a white establishment, the Bennite wing only lost morale, support and members.

A fundamental reason for this distinction between new agenda issues and the more traditional radicalism is the distinct role that the perception and reality of marginalisation plays in the identities of these different movements. For new agenda movements based around race,

sexuality and gender, marginalisation is the very condition of their action - demands for black sections, greater acceptance of the gay community, and improved women's representation only make sense within a political self-analysis which posits oneself as currently and unjustly marginalised. As such continuing marginalisation is not regarded as a negation of that particular identity upon which one's demands are based (although it may encourage the alteration of one's political strategy). If anything, as was mentioned above, continuing rejection by conference of black sections proposals only confirmed to some black campaigners their views of the inherent racism of the Labour Party and the need to redouble their efforts to defeat it.

The traditional radical wing within the Party had no such role for marginalisation within its identity. The marginalisation which Militant and Bennism, in particular, suffered after 1983 was a sign for many of a failed political project. Certain analyses could attempt to absorb this marginalisation: Labour leaders' consistent tendency to sell-out and/or the Party's historical willingness to do the work of the ruling class (Interview with Mullin 1994; Interview with King 1994) might resign one to the inevitability of marginalisation prior to the winning of great popularity but this outlook was hardly universal amongst Bennites. Furthermore, such views were only ways of ameliorating the impact of the radical wing's failure, ways to make marginalisation less significant; this contrasted with the new agenda movements where marginalisation was a central feature of their identity. Nothing indicates this distinction more clearly than the complaint, commonly made (rightly or wrongly) at this time, that new agenda movements over-emphasised their marginalisation so as to induce guilt in others and thus win support for their demands (Interview with O'Mara 1994); one cannot imagine Tony Benn ever being accused of such a strategy. In fact, Benn made consistent attempts throughout the 1980s to downplay rather than emphasise the marginalisation of his wing - one needs only to

recall his famous comment that despite the 1983 result, eight and a half million people still voted for socialism (Kellner 1983).

Thus a central feature of the transformation since 1983 has been the fluctuating fortunes of movements, within the Party, based around new agenda issues. However, whatever the various organisational highs and lows of such movements, the beliefs that inspired and sustained them continued to exert a powerful influence over the Party, its central disputes and developments. The same cannot be said of the radical wing. The decline of movements based upon radical ideas signalled both an organisational collapse *and* a severe waning of the radical reformist socialism which had originally generated those movements.

THE NEW AGENDA AND MULTIPLICATION

Another transformation the growth of black sections and other new agenda issues instituted was a further multiplication within the Party. In itself, the new agenda represented a break with the traditional left-right spectrum, for although support for the reform from within the Party came largely from the radical wing, as has been pointed out above, the black sections movement cannot be identified as synonymous with that radical wing. One pertinent difference in this respect is the distinction between the political culture of the black sections movement which was separate and at times hostile to the white culture of the Labour Party and movement including that of the radical wing itself.

Furthermore, the development of the dispute over black sections itself introduced multiplication into the community of black members in the Party which was not determined by any other spectrum. This multiplication formed firstly around those members who backed the

black sections reform and those who did not. A number of black members opposed the idea of a blacks-only, constitutionally guaranteed section as flawed or patronising from the beginning of the dispute. One writer commented:

> The arguments for black sections run the risk of confusing what is just *one* means of struggle with a desired end: that of full equality for black people in all spheres of British life. ... At the end of the day, the sad fact remains that until there is an attempt to tackle fundamental issues that affect the black community, and a commitment to real structural change ... the argument for black sections, must remain a call for cosmetic change at the expense of real progress (Riley 1985).

While there were other black members, like the Nottingham East (imposed) Parliamentary candidate Mohammed Aslam (Shukra 1990: 180), who supported less radical reforms such as the Black and Asian Advisory Committee (see above).

However, these positions were further multiplied by views amongst black sections supporters themselves. The disappointment felt by many of the black sections campaigners after the conference remitted their demands for a second time in 1984 (Labour Party 1984b: 165-169) led to the spontaneous establishment of "unofficial" black sections in a number of constituency parties throughout the country such as Lewisham East, Nottingham East and Roy Hattersley's constituency of Birmingham Sparkbrook (The Guardian, 11 June 1985; The Times, 23 May 1985; 12 June 1985; 14 June 1985). The initiative came largely from the more hard-line, grass roots members of the black sections movement who had formed themselves into the Black

Labour Activist Campaign to broaden what they felt was the narrow focus and cautious style of the National Committee (Shukra 1990: 172; Interview with Wadsworth 1994).

A conference of unofficial black sections displayed the uncompromising spirit of these more grassroots members by stating it would refuse to give-in to any leadership pressure (Jenkins & Harris 1985) following a decision by the NEC to quash these unofficial black sections through the NEC (NEC 7, 27 March 1985: 4). The NEC's moves were largely ineffective.

These distinctions within the black sections campaign began to create serious internal tensions during the Sharon Atkin affair (see above). Four black parliamentary candidates - Bernie Grant, Diane Abbot, Paul Boateng and Russell Profitt - issued a statement arguing that the best interests of black people were served by working for a Labour victory (Abbot D. et al. 1987; Interview with Wadsworth 1994; The Guardian, 14 April 1987; The Independent, 14 April 1987) - an interesting attempt to articulate black demands to the active vote maximisation *value*. However, many in the black sections campaign regarded this as a humiliating, Uncle Tom mercy plea and the Chair of the National Committee, now dominated by the more radical campaigners, called for an apology and retraction which was not received (Interview with Wadsworth 1994).

Thus the major distinction within the movement was that between the grassroots, hardliners who were less willing to compromise with the Party leadership and which was represented in its most organised form by the Black Labour Activists Campaign and a vaguer grouping made-up of black figures in the Party who often held senior positions in local government or trades unions and were usually developing successful Parliamentary careers. The latter were more willing to find a way through the conflict by developing alternative ideas to blacks-only

sections - this was especially the case following the 1987 election defeat. For those active within the less compromising stream, the conciliatory grouping was often regarded as careerist or weak-willed. Marc Wadsworth, one of the main figures in BLAC and, ultimately, chairperson of the National Committee, commented:

> The people who were already on the road to Parliament didn't have that much interest in forming black section local groups, it was people like myself who kept those groups going. ... We wanted to get bedded down into the real issues and mobilise people. We were the people who ensured that the resolutions got to Party conference time and time again, we battled in our ward Party, we then battled in the GMC, we then fought to get delegation, we then fought to get amendments if we failed on the resolution - we were doing the graft to raise the issue in the Party. We did news releases, we weren't afraid to be quoted. Others were more timid because they could see a longer perspective in terms of where they wanted to get to and who they might want to stay friends with later on in the campaign (Interview with Wadsworth 1994).

Of course, those who supported conciliation could not agree with this analysis and felt their approach was necessitated by the failure of the campaign to win any major reform. Bill Morris wrote:

> It would be unkind to say that black sections are an idea whose time has gone. After all, the debate on black representation has helped to give us four black MPs, and to raise the Party's - and the nation's -

> consciousness of racism and discrimination. ... But the time has come to move on. The motion to establish black sections has been defeated at successive party conferences, and the majority against shows no signs of shrinking. ... The case for some form of independent black representation within the party has surely been made. And the need for the party to listen to the views of its black members, and through them to the black community, is more urgent than ever. That is why I believe we should look again at the "socialist society" option (Morris 1988).

However, the attitude of this element within the black sections campaign was not always conciliatory. The more clumsy manoeuvrings of the Party's leadership brought an angry tone into the voices of even those most willing to negotiate. After the Vauxhall debacle, Bernie Grant stated:

> We are saying the decline in the party's commitment to racial equality started with the Sharon Atkin events in 1987. Since then we have had the appointment of a Scottish MP as race spokesperson for the Labour Party. We have had the lack of progress with regard to black sections despite the Party's motion at the conference last year. We think this last event is the last insult we can bear. We think the Labour Party is no longer committed to racial equality and that the party does not want any more black Members of Parliament, because if you cannot get a black MP for Brixton with the highest concentration of black people, then they really don't want any black MPs (The Guardian, 19 May 1989; The Independent, 19 May 1989).

Thus black sections had clearly introduced further multiplication into the Party characterised not by left-right distinctions but by race, attitude to and involvement in the black sections campaign, and conciliation versus a no-compromise position within the campaign itself.

Similar multiple positions were created around sexuality and gender which had their own campaigning organisations such as the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the Womens Action Committee and the Labour Party Womens Conference. As with Black Sections, there were those who shared the sexuality or gender that formed the raison d'ê tre of these groups but who opposed the associations themselves, while within the actual organisations there were distinctions based around conciliation with or outright opposition to the leadership (Interview with Matheson 1994; Interview with O'Mara 1994).

FURTHER NEW AGENDA ISSUES

The failure of the soft left and the core leadership to respond to the new agenda perspectives of black sections and the policies of London local authorities in the mid-eighties was reproduced in the late eighties on a number of other new agenda issues. Because the core leadership - mesmerised as it was by the approach to image and policy of the New Strategic Thinking - had not constructed a way of responding to the radical and challenging perspectives of the new agenda beyond either mouthing bland platitudes or expressing outright hostility, it sacrificed a series of new agenda issues, which were increasingly influential in shaping the views of the media and especially young voters in the late 1980s, to bodies that were active outside the Party.

Nuclear power was one issue that became enormously important in the late 1980s and yet it was an issue to which Labour responded extremely falteringly forfeiting the initiative on the issue to Greenpeace, the Green Party and other green groups.

As the horrendous effects of the Chernobyl disaster became clearer over the Spring of 1986, internal campaigning and calls for the Labour Party to take a more forthright stance against nuclear power began to grow. In fact, the Party conference had already called for "a halt to the nuclear power programme and a phasing out of all existing plants" (Labour Party 1985b) by 3.9 to 2.4 million votes. However, those who fervently supported this policy were stumped by the fact that the Party's environment spokesperson was Jack Cunningham who was not only on the cautious, ultra-moderate wing of the party but was also a firm supporter of nuclear power (The New Statesman, 18 April 1986; The Times, 5 May 1986), not least because the notorious Sellafield re-processing plant was within his Copeland constituency and thus provided employment for a fair number of his constituents.

The issue was also complicated by the fact that many in the labour movement, especially those in the AUEW and the EETPU, opposed closure of nuclear plants on the grounds of job losses. This contrasted with the NUM's stance which felt the nuclear energy programme was removing jobs from the mining industry (The New Statesman, 14 March 1986; The Independent, 8 September 1989). Thus the issue managed to pose such heartfelt Labour concerns of the right to a job and public and employee health and safety against each other.

In response to the growing concern, Kinnock said on TV-AM that Labour would absolutely not proceed with the development of the Sizewell reactor stating that:

> We want a gradual policy that reduces dependence and not one that either embarks on a fresh generation of nuclear power or relies upon any expansion of that programme (The Guardian, 5 May 1986; The Times, 5 May 1986).

But the leader went on to reject calls by Tony Benn and others for a total and speedy shut-down of all nuclear facilities. Within a few days Cunningham and Benn clashed over the policy in public in the House of Commons.

Furious argument over the issue also raged within the TUC leading to an angry debate at the annual congress and the rejection of a motion calling for closure of nuclear power stations by only 60,000 votes (The Times, 5 September 1986). The importance of the issue for Labour Party and movement members was displayed by the conference resolutions for 1986 - the issue of energy was the concern of a huge 180 resolutions, the majority calling for an end to nuclear power (The Times, 8 September 1986). After a long discussion, the NEC decided to recommend a composite to Conference which called for the gradual reduction in dependence on nuclear power but the motion was considerably weakened by the fact that it made no mention of any timetable (NEC 15, 28 September 1986: 6; The Times, 28 September 1986). Conference backed this motion with a two-thirds majority while heavily defeating a call to postpone any decision for a year in order to review the issue. Nuclear power never again reached the same level of controversy within the Party. However, the issue of the environment continued to win mainstream attention inspiring increasing activism around non-Labour campaigns to protect the countryside and the Earth's ecology. A development from which the Green Party was to benefit in the short term during 1989 European elections and other

groups, such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, were to benefit in the long term chalking-up campaign successes and increased memberships.

A similar issue was that of gay rights. The last weeks of 1987 were dominated by a conflict within the Party over clause twenty-seven of the Government's Local Government Bill which, in direct response to the 'loony left' campaign of the previous two years, aimed to prevent local authorities from "promoting homosexuality" in schools. The clause which was not only homophobic but was the first attempt in four decades by any government to legislate for what should and should not be taught in schools, received support from Labour's front bench in the form of the environment spokesperson, Jack Cunningham (Interview with Matheson 1994; The Guardian, 9 December 1987; The Independent, 9 December 1987). Cunningham stated that Labour would only propose a clarification amendment to the clause.

A conflict had been brewing over the issue of gay rights since Labour had refused to take a firm stand against the spate of smear stories aimed at gay people and local authorities that had been appearing in the press for the last few months. However, the limited response of the Shadow Cabinet to clause 27 in Parliament inspired a sudden and furious week of outrage and lobbying (Interview with Matheson 1994; The Guardian, 15 December 1987; The Independent, 10 December 1987). Cunningham came under enormous pressure from gay rights groups, MPs and Party members to change his stance. And as such, the environment spokesperson announced that Labour would seek an amendment which would allow teachers to 'counsel' their students and ensure that local authorities still had the right to promote civil rights and liberties for gay people (The Guardian, 15 December 1987; The Independent, 14 December 1987). The backdown was a limited one that only ensured a continuing dispute and

effectively allowed the Tories and the Liberal Democrats to draw public attention to another split in a supposedly united Labour (The Times, 9 March 1988). As a Tribune editorial put it:

> The Party spokesmen involved ... fell into a well-planned Tory trap. The clear impression given ... was that Labour is, in all important respects, as intolerant and bigoted as the Government over gay rights ... Labour front-benchers believed a Tory lie and failed to defend their own supporters. The image of an embarrassed and divided party is entirely their own fault (Tribune, 18 December 1987).

However, the gay rights issue was far too reminiscent of the 'London effect' debacle for the core leadership to respond enthusiastically and again the initiative passed to newer, more imaginative associations outside the Labour Party such as Outrage and Act-up.

Something should also be said about the issues of women's rights and representation in the Labour Party during 1983 to 1989. Prior to the 1983 General Election, the Party had produced a radical approach to women's oppression throughout British society. Labour's Programme 1982 recognised the multiple sources and sites of discrimination against women and committed the Party to a statutory minimum wage, a huge expansion of childcare facilities and a major training programme for women (Atkinson and Spear 1992: 153). Although the radicalism of these commitments was weakened somewhat in the 1983 election manifesto, it was not until Kinnock's election that the issue largely disappeared off the agenda of debate within the Party.

The new leadership clearly had their own priorities with regards to organisational transformation which would strengthen the power of that leadership, weaken the left and respond to ad hoc crises. Demands from the Labour Women's Action Committee for greater powers for the Annual Women's Conference thus received no response from the leadership. In addition, the Labour Women's Action Committee was associated in the leadership's mind with the hard left and as such response to their demands (as with the issue of black sections) could be perceived as a capitulation to the left (Perrigo 1995: 412-413; Perrigo 1996: 123-127; Lovenduski & Randall 1993: 140).

However, during much of the 1980s there were problems of mobilisation amongst women in the Party. Although the Labour Women's Action Committee was successful in broadening awareness of the problems faced by women in the Party and having model resolutions discussed (Perrigo 1995: 412; Perrigo 1996: 124), it had difficulty in mobilising women throughout the Party. The Committee was perceived by many women as controlled by London left-wingers and thus there was resistance to allowing the only organised force of women in the Party to take a lead (Lovenduski & Randall 1993: 140).

As such little real shift or major debate on the issue of women's rights and representation occurred in the Party during the period covered by this thesis. The only area of change came with the decision of the leadership to improve the image of the Party to make it more attractive to women following findings that support had been lost amongst female voters due to Labour's strong working-class, male image. However, such changes as were instituted in this direction (such as using images of women on Party literature) were seen largely as "glossy packaging" (Norris & Lovenduski 1993: 41) and led to "a certain cynicism" about the leadership's motivation (Perrigo 1996: 128).

The move which really brought the issue of women's rights and representation alive was the decision of the 1989 conference to begin the process of introducing quotas for women in the choice of prospective parliamentary candidates (Perrigo 1995: 414; Perrigo 1996: 127; Short 1996: 22). The decision was accepted overwhelmingly by the docile 1989 conference after being proposed by the leadership. It seems likely that the leadership saw this move as one more way of improving its appeal to women and it is indicative of how low down the agenda women's issues had slipped that, considering the great controversy quotas were to promote in the 1990s, the idea was accepted in its initial form so suddenly and with so little prior debate (Short 1996: 21; Lovenduski & Randall 1993: 140-141).

Thus although there was some agitation around the issue of women's representation in the 1980s, it was to have little impact until the 1990s. We can see from the above, as with other new agenda issues, Kinnock's leadership did little actively to promote women's rights in the Party or respond positively to the demands that were made. As Perrigo has made clear, prior to 1989, the leadership hoped either to contain women's demands or adapt them to aid their own goal of vote maximisation (Perrigo 1995; Perrigo 1996).

Perhaps the issue which more than any other displayed how divorced Labour had become from genuine agitation around new agenda issues was that of the poll tax which was just becoming a point of national concern during 1989. This issue united many young people and a wide variety of different single-issue pressure groups into a loose but united bloc in opposition to the tax. In many ways it can be seen as the most significant, single historical event in the construction of the new type of extra-parliamentary politics which has become increasingly

influential during the 1990s (Lent & Sowemimo 1996). However, although Labour opposed the poll tax, the core leadership's forthright opposition to strategies of non-implementation by local authorities, non-registration and non-payment meant that the leadership on the one issue which more than any other united the electorate against the Thatcher Government was lost to groups such as the Anti-Poll Tax Federation and, in Scotland, to the SNP (see chapter nine for details of the soft left's failure to engage fully with the anti-poll tax movement).

As such, an important aspect of the Party's transformation was its failure to take-up any new agenda issue in a positive or forthright manner. This gave rise to a phenomena, that was to effect Labour's continuing change in the 1990s. This was the development of a distinct, more radical, extra-parliamentary politics external to, and in many cases hostile to, the Labour Party. A sure sign that the mass party approach supported by the soft left in the early and mid-eighties had been utterly lost for the sake of a more muscular implementation of the New Strategic Thinking.

CONCLUSION

The disputes over the black sections and London effect clearly had multiple and complex effects upon the transformation of the Party. Contingent political aspects of the transformation were affected by the shifting allegiances of the soft left away from their radical new agenda roots in the form of the mass party approach and towards the core leadership and their more cautious strategy. Contingent political matters also existed in the continuing marginalisation of the radical wing exacerbated by their association with the black sections movement. Institutional aspects of the transformation were also involved, as the powerful structural position of the core leadership weighed heavily on the decision of soft left activists

to avoid links with groups which could face a Militant-type marginalisation through formal disciplinary procedures. However, this in itself affected the process of formal marginalisation, in that by the mid-eighties, the loss of links with the soft left was as good as formal marginalisation thus reducing the need for the core leadership to utilise its institutional power.

Ideological factors in the transformation were similarly affected as the rejection of black sections and the new agenda policies of Labour local authorities by the core leadership and the soft left positioned those issues and groups as 'outsides' constitutive of the identity of a non-radical, cautious active vote-maximisation *value* based on the New Strategic Thinking. While the rejection itself resulted, inter-retroactively, from the distinction between the *values* of core leadership and the black sections itself.

Multiplication was also introduced as the black section campaign divided black Party members and itself along lines not congruent to traditional left-right divisions. While the differences between black members and white members introduced a multiplication based upon ethnicity rather than ideological distinction.

Finally, the failure of the core leadership and the soft left to respond in a positive fashion to new agenda issues - to avoid even attempting to articulate such issues to the active vote maximisation *value* and the New Strategic Thinking - meant that the transformation lacked the new agenda element that had so inspired many of the Party's new members in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This lack encouraged the development, for the first time in the post-war era, of a wide variety of highly influential and active oppositional bodies outside of the Party and movement.

8

ELECTION DEFEAT AND LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The generally accepted view of the 1987 election defeat in the existing literature on the transformation is that the professionalism of the campaign combined with the fact that the Labour had lost once again convinced many in the Party that what was required was further professionalisation plus a concerted reform of the policies which were widely accepted to have either scared the voters and/or failed to reflect new social conditions and popular expectations (Hughes and Wintour 1990: 2-3; 34-36; Shaw 1994: 84-85; Smith 1992a: 10-11). Thus the 1987 defeat ensured the future of Kinnock's reform agenda and Kinnock's leadership by a process of rational consideration of the facts of that defeat by the leadership and the wider membership. This thesis has already displayed how a wide variety of other interacting factors preceding the 1987 defeat contributed to the development and the existence of Kinnock's reform project - this in itself has furthered the search for complexity in this field. This chapter continues that process by displaying how the increased credibility of Kinnock's project, the nature of that project and the strength of Kinnock himself were caused not solely by rational consideration following the 1987 defeat but rather by a multiplicity of factors.

Specifically it is asserted that a number of causal processes inter-retroacted with rational decision-making after the defeat to enhance Kinnock's standing and the influence of his approach. It is argued that in the wake of the election defeat there was a concerted attempt to forge a new unity between the radical wing of the Party and the soft left. This move attracted a number of individuals but its ultimate, bad-tempered failure finally ended any possibility of an anti-Kinnock alliance on the left of the Party thus strengthening Kinnock's power.

The defeat was also followed by a further shift towards Kinnock at grassroots level. Most of the councils which had been involved in the rates rebellions were now dominated by soft left figures who had opted for a creative accountancy solution to the financial difficulties ahead of a hoped-for bail-out by a Labour government after 1987 (see chapter four). When this government failed to materialise, leaders of those councils finally made spending and services cuts. This was preceded by brief battles which destroyed any remnants of the radical left in local parties and ensured that these soft left activists finally acknowledged in practice that direct action, however low-grade, by socialist councils was a dead strategy. Kinnock's arguments of 1984-1985 had finally won through.

The new PLP following the election also catapulted soft left figures to the top of the Shadow Cabinet elections at the expense of the moderates, while similar figures also did very well in the NEC elections. Suddenly the leaders of the soft left were the leaders of the Party, they were undeniably part of the establishment - and so entwined their fortunes ever closer with those of Kinnock and his strategy of the New Strategic Thinking. In this context, combined with the fact that the only alternative to the New Strategic Thinking - the mass party approach - was largely defunct, it is unsurprising that Kinnock's agenda and personal power was strengthened.

Another significant cause of Kinnock's power and success after the 1987 defeat that an emphasis upon rational consideration misses is the contingent political situation in the Party at the time. This chapter presents evidence which shows that in the year following the 1987 defeat, Kinnock was actually extremely unpopular within all sections of the wider leadership of the Party and movement and there was a strong feeling that he should be removed. In fact, that very rational consideration which much of the existing literature claims to have upheld Kinnock's power actually was concluding that if the next election was to be won a more attractive and effective leader needed to be found. It is also shown that initial moves were made by the moderate wing to undermine his position but he was saved by the fact that the moderate wing no longer had the organisation to effect a coup, the soft left had no figure who could act as a clear challenger and the Unions were wary of over-stepping the mark. The failure of these initial serious attempts to get off the ground only strengthened Kinnock further and confirmed his unassailable position.

It is also shown how in the above context, the unrealistic challenge of Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and John Prescott served further to enhance Kinnock's power and project, revitalised his leadership and sent the radical wing into even steeper decline.

All of these factors, many of which resulted from complex processes of change prior to 1987, combined with rational consideration to ensure Kinnock's predominance. A more complex context is thus shown to exist for a situation identified by the existing literature but which has been simultaneously simplified by the identification of one over-riding causal process by that same literature.

THE 1987 DEFEAT

It has been shown above how, although the contingent political realignment was largely a gradual process with roots back in the new agenda issues of the 1960s, there were points of sudden shift and change: the 1981 deputy leadership election, the 1983 election defeat, the disputes of 1984 - 1985, and the rejection of the new agenda policies of the London local authorities. To this list can be added probably the last major point of shift, the 1987 election defeat.

The shock of the defeat was great. The election campaign had started in an extremely unfavourable context for Labour. An ill-advised trip to the US by Kinnock and Healey had been a public relations disaster engineered in part by the White House, who were keen to denigrate Labour's unilateral policy prior to the election (Interview with Davies 1994). The poor effect of the trip was only exacerbated by the fact that it practically coincided with Thatcher's rapturous welcome in Eastern Europe. A general gloom in the Party was deepened when local election results, announced four days before the election campaign began, put Labour just four percentage points ahead of the Alliance's 27% and nine behind the Tories' 40% (The Independent, 8 May 1987). As John Edmonds commented, in the run-up to the election there was a sense that the

> ... election was about fighting for second place. ... The Party was in real trouble, the whole of the campaign was derived from the premise that we might become the third party in terms of popular vote (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

However, after an initially poor start the campaign was a huge success. The media, which only days before had been covering the death of socialism and the Labour Party were suddenly obsessed with the surprising professionalism of Labour's campaign, the fact that polls showed Labour overtaking the Tories in marginal seats, and the state of panic and confusion in the Government's camp (Crewe 1987; The Guardian, 11 June 1987; The Independent, 19 May 1987; 22 May 1987; 24 May 1987; 11 June 1987). But it was this very efficacy, the great contrast with the 1983 campaign, and a rash of favourable polls - most notoriously the BBC election night exit poll which predicted that the Conservative majority would be cut to twenty seats - that made Labour's failure to barely dent support for the Government all the more painful. As one activist put it:

> The 1987 defeat was more traumatic. In 1983 a lot of us were expecting it, in 1987 we thought we could do it. The Party Political Broadcasts were very moving, they made you feel we were touching all the right chords (Interview with Matheson 1994).

The deep trauma of the election defeat, or rather the extent of the defeat, immediately provided the context within which a new contingent political realignment took place. This realignment formed itself around a number of inter-retroactive features.

First amongst these was a brief split within the ranks of the soft left. Following the defeat a few figures from the radical wing of the Party united with some more radical-leaning members of the soft left to call for "left unity" in order to defend and develop the Party's radical policies and to prevent a predicted assault by the moderates. Peter Hain was chief amongst these using his position as, in his own words, "somewhere in between" the soft left and the radical wing

(Interview with Hain 1994), as a type of neutral power broker. Hain also had close although increasingly fraught links to the LCC having been vice-chair of the organisation. As Hain wrote there were three alternatives for the soft left following the election defeat: it could split, "dissolve into the centre" or, Hain's preferred option:

> it can regroup, embrace others on the Left outside its ranks who are also prepared to build a genuinely *democratic* Left, and then move forwards to modernise the Labour movement and renew its socialist appeal (Hain 1987).

Two attempts were made to achieve this goal of left unity. The first centred on negotiations between the Tribune Group and the Campaign Group to draw up a joint slate for the Shadow Cabinet elections. The decision briefly split the Tribune Group, which was dominated by soft left supporters. However, Tribune finally rejected the plan by thirty-seven to twenty-seven votes (The New Statesman, 28 August 1987).

The second attempt was made on the eve of conference when four LCC Executive members - Peter Hain, Joan Ruddock, George Galloway and Ken Livingstone - signed a joint statement with senior members of a new radical group, Labour Left Liaison, calling for left unity (Livingstone et al. 1987). This move utterly failed being rejected out of hand by other leading figures on the soft left. Robin Cook replied to the appeal somewhat testily, writing:

> We have just emerged from an election in which Labour's share of the poll was lower than in any general election for 60 years, with the single exception of the abyss of 1983. The immediate priority is how we

> broaden the base of Labour support, not how we drive our own right wing into the sea (Cook 1987b).

And despite the fact that some of its most high-profile members had signed the appeal, the LCC executive responded with hostility to the idea (Interview with Hain 1994). The Group's AGM displayed the very different trajectory of the LCC's strategy to that of the left unity idea when it passed a motion (LCC 1987c: 2) stating

> political grounds for general unity and a common organisation with the hard left do not exist and that organisational links between LCC and Labour Left Liaison are ruled out (LCC 1987b: 4).

Instead the AGM committed the LCC to developing further its own structures and contributing supportively to the Policy Review (LCC 1987b: 4; LCC 1987c: 2). While Peter Hain despite being well-known in the Party and a long-serving member and officer of the executive only just scraped back on to the body coming seventeenth out of the twenty successful candidates. Livingstone actually lost his place by a considerable margin (LCC 1987c: 3).

The failure of the left unity project was both a cause and effect of the realignment that followed the 1987 election. It was a cause in the sense that it enhanced, through public acknowledgement, the existence of two distinct tendencies-cum-factions within the Party: the total rejection of the joint slate and the left unity appeal defined the outline of an uncrossable distance between the soft left and the radical wing. After that point no serious attempt at unity

was made again and their mutual role as 'constitutive outsides' for one another was fully confirmed.

It was an effect in a variety of other ways. The new intake of MPs following the election boosted the numbers and hence the power of the soft left. One analysis at the time assessed that the new MPs were largely on the "left" and that this group of new "left" MPs was "overwhelmingly pragmatic 'soft' lefties" (Rentoul 1987). The analysis, whilst admitting that classification was difficult in some cases, assessed the allegiance of all MPs as follows:

	PLP before election	**PLP after election**
Right	87	75
Soft Left	91	121
Hard Left	29	33

This shift displayed the extent to which the ideas and organisations of the soft left had come to dominate the grass roots of the CLPs and the trade unions resulting from the decline of the radical wing since 1983 and the historical weakness of the moderates amongst activists which had been exacerbated by defections to the SDP (see chapter four and *passim*).

These proportions also boosted the confidence of leading figures on the soft left who were aware that they were now more likely to receive high votes in the Shadow Cabinet elections

without having to rely on the support of the Campaign Group (Rentoul 1987). This confidence was further boosted by the fact that the most senior parliamentary figures on the soft left had had their public profiles heightened during the election - a factor that often weighed heavily in the Shadow Cabinet elections. This was particularly the case with Bryan Gould who had received a large amount of media attention as the co-ordinator of the much-praised campaign.

The confidence was justified when a stunning shift to soft left figures occurred in the Shadow Cabinet election. Bryan Gould, John Prescott and Michael Meacher gained the top three positions respectively (The Guardian, 9 July 1987; The Independent, 9 July 1987). This compared with the 1986 elections, held just eight moths previously, when the top eleven positions (with the exception of the independently-minded, Denzil Davies) had gone to staunch moderates with Gerald Kaufman and John Smith achieving the two highest votes (The Guardian, 30 October 1987; The Independent, 30 October 1986). The soft left victory was made even more striking by the fact that only one member of the Campaign Group, Jo Richardson, was elected and four senior moderate members of the previous Shadow Cabinet - Barry Jones, Peter Shore, Giles Radice and Peter Archer - failed to be re-elected (The Guardian, 9 July 1987; The Independent, 9 July 1987).

Within this context it is hardly surprising that the soft left felt able to cut any final links they had with the radical wing. They now felt themselves to be the major force in the Party with no need of alliances and pacts. A certain sense of triumphalism permeated the soft left for a number of months following the Shadow Cabinet elections (Interview with Party Official and Activist).

A major effect of this shift, apart from ending all links with the radical wing, was the fact that it entwined the fortunes of the most senior soft left figures more closely than ever before with those of Neil Kinnock and thus enhanced, despite a number of serious doubts (see below), the association between the soft left and the core leadership.

These shifts also occurred outside the PLP at local level although for different reasons. Since the collapse of the rates rebellion in 1985, rate-capped authorities had "bridged the gap", as the buzz phrase had it at the time (Wolmar 1987), between the spending limits set by the Government and their own spending plans through the use of "creative accounting" which involved elaborate financial devices, such as selling council property and then leasing it back, to free-up funds. However, it was generally accepted amongst councillors that such methods were only a stop-gap. The underlying hope was that a Labour win at the next election would end the rate-cap and thus prevent councils having to impose the cuts and rent rises which were bound to be the longer term outcome of the Government's restrictions (Wolmar 1987; Interview with King 1994).

However, the election defeat meant that no such salvation was at hand and the predominantly soft left leaders of local councils, who had already edged closer to Kinnock after the London Effect capitulation, decided to accept the inevitable and impose spending and service cuts and/or rent rises. The decisions were not taken easily though. Prior to cuts budgets going through there were usually battles with the radicals left on the council. However, this was to be the last gasp of the radical wing in local Labour politics, since every London Labour council, except Hounslow where a radical leadership triumphed and Barking and Dagenham which had never faced spending problems, accepted cuts and rent rises in 1987. Either radicals such as Linda Bellos in Lambeth and Andrew Puddephat in Hackney accepted the need for

cuts or else there were soft left coups, as in Haringey, which deposed radical leaders (Wolmar 1987; Interview with King 1994).

Once the battle against the cuts had been lost, the radical wings in CLPs faced complete marginalisation and further loss of members and support (Interview with King 1994), while the dominant soft left leaders had, in effect, now totally thrown in their lot with Kinnock and his now rather dusty "dented shield". Their only hope for the future was to work wholeheartedly for a Labour government - a triumph, in effect, for the active vote maximisation *value*. Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington council, commented that although compliance with Kinnock might mean having to make unpleasant choices, defiance had "been tried, failed and discredited" (Kellner 1987b).

As such the 1987 election defeat effectively strengthened the contingent-political association between the core leadership and the soft left both within the PLP and in local Labour parties. It also enhanced the strength and status of soft left personnel within this association, although as will be shown this was not to say that soft left ideals were necessarily adopted. And finally, it further isolated the radical wing. Effects one could not have predicted prior to their occurrence. The inter-retroactive complexities involved in the contingent-political and ideological developments following the 1987 defeat are clear in such a context.

THE 1987 CAMPAIGN AND THE NEW STRATEGIC THINKING

Hughes and Wintour with their heavy emphasis upon rational processes within the core leadership identify a presentation given by the Shadow Communications Agency to the Shadow Cabinet in November 1987 as the key-point at which leading figures became

convinced of the absolute necessity of adopting a New Strategic Thinking approach (1990: 48-9). As this thesis has already shown the emergence of the New Strategic Thinking as the dominant strategy for the fulfilment of the active vote maximisation *value* was far more gradual and complex and far less a purely rational calculation than can be accounted for by one event (see chapter four and chapter six).

Hughes and Wintour are partially correct though to highlight the second half of 1987 as the point at which the New Strategic Thinking became more accepted both by leading figures in the soft left, who still maintained a certain affection for the mass party approach, and by the broader membership of the Party.

This wider acceptance was partly the result of the fact that the 1987 election campaign was the first major outing for the New Strategic Thinking. Although it had become common knowledge that the core leadership was taking a more professional and slicker approach to its public image following the launch of the Freedom and Fairness campaign of Spring 1986 (The Guardian, 23 April 1986; The Times, 23 April 1986), the 1987 campaign popularised the notion that Labour now had an effective and highly media oriented campaigning machine at its disposal.

Under the command of Peter Mandelson and Patricia Hewitt, the watchwords of the campaign were "discipline" and "co-ordination". Each week's and each day's campaign themes were supposed to be rigorously and consistently pursued by all Party spokespersons and campaigners. These themes were based on four year's survey work using all the methods of market research - focus group discussions about creative and strategic concepts, repeated questioning of a panel over a year, and larger polls. The main themes that were chosen as a

result of this project to discover Labour's strengths were wholly predictable - jobs, health, pensions and education. Although one area did come as a surprise - crime. Strangely, according to Mandelson and Hewitt, the research also indicated that Neil Kinnock was an electoral asset and, as a result, the chiefs decided to make the leader's national tour the centrepiece of the campaign (Hewitt & Mandelson 1989: 52), a policy that the press were keen to follow.

This approach led to accusations that Labour was running a presidential campaign (see chapter six) which was not only antithetical to the principles of British democracy but alien to the collective spirit of the Labour movement which supposedly resisted attempts to personalise politics and establish a cult of the individual. Hewitt and Mandelson have responded to this claim by arguing that the assertion is true

> only in the sense that he was the most effective exponent of the values and hope offered by Labour, and the media circus following each leader ensured that all the leader's tours were the principle device for telling the story of the campaign (Hewitt & Mandelson 1989: 53).

This approach also led to the aspect of the campaign that won most media attention and praise, and which simultaneously came to epitomise for many the style and techniques of the New Strategic Thinking: an election broadcast directed by Hugh Hudson. This broadcast, like Gau's earlier attempt (see chapter four), was exclusively about the leader's qualities, achievements and personality. Hewitt and Mandelson, use this broadcast as an example of how focusing on Kinnock was a way of selling the party:

> It was not simply a biographical tract about Neil Kinnock; it was using him as the vehicle - in fact, as the device - for saying something about the Labour Party (Hewitt & Mandelson 1989: 53).

The discipline and co-ordination of the campaign was maintained through the use of electronic-mail technology which allowed Mandelson and Hewitt's office to feed messages regularly and almost immediately to candidates, local activists and campaigners.

Despite the fact that the Tories won a landslide, the campaign was judged an enormous success by the media which brought honour back to the Party after the shame of 1983 and had even made the Government's own expensive efforts look wan and panic-stricken.

This paradoxical triumph won plaudits for the new 'spin-doctors' and praise (plus PLP votes in the Shadow Cabinet election) for the campaign co-ordinator, Bryan Gould. As such the New Strategic Thinking was foregrounded by the 1987 election in a way that the mass party approach never would or could be. The latter was a strategy for a gradual building of civil society alliances and support that would develop into votes over time through concerted grassroots activity. The New Strategic Thinking had an immediacy about it, a "lets do it" *value*, that made it very appealing to members of a Party that had just lost another election. The presiding sense after the defeat was not that the New Strategic Thinking had failed but that the Party had failed because the New Strategic Thinking had not been applied for long enough - if the approach could achieve what it had in four weeks in terms of simply shifting Labour's image from the negative to the positive then surely, many felt, it could easily win an election given four years (Tribune, 12 June 1987).

However, the boost the election gave to general acceptance of the New Strategic Thinking must be seen within the context of multiple and complex causal factors, most of which are dealt with in more detail in other sections of this and previous chapters. This contrasts with some aspects of the existing literature which sees the boost as the result of one primary factor - the rational realisation that reform was needed expectations (Hughes and Wintour 1990: 2-3; 34-36; Shaw 1994: 84-85; Smith 1992a: 10-11).

Firstly, the New Strategic Thinking was able to win such praise rather then condemnation after the defeat because no other viable alternative existed. The mass party approach had gradually declined in its influence as the soft left failed to build practical links with black sections and had actively cut links with the policies associated with the 'London effect'. In fact, this latter process which had largely occurred just prior to the election was enhanced once more, when the core leadership briefly blamed the London authorities for the defeat (The Guardian, 12 June 1987; The Independent, 29 June 1987). It is indicative that when the mass party idea did resurface again in 1988 it was in a far more bureaucratic form essentially calling for the construction of a larger membership with less emphasis upon new agenda issues and external links (see chapter nine).

Secondly, the individuals from the soft left who had backed the mass party approach and who were clearly the most influential intellectual force in the Party, were now rapidly forming a sizeable portion of new Party officers - Walworth Road was regarded jokingly at the time as an "LCC closed shop" (Interview with Hulme 1994). As such, many of the leading, non-Parliamentary figures on the soft left were now deeply involved in the planning and co-ordination of the campaign - a factor which made the soft left, as a whole, more favourable to the New Strategic Thinking and, of course, less likely to criticise it.

And thirdly, this new establishment role for the soft left was enhanced by the election of its most prominent parliamentary members to the Shadow Cabinet in 1987 tying the strand, by patronage and Shadow Cabinet loyalty, to Neil Kinnock whose favoured approach was clearly the New Strategic Thinking.

Thus despite the defeat, the 1987 election proved a turning-point for the active vote maximisation *value*, articulating it more closely than ever to the New Strategic Thinking and ending any role that might have existed for an already ailing mass party approach along the lines of that which influenced the LCC in the early 1980s. The election also, of course, enhanced the status of those, such as Peter Mandelson, who had led the campaign - a factor which had its own effects on the transformation (see chapter six).

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Despite the improvement in contingent-political matters from the point of view of the leader, following the election defeat, Kinnock's *personal* relations with leading figures in the Party and movement worsened considerably. This, combined with his weak public and media image, almost developed into a serious assault on his leadership. The fact that he survived this proto-challenge ultimately strengthened his position. Study of these events and their outcome shows us something important about the nature of the transformation. It displays that Kinnock's powerful input into the transformation was based not solely upon his inherent drive, management skills and popularity (Hughes & Wintour 1990: *passim*) - although these clearly played a part at certain times - but because he was unchallengable for largely contingent-political reasons.

Throughout his leadership, despite winning the political support of the Solidarity-based group of ultra-moderate MPs, Kinnock never won their admiration or trust (Interview with Party officer and activist). The most-experienced and influential members of Solidarity were in many ways the inheritors of the socialist revisionism that had its post-war origin in the reforming zeal of Hugh Gaitskell and of which the greatest intellectual exponent had been Tony Crosland. In the 1980s, the most senior figure on this wing of the Party was Roy Hattersley, who had been a close friend of Crosland, and was the leading inheritor of the mantle of the Frognal set: the informal group of urbane revisionists that had gathered around Gaitskell and continued to keep his spirit alive throughout the sixties and seventies against the increasing power of the radicals. Many of those with greater ministerial experience and a higher public standing who had similar claims on this inheritance, such as Shirley Williams, David Owen and especially Roy Jenkins, had already left Labour to establish the Social Democratic Party in 1981.

The relationship of this grouping to Kinnock was remarkably similar to the Frognal set's relationship to Harold Wilson (see Pimlott 1992). As with Wilson, they found Kinnock not to their taste at all. Both men had their origins in the left of the party and had built their political careers around support for left-wing causes and had, on countless occasions, taken part in vigorous assaults on the influence of the right (Interview with Barron 1994). At a more personal level, neither man had the taste for high culture and high living that was the factor, other than politics, that bound together the Frognal set and its descendants.

In some ways Kinnock was worse than Wilson in the eyes of the Frognal set's descendants. While the former Prime minister had the poor taste to play upon his air of middle manager and

common man at least he had the refinements of an academic's career at Oxford University. Kinnock however was brash, loud and verbose with a third-class degree from Cardiff and an oratorical style that drew its inspiration from the bogey-man of the Gaitskellites, Aneurin Bevan. Of course, Kinnock also had a strong and apparently abiding link to the issue that appalled Labour's moderates more than any other - unilateralism.

As such, private complaints, jokes and petty conspiracies against Kinnock on the part of Solidarity members were a common feature of his leadership. Bryan Gould comments

> Behind the scenes the right was always very dismissive of Neil because they didn't think he was up to the job. They were irritated by him. Even in Shadow Cabinet meetings and elsewhere, some people ... actually turned to *me* and said 'for God's sake why doesn't he shut up'. There was a great deal of impatience on the right (Interview with Gould 1994).

This is a situation confirmed by Peter Hain:

> The right was always disloyal. They were always muttering in the lobbies behind his back, briefing against him in the press about his so-called intellectual deficiencies which I always thought was just snobbery (Interview with Hain 1994).

Despite their similar attitudes to Party reform (see chapter four), this tacit hostility extended to the personal relationship between Kinnock and his deputy leader. John Edmonds noticed that

> Kinnock was fairly loyal to Hattersley but Hattersley never felt a crushing burden of loyalty on him and he was quite happy to tell anybody. He told me on many occasions: "Kinnock has got this terrible intellectual insecurity" and Roy would go into this psycho-babble in some detail. This is not the most loyal thing to do (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

However, like Wilson again, the moderates knew that their best hope for uniting a majority of the party and the movement behind a strategy of organisational and policy overhaul lay with Kinnock. Only a figure from the radical or soft left streams, with an eye on reform, could drag those sections along with the process - a figure from the moderate wing could never have won the whole Party's support for a major transformation during the 1980s and the moderates knew it (Interview with Barron 1994; Interview with Warburton 1994).

However, the conjunction of the election defeat and the sudden dominance of the soft left frightened some Solidarity members into the earliest stages of action against Kinnock's leadership.

Maybe in an attempt to avoid upsetting the moderate wing too greatly, Kinnock appointed leading moderates to the most senior positions in the Shadow Cabinet despite the fact that it was soft left figures who had won the highest votes in the actual election (The Guardian, 14

July 1987; The Independent, 14 July 1987). A decision that caused some anger within the ranks of the soft left.

However, as the moves for a full-scale policy review began to attract support, it was clearly the new champions of reform such as Bryan Gould, Michael Meacher and David Blunkett who were capturing the imagination of the core leadership. They were also capturing the imagination of the press and the Party members. In particular, Bryan Gould's profile had been raised enormously by the election campaign. Whereas before he had been somewhat obscure, the co-ordinator of the glittering campaign was suddenly Labour's star turn (Lloyd & Pimlott 1987). Hattersley on the other hand, fairly or unfairly, was perceived to have performed badly during the campaign and was particularly blamed for a fiasco over taxation in the final week in which leader and deputy leader appeared to contradict one another (Hughes & Wintour: 33-34)

Fearing the new dominance of the soft left, Hattersley and others began a campaign to re-assert their influence. Within a few days of the leader giving his full-backing to the Home Policy Committee's proposal to submit the idea of a policy review to conference (The Guardian, 7 July 1987; The Independent, 7 July 1987), Roy Hattersley was voicing his doubts on Channel Four's A Week in Politics. Casting himself as the guardian of Labour's principles, he argued:

> There can be no shift in our fundamental philosophy ... I think we ought not to talk about selling our policies using the language of soap powders and dog food. A political party can only succeed, perhaps only survive, if it has a clear ideological position ... The idea that six weeks

> after an election defeat, somebody can come along and say: 'These are all the things we do; we change this policy, we have a new defence policy, we abandon nationalisation, we give up our view of equality. What we do, we send out a lot of marketing men into the country, just as the Democrats did twenty years ago, and say "what are the policies people want and when we find out what they'll vote for, we'll write it into our manifesto" - that is not the sort of politics I want to be involved in

And sounding more and more like a staunch member of the Campaign Group, he went on to say:

> If you were running a religious programme and there was a bishop sitting here, you wouldn't say to him: 'What's all this about the Sermon on the Mount? You've been going on about the Sermon on the Mount for 2,000 years, we need something new to attract the trendy, upward mobile middle-classes'. ... I've not gone through the last six years, the defeat of '79 as well, the humiliation of '83, to make the Labour Party into a new sort of Social Democratic Party ... The only clear ideology which is acceptable to democratic socialists is the greater freedom that comes from greater equality (The Independent, 11 July 1987).

The themes of Hattersley's comments continued to rumble within Solidarity. At a meeting of the group in September, the deputy leader gained the backing of Kaufman, who stated that Labour was suffering from "a credibility gap based upon a crisis of identity" and warned that

> We cannot survive as a Labour Party by proceeding on an agenda set by opponents with whom we profoundly disagree (The Independent, 28 September 1987).

In October, during the conference, the press began to report that the moderate wing planned to campaign to re-assert its influence with Hattersley taking a more outspoken stance on unilateralism and the economy, areas which were of central importance to the Party's future and on which they felt they had been marginalised despite the strong views of many Solidarity members on precisely these two issues (The Independent, 1 October 1987).

As such, the ire of the moderates was raised even higher by their loss of control over the future of economic policy. After the Shadow Cabinet elections, there had been a tussle for positions, particularly the key role of Shadow Chancellor. While the soft left supporters had favoured Bryan Gould for the job, Kinnock - possibly under pressure from his deputy - gave John Smith the post. Gould received the more lowly job at trade and industry. However, Kinnock then went on to appoint Gould to oversee the work of the Productive and Competitive Economy review group which effectively gave the trade and industry spokesperson responsibility for the future of Labour's high profile macro-economic policy dealing with the crucial issues of inflation, growth and unemployment - the areas which in many ways would set the tone for most of Labour's other policies. Smith, supposedly the more senior figure, was left with responsibility for the detailed, micro-economic areas such as banking and welfare which were not only unglamorous and low-profile but would inevitably be determined by Gould's initiatives (Interview with Party officer and activist; Interview with Gould 1994).

However, dissatisfaction with the leader was not confined to the moderate wing in the wake of the election. It had been felt by some in the Party and movement that as his leadership had developed, Kinnock had become increasingly reliant upon his personal office which had begun to form a rather exclusive and overly protective shield around the leader which only the favoured could penetrate. David Warburton, a senior officer of the GMB and a friend of Kinnock, had actually approached the leader in 1985 to air these concerns at the request of a number of union General Secretaries. Kinnock's response on that occasion was concerned and responsive (Interview with Warburton 1995). Despite this, rumours and experiences of Kinnock's increasingly distant style of leadership continued to circulate amongst Party and movement officers (Interview with O'Mara 1994; Interview with Matheson 1994).

Alongside these problems, the leader could at times be authoritarian, sometimes over seemingly small details (Interview with Gould 1994; Interview with senior Party figure), and on occasion descended into stress-fuelled furies. One senior PLP officer, despite being wholly supportive of Kinnock's political project, recognised that on a personal level, he could be a very difficult man to work with, whose personality helped determine the nature of his rule:

> There was a heavily centralising tendency that came from Neil's office and came directly from Neil's own determination and strength of character and impatience and anger. And he could be very frighteningly angry, especially when worked-up. The stories are legendary of people coming back to Parliament with him in a taxi after a long and stressful NEC meeting where he was by that stage so hyped-up that he was aggressive and sometimes rude and hurtful to just about everybody

> including his friends. ... There was always therefore a tension over Neil wanting to get his own way on absolutely everything down to the quite small points (Interview with senior Party figure).

Kinnock, himself, admits that the behaviour of his colleagues could drive him to great heights of angry frustration. Recalling a lengthy Home Policy Committee meeting at which the leader was trying to change policy on council house sales, he comments:

> My intention was not to speak because I'd managed in conversations beforehand to guarantee a majority of at least one in the Committee ... A lot of people did speak and they trotted out the same old stuff about council housing and eventually Tony Benn spoke. And Tony Benn said that this was a fundamentally mistaken policy because what everybody had to understand was that these weren't merely people's houses, these were "the community's houses"; they weren't ours to sell and they weren't peoples to buy. I have to say that a red veil floated down over my eyes. As someone who had been brought up in a council house I thought Benn's attitude was so patronising, so arrogant, so unreal. I said: "listen, I'll heed to a lot of people on this issue but I'm not going to listen to a bloody word from someone whose never paid rent and has never paid a mortgage in his life" ... I was crazy with anger, I didn't bang the table or anything, but I was seething at the sheer bloody aristocracy of the view ... (Interview with Kinnock 1994a).

However, following the 1987 defeat, these disturbing aspects of his personality were exacerbated and the leader, who did have a tendency to be "cast into the greatest despondency" during setbacks (Interview with Gould 1994), retreated behind his office staff once again in a state of what seemed to many to be depression. In particular, he became difficult to contact or talk to in person. John Edmonds commented:

> It was after the election that the problems arose because he became very reclusive, he talked to nobody. We had all sorts of trouble in the union with getting access to him, he was just taking everybody for granted, he was in one of his black moods. He reacted badly to anything that was said not just criticism, anything that was said. It was ... a very, very bad period. ... From the election through to about the Spring of 1988, we didn't really have a leader of the Party at all, that was involved with any intercourse with anyone else in the Party. He was just pissed-off, fed-up, making life difficult for the people around him. ... There was a tremendous amount of criticism which certainly I shared ... (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

Alongside the personal difficulties with the leader there was an increasing and equally troubling sense that Kinnock was actually losing votes for the Party. A number of senior figures expressed the fear that Kinnock was essentially a "loser" who frightened away potential voters (Interview with Edmonds 1994; Interview with senior Party figure). While it became increasingly common, even amongst some soft left activists, to assert that three things needed to go before an election could be won: unilateralism, nationalisation and Kinnock (Interview with Hulme 1994). Amongst the broader Party and movement there was in fact no

consensus that Kinnock was a liability (Interview with Haworth 1995) and among constituency activists the leader remained generally popular as a friendly, forward-looking and charismatic figure (Interviews with the following: O'Mara 1994; Matheson 1994; Edmonds 1994). But as one Party worker put it

> ... there was this profound sense that it wasn't going well enough and was there anything further that could be done about it. And obviously the question will always be there about whether a change of leader would do anything about it (Interview with Haworth 1995).

However, despite this profound concern about the personal and political situation of the leader, he never faced a serious challenge to his position from the moderate or soft left strands in the Party. The reasons for this tell us a great deal about the nature of Kinnock's rule and his role in the transformation. They indicate that Kinnock remained in power despite the serious problems besetting his leadership because the contingent political circumstances in the Party made his position unchallengeable. Those who could launch a challenge lacked the necessary facilities to do so.

The moderate wing, especially the most hard-line Solidarity members, were, with the exception of the radicals, the most dissatisfied at this time with the direction in which the Party was travelling. They also possessed the only figure with the seniority and respect necessary to challenge Kinnock - John Smith. However, the moderate wing, as was mentioned above lacked the necessary network of supporters in the trade unions and the CLPs, and even in the PLP

after the 1987 election, to launch a successful challenge through the electoral college (see chapter five).

The grouping that did possess those strong links in the CLPs, the trade unions and an increasing power in the PLP was the soft left strand. This group possibly could have launched a worthy challenge but they lacked an individual figure of the necessary stature to draw support away from Kinnock. As Alan Haworth pointed-out:

> The only way a leadership challenge would have worked would have been if the soft left's challenger had been Smith (Interview with Haworth 1995).

But while the following years were to prove a period in which links between the moderates and the soft left were to become ever closer, in 1987 too many social, cultural, personal and policy differences remained for such an alliance ever to have occurred. Of course, alongside these obstacles was the general wariness of launching a challenge which might split the Party just when it was finally presenting a relatively more united image to the public (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

Nothing displays these problems in challenging Kinnock more clearly than the (anti)-climax, that occurred in the Winter of 1987, to this period of dissatisfaction.

In November, David Warburton, decided once again to warn the leader of the situation he faced. Unfortunately, he chose to do it in a rather more public way than his previous approaches. Using his position as editor of Labour Forward, a newsletter for trade unionists,

Warburton told Kinnock not to misuse and ignore those who supported him (The Independent, 6 November 1987; Interview with Warburton 1995). This was followed six weeks later by another piece in Labour Forward, in which Warburton stated that:

> The leadership and the Labour Party election style, if not the result, was acclaimed. But even basking in the satisfaction of a 'new image' seems to have bored the leadership. Since the general election Neil Kinnock has made no major speech; he has taken no initiatives on a whole range of subjects. The distance between the leadership and the rest of the movement is, at best rather sad, even surprising. At worst it is demoralising (The Independent, 28 December 1987).

The warnings, which were a genuine, if rather naive, attempt to bring the leader out of his cloistered existence (Interview with Edmonds 1994; Interview with Warburton 1994), was interpreted by the press as a deliberate attempt to undermine Kinnock and whip-up opposition.

However, instead of opening the way for a challenge to the leader or even a debate about the Party's direction and the role of the leader, Warburton's comments encouraged a public backing of Kinnock by MPs and trade union leaders. John Edmonds, General Secretary of the GMB, moved to disown the remarks and went so far as to relieve Warburton of his political duties and order him to stop editing Labour Forward (Interview with Edmonds 1994; Interview with Warburton 1994).

A similar fate befell moves to challenge Hattersley - which considering he was clearly Kinnock's favoured man for the job would have been a reasonably direct attack on the leader himself. The deputy leader's now very public weakened position and stature had attracted the attention of John Prescott, and the Party was thick with rumours of an imminent challenge for the deputy leadership. Prescott was something of an individualist, probably closest to the soft left strand but too apt to speak his mind publicly and too openly hostile to the doyens of the New Strategic Thinking to be associated with the increasingly powerful figures and organisations of that grouping. As a result, Prescott, despite never having launched a formal challenge, was forced to publicly announce that he would not stand after the main organisations of the soft left - the Tribune Group and the LCC - condemned any such plan. If the soft left's most senior figures such as Cook, Gould or Meacher lacked the necessary stature to take-on the core leadership then Prescott was certainly not an adequate alternative to win the backing of the soft left's machine.

Thus Kinnock, the most powerful figure within the transformation of the Party, maintained the institutional and contingent political aspect of that power in part by default resulting from the contingent-political situation of the day. He was unchallengable because the circumstances made him unchallengeable. Such factors were of course major causes of the transformation itself. However, the failure of the moderates' complaints or the more general dissatisfaction with Kinnock to deliver anything more than rumours and newsletter articles only served to strengthen Kinnock's position making it clear to anyone with any thought of a challenge that the leader was immovable for the moment.

In addition, it should be pointed-out that Kinnock was also able to hold onto his position by the rules governing trade union behaviour. Minkin, in particular, has focused upon this,

asserting that trade union behaviour is strongly determined by rules of propriety and protocol (Minkin 1991: *passim* but especially 619-645) which are designed to uphold "freedom, democracy, unity and solidarity" (Minkin 1991: 619) rather than gain any short-term political influence over the Party. Undoubtedly, such rules ensured that Kinnock did not face too great a vocal opposition from the unions despite periods of intense dissatisfaction. In particular one can see how, in the Warburton affair (covered above), these rules of propriety seemed to have come into play and stopped the criticism going any further and thus eliminated any possibility of a concerted trade union move to undermine Kinnock's position.

However, isolated from the actual workings of power at all sections of the Party, the Campaign Group decided that the time was now ripe for them to launch their own battle for both the leader's and the deputy leader's post. It was a decision that was to have a significant effect on the future of the transformation and the Party.

THE CAMPAIGN GROUP CHALLENGE AND THE FADING OF THE RADICAL WING

The huge victory of Kinnock and Hattersley over the challenge for their jobs by Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and John Prescott had a series of effects upon the Party's transformation. It brought Neil Kinnock out of his reclusive period, it confirmed the enormous support there was throughout the Party for the "dream ticket", it enhanced the distinction between the soft left and the radical wing beyond even that achieved before and after the 1987 election, and it confirmed and thus enhanced the radical wing's status as a weak and ineffectual rump. In short, the leadership challenge of 1988 acted as a political denouement - it confirmed and finalised the processes of transformation that had gone before. After the announcement of the

very poor showing for Benn, Heffer and Prescott, the Labour Party changed irrevocably. Nothing signified this more clearly than the fact that the adoption of the Policy Review in 1989 was an anti-climax of easy victories for the leadership (see chapter nine). A grouping that fundamentally disagreed with the reforming project of the core leadership, and that could launch a serious challenge based upon that disagreement, no longer existed after 1988.

Since the election the radical wing had been making increasingly strident attacks on the direction of the Party. Despite the loss of media interest, Militant was still facing expulsions, an issue that had always outraged the Campaign Group and its supporters. And the Policy Review was seen as a move to turn the Party towards social democracy and remove any vestiges of its socialist tradition or principles (see chapter nine). The increasing statements in favour of OMOV and reducing links with the unions also inspired the ire of the radicals (see chapter six).

Towards the end of 1987, optimism on the radical wing of the Party grew. Hostility from the Solidarity Group, rumours of a challenge by Prescott and the popular perception that the soft left were increasing their power at the expense of the moderates on the back of the Shadow Cabinet elections encouraged some in the Campaign Group that the mood in the Party was swinging against Kinnock. Benn said as much at a press conference in January (The Guardian, 14 January 1988; The Independent, 14 January 1988).

This confidence was also bolstered by the first Socialist Conference held in November 1987 and sponsored by leading Campaign Group figures within the Party, especially Tony Benn, and organisations outside the Party such as The Socialist Society, an organisation of left-wing intellectuals co-founded by Ralph Miliband. Despite opposition from some such as Ken

Livingstone who objected to building close links with external groups (Livingstone 1989), some of which were antithetical to Labour, the first Socialist Conference was a success gaining a fair amount of media coverage and attracting an unexpectedly large number of people. Benn noted in his diary that

> The mood and excitement are great ... the feeling that something is being done dominates, and with a couple of thousand people here there is no doubt that we have launched something big (Benn 1992: 524).

This new mood may go some way towards explaining the willingness by some in the Campaign Group to launch a challenge to the post of leader and deputy leader on 23rd March (The Guardian, 24 March 1988; The Independent, 24 March 1988).

Whether to make the move had already caused dispute inside the marginalised Campaign Group. There was considerable opposition to a challenge to Kinnock from Chris Mullin, Margaret Beckett, Gavin Strang and Audrey Wise who herself was under pressure to stand for the deputy's post (Interview with Corbyn 1994). Mullin thought that it was pointless for Benn to "chuck himself against the barbed wire" (Interview with Mullin 1994) by inevitably losing while Clare Short objected to what she saw as a macho confrontation that would achieve little (Interview with Corbyn 1994). Mullin, ex-editor of Tribune, reckoned that Benn would receive between 12% and 18% of the electoral college while Benn himself apparently thought he might gain a respectable third of the vote (Interview with Mullin 1994) and be able to encourage greater debate within the Party which, at present, many from the Campaign Group felt was being stifled. It was also argued that a challenge would generate new interest in the radical stance, win support for the Campaign Group and as such shift Kinnock and the

Policy Review process some way towards their point of view. There was also a sense on the part of some that a stand had to be made against Kinnockism whatever the cost. As Benn said in his statement to the Group before they voted to go ahead with the challenge:

> The case for standing is that the leadership is killing the Party, diluting policy, centralising power, capitulating. There is a general air of demoralisation (Benn 1992: 540).

The response to the challenge from within the core leadership was ambivalent. There was a feeling that a contest with the Campaign Group would be a distraction that might highlight splits but that it would also be a chance to prove convincingly how marginalised the radicals had become (Interview with Clarke 1994). As Neil Kinnock commented in language that attests to his boisterous attitude to the internal politics of the Party:

> I said in public that such a challenge was evidence of immaturity, of lack of attention to the real well-being of the Party. Privately I was saying the same thing but I was adding the sentence: " ... and if they do run we'll wipe the buggers out". And we did. (Interview with Kinnock 1994a)

There was also a sense amongst the core leadership that an overwhelming victory could revive the flagging popularity of the Kinnock regime. Kinnock commented that:

> ... election contests have results and results mean mandates. This can be a refreshing vote (The Guardian, 25 March 1988; The Independent, 25 March 1988).

And in effect, the contest did refresh the leadership but well-before the result was known. Kinnock, at heart an old-fashioned campaigner who relished a battle, was brought out of his post-election doldrums by the challenge. The contest forced him publicly to restate his mission and to crusade for the ideals of the newly-launched Policy Review. Such activity could only help a leader who had become withdrawn and depressed in 1987. John Edmonds noticed:

> Nothing brought him out of himself faster than an overt challenge and that's what brought him out this time. It also meant that he got a lot more public support than he would have done had things just carried on quietly and as normal ... (H)e began to get himself together and we knew then he was going to be the leader for the next election (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

Soon after the announcement of the challenge the first ill-effects for the Campaign Group appeared. Jo Richardson, Margaret Beckett, Clare Short and Joan Ruddock all resigned from the Group in protest at the decision to challenge (The Guardian, 30 March 1988; The Independent, 30 March 1988). The first three were all members of the front bench, representing at this time rare points at which the Campaign Group had links with any institutional power in the Party. It is not insignificant that all four of the resigners were women and held powerful views about the patriarchal culture and structures not just of the British political establishment but of the Labour Party and movement itself. For them the

Campaign Group and its supporters were often little better, and at times even worse, than the rest of the Party. The radical left was immersed in a culture and language that was obsessed with a demonology based upon betrayal to the socialist cause as they conceived it which, despite all their differences, was not dissimilar to Kinnock's own demands of absolute loyalty (Interview with Hain 1994; Interview with Gould 1994). A flexing of a wasted political muscle in the form of tokenistic resolutions and pointless challenges couched in an aggressive language of personal invective seemed increasingly to stand as an ineffective but self-gratifying substitute for genuine movement, policy and ideology development. Furthermore, the growing closeness between sections of the Campaign Group and Marxist organisations - such as Livingstone's association with Socialist Action, and Benn's closeness to various groups active in the Socialist Conference - which raised these vices to the level of an absolute political necessity did nothing to lessen this destructive trend. For a growing number, the Bennite wing increasingly appeared to be about groups of men proving how terribly hardline they were while achieving nothing but their own demise. It did not help either that many did not take their complaints very seriously. Even in retrospect, the leading organiser in the Campaign Group, Jeremy Corbyn, feels Clare Short's reasons for resignation were "very unspecific in reality" and had more to do with personal differences with Denis Skinner (Interview with Corbyn 1994).

The resignations also strengthened the soft left stream, for those who left the Campaign Group, of which there were a fair number in the 1980s would tend, as a matter of necessity, to end-up associating themselves with the more radical elements in the leadership-supporting dual association.

To make matters worse for the Campaign Group plan, John Prescott, in the new atmosphere of assault on the leadership, revived his challenge for the deputy's post making it extremely unlikely that Heffer could build a united movement against Hattersley's position.

A further self-defeating effect of the challenge was the enhanced closeness it forged between soft left supporters, moderates and the core leadership. This was underlined when John Smith and Robin Cook were announced as joint co-ordinators of the Kinnock-Hattersley campaign. Cook and Smith decided to use the campaign as an opportunity to revive the Party's interest in the review process, clarify the leader's direction and improve Hattersley's standing with Party members (The Guardian, 1 April 1988; The Independent, 1 April 1988).

Further enhancement of soft left support for Hattersley and Kinnock came when the Tribune Group voted to back the pair (The Independent, 1 April 1988) despite calls by Tribune newspaper to support Prescott arguing that there was widespread disquiet about how the Party was being run and about the closed processes of the Policy Review (Tribune, 1 April 1988; see chapter six). However, soft left attitudes were not homogenous. Alongside the call by Tribune, the LCC announced that after a postal ballot of its 1,300 members, it was backing Prescott. The LCC executive had actually recommended that the membership back Prescott indicating the divisions that still existed between the moderates and sections of the soft left. Furthermore, the LCC executive felt that Prescott's emphasis on organisational renewal and campaigning fitted-in well with the organisations recent revival of a diluted version of the mass party approach (see chapter nine) which called for various reforms of the Party constitution and a large-scale membership drive. The vote was a setback for Hattersley, who gained only 33% of the vote against 60 % for the energy spokesperson. But it was also an omen for Heffer and Benn who received a derisory share of the LCC's membership support.

Kinnock gained a heartening 82% support (LCC Mailing, March 1988: 1; LCC Mailing, May 1988: 1).

The Campaign Group's challenge also precipitated a further institutional centralisation of the Party. Prominent figures in the Party and trades unions, especially John Edmonds, let it be known that they were seeking a rule change which would prevent leadership challenges of this sort. The most popular proposal was to raise the percentage of nominations from the PLP required to launch a challenge. At present it stood at 5%, it was suggested to the press that Kinnock favoured raising that to 20% (The Guardian, 4 April 1988; The Independent, 4 April 1988). The rule change was ultimately agreed by the NEC in June (The Independent, 24th June 1988), making it practically impossible for a minority body like the Campaign Group to challenge for the leadership or deputy leadership ever again. A factor which scuppered Campaign Group challenges in 1992 and 1994 before they even got off the ground.

The Campaign Group was thrown into further gloom by the fact that Kinnock and Hattersley decided to use the challenge to encourage CLPs to use OMOV in the vote and thus improve support for a more formal reform which now had much wider backing than in 1984 (see chapter six). Thus the Campaign Group's move appeared to have given another tactical advantage to Kinnock precisely on one of the issues that had inspired them to challenge him in the first place. Benn's response was to call for a "popular vote" in which the whole of the Labour movement would be counted as one constituency instead of as an electoral college split into three sections which gave considerably more weight to some individual votes, such as MPs, than others (The Independent, 14 April 1988). While Benn's demand was arguably far more democratic, it was hardly as practical and immediate a tactic as Kinnock's within the context of an already-running leadership campaign.

However, the Summer of 1988 was to prove very difficult for the core leadership. Poor opinion polls (The Observer, 26 June 1988), severe public embarrassment over gaffes on the defence policy (see chapter six and nine), and Denzil Davies's resignation from the Shadow Cabinet (see chapter six) led to a flurry of press reports that the Party was turning against Kinnock. The New Statesman introduced a critical article about Kinnock's style by saying:

> KMG ("Kinnock must go") is the buzz phrase among the chattering classes (Crick 1988).

While The Independent reported that Kinnock's advisers were warning him that he must re-assert his authority at conference or face a serious challenge the year after from a figure like John Smith (The Independent, 26 July 1988). There was even speculation that Smith might launch a challenge there and then (Benton 1988). And, six months after the fact, the story finally filtered down to the press that Kinnock was in a state of depression.

To a large extent the press was wrong. It is true that doubts about Kinnock's leadership were still being expressed, as they were for the rest of his time in office (Interviews with the following: Edmonds 1994; Haworth 1995; Hulme 1994) - and this Summer was a particularly vocal period for those doubts - but he was no more at risk from a serious challenge in 1988 than he had been in 1987 for all the reasons outlined above. If anything the existence of a weak challenge in the form of Benn, Heffer and Prescott made a stronger challenge less likely since no-one wanted to contribute to, or be seen to contribute to, the disunity of the Party just when the trouble-makers (the constitutive outside!) were at their most active.

As John Lloyd, editor of The New Statesman observed, in a comment that has since been disproved for the Tories but still holds true for Labour:

> Changes of leader in either of the two major parties need the debilitating sickness of the leader or the momentum of a just-lost election. Lacking either of these, we shouldn't waste too much time on speculation that Neil Kinnock is about to be removed by his colleagues, many of whom mutter darkly about him (Lloyd 1988).

If anyone doubted the truth of Lloyd's comments then the actual results of the leadership election removed such doubts. For the Campaign Group, even Chris Mullin's worst-case scenario proved to be optimistic. In the leadership race, Kinnock won 88.6% of the vote while Benn achieved 11.4%. For the post of deputy, Hattersley exceeded expectations winning 66.8% to Prescott's 23.7% and Heffer's 9.5%. Benn had in fact received the support of only thirty-seven MPs, 111 CLPs and two trades unions (The Labour Party 1988c). Despite his claim that if that was transformed into a popular vote, it would have constituted a third of the electorate (Benn 1992: 550-551), this obviously counted for nothing in the face of what was interpreted by the media and much of the party as an overwhelming renewal of Kinnock's and Hattersley's mandate (The Guardian, 3 October 1988; The Independent, 3 October 1988).

In his diary, Benn made the observation that, despite the defeat, he did not feel the decision to stand had done any harm (Benn 1992: 551). A rare example of someone damning *himself* with faint praise. But it is also a comment that reveals how detached from the new Labour Party, the radical leader had become. In fact, the challenge had enhanced the processes of

transformation that Benn had specifically wanted to halt and redirect. It stabilised what had been, prior to the Campaign Group decision, a faltering association around the core leadership and it had brought the leader out of his withdrawn depression and, thus, strengthened Kinnock's hold over the Party to a level never achieved by any other Labour leader before him. The Campaign group move ensured that the Policy Review with its embrace of market forces and its abandonment of unilateralism was unchallengeable.

The defeat also provided the grand finale to what was one of the most significant causes, aspects and effects of the transformation: the decline of the radical wing as a serious political force in the Party. It cost the Campaign Group some of their most effective and influential members in resignations; it removed any remaining possibility of any future alliance with any sections or individuals on the soft left; and it provided the context and inspiration for a rule change over leadership challenges which made it impossible for a minority movement such as the Campaign Group to ever make the same move again - a factor which probably saved them from further self-inflicted wounds in 1992 and 1994.

But because of the inter-retroactive nature of retrospective analysis, the reality of politics is as much defined by the shifting perceptions of what that reality is as by any supposedly more concrete factor. As such, the failed leadership challenge showed the membership of the movement and the people of Britain that the one-time powerful Labour Left was a moribund force. A perception that was to chime in very neatly with the media spirit of the next twelve months in which communist regimes were to crumble throughout Eastern Europe and socialism was loudly proclaimed to be dead. And true to inter-retroactive dynamics, the perception came to modify the "reality" when only Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner won seats

for the radical wing on the NEC at the 1989 conference. Ken Livingstone, who lost his seat, described them as the "worst results for the Left since 1952" (Livingstone 1989).

Only John Prescott survived to fight another day although he had to wait for five and a half years, a reform of the electoral college, a public expression of absolute loyalty to John Smith, the death of that leader, and a particularly poor campaign by his opponent to achieve his dream of becoming deputy.

The Campaign Group and Prescott challenges were a clear case of negative identity construction. Rather than rallying opposition as the Campaign Group hoped, the emergence of a direct challenge to the loose, even faltering, core leadership-supporting association, hypostatised that association as the challenge became immediately posited as an outside by those within the association. Their shared beliefs, identity and mutual commitment was reconfirmed, even strengthened, by the sudden awareness that others who did not share those common factors still existed as a potentially organised and disruptive force.

The complex inter-retroaction implied by this identification of the challenge as a case of negative identity construction is clear, if not easy to detail for all the reasons given in chapter three. Part of the inter-retroaction can be identified however, in the sense that the launching of the challenge relied to a certain extent on the positing by the challengers of the core leadership and its supporters as an outside for themselves. Not only did this allow for a hostile act in the form of the challenge and hence allow the positing of one outside (by the challengers) to cause the positing of another (by the challenged) but the launch of the challenge was, in part, the result of the fact that the Campaign Group (and to a lesser extent, Prescott) had already

been increasingly posited as an outside since 1983, while the very launching enhanced the existence for both challengers and challenged of their mutual role as a constitutive outside for each other. Hence, there was clearly a complex process of retroaction occurring in relation to the negative identity construction of which the leadership challenge was a part. When the fact that this retroaction is itself caused by, and modified in its detail, by other factors such as the troubles of the 1984-1985 period, the growth in influence of the new agenda, the waning of the mass party approach, the changing nature of *value* etc. etc. then it becomes clear that this relatively simple idea of negative identity construction can hide a huge wealth of complex *inter*-retroactive processes.

CONCLUSION

The defeat of 1987 and its troubled aftermath strengthened every aspect of the transformation. The soft left's identity was enhanced and its distance from the radical wing was widened. Anger at Kinnock's authoritarianism and tendency to retreat behind his office worsened but simultaneously his hold over the Party grew until his position became unchallengeable. The radical wing was consigned to marginalisation and isolation. And paradoxically, the credibility of Kinnock's approach based upon the articulation of the active vote maximisation *value* to the New Strategic Thinking was greatly enhanced.

Such events could only occur because causal processes did not run in a clear, linear fashion. Instead spatially and temporally distinct factors introduced unexpected modifications into the Party's post-election development by processes of inter-retroaction.

The strengthening of the transformation process and of Kinnock's position after the 1987 defeat has been shown to be the result not solely of a rational, calculated assessment of the success of the election campaign and the need to build on that limited success, but as the result of a confluence of a variety of factors. The transformation occurs as a result of an inter-retroactive context where rational considerations are constantly modified by, and themselves modify, contingent-political, institutional, ideological and personal causal processes. An illustrative example from this chapter can easily be found. The failure, or even the occurrence, of the left unity initiative could not have been predicted prior to the election, and yet its existence as a causal process inter-retroactively related to contingent-political, ideological, institutional and personal factors was clearly an influence on how the Party responded to the 1987 defeat and whether Kinnock and his approach were to survive.

Because of such complexity, Kinnock's greatest failure as leader (prior to the 1992 defeat) was to prove a significant feature of the inter-retroactive context within which he would be able to achieve the radical overhaul of policy which many analysts have identified as his greatest success. It is to this which we now turn.

9

POLICY REFORM AND THE NEW ESTABLISHMENT

As has been pointed out, policy reform is the one area of Labour's transformation that has received a great deal of analytical attention. However, because of its prime position within an epiphenomenal schema, policy reform has been exhaustively studied but paradoxically its role as *part* of a broader transformation has rarely been explored. This is an omission because although this thesis has criticised the over-emphasis on policy reform, there can be little doubt that when given its rightful place in a broader inter-retroactive context, it has played an important role. In particular, changes in policy have a close inter-retroactive relationship to changes in *value*. They are also linked to changes in the institutional and contingent-political circumstances of the transformation. While the Policy Review itself played a special role in continuing the enhancement of the core leadership's stability and altering the nature of the policy process. Furthermore, policy reform is indicative of other aspects of the transformation such as multiplication in the Party and the development of a widespread cynicism towards the core leadership. In addition, the ease of the Policy Review's passage indicates the degree of transformation that had already occurred before the 1987-1989 period - a point made earlier (see chapter five in particular).

In particular, it is argued here that policy reform throughout the 1983-1989 period was characterised by a complex dispute over the Labour Party mission to implement a series of basic principles. Each side in this dispute held that their approach to policy reform would most effectively ensure that this *value* of implementing basic principles would be met. The dispute was complex because it involved *values* which, as has been outlined above, are, in truth, shorthand for a confluence of many individual beliefs and thought-processes. Furthermore, the dispute involved articulation of different perspectives which meant that the very content and status of certain basic principles shifted. This in turn affected the strategies to which they had been articulated. Without going into too much detail, the chapter argues that three main approaches to the basic principles *value* battled for supremacy. These were the argument that the best way to implement basic principles was to actively maximise votes and win power; that changes in terms of policy and campaign strategy did not undermine any basic principles; that strong commitment to basic principles would win the Party votes. (The chapter points-out that this last argument was made not just by the radical wing but also, more surprisingly, by the moderates.)

This approach contrasts with existing analyses and reports of the time which presents the whole dispute over policy in far starker and simpler terms as a battle between those willing to dilute principles for the sake of power or as a result of realistic assessment of the political situation *and* those who intended to stick to traditional principles no matter what the electoral cost (Hughes and Wintour 1990; Heffernan and Marqusee 1992; Smith1992a).

The chapter also treats the Policy Review as not simply an effect of other changes but also tries to appreciate the effects the process of the Review had on other factors. New evidence and analysis is presented which shows how the Review allowed an ever-closer relationship to

grow-up between the core leadership and the personnel of the soft left and how this ultimately led to a new Party establishment in which that same personnel ended the old moderate dominance of the establishment. It is also argued that this finally removed any of the radical, grassroots inheritance of the soft left to which those personnel may still have clung.

It is also argued that the Review changed the nature of opposition within the Party. With the extreme marginalisation of the radical wing and the decline of the soft left as an organised grassroots force, opposition to the core leadership became increasingly located within the Party establishment itself and thus, as one would expect, far more low key and moderate. It is also argued that, in this context, opposition to the core leadership was issue-led occurring in an ad hoc and non-factional fashion - the old spectrum of left and right ideologically-driven conflict ceased to be as significant. This argument is supported with evidence regarding the disputes over Aims and Values, defence, Europe and Bryan Gould's conflict with Kinnock and Hattersley.

In this way we get a broader understanding of policy reform as the effect of complex inter-retroactive processes beyond the purely rational, factional and electoral and as a cause of further developments in terms of organisation, contingent political and ideological identity. In short, a more complex picture emerges.

POLICY AND *VALUE*

The period after the 1987 defeat was, of course, dominated by the Policy Review which represented a great intensification of policy reform. The Review was enormously important in that it recast all of the Party's policies, ended the commitment to unilateralism and confirmed

the move away from re-nationalisation. However, there were many incremental and tentative changes before 1987 which were also important in the sense that they were inter-retroactive with changes in both *value* and the contingent political situation.

Policy reform and dispute occurred within the context of a battle over what I shall call the 'basic principles *value*' and which can be characterised as the sense that a prime goal of the Labour Party is to act upon and implement a series of basic principles. As with the 'defend the people' *value*, each individual and group attempted to articulate the basic principles *value* to their own strategy or approach. However, a complexifying aspect of these disputes over the basic principles *value* was that in attempting to articulate the *value* to certain strategies, disputes inevitably erupted over what constituted the basic principles of the Party. This, as will be shown, provided examples of a particularly close inter-retroactive process. For as one factor was articulated to another, the forms and meanings of those factors underwent their own processes of transformation that both resulted from and intensified the articulation itself.

We can identify three main articulations of this *value*. The first is that developed and utilised most fully by Kinnock and the core leadership which argued that the best way to ensure the implementation of basic principles was to actively maximise votes and win parliamentary power. Kinnock commented:

> We, who have no power of financial manipulation or a popular press to advance our case and defend our values, require Parliament as the basic tool of democracy - a platform for our views, a means of succour for those we seek to help, the most dependable instrument for preventing the reversal of power. That means, and has always meant, that extra-

> parliamentary activity is complementary to intra-parliamentary activity. But it is absurd to think that extra-parliamentary activity can be the effective way to achieve and execute effective power (Kinnock 1983b: 10)

And elsewhere:

> ... I'm not sure about some people. whether they want to fight to win or whether they just want to fight. Our obligation is to present our policies in a way that maximises our appeal and the chance of winning in order to put our policies into practice. If we're not in the business of trying to put policies into practice, then politics is a hobby, not a purpose (Kinnock & Kelly 1988).

This articulation led to some particularly convoluted pronouncements, since the nature and status of the Party's basic principles were themselves one area that was open to reform for the fulfilment of the active vote maximisation *value*. Thus Kinnock commented on the issue of unilateralism, a policy that some felt was a basic principle in itself:

> If we do not get the power of government, the consequence will be that Trident will definitely be completed and deployed and, in addition, other systems will be multiplied under the guise of modernisation. This party, I am certain, wants to be part of the process of nuclear disarmament. Indeed this party wants to take a leading part in that process. That is only possible in government. When we conclude our

> review next year and resolve upon our policy for fighting the next general election, that policy must be serious about nuclear disarmament, serious about defence. Indeed, so serious about both objectives that we are capable of earning the democratic power to achieve both objectives (The Guardian, 5 October 1988; The Independent, 5 October 1988).

In many cases, this articulation took a rather vague form which upholds the view that Labour Party members can be motivated by very unspecific *values*. This form was increasingly common during the Policy Review. The *value* involved the highly pragmatic sense that many of Labour's existing policies were morally good, socially beneficial or politically sensible but that the electorate consistently refused to see this and as such the only way Labour was going to achieve power was by reforming those policies.

For example, Alice Mahon, a firm supporter of unilateralism, recognised that the debate in the Party had shifted by 1988:

> The essence of the problem for the Party is no longer about whether we should have the bomb. We have, at least, moved on from there. It is about whether we can win elections with a unilateralist position (Mahon 1988),

Unfortunately for Mahon, it seems that large numbers of Party members decided that the Party could not win elections with the unilateral policy and thus accepted change with a

resigned, "shrug of the shoulders" (Interview with Hulme 1994). Bill Gilby, a long-time LCC and Party activist, union officer and close associate of Tom Sawyer, commented:

> I'd been a member of CND and my wife had been the secretary of the local CND branch. ... We'd been committed to this policy and were against nuclear weapons but more important than any of that we were for the return of a Labour government. Having been beaten in 79, having been beaten in 83, having seen our communities getting kicked all over the shop by Thatcher, having unions battered (meant that) securing power was the issue and we were willing to ... make a few sacrifices to do that. There was a lot of that about (Interview with Gilby 1994).

Another senior officer and activist put it even more bluntly:

> On unilateralism I think it would be suicidal for Labour to go into the next election with any policy to cut the number of nuclear warheads Britain has *but* equally I feel it is absurd for a country as small and unimportant as Britain to have nuclear weapons. How do I resolve these two views? I keep quiet about the second one. That probably makes me not a proper right-winger, that's why I'm still genuinely on the soft left because secretly I think nuclear weapons are particularly ridiculous after the Cold War (Interview with senior activist and Party officer).

Once such views had become common on unilateralism, a policy of such symbolic importance, then other changes wrought by the Policy Review could be accepted along similar lines. Another senior Party officer felt that on the issue of Europe and the economy, the ERM was accepted simply because "there was no other option if we wanted to be seen as a responsible Party" (Interview with senior Party officer).

A major review carried-out in the GMB by MORI found similar attitudes among Labour supporters and members. On a whole series of issues - unilateralism, renationalisation, repeal of trade union legislation - members of the union supported these policies but recognised that they would not win the Party votes (Interview with Edmonds 1994). The union's General Secretary felt that the review was a recipe for pragmatism, it

> demonstrated what we already knew that there were an awful lot of people committed to particular policies who knew that those policies wouldn't work in elections (Interview with Edmonds 1994).

This popular response in the Party is almost certainly related to the articulation which states that the best way to fulfil the basic principles *value* is to win power. This is because even if many members recognised that the embodiment of basic principles in the form of various policies had to be jettisoned they must have still believed that Labour would achieve some other basic principle to make it worth winning power. In some cases these other basic principles were simply a 'bottom-line' such as a free health service and free education - the dropping of which would have made some members consider withdrawing support (Interview with O'Mara 1994). Equally other *values* sometimes took the place of basic principles. David Blunkett, for example, seems to suggest below that the fulfilment of the 'defend the people'

value is more important than the implementation of any policy embodying a basic principle - alternatively (even simultaneously) he may be suggesting that the 'defend the people' *value* actually is a basic principle. Responding to comments by some that they would leave the Party if unilateralism was ditched, he stated:

> Those people who suggest that they will leave to join the Greens over the defence issue illustrate the kind of one-issue politics that smacks of self-indulgence rather than care for others. ... There is not a single policy issue or a cause, no matter how worthwhile, which is either more important than winning the next general election, or could be achieved more easily without that victory (Blunkett 1989).

However, it seems more likely (although this can only be educated speculation) that many members were willing to adopt this pragmatic *value* out of a largely unspecific sense that Labour in government would come closer to fulfilling the basic principles *value* than the Tories. What constituted those basic principles clearly changed over time maybe to include only the most fundamental aspect of a progressive vision or maybe to include other *values* such as the 'defend the people' *value*.

However, a second widespread articulation that was made both by the core leadership and individuals associated with the soft left constructed the sense that the necessary changes in terms of policy and strategy for the winning of power did not necessarily undermine the basic principles *value*. Kinnock stated that

> the basic challenge to the Labour Party is to be able to distinguish between means and ends. If socialists do that they will understand that the ends are those of liberty, opportunity, equality, security - a decent life. A variety of means will have to be adopted and that variety is very broad. If you start to confuse means and ends then you are in danger of being falsified by history and by the realities of economic development, international changes and much else (Interview with Kinnock 1994a).

This distinction between means and ends was influential within the soft left strand. Bryan Gould, for example, took up this theme more than any other figure in the Party arguing that active vote maximisation did not necessarily imply the dilution of principled policies:

> The party activist is told he must choose between the right's claim, on the one hand, that labour is fatally handicapped by policies which alienate the electorate and which must therefore be abandoned, and, on the other hand the left's argument that a concern for "mere electoral success" should not be allowed to stand in the way of a renewed commitment to those policies. But what if neither of these propositions is correct? ... There is a good deal of evidence to show that it is not Labour's policies which prevent it from winning popular support. It is rather the credibility of the Party as a whole ... which raises doubts in the minds of the electorate and which then spills over into a scepticism about the policies ... The lessons for the left are clear. We do not have to abandon our policies in order to seek electoral support ... (However) commitment to policies does not require that the wider electorate (...)

> should be ignored or treated with contempt. There is nothing unsocialist about wooing the wider electorate, since this is the pre-condition, not just for gaining power, but for retaining and building support for our policies (Gould 1985b).

While 'Chartist', the journal of Clause 4 - a consciously soft left group that provided a second generation of LCC activists in the 1980s - described itself as being

> ... at the heart of debates about *new roads to socialism* (Chartist publicity flyer 1990 - my italics).

This articulation was particularly pronounced in the debate over changes to policy on public ownership and on defence. The first of these issues was dealt with in the publication A Future That Works (Labour Party 1984a), launched by Roy Hattersley in September 1984 (The Guardian, 14 September 1984; The Times, 14 September 1984). This was a policy document that outlined the Party's broad approach to the economy emphasising Labour's commitment to the basic principle of "creating jobs" and of "freedom, social justice and fair deal for all" (Labour Party 1984a: 1). Its greatest significance though was its failure to mention the national economic assessment and the full-scale renationalisation programme which had formed the backbone of the 1983 manifesto (Labour Party 1983b). Instead the document emphasised the need to achieve full employment by pragmatic and diverse means (Labour Party 1984a: 8-16). It also stressed the need for new thinking on nationalisation arguing that the Tory privatisation programme should not be allowed to dictate the priorities of a Labour government by committing the Party to re-nationalisation of all concerns that had been sold-off (Labour Party 1984a: 15). And in association with this shift, the new framework also

suggested the need for "new models of socialist enterprise ... if we are to inspire popular support for socialism" - clearly a move away from traditional Morrisonian public ownership (The Labour Party 1984a: 16).

Hattersley continued the challenging of traditional approaches to public ownership, launched by A Future That Works, through a protracted series of interventions on the issue throughout 1985. His speeches used the articulation between the active vote-maximisation *value* and the basic principles *value* a great deal. He consistently argued that alternatives to nationalisation such as employee involvement in the running and ownership of companies through share-owning schemes, employee buy-outs and co-operatives were

> wholly consistent with the aims of socialism, the more equal distribution of power and wealth, and the consequent emancipation of working people (The Times, 17 October 1985).

From a slightly different perspective, Kinnock displayed the extent to which nationalisation had become disarticulated from the basic principles *value*, at least in his own mind, when he incidentally implied that such a policy would be a waste of money if one was serious about basic principles:

> Our absolutely predominant priority is generating employment, generating production and generating investment so that we rebuild the British economy. Therefore within that order of priorities the use of funds for renationalization are going to take their place in a pretty long

queue (The Guardian, 30 December 1985; The Times, 30 December 1985).

This articulation was continued elsewhere in a series of key-note speeches by Kinnock, Smith, Hattersley and Prescott known as the 'Party of Production' campaign. The speeches emphasised Labour's basic principle of re-building Britain's lost manufacturing base but articulated this to some alternative methods for the achievement of this, rather than the traditional Keynesian approach. They emphasised Japanese strategies for increasing productivity, a National Investment Bank, a new body to initiate joint ventures between the state and the private sector, and a Ministry of Science to bolster investment and quality in research (The Guardian, 3 January 1986; 21 January 1986; 11 February 1986; The Times, 4 January 1986; 21 January 1986; 11 February 1986).

Unsurprisingly, considering their general leanings, this new articulation as applied to public ownership, also had a strong influence on the soft left. Gould who wrote particularly extensively about the issue and was highly influential amongst the soft left, echoed A Future That Works by commenting, with reference to Bennite demands for renationalisation of all privatised firms:

> ... why should we allow our agenda for public ownership to be determined by our political opponents? What we should be doing is identifying new criteria for public ownership, which need not exactly coincide with the earlier boundaries of the public sector and might well go substantially beyond it. We should also work out new mechanisms

> for bringing it about. We should be looking at various ways - bonds, golden shares, and so on - of separating equity ownership from the rights of control and direction. ... As in so many other areas, the success of the Labour government will depend on the intelligence and flexibility we are able to bring to bear (Gould 1985c)

The editor of 'Chartist' wrote along similar lines in the period after the 1987 election, (although published in a 1990 collection):

> Socialism is ultimately based on the redistribution of power, material resources and opportunity; attacking the sources of inequality in the working of capitalism and the divisions of class, sex and race. The left has confused these goals with particular means such as state ownership. Economic policies should be aimed at a variety of forms of social ownership, coexisting with a private sector made more accountable to it employees through extensive industrial democracy, plus a balance between planning and markets (Davis 1990: 111)

Very similar viewpoints can be found in many other documents. See, for example: Thomas (1983), Blunkett & Hain (1986), Gould (1989a).

The same articulation of *values* occurred in relation to unilateral nuclear disarmament with the electorally beneficial ditching of the defence policy being portrayed as no threat to the achieving of the basic principle of disarmament and peace. The issue was probably the most sensitive and controversial policy matter during Kinnock's leadership. As such Kinnock took a

softly-softly approach for much of the 1980s. The articulation between the active vote maximisation and basic principles *value* proved particularly useful in that it provided a schema within which the ditching of such a central policy could be regarded as not quite so total a capitulation to the critique of the press and the Government. The articulation also linked up neatly with international changes such as the Reykjavik agreement between Reagan and Gorbachev since it added further potency to the sense that unilateralism was merely a means to achieve the basic principle of peace, the efficacy of which was lost with the thawing of the Cold War. As Kinnock commented:

> Unilateralism has got to be considered in the context of a significant multilateral change. As a 27-year veteran of CND, I've never regarded unilateralism as an end in itself. To me it was always a tactic rather than a philosophy (Kinnock & Kelly 1988).

An editorial in The New Statesman provided one of the clearest uses of the articulation in relation to unilateralism arguing

> (Labour) cannot convince that unilateralism is the best way of achieving its ends because, on the available evidence, it is not (The New Statesman, 5 December 1986).

The editorial gave two reasons for this. Firstly, Britain's nuclear force was too small for unilateral disarmament to have any effect on the gathering pace of world-wide disarmament. And secondly, Britain's close political relationship to the US meant that remaining a part of

NATO's nuclear strategy, rather than unilaterally withdrawing, would provide a government, committed to international disarmament, with more influence :

> Remaining within NATO's nuclear strategy does not have the same satisfying finality of ending the possession of nuclear weaponry with the stroke of a pen: but to remain in with the intention of changing it will in the long run do much more (The New Statesman, 5 December 1986).

This articulation regarding defence and public ownership also led to more explicit questioning of the actual status of these two issues as basic principles - an indication of the inter-retroactive form that articulation can take. As Ben Pimlott wrote:

> ... as over nuclear weapons, there is still a cruel dilemma. Does public ownership matter in itself, as part of the socialist vision, or not? (Pimlott 1987).

And although the Bennite wing remained extremely sceptical about any attempts to downplay the centrality of unilateralism and renationalisation, it became popular within the core leadership and in the soft left strand to assert that :

> If we were to be elected, we would be elected in spite of unilateralism never because of it. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament stuck at 26% whatever poll was taken, whatever the form of question was asked and there was never going to be any more than that. So, living by

> my own rule, *that* was a reality that had to be understood and dealt with. Obviously that change was going to be toughest ... because of the fact that unilateral nuclear disarmament became a central British socialist canon. If you didn't believe in unilateralism, you couldn't be a socialist. It was an end in itself when obviously it never should have been viewed as anything more than a means to an end (Interview with Kinnock 1994a).

These new articulations, specifically on defence, began to show early signs of influence when two important figures emerging from the radical wing into the soft left, Tom Sawyer and Michael Meacher, voted against a Tony Benn NEC motion calling for withdrawal from NATO (NEC 7., 27 March 1985: 6).

Interestingly, this softly-softly approach was hindered to some extent by the interventions of Healey, the Foreign Affairs Spokesman between 1983 and 1987, who failed to see the importance of the new articulation and instead made ham-fisted and unauthorised pleas for an end to the unilateral policy based on old arguments used during the disputes of the late seventies about the importance of Britain's nuclear capability. He argued in 1986:

> So long as the Soviet Union has nuclear weapons, there have to be nuclear weapons somewhere in NATO to deter the Soviet Union from using nuclear weapons. After all, the only time that nuclear weapons have been used was by the United States under very democratic leadership to shorten the war in the Far East against a country which

> did not possess any nuclear weapons. One can't rule out that contingency may occur again (Healey & Dettemer 1986).

This was an approach to the issue which never convinced or was uttered by members of the soft left and those who shifted on the policy of unilateralism. As the above has shown, the shift was never in any sense an embrace of deterrence arguments, it was an acceptance of the *value* articulation which suggested that to ditch unilateralism did not mean ditching disarmament and peace as basic principles.

The third articulation of the basic principles *value* connected it to the vote-maximisation *value* but in a way distinct from the New Strategic Thinking. This articulation asserted that a strong commitment to, and espousal of, Labour's basic principles would win the Party votes. A common source of this view was the Bennite wing of the Party. One of Tony Benn's most common observations throughout the 1980s was that a strong, clear socialist alternative wins votes while Kinnockite equivocation and abandonment loses the trust of the electorate:

> (T)he new Labour revisionists have decided that the best way to gain political power is to adopt the main outlines of the present right-wing consensus, and boast that they are better able to administer. This is ... unlikely to be very persuasive among an electorate that will vote for a change only if it can see what the alternative would be (Benn 1988).

And in a particularly interesting attempt to articulate the Bennite agenda to the hard-nosed, realist *value* characteristic of the New Strategic Thinking and active vote-maximisation, he commented:

> You see, all this language that is used, this trendy language about 'we must face the harsh realities', 'we must give up comfortable illusions', and 'ditch the sacred cows': all this language could be used by us. Let's face the harsh reality that there isn't a Soviet threat; let's give up the comfortable illusion that public relations and polling is a substitute for argument, let's all use this language and turn it in a way that opens up the real questions (Bevins 1987).

Other figures from the radical wing employed the articulation of basic principles and active vote maximisation *value*, by asserting, as Eric Heffer did, that the Labour Party had clear principles

> embodied in the constitution and in the various programmes which the Party has issued over the years.

But that

> (t)he weakness of the Party has not been its principles but its practice. Too often, Labour Governments have not kept to the Party's principles and that is surely one of the reasons, in fact an important one, that some people have turned away from us (Tribune, 17 May 1985).

However, the radical wing was not alone in the belief that vote maximisation could only be achieved by a strong espousal of basic Labour principles. The scourge of the Bennites, Roy Hattersley, regularly made interventions arguing for a more principled approach. While Hattersley, clearly did not share the radical policy commitments of the Bennites, his comments, like theirs, were aimed at what he felt was an increasing blandness on the part of Labour's pronouncements resulting from the New Strategic Thinking. As can be seen in chapter eight, he became more vociferous on this issue in the aftermath of the 1987 defeat.

Hattersley articulated his principled stance with the vote maximisation *value* by arguing that:

> The clear lesson of 1979 is that elections are won by the Party which impresses its ideological identity on the election campaign. Labour has to excite as well as to reassure the voters and in politics real excitement comes from the clear advocacy of a distinctive idea. ... It was the certainty with which Margaret Thatcher proclaimed her free enterprise philosophy that gave the 1979 campaign its remarkable élan. ... Labour needs to be just as certain about the benefits which follow from the creation of a more equal society. Doubt is a prescription for defeat. Those who lack faith need to acquire it. Ideological certainty requires continued belief in the traditional principles of socialism (Hattersley 1989)

Thus we can see how multiple combinations of apparently straightforward articulations of the basic principles, defend the people and active vote maximisation *values* played a significant

part in the inter-retroactive context of the transformation. In particular, the above analysis shows the inter-retroaction involved in articulation; whereby the process of linking two ideas or *values* to each other irrevocably changes both in a continuously developing fashion. Once an articulation is made and wins any degree of resonance, it implies further ideological connotations which open up new debates and concerns leading to further inter-retroactive change and more articulations and disarticulations. A process, of course, which brings to our attention very high levels of complexity.

THE POLICY REVIEW, THE SOFT LEFT AND THE NEW ESTABLISHMENT[15]

The Policy Review was the chief instrument by which the soft left finally reached the peak of its influence over the Labour Party. However, this peak of influence was far from a straightforward victory for soft left personnel and ideals. Despite the triumphalism of the 1987 Shadow Cabinet elections and their aftermath, soft left identity, beliefs and structures became so much less cohesive that it becomes hard to distinguish any unique and distinct soft left contribution to the direction of the Party in the late 1980s.

It has already been mentioned how many of the officers at Walworth Road and many of the officers and researchers in the PLP were drawn from the soft left strand (see chapter eight). It has also been outlined how the Shadow Cabinet elections after the 1987 defeat elevated soft

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[15]The terms 'Party establishment' and 'establishment' are taken to mean the personnel who broadly supported the notion of Party transformation, particularly in the form of the Policy Review, and who were members of the core leadership, the Shadow Cabinet, the NEC, the leaderships of the larger trade unions and the Party staff in the PLP and at, or responsible to, Walworth Road.

left figures to leading positions in the PLP despite Kinnock's decision to continue appointing moderates to the most senior posts in the Shadow Cabinet. However, it was the establishment, structures and development of the Policy Review that most effectively positioned the soft left as the dominant force in the Party.

The genesis of the Policy Review was itself a boost for the soft left. The idea - which was hardly original having been suggested as far back as the 1983 leadership contest (see chapter four) - was espoused most vigorously by the Deputy General Secretary of NUPE, Tom Sawyer (Interview with Gilby 1994; Interview with Senior Party Official). Sawyer fulfilled, in many ways, the stereotypical image of a soft left figure having been a staunch Bennite who was dismayed by the splits and battles of the 1983 - 1985 period and had ultimately, after sitting on the inquiry into Militant, backed Kinnock's forthright stance on the issue. Through this process he had cut his links with the radical wing of the Party and had become one of the most prominent soft left supporters of Kinnock and his reform project in the trade union movement and he remained such throughout the Review. Even as late as 1989, he could still make a comment as staunchly 'traditional' soft left in its sympathies as:

> We are a Party of the Left, not of the Centre or the Right. But (the Review) had to be an agenda that connected with people's needs and started where people were. ... Some people say that's going for the middle ground. But if you don't build a coalition round a Party of the Left, you'll never get power (Sawyer & Kelly 1989).

Sawyer argued and lobbied for the speedy establishment of the Policy Review, a move which won the immediate backing of other soft left figures. Even Michael Meacher, who was the

soft left supporter regarded by many as still having the most radical sympathies, chose that celebration of traditional Labour principles and heritage, the Durham miners' gala, to call for new policy ideas "untrammelled by past stereotypes" (The Independent, 24 June 1989).

The fact that figures such as Sawyer and Meacher were seizing the initiative on the policy review idea was a blow to the moderates and a boost to the soft left. But the blow to the moderates was enhanced by Sawyer's plan to construct the review in a way which would by-pass the Shadow Cabinet. One of Sawyer's chief aims in arguing for a Review was to impose some discipline on the policy process since Sawyer and his advisers in NUPE feared that following the 1987 election, there would be a sudden rush of policy documents and papers from different front bench spokesperson's offices with no overall co-ordination and no respect for the democratic procedures of the Party (Interview with Gilby 1994). While this may have been the chief aim, there was also a pleasant by-product for the soft left in that removing the Shadow Cabinet's policy-making powers also undercut the influence of the moderates who still held the most senior portfolios - a fact of which the moderates were very well-aware and was evidenced by the public protestations by Hattersley and Kaufman in late 1987 about the Party's direction (see chapter eight).

Sawyer's prime role in agitating for the Review led to him becoming the *de facto* co-ordinator of the project. However, the soft left's grip on the Review was to extend beyond Sawyer. As was pointed-out in chapter eight, the most important group, that dealing with macro-economic policy, was convened by Bryan Gould and John Evans (each group had two convenors - one from the Shadow Cabinet, one from the NEC). While the Shadow Chancellor himself, John Smith, convened a group dealing with the far narrower brief of taxation, income and social security - a group whose agenda was bound to be set, to a large extent, by what

Gould's group proposed. Another heavyweight group was that dealing with employment policy and union rights, this also went to soft left figures being convened by Michael Meacher and Eddie Haigh. The only fundamental policy issue that was given over totally to a moderate was Gerald Kaufman's Britain in the World group which had the basic task of overturning the defence policy. This was a loss to the soft left in that many of its leading members were dubious about a total renunciation of unilateralism and acceptance of the Reagan-Gorbachev peace process (see above). However, the most senior moderate, Hattersley had to make do with constitutional reform although even there he was counter-balanced by Jo Richardson as the NEC convenor, while Jack Cunningham was given environmental policy. The soft left also gained control of consumer issues with Jack Straw and David Blunkett as convenors of the Consumers and the Community Group (Labour Party 1988d).

However, this is where greater complexity enters our analysis. For while the coincidence of events following the 1987 defeat transformed the soft left into the most influential strand in the Labour Party establishment outside of the core leadership itself, this transformation ultimately meant that the identity and ideals that were specific to the soft left were diluted to the point of invisibility. Many of the original principles had already been lost on the road to the soft left triumphs of 1987. In particular, the practical commitment to new agenda issues and the mass party had dropped away in the mid-eighties (see chapter seven). While, the new positions of power held by soft left personnel - which meant they were now primarily responsible and of necessity loyal to Kinnock and his own preferences - ensured that by 1989 in deed, if not in word, they were supporters of: a multilateral disarmament policy; a pro-Europe and pro-EMS policy; a very luke-warm attitude to constitutional reform; an environmental policy that was ambiguous on nuclear power; and a campaign strategy that owed everything to the New Strategic Thinking and little or nothing to the broad coalition

tactics of the mass party approach. Furthermore, the deep social and cultural differences that had once existed between soft left and moderate strands began to disintegrate in the late 1980s as the personnel of each strand found themselves with similar interests and goals as senior members of the PLP, Shadow Cabinet and Party establishment. The old distinctions based upon the grass-roots radicalism of the soft left and the hierarchical corporatism of the moderates lost their significance.

Nothing displays this transformation of the soft left better than the altered role of the LCC in the late 1980s and the attempted resurrection of the mass party ideal during the same period.

Many of the leading figures and chief activists in the LCC during the mid-eighties had become employees of the Party, researchers for MPs or, in some cases, MPs or Parliamentary candidates themselves. As the group became thus more integrated into the Party establishment it gradually lost its grass-roots, activist identity. This process was exacerbated by an influx into the LCC of a number of members whose main schooling had been in student politics, specifically in NOLS and the NUS. These new members, who were well-organised as the group Clause Four within the LCC, were often ambitious to become members of the Party establishment themselves and were less interested in the older LCC concerns of building local networks for democratic empowerment (Interviews with the following: Gilby 1994; Hulme 1994; Party Activist and Official).

As Nigel Stanley, the LCC's Organisation Secretary in its grassroots heyday commented:

> For factional activity to work, it generally has to be against something and the LCC was no longer against anything very much in terms of

> what the Party leadership was doing. It was harder to promote the mass party debate because it wasn't factional or exciting. So I think to some extent the loss of its activist identity was inevitable for the LCC; I don't think there was any alternative at that stage. I wouldn't say that it stopped being an activists' organisation in the sense that people just sat in their armchairs: people were doing different things which perhaps were less exciting (Interview with Stanley 1994).

Comments which acknowledge how loss of identity can rapidly follow the destruction of a group's constitutive outside. A process that clearly happened with the decline of the opponents of the soft left - the moderates, Militant and the Bennites - from the mid to late 1980s.

As such, there was considerable debate about what role actually existed for the LCC in the late 1980s. Some executive members felt it was time the group wound itself up (Interview with Hulme 1994). As the Organisation Secretary of the LCC himself succinctly put it:

> (T)here was no longer an objective need for the LCC. They didn't have a purpose or a function anymore (Interview with Hulme 1994).

However, rather than choose a sudden death, the LCC having lost its activist edge developed into something of a mainstream think-tank. But many of the ideas the LCC floated were often closely linked to the trajectory of the core leadership itself. It was often easier for the latter to test the response to a new idea by channelling it through the LCC rather than risk opposition by launching an unpopular idea cold. These links were close. The group's organisation

secretary met regularly with Charles Clarke in the late 1980s to discuss the plans of the core leadership and the plans of the LCC and to decide how they could best be co-ordinated. At times, senior LCC figures would float ideas, which the leadership favoured, in the LCC's own publication Labour Activist or in Tribune and, sometimes , by 'leaking' ideas to The Guardian's Patrick Wintour. The LCC even helped out in the Policy Review by providing the Party members who made-up the panels Kinnock and others met to test out new policy ideas (Interview with Hulme 1994).

Further indication of the depth of change came with the recasting of the mass party approach by the LCC think-tank. And to a great extent this highlighted how difficult it had become in the Labour Party to maintain a radical perspective whilst also being influential within the Party establishment.

The LCC executive relaunched the idea of the mass party approach in 1988 at a point when the soft left was becoming evermore deeply embedded in the official structures of the Party. The relaunch was itself something of a watered-down version of the old ambitious plans for a wide network of Party and non-Party organisations campaigning together for a democratic socialism and a Labour government (see chapter five). However, the new approach did have some radical elements. The LCC demanded recruitment drives based around an easier membership application process for trade unionists (Thompson 1988); a more open and genuinely consultative Policy Review (Thompson 1988); use of quotas to improve women's representation at all levels of the Party (Bryan 1989); and the use of OMOV for leadership, deputy leadership and NEC elections (LCC 1989: iv).

However, the emphasis, in the old mass party approach, on networking with groups outside the Party played a far less significant role in the new version - itself a sign that the LCC and the soft left had changed following the debacle of the London effect and black sections - but it still maintained a certain presence leading, primarily, to the LCC's criticism of the Party's failure to campaign effectively against the poll tax by diverting resources into the Policy Review and Labour Listens (Thompson 1988). But as with black sections, the soft left continued its failure to engage with actually existing examples of pressure group and new agenda issues by rejecting (Lucas 1988) the precise aspect of the poll tax that was stimulating the most intense, mass activity outside the Party - non-payment and non-registration.

The mass party approach did catch the attention of Kinnock and Whitty though. However, despite the demands for greater internal democracy, consultation and improved representation, the core leadership emphasised only one issue: the idea of increasing the membership. The main strategy for achieving this was the establishment of a centrally-administered and computerised membership scheme, a reduced membership fee, and an attempt to encourage CLPs to be more welcoming (Haigh 1988; The Independent, 5 July 1988). There were also one-off schemes such as the chance to win a Ford Fiesta if one joined the Party (The Independent, 4 October 1988). Despite the fact that the project was an embarrassing flop - with a net increase in membership of 27,000 within nine months of the launch of the drive comparing somewhat poorly to the projected goal of 600,000 over a year and a half (The Guardian, 12 September 1989; The Independent, 12 September 1989) - its real import was in displaying how difficult it was for the soft left and the LCC to have any *radical* impact upon the Party and remain influential and powerful.

Kinnock, whose position was unchallengeable in the late 1980s largely because of the support of the soft left, could simply pick and choose which aspects of a new idea suited his very cautious and authoritarian approach best and the soft left, now losing much of its identity, personnel and structures to the Party establishment, was in no position to object too strongly or publicly. Although some aspects of the demands of the new mass party approach were to come in time under the more open and confident leadership of John Smith (Interviews with the following: senior Party officer; Corbyn 1994; Mullin 1994), the original plank of the approach which had inspired a whole generation of activists of linking the Party to a wide-range of campaigning movements was lost for good as Labour, its activists and what was left of the soft left completely missed the chance to achieve this by supporting the largest protest movement of the post-war period - the anti-poll tax campaign.

The Policy Review had played a major role in reconciling the soft left to the narrower goals of the core leadership having brought many of its leading figures into the heart of a policy process on which that core leadership was shown always to have the final word (evidenced by the conflict with Gould; see below and chapter six). However while this bringing of the soft left into the establishment transformed that strand, the causal process was far from one way. This development had its own effect on the Party establishment and the nature of opposition within the Party itself.

THE POLICY REVIEW AND TRANSFORMED OPPOSITION

In this section consideration is given to the notion that the Policy Review was not only an effect of change, the over-riding way in which the Review is presented in the existing literature, but a cause of further change in other sections of the Party. This fits in with the

search for complexity, which requires that all factors are treated as both cause and effect of other elements.

The Review very effectively reduced debate and potential confrontation about all the individual policies that the core leadership wished to reform. Instead of undergoing a prolonged period of dispute within which Kinnock would have to launch, negotiate, argue and push through the NEC and conference each new reform, the leader instead ensured that the idea of a large-scale, wide-ranging, no-taboo review was accepted in the traumatised weeks following the election. He thus tacitly had the Party accept that controversial issues such as unilateralism and renationalisation were to be extensively reformed even before they had been officially re-written.

The Policy Review also provided the structure and facility for Kinnock to recreate Party doctrine largely according to his own wishes: the Review when adopted overwhelmingly at the 1989 conference (The Independent, 7 October 1989) was the final acceptance by the official bodies of the Party and movement of the articulations that linked active vote maximisation, the New Strategic Thinking, the 'defend the people' *value* and the basic principles *value*. Articulations espoused most vociferously by the leader himself.

Of course, this process was enhanced by the marginalisation of the radical wing (confirmed beyond doubt by the 1988 leadership challenge) which meant that a forceful and effective opposition to the transformative plans of the core leadership, the soft left stream and the moderates no longer existed (see chapter eight). However, once the Policy Review was underway it soon became clear that a number of multiple positions existed over certain policies within the ranks of those who supported the broad thrust of the transformation. Such

multiplication means that while a unified opposition to the transformation *per se* based around the direct action strategy and radical principles was gone, a new type of opposition had developed within the Party that was more fragmented and modular - coalescing and dividing along different lines depending upon the issue under dispute.

However, this transformed opposition was now primarily located in the Party establishment. Disputes, particularly about Europe, basic principles, the market and defence, while involving some CLP and grassroots activity were largely fought out within the Shadow Cabinet, the NEC and the higher echelons of the trade unions. The mass mobilisations and Party-wide clashes over defence, trade union strategy, Europe, public ownership and local government of the late 1970s to mid-1980s (see chapter one and four) were gone[16]. This point is particularly strongly upheld by the fact that while disputes did exist within the Party establishment over defence, the market, basic principle and Europe, the final review document was overwhelmingly backed by conference with only token opposition.

A brief survey of how these disputes developed displays the extent to which the Policy Review split the leading figures in Labour but also limited that split to the Party establishment.

The Statement of Democratic Socialist Aims and Values (Labour Party 1988a) which was supposedly designed as an ideological 'litmus' test against which the practical policies of the Review would be measured, became one of the first signs that opposition was now primarily internal to the Labour establishment and that it had become more complex and multiple. The

[16]In fact, the prime issues that remained matters of grassroots pressure and organisation were now new agenda concerns such as race, sexuality and women's' representation.

events surrounding Aims and Values also, incidentally, once again questioned Kinnock's judgement and managerial skill (see chapter four and eight).

The idea of producing a document that would clearly state the ideological of the Kinnockite Labour Party had been proposed for a number of years although earlier efforts had been rejected as too wordy by Kinnock.

Ultimately however, in the context of the Policy Review, Hattersley had been asked by Kinnock to compose The Statement of Democratic Socialist Aims and Values. The deputy leader wrote and then corrected and recorrected his own manuscript sometimes based on margin comments made by the leader (Labour Party 1988b). According to Hughes and Wintour (1990), at one stage the deputy leader complained to Kinnock that despite his best efforts he kept producing a précis of Choose Freedom (Hattersley 1987a), the polemical work on socialist ideals Hattersley had published only a few months previously. The leader apparently replied that that was exactly what he wanted. If this exchange really did occur, it seriously questions Kinnock's judgement. Giving licence to a figure regarded with suspicion and, at times, hostility by many in the party, to produce a digest of his own work and present it as an enduring statement of Labour's beliefs was to court trouble. Whatever, Kinnock's actual comments to Hattersley, one thing is clear, the events that followed the presentation of the document created division and once again must question the view that Kinnock was a consistently brilliant manager of the Party. The issue was seriously mishandled.

When the Aims and Values document was presented for discussion to a joint meeting of the NEC and the Shadow Cabinet in the first week of February, it indicated the degree and nature of the multiple differences that existed within the transformation-supporting section of the

Party. Kinnock and Hattersley may have been expecting criticism from the radicals in the room such as Livingstone, Skinner and Benn but the first people to attack the document were Kinnock's close allies, Robin Cook and Bryan Gould, and Hattersley's firm supporters, John Smith and Jack Cunningham. Cunningham questioned the document's failure to deal with science or the environment, while more fundamentally, Cook, Gould and Smith attacked the paper for being far too enthusiastic about the role of the market (The Guardian, 6 February 1988; 8 February 1988; The Independent, 6 February 1988). Robin Cook then kept up his attacks in public with an article in The New Statesman (Cook 1988).

In response to the pressure, Kinnock agreed to have the document re-written and to signal that he had taken on board the criticisms he wrote in an introduction to a Fabian Society pamphlet on Europe published on the 22nd February:

> In so many respects, the relative comfort and safety of modern life is due to the success achieved by socialists and others who realise that life is too important to be left solely to the dictates of demand and supply. In the philosophy of the nineteenth century economic liberals and in the policies of their successors, the 'New Right' of our age, such safeguards are impediments to the 'great adventure' of market capitalism. To everyone else, they are necessary limitations to the excesses and abuse that follow from the inevitable tendency of that system to put profit before people (Kinnock 1988: 1-2).

This marked a U-turn from the sentence in the Aims and Values statement which had caused much of the dispute, which read:

> ... in our pursuit of extended freedom, enhanced liberty and increased choice there are many areas of the economy where market allocation is essential and where competition between companies, whether privately owned or socially owned is a dynamic factor which serves consumer and wider economic interests (Labour Party 1988b: 12-13).

Aims and Values was extensively redrafted over the next few weeks to allow for an adequate response to all the criticisms made of it: the environment and science was written in; sections on democracy and community were included to please Blunkett; a stronger denunciation of nuclear weapons was inserted; and efforts were made to make the market appear less glorious and bountiful.

As a result, the NEC approved the revised document on 23rd March by twenty-one votes to four, although a further six amendments on the role of the market were added during the meeting (The Guardian, 24 March 1988; The Independent, 24 March 1988). However, in its successful attempt to avoid offending anyone, the Statement on Democratic Socialist Aims and Values excited no-one. Alongside its blandness, more practical and interesting matters for the media and the Party members such as a leadership challenge, extreme confusion over defence and appalling poll ratings, consigned it to immediate obscurity.

However, Aims and Values had displayed that strong differences of opinion existed *within* the transformation-supporting establishment. It also showed that, at least on this issue, the establishment was the main source of opposition. While many in the Party regarded Aims and

Values as a joke or a managerial failure (Interview with Hulme 1994; Interview with Senior Party Activist and Official), few engaged with it as enthusiastically as the doyens of the new political establishment.

However, it was the issue of defence that was to reveal further divisions and multiplications and was, most surprisingly, to remain a largely establishment affair. A brief account of Kinnock's final and successful attempt to ditch unilateralism shows how the process of reform was now played-out largely within the Party establishment and how opposition to the form of change originated there.

Hints that Kinnock was planning a radical reform of the defence policy came in March 1988, when he suggested that Labour might drop the commitment to scrap the Trident project. This encouraged CND leaders, and the Campaign's ex-President turned MP, Joan Ruddock, to warn Kinnock, in public, against opting for such a decision (The Independent, 10 March 1988). Kinnock ignored Ruddock and CND and went ahead over the next two months to make a series of speeches and statements which indicated that he was speedily shifting ground on nuclear weapons. On 10th May he said that Trident could be used for the purpose of "energising and accelerating" the peace talks (The Independent, 11 April 1988) and a month later he indicated to reporters that he was ready to accept the nuclear umbrella within the framework of NATO (The Independent, 10 May 1988). This was followed the next day by a speech to a meeting of the Socialist International Council in Madrid at which he seemed to suggest that he accepted the principle of deterrence (The Guardian, 12 May 1988; The Independent, 12 May 1988). A principle which never won any support amongst the soft left (see above). As such, this last shift was a step too far and Kinnock, unlike in the case of CND's and Ruddock's protestations, had to submit to a challenge from within the

establishment when Blunkett at an NEC meeting on 25th May, proposed a motion to the effect that "nuclear weapons cannot contribute to the effective defence of our country" (The Guardian, 26 May 1988; The Independent, 26 May 1988). Kinnock could not at this early stage of the Policy Review afford a dispute with the still wary members of the soft left.

In a specific attempt to limit establishment opposition, the Britain in the World review group had decided to postpone any discussion of defence until next year for the rather dubious reason that the international scene was changing so quickly (Interview with Clarke 1994) - how Kaufman and the other seven on the group knew that things would slow down in 1989 (which of course they did not) is unclear. This enabled Kinnock to argue, rather perversely considering all his interventions on the issue, as he did in the 25th May NEC, that no decision or moves should be made by senior figures such as Blunkett or others until the review group reported in mid-1989 (The Independent, 26 May 1988).

However, Kinnock's strategy was to go seriously awry in the following months. On 5th June, Kinnock gave an interview on the television programme This Week, Next Week in which his prolixity was to get the better of him. The Party leader, in a short but unclear answer to the inevitable question on defence, rejected what he called "something-for-nothing unilateralism" (Interview with Davies 1994; The Independent, 6 June 1988) using the standard argument that times had changed under the new détente. However, the interview was interpreted by the press as a U-turn on unilateralism (The Guardian, 7 June 1988; The Independent, 7 June 1988). Those within the establishment who doubted the need for a defence shift went on the offensive. Cook, Ruddock and Blunkett all demanded explanations in private from the leader. While Blunkett went on to publicly warn of a split over defence, claiming that the recent

comments were causing "confusion and genuine concern" (The Guardian, 11 June 1988; The Independent, 11 June 1988).

On 16th June, opposition came from a different quarter of the establishment when Ron Todd made a veiled attack on the party leader's defence shifts at the TGWU Irish Conference by warning against any assault on the party's "bedrock" policies (The Guardian, 17 June 1988; The Independent, 17 June 1988). However, in an attempt to clarify the position, the leader only made things worse when during a lunch with journalists from The Independent, Kinnock appeared to re-affirm a strong unilateral policy that even included the absolute scrapping of Trident and Polaris (Jenkins 1988). The sudden swing made the leader look indecisive and subject to pressure from the unilateralists.

Following further gaffes and disputes within the Shadow Cabinet (see chapter six on the resignation of Denzil Davies) a pre-conference NEC passed a motion condemning the rise in conventional forces and calling for the dissolution of NATO by thirteen votes to twelve (The Independent, 3 October 1988).

This was followed at the conference itself by another speech from Todd continuing his partially-veiled assault on Kinnock's reform plans by attempting to turn the leader's own articulation of old and new against him. Todd stated:

> On the one hand there are modernisers and reformers, with sharp suits and cordless telephones, clipboard and scientific samples. I understand that the latest Labour Party sales product is a rule-book in filofax form. It looks smart and modern and its loose-leaf: you can slot in

> amendments as and when convenient. ... (But) the nostalgics look back to a misty past, which never really existed, when no one cared about opinion polls, advertising and all the rest of the flim-flam, they just got on with being good socialists. ... Our victory will be built on traditional principles *and* on modern practice (Todd 1988).

Todd's remarks apart from causing a brief embarrassment for Kinnock made it clear that winning his union's support for the Policy Review, especially its line on defence, without comment or even opposition could never be taken for granted. Kinnock and his associates would probably have to look elsewhere for union support in their drive to overturn the defence policy.

When the Britain in the World review group did report it opted unsurprisingly for an unambiguously multilateral disarmament stance. Even the idea of scrapping Trident was rejected, although it was proposed that work on the fourth submarine be stopped if Labour won the next election (Labour Party 1989a). Considering the intense conflict that the unilateral policy had inspired over the last nine years, the review group's statement dispatched unilateralism with surprisingly little opposition or fanfare. Despite a clash between Kaufman and Cook over the latter's unsuccessful demand to include a reference to the possibility of bilateral deals, the NEC agreed the report by seventeen votes to eight (The Independent, 10 May 1989). Those on the NEC who had reservations about the shift away from unilateralism, such as Cook, Blunkett and Short, did not organise any major opposition probably aware that they would almost certainly lose and out of loyalty to Kinnock and the Policy Review. The

Party was also beginning to improve its standing in the polls, registering an equal share of the vote as the Tories - no-one wanted to be accused of spoiling the revival.

It is indicative of the internalisation of opposition to the establishment that despite the high degree of dispute that existed within the NEC and trade union leaderships to the overturning of the unilateral policy, the actual abandonment of unilateralism was greeted with resignation and practically no resistance from the rest of the Party. It is true the TGWU conference voted broadly to support the existing defence policy (The Guardian, 28 June 1989; The Independent, 28 June 1989) but Kinnock found an alternative block vote to back him in NUPE (Interview with Gilby 1994). At conference, the change was overwhelmingly approved after a low-key debate that gave no indication of the depth of division and antagonism that had once existed throughout the Party on the issue.

These shifts on defence are also an exemplar of the inter-retroaction that occurs between masses of factors to produce one particular change. At one level, we can observe how a relatively straightforward retroaction occurs between the core leadership and the NEC to allow for the change in defence policy. The core leadership pushes on the issue of defence gradually making it clear that a change is being considered. However, at a number of points, the core leadership pushes too far or too quickly angering members of the NEC forcing a withdrawal. Once apologies have been made and assurances given, confidence is restored in the core leadership and they are free to continue pushing, maybe more subtly and carefully but still effectively until finally, out of this retroactive process of gradual modification and remodification, the NEC accepts the major shift away from unilateralism.

However, when we become aware of the fact that this relatively simple retroaction could not have come about in the from that it has without the involvement of a vast number of other factors such as gradual shifts in *value*, the contingent-political situation of a dual association, the confirmation of Kinnock as undisputed leader in 1985, the strengthening of his position in 1987/88, not to mention the nature of the very constitutional structures of the Party, plus many other factors (including, of course, those which have constructed these factors themselves), we get an impression here of how one event such as a change in the defence policy is the outcome of an enormously detailed and complex inter-retroactive context.

One further policy area that divided the transformation-supporting establishment and again displayed the latter's internalisation of opposition was Europe and the linked matter of the market. Issues which became interwoven with the personality and career of Bryan Gould.

There was intense conflict within the Party establishment between Gould and a number of other figures. This dispute had its origins in the way Hattersley and his allies felt they had lost influence to Gould and the soft left during the 1987 Shadow Cabinet elections and the construction of the Policy Review (see chapter eight). This factional and personal dispute began to focus on the role of the European Community. Hattersley, Smith, John Eatwell (Kinnock's economic adviser) and ultimately, Kinnock himself, favoured an increasingly firm commitment by Labour and a Labour government to the institutions of the EC, especially the European Monetary System - which was regarded as a good rebuttal to the Tory accusations that a Labour government would be inflationary (Gould 1994; Interview with a senior Party official). However, Gould himself was very cynical about the favourable effects of the EC on

the British economy (see below). As such, the disputes between Gould and Hattersley and his supporters became linked to the former's control over the direction of macro-economic policy and consequently the ability of Gould to direct Labour into an ambitious and controversial stance on the market and public ownership. Gould made a series of moves to shift Labour's position.

In February of 1988, Kinnock stated his total commitment to the EC and embarked on a trip to Brussels to emphasise that Labour no longer engaged with any thoughts of withdrawal from Europe (The Independent, 4 February 1988). However, a few days later Gould gave an interview to The Independent in which he expressed his view that the single European market would damage Britain's interests. He also intervened in the Aims and Values debate that was raging at the time, stating that following the stock market crash in 1987 and the resultant increased intervention on interest rates that

> it provides a great opportunity for the left in politics to say, you can't trust the market with these central economic decisions (The Independent, 17 February 1988).

The newspaper interpreted this as a criticism of the "Kinnock-Hattersley view of the market".

This was followed by a lecture to a Fabian meeting and another Independent interview in which Gould suggested radical changes to the way shares were held in limited liability companies to empower the employee and consumer. In terms that seemed to owe more to the leadership challenge of Benn and Heffer than to the moderate language of Kinnock's leadership, Gould stated that he was proposing

> a major shift in the balance between the owners of capital and the interests of others including the consumer, the employee and the public (The Independent, 2 March 1988).

In May, however, Gould's review group produced an initial report, more in line with Kinnock's preferred trajectory, that aimed to shift policy towards a stronger market emphasis and away from re-nationalisation policies proposing instead "public interest companies" (Labour Party 1988d: 5) which would be held to stricter standards of pricing, service and investment by strengthened regulatory authorities (Labour Party 1988d: 3-7).

However, Gould continued to win headlines by warning in the Crosland lecture that Labour must avoid adopting too many of Thatcherism's ideals (The Independent, 12 November 1988). And in February, Gould told a Fabian society meeting that the Policy Review should not drag the Party into "the black hole that seems to lie in the centre of British politics" and that there was

> no future in trying to be more fiscally conservative than the Conservatives, more moderate than the moderates, or wetter than the wets (The Guardian, 12 November 1988; The Independent, 25 February 1989).

Gould followed this with an article in Tribune in which he criticised Labour's increasing acceptance of European union:

> We should be extremely foolish to rush forward to welcome the centralisation of power in Brussels when it threatens to do great damage to working people. At a time when Labour is fighting for power to be devolved to Scotland, there is something perverse in also wanting it to go upwards to Brussels (Gould 1989b).

These comments on Europe clearly conflicted with Kinnock's approach and, as a result, the Policy Review report, published in May, smacked of a half-hearted compromise between Gould and the leader's office: calling for "co-operation" rather than political union and remaining ambiguous on the single market. However, the one firm point, clearly inspired by Gould, was the report's rejection of the EMS (Labour Party 1989: 14). This sat alongside some other favourite Gould ideas about regulation, employee share-ownership, and co-operatives plus a pledge for a Labour government to become a majority shareholder in a privatised British Telecom and water industry and plans to beef-up the Department of Trade and Industry (Labour Party 1989: 9-16). Kinnock's office hit back with its heavyweight economics chief. John Eatwell openly displayed the growing dissatisfaction with Gould's stance on Europe by publicly arguing that Labour needed a favourable policy on the EMS (Eatwell 1989).

However, the trade and industry spokesperson did not compromise. In the run-up to the 1989 conference, he stated on BBC television that normal dividends would not be paid to private shareholders in firms in which the Government held the majority of shares as any profit would be used for investment or to keep prices low (Tribune, 22 June 1989). This totally contradicted Kinnock who had taken a very careful line on share purchase making it clear that all shares would be bought back at a fair, market rate. Briefings condemning Gould's

comments came out of the leader's office; some "colleagues" told the press that Gould's comments were designed to make his seat on the NEC more secure by appealing to the Bennites in the CLPs (see chapter six for details of secret press briefings).

Gould's battle within the Party establishment damaged his political standing for good. Although he did not immediately lose his executive seat, he was unable to win back the adulation that surrounded him after the 1987 campaign (see chapter eight). The dispute quickly led to his removal from the trade and industry post and ultimately, and less directly, to his withdrawal from British politics. His interventions represented the most consistent and concerted attempt to alter the context of Labour's future policy but, most importantly, they displayed how such opposition was now located firmly within the establishment and how it was related to single issues rather than the broad alternatives of the early 1980s.

Such disputes over Europe, the market, defence and Aims and Values introduced specific divisions into the now unequivocal supporters of transformation. These conflicts did not divide along any particular factional lines but created differing divisions depending upon the issue under contest. However, most significantly, the Policy Review made opposition over policy an establishment affair. The utter failure of the consultation procedure meant that much of the Review was barely engaged with by most Party members and thus was accepted with a high degree of resignation and cynicism (see chapter six). This is one of the most striking features of the transformation when one considers the extent to which defence, Europe, public ownership and basic principles had been issues involving the whole of the Party and movement in processes of factional and institutional division for so many years.

Kinnock's relatively easy manipulation of the 1989 conference and the Policy Review to win backing for *his* stance on defence, the market and Europe displayed that the only audible voice of opposition to core leadership plans *now* came from within the Party establishment and thus was often very cautious and moderate and was ultimately very limited in its effect when it came to opposing a shift on which the core leadership - the most powerful body within the establishment - was implacable. A grassroots opposition that could influence NEC elections, trade union executives, candidate selections and ultimately conferences no longer existed and thus a Party and movement-wide opposition that could bring pressure to bear on leaders by sheer force of numbers was not there to back-up the criticisms of Todd and Ruddock. The lack of such an opposition was displayed most starkly when Kinnock, following the 1989 conference acceptance of a motion calling for a Labour Government to cut conventional forces by a substantial amount (The Labour Party 1989b: 155), dismissed the demand out-of-hand to the press and correctly pointed-out that it would never be Party policy at the next election (Interview with Matheson 1994; The Independent, 3 October 1989).

CONCLUSION

Considering the exalted role the Policy Review has in analysis of the Party's transformation, it is important to restate here the point that the Party came to the Policy Review of 1989 as the result not of one cause or even a few causes but due to a mass of inter-retroacting causes, aspects and effects - the complexity of which is enhanced by the recognition that any one cause, aspect or effect can only have a significance when it is seen as constantly mediated through a mass of other causal processes. Hence the strong sense of resignation that existed in 1989 to the radical change of Policy only existed because of the vast changes that had gone before in terms of Kinnock's personal power, the emergence and assimilation of the soft left,

the decline of the radical wing, the failure of the mass party approach, the growth in influence of the New Strategic Thinking, the centralisation of the Party, the various articulations and re-articulations of *values*, the power of the block vote and a whole variety of other causes active within the inter-retroactive context outlined in this thesis.

Policy reform and the Policy Review were never simple processes based upon open debate and resulting conversion over a number of issues. The processes were made possible by a diversity of different factors that included the contingent-political, the ideological, the personal, the rational and the institutional in close inter-retroaction. Furthermore, the processes of policy reform and the Review itself enhanced a number of aspects of the transformation and introduced some new aspects. In particular it helped assimilate the soft left into the Party establishment, it made policy opposition primarily a feature of that establishment rather than the Party as a whole, and it provided the context within which various *values* were disarticulated and rearticulated. In short it was *one* cause, aspect and effect of the transformation, it was not *the* transformation in any sense.

10

CONCLUSION:

ACKNOWLEDGING SIMPLIFICATION

The introduction to this thesis suggested that it would operate on three levels: empirical findings relating to Labour's transformation; the theory of the Labour Party itself; and the theory of complexity. In this conclusion, these three levels will be distinguished once again, despite the fact that their enormous affect upon each other makes such distinction a matter of convenience and clarity, and be explored individually and in retrospect. Within this context, we can also take-up the two tasks slated for this conclusion in chapters two and three, the acknowledging of simplification in the preceding analysis and the further consideration of paradox and approaches which go beyond the tactical and instead focus more directly upon 'understanding'.

EMPIRICAL MATERIAL AND COMPLEXITY

This thesis has made a large number of observations about the factors involved in the transformation of the Labour Party between 1983 and 1989. They have ranged from the factual to less clear-cut matters of interpretation. It would be impossible to cover all of these here. Instead I will briefly present in the most straightforward fashion, the findings which I feel most effectively aid the important objective of augmenting the causes, aspects and effects

of Labour's transformation already identified by other analysts. In that sense, this review will not stand out of context but will also enhance the broader goal of this thesis, tactically subverting simplification by providing a sense of complexity. Each point states an empirical finding clearly and then explains how this finding was prompted by the goal of complexity, how its enhances the attempt to reach that goal, and how it differs from the existing literature on the period.

The thesis asserted the following.

1. There was a very early start to the transformation. The core leadership, in particular, was committed to reform from the earliest days of its existence and began a process of radical transformation in the spheres of policy, party organisation and campaigning styles in the months prior to the Miners' Strike. As was suggested in Part One, the goal of complexity encourages us as analysts to go beyond the temporal 'focus' of accepted causal processes. In this vein the thesis has searched for earlier causes of the transformation process and discovered them in empirical form. Of course, as has been stated earlier, this should not be taken to suggest that earlier causes of the transformation should be taken as replacing already-identified later causes but simply as augmenting the number and thus the complexity of our analysis. This finding also builds on existing literature on Labour's transformation which has tended to understand it as having only genuinely begun in 1985 or 1987.

2. Changes in *value* played a significant role in the transformation. Particularly important from the earliest days of the Kinnock leadership was the construction of an 'active vote maximisation' *value*. The development of the 'new strategic thinking' and the 'mass party approach' was closely interwoven with the fortunes of this *value*. The goal of complexity has

prompted the use of an alternative form of Drucker's notion of non-doctrinal beliefs and this thesis has found empirical evidence in the early days of Kinnock's leadership which verifies the role *value* played. By identifying *value*, we not only posit a new causal factor in the transformation of the Labour Party, thus coming closer to the goal of a complex analysis, but this causal factor in itself is one which subverts tendencies to simplification by displaying complex processes of articulation between *value* proper and doctrine and by suggesting a whole range of transformatory causal processes operating at such a high level of qualitative and quantitative complexity as to be beyond the reach of current methodologies. The simple introduction of the notion of *value* itself into empirical analysis of the Labour Party builds on current literature on Labour in the 1980s which has largely avoided the use or operationalisation of this concept.

3. The 'defend the people' *value* was transformed as it was disarticulated from the direct action strategy and articulated to the 'active vote maximisation' *value*. All comments made about *value* in the preceding point apply here but, in addition, this point shows how the goal of complexity can spur the analyst on to find greater complexity itself in the empirical evidence which displays not only that *value* exists as a potent causal process in the transformation but that *value* also undergoes complex processes of articulation and disarticulation. It has also shown that this process of articulation and disarticulation (identification of which were themselves sponsored by the analytical goal of complexity) introduces even more complexity into our understanding in that it is a retroactive and inter-retroactive process, whereby the *values* and other features transform one another by virtue of that process of disarticulation and rearticulation. Clearly this builds on existing literature which not only rarely identifies *value* as a significant factor in the transformation but obviously fails to identify the complexities of *value* and its relation to other *values* and

features of the Party. It also displays how differing viewpoints within the Party were not, necessarily, built upon completely different principles but were often battles over the meaning and application of certain aspects of *value*. This point and others made below, show, in fact, how much of the transformation of the 1980s was a battle over such meanings and applications rather than a direct clash of incommensurable principles.

4. A dual association was established within the leading bodies of the Party between the core leadership and the moderate wing and the core leadership and the soft left. The relationship between soft left and moderate wings was uneasy and, at times, conflictual for most of the 1980s. With this point the goal of complexity, in particular the method of 'multiplication', has prompted a search for divisions and variations within organisations or structures usually identified as unitary by the existing literature. As such, significant nuances have been introduced into our appreciation of what is usually identified as the most important political alignment to facilitate the transformation.

5. The soft left stream developed out of a long-term confluence of varied and diverse causal processes of which opposition to Militant and to moderates at local level in the 1970s and 1980s were significant. Such initial variety continued with ongoing divisions and diversity within the soft left throughout the 1980s reaching its pinnacle in the dispute over 'Left unity' soon after the 1987 election. The goal of complexity prompts the analyst to search for 'multiplication, within unitary bodies and to identify multiple causes and multiple effects involved in any political phenomena. This has been done with the analysis of the soft left displaying that this body lacked the cohesion, shared outlook and capacity for common action often assigned to it by much of the existing literature.

6. Some moderates in the Party were initially wary of a forthright attack on Militant. The early running on this idea was made by the majority of the leading supporters of the soft left stream. Once again, complexity with its emphasis upon diversity within accepted unitary bodies has prompted, and been enhanced by, the identification of divisions both within the moderate wing of the Party on the issue of Militant and within the leadership 'association' on the same issue. This builds on the literature on Labour's transformation which has tended to emphasise the leading role moderates played in urging an all-out attack on Militant and fail to recognise the wariness on the part of some moderates and the firmer support for this strategy on the part of many leading members of the soft left. This is not to say that all moderates opposed the strategy and all on the soft left supported it - that would clearly undermine the goal of complexity. Rather it states that there is new interview evidence, largely from those who led the attempt to crush Militant, presented here which suggests hitherto unrecognised variety of views on the matter.

7. Kinnock forged a close tacit link to the grassroots supporters of the soft left in his 1985 conference speech and severely damaged the old articulation of the 'defend the people' *value* to the direct action strategy. As with the points on *value* above, the use of this concept here is prompted by and enhances the goal of complexity. It also displays more clearly the complex inter-retroaction between personality, specific events, *value*, political alignments and political strategy. Whilst in much of the existing literature, the 1985 conference speech is presented as an event which enhanced the standing of Kinnock as a leader in the eyes of the Party, it is shown in this thesis how it had a multiple series of effects, which interacted with one another, in the areas listed above. This clearly not only advances our understanding of this significant event but also promotes complexity.

8. Organisational transformation resulted from the combination of a variety of factors including: ad hoc responses to events by the core leadership; the personal style of Kinnock; the growth of a presidential style; the use of existing powers by the core leadership and Party establishment; the influence of the Shadow Communications Agency; the failure of Labour Listens; the decline of oppositional forces within the Party; and conscious decisions by the core leadership to centralise. Clearly such a conclusion is predicated upon the emphasis within the complex approach of identifying multiple causes and multiple effects within any one aspect of the transformation. This also develops the existing literature which has explained organisational transformation as the result solely of a conscious attempt by Kinnock's office to gain total power or as an attempt by the same office to modernise the Party and make it more electorally attractive.

9. OMOV played a significant role in the development of the identity of the soft left and the core leadership. Once again in the search for multiple causes and effects of the transformation, this thesis has shown how the dispute over OMOV operated not solely as an important organisational development but also as a inter-retroactive factor in the growth of the identity of significant elements of the Party. In particular, the inter-retroactive aspect has been drawn out, for as an allegiance to OMOV enhanced the power of the soft left and the core leadership, so that allegiance both altered the nature of OMOV as a reform proposal and altered the identity of, and the relationship between, the soft left and the core leadership. This clearly enhances complexity as well as being prompted by the goal of enhancing complexity which posited the search for inter-retroactive and multiple causal processes as an apposite method. This enhancement of the role of OMOV is a further advance on the existing literature which has tended to limit the reform to the role of a straightforward organisational dispute between the leadership and the left.

10. The development of major disputes over new agenda ideals was itself a significant feature of the transformation. In particular, the black sections and 'London effect' disputes enhanced soft left allegiance to the core leadership and helped break many on the soft left's practical commitment to new agenda ideals. This is a particularly important aspect of the analysis presented in this thesis. The greater part of work on Labour's transformation has tended to ignore new agenda issues, especially black sections, or has dealt with them in a fashion designed simply to uphold normative judgements of the leadership. This thesis has instead shown how black sections and new agenda disputes were central to the development of a soft left identity and then how a retreat from those same issues helped develop that identity further particularly in relation to allegiance to the core leadership. Again this is part of the overall striving for complexity which has attempted to show how factors, which may easily be rejected as ineffectual, do in fact have a significant role to play in the transformation even if it is, at times, by virtue of their defeat or marginality.

11. Multiple divisions existed over a number of events and issues in the Party's transformation including: Militant, OMOV, policy reform, black sections and the rates rebellion. As has been mentioned above, the goal of complexity sponsors an attempt to multiply divisions and diversity within unitary factors. Much of the literature on this period of the Party tends to present the above disputes as being characterised by dualistic disputes often centred around the 'right' and the 'left' or sometimes the leadership and the 'left'. This thesis has shown how, on each of the above issues, a series of varied positions were held at different stages of the disputes. A factor which goes towards providing a far more complex picture of the transformation period covered here.

12. Kinnock had a very strong personal tendency both towards authoritarianism and demoralised withdrawal. This severely worsened after the 1987 defeat affecting relations with trade union leaderships and the PLP thus encouraging informal plans for leadership challenge from all sections of the Party. This tendency also questions Kinnock's reputation for unfailingly effective management. His shortcomings did not damage him only because of a commitment to unity and change on the part of union leaders and because of the various weaknesses of the different streams in the Party which may have challenged him. In the existing literature, Kinnock's pre-eminence in the Party is explained as the result of effective management, a strong personality and/or a firm political alliance on the NEC. It has already been mentioned above how this firm political alliance was more complex than previously suspected. The points dealt with here also show that the set of circumstances which upheld Kinnock's leadership were the result of a complex confluence of multiple factors involving the poor relationship between the moderate wing and the soft left, the organisational weakness of the moderate wing, the lack of a clear leadership candidate on the soft left, the continued commitment on the part of trade union leaders to the reform process, and the tactical errors of the Bennite wing. All of these factors worked, at certain times, to uphold Kinnock's position in spite of, rather than because of, his management style and personality. As such, Kinnock's sometimes apparently paradoxical strength in the Party is explained in terms of multiple and inter-retroactive causes rather than merely one or two relatively simple causes.

13. Kinnock never won the wholehearted backing of the moderate wing who remained constantly dissatisfied and suspicious. In the search for multiplication in the form of divisions within apparently unitary elements, the thesis has discovered yet another division within the core leadership alliance. While the existing literature has tended to portray as Kinnock being increasingly close to the moderate wing of the Party and as increasingly keen to do their

bidding, this thesis has instead shown that as well as there being constant division between the moderates and the soft left, the moderate wing also felt a consistent suspicion towards Kinnock.

14. The Policy Review damaged the standing of the moderates and elevated leading soft left personnel to establishment level but the Review ultimately stripped the latter of their most fundamental soft left ideals. The transformation of the Labour Party is sometimes seen as the triumph of the soft left. This thesis has shown, however, that that triumph was more nuanced and complex than generally presented. In fact the rise of the soft left was itself a complex inter-retroactive process in which many leading figures on the soft left transformed their identification with radical principles thus gaining more power which, in turn, encouraged a further shift away from that identification which consequently enhanced power an so on. This also contrasts with literature which presents the rise of soft left personnel as a sudden and highly conscious betrayal of political principles for the sake of career.

15. Policy reform was caused by and itself effected changes in *value*, especially the 'basic principles' *value*. Policy reform has been highlighted in this thesis as a prime example of inter-retroaction - a key concept in the achieving the goal of complexity. Such reform was closely interwoven with the transformation of *value*, and other factors, in the Party. This contrasts with the existing literature on the Party which tends to treat policy reform as the ultimate and final outcome, or even telos, of all other changes - especially in the form of the Policy Review. In the analysis presented here, policy reform and the Review play a far more complex role as the effect of multiple causes and as a cause of other multiple effects. It has also been shown that there is an important relationship between the Party's *values* and its doctrine - a factor overlooked by much analysis of the Party.

As was mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, all of these findings must be taken as individual aspects of a broader inter-retroactive context within which no over-arching cause or series of causes can be identified as prime. The findings are constituted of a complex combination of personal, ideological, institutional, rational and contingent-political factors. Not one of these categories can be inserted into the inter-retroactive context without being regarded as mediated through the others. As such, there can be no epiphenomenal prioritising of the empirical findings above.

THEORY OF THE LABOUR PARTY

Informed by the considerations on complexity, this thesis has taken an approach to analysis of the Labour Party which includes four factors distinct from previous analyses. Although these factors should not, in general, be treated separately from complexity (for the reason that they risk becoming concepts aiding 'understanding' rather than subverting simplification as a feature of 'explanation'), they shall be dealt with as such on this occasion for the sake of clarity .

Firstly, there has been a strong emphasis upon the role of *value* in the development of the Party. At certain points, *value* has been a limited, unspecific factor in a wider phenomena; for example, in the idea that the New Strategic Thinking was permeated by a hard-headed, business-like *value* drawn from the advertising world and the strong will of the 'core leadership' (see chapter four). Elsewhere, *value* has been positioned as a central feature of a particular aspect of the transformation. This has occurred most clearly in the construction of

the active vote maximisation *value* in the early days of the Kinnock leadership (see chapter four), the shifts around the 'defend the people' *value* in the mid-1980s (see chapter five), and the role of the basic principles *value* during debates over policy reform (see chapter nine). Of course, *value* permeates the whole of the Party in many distinct and complex ways and thus it has only been possible to highlight some very limited aspects of *value*. This has also meant categorising and naming a feature of the Party which is so vague and amorphous that it is, in reality, uncategorisable and unnameable. But consideration of this drift into simplification can be left to the section below.

Secondly, there has been an attempt to multiply the categories normally used in analysis of the Labour Party and its transformation of the 1980s. This has been most explicit in relation to the traditional left-right spectrum. Instead of using this as the main template by which to understand how individuals and groups position themselves within the Party, multiple transections of the spectrum based upon generation, ethnicity, disagreements over specific events and disputes over certain policies, strategies and ideals have been incorporated along with a number of other such transections. In addition, there has been an attempt to avoid portraying groups of members as internally monolithic and instead highlight the multiplicity of distinctions that existed within diverse bodies which included, amongst others, the campaign for black sections, the soft left, the LCC, the moderate and radical wings of the Party and even the 'leadership' itself.

Thirdly, the analysis of the Party has been based around the identification of multiple causes and effects as constitutive of the transformation. Rather than emphasise one cause or set of causes as the origin of the transformation, there has been an attempt to show how ideological, institutional, contingent-political, personal and rational factors all contributed equally and in

interaction to the outcome that has been labelled the 'transformation'. However, in the pursuit of a multi-effectual analysis, the very notion of the 'transformation' as a singular identifiable outcome has been challenged. Rejecting the epiphenomenal idea that the transformation can be located within any one sphere, the thesis has identified change in the Party as an ongoing, wide-ranging process with no certain or specific outcome. This can be seen most clearly in the fact that the chapter on policy reform and the Review has not treated those features as the final resting-place of change but simple as one more factor acting as both a cause, aspect and effect of the transformation. Furthermore, this approach has also meant focusing upon the Party as a whole within the analysis. Rather than substituting the leadership for the Party or published doctrine for the Party's *values*, the analysis has aimed to deal more broadly with change as something that is caused by and affects the whole Party - a body for which there can be no metonymical substitute.

Fourthly, the concepts of negative identity construction and articulation have been employed in relation to the Labour Party. Both of these notions were introduced as a specific, tactical response to complexity but even alone they have hopefully introduced a greater element of flux, flexibility and flow into the analysis of the Party. With these concepts' strong emphasis upon the human construction of identity and values out of the free association between diverse elements, and upon the importance of conflict and variability in that construction, they have proved powerful methods for representing the rapid transformation of the Party in the 1980s. Articulation has been applied widely but probably explored in most detail at the points where disarticulation and rearticulation occurred between certain *values* regarding the role of the Party and strategies dealing with the fulfilment of those *values* (see, in particular, chapters four, five and nine). While negative identity construction has been applied most completely

when discussing the development of soft left identity and in the consideration of challenges to the 'core leadership' in the aftermath of the 1987 defeat.

These are the four main feature of the theoretical approach to the Labour Party taken in this thesis. However, as was mentioned above, their linkage to the broader theory of complexity is close and it is the application of this theory that we must now reconsider in the light of the preceding pages.

THE THEORY OF COMPLEXITY AND THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SIMPLIFICATION

Complexity has been such an all-pervasive concept within the thesis that to summarise the notion here would serve little purpose. It is sufficient to remind ourselves that the apprehension of complexity is an ideal which may or may not be achievable and that the premise of this thesis has been that we cannot even begin to settle this ambiguity unless we first subvert the tendency towards simplification which exists in the great majority of traditional analysis. Various tactics for such a subversion have been outlined and applied here in the hope that a 'sense of an evaded complexity' can be communicated to the reader. However, one of these tactics still remains to be applied that of the blatant acknowledgement of the simplifications which have occurred in this text.

Admittedly it is not common for a thesis to include a critique of itself. However, within the context of the task of tactical subversion of simplicity, it is clearly necessary to review the points at which simplification has occurred. It is the very imperatives of a thesis constructed along reasonably traditional lines which militate against complexity and encourage a shift back

to simplicity. As such, the analyst striving for an enhancement of complexity must highlight these imperatives and show how they have undermined the chief goal.

The structure of this thesis is probably the most significant feature in maintaining the inertial power of simplicity. A work of analysis, at least as carried out in the west, is primarily designed for communication. Such communication spreads the conclusions contained in the work thus facilitating an application of those conclusions as an exertion of power-knowledge (see chapter two). However, an imperative to communicate, while being caused by a drive to simplify, also has its own structural consequences for a piece of analysis which themselves enhance that drive (an inter-retroactive process, of course).

We can identify three main structural consequences of this communication imperative. Firstly, the analysis must be fixed both in space and time. This thesis is clearly fixed directly to these pages and has been started at one point and will soon be finished at another. Of course, the thesis also has its own internal spatial and temporal focus necessitated by linear causality (see chapter two) in which the period between 1983 and 1989 is studied and only those issues and events apparently pertinent solely to the changes in the Labour Party are explored. Secondly, the analysis, or at least sections of the analysis, must be of a manageable length. Indeed, the length of this thesis is more tightly controlled than most other long pieces of work having an upper word limit of around 100, 000. Finally, a piece of analysis must follow its own linear structure (akin, in fact, to that of linear causal processes). Not only must word follow word, paragraph follow paragraph, page follow page etc. but the immeasurably influential notion of logic has established ingrained rules by which a sense of argument is constructed as one idea follows necessarily and sensibly from another. Rebellion against such structural limitations is

not unknown although it is rare; it can be found in areas as diverse as the 'cutting-up' techniques of surrealists and the aphoristic structure employed by Nietzsche.

However, we can identify the ways in which the combination of these structural restrictions militate against complexity and have therefore deeply affected the achievement of the objectives in this thesis.

Firstly, there is the necessary evasion of the causal processes which have influenced transformation in the Party but which occurred prior to the resignation of Foot in 1983. Throughout this thesis such causal processes have been implied through the shorthand of '*value*'. This concept has brought into the focus of analysis ideological issues such as electoralism, labourism and parliamentarianism (see chapter three) which clearly owe their formation to factors existing much earlier than 1983. Elsewhere, there has been a more empirical reference to early factors especially when dealing with the development of the soft left and the new agenda; here developments of the 1960s and 1970s were invoked to enable our explanation.

However, the details of the interactions between earlier factors and the transformation could not be explored. As such, our understanding of the transformation was limited in this respect. Simplicity rather than complexity was enhanced as the quantity and quality of the causal processes we brought to bear on the changes of the 1980s was reduced.

It should be re-iterated here the full implications of such a limitation of focus. It may appear that I am criticising such focus merely because it reduces the quantity of causal processes identified. This is to ignore the qualitative implications of inter-retroaction. Earlier factors do

not exist simply as causes of the transformation which are spent of their significance once they have had their impact. Within the context of understanding (rather than explanation), earlier factors have an ongoing qualitative impact upon the nature of the transformation. They do not merely cause transformation, they affect its development and content. As such, limitation of temporal focus in this way limits our understanding by severely reducing complexity.

To take just one example amongst many, this thesis has of necessity ignored a factor such as the 1945 election victory of the Labour Party and its influence on the changes of the 1980s. This victory has a diverse series of inter-retroactions with the aspects of the transformation. At a most basic level, the victory of 1945 created the context within which Labour was finally confirmed as a major governmental force, only within this context can we explain the extent of Labour's loss in 1983. The fear of decline and even extinction which was promoted by this loss can only make sense after a period of great influence and power. The 1945 success also plays a major inter-retroactive role in defining the identity of the radical wing, many of whom interpreted 1945 as a victory for full-blooded socialism and used it, as a result, as an argument against change. In addition, the 1945 victory became something of a mythical reference point for Labour members - a past utopia when Labour had a huge majority and could wholeheartedly pursue a socialist programme. Such a positioning inevitably shapes the ideals of the Party, thus making acceptance of new complications and vagaries more difficult. Alternatively, and simultaneously, it can make reform easier for some: 1945's historical , mythical status allows it to become a symbol of a glorious past no longer relevant to the complications of the modern world - it becomes an emblem of the need for reform rather than the need for socialist steadfastness within the reformer's unsentimental approach that takes pride in challenging accepted beliefs.

Similar problems occur with the spatial focus of the thesis. Clearly a huge variety of factors beyond the specifics of the political transformation of the Party influence that transformation. Developments in the personal lives of involved individuals and changes in the cultural life of Britain (for example, the growth of a forthright youth culture since the 1950s has affected development of new agenda issues), - to name but two - are outside the strict spatial focus of the thesis but can easily be seen to have influenced the nature of the transformation. While others, more 'closely' linked to the transformation such as changes in the global economy (see Shaw 1994) and in the wider labour movement (see Minkin 1992) could only be introduced incidentally and could not be dealt with in their full complex detail.

A second imperative militating against complexity is the neglect of future retrospection resulting from the fixed nature of the thesis. Looking back from 1996, the 1980s can be portrayed as the transformation of the Labour Party. In the time of Tony Blair and a popular Labour Party, the period of Kinnock appears to be the first stage in a longer and successful process of continuing transformation. However, as the Party develops over the coming years, we may be looking not solely for causes of successful transformation but conceivably also of decline; or equally conceivably of huge electoral victory; or of even more transformation. As an analyst, I may be seeking to answer not only why and how change occurred but how such change, and other issues, can be located as causes within the collapse, victory or further transformation of the Party. This upholds the views of Hume and Nietzsche (see chapter two), the effect does seem to be the cause of the identification of the cause. There is a complexity that exists which we cannot yet sense for the causes involved have not yet revealed themselves in, or been constructed by, their effects.

One can highlight this issue most powerfully, when one imagines an analysis completed in 1982. Instead of regarding the influence of the radical wing in the early 1980s as a short-lived 'blip', analysts sought causes of the transformation which had brought the radicals to such dominance (see, for example, Kogan & Kogan 1982). No causes of failure were yet sought except for speculative or prescriptive objectives. As a result, causal processes multiply as factors change and as retrospection surveys a longer time period. Clearly, such an enhancement of complexity cannot be accounted for in this thesis once it is completed and set in its fixed spatial and temporal location.

Thirdly, the analysis has relied very heavily on linear causal processes despite the critique of such a model advanced early in the thesis and attempts to introduce inter-retroaction. It is not hard to identify such linearity throughout the thesis. Turn to most pages and there will be examples where one factor is identified as causing an effect with no attempt to display the inter-retroactive processes involved. This is, in part, the result of the powerful influence of linear causal processes without which it has become impossible to provide an explanation. But it also results from the linearity and length limitations of the thesis itself where logical development and the sequential nature of writing encourage a similar linearity in analysis, while the limitations on length (and sheer stamina) prevent one identifying all inter-retroactions. For example, one can only imagine the mass of inter-retroaction that must be occurring at the level of the individuals who make-up the Party memberships and leaderships. Consideration of how features of many personalities inter-retroact with the events and *values* of the transformation suggests a level of complexity that seems to be beyond human imagination. Even at an apparently more straightforward level, this thesis has not considered in any explicit or detailed way, how inter-retroactions may have occurred between factors such as new agenda issues and policy reform or between retrospective analysis of the Miners'

Strike and the debate about electoral reform in the late 1980s. Such examples could form a list which in itself would be awe-inspiring without even starting to analyse the combinations of factors mentioned in the list.

Concepts such as *value*, articulation and negative identity construction were introduced to counter the problems of accounting for every inter-retroaction. This they have hopefully achieved, if only to a limited extent. However, the employment of these concepts itself carries with it a risk which should be warned against here. These concepts can take on a certain rigidity whereby they become entities in themselves signifying a single causal process. In short, their tactical role as conceits designed to imply inter-retroaction and thus hint at the complexity evaded by the analysis is forgotten. Instead they may become reified as truthful representations of a reality simple enough to be reduced down to a few major concepts and categories. As such, it must be reiterated that they are designed to subvert simplicity by implying a complexity which, for whatever reason, cannot be fully explored. They are not accurate representations in themselves.

A similar process of simplification has occurred in relation to categories which appear, at first, more benign in their use. Notions such as 'policy reform', 'constituency labour party', 'local authority', even 'Miners' Strike' have been used without any questioning of their singular identity in the way that other categories such as 'Party leadership' or 'left' and 'right' have been questioned and multiplied. Using them in this way, can lead to their hypostatization as distinct and monolithic entities. Such categories are simplifications of processes or phenomena which are just as multiple and in a state of complex inter-retroaction as any other and their unquestioned use here must not be taken as an indication of a location of comprehensible simplicity amongst a mass of other, distinct complexities.

Identifying shortcomings in this way is itself a method of implying complexity and thus of challenging simplification. This beneficial consequence has already been suggested in chapter two. However, it leaves both writer and reader with the sense of complexity which this whole thesis has been designed to create. However beyond that sense there is clearly an emptiness. No alternative method, however tentative, for a fuller appreciation of complexity has been proposed. Such considerations are outside the scope of this thesis and maybe outside the scope of any thesis but I believe it is worth returning very briefly to the issue of paradox, first mentioned in chapter two, to see whether, here, we may find a slight guide to achieving understanding beyond explanation.

PARADOX AND COMPLEXITY

Paradox, as an explicit concept, has been absent from this thesis since its significance was first suggested in chapter two. Of necessity the preceding analysis has been a non-paradoxical appreciation of complexity. Some allowances for the inertial power of simplicity have had to be made. However, after the employment of the tactical approach for so many pages, it now seems sensible to spend a few paragraphs upon the less conciliatory concept of paradox and the guides it may provide for going beyond that tactical approach. We can begin this by recounting and developing the matter of why paradox arises out of complexity.

Firstly, there is the fact that arguing for complexity makes paradox more apparent. As was asserted in chapter two, most approaches (ones that either do not account for complexity or do not challenge notions of absolute truth) implicitly assume that the world is comprehensible and then proceed to comprehend it. Complexity, like other rejections of absolute truth,

'suffer' an inherent paradox in that they doubt full comprehension of the world and yet seem to propose just such a comprehension based upon relativism, nihilism, perspectivism or in this specific case complexity. It was also pointed out that this does not necessarily negate the latter approaches as the former are just as subject to paradox (in the adapted form of Godel's Theorem) - one just has to look somewhat more closely to find it.

Secondly, we can develop our appreciation of the links with paradox further by recognising that the latter is the application of complexity to complexity itself. This thesis is dominated by a causal process. This can be stated as follows: the analyst's identification of the breakdown of linearity and the consequent augmentation of causal processes and their interactions has effects on our analytical method and our assumptions about the analytical endeavour. However, true to the notion of inter-retroaction, we notice that the initial cause here (the identification of the causal process) is itself modified by its effects. By leading to the challenge of our assumption that politics and the world can be fully 'understood', the identification of the prime causal process, in a way which implicitly assumes that identification to be objective and truthful, undoes itself. Hence paradox is the retroaction back of the effect of the analysis upon itself.

Finally, we can reiterate the suggestion in chapter two that paradox is useful in attempting to respond to complexity in a less tactical fashion by observing that it seems to be a form of knowledge without power connotations - power being a prime implication of simplified knowledge (explanation). Paradox in its full effect cannot be used as a basis upon which to act and to exert power. To act we must depart from paradox by asserting that its import can lie only within the realm of theory and that in "the real world" we have no choice but to exert power and act. Alternatively, we can halt the "strange loop" of paradox and allow its

destructive work to go only so far and then assert that based upon this the world is incomprehensibly complex or that all analyses, rational or not, are based upon an initial leap of faith. This thesis has used both of these techniques for the sake of power and action but paradox, with its annoying persistence, undermines such moves when allowed its full effect. Assertions about having to act, or "the real world", or leaps of faith are assertions which we can keep sacred from the ravages of paradox for the sake of sanity. But they are analytical certainties and absolutes just like any other assertion about our world and therefore cannot logically escape paradox. As such, paradox cannot be used for power effects without ignoring or departing from its work.

This means that if we wish to come-up with useful 'explanations' which will enable us to exert power, to have an effect upon the world, we must reject paradox almost completely. However, if we wish to 'understand', free of the imperatives of power, it seems we may have to embrace paradox. (No prioritisation of 'understanding' over 'explanation' should be read from this - they are simply different projects often confused.)

This does not indicate that we can simply 'use' paradox as a method to 'understand' a topic such as the transformation of the Labour Party between 1983 and 1989. The very notion 'Labour Party', or the notion 'transformation', or indeed '1983-1989' are definable entities with easily traceable sets of factors and causal processes. They are clearly the building-blocks of simplification. Ultimately, complexity and paradox must mean going beyond the atomisation of factors promoted by categorisation of this sort, as mentioned above. This is why, from the perspective of complexity, we can only relate to such topics and tasks tactically. As the above consideration make clear, once paradox enters our approach it

challenges all. It is not merely a method; it is the catalyst for a radical rethink of our methodology.

Such a rethink is beyond the scope and limitations of this thesis. All that can be achieved here is to propose one potentially fruitful route towards the beginning of this rethink.

It seems sensible to look to other existing modes of analysis which may provide guides for change. One existing mode which presents itself is that of Zen Buddhism. There are a great many Western preconceptions about Zen which affect our ability to treat it with the interest and seriousness to which it is due. However, more expert authors have dispelled such preconceptions elsewhere especially in the unsurpassed introduction by Suzuki (1969). What will be said here is simply that Zen seems to provide a response to many of the issues of complexity outlined in this thesis. Particularly striking are the fact that in its attempt to understand, Zen responds to the observation that all things seem interwoven in a way that bears comparison to the more schematic notion of inter-retroaction. One particularly influential school of Zen even responds by centring its meditation upon paradoxical considerations. But perhaps the most significant aspect of Zen is the fact that, like Western thought, it is based upon a tradition of contemplation with a goal of understanding but, unlike Western thought, it has deliberately avoided the restrictions of text and overt communication as a method. This alone makes it a vitally interesting source for the analyst concerned about the problems which complexity and paradox raise for text, communication and power/knowledge.

This thesis has aimed to provide a sense of complexity in an attempt to subvert simplicity. Within this task it has also hopefully said something interesting and new about the transformation of the Labour Party between 1983 and 1989. However, as should by now be clear, traditional western analysis is about power/knowledge, a significant feature of which is communication. As such, as soon as we communicate, complexity often seems lessened. In this sense, the thesis is a highly ambiguous exercise. It communicates to subvert simplicity but in communicating can reinforce just that simplicity. Thus this ending may itself be the best tactic available for the achievement of a greater complexity.

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