

## **The campaign for democratic socialism 1960-1964.**

Brivati, Leopoldo

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**THE CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM 1960-1964**

Brian Leopoldo Brivati

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Department of History, Queen Mary and Westfield College,  
University of London  
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## Abstract.

### The Campaign for Democratic Socialism 1960-1964.

In early 1960 it seemed likely that the official Labour Party defence policy would be defeated by a unilateralist resolution at the Scarborough Conference. In response to this possibility the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, or CDS, was established.

The CDS projected the image of a grass-roots movement inspired by Gaitskell's "fight and fight again" speech. But it was run by a Campaign Committee which included leading members of the Party like Tony Crosland, Roy Jenkins and Patrick Gordon Walker, as well as less well known members like Bill Rodgers, Dick Taverne, Philip Williams, Brian Walden, Denis Howell and David Marquand.

This highly talented group launched an elaborate and successful lobbying, publicity and briefing operation which was influential in overturning the unilateralist vote at the Blackpool Conference of 1961. After Blackpool the Campaign helped many of its leading members find seats in the House of Commons while continuing to put the "revisionist" case through its newspaper Campaign.

The importance of the CDS in the history of the Labour Party is, primarily, as the first internal pressure group organised by the right of the Party. It was also the first internal Party group to use such sophisticated lobbying techniques. Moreover, the subsequent careers of the leading members of the Campaign influenced the development of the Labour Party. The CDS was an important formative political action for many of them. Finally many of the CDS supporters set-up or joined the SDP when it was launched.

## Introduction.

Bill Rodgers, the secretary and main organiser of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, wrote in a brief history he drafted of the Campaign at the time of its close in 1964, that the CDS deserved a "chapter in the history of the Labour Party."<sup>1</sup> Within five years of this being written three studies of the Campaign had been completed. In 1966 two chapters appeared in Lord Windlesham's study Communication and Political Power;<sup>2</sup> in 1968 an unpublished MPhil was completed by Patrick Seyd on "Factionalism in the Labour Party: A Case Study of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism" and in 1969 Stephen Haseler published The Gaitskellites, which contained a chapter on the CDS.

In the twenty-two years since the appearance of Haseler's study the historical significance of this right-wing pressure group has steadily increased. In the 1970s the increasing isolation of the Gaitskellite group of Labour MPs, especially those who were strong advocates of the European Community, made the earlier struggle, and its breakdown over the Community, of renewed interest. In the late 1970s the resurgence of the unilateralist pressure group, CND, as a national force in Labour Party politics and their resounding successes at Labour Party Conferences, brought the unilateralist question back to the centre of Labour politics. These controversies combined after the defeat of the Labour government in 1979 to produce the formation of the SDP in 1981. There

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1. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 20.

2. Lord Windlesham, Communication and Political Power, Cape London 1966, Chapter 4, "The Springboard" and Chapter 5, "The Campaign".

were those who, at the time of the launch of the SDP, saw a direct link to the stand the CDS had taken in the early 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the leading figures of the SDP went out of their way to identify themselves with the memory of Hugh Gaitskell. Following election defeats in 1979, 1983 and 1987 the Labour Party launched a fundamental rethink of its policy. It adopted this revisionist stance in the face of defeat, dropped unilateral nuclear disarmament and opposition to membership of the EC and embraced aspects of the market economy. Each of these changes can be seen as extensions of the broad policy stance of many leading revisionists but more importantly the process of modernising policy options was in tune with the objectives of the Gaitskellite revisionists. Thus parallels with the pre-1964 period can be drawn on a number of different levels.

The main previous studies of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism were completed before the end of the 1960s, in fact before the Wilson Government was defeated in 1970. Patrick Seyd's MPhil thesis was a broadly hostile left-wing analysis concerned with describing the way a right-wing faction operated within the Labour Party and was in general dismissive of the Campaign's influence. Lord Windlesham, from whom both Seyd and Haseler drew widely, outlined the basic shape of the CDS and was concerned with showing the way the Campaign used modern techniques of political communication to further its cause. Haseler included his chapter on the CDS in a generally sympathetic study of the Gaitskellites. Each offered some new factual material, as well as analysis of the influence of the CDS; however, each was written close to the events and the writers could have had no way of predicting the subsequent troubled history of the Gaitskellite MPs.

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3. Rodgers in interview with author, and see Hugh Stephenson, Claret and Chips. The Rise of the SDP, p 31.

Building from the work of these previous writers, the current thesis is based on interviews with the main actors in the CDS story who are still alive. These were complemented by the circulation of a questionnaire to the surviving MPs and other supporters of the Campaign<sup>4</sup> and another questionnaire to members of the "Group",<sup>5</sup> a debating society which preceded the Campaign proper. In addition Bill Rodgers granted unrestricted access to the office records of the Campaign. These amounted to some 56 files and covered the story of the Campaign from the first tentative meetings in the spring and summer of 1960 to the complications over the lease of the office and the balance remaining in the bank account, which continued into 1966. To complement the primary written and oral material. use has been made a number of important

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4. The Questionnaire asked the following questions: Who did you support in the leadership election of 1955? In the period before the 1959 election, how did you feel about left-wing organisations like CND and the Bevanites? Did you take part in any groups that opposed the activities of the Bevanites or CND? Could you describe the actions of these groups? During the period 1955-1959 did you feel that the leadership was out of touch with its supporters in the rank and file? Did you feel at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the left wing of the party? What did you see as the main reason for Labour's defeat in 1959? Please describe the performance of the leadership, especially Gaitskell, in the 1959 elections? When did you join the CDS, did someone canvass for your support or did you apply to join? What were your reasons for joining the Campaign? Did you have any knowledge of the way the Campaign was financed? How far did you feel that you had a role in the formation of the Campaign's policy? If you were an active member of the CDS please describe the kind of activity this involved? Specifically did you a) Canvass for Trade Union support after Scarborough in 1960, b) If so, which unions were your main targets and how successful were you in this activity, c) Work for the adoption of Parliamentary Candidates who were sympathetic to the aims of the Campaign? If so, which candidates in which constituencies did you help? The individuals listed below played a role in the CDS, could you give an assessment of their relative contributions to the Campaign's organisation, propaganda and ideology, Tony Crosland, Patrick Gordon Walker, Denis Howell, Frank Pickstock, Bill Rodgers, Philip Williams? Which other individuals do you feel played an important role in the CDS; could you name them and outline the role they played? Did you witness Gaitskell's "fight and fight and fight again" speech at Scarborough in 1960? Did this speech change your perceptions of Gaitskell in any way? Can you assess the impact that the CDS had on the outcome of the vote on unilateralism in Blackpool in 1961? A stated aim of the Campaign was to educate the party in the ideas of revisionism, did you agree with this aim and could you assess what success the Campaign had in realising this objective? Please describe your attitude to the attempt by Macmillan to bring the UK into Europe? How did you react to Gaitskell's position on the European questions? What caused the decline of the Campaign after 1962? Do you own any papers relevant to the Campaign which you would allow the researcher to examine and If so, could you give a brief description of their contents. The questionnaire was returned by Austen Albu, Alec Grant, Jim Boyden, Jeremy Bray MP, Lord Diamond, Roy Hattersley MP, Dick Leonard, Lord Mayhew, Lord Mellish, Lord Jay, Dick Taverne, Alan Thompson and Justice Waterhouse

5. The Group questionnaire asked a series of questions designed to establish who attended meetings and who spoke; other questions included: Were you a supporter of CDS? If so what role did you play? How have your views changed on unilateralism, the European Community and Public Ownership? Which political parties have you belonged to and Please assess your own contribution to the Group. The questionnaire was returned by Ivan Alexander, Gordon Borrie, Tyrell Burgess, Conrad Dehn, David Donnison, Bruce Douglas Mann, Ben Hooberman, Oleg Kerensky, Keith Kyle, David Lane, Ivor Lucas, Colin McIntyre, Bryan Magee, David Vaughan Williams, Ronald Waterhouse.



secondary works and diaries which have been published since 1969, including Philip Williams' monumental biography of Hugh Gaitskell,<sup>6</sup> the Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman,<sup>7</sup> Eric Shaw's study of the central party organisation<sup>8</sup> and Susan Crosland's highly personal biography of Tony Crosland.<sup>9</sup>

The wealth of new material that has become available since 1969 provides the basis for this new study of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism.

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6. Philip Williams, Hugh Gaitskell, A Political Biography, Cape, London 1979.

7. Janet Morgan, (editor), The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman, Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, London 1981.

8. Eric Shaw, Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party: the Politics of Managerial Control in the Labour Party 1951-1987, Manchester University Press, 1989.

9. Susan Crosland, Tony Crosland, Cape, London, 1982.

## Chapter 1:

### The Labour Party in Opposition 1951-1959.

The creation of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism<sup>1</sup> in 1960 was the culmination of a process of internal Labour Party conflict which had developed over the 1950s. To appreciate the significance of the launch of the CDS, it is necessary to outline the main features of Labour Party history in the 1950s. Labour Party politics in this decade were largely dominated by internal conflicts which in turn were influenced by the unfolding of the legacies of the 1945-1951 Labour Governments. The decade was dominated by internal politics, rather than wider issues, for two main reasons.

Firstly, the nature of the Labour Party itself tended to expose internal disputes. There have been a number of different explanations of this. For Mark Jenkins<sup>2</sup> the Party was divided between the "apparatus" and the "movement". The Party apparatus gained its legitimacy and

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1. CDS or the Campaign are used throughout to denote the Campaign for Democratic Socialism.

2. Mark Jenkins, Bevanism, Labour's High Tide and the Democratic Mass Movement, Spokesman Books, London 1977, pp 13.

power from the movement, but remained separate and in some way compromised by its association with the state. In contrast, H.M. Drucker<sup>3</sup> saw the Labour Party as more difficult to classify because it was not simply an instrument for acquiring votes and using power, it was both a party of government and a protest movement. The problem for the British Labour Party was not a careerist leadership, which Drucker identified as the main problem for the German SPD, but an inability to define what the "implementing of socialism" would actually mean. In the place of a definition of socialism, the Labour Party produced a series of manifesto promises on individual issues.<sup>4</sup> This led to a continual reappraisal of party policy and a conflict between different sections of the Party as to what should constitute policy. A combination of the Party's structure and its self-image as a socialist (or social democratic) party, which did not define exactly what socialism would be, produced a marked tendency for internal party strife.

The second reason for this concentration on internal party politics was the feeling of impotence caused by a long period of opposition. A political party in opposition, without the power to implement its policies, has very limited outlets for its collective energy. For the Labour Party this has tended, in periods of opposition like 1951-1954, 1959-1961 and 1979-1983, to find an outlet in self-destructive division.

There was nothing inevitable about the internal struggle. The Party's structure, the legislative programme of 1945-1951 and the competition between opposing doctrines did not make inevitable the prolonged and electorally devastating divisions of the 1950s. The Party in 1951 could have adapted to the post-war era without facing up

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3. H. M. Drucker, Doctrine and Ethos in the Labour Party, George Allen and Unwin, London 1979, p 1.

4. Described by Drucker as manifestoism in Drucker 1979, pp 91-94.

to the fundamental questions of its own identity. It could have become a basically social democratic party which would not have entered into a debate about the new direction for socialism but would have simply continued the process of consolidation.

The fact that it did not do this was in large part due to the Bevanites. Their consistent critique of policy and their refusal to accept the domination of the Party by the right, meant that the underlying problems faced by Labour in 1951 came out into the open. Once exposed, the structure of the Party and the tendency for policy formation to be dealt with in a piecemeal fashion, or through "manifestoism", compounded the image of disunity.

In the Labour Party's 1951 election manifesto an "elaborate 'then' and 'now' contrast was made between pre-war misery and present prosperity"<sup>5</sup> and the clear contention was that a vote for the Conservatives was a vote for a return to the bad old days: "Forward with Labour or backwards with the Tories". Gaitskell did not share this view; he recorded his own analysis in his diary: "What the intelligent Tories will, of course, want to do is be able to say to the electorate when the election comes, 'No war, no unemployment, no cuts in social service, just good government.'"<sup>6</sup>

The success of the Conservative administrations in fulfilling Gaitskell's prediction contributed to the tendency of the Labour Party to turn inwards, expending energy on arguing over what was the correct path the Party should take to defeat the Conservatives and intriguing over the successor to Attlee as leader. The

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5. David Butler, The British General Election of 1951, Macmillan, London 1952, p 48.

6. Philip Williams, (editor), The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, Cape, London 1983, entry for Friday November 23 1951, p 307.

two issues of the Party leadership and the future of socialism were interrelated because whoever led the Party would have a large say in the direction it was to take.<sup>7</sup> They were also issues which provoked a great deal of emotion at all levels of the Party. The Labour Party of the Morecambe Conference in 1952, described by Michael Foot as "...rowdy, convulsive, splenetic; threatening at moments to collapse into an irretrievable brawl",<sup>8</sup> was an organisation where fraternal fellowship among comrades was often hard to detect and animosity between individuals was often bitter. Two examples of this were Bevan's description of Gaitskell as "nothing, nothing, nothing",<sup>9</sup> which was reciprocated by Gaitskell's comparison of Bevan with Hitler.<sup>10</sup>

These Party conflicts were not simply disagreements among colleagues. Although the debates were fuelled by individual ambition there was a sense, somewhere in the morass of endless bickering, that what was at stake was the future direction for socialism and the possibility of a great national party achieving power. Christopher Mayhew recalled those "battles in Committee Room 14 or in the Grand Committee Room with some pride. The debates were conducted on both sides with skill and the votes were sometimes extremely important, capable of decisively changing the policy of the Party or the stature of the responsible party leader...Sometimes our party seemed to be performing the function of a two party system all by itself."<sup>11</sup>

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7. Eric Shaw, Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party, Manchester University Press, 1988, pp 31-51.

8. Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan Volume 2, 1945-1960, Davis Poynter, London 1975, p 379.

9. Foot 1975, p 295.

10. Janet Morgan, (editor), The Backbench Diary of Richard Crossman, Hamish Hamilton and Cape, London 1981, entry for Thursday March 24 1955, p 410.

11. Christopher Mayhew, Party Games, Hutchinson, London 1969, p 102.

The depth of personal rivalry and competition during the 1950s was to have an over-spill in the 1960s which was reflected by the CDS. The Campaign was not primarily about the fighting of old battles, but the Gaitskellites did learn a number of lessons from the battles of the 1950s which affected the way they fought unilateralism in the 1960s. The scope of right-wing organisation developed as the decade developed - from an early tentative Parliamentary organisation and the use of the Party apparatus, to the overt sectional organisation of the CDS years.

The first five years of the decade were a period of new and developing areas of conflict, the second five were ones, at least among the party elite, of an attempt at accommodation. It is more difficult to generalise about what the decade was like among the rank and file. With the battle for the leadership lost by Bevan in 1955 the left wing of the membership tended to involve itself increasingly in extra-Parliamentary activity, for example CND.<sup>12</sup> For rank and file members who supported the leadership the power wielded by the block vote tended to minimise the scope for activity. The CDS was an attempt to mobilise these members when the power of the block vote began to move in favour of the left after Frank Cousins became leader of the TGWU. Throughout the 1950s however they were disadvantaged in the face of the greater motivation of the left, who tended to highjack meetings.<sup>13</sup>

In his Conference speech before the 1951 election Bevan stated bluntly that: "Labour has no sense of defeat".<sup>14</sup> Even after the election there was a feeling of confidence

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12. CND was not actually founded until February 1958 but other organisations had been opposing the bomb, by February 1957 100 local groups associated with the peace pledge union existed, see John Minnion and Philip Bolsover, (editors), The CND Story, Allison and Busby, London 1983.

13. Gaitskell 1983, entry for Saturday April 23 1955, pp 396-397.

14. John Campbell, Nye Bevan and the Mirage of British Socialism, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1987, p 267.

in the Labour movement, with membership rising and, even while being defeated, Labour achieved its highest ever vote.

For Mark Jenkins<sup>15</sup> the achievement of the record vote in 1951 was despite and not because of the Labour Government's record:

Labour's record 1951 vote was achieved despite austerity, consolidation, rationing, the use of troops against strikers, imposition of charges on the health service, higher national service to prosecute colonial wars, involvement in Korea, the biggest jump in the retail price index for 10 years and a series of splits at cabinet level.

A list of the achievements of the Labour Governments can be set against this list of failings:

We did what we promised to do...to nationalise the Bank of England, the fuel and power industries, inland transport and the iron and steel industry; and this we did in 7 major Acts. We promised a vast development of social services; and faithfully provided, or extended sickness, unemployment and retirement benefits, maternity grants, widow's pensions and death grants. Free, comprehensive medical service was established.<sup>16</sup>

One can add to Christopher Mayhew's list the demobilisation of the army, the housing programme and the independence of India. Most of the achievements came between 1945 and 1950, most of the failings in 1950 and 1951. The Party's vote increased over the troubled period 1950-1951, by nearly 700,000, to reach a total of 13,948,605 and individual membership reached over one million in 1952. The Party was defeated by the electoral system, achieving a plurality of votes which, piled up in traditionally Labour areas, produced a minority of seats.<sup>17</sup>

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15. Jenkins 1977, p 115.

16. Mayhew 1969, p 42.

17. Figures quoted from David Butler and Gareth Butler, British Political Facts 1900-1985, Macmillan, London 1986, p 152.

Nye Bevan's assertion that the Party had no sense of defeat was based on the hope that the Conservatives would fail in the post-war challenge and not on Gaitskell's view that the Tories knew what to do to hold power. Overall the mood of the Party was confident and the political conflict was in the context of their expectation of a rapid return to government.

The Labour programme had been largely implemented and the Party had proved that it was fit to govern. What should now be the policy of the Labour Party? This formed a key electoral dilemma for the Labour Party in the 1950s, and the search for a policy direction was repeated to an extent in the 1980s, although the later period the legacy was of a much less successful Government and the problem was a perceived failure of the Party in Government.

The dilemma on policy, in the aftermath of the Attlee Governments, was central to the historical development of the Party. Labour-based movements from the late 19th century onwards have suffered from a basic division, with varying degrees of seriousness, between maximalists and minimalists, defined in different ways. In the British context, the Labour Party began as an extension of the trade union movement with a corresponding group of middle class radicals attached to it and to the Independent Labour Party:

The Labour Party has always been divided. Whilst intrinsically a creation of the trade union movement, seeking repeal of restrictive legislation, other groups involved in its formation conceived it to be the institution through which a socialist Commonwealth, of whatever kind, might be built.<sup>18</sup>

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18. Alan Warde, Consensus and Beyond, The development of Labour Party strategy since World War Two, Manchester University Press 1982, p 1.



Tony Crosland, the leading theorist of the radical right of the Labour Party, gave a concise summary of the different doctrines which emerged from these two main founding groups and concluded that what emerged from this "brief catalogue" is the "variety and heterogeneity" from which the modern Labour Party was born.<sup>19</sup> Crosland goes on to conclude that:

It is not even surprising that different doctrines should be supported at the same time - Owenism and Chartism, Marxism and Christian Socialism, Fabianism and Guild Socialism. There must always be divergent views on the right emphasis and order of priorities, and these will prevent a uniformity of thought. The trouble is that some of the divergences are not a matter simply of emphasis or the right priorities. They are fundamental, and the doctrines are mutually inconsistent.<sup>20</sup>

From these divergent and inconsistent theories, there emerged a political party with a political programme. The British political system itself and the need to be electorally viable tended to reduce the utopian and accentuate the practical. The 1945-1951 Governments exaggerated this process by instituting what Dalton called "Practical Socialism", thereby defining socialist doctrine in terms of Morrison's maxim that socialism is what the Labour Government does.<sup>21</sup> The result was to leave the left of the Party stranded in support of the movement for traditional values and the mouthing of "sacred texts", most notably Clause Four, but without a clear link to any socialist past. Another consequence was that the mixture of doctrines and their emergence in the policy of the 1945-1951 Government, left the Party as a whole rather directionless once it lost power. This

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19. C.A.R. Crosland, The Future of Socialism, Cape, London 1956, p 45.

20. Crosland 1956, p 87.

21. According to Professor George Jones of the London School of Economics, Morrison used this phrase at a LSE Government Department Seminar chaired by Robert Mckenzie in the 1950s. I am grateful to Professor Peter Hennessy for giving me the source of this quote.

opened the way for the "revisionists" to claim that an appeal to the past was no longer enough and what was needed was a new doctrine for the future.

For Gaitskell the policies of those who wanted to move on to the next stage of socialism and those who were dissatisfied with the achievements of the first instalment were electoral suicide. This argument was most clearly stated by Gaitskell's closest ideological ally, Tony Crosland, in The Future of Socialism which was published in 1956. For Crosland, the experience of the war and the post-war Labour Governments had discredited the popular assumptions of pre-war Marxists:

The belief that the inner contradictions of capitalism would lead to first a gradual pauperisation of the masses and ultimately to the collapse of the whole state, have by now been rather disproved.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast the left of the Party, at least those who were not Communist or fellow travellers, which was the vast majority, tried to spell out a socialist alternative that would radically change society, to build on rather than consolidate the achievements of 1945-51. For Bevan and the left the conflicts in society between property, poverty and democracy were not changed by the war. Bevan's book, In Place of Fear, expressed a belief in the power of planning and the need to use the state to control the market so that "effective social power" will "pass from one order of society to another".<sup>23</sup> This watered down version of the class war was supported by a strong emphasis on the need for participation. "The ordinary man and woman is called into consultation and is asked to decide what he himself would put first in the national order of things".<sup>24</sup> Bevan and the left saw state

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22. Expanded on in "The transition of Capitalism" in Richard Crossman, (editor), New Fabian Essays, Turnstile Press, London 1952.

23. Foot 1975, p 371.

24. Warde 1983 p 79, quoting Nye Bevan, Democratic Values, Fabian Tract 282, London 1950, p 11.

ownership rather than demand management as supplying the answer to the problem of full employment, but to Crosland, growth in the economy and demand management meant that prosperity was assured and the Labour Party could now turn to more social questions.<sup>25</sup> The left also maintained its faith in public ownership, with modifications to make it more accountable, as a form of extending equality, while for Crosland extending public ownership in the already mixed economy was redundant unless it was in the form of competitive public enterprise or government share ownership.<sup>26</sup> The left could not really match the detailed analysis offered by the "New Thinkers" on the right.

Bevan's fundamentalist formulas prevented him from seeing that the range of possible alternatives to free-market capitalism was now much broader than an overnight transition to socialism.<sup>27</sup>

The basis of the argument, stressed more by right-wing writers than left, was the electoral viability of the Labour programme. Although the vagueness of the left's analysis tended to weaken their arguments on an intellectual level, the appeal of left-wing leaders like Bevan was not primarily intellectual anyway. In contrast the right-wing writers had little popular appeal in terms of inspiring the faithful:<sup>28</sup>

What is the common factor which Labour people share and which sharply distinguishes us from the Tories? It is Socialism. If it is not that then there is nothing...the more we play it down, the less we

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25. Crosland 1956, especially in the section "Liberty and Gaity in Private Life: the need for a reaction against the Fabian tradition", p 521.

26. Crosland 1956, pp 487-497.

27. Campbell 1987, p 266. Patrick Seyd in The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left, Macmillan Education, London 1987, p 13, supports this view: "but lacking any extensive research of the structural changes in the British economy [the left] tended to react to initiatives from the right of the Party. General slogans rather than detailed policies became the norm for the Labour left on economic issues."

28. Another lesson for the CDS in the form of the failure of the leadership to impress the rank and file.

differ from our opponents and the less reason there is for people to vote for us to get the other lot out.<sup>29</sup>

Appeals like the one quoted above were guaranteed to fill halls with the faithful, but the content of the left-wing critique had a basic failing which Gaitskell summed up, rather harshly: "Can anyone honestly say that if the Labour Party had chosen a policy which reflected more or less the line of the Communist Party we should have received a larger vote?"<sup>30</sup> Even though Gaitskell took his anti-Communism to its height in a speech at Stalybridge, in September 1952, in which he warned of the dangers of fellow travellers,<sup>31</sup> the battle between the opposing domestic doctrines was less bitter than that conducted over foreign policy. It is interesting to note that it was foreign policy which tended to dominate the internal battle rather than domestic policy. This leads support to Drucker's contention that the Labour Party never really faced up to the question of what, after 1945-1951, implementing socialism meant in practice. The Party became in a sense trapped by its own consensus building achievements and without an effective alternative to competent Tory rule.<sup>32</sup> It struggled with itself to come up with a distinctive alternative which could outflank the Conservatives and appeal to the electorate now living in relative peace and prosperity.

This formed the basic electoral problem which the Party has faced ever since. The view of fundamentalists was that if the electorate were offered a fully socialist programme based on an enlightened form of public

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29. Bevan, Iribune, December 3 1954.

30. Gaitskell, Iribune, June 24 1955.

31. In comparison with the United States there was not that much cold war rhetoric in British politics at this time and Gaitskell himself admitted that he was a little extreme at Stalybridge. Gaitskell 1983, entry for October 1952, pp 331-332.

32. Even when the Conservative Government was incompetent as over Suez the Labour Party could not sustain the attack and turn it into an election victory, see Leon D Epstein. British Politics in the Suez Crisis, Pall Mall Press, London 1969, pp 67-77.

ownership and a profound restructuring of society, it would vote for it. The view of the revisionists was that the electorate would not vote for radical change and that anyway society was so changed by the Second World War that the Labour Party working within the mixed economy could fulfil a substantial programme of social reform and ensure ever increasing living standards for the people.<sup>33</sup> These differing opinions underpinned the Party divide. The fundamentalist view came to be associated with the Bevanites.

The Parliamentary Bevanites<sup>34</sup> formed a challenge to the domination of the Labour Party by the axis of moderate leadership, big trade unions and right-wingers. The challenge took the form of persistent criticism of the direction of the Party after the fall of the Attlee Government. The group was not organised primarily as a factional bid for the leadership. Foot's biography of Bevan, Campbell's book on Bevan and the Mirage of British Socialism and the Crossman diaries,<sup>35</sup> all refute

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 33. Patrick Seyd, 1987 p 22, offers an alternative view which has the division in the party between socialists and social democrats summed up thus: "Socialists are committed to the transformation of property relationships and social democrats are committed to the modification of property relationships, 'Managing Capitalism set against replacing Capitalism.'"

34. There are a number of different ways of measuring Bevanite Parliamentary strength. The range goes from 25 hard core members, estimated by Ben Pimlott in The Political Diaries of Hugh Dalton, 1918-1940, 1945-1960, Cape, London 1986, p 563, which rose to a maximum of 57 over the 1952 defence debates, Hansard 5th Series Vol. 497 Col. 559-560, to 47 floating members listed by Jo Richardson, the group's secretary, and quoted in Jenkins 1977 pp 309-311. The membership of the group, Pimlott's 25, seems the best guide rather than Jenkins' figure, which includes all Labour MPs who voted against the whip. Jo Richardson's list includes some Keep Lefters but excludes others; it also excludes those pacifists who voted with the Bevanites in 1952. The Jo Richardson list is broken down here into leading members, following Bevan's phrase after the group was disbanded, "those of us who really matter" and the other less vocal Bevanites. The leading members are in turn broken down by those who gradually stopped being Bevanites and voted with Attlee in the March 1955 H-Bomb debate and those who remained largely loyal.  
 a) Voted with Attlee: Richard Crossman; John Freeman; Tom Driberg; Stephen Swingle; Hugh Delargy; Leslie Hale; Bob Stross and A. J. Irvine. Gradually stopped being open Bevanites: Harold Wilson; Geoffrey Bing and Desmond Donnelly, (who attacked Bevan at conference in 1954).  
 b) Did not vote with Attlee: Michael Foot; Jennie Lee; Ian Mikardo; Barbara Castle; Harold Davies; J. P. W. Mallalieu; and Emrys Hughes.  
 c) Other members: Donald Bruce; George Craddock; F. E. Jones; Archie Manuel; Elles Smith; John Timmons; Tudor Watkins; Edward Yates; Will Griffiths; George Roberts; Richard Acland; Marcus Lipton; Thomas Williams; Geoffrey Roberts; Cecil Poole; Julian Shaw; David Weitzman; Maurice Orbach; Julius Silverman; John Baird; C. R. Bence; Fenner Brockaway; J. Carmichael; Ernest Fernyhough; Malcolm Mcmillan; John Rankin and Walter Marlow.

35. Foot 1975, p 367: "But what was false was the suggestion that all his moves, manoeuvres, protests, resignations, attacks were calculated however ineptly to further his personal ambition: the Deakin/Dalton caricature". Foot can to an extent be expected to play down his leader's personal ambitions, but Campbell 1987, generally more hostile to Bevan also notes his growing disillusionment with politics, pp 284-285, the different advice he was receiving from his friends, pp 303-304, and the overreaction of the Dalton/Deakin caricature, p 255. see also Crossman 1981 p 63 and p 290.

Gaitskell's belief, expressed to Crossman, that Bevanism was above all a conspiracy to gain the leadership for Bevan.<sup>36</sup>

The left's opposition to the Attlee Government had been focused on the foreign policy of Ernest Bevin, not the leadership of Attlee.<sup>37</sup> The basis of the "Keep Left" argument was that the government had been too ready to abandon the idea that "left can talk to left", in favour of the Cold War. This opposition was neither fully organised nor based on a spontaneous grass roots disillusionment with the Attlee Governments. The development of left-wing opposition into the Bevanite group did not materially change its outlook or its organisation, but did enhance its credibility by improving the calibre of its members.

The Bevanite group was not a direct challenge to the leadership but rather an attack on the complacency of the Labour Front Bench in the period 1951-1955, and a blueprint for left-wing activity in subsequent decades. For the Labour leadership it was insidious because it was unpredictable and a challenge because it was articulate. However, the Bevanites have tended to be vastly overrated, both at the time and since, because of their symbolic value and journalistic prowess.<sup>38</sup>

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36. Crossman 1981, entry for January 21 1952, p 63 felt that Nye was a reluctant Bevanite, which is hardly consistent with a conspiracy theory, and that after October 1952 he avoided meetings, Crossman 1981, entry for March 3 1954, p 290. He also quoted Gaitskell's view that Bevan was making a bid for power, Crossman 1981, entry for March 24 1955, pp 409-410, but ruining it by his inability to play on the team until the period 1957-1960 when any hope of the leadership had disappeared. What emerges from this is the development of Bevan's ambitions over the period; a factional attempt to seize the leadership does not. The real change comes in 1955 with the leadership election and the removing from the Bevanites of the tantalising hope of Bevan's leadership. Gaitskell according to Crossman said: "Bevanism is and only is a conspiracy to seize the leadership for Aneurin Bevan. It is a conspiracy because it has three essentials of conspiracy, a leader in Bevan, an organisation run by Mikardo and a newspaper run by Foot", Crossman 1981, entry for March 24 1955, pp 409-410.

37. See Geoffrey Wakeford, The Great Labour Mirage: An indictment of Socialism in Britain, Hale, London 1969, and Jonathan Schneer, Labour's Conscience: The Labour Left 1945-1951, Unwin Hyman, London, 1988.

38. Driberg wrote for Reynolds News, Crossman for the Daily Mirror and Sunday Pictorial, Crossman and Freeman for the New Statesman and Mikardo and Foot for Tribune.

The first public schism of the Attlee governments represented the first dent in the New Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> The resignation of Bevan, Wilson and Freeman over the effects of the cost of rearmament on the health service could hardly have been more public.<sup>40</sup>

The issue of the Gaitskell budget and its demand for charges on the health service marked the beginning of post-war Bevanism. The rearmament programme was also a rather symbolic failure of the Attlee Government to be properly socialist by "attacking" its most central achievement, the health service. The fact that the cuts were contained in the same budget which laid out plans for increased rearmament, a three year £3,400 million programme, seemed to the Bevanites to compound Gaitskell's sin.

The economic crisis of 1951 was caused, according to left-wing critics of the Government, who formed the Keep Left group,<sup>41</sup> by the rearmament programme. Gaitskell summarised this view in a memorandum presented to the Parliamentary committee of the Labour Party in November 1951 as follows:

...the views of Messrs, Foot, Crossman and their friends may be summarised as follows: We have a dollar crisis which is caused by rearmament. It is now suggested we should be granted and accept dollar aid so as to enable us to go on with rearmament. This would be wrong because if we accept dollar aid we shall be dependent on the U.S.A. We must therefore refuse the dollars and solve the economic problems by cutting our defence programme.

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39. Robert J. Jackson, Rebels and Whips, Macmillan, London 1968, lists 8 domestic and 31 foreign revolts during the Attlee governments. These were unorganised, Stephen Haseler The Gaitskellites Macmillan, London 1969 pp 19-20.

40. A distinction should be made between the reasons for the resignations. Wilson's stance was more limited than Bevan's, and Wilson did not follow Bevan's lead when Bevan used his resignation speech substantially to widen the area of dispute from the imposition of charges on the health service to the general thrust of the government's foreign policy.

41. Kenneth Harris, Attlee, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1982 p 306.

He goes on to state that the crisis was not caused by rearmament:

The dollar deficit was caused by heavier purchases by the whole sterling area of dollar goods, higher prices for these goods, lower prices for the main sterling area materials, the loss of Persian oil and capital movement.<sup>42</sup>

The position of Foot and other "Keep Lefters"<sup>43</sup> was that the crisis was caused by the excessive demands of the £3,400 million rearmament programme, summed up in the New Statesman Parliamentary column by Tom Williams as "Rearm we must, if we bust we bust".<sup>44</sup> The alternative positions taken over rearmament were to be a recurring theme over the decade. The debates of July 1952, March 1953, April 1954 and March 1955, ran over the same themes with the different positions of Labour members having changed little.<sup>45</sup>

A similar split could be observed over the rearmament of Germany. The partition of Germany and the permanence of the Iron Curtain could not be taken for granted in 1951. The four power occupation of Germany had turned into a combined occupation of two opposing camps and the West was moving towards making the Western half of the country a cohesive unit, while in the Eastern Sector the Russians crushed all opposition and failed to hold any free elections. The left of the Labour Party felt that not enough effort had been made to reach an agreement with the Russians, that Britain was following too closely the cold war policies of the United States. The American

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42. Gaitskell 1983 pp 293-294.

43. The 1950 pamphlet "Keeping Left" highlighted the issues that were "to become the great divisive issues of the fifties, the scale of military expenditure, German rearmament and nuclear weapons." See Hugh Berrington, Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons 1945-1955, Peragmon Press, Oxford 1973, p 84.

44. New Statesman, July 14 1951.

45. These debates were as follows, all Parliamentary Debates, 5th Series, Hansard: July 9 1952 Debate on the Economic situation, volume 504, columns 1272-1405 and columns 1691-1694, March 5 1953, Debate on Defence White Paper, volume 512, columns 567-690, April 13 1955 Debate on SEATO volume 537 columns 970-975 see also Crossman 1981 p 312, March 1 and 2 1955 Defence Debate volume 537, columns 1893-2012 and 2066-2190.



alliance was so central to the world view of the Gaitskellites that it seemed necessary to take a full role in the creation of a rearmed and economically viable West Germany, which would be able to take its full role in the reconstructed Europe, because this was central to American foreign policy. The issue of German rearmament created a strange and temporary alliance between the Bevanites<sup>46</sup> and Dalton, and enabled them to achieve their most important foreign policy success when the Labour Party adopted Dalton's NEC statement of May 1952 which seemed to move the party policy towards opposition to German rearmament.<sup>47</sup> The Paris Agreements on German rearmament were eventually passed by the House with only six pacifists voting against.<sup>48</sup> For the Bevanites opposition to German rearmament was based on the economic consequences of rearmament and the mistaken policy of Communist containment, while for Dalton it was based on a fundamental mistrust of the Germans.<sup>49</sup>

The issues which underpinned the disputes over rearmament were world issues: the Cold War; Communist containment; the restructuring of Europe; European unity and the British "special relationship" with the United States. They tended to dominate the thinking of leading Bevanites and overshadow domestic issues, such as public ownership, especially after the official disbanding of the group in 1952. It is ironic to note that the issue of nationalisation was an increasingly non-controversial one as the divisions on defence and foreign policy deepened.<sup>50</sup>

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46. Although the Bevanites were not united on this issue, see Berrington 1973 pp 102-106.

47. Ben Pimlott, (editor), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton 1918-40, 1945-60, Cape, London 1986, entry for Friday May 2, pp 585-586, and Crossman 1981, entry for Thursday May 1 1952, p 102-103.

48. Gaitskell 1983, entry for November 12 1954, pp 348-349.

49. Dalton 1986, entry for Monday June 30 1952, pp 592-597.

50. New Left Review, November-December 1964.

It is perhaps a little misleading to talk of the Bevanites as a group in such self-conscious terms. A group definitely existed which held regular meetings in Parliament and, after the Party meeting of October 23 1952,<sup>51</sup> private lunches. The group had officers, it organised in the constituencies mainly through Tribune Brains Trusts and it had a propaganda operation in the form of Tribune. It was recognised as a group by the officials of the Labour Party and by the press. The membership of the group included individuals of widely different political outlooks. It was at the time and has been subsequently seen as a party within a party, whereas it was more of an association of politicians who were critical of Labour foreign policy and generally took interventionist stances on domestic issues. This group came to represent, for many activists in the constituencies, an articulate and appealing form of socialist fundamentalism.

This faith was expressed through elections to the NEC's constituency section. All 28 members of the NEC, with the exception of the leader and the deputy leader, were elected annually at the Labour Party Conference. Conference was dominated by the Big Six unions: Transport Workers, Mineworkers, Engineers, General and Municipal Workers, Shopworkers and Railwaymen, who between them controlled 3,029,000 out a total trade union vote of 4,407,000 and a total Conference vote of 5,444,000 votes.<sup>52</sup> Therefore although conferences in the 1950s could have had the atmosphere described by Michael Foot above,<sup>53</sup> so long as the leadership controlled the block vote they were more important as a forum for debate than as a decision making body.

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51. Haseler 1969 p 19, quotes resolution: "The P.L.P...calls for the immediate abandonment of all group organisation within the party".

52. Lewis Minkin, The Labour Party Annual Conference, Allen Lane, London 1978, p 24.

53. Foot 1975, p 379.

The NEC had 4 sections:

1. A trade union section in which twelve members were nominated and elected by the affiliated trade unions.
2. A constituency organisations section in which seven members were nominated and elected by affiliated Constituency Parties and Federations of Constituency Parties and Central Labour Parties in divided Boroughs.
3. A women's section in which five women were nominated and elected by the whole Conference.
4. A Socialist, Co-operative and professional organisations section in which one member was nominated and elected by the socialist /Co-operative and professional organisations affiliated to the Party.

In addition the Party Treasurer was nominated and elected by the votes of the whole of Conference.<sup>54</sup> The only section not dominated by the block vote was section 2, the Constituency Labour Parties. The Bevanites were successful in staging a coup in this section at the 1952 Party Conference. Barbara Castle successfully transferred from the Women's section, two of the resigning ministers Bevan and Wilson won places along with the journalists Crossman and Mikardo, and Tom Driberg completed the Bevanite team. Each was a well-known member and Minkin has stressed that this was a key criterion for election for this section.<sup>55</sup> A combination of the left-wing activism of the constituency sections, the candidates' high profile and some organisation, although by no means the amount feared by the right, allowed these Bevanites to replace the ex-ministers Shinwell, Dalton and Morrison. Bevan himself attempted to challenge the strength of the block vote further by contesting the Treasurership. He was unsuccessful against Hugh Gaitskell in 1954 and 1955<sup>56</sup> but defeated three right-wing candidates in 1956.<sup>57</sup>

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54. Minkin 1978, p 243.

55. Minkin 1978, p 244.

56. Foot 1975, pp 438-439.

57. In 1954 Gaitskell beat Bevan by 4,338,000 to 2,032,000, Gaitskell 1983, entry for Summer and Autumn 1954, p 334. In 1955 he beat Bevan 5,475,000 to 1,225,000, Crossman 1981 entry for Saturday October 7 1955, p 448. In 1956 in a four way split Bevan finally won. Bevan 3, 029,

According to Minkin organisation was not decisive in the constituency section elections: "The Constituency Labour Parties were not impervious to organised influence, but the results of the election to the section were a complex product of inertia, spontaneity and custom as well as organised stimulation".<sup>58</sup>

The difficulties of organising in the constituencies which the left experienced, even with the resources of Tribune, were another lesson the 1950s held for the CDS.<sup>59</sup> While the leadership effectively controlled the elite of the Party, and the policy apparatus, with the exception of occasional upsets at Party meetings,<sup>60</sup> they could not seem to muster the enthusiastic rank and file support of the annual Tribune rally. The Socialist Union<sup>61</sup> and the Fabian Society<sup>62</sup> attempted to motivate the rank and file, but in the 1950s could not rival the left. It was in part the very power which the right of the Party controlled that made their rank and file supporters difficult to motivate. They did not need to muster every available member for votes as they could rely on the block vote. There was also perhaps an arrogance of power which reduced the time ex-ministers spent looking after and paying attention to the rank and file. Finally the issues tended to favour the left in terms of "crowd appeal" and excitement.

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000, Brown 2, 755, 000, Pannell 644,000 and Rhydderch 44,000, LPACR 1956 p 112. He did not achieve an absolute majority and might have been defeated if there had been a single right-wing candidate.

58. Minkin 1978, p 245.

59. Ian Mikardo in interview with author.

60. See R K Alderman, "Parliamentary Discipline in Opposition: The Parliamentary Labour Party 1951-1964", Parliamentary Affairs, Volume 21, 1968, pp 124-136.

61. Reg Freeson in interview with author.

62. The Fabian Society was not overtly right-wing but was designed as a debating forum and think tank for the whole Party, Bill Rodgers in interview with author.

This was especially the case later in the decade when unilateral nuclear disarmament became a popular cause for rank and file members and offered the politically committed plenty of action in the form of the Aldermaston marches and rallies in Trafalgar Square. This might at first sound like a factious point but it should be remembered that those individuals in society who take part in political activity are a tiny minority and that their motivation can quickly evaporate if they are only offered boring meetings through which to express their enthusiasm. This danger was particularly acute during a period of opposition when the Party at Westminster was largely impotent. The CDS organisers learnt from the 1950s that it took more than General Elections to keep the faithful motivated; the very second paragraph of the CDS manifesto states clearly the awareness of the signatories of the failure of the right to motivate the rank and file:

This is the culmination of a long period in which the voice of moderate opinion in the Labour Party has been drowned by the clamour of an active and articulate minority...we seek to assert the views of the great mass of Labour supporters against those of doctrinaire pressure-groups.<sup>63</sup>

After the 1952 Conference the strength of the Bevanites in the constituency section did not decline, but the radicalism of the constituency section in comparison to other sections was less noticeable because the ex-ministers had lost their seats and the Bevanites' position became secure.

The organisation of Conference resolutions was important in policy terms. The domination of the platform in the early 1950s was enhanced by the tendency of the committee which decided on resolution-compositing to choose for debate the most extreme left-wing resolution. The

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63. CDS Papers: Origins File, A Manifesto Addressed to the Labour Movement.

Bevanites therefore attempted an early distinction between hard and soft left when they tried to get moderate left-wing resolutions accepted, resolutions that would appeal broadly. The Bevanites also tried to influence the wording of composites in favour of motions which at least stood a chance of a decent vote.<sup>64</sup> This and their activity on the NEC and at Party meetings was generally more successful on domestic than on foreign policy issues.

In a sense this was due to the "Clause Four factor" which made more radical domestic policy propositions harder to oppose than foreign policy. Moreover the Labour Party as a whole was more open to left-wing initiatives on the domestic front. Generally in fact the Party was more left-wing than the revisionists would have liked. The foreign policy critique of the Bevanites continued after their gradual decline as a Parliamentary group. Indeed it was foreign and defence policy, in the form of the H-bomb, which caused the break between the leading Bevanites, Crossman, Driberg, Freeman and Swingler, and ultimately Bevan himself, and the rest of the left.

The Bevanites did not seek to take over the Party but were fighting to push it in the vague direction its leading members favoured. In fact the Bevanites were operating in a similar way to the right of the Party, but the key difference was that the right controlled the block vote while the Bevanites had more influence in the constituencies, although Bevanite influence in the Constituency Labour Parties should not be exaggerated.<sup>65</sup> The right's control of the block vote and influence over the apparatus of the Party meant that it saw itself as acting in the interests of the whole Party, whereas their

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64. Crossman 1981, entry for Saturday September 27 1952, pp 144-145.

65. A measure of Bevanite support is given by Jackson 1968, p 119 and p 123. Support for Bevan recorded by Gallup among party members between September 1952 and October 1952 showed a 11% drop, this had fallen a further 11% by April 1954 to stand at 24% against 54% for other party leaders.

power base in the local parties meant that any action by the Bevanites appeared as schism, and by extension as a challenge to the central establishment.

The Bevanites functioned both as left-wing critics and as a source of considerable irritation to the right-wing leadership in the Parliamentary Party and in the Unions. They came to represent, for the rank and file, the leadership and values of socialism which many felt had declined as the Party experienced power. But the Bevanites themselves, for example Crossman in his diaries, stressed the difficulty they had in organising in any coherent way.

The fact is that Bevanism and the Bevanites seem much more important, well-organised and Machiavellian to the rest of the Labour Party, and indeed to the USA, than they do to us who are in the group and who know that we are not organised, that Aneurin can never be persuaded to have any consistent or coherent strategy and that we have not even got to the beginning of a coherent, constructive policy. What we have, and it is very important, is a group of MPs who meet regularly, who know and like each other and who have come to represent "real socialism" to a large number of constituency members. This produces an extraordinary bitterness among those who take the Gaitskell line.<sup>66</sup>

This "extraordinary bitterness" was represented by, for example, Gaitskell's Stalybridge speech in September 1952, in which he described the Bevanites as "frustrated journalists", and later, in March 1955, to Gaitskell's campaign to have Bevan expelled from the Party. At times the right's obsession with Bevanism reached paranoid proportions and it was the centre of the Party, the "Keep Calm" group which pulled it back.<sup>67</sup> Campbell, for the

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66. Crossman 1981, entry for Tuesday December 4 1951, pp 47-48.

67. On the backbenches George Strauss, Michael Stewart and John Strachey organised the Keep Calm Group to try and maintain unity; see Hugh Thomas, John Strachey, Eyre Methuen, London 1973, p 269, Foot 1975 p 392, Crossman 1981, entry for Thursday January 29 1953, pp 196-197 and Gaitskell 1983, entry for November 12 1954, p 349.

most part critical of the Bevanites, agrees that "the right overreacted in its conviction that Bevanism was a cancer".<sup>68</sup>

The Bevanites' constituency support did more than feed their socialist faith, it also furnished them with places on the NEC. As the decade progressed, the activists perception of leading Bevanites' and their perception of themselves tended to diverge. The divergence between leading Bevanites actual roles in the Party elite and the party activists' perception of that role, was most pronounced in the cases of Harold Wilson and Richard Crossman, who came to occupy an awkward middle ground. The final disillusionment for the rank and file was when Bevan himself supported the leadership, of which he was by then again a part, in the H-bomb debates of 1957.<sup>69</sup>

The rearmament issue extended into the debate on the NATO and SEATO alliances and into the general nuclear debate which came increasingly to the fore after 1957. However the issue of German rearmament was different to that of nuclear power. The failure of Bevan to give the lead over nuclear disarmament that he gave over the German question and the Cold War must be understood in this context.

Bevan's break with the left over the bomb was not just connected with the difference in his position in the Party, and his changed attitude to politics.<sup>70</sup> The nature of the unilateralist case was different. It was not primarily based on "realpolitik" considerations but on a moral and pacifist analysis of the bomb, whereas the other issues of foreign policy had been "conventional political issue[s]".<sup>71</sup> Bevan had shown in the debates of

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68. Campbell 1987 p 255.

69. Foot's highly emotional account of the debate, Foot 1975 pp 572-577, gives a full picture of feelings on the left, but he also quotes one right-wing MP: "When Bevan sat down, I had to get up and go away. I couldn't stand it any more. I felt as if I had been present at a murder, the murder of the enthusiasm that has built the Labour movement" p 577.

70. Foot 1975 pp 440-443.

71. New Left Review, November-December 1964.



1955 that he had grave doubts about the first use of the weapons but he believed that Britain should have them if it was to maintain its place as a leading nation.

The eventual outcome of the Bevanite challenge belied the intensity with which the conflict was conducted in the 1950s. The domestic differences were largely ironed out and the Labour Party under the leadership of Wilson returned to the centralist, balancing of interests path of Attlee. However the issue refused to disappear. The maximalist versus minimalist controversy surfaced again in the governments of Wilson and Callaghan. The symbolic stance of the Bevanites was represented in the person of Foot as leader and in the Labour manifesto of 1983, the first time a maximalist programme had been presented to the electorate, and the electorate resoundingly rejected it.<sup>72</sup> Following this defeat Neil Kinnock was elected leader of the Labour Party. Kinnock's style of leadership was not unlike that of Hugh Gaitskell - he led from the front. He also engaged in an extended battle with a maximalist group in the Party, the Militant Tendency. The comparison can be taken one stage further. In the same way that Hugh Gaitskell tried to dominate his Party by a speech at Conference, so Neil Kinnock asserted his authority over the Party at the 1985 Bournemouth Conference. In so doing he aligned himself with Gaitskell's view that the priority for the Labour Party should be the pursuit of power and compromise on policy was a necessary expedient in winning power.<sup>73</sup>

The election year of 1955 started with the leadership divided but ended with the foundations laid for the unity which characterised the closing years of the decade. This

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72. See Austin Mitchell, Four Years in the Death of the Labour Party, Methuen, London 1983.

73. See Michael Leapman, Kinnock, Unwin and Hyman, London 1987, pp 104-105.

unity was ensured by the final break-up of the Bevanites, which allowed an accommodation to be devised between Bevan and Gaitskell over the period 1955-1956 which culminated in the Gaitskell-Bevan axis of 1957-1959. This unity at the top of the Labour Party was generally reflected, in the movement as a whole, in the honeymoon period after the leadership election. However, vocal criticism of Party policy, from the inside and the outside of the Labour Party itself, continued in the late 1950s through "Victory for Socialism", a revival of Bevanism, and through the CND. Thus at no time in the 1950s was the Party lacking some form of left-wing organisation which was more or less hostile to Gaitskell and the Gaitskellites.

The Labour Party did not suffer from a lack of popularity in Gallup polls in the Parliament leading up to the election of 1955. Out of the 42 months between November 1951 and May 1955 the Labour Party held the lead in 28 months ranging from 10% in July 1952 to 0.5% in October 1954 and held a virtually unbroken lead until January 1955. Even at the height of the Bevanite controversy, during 1952, the Labour Party held an average lead of 6%.<sup>74</sup> It also had a Front Bench team comparable in experience, quality and profile to the Conservative Front Bench. The record membership figures and increases in the level of trade union affiliation in the early 1950s provided sound, if not exactly flourishing, finances.<sup>75</sup> In the early 1950s a certain amount of complacency developed in administration of the Party. Gaitskell was to comment when elected Treasurer that the job had not really been done for 10 years,<sup>76</sup> which meant that the Labour Party's organisation was poor and inefficient. But

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74. Anthony Seldon, Churchill's Indian Summer, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1981, pp 441-443.

75. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, British Political Fiance 1830-1980, American Enterprise Institute, 1981, pp 155-178.

76. Gaitskell 1983, entry for November 9 1954, p 344.

this should not be exaggerated, the Labour Party was not in bad shape, it did not even suffer in the main from its recent record of internal division and strife.

Nevertheless the Conservatives started the 1955 campaign with most of the advantages and few handicaps. Eden had taken over from Churchill and made only minor changes in the Cabinet. The Churchill and Eden Governments gave the Conservatives a powerful domestic legacy to exploit in the General Election. The Governments had not introduced a full-blooded capitalist economy and could therefore put themselves forward as one nation Tories. Their key advantage was the generally favourable economic conditions, "the economy was run at full employment with a minimal rate of wage or price inflation; without, after 1952, balance of payments difficulties, and in the absence of a wages policy."<sup>77</sup> Although problems of over stimulation of the economy were to occur in the summer, for the election in May the economic picture was sound. Moreover, the Conservatives had not returned to confrontation with the Unions but had reached a state of industrial harmony with Walter Monckton dealing with the trade union leaders. Most of the Union trouble was with unofficial strikes and there were a number of these through the election period. These were strikes over differentials and other industrial issues associated with affluence. The Observer commented at the time of the 1955 election: "In the economic field Britain is very prosperous, the prosperity is widely diffused, with full employment and higher wages than ever before."<sup>78</sup> The welfare state and social services had been left untouched and even expanded in some areas. Macmillan was highly successful in his house building programme. The Chancellor, Rab Butler, introduced a give away budget before the election which caused many problems later but

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77. Seldon 1981, p 177.

78. Observer, May 8 1955.

provided a surplus of £134m to be distributed by reducing the base rate of income tax and by increasing personal allowances.<sup>79</sup> The Conservative Governments did nothing to weaken their electoral chances.

Labour continued until a month before the election to shoot itself in both feet. As the Opposition to a Government that had pursued a successful domestic policy, the Labour Party had a very difficult task and the election was fought and won by the Conservatives on domestic issues. The Labour Party could have adopted various electoral tactics and these alternatives formed the basis for much of the debate after a further electoral defeat in 1959. They could have attempted to make the election a choice between individuals rather than policies, to promote an efficient team able to run the country better than the Conservatives. They could have challenged Conservative policy and offered either radical or moderate alternatives to set the agenda for the campaign, putting the Government on the defensive and mobilising discontent. They also needed their share of luck or gaffes from the Government.

The Labour Party in 1955 managed to achieve few of these objectives. It was difficult to promote a team when a leading player, Bevan, organised his own meetings and failed to keep in touch with Transport House, the Party leadership having just tried to expel him.<sup>80</sup> The Labour Party came up with a programme that was neither distinctive nor original, "a rehash of an indigestible dish" was Hunter's description<sup>81</sup> of the manifesto. In policy terms the Party suffered from the skill with which the Conservatives had stolen the Attlee Government's clothes. Eden was highly successful at playing down the

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79. New Statesman, April 23 1955

80. Gaitskell 1983, entry for Saturday March 19 1953, pp 364-375.

81. Leslie Hunter, The Road to Brighton Pier, Arthur Baker, London 1959, p 112.

election and thereby keeping Labour's full electoral strength away from the polls. There was also the overwhelming problem that most people thought the result was a forgone conclusion: "the absence of doubt about the outcome may have been largely responsible for the tranquillity".<sup>82</sup> A low turnout in an uninteresting campaign produced the expected Tory victory.

With the defeat of Labour in 1955, which was a disappointing and disorganised campaign, the attention of the Party became focused on Attlee's retirement. Attlee received little blame for the defeat; as an elder statesman, the Party campaign had in fact focused on his experience, with an election poster carrying the message "Four Power Talks. Send Attlee". The pipe and cherry cottage may not have looked particularly impressive on television, but the post-mortem of 1959 was not foreshadowed in 1955. The post-election analysis, such as it was, tended to blame division within the Labour Party and the Conservatives' success with the economy.<sup>83</sup> Gaitskell ranked causes of defeat as the economy, dissension and organisation.<sup>84</sup> Wilson's report on the Party echoed this, but Attlee gave the clearest explanation of defeat: "The Tories had won because they had taken over as their own policies that which Labour had preached and practised from 1945 on".<sup>85</sup>

After the election defeat the attention of the Party turned to the leadership of Attlee. The prelude to the 1955 leadership contest had been long and often bitter. The general expectation before the 1955 election was that Morrison, after 20 years of service to the Party, would step into office for a short time and then be superseded

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82. David Butler, The British General Election of 1955, Macmillan, London 1955 p 91.

83. Jackson 1969, p 138 and Geoffrey McDermott, Leader Lost, Frewin, London 1972, pp 88-94.

84. Williams 1979, pp 353-354.

85. Harris 1982, p 535.

by a younger leader. The prospect of Bevan leading the Labour Party after the expulsion crisis of March and the Parliamentary row of April 1955, was remote.

However the possibility of winning the leadership concentrated Bevan's mind and although he was torn between the role of romantic rebel, the course favoured by his wife Jennie Lee, and respectable leader, the course favoured by other Bevanites, he knew that if he was to stand a chance of winning the leadership he had to delay the contest until the memory of the expulsion crisis had receded.

In the week after the election the expected leadership contest opened when Dalton published a letter to the press urging the older members of the shadow cabinet to resign.<sup>86</sup> Dalton excluded Attlee from his appeal but Attlee was ready to retire and, at the first shadow cabinet meeting and the first Party meeting, he offered to resign. Bevan, seeking to delay the race, was the first and most vocal voice to call on him to stay on, while Morrison was silent. Attlee agreed to stay on and recorded in his diary that night "this is almost certainly the end of Morrison".<sup>87</sup> The delay was bad for Morrison because his age counted against him and he therefore needed a quick election before the effects of the generational changes caused by the Dalton letter could be felt. The initially-delayed departure of Attlee was further put off because the Parliamentary session was extended. In August 1955 Attlee had a stroke and in September in an interview with Hugh Cudlipp, just before the Party Conference, he restated his desire to retire

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86. "Operation Avalanche" was a typical piece of Dalton scheming, the letter he wrote to the Daily Mirror said in part, "I myself have decided not to be a candidate for our shadow cabinet in the new Parliament and I hope that a number of my fellow veterans will decide likewise." Quoted in Pimlott 1985, p 622.

87. Harris 1982, p 536.

and specified that his successor should be neither Morrison or Bevan by indicating that he did not want a "Victorian, or a futile left-winger."<sup>88</sup>

Both Gaitskell and Morrison did well at the Margate Conference of 1955 but more importantly Gaitskell was able to score heavily in the Parliamentary debates on the Finance Bill which repudiated much of the give away budget that had preceded the election.<sup>89</sup> As the Labour leader was elected solely by the Parliamentary Labour Party at this time, this success and his gradual destruction of Butskellism, counted for more than his "Why I'm a socialist" speech at the Conference. As Wilfred Feinburgh writing in the New Statesman, had put it before the election: "After Hugh Gaitskell had replied to Butler there remained little to be said about the budget. Gaitskell did more than disturb the equanimity of the Chancellor, which is in itself a feat: he also disposed of Butskellism."<sup>90</sup>

According to Attlee's biographer the old leader was not particularly close to or keen on Gaitskell as leader and would perhaps have wanted Bevan if he had played more effectively on the team.<sup>91</sup> Attlee certainly did not want Herbert Morrison and as loyalty was the virtue he favoured most he was perhaps moderately in favour of the arch loyalist Gaitskell. Attlee certainly felt that Gaitskell would win. All the signs before the actual election were in Gaitskell's favour. Perhaps the most significant challenge was the one originally favoured by

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88. Harris 1982, p 539.

89. Bernard Donoghue and George Jones in Herbert Morrison: Portrait of a Politician, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1973, p 538, contrast Gaitskell's success in the House of Commons with Morrison's failure. In the main their account of the leadership election agrees with Gaitskell's biographer, Williams 1979, pp 537-541, and is reinforced by a contemporary observer, Leslie Hunter, in The Road to Brighton Pier, Arthur Barker, London 1959, pp 158-159, pp 162-164 and pp 170-171.

90. New Statesman, April 30 1955.

91. Harris 1982, p 543.

Dalton, that of Jim Griffiths, himself something of a veteran MP and former Colonial Secretary, as a stop gap leader.<sup>92</sup> Dalton became disillusioned with this option when it became clear that Griffiths was himself too old and that Gaitskell had a chance of winning in his own right first time.<sup>93</sup> Jay identified in December 1955 a landslide in favour of Gaitskell in the Parliamentary Party, due to his performance in the House.<sup>94</sup> Attlee resigned on December 7 sure that the Labour Party was in good heart and that his resignation would unleash no new divisions.<sup>95</sup> With a keen group of supporters ranging from young members, to the wily old Dalton, Gaitskell was in a commanding position.

Gaitskell seems to have been a little ambivalent about his success or failure,<sup>96</sup> he knew that if he failed this time he would still be in the running in the future, especially if Morrison was to win. As a professional politician he knew he had to stand and, despite this hint of ambivalence, he wanted to win. The election campaign had only one really interesting event, the attempted combination between Morrison and Bevan, which not even Foot could defend either in Tribune or in his biography of Bevan. This intrigue had been hatched, according to Williams, before Attlee's retirement had even been announced. Jay initially thought it was a very clever move but opinion turned against such a cynical manoeuvre, especially when on the Thursday afternoon, with nominations due to close the next day, Bevan announced he would withdraw if Gaitskell agreed to do the same, giving Morrison a free ride and presumably Bevan the deputy leadership. The alliance between the old and bitter

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92. Dalton 1986, entry for Tuesday November 11 1952, p 601.

93. Dalton 1986, entry for End of October 1955 p 674.

94. Douglas Jay, Change and Fortune, Hutchinson, London 1980 p 245.

95. Harris 1982 p 541.

96. Jay 1980 p 245 and Williams 1979 p 361.



rivals achieved nothing, except perhaps a slight increase in Gaitskell's support; the end result was a substantial victory for Gaitskell.<sup>97</sup>

The celebrations were played down by Gaitskell as he attempted to keep Morrison as deputy leader, but Morrison refused and resigned. This, combined with earlier resignations, meant that between May and December 1955, Attlee, Morrison, Dalton, Ede, Shinwell, Hall, Soskice and Whiteley had all disappeared from the shadow cabinet.<sup>98</sup> The period also saw the final break up of the Bevanites, with Crossman, Castle and Wilson furious with Bevan for his intrigues with Morrison. The leadership election closed the Bevanite schism, marked the change of generations and provided the basis for a period of relative calm and unity within Labour ranks as the Conservative Party faced its profoundist crisis since taking office in 1951, the Suez invasion.

Suez was in many ways very good for the Labour Party in that it proved that the leadership could work together and that Gaitskell could be an effective leader of the whole Party. In the Parliamentary debates Gaitskell and Bevan worked well as a team<sup>99</sup> and despite the charges levelled at Gaitskell that he was playing a party line,<sup>100</sup> Williams<sup>101</sup> shows that he was consistent in opposing the use of force against Nasser unless the United Nations approved it. Foot gives rare praise to Gaitskell in his description of the Suez debates:

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97. Gaitskell 157, Bevan 70, Morrison 40.

98. This was in part due to Hugh Dalton's "Operation Avalanche". Dalton wrote to the Daily Mirror encouraging his older colleagues to stand down, "I myself have decided not to be a candidate for our shadow cabinet in the new Parliament and I hope that a number of my fellow veterans will decide likewise," quoted in Pimlott 1985, p 622.

99. It is interesting, as Leon Epstein, British politics in the Suez Crisis, Pall Mall, London, 1969, p 77 notes, that "Gaitskell's 'hysterical' attack on the Suez operation was even contrasted unfavourably with the more philosophical critique of Aneurin Bevan."

100. Epstein 1969, p 67.

101. Williams 1979, pp 418-444.

Indeed, the speeches of Gaitskell and Bevan throughout the crisis - the combination of Gaitskell's relentless, passionate marshalling of the whole legal and moral case against the Government's expedition to Suez and Bevan's sardonic and reflective commentary upon it - complemented one another and constitute together the most brilliant display of opposition in recent Parliamentary history.<sup>102</sup>

But the Suez debates did not dispel the feeling among the left of the Party that Gaitskell was too closely associated with the right. Moreover, for Gaitskell the concept of leadership was not simply to reconcile the opposing sides but to educate the Party by force of argument. Dalton, in the last years of his life warned Gaitskell against too close an association with a particular group in the Party even if such a group was necessary to a leader who was trying to command from the front and urged him to widen his contacts with the backbenches.<sup>103</sup>

The Suez period and the years leading up to the General Election of 1959 saw the blurring of the internal party lines which had characterised the early years of the decade. Frank Cousins, (the new General Secretary of the TGWU), Bevan and Gaitskell combined over the policy document Industry and Society opposing Morrison's commitment to a shopping list of industries that Labour would nationalise. The Morrisonian concept of the shopping list of nationalised industries was to be superseded by forms of social ownership which were flexible and essentially economic rather than social policy. The concept of nationalisation envisaged before the Second World War was gradually eroded as the Party attempted to meet the challenge of Tory affluence.<sup>104</sup>

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102. Foot 1975, pp 516-517.

103. Dalton 1986, entry for Easter Recess April 1958, pp 688-689.

104. This issue is fully discussed in Tudor Jones, "Revisionism in the Labour Party", Contemporary Record, Volume 5, Number 3, 1992.

In the foreign and defence field the old alliances broke up as Bevan bitterly parted from his rank and file supporters over the unilateralist debates of the 1957 Conference. Crossman<sup>105</sup> described the 1957 Conference as a monumental success for Gaitskell. Although the Bevan-Gaitskell axis had been developing over the Industry and Society policy, its flowering, such as it was, dates from this Conference. The axis between the two leaders did not mean that either abandoned their respective styles or that they became particularly close; it did however provide a united front in the House of Commons and in the country.<sup>106</sup>

Bevan still criticised Gaitskell's leadership, but only in private<sup>107</sup> and the public schism between the two was not repeated. Immediately after his election, Gaitskell enjoyed a honeymoon with his party and even with the Tory press. This honeymoon was ended over the Suez crisis and the animosity for Gaitskell in the Conservative Party, caused by his opposition to the use of force, meant that he never really recovered the dubious Butskell label. The press and the Conservative Party became increasingly critical as Gaitskell worked hard at maintaining the unity of his Party and he was charged with being prepared to lead Labour wherever it wanted to go.<sup>108</sup>

For Gaitskell the honeymoon with his own party was equally short-lived as the problems of leading it in the second full Parliament of opposition became apparent. Gaitskell's assessment of himself as leader, and of his very rapid rise to the top was simple:

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105. Crossman 1981, entry for Friday October 4 1957, p 615.

106. Campbell 1989, pp 347-50.

107. For example Crossman 1981, entry for Wednesday March 25 1959, p 743.

108. Recent accounts agree with Williams line that Gaitskell was more or less consistent, see for example David Carlton, The Suez Crisis, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1988 p 49 and Scott Lucas, Divided we Stand, Hodder and Stoughton, London 1991, pp 157-158.

The leadership came my way so early because Bevan threw it at me by his behaviour. Ask yourself about the Labour Party now - if not me then who? Qualities? Perfectly ordinary ones - intelligence, hard work, capacity for getting on easily with people-and-some moral courage. Of course there are great weaknesses - don't I know! But the whole subject is boring.<sup>109</sup>

Gaitskell himself suffered from the ever present need to keep the Labour Party united and balance the needs of effective opposition with party political gain. He was handicapped by the constraints of continued opposition which made the last years of the 1955 Parliament dull,<sup>110</sup> and by Mikardo's and Foot's attempt to revive Bevanism in a new grass roots organisation, "Victory for Socialism". Gaitskell's reaction was to meet Victory For Socialism head on: "Gaitskell was determined to stamp out any factional organisation in the constituencies, and wanted to warn local parties that it would be unconstitutional to associate with VFS."<sup>111</sup>

The internal state of the Party was not helped by the bus strike of July 1957. The dispute, like the strikes at the time of the 1955 election, tended to reflect badly on the Labour Party, and to accentuate a problem of image: "In a time of prosperity, Labour was still blamed for post war austerity, still seen as doctrinaire, still suspected of anti-British instincts."<sup>112</sup> Even a sympathetic account of the strike, by Frank Cousins' biographer, acknowledges the skill with which Macmillan used the dispute against the Labour Party.<sup>113</sup>

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109. Williams 1979, p 371.

110. They were also quieter in terms of revolts inside the Labour Party. There were 15 revolts recorded in the House of Commons between 1951-1955 as against 9 in the 1955-1959 Parliament. Recorded in Jackson 1968, p 114 and p 152.

111. Williams 1979, p 477.

112. Williams 1979, p 472.

113. Geoffrey Goodman, The Awkward Warrior, Frank Cousins, His Life and Times, Davis-Poynter, London 1979, pp 177-191.

Events like the bus strike highlighted the extent to which the right's paranoia of the Bevanite years had been replaced by a paranoia about any schism returning. This was exaggerated from January 1958 onwards by the knowledge that a General Election had to be held soon. The fact that Macmillan shrewdly held out until October 1959 was in effect devastating for Labour's chances. The period between January 1958 and the election was characterised by foreign travel by the leadership and a general lack of excitement. In the country this was reflected as left-wing activists turned to CND, which was launched in January 1958, and by the leftward swing of the TGWU under Cousins. In the same period the Conservatives, "engaged in a public relations campaign on a scale that was altogether new to British politics".<sup>114</sup> In effect the Government fought a twenty-seven month election campaign, spending around £500,000 during the period June 1957 to September 1959 on nation-wide poster campaigns. The Labour Party in contrast spent only £102,000 from late 1958 to the spring of 1959.<sup>115</sup> The party images also provided a contrast. For the Conservative-inclined sections of the press the new bogeyman on the left was Frank Cousins, who, after initially working with the Bevan-Gaitskell axis, began to move in his own direction after January 1958 and with increasing militancy.

The Conservatives successfully weathered an economic storm, abandoning deflation as the election approached. For the Labour Party the period between the 1958 budget and the election saw the opening moves in the unilateral disarmament dispute. The crisis in Labour defence policy was caused by the formation of CND as a pressure group dedicated to the unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons, and by the Sandys defence White Paper which

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114. David Butler, The British General Election of 1959, Macmillan, London 1960, p17.

115. Butler 1960, figures p 21 and p 28.

moved British defence policy towards an increasing reliance on nuclear rather than conventional weapons. These twin pressures made precarious the delicate compromise on defence policy devised after the 1957 Conference. Cousins and other Union leaders supported unilateralism and in July 1959 the TGWU delegate Conference adopted a defence policy which was largely opposed to the official Labour Party policy of the non-nuclear club.

Gaitskell replied to the open challenge from Cousins<sup>116</sup> and illustrated his inner stubbornness and schoolmasterly tone in a speech at Workington on July 11 1959:

The problems of international relations...will not be solved by slogans, however loudly declaimed, or by effervescent emotion, however genuine.[but by] very hard, very clear, very calm and very honest thinking...our Party decisions on these matters are not dictated by one man whether he be the Leader of the Party, our spokesman on Foreign Affairs, or the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union. They are made collectively.

In the same speech he stated his view of Conference sovereignty and its limitations, identifying over a year before the "fight and fight again" speech, which was claimed to be the the official inspiration for the CDS, his willingness to campaign openly to reverse decisions of Conference:

...we should argue out and settle ultimately in our Conference the great issues of policy. But it is not right that a future Labour government should be committed by Conference decisions one way or the other on every matter of detail for all time...A Labour Government will take into account the views of Conference...but Annual Conference does not mandate a Government.<sup>117</sup>

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116. Crossman 1981, entry for Friday July 17 1959, p 767.

117. Williams 1979, p 504.

The speech and the approaching General Election tended to defuse the first wave of Cousins' new muscle-flexing. Crossman found Gaitskell invigorated by the contest and was impressed by Gaitskell at this time: "The whole talk was that of a man who is rather rapidly growing up, growing tougher and growing stronger."<sup>118</sup>

The Labour campaign of 1959, for all the criticism which was heaped on it after the result, was a better organised, financed and fought campaign than 1955. The Conservatives initially attempted to keep the campaign quiet as they had done successfully in 1955, but the Labour Party, the leadership and the membership, fought a vigorous campaign which demanded a response. Gaitskell, appearing in all the television broadcasts and in an exhausting national tour, spearheaded the campaign. Crossman headed a campaign committee which co-ordinated the effort by taking charge of "the Research Department, which issues campaign notes, and of the television and radio and the leaflets, as well as trying to impose the general policy direction on the campaign."<sup>119</sup>

Despite the efforts of the Labour Party the dominant issue was, from the outset, economic well being. The Conservatives were not seriously challenged as the party of affluence.<sup>120</sup> Gaitskell was the best Labour campaigner but he was also responsible for the worst gaffe of the campaign when, in pledging not to raise income tax, he gave the Tories the opening they needed for their counter attack. From this point the Conservatives regained the advantage for the last week and after a campaign dominated by long term views of economic well being, the Conservatives recorded their biggest victory since the war, increasing their majority to 100.<sup>121</sup>

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118. Crossman 1981, entry for Thursday August 13 1959, p 770.

119. Crossman 1981, entry for Tuesday September 22 1959, p 779.

120. Butler 1960, pp 68-79, Williams 1979, pp 522-529.

The decade of division which closed with this election defeat had seen the Labour Party lose three general elections in a row. After the defeat of 1951 there had been an expectation that power would be regained at the next election. After the defeat of 1955 attention had focused on the leadership of Clem Attlee. There was nothing to distract the Party after the defeat of 1959 and a period of bitter internecine warfare followed. In the course of this warfare both sides organised campaigns to pursue their favoured policies, and for the first time, the right-wing of the Party took the battle to what had been traditionally been seen as the stronghold of the Labour left - the Constituency Labour Parties.

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121. The full result was: Conservative 365, Labour 258, Liberals 6, Independent 1. Source, David Butler and Richard Rose, The British General Election of 1959, Macmillan, London 1960, p 189.



## Chapter 2:

### From Election Night to Party Conference.

In the middle of the 1959 campaign Gaitskell "told Roy Jenkins he expected to win."<sup>1</sup> The result was therefore a crushing blow and defeat launched Labour on another bitter period of internal strife. The Party had failed to overcome the image of Tory affluence despite having unity, an agreed programme and the enthusiastic support of Party workers. Although Crossman was more positive in his summing up of the result: "The image we presented was quite right. The policies were quite interesting and all we were dogged by was the simple truth: Tory voters are far more afraid of another Labour Government than Labour voters are afraid of another Tory Government".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Williams 1979 p 526.

2. Crossman 1981, entry for Friday October 9 1959, p 786.

It was the third Election defeat in a row and the fourth in which Labour had seen their number of seats reduced. Gaitskell conceded defeat on television at 1am in the morning: "It is obvious there will be a Conservative Government."<sup>3</sup> Williams summed up the effect on the Labour leader: "It was the worst disappointment of Gaitskell's public life, a profound shock very deeply felt."<sup>4</sup>

In his diary Hugh Dalton records that on Friday October 9 Gaitskell rang him and said "Come round on Sunday Morning and I'll try to get some of the intelligent young men along". So at 11am on Sunday October 11 1959 a "post-mortem" meeting was held at Gaitskell's house at 18 Frogmal Gardens.<sup>5</sup> Present at the meeting were Hugh Dalton, Tony Crosland, Patrick Gordon Walker, Douglas Jay, Roy Jenkins, Herbert Bowden and John Harris.<sup>6</sup> In the evening Gaitskell was given dinner by Woodrow Wyatt and Tony Crosland,<sup>7</sup> and during the day Douglas Jay and Tony Benn visited the House.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, "Nye Bevan was invited but didn't come"<sup>9</sup> so the accidental impression was created of a meeting of the right to plan a response to the election.<sup>10</sup>

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3. Williams 1979, p 529, Bevan hated his use of television, Foot p 627, Daily Herald, October 9 1959, Front page.

4. Williams 1979 p 529.

5. Susan Crosland, Tony Crosland, Cape, London 1982 p 92 and Williams 1979, p 538 call it a farewell dinner for Dalton, Lord Jenkins and Lord Jay in interview with author deny it was a dinner for Dalton, Pimlott, Dalton, Macmillan, London 1985, p 633, mentioned the meeting but not as dinner for Dalton. In fact it was unlikely that a dinner for Dalton would have been held so long after he actually gave up his seat for Jim Boyden and Dalton makes no mention of it. Dalton 1962, p 467 and the account in his diary is specific, Ben Pimlott, (editor), The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, Cape, London 1986, entry for October 11 1959, p 694, that the meeting took place on the Sunday.

6. Pimlott 1985, p 633 does not mention Harris but Williams 1979 p 538 and Dalton 1986, entry for October 11 1959, p 694, do.

7. Crossman 1981, entry for Monday October 19 1959, p 788.

8. Williams 1979, p 539.

9. Foot mentions Gaitskell's visit to Bevan, Foot 1975, p 628, but does not mention the invitation of Frogmal Gardens.

10. Lord Jay in interview with author.

This impression of the meetings was later dismissed by Williams: "It was neither a group of friends meeting at random nor the planning session for grand political strategy assumed by the left who, like the press, learned of it at once...The participants were too punch drunk by the campaign, far too close to the result, and far too individualistic in their reactions for that." Things would perhaps have been clearer if Gaitskell had taken charge and organised the response of his supporters to the defeat.<sup>11</sup> Michael Foot's account of the way the meeting was perceived on the left made clear that the detailed questions as to what precisely occurred at the weekend meeting, were beyond the scope of the biographer of Bevan, "but it is indisputable that a bold initiative was set in motion by the right wing of the Party, and it does appear that the lever which helped to let it loose was pulled at that Sunday night meeting in Frogmal Gardens."<sup>12</sup> He goes on to say that "the idea was to erase the working-class image of the Party, to remove the 'danger of fighting under a label of a class that no longer exists'; to seize the moment to carry forward the revisionist ideas of recent years no longer solely by relentless pressure but by a coup d'etat."<sup>13</sup>

If such a calculated strategy had been planned, and it seems unlikely that it was, then it singularly failed to materialise. Gaitskell's failure to control the response of his friends to the defeat meant that their views emerged piecemeal in the weeks that followed. Ironically this lack of control actually contributed to the impression, in left wing circles, among trade union MPs and Labour Party officials,<sup>14</sup> that what was going on was an organised response, which had as its object the

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11. Williams 1979, p 538.

12. Foot 1975, p 630.

13. Foot 1975, p 632.

14. Crossman 1981, entry for October 23 1959, p 796.

fundamental reform of the Party. This was highly detrimental to the chances of success for Gaitskell's more considered response to the defeat which centred on the revision of Clause Four. The whispering campaign by the left, especially about the proposal to break links with the trade unions, turned many in the Labour Party against any form of substantive change.

What had actually occurred during the weekend has tended to be obscured by what was thought to have been happening. The conversations which took place over the weekend were "rambling" and "punch drunk".<sup>15</sup> A number of issues were touched on and Douglas Jay said he was thinking about writing an article for Forward.<sup>16</sup> Among the other things discussed were nationalisation's effect on the result, a Lib-Lab Pact and Clause Four. Dalton summarised the conversations in his diary: "Party constitution might be revised, some new formula on public or common ownership substituted for the 1918 text. Party constitution might also be changed by having National Executive elected by Unions, local Parties regrouped regionally and Parliamentary Party with shift of authority towards Parliamentary leadership...Hugh very wisely listens more than talks to groups like this."<sup>17</sup> Crosland warned Gaitskell against touching Clause Four, while Woodrow Wyatt was rather in favour of its reform. There was no mention of the role of the unilateralists in the discussion. The nuclear debate seemed to have little relevance for the "Hampstead Set's" deliberations at this stage.<sup>18</sup>

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15. S Crosland 1982, p 92 and Williams 1979, p 538.

16. Lord Jay in interview with author.

17. Dalton 1986, entry for October 11 1959, p 695-696.

18. Williams 1979, p 539.

Lord Jenkins has described the weekend<sup>19</sup> as an informal inquest as to why the election had been lost:

A general consensus among those who were present was that there were about four reasons for it. One of which was the unpopularity of nationalisation, one was the unpopularity of trade unions, one was the unpopularity of Labour local councils and the Party was slightly too stuck in an old fashioned proletarian grove. A certain amount of germination of ideas that lead on to the Clause Four battle took place. The whole debate was conducted much more casually than conspiratorially.

This "rambling", "casual" and "punch drunk" set of weekend meetings nevertheless created the impression among critics of Gaitskell that he had devised an agenda for revising the Labour Party's basic ideological shape. This was to be achieved by abandoning the commitment to nationalisation, breaking the links with the trade unions and even forming an alliance with the Liberals. While all these possibilities were discussed during the weekend they did not form part of an agreed agenda. Gaitskell was not organised enough in his own thinking in the post-election period to have come up with such an agenda, as is shown in his conversations during the week after the post-mortem weekend. The "break with the Unions plank" was largely discounted by Gaitskell who derived a great deal of his support from trade union leadership and trade union sponsored MPs. In any case the main source of this part of the "hidden agenda" was Ivan Yates's article in Reynolds News which appeared on Sunday October 11 1959, and could hardly therefore be seen as a part of the conspiracy.

Yates produced an analysis of the election which fitted the left's critique much more closely than Jay's, but his articles have been ignored in accounts of the controversy.<sup>20</sup> Yates was a member of "the Group"<sup>21</sup> and

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19. Lord Jenkins interview with author.

20. See Stephen Haseler, The Gaitskellites, Revisionism in the British Labour Party 1951-1964, Macmillan, London 1969, p 158-171. Haseler ignored Yates completely. He was also mistaken in

had close associations with younger members of the Party but he was not a member of the Hampstead Set and had not been at Frogmal Gardens on the post-mortem weekend.<sup>22</sup>

Yates wrote a political column in the Labour-friendly Sunday paper Reynolds News and his column on Sunday October 11 1959 was the first round in the controversy. Yates asked himself why Labour had lost the election, and stated, "to put it bluntly, because the electors did not like its face. They didn't like one thing above all, its close links with the Unions...The block vote and strikes official and unofficial." To strengthen his case he pointed out that the left had been particularly critical of the block vote system at the height of the Bevanite rebellion. He claimed that a Tribune pamphlet of four years earlier, which had advocated the reform of the block vote system, had been printed but not published.

As well as advocating a change on nationalisation, Yates called for a reform of the constitution and Clause Four. While the constitution is being looked at "the phrase committing the Party to the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange should be scrapped. No one any longer believes in it literally".

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a number of minor respects. For example he states that "Jay called for a total and complete ban on nationalised industries" when he had actually called for no new public monopolies but extensions of social ownership through the "Co-operative movement, municipal enterprise and public investment." The difference is crucial because it was the right's main defence against the left. Haseler also states that "at no time during the whole Clause Four controversy did Gaitskell ask for the removal of Clause Four". The original constitutional amendment before the March 16 NEC meeting would have replaced Clause Four, Gaitskell compromised when he accepted the "Amplification of Aims" to run alongside Clause Four and was defeated when this was simply published by the NEC rather than being incorporated into the Party's constitution.

21. An informal debating society which formed the social centre from which the London group of the CDS developed. See below, p 97-101.

22. Although he did give a memorable description of the left's perception of this weekend: "The picture posed...is of a coven of old Wykehamists converging in the dark of Mr Gaitskell's house in Frogmal Gardens. We see them plotting round the fire where the cauldron bubbles merrily away. There is Woodrow Wyatt eating devilled kidneys off silver plate. Tony Crosland's in the kitchen boiling himself an egg. While in a corner of the sitting room Mr Gaitskell himself cuts a rug...I don't suppose its quite like that but Hugh Gaitskell does have his friends round and they did come round just after the election; they even, believe it or not, discussed politics and thought up some ideas." Ivan Yates, Reynolds News, October 18 1959.

The response to Yates' article was generally hostile. The editor of Reynolds News, William Richardson, stated in an editorial that he opposed breaking the link with the Unions.<sup>23</sup> Three hostile letters were printed alongside Yates' next article in which he made no apology but played down the idea of breaking of links with the Unions (which he had not overtly advocated but had hinted at) while stressing the need to revise Clause Four.

After Yates' articles came the most important consequence of the weekend - the publication of Jay's article in Forward. However it was not under instructions from the "coven of Frognal Gardens"<sup>24</sup> that the article appeared; in fact Jay had been asked by the editor of Forward, Francis Williams, to write a piece about the election. Jay's plan was to write up the impressions of his local Party workers in Battersea, and so on the Friday after the post-mortem weekend Jay visited his Party workers to find out what they thought. The article was a record of what "some people who had really canvassed felt about the election". Two things changed between the conversations with the Party workers and the publication of the article. First, Francis Williams persuaded Jay to put his name to the article. Because Jay was so closely associated with Gaitskell it was then widely assumed to be a kite for the leader. Second, Jay spoke to Eric Fletcher the Labour MP for Islington North.<sup>25</sup>

It was Fletcher who persuaded Jay that nationalisation had been a major issue in the election. There is no suggestion that Fletcher attended any dinners at Frognal Gardens and he was not regarded as a member of the Hampstead Set. On October 16 Jay's article appeared in

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23. Reynolds News, October 18 1959.

24. See note 22.

25. This account of the Forward article incident is drawn from Lord Jay Interview with author and Lord Jay Change and Fortune, Hutchinson, London 1980, p 271-275.

Forward. The article questioned the future role of nationalisation in Labour's policy and suggested changing the Party's name to "Labour and Radical".<sup>26</sup> The notorious Forward article when it is re-read now does not appear so radical. Indeed, as Jay pointed out in his memoirs, many of the charges made against it at the time were false.<sup>27</sup> The article did not propose a break with the trade unions but it did propose moving Conference to May so that the appearance of Conference simply rubber stamping TUC proposals would be reduced. This criticism of the Labour Party/Union link seems rather mild; the link was unpopular for other and more profound reasons that Jay did not mention in his article, such as the block vote and the support of unpopular strikes. Nor did the article propose the abandonment of all forms of public ownership but it did propose that no new state monopolies should be created. The proposal to change the name of the Party was to add "radical" or "reform" to "Labour". These proposals now seem at most cosmetic public relations changes rather than the coup d'etat that the left tried to make them appear. The most controversial ideas were to leave steel nationalisation out of future Party policy and to change the nature of the NEC by making it a federal body, eliminating the section elected by the Labour Party activists. The article illustrated the poor co-ordination between the revisionists when it came to organised action.

After the Forward article came out, Fletcher made a speech which supported Jay and was reported on the front page of the Observer: "Jay's diagnosis is correct. Talk of nationalisation lost us the election more than any other factor."<sup>28</sup> Shirley Williams was invited by the Sunday Times to give her view on the same day. She

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26. Forward, October 16 1959

27. Jay 1980, p 275.

28. Observer, October 18 1959.



supported Jay on nationalisation: "nationalisation is probably the single most unpopular plank in Labour's policy", but she felt that "a break with the unions is a counsel of despair".<sup>29</sup> Jay had never advocated a break with the trade unions although the left charged that he did and the impression has remained to the present day.<sup>30</sup>

The other theme in the left's charge against Gaitskell, which had its main source in newspaper articles, was the possibility of a pact with the Liberals. In fact this story dominated the front pages of the Sunday Papers after the election and must have been discussed on the Sunday of the post-mortem weekend. The basic tone of these pieces was that the country needed a "union of radicals" and Grimond was prepared to do a deal. The Sunday People<sup>31</sup> went so far as to report meetings at the highest level between right-wing Labour people and leading Liberals. Jay's suggestion that the Party change its name to Labour and Radical fed this speculation.<sup>32</sup> Woodrow Wyatt who attended the post-mortem weekend advocated this course to Gaitskell, but Gaitskell rejected this option out of hand.<sup>33</sup>

The way the front bench reacted to the changing fortunes of Gaitskell over the following months contributed to the failure to support the leader that Rodgers and Taverne identified in an open letter to Gaitskell in February 1960.<sup>34</sup> The perception that the front bench had somehow failed to defend the leader was a key element in motivating the CDS organisers.<sup>35</sup> The process of decline

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29. Sunday Times, October 18 1959, p 10.

30. Witness Seminar Transcript, Haseler.

31. Sunday People, October 11 1959, Front Page: "Is it a Lib-Lab Deal?"

32. Forward, October 16 1959.

33. Williams 1979, p 540.

34. Ronald Waterhouse Papers: Letter to Gaitskell.

35. Rodgers in interview with author, Taverne in interview with author.

in Gaitskell's leadership began with his handling of the post-mortem on the 1959 General Election and only recovered fully after the Blackpool Conference of 1961. The period between the conferences of 1959 and 1960 are characterised by Gaitskell's slow climb back to the position he had enjoyed on October 8 1959: unassailable Party leader.

In the week after the post-mortem weekend Gaitskell visited Crossman and proposed, in the course of a six hour conversation, a complete revision of the constitution, redefinition of aims and a federal structure; but he was against dropping nationalisation or breaking the links with the Unions.<sup>36</sup> During the rest of the week he held various meetings, including one with Bevan, and put forward schemes for reform of the Party's structure. It is intriguing that in these early conversations his emphasis seemed to be on elite structure, the NEC and the shadow cabinet, rather than on ideology. Bevan proposed that the shadow cabinet should be appointed by the leader rather than elected. Gaitskell was not at all keen on this idea.<sup>37</sup> On the Monday evening following the publication of the Jay article Roy Jenkins appeared on Panorama and again questioned the future of nationalisation and said that at the very least the Party should drop the idea of steel nationalisation.<sup>38</sup>

In the immediate post-election period the piecemeal appearance of various articles and statements simply fuelled the speculation. The fully worked out revisionist case that appeared during the early 1960s did little to alleviate the opposition of the left.<sup>39</sup>

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36. Crossman 1981, October 19 1959, p 789.

37. Williams 1979, p 541.

38. Williams 1979, p 542 and Crossman 1981, entry for October 19 1959, p 789.

39. The main works were: Douglas Jay, Socialism in the New Society, Longmans, London 1962 and C.A.R. Crosland, The Conservative Enemy, A Radical Programme for the 1960's, Cape, London 1962.

Yates had said three things would come out of the meeting of the "coven": "One that Douglas Jay should write an article. Two that Roy Jenkins should take over from Harold Wilson as shadow chancellor. Mr Wilson becoming some sort of super organisation man and shadow leader of the House. Three that Dick Crossman should carry on in the future the work he did during the election in charge of Labour's campaign committee."<sup>40</sup>

Jay's article, influenced by Fletcher rather than Gaitskell to attack nationalisation, had appeared and provoked Crossman to move back into his old role of troublesome rebel.<sup>41</sup> As far as Wilson was concerned, Gaitskell was questioning his future and this was stirred up by Crossman, who reported all the conversations he had with Gaitskell to Wilson. It was possibly Gaitskell's wife Dora, who Ian Mikardo described as "a great hater", who was scheming against Wilson.<sup>42</sup> The important thing was that the rumours sparked off Wilson's fears and partially rekindled the Bevanite alliance of Barbara Castle, Harold Wilson and Dick Crossman. Wilson later claimed that but for this episode he would not have challenged Gaitskell for the leadership.<sup>43</sup>

Gaitskell's standing within the Parliamentary Party was not outwardly affected and on October 21 he faced his first Party meeting since the election and received a standing ovation. Douglas Jay's Forward article was denounced and Crossman felt this meant the Jay-Jenkins line had been defeated<sup>44</sup>.

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40. Reynolds News, October 22 1959.

41. Crossman 1981, October 21 1959, p 793-794.

42. Ian Mikardo interview with author.

43. Williams 1979, p 542, Wilson plotting, Crossman 1981, entry for December 9 1959, p 804.

44. Crossman 1981, entry for October 21 1959, p 794, Crossman does not record who denounced Jay and Jenkins.

The controversy which emerged in the weeks after the General Election merged into the longer term debate about the future of the Labour Party. The wider debate, which Gaitskell tried to address in his Clause Four reform, centred on two main interrelated questions: What was the best way for the Labour Party to achieve power? and What was the best way of building on the achievements of the Attlee Governments? On the revisionist wing of the party the most influential responses to these questions came from Dr Mark Abrams<sup>45</sup> and Tony Crosland<sup>46</sup> who held the view that Labour had lost the election because it was still too left-wing and dated.

Dr Abrams' analysis appeared through the summer of 1960, in Socialist Commentary under the title "Why Labour Has Lost Elections". His main conclusions seemed to support the contention that Douglas Jay had made in his Forward article, that relying on the working class was an electorally dangerous tactic. Abrams wrote "and the survey provides additional material to suggest that attachment to the Labour Party" on the grounds of standing for the working class was "a fragile bond... Already almost two thirds of the Labour Party's working class supporters consider themselves to be outside the working class (the outstanding identification mark of the Labour Party) and another quarter, while admitting their working class general status, distinguish themselves clearly from the Labouring classes."<sup>47</sup> Part 4 of the Abrams study concentrated on young voters who had come on to the electoral roll while Labour were in opposition. The study did not offer much more hope here: "If we ignore the 10% whose political views were so uninformed that they could not be described even as leaning towards any party, then it appears that 52% of young people today

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45. Socialist Commentary, May - July 1960.

46. Can Labour Win, Fabian Society 1960.

47. Abrams, Socialist Commentary, May 1960, p 6.

are Conservatives, 43% are Labour supporters and 5% are Liberals. This Conservative lead has two sources; 35% of all working class young people are ready to identify themselves with the Conservative Party, and only 10% of middle-class young people support the Labour Party."<sup>48</sup> Further, when the young people were asked what they most liked or disliked about the Labour programme, 47% of the 18-24 age bracket didn't know, but of those who did express a dislike, 26% identified nationalisation. It should be stated that this negative image of nationalisation owed a lot to the powerful anti-nationalisation propaganda carried by newspapers, television and even in cinemas.<sup>49</sup> Abrams' conclusion concerning young people of the 1959 generation was straightforward, "there is among young people today a complex of barely conscious Conservative sympathies which have still not yet fully expressed themselves in overt Party affiliations."

This impression was reflected throughout the Party and it is significant that the opening debate at the post-mortem conference was designed to launch a new Labour Youth Movement.<sup>50</sup> The other main conclusion of the Abrams study, that nationalisation was unpopular, was disputed by the left-wing of the Party. However neither wing of the Party denied that the better-financed and longer Conservative campaign had undermined the Labour campaign from the start. Many newspapers<sup>51</sup> mentioned the way the election campaign had been fought by the Conservatives for years before the election, whilst Labour had only really tried in the weeks of the campaign. The combined

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48. Abrams, Socialist Commentary, July 1960, p 5.

49. Butler and Rose 1960, p 17 and p 241-255, especially p 254 for the non-Conservative Party campaign against nationalisation.

50. LPACR, 1959.

51. For example Reynolds News, October 11 1959, p 8.

efforts of Wilson's reorganisations<sup>52</sup> and Crossman's campaign committee<sup>53</sup> could not match the long term campaigning of the Conservative Party. Although Labour's campaign in 1959 was well received, the need for modernisation in both policy and presentation, the theme that was to recur throughout the history of the CDS, permeated the post-election debates on both the right and left.

As far as the right was concerned the Abrams analysis supported their views on the need to adapt the Labour Party to the post-war world. The main prophet of this modernisation and the intellectual powerhouse of the revisionists was Tony Crosland; his views on the defeat were part of his ongoing analysis of British Socialism. He had already argued that there had been a change in the nature of capitalism:

Such primary poverty as remains will disappear within a decade, given the present rate of economic growth; and the contemporary mixed economy is characterised by high levels both of employment and productivity and by a reasonable degree of stability. In other words the aspirations relating to economic consequences of capitalism are fast losing their relevance as capitalism itself becomes transformed.<sup>54</sup>

Crosland believed that it was the affluence of the new society which had contributed to the defeat of a backward looking Labour Party and that if the Party was to win it had to stress modern visions of socialism, like social welfare, and not harp on about "nationalising the commanding heights of the economy."

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52. Eric Shaw, Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party, Manchester, MUP 1988, p 81.

53. Crossman 1981, entry for September 15 1959, p 774.

54. C.A.R. Crosland, The Future of Socialism, Cape, London 1956, p 105.

The new society, brought about by the development of world markets in the 20th century and by the Second World War, had produced a new economic organisation. Crosland called this the mixed economy, to imply a mixture of state and private ownership and he was adamant that the Labour Party had to adapt its vision of socialism to this new situation if it was ever going to win power.<sup>55</sup>

The reaction of the left to the defeat of 1959 was also consistent with their developing analysis of the post-war British scene. The left through Tribune, in the General Election debate at the post-mortem conference,<sup>56</sup> and Michael Foot in the Daily Herald,<sup>57</sup> argued that Labour had lost by being too middle of the road and not radical enough. They also warned against accepting the revisionists' prescriptions.<sup>58</sup> In the Daily Herald Foot called the election a defeat for the country: "while placards on every hoarding were prophesying the doom which nationalisation would bring, while Labour leaders were lisping their much too mild peeps in favour of the principle of public ownership, a nationalised rocket hit the moon and another circled it." This was to be the recurring theme of the left: the Labour Party had not lost because it was too left-wing but because it was not radical enough. Some on the left took this to the extreme of believing that the purity of the doctrine was more important than the winning of elections. This view was clearly expressed in the first issue of New Left Review by Ralph Miliband: "Nor in any case can election

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55. This idea was not by any means confined to the revisionists of the Labour Party. It formed a central tenet of the pluralist view of society represented in the writings of Professor Galbraith and Professor Lipset. Ralph Miliband in his critique of these pluralist ideas sums up the post-capitalist argument: "This was a belief, not simply in the occurrence of major changes in the structure of contemporary capitalism, which are not in question, but in its actual transcendence, in its evolution into an altogether different system and, needless to say a much better one,". Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society, Quartet books, London 1969, p 11.

56. For example Daily Herald, October 15 1959, reported the launch of a Tribune campaign for full-blooded Socialism and K Zilliacus, in the General Election debate LPACR 1959, p 128.

57. For example Daily Herald, October 16 1959, p 4.

58. For example Barbara Castle, "Still Socialist", New Statesman, October 17 1959, p 497-98 and R H S Crossman, "Stimulus of Defeat", New Statesman, October 17 1959, p 498-99.

prospects ever be the ultimate criterion of policy. In this respect the victory of 1945 has had very bad consequences in that it has so powerfully reinforced Labour's ministerial obsession."<sup>59</sup> This was echoed inside the Labour Party by left-wingers like Ian Mikardo.<sup>60</sup>

The left therefore greeted with suspicion the overtures from the right about the need for revising the part played by nationalisation in the Party's programme. It was feared that the leadership was planning an ideological revolution that would remove the "traditional" or "fundamentalist" planks of Labour Party policy.

What Gaitskell actually wanted to do was to expand the basic aims of the Party to include the concerns which had emerged since the Second World War. This desire was based on the analysis of The Future of Socialism in which Crosland had made clear that the Attlee Government had produced something of a crisis in left-wing circles about the meaning of socialism in the affluent society: "Labour Governments have been in power and have found responsibility harsher and quite different from anything they expected, while full employment and social security have destroyed the rationale of much of the old emotional enthusiasm".<sup>61</sup>

For both working-class and middle-class activists the success of the Attlee Governments in fulfilling the demands of the 1930s created a psychological barrier to the acceptance of the need to change socialism. The experience of government, the very creation of a partially socialist society, meant that many of the old

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59. "The Sickness of Labourism", New Left Review, Volume 1, Number 1, 1960, p 8.

60. Ian Mikardo interview with author.

61. Crosland 1956 p 99.



dreams were dead. Crosland realised that revisionism, which pointed this out, was resented: "Now the certainty and the simplicity are gone; and everything has become complicated and ambiguous...90% of resolutions at Party conference today are Quixotic tilts at objects still hopefully seen as 'outrageous giants of that detested race.' Unfortunately there are too few Sancho Panzas to point out that they are really windmills."<sup>62</sup> He saw the way out of the confusion and the first step in re-establishing the agenda of socialism as the production of an exact definition of socialism. Gaitskell latched onto this when he asked for a revision of the Party's basic aims. Crosland believed that the only constant element, "common to all the bewildering variety of different doctrines which had been known as socialism", consisted of certain "moral values and aspirations"; and people had called themselves socialists because they shared these aspirations. Therefore a belief in the "possible future that designates socialism" rather an attachment to a particular set of means was what was important.<sup>63</sup>

The values which Crosland identified were as follows: a protest against the material poverty and physical squalor which capitalism produced; a wider concern for social welfare for the interests of those in need or oppressed or unfortunate from whatever cause; a belief in equality and the classless society and especially a desire to give the worker his just rights and a responsible status at work; rejection of competitive antagonism and an ideal of fraternity and co-operation and a protest against the inefficiencies of capitalism as an economic system. Gaitskell echoed many of these concerns directly in his

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62. Crosland 1956 p 99-100.

63. Crosland 1956 p 101.

"Amplification of Aims" and in his speech at the post-mortem conference. In this speech Gaitskell listed his view of what should have been socialist aims:

...first, we express what G.D.H. Cole once called 'a broad, human movement on behalf of the bottom dog'...Thus, at home, our first concern is naturally for the less fortunate - the old, the sick, the widowed, the unemployed, the disabled and the badly housed; abroad, it is reflected in a deep concern for the well-being of peoples much, much poorer than ourselves, badly in need of help. Secondly, we believe in social justice, in an equitable distribution of wealth and income. Thirdly, we believe in a 'classless society' - a society without the snobbery, the privilege, the restrictive social barriers which are still far too prevalent in Britain today. Fourthly, we believe in the fundamental equality of all races and all peoples...we believe quite simply in the brotherhood of man. Fifthly, British Socialism has always contained an essential element of personal idealism - the belief that the pursuit of material satisfaction by itself without spiritual values is empty and barren and that our relations with one another should be based not on ruthless self-regarding rivalry but on fellowship and co-operation. Sixthly, we believe that the public interest must come before private interest. Finally we believe that these things must be achieved with and through freedom and democratic government.<sup>64</sup>

The most obvious omission from these very similar lists of values was the question of the "ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange". Socialism was not defined in the Marxist terms of ownership so nationalisation was not a key criterion of socialism. Moreover simply as a means to an end, the end not specified, nationalisation, Gaitskell and Crosland argued, could be used to justify types of society which had little to do with British socialism. Ownership was not central to socialism but social welfare aspirations and equality were. It is hardly surprising that some writers, like Jay, took this to its logical conclusion and demanded a change in the Party's name. Gaitskell's speech at the post-mortem conference strongly echoed this

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64. LPACR 1959, p 111.

implied reduction in the importance of the ownership question. Crosland advised Gaitskell against trying to revise Clause Four,<sup>65</sup> but on purely tactical grounds. In essence the replacement of Clause Four by a new set of socialist objectives, the basis of Gaitskell's constitutional reforms, was Croslandite to the core.

Gaitskell's own contribution to the development of revisionism took three forms: inspirational, practical and theoretical. He was inspirational in terms of his personal relationships with revisionist writers and politicians, like Healey, Crosland, Jenkins and Jay, and in the way he led the Party at times of crisis like the Clause Four and the unilateralist debates. He was practical in his prolonged battle through Conference and the NEC to get revisionist policy accepted by the Party.

His theoretical contribution was obviously limited by the time he had available for study and serious writing but in the form of propagandist literature and direct advice he influenced the work of all the revisionists. He did not however control their output or necessarily agree with all their opinions. Moreover, before the famous "fight and fight and fight again" Scarborough speech he was not necessarily the focus for the loyalty of younger members of the Party;<sup>66</sup> Dalton had urged him to spend more time cultivating the rising MPs and candidates.<sup>67</sup>

Gaitskell as a full-time politician did not have the opportunity to complete any major work of political thought. His published work is mainly propaganda material for his Party. He did however make the occasional intellectual excursion and one example is Recent Developments in British Socialist Thinking published by

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65. Susan Crosland 1982, p 93.

66. Bill Rodgers, David Marquand, Bernard Donoghue, Dick Taverne, Shirley Williams in interview with author.

67. Pimlott 1985, p 631.

the Co-operative society in 1956. Gaitskell's view of the history of his Party, expressed in this book, is clearly one of a gradualist reforming political movement sometimes more "popular with the workers than the industrial wing sometimes being superseded in action." But above all gradually shedding and rejecting all forms of Marxism and Syndicalism, "reason has been brought in to support instinct and British Socialist thought has become ever more democratic."<sup>68</sup> This process reduced the General Strike to "an emotional spasm" that the Party did well to stay clear of and this strike marked the triumph of the gradualist strain in the Party, it marked "the transition from the pioneering stage to that of responsibility and power."<sup>69</sup> For Gaitskell the seminal experiences of British socialism were the Attlee Governments. In the exercise of power through ministries; "the Party has the opportunity to actually achieve concrete reforms which improve real lives". This "power" orientated theory of the Labour Party was based on an acute sense of Labour's history, or at least on a particular way of reading that history. It was a view of the Labour Party that was widely shared in the CDS; the Campaign's organisers were not "opposition minded people".<sup>70</sup> They also shared Gaitskell's suspicion of transforming blueprints. They adhered to a gradualist approach to social change:

In Britain the course to be followed was never charted too far into the future. "We'll see how we go" a favourite phrase of a highly influential socialist - Mr Herbert Morrison - reflects the general view that you can always look a little way ahead, but not too far, and that only as you move on will the picture become sufficiently clear to make plans which are realistic enough to be of value. This approach acquires special importance when the

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68. Hugh Gaitskell, Recent Developments in British Socialist Thought, Co-operative Union, London March 1956, p 40.

69. Gaitskell 1956, p 40.

70. Bill Rodgers and David Marquand in interview with author.

Labour Party came to exercise the responsibility of government and was thus compelled to face up to the detailed problems of policy formation.<sup>71</sup>

Gaitskell's major contribution to revisionism was not however theoretical. Even his most important contribution in this respect, the clear desire to achieve power and stances on political issues, like Clause Four, were organised around events and worked out in response to situations, rather than as abstract theory. Gaitskell's most important contribution was the practical. In this field there arose the most controversy and while he functioned in the service of his revisionist friends, for example finding Crosland his seat at Grimsby,<sup>72</sup> he got himself into further trouble with the left. A Labour leader should ideally, like Attlee, have no close friends. Gaitskell's period as leader, between the two "dealers" Attlee and Wilson, appears as a break in the Party's continuity and a period of brinkmanship leadership. The contrast with Attlee could not have been greater. H G Nicholas, in describing Attlee's electioneering at the time of the 1950 election, also sums up his style of leadership:

(the electioneering style) was merely the natural expression of the Prime Minister's habits and personality, there can be no doubt that it was a tour de force of unassuming advertisement. The family car, pre-war and far from de luxe, Mrs Attlee at the wheel no entourage beyond the indispensable detective, the road side stops ahead of schedule, Mrs Attlee would catch up on her knitting and Mr. Attlee would do a crossword.<sup>73</sup>

"Gaitskell was a sharp contrast to Attlee - both far more gregarious and far more willing to give a strong and early lead. When the second habit brought him under

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71. Gaitskell 1956, p 2.

72. Susan Crosland 1982, p 88: "Kenneth Younger, decided very reluctantly not to stand again and went to see his Leader to tell him. Gaitskell devoted exactly one sentence to expressing regret before asking Younger whether he thought the seat could be won by Tony Crosland."

73. H. G. Nicholas, The General Election of 1950, Frank Cass, London 1968, p 93-94.

furious attack and he fell back on the few friends he could trust, he acquired a much exaggerated reputation for cliquishness."<sup>74</sup>

Before and after he became leader he attempted to form an organisation to rival the left. This had not amounted to very much outside Parliament, but inside the Parliamentary Labour Party and in the House of Commons they seemed to have had some success. The main targets of these organisations were Bevan and the Bevanites, in the House. Gaitskell recorded the first meetings of this group in his diary in March 1952:

At the next Party meeting there was a discussion on foreign policy, and again they scored some success; so much so that Woodrow Wyatt and one or two others came to me and urged that we should really try and organise some kind of effective opposition. Then we had a meeting in Woodrow's flat. Chris Mayhew, Tony Crosland, Roy Jenkins, Arthur Allen, Alf Robens, Woodrow and myself. We decided that we must get people who could speak well to do so at the Party meetings, especially on defence and foreign affairs. We also tentatively thought of compiling a pamphlet which would contain the answer to Bevan's point of view. The struggle at the Party meetings has continued, with an interval on account of the king's death, ever since; but on the whole the anti-Bevanites have done a lot better, largely owing to the fact that better speeches have been made as a result of urging the right people to make them. Chris, Woodrow, Tony and Roy have all done well, especially the first, and thus set an example to others.<sup>75</sup>

Gaitskell's records of these early factional schemes, as recorded in his diary, are interesting in a number of ways. First, they show that as early as 1952 there existed a group which was revisionist and supportive of Gaitskell and, if not self consciously aping the Bevanites, then at least something of a reaction against them. Second, the entry showed the underlying political

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74. Philip Williams, Changing Styles of Labours Leadership, in Dennis Kavanagh, (editor), The Politics of the Labour Party. George Allen and Unwin, London 1982, p 57.

75. Philip Williams, (editor), The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, Cape, London 1983, p 311.

nature of the revisionists to the extent that the desire to change the Labour Party was expressed in action, however tentative, as well as in theory. Thirdly the style of the meeting, informal, held in a flat and unreported, tended to minimise its exposure but maximise its effectiveness within its limited objectives and was similar to early CDS meetings. The effectiveness of this early organisation was rather short term because Gaitskell's winning of the leadership election did much more to isolate and defeat the Bevanites and his careful playing down of factions in the first years of his leadership did much to unite the Party before the 1959 election. That this unity did not last and that the accusations about factions re-emerged after the election tends to suggest that Gaitskell did not stop relying on his friends in private.

Two years later, to counter the influence of Tribune, Gaitskell was influential in the transferring of the magazine Forward from Scotland to London, with Francis Williams as editor and John Harris and George Thomson as the only paid members of the board.<sup>76</sup> This magazine was to be a platform for the views of the revisionists and allowed them a limited access to the constituencies, though it never matched the circulation of Tribune.

There were other organisations which supported Gaitskell. The Socialist Union, a commune of Eastern European exiles based in Queens Park, published Socialist Commentary, a quarterly journal of revisionist ideas. Rita Hinden, the editor of Socialist Commentary, was later an active member of CDS and a member of the editorial board of Campaign.<sup>77</sup> The revisionists also had access to semi-official Party publications like the Fabian Pamphlets and many sympathisers within the Fabian Society

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76. Witness Seminar Transcript, Lord Jay.

77. Reg Freeson in interview with author and CDS Papers: Editorial Committee, Minutes File.

William Rodgers, the secretary of the CDS, was General Secretary of the Fabian Society for much of the 1950s. He was replaced by Shirley Williams as General Secretary in 1960. The post was designed to be filled by a Party civil servant and access to publication was open to both left and right. However the ethos of the society was more in tune with the revisionists than with the fundamentalists.<sup>78</sup>

These tentative organisational efforts were based on personal friendships and were further enhanced during the leadership election. The people involved tended to match David Howell's view of the stereotyped revisionist, "Oxbridge educated and with a life-style far removed from typical Labour voters."<sup>79</sup> The personnel was also remarkably consistent but lacking, until the issue of Europe came to the forefront, the schisms which occurred in the Bevanites. Through the 1950s and early 1960s the revisionists maintained both unity and discipline.

The nature of the practical help which Gaitskell gave his friends is revealing. If there was no single and consistent organisational expression of revisionism before the creation of the CDS then there was most certainly a champion for the cause ready to fight at any opportunity. In so appearing he perhaps undermined his effectiveness as a non-partisan leader above the fray and representative of all sections of the Party, but he was being more consistent with his style of politics at normal times like these than in the honeymoon period of conciliation before the 1959 election.

The practical support of Gaitskell for the revisionists' ideas helped them gain widespread credibility, to the extent that Stuart Hall could write in the New Left

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78. See R.H.S. Crossman, (editor), New Fabian Essays, Turnstile, London 1952. This gives a good indication of the balance in the Society.

79. Howell 1976, p 234.



Review in 1960: "The ideological battles have long since been joined and won. First Gaitskell assented; and then, one after another, the up and coming intellectuals in the leadership...By the time Industry and Society appeared at Brighton in 1957 the picture of reformed capitalism, the managerial revolution and applied Keynesian economics which Mr Crosland described had already begun to be extended across the face of official policy."<sup>80</sup>

It was in this background, amid cross currents of debate, that Gaitskell planned his speech for the post-mortem conference. The particular tactical choice of Clause Four was Gaitskell's own. He did not want to abandon the emotional force of the old formulation but he did want to remove the uncertainty about the extent to which the Party was dedicated to large scale nationalisation. In 1950, 1952 and 1955 he had attacked or agreed with attacks on Clause Four,<sup>81</sup> so after a long period of consultation and prompted by Ivan Yates and others he chose his own ground. He had not stopped and rested since the election and had spent his time collecting opinions from key figures in the Party. He decided that he would use his speech at the post-mortem conference to outline his plan for constitutional reform.

Despite his talks with left-wingers he settled on Clause Four as the key issue. In deciding on Clause Four Gaitskell had underestimated the romanticism of the Party while overestimating the force that logical argument would have in persuading them of the merits of his case. He also suffered from the fact that word of his intention had leaked out. On November 12, Charles Pannell, Sam Watson and Bill Webber warned Gaitskell that trade unionists would not accept a change to Clause Four.<sup>82</sup> Of

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80. New Left Review, Volume 1, Number 1, 1960, p 18

81. Williams 1979, p 546-547.

82. Williams 1979, p 549-550 and 913, Note 1.

his close friends Jay, Jenkins, Crosland, John Murray and Dora all opposed the change; only Gordon Walker supported it.<sup>83</sup>

On November 14, in a private meeting at Oxford,<sup>84</sup> he tried out his ideas on Marcus Lower, an Oxford city councillor, Ron Owen a member of the University's Extra-Mural Department, Brian Walden, also at the Extra-Mural department and Mrs McNeal, Gaitskell's secretary. They gave the ideas a cautious but not hostile reception. It is interesting that two members of the CDS steering committee, Owen and Walden, were brought into Gaitskell's confidence at such an early stage.<sup>85</sup> Four days later Dalton wrote to Gaitskell: "Jay's Forward article gave it all a bad start, and struck the tuning fork for all the Gregorian Chants of the Old Believers." Most of Gaitskell's friends were now warning him that the events since the election made the possibility of change very remote. The trade unions were hardening in their opposition to any change in the constitutional settlement of the Party. The "kites" had so outraged the left and the trade union MPs that other reforms suffered guilt by association. On November 24, Charles Pannell urged Gaitskell to drop the whole thing<sup>86</sup> or at least to show the speech to Bevan before he delivered it. The night before he was due to give the speech he showed it to John Harris and Nye Bevan, Harris then showed it to Jay. Jay said it would cause trouble but Bevan did not raise a single objection.<sup>87</sup> Gaitskell was determined to bring about a change: "If he provoked a storm it was not for lack of warning".<sup>88</sup>

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83. Williams 1979, p 550.

84. Williams 1979, p 917n and CDS Papers: Origins File.

85. Brian Walden and Ron Owen were members of the first CDS committee, see below, Chapter 3.

86. Williams 1979, p 550.

87. Lord Jay in interview with author and Jay 1980, p 277.

88. Williams 1979, p 544.

On Saturday November 28 Gaitskell delivered the speech to the post-mortem conference in Blackpool. His position was very unhopeful. There was no platform position, he spoke for himself alone. Even his initial procedure decision to push the reforms through Conference was probably mistaken.<sup>89</sup> Over defence he could challenge Conference sovereignty by advocating a policy which had joint TUC-NEC backing and which isolated his opponents. On Clause Four there was no platform lead because NEC investigations into the constitution, promoted as much by Morgan Phillips as by Gaitskell himself, only began after Conference. He was facing a hostile Conference without the protection of the block votes of other sections of the leadership. Moreover, Crossman's opposition, coupled with the alleged plot against Wilson, had revived factionalism within the Parliamentary Party.<sup>90</sup>

The key section of his speech ran: [Clause Four] standing as it does is obviously inadequate and "lays us open to continual misrepresentation...It implies that we propose to nationalise everything, but do we? Everything? - every little pub and garage? Of course not. We have long ago come to accept...a mixed economy...the view...of 90% of the Labour Party - had we not better say so instead of going out of our way to court misrepresentation?" There were hostile interruptions from the floor.<sup>91</sup> From the platform there was muted applause from Crossman, Driberg and Bevan, none from Greenwood, Gunter, Mikardo and Eirene White.<sup>92</sup>

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89. Williams 1979, p 547, states that Charlie Pannell had urged Gaitskell to use his standing in the Parliamentary Party to get MPs to push the reforms through Constituency Labour Parties but Gaitskell had insisted on Conference.

90. Crossman 1981, entry for December 9 1959, p 804.

91. LPACR 1959, p 111-112.

92. Crossman 1981, entry for December 9 1959, p 803.

The speech which followed Gaitskell's contained a bitter attack and included the memorable finale: "We have a capitalist economy, and where is this tripe getting us about a mixed economy which is non-existent? Engels many years ago wrote 'Nothing is; everything is becoming.' What kind of tripe is a mixed economy? Where he is going at the end, I do not know. I hope I am not there when he is."<sup>93</sup>

The rest of the debate was by no means completely hostile; Dick Taverne, Denis Howell and Douglas Jay, all involved in the CDS, each made speeches in defence of the leader.<sup>94</sup> Taverne was the only speaker specifically to support Gaitskell on the reform of the constitution.<sup>95</sup> The feeling that it was sacrilege to touch Clause Four was plain and the "antediluvian"<sup>96</sup> opponents of change received the better receptions. The Observer described Gaitskell's own reception as confused,<sup>97</sup> a feeling echoed by Jay about his own speech,<sup>98</sup> while Michael Foot seemed "to inspire the hall" and was cheered.<sup>99</sup> In contrast Ivan Yates gave Gaitskell a much better press, describing considerable cheers at the end, ignoring Castle's speech as Chairman and claiming that Foot was the only openly critical speaker.<sup>100</sup> Of the other speakers, Yates singled out Shirley Williams, Denis Healey and Tony Benn. Harold Hutchinson also commented on Williams' speech in the Monday edition of the Daily Herald and strongly backed Gaitskell. Aside from this, Yates' coverage was untypical. Tom Driberg described it

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93. LPACR 1959, p 114, Mr K Brown, Bury and Radcliffe Constituency Labour Party.

94. LPACR 1959, p 119-120, p 117-118 and p 120-121.

95. LPACR 1959, p 119-120.

96. Crossman 1981, entry for December 9 1959, p 803.

97. The Observer November 29 1959: "Desperate remedies thrown out" Front Page.

98. Lord Jay in interview with author.

99. Sunday Times, Front Page: "There were cries of no when Gaitskell called for a new statement of the party's fundamental principles." Foot, in contrast, was cheered.

100. Reynolds News, November 29 1959, Front Page.

as the worst conference since Morecambe in 1952 and attacked Gaitskell's speech: "No socialist has ever suggested that this [Clause Four] means state ownership of everything down to every home, car, TV set and toothbrush, and if the Tories misrepresent it as meaning that they will misrepresent any formula we devise instead of it."<sup>101</sup>

Gaitskell had chosen the ground he wanted to fight on and he had chosen badly. On November 29 Bevan spoke of challenging Gaitskell and Wilson was actively plotting.<sup>102</sup> Reaction was almost universally hostile, mostly questioning Gaitskell's tactics. Healey, George Brown, Strachey, Freeman and Jenkins (who called them appalling), all told him in no uncertain terms that he had been wrong.<sup>103</sup>

In response Gaitskell changed tack a little when he appeared on Panorama:

...if you were to say to me "...really we've got to accept the colour bar, because you'll never get into power if you don't," I should say, "well, in not very polite language, Go to hell...that's absolutely against my principles"...But if you say to me "I think your argument for nationalising the machine tool industry is rather weak," I would say "Well I'll discuss that with you".

In February 1960 facing a bitterly hostile campaign by Tribune Gaitskell continued to fight back. On February 13 in a speech at Nottingham he restated his view that Clause Four needed revision, and he attacked the "small professional anti-leadership group" but he also stressed that he supported public ownership.<sup>104</sup> Tribune welcomed

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101. Reynolds News, November 29 1959.

102. Crossman 1981, entry for November 25 1959, p 802 and p 804 and Williams 1979, p 558.

103. Williams 1979, p 560.

104. Williams 1979, p 564-565

the speech as the "most important declaration of his life" under the headline "Mr Gaitskell changes his tune".<sup>105</sup> The Spectator called the speech a "withdrawal from his Blackpool position" which would "only make his task of rallying moderates behind him even more difficult."<sup>106</sup> The Times carried the headline "Mr Gaitskell calls for more Public Ownership".<sup>107</sup> This provoked a future CDS manifesto signatory to rejoin in the letters column of the Spectator: "Mr Gaitskell does not want to scrap common ownership, all he wants to do is reassess its position in our range of socialist aims."<sup>108</sup>

After the Nottingham speech the left stopped frontal assaults, as some MPs and trade unionists came out in support of the beleaguered leader. There was a marked silence from much of the front bench in this period. This silence and the lack of co-ordination by Gaitskell's supporters inspired Taverne and Bill Rodgers to organise a letter of support. Rodgers recorded in his unpublished "History of the CDS":<sup>109</sup> "During the whole of the Clause Four dispute leading members of the Parliamentary Party who supported Hugh Gaitskell had made weekend speeches without telling...either Hugh or each other". Nobody in the Parliamentary Party had tried to "mobilise sympathetic opinion in the rank and file." Rather than being asked to undertake this organisation, the initiative came from Rodgers himself and he recruited Taverne as co-sponsor. They tapped into the network provided by the Group and other contacts to produce a list of fifteen candidates all under forty.<sup>110</sup>

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105. Iribune, February 19 1960, Front Page.

106. Spectator, February 19 1960, p 239

107. February 14 1960.

108. Spectator, March 11 1960 p 353, letter from Silvan Jones. There is also a letter from Jones in the Spectator for February 26 1960 supporting Gaitskell.

109. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History.

110. See below, Chapter 3, p 98-99 for a full account of the letter and "the Group".

Encouraged by signs of support but still hampered by vocal opposition Gaitskell gave more ground. The original idea had been to replace Clause Four with a new statement of aims which would include such things as colonial freedom and racial harmony but would not have a specific aim of widespread nationalisation. On March 3 Gaitskell told Sam Watson that although he would have preferred to have the statement of aims replace Clause Four he was prepared to see it along side the existing Clause, as an amplification.<sup>111</sup>

Gaitskell accepted a series of amendments in a second reading style debate at the NEC meeting on March 16 to discuss constitutional reform.<sup>112</sup> Morgan Phillips made it clear that he thought the time had come to rewrite the constitution. He circulated a document which he thought would bridge the gap between Clause Four and the new "Amplification of Aims" presented by Gaitskell.<sup>113</sup> Jenny Lee moved the key amendment which changed Gaitskell's phrase "...it believes that further extension of common ownership should be decided from time to time...according to circumstances", to read "through an expansion of common ownership substantial enough to give the community power over the commanding heights of the economy". The amended clause was accepted by 22 votes to 1. This same meeting of the NEC received 63 resolutions from Constituency Labour Parties protesting against any amendments to Clause Four.<sup>114</sup> The new statement was adopted with only one vote against. This result would have been a draw<sup>115</sup> and the "old" and the "new testaments" would have come into being, however for the

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111. Williams 1979, p 566.

112. NEC Minutes for 16 March 1960, p 21.

113. NEC Minutes for 16 March 1960, p 22.

114. NEC minutes March 16 1960, Section Number 85.

115. Williams 1979, p 568.

constitutional change to be ratified it was necessary to have Conference approval. In the following months it became clear that the trade unions, as well as many Constituency Labour Parties, would oppose revising the constitution and the new testament would become simply a statement of aims which would be published by the NEC. This was much more of a defeat than a draw.

At the trade union Conferences votes began to swing against the leadership, and the prospect arose of the leader being defeated on both his constitutional reform and on his defence policy. The question this posed to Gaitskell's supporters was clear: How long could the leader last?

The debate on nuclear weapons had a different background to the Clause Four debate. The ideologies of modernisation and revisionism contained little analysis of Britain's role in the world. The Future of Socialism was basically a domestic economic analysis.<sup>116</sup> In fact there was a difference of emphasis between the Gaitskellites on foreign policy. For Jenkins, the developing unity of Europe was central; in contrast Jay opposed Britain's involvement in the European Economic Community. However, on defence matters the right of the Party was in general agreement about the importance of the Western alliance. Indeed, some of Gaitskell's close associates were very anti-communist. For example Christopher Mayhew had worked in unison with the Foreign Office to close down the Anglo-Soviet Friendship societies<sup>117</sup> and others, like Patrick Gordon Walker,<sup>118</sup>

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116. This was part of the reason that Jay wrote his Socialism in the New society see Jay 1980, p 278.

117. Witness Seminar Transcript, Mayhew.



supported the retention by Britain of the independent nuclear deterrent despite the cancellation of Blue Streak.<sup>119</sup> All the Gaitskellites were united on the need to retain nuclear weapons within NATO until they could be negotiated away multilaterally.

The unilateralist<sup>120</sup> case was rejected not because it was outdated but because it was seen as being unrealistic. Some of the Gaitskellites had felt sympathetic to the Bevanites and now understood the passions of CND<sup>121</sup> but believed that the natural conclusion of unilateralism was neutralism.<sup>122</sup> The foundation for this rejection of unilateralism was a belief in the Atlantic alliance and collective security. The pro-Americanism of Crosland, Gaitskell and the younger supporters of Gaitskell was based on their experience and interpretation of the Cold War and was compounded, after November 1960, by the election of the young and dynamic President Kennedy.<sup>123</sup> The depth of Gaitskell's pro-Americanism shocked Healey in 1962 when Gaitskell said that the US had as much right to prevent a Soviet base in Cuba as the UK would have if it had been in Ireland.<sup>124</sup> Events, like the Cuban missile crisis, which were to encourage the unilateralists in their convictions that what was needed

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118. Robert Pearce, Patrick Gordon Walker: Political Diaries, 1932-1971, Historians' Press, London 1991 p 1-3, although personally in support of the Independent deterrent Gordon-Walker urged Gaitskell not to make an overt commitment either way: "On all matters I said we should say that an opposition could not know and must keep its hands free."

119. Williams 1979, p 587.

120. The term unilateralist is here used in a general way to indicate both the advocacy of one-sided British disarmament and the advocacy of general Western disarmament. A proper term for the former would be neutralism but the term most used was unilateralist. This point is discussed in John Strachey, On the prevention of War, Macmillan, London 1962, p 205 and Chapter 13.

121. Jay in CDS questionnaire, Taverne in CDS questionnaire, Marquand in interview with author and Rodgers in interview with author.

122. Made plain in Gaitskell's Speech in 1960 at Scarborough.

123. In fact two of the younger Gaitskellites, who were later active in CDS, David Marquand and Bernard Donoughue, were in the USA until late in 1960, Donoughue had been working for the Kennedy campaign. Marquand and Donoughue in interview with author, and Witness Seminar Transcript.

124. Williams 1979, p 694.

was disarmament, served for the modernisers to stress instead the need for strength. In this sense the rejection of unilateralism could be presented as being in line with the objectives of modernisation. One side in the debate between multilateralist and unilateralists felt that the only possible consequence of the possession of nuclear weapons was genocide. The other felt that by surrendering these weapons the consequence would be world domination by a repressive Soviet system. It was hardly surprising that the debate was conducted in a highly emotive way. Bill Rodgers, looking back after thirty years, summed up the way Party meetings on defence went like this: "...quite often the motions on unilateralism had been carried because someone had stood up in a meeting and said 'I want to say Mr Chairman that I think nuclear weapons are awful and for the sake of my children and my grandchildren I propose we vote against nuclear weapons' and the Chairman said 'Anyone against?'"<sup>125</sup> Conversely, the multilateralists would attack CND for being neutralist, pacifist and communist. Mayhew later described it as a fellow travelling organisation.<sup>126</sup> They maintained that if Britain were to disarm unilaterally she would have been defenceless against the Soviet Union.

These two entrenched positions tended to obscure the areas which were available for compromise. Richard Crossman,<sup>127</sup> and later Walter Padley,<sup>128</sup> tried to find forms of words that would be acceptable to both sides. The future of Britain's independent deterrent was the area of the defence debate which was most open for compromise.

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125. Witness Seminar Transcript, Rodgers.

126. Witness Seminar Transcript, Mayhew.

127. Crossman 1981, entry for May 20 1960, p 846-848, Williams 1979, p 583-591.

128. Minkin 1978, p 107.

In April 1957 Duncan Sandys had published his defence White Paper.<sup>129</sup> The task Sandys set himself was to reduce the size of Britain's defence spending by increasing her reliance on nuclear rather than on conventional weapons.<sup>130</sup> The original commitment to the bomb had been made by Attlee and Bevin in 1947, despite the arguments of Dalton and Cripps that Britain could not afford the expense of development that the McMahon Act would force on them.<sup>131</sup> The Prime Minister had been adamant: "It had, in theory at least, an overriding claim to the physical and human resources at the disposal of central government."<sup>132</sup> The development of the bomb between 1945 and 1958 illustrated perfectly the powerful dynamic of the arms race: "In October 1952, British nuclear capability was, roughly speaking, where the Manhattan Project had been in July 1945 and Kurchatov's team in the Soviet Union in August 1949. Within weeks of Monte Bello, the Americans tested a thermonuclear device. In the summer of 1953 the Soviets exploded a device in the megaton range."<sup>133</sup> The British scientists were off again chasing the H-bomb, which they succeeded in exploding in 1957. This opened the way for "co-operation with the Americans", which in turn became "purchasing from the Americans". In the end Cripps and Dalton were right: Britain could not afford to join the race. The cost of the capability of dropping the bombs on their targets had mushroomed.

The purpose of the British bomb was "to bolster the nation's political power".<sup>134</sup> Rearmament was demanded by the USA as Britain's part in the United Nations

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129. Defence: Outline of Future Policy, HMSO, Cmnd 124, London April 1957.

130. Michael Dockrill, British Defence since 1945, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1988, p 65-81.

131. Kenneth Morgan, Labour in Power, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1984, p 280-284.

132. Peter Hennessy, Whitehall, Fontana, London 1990, p 716.

133. Hennessy 1990, p 772.

134. Morgan 1984, p 284.

intervention in Korea. Gaitskell's role in the maintenance of Britain's world role started as Chancellor when he held out for the imposition of charges on the NHS to provide a small part of the rearmament package in 1950.<sup>135</sup> The sums raised by such charges were so small, twenty-three millions pounds, that it made no difference to the rearmament programme in the end, but the event was a significant symbol of the Labour Party's priorities in government.<sup>136</sup> The relegating of free health provision below rearmament neatly exemplified the Labour Government's adherence to Britain's grand role in the world.<sup>137</sup> Between February 26 1960 and early April the whole debate was reopened when the Government cancelled the Blue Streak missile.

The debate on nuclear weapons involved a series of initial questions: Should nuclear weapons play a role in British defence policy? If the answer was no, then was Britain to have a "hawkish" level of conventional weapons spending? One of the chief reasons Sandys put forward for the nuclear defence policy was that it would save money. This did not prove to be the case but the unilateralists rarely advocated increases in conventional weapons spending.<sup>138</sup> If the answer was no, did this mean a reworking of British treaty commitments? Bevan clearly felt that it did and he rejected this option,<sup>139</sup> whereas Frank Cousins was prepared to follow it through<sup>140</sup> and some of unilateralists were openly advocating withdrawal from NATO and a move to neutralism.<sup>141</sup>

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135. Gaitskell 1983, entry for August 11 1950, p 194-195.

136. Foot 1975, p 352.

137. Morgan 1984, p 280.

138. Dockerill 1988, p 70.

139. Foot 1975, p 572-573.

140. Williams 1979, p 609.

141. For example NATO or Neutrality, A Young Fabian Publication May 1961, makes the case for a neutral Britain.

If on the other hand the answer to this question was yes, then should Britain have developed its own weapons and produced its own enriched uranium? As has been said some of Gaitskell's associates wanted to maintain the British deterrent. If Britain was not going to develop its own weapons then should it have purchased them from the US? In June 1960 after the cancellation of Blue Streak the British Government undertook to purchase 100 Skybolt missiles when their development was completed by the United States.<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately for the British Government the Americans then decided to cancel Skybolt, without realising the repercussions in Britain.

Skybolt. It was an absolute pile of junk, paid for by the way, the development of which had been paid for 100% by the US - the British hadn't put in a dime - but they had an agreement that if we ever went forward with it, they would have a free ride, they could buy them...We had no obligation, or at least we thought we had no obligation, to produce a pile of junk...what we didn't understand was an ill-defined but very very real political requirement in Britain. So when we cancelled the weapon all hell broke loose and the agenda for Nassu was totally scrapped and we didn't talk about a damn thing at Nassu except Skybolt and what to do to replace it in the British inventory to permit them to maintain their independent deterrent, which ultimately became Polaris.<sup>143</sup>

Whether Britain developed its own system or merely purchased one, the question arose of whether or not it should have been tested? The issue of British testing of nuclear weapons had been debated throughout the 1950s since the first test at Monte Bello in 1952. Opponents of the tests saw them as an unnecessary increase in the amount of radiation in existence and a threat to human and wild life. Moreover they were relatively easy to oppose if the system was to be purchased from the United

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142. Dockrill 1988, p 72.

143. Robert McNamara, former US Defence Secretary, quoted in Peter Hennessy and Caroline Anstey, Money Bags and Brains: The Anglo-American Special Relationship Since 1945, Part 1, Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics, in association with Analysis, BBC News and Current Affairs, Strathclyde, 1990, p 13.

States because the United States rather than the British would have to carry them out. These and other related questions were debated at the annual conference in motions which either broke the questions down or put them together.

A resolution, in general, was a motion moved at a conference from the floor that was on a single issue or at least was drafted by a single affiliated body. A composite on the other hand was a longer motion which might couple together a number of different issues and resolutions from a number of different organisations. This was where the problem arose for Gaitskell when dealing with Conference. Motions calling for multilateral disarmament usually also called for a worldwide effort to end wars, this was perfectly acceptable because it committed the Party to nothing. There were also resolutions which called for unilateral disarmament or for a pacifist defence policy. It was relatively straightforward for Gaitskell to oppose these. When the compositing process came in, the problems really arose. Opposition to nuclear weapons could be advocated through asking for an end to manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons, through banning the use of British air space for overflying by planes carrying nuclear weapons or through not stockpiling the missiles. These calls would be coupled with a demand that China be included in the UN and conscription be restricted. Gaitskell could agree to the ending of testing, to including China in the UN and to the ending of conscription but was bound to oppose an end to the manufacture of the weapons and air space restrictions because he was still committed to the British bomb and the NATO alliance. Allowing China into the UN was carried regularly between 1955 and 1961<sup>144</sup> when part of a general resolution but was defeated between 1955 and 1959 when part of a unilateralist

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144. Craig 1982, p 131-148 and p 248-271.

motion. Moreover resolutions which if they had been carried into effect by a Labour Government would have meant virtual unilateralism were passed before 1960. A resolution demanding an end to testing and manufacture, passed every year from 1956, when coupled with a demand for a decrease in defence spending and a call for "progressive" disarmament(1957)<sup>145</sup> would have amounted to the dismantling of much of British nuclear defence.

These were issues loaded with symbolism and decisions on voting were based on a great deal more than simply the wording. Even the person introducing the motion or composite could make a difference on the platform's attitude, as it did in 1960 when Frank Cousins moved the TGWU resolution.<sup>146</sup>

Labour went into the 1959 General Election with resolutions having been passed by Conference advocating a nuclear defence policy based on opposing the testing of the weapons, calling for worldwide disarmament, for reductions in defence spending and reductions in the period of conscription.<sup>147</sup> The unilateralist motion of 1958 was defeated by 4.5 million votes and there was no full conference in 1959.<sup>148</sup> A year later the official defence policy was defeated and two unilateralist resolutions were passed. The way these resolutions came to be passed can be traced back in part to the election. The defeat itself did not affect Gaitskell's position, in fact he was considered unassailable after the campaign, which had been a personal triumph. However, as has been described, his handling of the post-election period had stirred up considerable opposition to his proposed

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145. LPACR 1957, p 163.

146. Williams 1979, p 606-607.

147. Craig 1982, p 136.

148. LPACR 1958, p 178.

constitutional reforms. His perceived reliance on the Hampstead Set revived charges by the left that he was a factional leader.<sup>149</sup> Both reduced his authority in the Party and forced his supporters to fight on two fronts.

The trade union Conferences which took place between Easter and August 1960 had two main questions before them. The first was the revision of the constitution and the second was disarmament. These conferences passed resolutions which then mandated their delegations to Labour Party Conferences<sup>150</sup> to vote on resolutions in a particular way. It was a system which was wide open to abuse. Bill Carron, the leader of the AEU, was famous for casting his vote at Conference in contradiction of the way he was mandated, by claiming a wider mandate from the membership or for casting the AEU vote twice for opposing resolutions.<sup>151</sup> Frank Cousins cast the TGWU vote for unilateralism in 1960 with no mandate from his Union to do so.<sup>152</sup> The NUR delegation which cast 272,000 votes at the 1960 Conference was swung unilateralist by 1 vote on its executive.<sup>153</sup> All sides of the Party agreed that the system was unfair, unrepresentative and outdated but would only say such things when suffering defeats. The Bevanites had attacked the block vote in 1952 and now many of them would defend the system.<sup>154</sup> Whereas during the period 1955 to 1959 (when the platform did not sustain a single defeat) Gaitskell never demurred, yet at Scarborough he called the system unrepresentative.<sup>155</sup>

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149. Common in the mid-1950s after his unsuccessful attempt to expel Bevan, Williams 1979, p 295-320 and 339-347 and Gaitskell 1983, entry for March 19 1955, p 384.

150. Minkin 1978, p 3.

151. Minkin 1978, p 177-179.

152. Minkin 1978, p 96. The TGWU resolution of 1958 represented a break with the official policy but not a mandate for full unilateralism.

153. Keith Hindell and Philip Williams, "Scarborough and Blackpool: An Analysis of Some Votes at the Labour Party Conferences of 1960 and 1961", in Political Quarterly, Volume 33, Number 3, July-September 1962 p 309, hereafter Williams 1962.

154. CDS Papers: "Conference must decide" leaflet issued by Victory for Socialism.

155. LPACR 1960, p 201.



The main difference between the two sides in the debate was that despite Gaitskell's attempts at organisation, one had a national organisation putting its case, CND, and in Tribune a weekly newspaper spreading the word. CND also organised model resolutions for Constituency Labour Parties to put forward and collaborated on compositing of resolutions so that they could concentrate their efforts on one or two key votes.<sup>156</sup> There was no equivalent organisation pushing multilateralism.<sup>157</sup>

The undermining of Gaitskell's position by opposition to his reform of Clause Four was compounded by the stirrings of revolt on unilateralism. Early in 1960 twenty-four Labour MPs signed a unilateralist motion in the House of Commons.<sup>158</sup> On March 1 forty-three led by Crossman and Wigg abstained on an official Labour defence motion.<sup>159</sup> Gaitskell was being attacked for not responding more quickly to the news, which was leaked on February 26, that the Government was going to cancel Blue Streak. In private Gaitskell gave only tentative support to the British bomb and had misgivings about it on financial and technical grounds, but he was reluctant to say so in public.<sup>160</sup> This reluctance meant that the Labour Party was in danger of supporting a deterrent that the Government might have abandoned. This combined with the coincidence of the meeting of trade union Conferences with the Aldermaston march and opinion polls showing a rise to 33% of support for CND which was as high as 41% among Labour voters.<sup>161</sup> The Communist Party had belatedly

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156. LPACR 1960, Foreign Policy and Defence debate, p 176-178. 79 organisations withdrew for the AEU Resolution, 75 organisations withdrew for the TGWU resolution.

157. CDS Papers: Origins File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

158. House of Commons, Motions and Questions and Orders of the Day 1959-1960, January and February, No 58, February 17 1960 p 1894a.

159. Hansard Fifth Series, Volume 619, March 1 1960, cols 1158-1167.

160. Witness Seminar Transcript, Lord Jay, Denis Healey in letter to author and Williams 1979, p 577.

161. Williams 1979, p 576 and p 921, Note 16.

leapt on to the unilateralist bandwagon and its influence swung the ETU's 140,000 votes against the official policy.<sup>162</sup>

On March 1 Gaitskell asked questions in the House on rumours that Blue Streak was to be cancelled.<sup>163</sup> He said that unilateralism would mean withdrawal from NATO and if this did not lead to a break up of NATO it would result in a NATO dominated by Germany. He did not repudiate the British system completely, because he felt that this was a dishonest thing to do when in opposition without the full information. He also knew it was not popular and he was scared of the Conservative Party playing the anti-patriotic card against Labour. The period after the debate was a critical time, but he was exhausted and on April 1 he left on vacation and to attend a Socialist International conference, thereby missing the full debate on Blue Streak, for which he was roundly condemned.<sup>164</sup>

This also illustrated a underlying concern that Gaitskell had a certain ambivalence on critical issues<sup>165</sup> until he had decided on his course or was faced with a crisis. For those who campaigned on disarmament issues throughout the 1950s this caused some disquiet. Philip Noel-Baker, the leading multilateralist campaigner of the period, expressed his frustration at Gaitskell's attitude to James Meade:

I have never been able to make Hugh Gaitskell take a real interest in disarmament. Whenever I say to him that the only way out with the unilateralists is by running multilateral disarmament very hard he always says "Yes", and then has a perfunctory half sentence or half paragraph in the next speech. But when I

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162. Willie Thompson, Letter to author.

163. Hansard Fifth Series, Volume 618, March 1 1960, cols 1144.

164. John Marullus, Iribune, April 29 1960, "The invisible leader".

165. A charge that was made about his stance on the European Community, see below, Chapter 6.

have tried to urge debates in the House in which he and Healey should take part he always says "What is there to say?"<sup>166</sup>

While Gaitskell was away, the Easter trade union conferences were held and the Co-operative Party with a "growing Communist influence" voted unilateralist by 3 to 1.<sup>167</sup> USDAW emulated the Carron technique by passing an orthodox motion by 62,000 and a unilateralist one by 19,000. Walter Padley, the General Secretary, thought he could have swung the vote but had to speak in the Clause Four debate instead, USDAW had 329,000 votes at Conference.<sup>168</sup>

In the debate in the House of Commons on the cancellation of Blue Streak, George Brown and Harold Wilson, without consulting Gaitskell, moved towards a rejection of the independent nuclear deterrent. The debate was a censure motion calling on the Government to hold an enquiry into the "circumstances surrounding the initiation, continuance and cancellation of Blue Streak." George Brown laid into the government in general, and Duncan Sandys in particular: "I do not believe it is unfair to say that the decision to go forward with Blue Streak must be a blunder of an unprecedented size."<sup>169</sup> He was careful to concentrate his fire on the particular type of system; "fixed site liquid fuelled rockets", rather than the principle of Britain's deterrent. Nowhere in the speech did he mention the V-bombers. The passage which caused the problem ran:

I fear that a gap, during which we shall not have a credible means of delivering an independent British deterrent seems now to be inevitable. We must remember that it is the credibility outside that

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166. Noel-Baker Papers: Correspondence 1959-1964, NBKR, 2/124, Noel-Baker to Meade, January 7 1961.

167. Williams 1979, p 580.

168. Williams 1979, p 922 Note 39.

169. Hansard Fifth Series, Volume 622, April 26 1960, Cols 211-228.

matters and not the self delusion in which we engage inside. The argument for maintaining an independent British deterrent for basic political reasons is one thing when you have it...**the argument for going back into the business once we are out is altogether different.**<sup>170</sup>

Strictly speaking all George Brown was saying was that once the system was cancelled the arguments changed. He ignored the existence of the V-bombers and their free fall H-bombs, so his contention that the deterrent was inoperative was actually false. The impression was created however, especially in an atmosphere that was increasingly hostile to the weapons, that the Labour Party was moving towards the repudiation of the British bomb. Wilson's knock-about summing up of the debate added to the impression: "Like so many other rather pathetic individuals whose sense of social prestige outruns their purse, he is left in the situation at the end of the day of the man who dare not admit he cannot afford a television set and who puts up the aerial instead. That is our situation, because without an independent means of delivery, the independent nuclear deterrent, the right Hon Gentlemen's short cut to national greatness, is an empty illusion."<sup>171</sup>

On May Day, the AEU, with Carron this time outmanoeuvred, voted unilateralist by 38 to 14, taking another 697,000 votes away from Gaitskell.<sup>172</sup> George Brown as official defence spokesman was trying, with Crossman, to find a form of words that could form a compromise. Gaitskell told a meeting of close supporters that a unilateralist resolution was bound to be passed at Conference. In contrast Frank Soskice, Patrick Gordon Walker, Roy Mason and Michael Stewart held out for the British deterrent.  
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170. Hansard Fifth Series, Volume 622, Cols 228, emphasis added by author.

171. Hansard Fifth Series, Volume 622, Cols 330.

172. Williams 1979, p 384 and Williams 1962, p 309.

173. Williams 1979, p 577.

On 31 May the TUC and NEC each appointed drafting committees of four. At the end of the first meeting which discussed a draft by Crossman, Brown, Healey and Morgan Phillips, Gaitskell got himself added to the committee. Crossman felt that without Gaitskell present they could have got Frank Cousins to accept the compromise.<sup>174</sup> Brown and Crossman produced a draft that Cousins could accept but which made no reference to nuclear weapons within NATO - it fudged the key issue. Gaitskell opposed this and the trade unionists "exposed [Crossman's] semantic shams as hopelessly fragile"<sup>175</sup> or as Crossman put it: "Every word, every comma, was niggled at and disputed, either for minutiae of drafting points or, more often, in demand for a more nuclear-warrior-like presentation."<sup>176</sup>

During this debate Cousins made it clear to Bill Webber that he felt that NATO should have no nuclear weapons at all. Cousins was isolated in his opposition and the draft was accepted: "All those four hours rowing, wrangling, for nothing except to make sure that Frank Cousins was against us."<sup>177</sup> The policy already pledged the Party to no further British tests and no first use, no joint European deterrent; Britain would in future contribute to defence through conventional means as it would cease to be an independent nuclear power and as a result of this meeting phrases were added about loyalty to NATO and political control of nuclear weapons.

Gaitskell was now armed with a policy statement endorsed by the TUC and the NEC and he made a series of speeches pleading his case. His speech at the NUGMW Conference on

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174. Crossman 1981, entry for June 1 1960, p 856-857.

175. Williams 1979, p 589.

176. Crossman 1981, entry for June 1 1960, p 856.

177. Crossman 1981, entry for June 1 1960, p 857.

May 23 was acclaimed as his best outside the House. He stressed three issues of principle: support for defence, for staying in NATO and for NATO's retention of nuclear weapons while the Russians had them.

He succeeded in bringing the NUGMW, with 650,000 votes, on to his side as it voted against unilateralism by 260 votes to 80, and the Post Office Workers [160,000] gave him victories on both defence and on Clause Four. The Railway Clerks and Woodworkers also came out in support of the platform and the Yorkshire miners voted for the TUC-NEC policy by 75 votes to 19.

On Clause Four the tide was turning the other way; USDAW had accepted the statement of aims but not as an amendment to the constitution; NUGMW had accepted it, but by a much smaller majority, 204 votes to 132. AEU and the Yorkshire miners both voted to retain Clause Four. This was followed in early July by the rest of the miners voting against changing Clause Four but for Gaitskell on defence; the NUM voted against a change in Clause Four by 354,000 votes to 326,000, and were anti-unilateralist by 470,000 votes to 201,000. The railwaymen went with the left on both, by 66 votes to 11 and by 39 votes to 38, carrying 272,000 votes with them, as did the Building Workers, Boilermakers and Electricians.<sup>178</sup>

There was by July a mandated majority of 1,700,000 trade union votes against reforming the constitution.<sup>179</sup> On July 13 the amending of the constitution was dropped at a special meeting of the NEC and it was agreed that the Amplification of Aims would simply be published. This was bowing to the inevitable but it also avoided the possibility of the platform being defeated on both defence and on the constitutional reforms. Rather than

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178. All voting figures compiled from Williams 1979, p 592-593 and Williams 1962, p 309.

179. Williams 1979, p 593.

take a similar course on defence, Gaitskell ensured there would be a confrontation. This turned the debate into a "Who runs the Party" debate. During the period between the mandating of the votes and the debate itself Gaitskell was helped by the cancellation of the Summit which increased the uncertainty of the international situation. His speech to Conference was also very important in swinging the unmandated votes to the platform. Estimates before the conference gave a one million majority among union votes and one million majority among Constituency Labour Parties for unilateralism. The Daily Mail gave Gaitskell a 50% chance of surviving Conference.<sup>180</sup>

As Conference convened everyone felt that for the first time the leadership was to face a major defeat. On October 2 the NEC voted 17 to 4 against compromise with Cousins and 13 to 7 to oppose the TGWU resolution.<sup>181</sup> Cousins persuaded his own union to vote, without a mandate, for unilateralism.<sup>182</sup>

The debate on Foreign Policy and Defence opened with the presentation of the joint TUC-NEC, "Policy for Peace" by Sam Watson of the NUM and the NEC. He attacked the attempts by Crossman and Brown to paper over differences and made it plain from the outset that any victory for unilateralism would be hollow and bluntly stated that: "The final arbiters of the future of this Party do not sit in this conference, but are the British electorate and the British people."<sup>183</sup> The main thrust of this and the other speeches on behalf of the platform were that the differences between the two sides were not minor ones but that they boiled down to whether Britain should leave

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180. Williams 1979, p 595.

181. Williams 1979, p 607.

182. Minkin 1978, p 96.

183. LPACR 1960, p 170-174.

NATO if it refused to disarm unilaterally or whether Britain should stay in NATO but without its own nuclear weapons. The debate then took a curious turn with a resolution from ASLEF, which was eventually remitted, opposing the training of German troops in Britain.<sup>184</sup> The AEU resolution was then introduced and seconded by Ian Mikardo and things started to warm up. In a short emotive speech Mikardo made clear the basis of the unilateralist case, which echoed throughout the debate; an emotional appeal based on the destructive power of the weapons followed by doubts about the aggressive intent of the USSR and attacks on the theory of deterrence.<sup>185</sup> Mikardo was followed by Cousins who introduced the TGWU composite resolution. He added to the Mikardo case the view that as the Labour Party had lost three elections in a row the presentation of a new policy to the British electorate would actually help the Labour Party electorally.<sup>186</sup>

After the presentation of resolutions, Conference moved to a general debate, which was opened by Philip Noel-Baker. Noel-Baker's speech was one of the most powerful, not the less effective because he had just received the Nobel Peace Prize. The case he made for multilateral disarmament carried a great deal of authority.<sup>187</sup> George Brown followed with a forthright defence of the executive's position: "Britain has to be defended in the conditions which exist today and not those which we wish existed today."<sup>188</sup>

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184. LPACR 1960, p 174-175.

185. LPACR 1960, p 177-178.

186. LPACR 1960, p 178-181.

187. LPACR 1960, p 184-185.

188. LPACR 1960, p 185-186.



Back came the unilateralists with Michael Foot introducing the question of control, in a sharp passionate speech: "We were told of one of the most disgraceful incidents in British History, when an American Secretary of State in Paris, at a critical moment in world affairs was willing to give orders about planes flying over these Islands without consulting the British Prime Minister. We all might have been blown up to pieces by that monumental folly."<sup>189</sup> Foot was only warming up and he went on: "Is there any lady, mother or grandmother who can step to this microphone, who can take part on the platform, who can listen peacefully in the galleries and not be fully conscious that when the die is cast today, irrespective of whether we have a Labour Government within the next four years or not, human destiny is being decided?" The atmosphere built up in this debate was extremely intense and the balance of the argument was even. The unilateralists used emotive language and extravagant argument to put their case. The multilateralists countered with logic and with what, like Denis Healey, they saw as the fallacies of the unilateralist argument: "The unilateralists are saying...that we have got to give a lead. The question I ask you is: if we give a lead, who is going to follow?"<sup>190</sup>

Gaitskell was the last to speak and he started by praising the debate: "This has been a magnificent debate".<sup>191</sup> He then listed all that the two sides agreed on, which was much, before changing tack and launching into his attack on unilateralism and his advocacy of the "Policy for Peace". He initially concentrated on the abandonment of the British deterrent before turning, as Denis Healey and Sam Watson had done, to the question of

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189. LPACR 1960, p 189.

190. LPACR 1960, p 192-193.

191. LPACR 1960, p 195.

the Western Alliance and NATO. He made it clear that possession of the bomb by Britain was not a matter of principle: "I have never taken the view that the decisions made originally by the Labour Government in 1947 to manufacture our own atom bomb...were the kind of things which involved us in a matter of principle."<sup>192</sup> He did not spare the unilateralists, accusing them of cloaking their real intentions by not coming out and saying they were prepared to see Britain withdraw from NATO: "If you are a unilateralist on principle, you are driven to becoming a neutralist". The middle section of the speech outlined the platform's objections to the particular motions in detail. Finally he turned to the consequences of defeat and finished his speech with an extremely powerful challenge and a call to arms:

The place to decide the leadership of this Party is not here but in the Parliamentary Party...It is perfectly reasonable to try to get rid of somebody ...who you think is not a good leader...What would be wrong...and would not be forgiven, is if, in order to get rid of a man, you supported a policy in which you did not wholeheartedly believe...Supposing all of us, like well-behaved sheep were to follow the policies of unilateralism and neutralism, what kind of an impression would that make upon the minds of the British people...What sort of people do they think we are? Do they think we can simply accept a decision of this kind? Do they think we can become overnight the pacifists, unilateralists and fellow travellers that other people are?

He ended:

I say this to you: we may lose the vote today and the result may deal this Party a grave blow. It may not be possible to prevent it, but I think there are many of us who will not accept that this blow need be mortal, who will not believe that such an end is inevitable. There are some of us, Mr Chairman, who will fight and fight and fight again to bring back sanity and honesty and dignity, so that our Party with its great past may retain its glory and its greatness.<sup>193</sup>

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192. LPACR 1960, p 197.

193. LPACR 1960, p 201.

Assessments of the speech are generally agreed that it was an extraordinary political performance. At the time one journalist wrote: "The thing of transcending importance about Mr Gaitskell's speech at Scarborough was not that he was at last goaded to round on his critics but that he tore the paper from the crack: with an honesty and clarity that made the step irrevocable. He bared a deep division in the Party on a crucial issue of foreign policy and defence. He did not create the division: that was the work of others. His contribution was to force the Party to acknowledge it."<sup>194</sup> Later Windlesham described the scene: "Going into the conference as a leader whose fitness for the job had been questioned not only by Party members who believed in a more vigorous style of traditional socialism than he did, but also by people whose aims were similar to his own, the voting indicated that his tour de force drew in most votes not already mandated."<sup>195</sup> Williams was slightly more lyrical in his description: "As he finished exhausted, drenched in perspiration under the hot television lights like an actor after a major performance, he was greeted by cheers from nearly two-thirds of the delegates...The debate and vote at Scarborough transformed Gaitskell's position", in the morning the papers were "widely enthusiastic".<sup>196</sup>

After the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow" the results of the votes were announced. Gaitskell lost the day. The joint NEC-TUC policy on defence was defeated by 297,000 votes. The TGWU resolution No 60, which Gaitskell took to mean unilateral disarmament, was passed by just

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194. Times, October 21 1960.

195. Lord Windlesham, Communication and Political Power, Cape, London 1966, p 84.

196. Williams 1979, p 612 and p 622.

43,000 votes. The AEU resolution No 33, in favour of which 79 other organisations withdrew their resolutions, was passed by 407,000 votes.<sup>197</sup> This last resolution, was the most straightforwardly unilateral. Yet as Dora Gaitskell described it "he smiled until he almost laughed" because the majorities against him were only a third of what had been predicted.<sup>198</sup> Significantly for the development of the CDS Gaitskell had been particularly effective in swinging Constituency Labour Parties. On the morning after the vote he met, still in his dressing gown, with John Harris and said that this morning he had started "planning operations at the grass roots to reverse the decision." He also wrote a sketchy note of his "Objects: This year desperately good organisation needed."<sup>199</sup>

Part of this organisation was the CDS, which had been planning its operations since the dark days of Easter. After Scarborough its painfully drafted manifesto had to be revised to include an opening section which read: "We are long standing members of the Labour Party who are convinced that our Movement cannot afford another Scarborough. Rank and file opinion must now assert itself in support of Hugh Gaitskell."<sup>200</sup>

The analysis of the 1950s and early 1960s presented in the opening Chapters present the origins and background to the organisation and launch of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism. There are four main points that need to be drawn out from these years.

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197. LPACR 1960, p 202.

198. Williams 1979, p 613.

199. Williams 1979, p 623.

200. CDS Papers: A Manifesto addressed to the Labour Movement.

First, the precedent for internal Party organisations had been set by the Bevanites in the 1950s. Although predominantly a Parliamentary grouping they had important links in the constituencies and foreshadowed at least two of the activities that CDS were to engage in, canvassing for votes to the constituency section of the NEC and circulation of model resolutions for the Party conference.

Second, in the late 1950s the development of the Bevanites, and their successor Victory for Socialism, was accompanied by the growth of the single issue pressure group the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. This group was external to the Labour Party but foreshadowed CDS in the sense that its powerful advocacy of unilateralism was the main challenge the Campaign sought to match in its first year.

Third, the electoral defeats of 1955 and 1959 underlined the need for a modernisation of the Labour Party following the experience of the Attlee governments. The divisions over the form this modernisation should take centred on the revisionist analysis of Tony Crosland. This in turn was the basis of the Clause Four reform launched by Gaitskell, against Crosland's advice, after the defeat in 1959. This philosophy and its critique of fundamentalist positions were to be ideological underpinning for the CDS Manifesto.

Finally, the main element missing from Labour politics in the 1950s is an organisational expression of the revisionist ideology and which was loyal to the leadership of Gaitskell. Aside from the informal organisation attempted by Gaitskell in the House of Commons there was nothing in existence on the right of the Party to rival Tribune, the Brains Trust that held discussion meetings around the country or, later in the decade, the CND. In response to the cross currents of

these years and out of a desire both to defend the leadership and project the cause of revisionist modernisation such an organisation began forming in 1960.

## Chapter 3,

### The Private Origins and Public Launch of the CDS.

No organisation simply appears on the day on which the press release announcing its launch is issued. The tip of an iceberg of organisation peeks through the water. The rest is submerged and possibly purposely concealed. To achieve "planned spontaneity"<sup>1</sup> when the Campaign was actually launched the private origins of the CDS were concealed behind a carefully constructed facade.

Windlesham, in his study of the CDS,<sup>2</sup> mentioned, without giving details, the existence of an informal group in London to which some of the early CDS organisers belonged.<sup>3</sup> In fact, from 1954 a number of younger Labour

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1. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of Meeting of Full Group, June 27 1960, point 7.

2. Windlesham London 1966, Chapter 4, The Springboard and Chapter 5, The Campaign. The CDS is used as a case study.

3. Windlesham 1966 p 95, "In London some of the signatories of the February 3rd letter had been meeting for some years past with a group of Oxford graduates' contemporaries who had graduated in the early 1950s. The most active regular participants were W.T. Rodgers; Michael Shanks...Dick Taverne...and Ivan Yates. " This is a slightly misleading view of the Group. Firstly these were by no means the only active participants, David Vaughan-Williams and Colin McIntyre were just as involved. Secondly the Group was not simply Oxford and had developed from its initial basis. Neither Patrick Seyd, Factionalism in the Labour Party, A case study of the CDS, Unpublished MPhil, University of Southampton 1968 nor Stephen Haseler The Gaitskellites, Cape, London 1969 mention the existence of the Group.

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Party members, including candidates and councillors, had been meeting together in an informal debating society, known as "the Group".<sup>4</sup> Bill Rodgers reviewed the early years in his diary in 1957: "We started three years ago with about eighteen members of whom perhaps 6-8 generally attended. Now we are up to two dozen or so and the newcomers are more active."<sup>5</sup> Rodgers had organised the Group to ensure that some of his Oxford contemporaries did not lose track of politics.<sup>6</sup> It also meant that during his time at the Fabian Society, when he was acting in the role of a civil servant and making contacts around the country,<sup>7</sup> he could maintain a link with political discussions.

Those who regularly attended meetings of the Group who went on to form the nucleus of the London CDS group were, Ivan Yates, Michael Shanks, Bill Rodgers and Dick Taverne.<sup>8</sup> Anthony Dumont, Bryan Magee, and Ronald Waterhouse who signed the Manifesto also attended these meetings.<sup>9</sup> Other Group members who were then recruited into CDS included Gordon Borrie, Keith Kyle, Oleg Kerensky, Bruce Douglas-Mann and Conrad Dehn.<sup>10</sup> Members who did not join CDS included David Donnison, Ivan Alexander, David Vaughan-Williams, David Wedgwood Benn, Ben Hooberman,<sup>11</sup> Michael Summerskill and Donald Watt.<sup>12</sup> The break off into what Rodgers described as "real

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4. Rodgers in interview with author. (Rodgers' wife used to call it "The Boys")

5. Unpublished diary quoted in letter to Michael Summerskill, January 18 1990.

6. Bill Rodgers in a letter to Michael Summerskill, January 18 1990.

7. Rodgers and Williams in interview with author

8. Questionnaires on the Group, Rodgers to Summerskill January 18 1990 and Windlesham 1966 p 95.

9. Magee and Waterhouse interview with author.

10. CDS Papers: A Manifesto Addressed to the Labour Movement and CDS Papers: Signatories File, see below.

11. Questionnaires on the Group, Donnison, Alexander, Vaughan-Williams, Hooberman, Summerskill and Watt.

12. Watt and Summerskill interviews with author.

politics"<sup>13</sup> caused the disintegration of the Group. The last recorded meeting was February 15 1960 at Bryan Magee's flat.<sup>14</sup>

The last three meetings of the Group were the ones which were most important in terms of the CDS. These were held on January 21, February 1 and February 15 1960.<sup>15</sup> The first took place at Ivan Yates' flat.<sup>16</sup> This meeting discussed three special manifestoes drafted by members of the Group;<sup>17</sup> Donald Watt's Industry in the National Interest, David Donnison's When we know what we want we shall know what to do and Dick Taverne's The Principle of Social Responsibility.<sup>18</sup> None of the participants remembers whether the plan was to publish a manifesto.<sup>19</sup> However the precedent for manifestoes was clearly set in these meetings of the Group.

The meeting of February 1 took place just two days before the sending of a public letter of support to Hugh Gaitskell. Dick Taverne and Bill Rodgers, who along with Ivan Yates were organisers of the Group,<sup>20</sup> also organised the sending of this letter.

The letter of support was "almost the only non-Parliamentary expression of support for [Gaitskell] during this period."<sup>21</sup> In part the letter read:

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13. Rodgers to Summerskill, January 23 1990.

14. Questionnaires on the Group: Waterhouse and McIntyre, Waterhouse Papers: Notification of meeting and Rodgers to Summerskill, March 15 1990.

15. Waterhouse Papers: Notification of meetings.

16. Waterhouse Papers: Notification of meetings.

17. Watt and Taverne interview with Author. Donnison letter to author.

18. Waterhouse Papers: Copies of the three Manifestoes.

19. Donnison letter to author, December 12 1989, Taverne and Watt in interview with author.

20. Rodgers interview with author.

21. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 2.

It is not an easy time for the Labour Party and its members. But surely courage is needed if we are to put our affairs in order, however painful the process of self-examination and change may be. Most of all, we must avoid the bitterness and futility of attacks by Parliamentary colleagues and other prominent spokesmen on each other and the suggestion that your leadership of the Party is under review. We are bound to have disagreements. The signatories of this letter hold differing views about policy, and we are a democratic Party in which no one man's word is law. But to disagree is one thing; to divide and weaken the Party another. We regard your leadership as settled and look to you to lead Labour back to power again.<sup>22</sup>

Rodgers' experience in organising the letter brought home to him the lack of co-ordination between the rank and file and the leadership. He believed that a majority of the Party supported Gaitskell but that their voices tended to be drowned out by the left:

Discussions with [Taverne] and, with other signatories, confirmed the strong sense that more ought to be done to rally rank and file opinion: in addition, it was clear that the real support for Hugh Gaitskell within the Labour Movement was far greater than ever before. This view was also confirmed by my experience in the St. Marylebone Labour Party. It was traditionally a left-wing party, but organisation was capable, if not of producing a majority for Hugh Gaitskell, at least of producing a very considerable body of moderate opinion. The trouble was that for many reasons leadership from the right and centre was missing.<sup>23</sup>

There was a feeling that there was a great deal of support that simply needed to be "rallied". However the letter was not, as Windlesham described it, "an attempt to create a channel" of communication that "Gaitskellite sympathisers" could use to reach a wider audience.<sup>24</sup>

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22. The complete text is reproduced in Windlesham 1966 p 96 and a copy is contained in the Waterhouse Papers: February 2 1960, Letter to Gaitskell.

23. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS history p 3.

24. Windlesham 1966 p 94.

Rodgers was experimenting with the letter, feeling the water, but so long as Gaitskell opposed organisation he did not take things further.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to Taverne and Rodgers, the letter was also signed by Gordon Borrie, Anthony Dumont, Ben Hooberman, Colin Jackson, Bryan Magee, Christopher Rowland, Ronald Waterhouse who were all members of the Group, and Richard Everly, Maurice Foley, Ivor Richard and Dick Leonard who were broadly sympathetic to the CDS. Shirley Williams also signed the letter.

Shirley Williams's signature on this letter and exclusion from the Group highlights a characteristic of the Gaitskellite organisations which was typical of the times. Williams was excluded from membership of the Group on grounds of her gender.<sup>26</sup> "The Group problem was that a number of wives and girlfriends were eligible on merit, but it was thought that, if they were invited, other less eligible wives and girlfriends would also want to come. We were strenuous in wishing to maintain the quality and seriousness of the political discussion and not making it a social occasion."<sup>27</sup> The stress laid on ability is echoed by Alec Grant, later a signatory to the Manifesto, but never invited to join the Group, as Grant put it "I don't think I ever achieved the status".<sup>28</sup> However it was not only about ability, there was a male ethos about the Group and to a lesser extent, about the CDS.

For Shirley Williams the exclusion of women was as much to do with the Group's background in Oxbridge and the political threat that women might pose, as it was to considerations of standards:

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25. CDS Papers: Rodgers' History of the CDS p 2.

26. Williams in interview with author and Rodgers to Summerskill, January 18 1990.

27. Rodgers to Summerskill, January 18 1990.

28. Grant to Summerskill, May 30 1990.

Bill didn't want women, but I was in a sense the bone of contention because I was the most senior in political terms. There were only a couple of women, Jean Donnison and Marigold Robins. Why should we make an exception for just one or two women? It complicates life. It means we can't meet at clubs.<sup>29</sup> The kind of people who would have fought against this, the more radical people, were not members. It was always perceived to be somewhere between an Oxbridge club and a serious political organisation.<sup>30</sup>

Shirley Williams felt she was excluded because she was seen as a political threat. Leaving aside the way that selection was applied on an individual basis to men, but on a gender basis to women, it is significant that the perception from those excluded from the Group was that it was Oxbridge and exclusive. These were similar criticisms to those levelled at the Hampstead Set by the left.

It was an awareness of these criticisms that influenced the kind of people invited to sign the CDS Manifesto when it was finally prepared and it also influenced the decision to exclude the names of Crosland, Gordon Walker, Jay and Jenkins from the early CDS publicity. Overall, the Group established the precedent for the Manifesto, showed the limitations of letters to newspapers, illustrated the male/Oxbridge ethos of the CDS organisers, taught the organisers the limits of debating groups, separated the political members of the Group from the non-political and thereby provided a network to tap into for early CDS supporters and contacts. In these ways it was an important precursor to the CDS which has been neglected by earlier writers on the Campaign.<sup>31</sup>

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29. There is no evidence among the Group papers that meetings were ever held in clubs.

30. Williams in interview with author.

31. Windlesham 1966 p 95 as quoted above is the only published mention of the Group.

The transition from the Group to the Campaign was actually smoother for the signatories than for the main organisers. For Rodgers, Taverne, Yates and Shanks the limitations of the debating society were obvious. The Group included people who did not share their political beliefs, for example David Donnison, Donald Watt and David Wedgwood Benn.<sup>32</sup> It included others who could not get involved in overt political action, like the civil servants David Lane and Ivor Lucas.<sup>33</sup> Moreover they realised that they were hardly capable of organising a grass roots revival from the drawing rooms of each others' flats and houses.<sup>34</sup> So the leap from organising monthly meetings and Christmas parties<sup>35</sup> to attempting to mobilise the rank and file of the Labour Party was considerable. For less influential figures,<sup>36</sup> like Ronald Waterhouse, attendance at Group meetings flowed naturally into the supporting the Campaign: "These meetings, [January and February 1960], seem to have witnessed the birth of the Manifesto Group as it became. There was much correspondence about manifestoes in 1960."<sup>37</sup> That there was no actual link between the Manifesto of the CDS as such and the manifestoes discussed by the Group is clear from the content of the three Group manifestoes,<sup>38</sup> that there was a link in continuity between attendance at Group meetings and membership of the CDS, was also clear for some of the participants.

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32. Questionnaires on the Group, these three were at the time more left wing than the others.

33. Questionnaires on the Group, Donnison and Watt.

34. Questionnaires on the Group, Lucas and Lane.

35. Waterhouse Papers: Invitations to parties.

36. Influential in terms of the internal dynamics of the Group.

37. Questionnaire on the Group, Waterhouse.

38. Waterhouse Papers: Texts of the three manifestoes.

Gaitskell's setback on Clause 4 in March<sup>39</sup> and the swing of conference votes to unilateralism over Easter produced a considerable crisis on the right of the Party.<sup>40</sup> It was reflected in some fairly desperate private talk and personal disillusionment with the Labour Party. Taverne recalls a conversation between himself and Bill Rodgers, which took place sometime between the sending of the letter of support to Gaitskell<sup>41</sup> and the first meetings of the London CDS organisers:<sup>42</sup> "I remember going to a young Fabian conference in Wilton Park, travelling in the train with Bill and one of us said to the other...if the Labour Party goes on like this there is no point in belonging to it any more. Lets give it one last try, can't we organise something?"<sup>43</sup> Given the subsequent careers of the two this was a more accurate predictor of Taverne's than of Rodgers' thinking.<sup>44</sup> However, even Crosland did not discount the possibility of the Party splitting.<sup>45</sup>

The depression was accompanied by a growing feeling that there was a need to organise something in the face of what was perceived to be the skilled organisation of the left, in the form of CND, Tribune and the organising of resolutions to the Party Conferences. The need to organise developed as a reaction to the perceived success of the left.<sup>46</sup> Whether there was any truth in Ian

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39. NEC Minutes for March 16 1960 pp 21-22.

40. See above, Chapter 2.

41. February 2 1960.

42. May 16 1960.

43. CDS Witness Seminar Transcript and Taverne interview with author.

44. Taverne resigned from the Labour Party in 1971 and fought a successful by-election. Rodgers stayed until 1981 and then found it very difficult to leave. If this conversation pre-dated the meeting with Crosland then it would represent their first discussion of the CDS.

45. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

46. Witness Seminar Transcript, Magee, Donoghue, Rodgers and Taverne.



Mikardo's claim that the left in general was not well organised,<sup>47</sup> and Victory for Socialism was not efficiently run,<sup>48</sup> is irrelevant as far as the CDS was concerned. The perception on the right of the Party, among those who organised the Campaign, was that they were competing with a skilled and well-organised left-wing.<sup>49</sup> They concluded that the only way to defeat such an organisation was to set up a rival. This was not based, as had been done in the past, on the Parliamentary Party, or the official channels of Transport House, but was to operate unofficially, through the Constituency Labour Parties.

Windlesham gives the credit for the early phase of organisation mostly to Rodgers: "If Rodgers was the catalyst in the gathering process by which like-minded people in London and Oxford were drawn together to create the nucleus of an organisation, it was Crosland who had a similar role in the working-out of a commonly accepted policy."<sup>50</sup> In fact the process was more complicated than this.<sup>51</sup> Crosland was the link and the motivator for both the London and Oxford groups, while Rodgers convened one section of the London group and Walden had brought together the Oxford group. Crosland was really the organisational and the policy catalyst of the combined Oxford and London groups until first Pickstock and then Rodgers took up the day to day task of running the Campaign.<sup>52</sup>

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47. Witness Seminar Transcript, Seyd made this point, and Mikardo in interview with author. .

48. Mikardo in interview with author.

49. Witness Seminar Transcript, Rodgers, Magee, Taverne and Donoughue.

50. Windlesham 1966 p 98.

51. Without access to the CDS Papers this would not have been immediately apparent.

52. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of Meeting, June 27 1960.

The first group that was to form the CDS had been brought together by Brian Walden in Oxford: "In Oxford, a group within the university and the City Labour Party, was meeting because of their concern with the activities of CND supporters within the City Labour Party."<sup>53</sup> Brian Walden, "an ex-student of Nuffield and at the time tutor-trainee in the extra-mural department," recruited Alderman Frank Pickstock for this anti-left group.

On Wednesday May 11 the first discussion of a broader new group took place between Walden and Pickstock. While travelling together to North Staffordshire they discussed the state of the Party, "...and agreed that there was no future in it for us if the present inability to resist its lunatic left, pressure groups like CND, and its inability to adjust itself to the present day continued." Rather than confining themselves to Oxford they considered that "as a despairing effort" they should "sound out possibilities" of forming a "centre group to express the mass of moderate opinion."<sup>54</sup>

On the same day there was a meeting in London between Gaitskell, Crosland, Jenkins and Gordon Walker. The discussion centred on how to deal with the defence question and the pessimism of the grass-roots Oxford people was reflected at the very top of the Party:

Crosland said that if [Gaitskell] took this line how many would he carry into opposition? He could not hope for 100. [Perhaps 10] said [Gaitskell] who became very angry and rounded on the other 2 sharply and implied that I was a [fudger] of principle. [Crosland] said this would be like the ineffective right-wing breakaway in French party - purely intellectual with supporters like Tomney and Bellenger.<sup>55</sup>

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53. Patrick Seyd 1968 p 109, this is the only detail given of the Oxford Group.

54. CDS Papers: Untitled File, typed note, undated and unsigned describing Pickstocks movements in May and June.

55. Robert Pearce, (editor), Patrick Gordon-Walker, Political Diaries 1932-1971, Historians' Press, London 1991 p 2.

This was followed by a meeting with Philip Williams, Ron Owen<sup>56</sup> and Tony Crosland in Nuffield College.<sup>57</sup> Walden sent Pickstock a detailed account of this meeting which makes it plain that the idea for a centre group had been Pickstock's. Crosland's reception of the idea was "wildly enthusiastic"<sup>58</sup> and he informed Walden and the others about a London group that had been established. The London group, which was planning a meeting on June 27,<sup>59</sup> was described as "entirely middle-class in composition". Crosland invited the Oxford people to come down to London and lay out their plans to a combined meeting of the two groups.<sup>60</sup> The new organisation, christened The New Group, would be enlarged on the basis of personal contacts. There would be no problem with finance; "Crosland guarantees all the money we need for a venture of this kind."<sup>61</sup> The organisation would be based on local groups established by personal contacts. "Emphatically this is going at first to be democratic centralism, there is going to be no bloody nonsense about constitutions and executive committee etc. We are all privates and generals at the same time."<sup>62</sup>

The idea of a "democratic centralist" organisation with local groups was dangerously like a party within a party, or indeed a new party. The depth of depression reached at

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56. Owen had also been in the Extra-Mural department and was now a mature student at Queens College Oxford. He served on the Oxford City Council from 1952-1957, see Seyd 1968 p 109.

57. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Typed Note, undated and unsigned describing Pickstock's movements in May and June, the date of this meeting was probably May 12 1960. Seyd 1968 p 110 mentions a "meeting of Oxford people on May 14 and 15," but there is no other record of this.

58. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960 p 1.

59. CDS Papers: Rodgers CDS History, the decision to hold a further meeting with an enlarged group was presumably taken at the first meeting of May 16.

60. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock May 18 1960, The meeting that heard the Oxford plan was on June 26.

61. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

62. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

this stage of 1960 among the right-wing supporters of Gaitskell is made clear again in Crosland's reactions to Walden's proposals:

Crosland appealed passionately that we go for Labour Party members, and Labour sympathisers. He did not discount the possibility that eventually the Labour Party would split, and then the role of the New Group would change, but for the moment he wanted us to do what you and I have already discussed, namely build ourselves up as a new given factor within the Labour Party.<sup>63</sup>

The picture Walden paints in this letter may partly have been a result of his tendency to over dramatise, as in "For the pioneers this is going to involve a complete sacrifice of personal interest, and advancement within the present Party",<sup>64</sup> but it is revealing just how far Crosland was prepared to take the logical consequences of Gaitskell's potential long term defeat on Clause Four and defence.

The question of who the New Group was to be aimed at was discussed by the Oxford group at further meetings on May 22 and May 29<sup>65</sup> and the initial concentration on Labour Party members was not changed: "Our feeling", Williams wrote to Crosland, "was that the people we were aiming at were: (a) non-leftists and non-fudgers in the Labour Party; (b) those who have drifted out of the Party recently; (c) potential members deterred from joining by the Party's present state; (d) active trade unionists who play little part in politics in present conditions; (e) left-wing Liberals."<sup>66</sup>

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63. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

64. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

65. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Typed, unsigned and undated note discribing Pickstock's movements in May and June.

66. CDS Papers: Origins File, Williams to Crosland undated, from content it must have been sometime in late April or early May 1960.

The motivation behind the organisation was made clear by Walden: "Above all else this is not going to be a wholly middle-class talking shop. We want no windy discussions on minute matters of policy, and we do want working class, no class, any class members, trade unionists, local councillors, GMC delegates, non-GMC delegates, ward members, non-ward members - the whole bloody lot."<sup>67</sup>

In London the equivalent role to Walden was played by Bill Rodgers. For Rodgers "the Campaign begins on a day in Easter week 1960."<sup>68</sup> Rodgers resigned as general secretary of the Fabian Society in January 1960 and took a job with the Consumers' Association.<sup>69</sup> Having made the decision to leave his job in the Fabian Society he felt "free to take a more public position" by organising a letter of support for Gaitskell. While he was still serving out his notice,<sup>70</sup> he arranged a meeting with Tony Crosland at The Two Chairmen pub in Dartmouth Street, across the road from the Fabians' headquarters. Rodgers's account of this meeting made plain the personal difficulties his plans for the CDS gave him:

I said then that I felt personally in a dilemma. I had decided to leave full time politics and had in mind that I would not play a very active part at least until the next general election. On the other hand, it now seemed to me, in view of the Clause Four dispute, that this was really the time to rally more seriously than ever before people of like minds. I raised with Tony the whole question of liaison on the right in the light of our experience of the Clause Four dispute and of my letter to Hugh Gaitskell.<sup>71</sup>

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67. CDS Papers: Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960, emphasis as original.

68. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 1, Witness Seminar Transcript and Rodgers in Interview with author, this quote, in roughly similar form, occurs in all three.

69. He was sacked shortly after the publication of the Manifesto, by Caspar Brook the Director of the Consumers Association, who objected to his association with the Campaign, CDS Papers: Rodgers CDS History p 11.

70. Shirley Williams replaced Rodgers at the Fabian Society so was mainly neutral during the active period of the CDS, Williams in interview with author.

71. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 3.

Rodgers lamented the way that Tribune had succeeded in making left-wing policy appeal to young people by giving them a direct input into an organisation and allowing them to meet "leading Tribune figures socially".<sup>72</sup> This meant that there was "real cohesion on the left".<sup>73</sup> Finally he told Crosland what he wanted to see happen: "Was it possible to get some sort of continuous liaison on the right from Hugh Gaitskell at the top, through Members of the Parliamentary Party, to candidates and key workers in the constituencies?"<sup>74</sup>

In further discussions they decided to assemble a group in London to discuss what should be done.<sup>75</sup> Present at this meeting were representatives from inside and outside the House of Commons.<sup>76</sup> The non-parliamentarians included Dick Taverne, Rodgers's co-organiser of the February 3 letter and co-organiser of the Group. There was also Ivan Yates, another leading light of the Group and the author of articles supportive of Gaitskell over Clause 4 in Reynolds News,<sup>77</sup> he was very active on the Steering Committee of CDS until he left to join the Observer in 1961.<sup>78</sup> Finally there was Michael Shanks, also a Group member, Industrial Editor of the Financial Times and author, in 1961, of the revisionist tract The Stagnant Society<sup>79</sup> which sold 60,000 copies and was the first in a series of Penguin specials along the lines of "What's

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72. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 3.

73. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 4.

74. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History File p 4. Neither Windlesham 1966 nor Seyd 1968 mention this meeting in detail, Haseler 1969 mentions it p 209 but only in passing. Crosland S. 1982, mentions it p 100 and quotes from Rodgers without giving the source as the CDS history.

75. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 4, there is no minute of this very first meeting among the papers.

76. Windlesham 1966, Seyd 1968 and Haseler 1969, were unaware of this meeting and the June 26 meeting, they give the first meeting as the June 27. In fact by June 27 much of the planning had already been done.

77. See above pp 44-45.

78. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 13.

79. The Stagnant Society, Harmondsworth, Penguin 1961.

wrong...".<sup>80</sup> Shanks, in common with other CDS organisers had spent time in the United States<sup>81</sup> and shared Rodgers's impatience with the lack of organisation on the right of the Labour Party. He became an active member of the Steering Committee and later the Editorial Committee of the CDS newsletter, Campaign.<sup>82</sup>

From the Commons came the four leading members of the Hampstead Set. Rodgers later offered his own verdict on the contributions of Douglas Jay and Roy Jenkins: "Douglas Jay, although always willing to help, didn't play a leading part. Roy Jenkins kept in continuous contact, was always very willing to help and served on Committees, but he was perhaps less close to us in the crucial months than some others."<sup>83</sup> Roy Jenkins suggested<sup>84</sup> they also invited Denis Howell. Howell had been elected for Birmingham All Saints in 1955 but was defeated in 1959<sup>85</sup> and was therefore out of the House working in public relations.<sup>86</sup> He was seen as a considerable grass roots operator in the Birmingham area and became the main organiser for the Campaign among the trade unions and Constituency Labour Parties around the country.<sup>87</sup> The two key figures were Patrick Gordon Walker and Tony Crosland. Gordon Walker was supportive and kept Gaitskell informed of what was happening in the Campaign and in the liaison committee set up with the trade unions

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80. John Barnes, "From Eden to Macmillan" in Ruling Performance, edited by Hennessy and Seldon, Blackwells Oxford 1987 p 105.

81. After Oxford he was a lecturer of Economics in the USA.

82. CDS Papers: Editorial Committee File.

83. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 13.

84. Rodgers in interview with author.

85. Returned at by-election for Birmingham Small Heath March 1961, see below.

86. Windlesham 1966 p 99, CDS Papers: Origins File, Howell to Rodgers, September 30 1960, headed paper. His company was simply called Denis Howell, Public Relations and was run from Birmingham.

87. Windlesham 1966 p 95.

on the selection of Parliamentary candidates.<sup>88</sup> But it was Crosland who got the most deeply involved in the early phase of the Campaign.

As discussed in the first two Chapters<sup>89</sup>, there was a general consensus amongst the CDS organisers, from Rodgers and Taverne down, that Crosland was the ideological inspiration. In the very early period he was also the link between the different groups and therefore the main inspiration.<sup>90</sup> This was reflected by Walden when he wrote the first outline plan for the Campaign in May 1960: "The only policy the group will have is this...an acceptance of modern political, social and economic realities as exemplified in the writings of Crosland and Galbraith."<sup>91</sup>

Rodgers later described Crosland's effect on the early part of the Campaign:

Throughout the period of preparation before the launching of the Campaign Tony Crosland's role was crucial. Not only did he give the intellectual lead reflected in the Manifesto: he also showed a single-mindedness of purpose and discipline which most of us had previously believed he had not possessed. It was he who kept us at it when we met, mainly at his flat, refusing, for example, to let us have a drink until we had done three hours solid work. He had the authority to keep us together and although he in no way dominated the group he gave it a lead without which much less would have been done.<sup>92</sup>

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88. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 8.

89. See below pp 12-12 and pp 59-64.

90. This applies up to the June 26 meeting. His role, other than helping with the drafting, declined thereafter.

91. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock May 18 1960, this letter is the first recorded plan of how the CDS was going to develop and is contained in an untitled File in the CDS papers, it was not available to previous writers on the Campaign.

92. CDS Paper: Rodgers' CDS History File, p 6.



Taverne echoed Rodgers's feelings about Crosland, "The person who I think contributed most after Bill [Rodgers] was Tony Crosland. At the meetings we went to he was the driving force. He would constantly say "Look, forget about all this talk about intellectualism. We are apparatchiks."<sup>93</sup>

The pattern the CDS was to follow in its first phase was laid out in the letter Walden sent to Pickstock describing his first meeting with Crosland. Walden and Pickstock's thinking had developed further than the London group<sup>94</sup> and Pickstock had the time to devote to the venture.<sup>95</sup> But the older Oxford Councillor was also seen as a suitable figure-head because he represented the grass roots of the Party: "Frank Pickstock was a great strength in all of this because he was deemed by all of us to be the real grass roots figure. He wasn't a very exceptional figure, he had been a station master in the 1930s who got an adult scholarship to Oxford, but he was a very wise, likeable and greatly respected figure."<sup>96</sup> Pickstock described his motives for joining up with this group in a letter to Rodgers in 1963:

I suppose I had some local standing; I had also a lot of experience of organising; I had an office and a secretary; and lastly I was generally unknown except as a local politician and an adult educator with good trade union connections. I was therefore free of the label which the left had successfully placed on the right: intellectuals. If in fact the new organisation was damned and smeared by the left I had no political career to be sacrificed. Though I should have had some personal suffering, this was a small matter weighed against the issues at stake.<sup>97</sup>

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93. Witness Seminar Transcript.

94. There is no written record in the Papers of a London Plan other than Rodgers comments to Crosland of April 1960.

95. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 10, Rodgers was still trying to make his job at the Consumer Association work out.

96. Rodgers in interview with author.

97. CDS Papers: Correspondence with F.V.Pickstock, Pickstock to Rodgers, July 3 1963.

He and Walden had met at the Extra-Mural Department at Oxford. Walden recognised the crucial role a figurehead like Pickstock could play in the conclusion of his letter to Pickstock:

Crosland said tonight that he had not felt so happy for years. He believes passionately that all this can be done. Given the initial surge, he believes that the response will astound us all. He made mention of his own personal sense of loneliness until recently - just the thing you and I had discussed. With all my heart Frank, I beg you to take this over. Already in Oxford we have willing helpers - the same is true of London.<sup>98</sup>

The Oxford group met again on Sunday May 22 and commented on a draft of the Manifesto by Pickstock which was to be the basis of the launch, though the Manifesto went through approximately 20 more drafts before being published.<sup>99</sup>

On May 16 the London CDS organisers held their first meeting.<sup>100</sup> By this stage the Oxford group had developed a considerable plan. Philip Williams reported to Crosland the progress that had been made so far.<sup>101</sup> The options in this very early period were quite wide and the political situation was still confused. The underlying assumption was that whatever the outcome at Scarborough a group was needed for longer term organisational objectives. The discussions in Oxford concerned the nature of the local organisations. They discussed options: "(a) a "pilot" group in Oxford, to show it could be done; (b) a simultaneous launching in as many places as possible, after due preparation; (c) a start in Oxford and say two other places."<sup>102</sup> Williams also outlined the function

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98. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock, May 18 1960.

99. CDS Papers: Manifesto Text File contains 16 drafts, the Philip Williams Papers, at Nuffield College Oxford, contain 4.

100. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 5.

101. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Williams to Crosland undated, between May 22 and June 26, probably earlier rather than later.

102. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Williams to Crosland undated.

these local groups were to serve: "(a) to discuss policy questions without Marxist preconceptions (b) to support particular policies within DLPs and TUs (c) to influence the selection of Parliamentary and municipal candidates."<sup>103</sup>

The initial organisational framework was prepared by the Oxford group prior to the June 26 meeting.<sup>104</sup> This meeting adopted a committee and it is clear that in the early phase it was the Oxford team which made most of the running. This only really switched when Rodgers was sacked from the Consumer Association and was free to do a full time organisational job. Moreover the work in the trade unions which became a critical part of the Campaign's work in the key period October 1960 to October 1961 was not clearly envisaged in the early phases.

According to Seyd "Williams and Walden argued in terms of letters to The Times, but this was rejected by Pickstock as a typical academic response. It was Pickstock who proposed the production of a Manifesto expounding what the group meant by socialism...The first draft of the Manifesto was written by Pickstock as a basis for discussion, to be circulated amongst members of the Steering Committee."<sup>105</sup> While it may well be possible that Williams and Walden had such limited objectives before the meeting with Crosland, they had both come round to Pickstock's view by May 22, over a month before the London meeting.<sup>106</sup> Therefore the first draft of the Manifesto was actually written before a Steering Committee was envisaged and completely rewritten for the

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103. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Williams to Crosland undated. DLP either refers to District Labour Parties or is a typing error and should be CLP.

104. The meeting on Sunday June 26 1960 was of the Thirteen only, the meeting on Monday 27 June 1960 was a wider meeting of the group.

105. Seyd 1968 p 112.

106. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Walden to Pickstock May 18 1960, CDS Papers: Origins File, Williams to Crosland undated.

combined meeting of the people from London and Oxford which took place on June 26 and established the Steering Committee of thirteen.<sup>107</sup> The Oxford group presented a united front to this first meeting with the London group.<sup>108</sup>

On the day following the formation of the Steering Committee the first principal meeting of a larger group took place at the Princess of Wales, Dovehouse Street, Chelsea.<sup>109</sup> After the earlier meeting of the four members of the Group and the four MPs each had recruited others to come along.<sup>110</sup> Present at this meeting, in addition to the thirteen from the meeting the day before,<sup>111</sup> were Ronald Waterhouse, Oleg Kerensky, Anthony Dumont, Fred Jarvis,<sup>112</sup> Austin Albu, George Thomson, John Harris,<sup>113</sup> Alec Grant, Julius Gould and Niall MacDermott.<sup>114</sup> Pickstock could not attend the meeting<sup>115</sup> so the job of proposing the drafting of a Manifesto was delegated to Ron Owen.<sup>116</sup>

This full meeting endorsed the decisions of the Steering Committee of the evening before. A Manifesto of approximately 600 words was to be prepared by the Oxford group and Crosland. This was to be circulated to "carefully selected individuals". It would be released to

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107. CDS Papers: Manifesto Texts, First Draft.

108. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History, p 5 and Untitled File, unsigned note describing Pickstock's movements in May and June.

109. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of first meeting.

110. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 6.

111. CDS Papers: Untitled File, unsigned note describing Pickstock's movements, states that Pickstock who could not come.

112. Questionnaires on the Group, these four were members of the Group.

113. Albu and Harris were close to Gaitskell.

114. CDS Papers: Minutes File, hand signed and typewritten lists of those in attendance.

115. CDS Papers: Untitled File, unsigned note describing Pickstock's movements in May and June.

116. It could not as Seyd states, Seyd 1968 p 112, have been Pickstock because Pickstock did not attend; see note above and CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 6, states that it was Owen. It was as Windlesham 1966 stated, p 96.

the press and carry the name and address of Pickstock. Once the Manifesto was public the "spontaneous formation of groups would be mentioned." Until this stage, which would be after the Party Conference, lists of supporters should be prepared and "planned spontaneity ought to be the aim in all arrangements, with the emphasis on grass-roots origin".<sup>117</sup>

Since Pickstock had not attended the meeting, Rodgers sent him an account of what had been agreed:

There was unanimous approval for starting an organisation. I confess that this surprised me because I had expected more caution from the MPs. The only doubt was whether it might be regarded as a Party within a Party and come under a general proscription - or make it more difficult to deal with VFS, if this was necessary at any time. But it was thought that this could be avoided, especially as personalities would not be involved: in any case, some risk was worth running otherwise the right would remain unorganised and exposed.<sup>118</sup>

He was also frank about the nature of the proposed spontaneous growth. "This spontaneous growth would, of course, result from your plans carefully laid in advance".<sup>119</sup>

Throughout July the Manifesto was posted between Oxford and London. The evolution of the drafting illustrates the hypocrisy of the CDS. It was an organisation within the Labour Party but because it was supporting the leadership it did not see itself as adding to schism in the same way that left-wing organisations did. The first draft that had been written by Pickstock for consideration of the Oxford Group in May was rather bleak. It read in part:

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117. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of first meeting, June 27 1960.

118. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Rodgers to Pickstock, June 29 1960.

119. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Rodgers to Pickstock, June 29 1960.

Many members of the Labour Party are dismayed that the broad purposes of the Party are being frustrated by the ceaseless activities of sects and pressure groups and feel the need for unity amongst those people, many of whom have given lifelong service to the movement, and who, whilst adhering to the central tradition of the British Labour Movement, recognise that its outlook and policies must be adapted to the economic, social realities of the present day.

Such members are today finding it increasingly impossible to continue active work in the Party when minority groups, unrepresentative of the membership as a whole, use pressure group tactics to impose their will on the Party. The aim of the .....is to form a platform on which the mass of the loyal members of the Labour Party may unite and act together to enable the Party to present to the nation a consistent and responsible policy in conformity with present day needs.

This draft was commented on by Walden, Williams and Pickstock and revised at a further meeting on Sunday 29 May.<sup>120</sup> After this meeting Crosland was invited to rewrite the Manifesto: "you seemed the obvious person to draft it! (to us anyway)"<sup>121</sup>

The Manifesto went through an almost complete change before being presented to the meeting of June 26 1960.<sup>122</sup> The main subsequent stages in its evolution were for its presentation at meetings in July, August and September, and finally it was changed after the Scarborough vote itself. To illustrate the way the drafting evolved we can take what came to be the "ideological background paragraph." This began as simply a call for action which was directed at specific targets and open about the form of re-organisation required. Key phrases are shown in bold:<sup>123</sup>

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120. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Typed, unsigned and undated note describing Pickstock's movements in May and June.

121. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Williams to Crosland undated.

122. CDS Papers: Manifesto Texts File. Philip Williams Papers: Manifesto texts.

123. My emphasis.

We realise that we ourselves will be charged with being yet another sect. We are forced to act in this way unless we are content to let **the central tradition of the Party** to be destroyed by the doctrinaire, **ideological Marxist doctrines** which are being preached ceaselessly. We call upon **Labour Party loyalists** everywhere to join us in this effort, and to form groups in all local Labour organisations. The purpose of such groups will be to unite active and like minded people and enable them to act together against the **irresponsible and disruptive activities of doctrinaire groups**, many of them containing ex-members of the Communist Party whose **Marxist-Leninist fervour remains undimmed**. The members of the ..... regard it as of the highest importance that the responsible leadership of the Party, namely, the Parliamentary Party shall receive the support they need from the Party. We cannot expect the electorate to support the Party, when the Party itself gives its **leaders so little loyalty** as it does at the present time.<sup>124</sup>

The specific request that groups form in "all local Labour organisations" was toned down as the drafting developed. The ideological background paragraph developed drastically and is in recognisable form by the fourth draft which pre-dates the June 27 meeting in London:<sup>125</sup>

**By central tradition of the Party we mean a non-dogmatic practical socialism.** Though the Labour Party has included many Marxists, its inspiration has been mainly drawn from trade union, **non-conformist, christian socialist and radical sources.** The narrow definition of socialism which is prevalent to-day is making it more and more difficult for many people to ally themselves with the Party.<sup>126</sup>

After three further revisions by the Williams, Crosland and Pickstock team it was presented to the July meeting of the Steering Committee in an almost identical form to the paragraph as finally printed:

**By the central tradition of the Party we mean a non-doctrinal, practical, humanitarian socialism - a creed of "conscience and reform" rather than of**

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124. CDS Papers: Manifesto Texts File: First Draft.

125. CDS Papers: Origins and Manifesto Text Files.

126. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Fourth Draft by Frank Pickstock after further discussion.

class hatred. The British Labour Movement owes its inspiration to British radicals, trade unionists, non-conformists and Christian Socialists, not to Marx and Lenin. We oppose the narrow Marxist definition of socialism which is being insinuated as orthodox Party doctrine, not only because it repels a growing number of Labour sympathisers but, above all, because it distorts the Party's ethical, reformist heritage.<sup>127</sup>

From there originally being numerous references to Marx or Marxism, these are the only ones that remained in the Manifesto as published. During the drafting process Pickstock tended to play a moderating role on Williams' and Crosland's overtly anti left-wing paragraphs. For example Crosland's response to Pickstock's fourth draft, the first to be seen outside Oxford, contained the following paragraph which was quickly deleted:

We are appalled by the personal venom, directed especially against the Party's elected leaders, shown by some "socialists" who have forgotten the meaning of the word fraternity. A Party of snarling factions will neither win, nor deserve, the confidence of the electorate.<sup>128</sup>

However Pickstock's role should not be overstated, from his first draft almost nothing remained by the time of publication, from Crosland's first re-draft paragraphs 3,4,6,7,8,12,13 and 14 formed the basis for the Manifesto as published.

Full meetings also contributed to the drafting of the Manifesto. At the meeting on July 29 for instance, Albu, Shanks, Jay, Dumont, Yates, Owen, Grant, Taverne, Jenkins, Gould and Kerensky all recommended amendments, ranging from Dumont's "less bromide" and Owen's "Needs more punch" to Albu's "world government is waffle".<sup>129</sup> During the drafting of the Manifesto one of the members

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127. CDS Papers: Signatories File, 7th draft discussed at London meeting 29 July 1960.

128. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Fifth Draft, Crosland's in response to Fourth Draft by Pickstock.

129. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Notes on discussion of draft manifesto, July 29 1960.



of the group, Niall Macdermott,<sup>130</sup> dropped out because he objected to the phrase in paragraph 10 of the pre-Scarborough draft that read: "we see the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange as a dogma irrelevant to our real problems." The sentence was dropped on the recommendation of Philip Williams<sup>131</sup> so that the section on public ownership read; "Recognising that public and co-operative and private enterprise all have a part to play in the economy, we regard the public ownership of particular industries or services as a useful technique to be justified on its merits." Which brought it directly into line with Gaitskell's position.<sup>132</sup>

The second full meeting of the organisers on July 29 formally elected a Steering Committee comprising Rodgers, Walden, Yates, Howell, Taverne, Pickstock and Williams. Rodgers was to act as chair and Pickstock as secretary. The MPs were also present but did not stand for the Steering Committee.<sup>133</sup> After the July meeting the drafting continued throughout August and September, although the shape of the Manifesto remained broadly that of the fifth draft written by Crosland.<sup>134</sup>

Sometime during August a possible list of ideal signatories was added to one of the copies being posted between Oxford and London. It read: Francis Place, William Lovett, Robert Owen, G.J. Holyoake, William Cooper, Henry George, William Morris, Robert Blatchford and Sidney Webb. On Crosland's copy the name Eduard Bernstein was added. On another copy Pickstock typed out composites of the ideal type of signatory:

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130. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting September 25 1960.

131. CDS Papers: Manifesto File, Williams to Pickstock, undated.

132. CDS Papers: Manifesto File A Manifesto Addressed to the Labour Movement, paragraph 11.

133. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes File, Notes on meeting, Friday July 29 1960.

134. CDS Papers: Manifesto File, Crosland's Fifth draft.

JAMES BROWN      Alderman, Borough of Porthampton. J.P  
Leader of Porthampton Labour Group.  
Branch Secretary, Transport Labourers  
Union. Member of the Labour Party since  
1919.

ERIC PIGGS      Journalist. Labour Candidate at Pulham  
1955 and at Cowley 1959.  
President Oxford Union 1953. Secretary  
NALSO 1954.<sup>135</sup>

The meeting of the Steering Committee for August was held in Oxford which reflected Pickstock's central role at this stage.<sup>136</sup> The August meeting approved the final draft of the Manifesto subject to last minute changes, which in the end were made after Gaitskell's speech at Scarborough. The search for signatories really began in earnest after this August 28 meeting.<sup>137</sup>

Ideas for people to sign the Manifesto were collected in much the same way as members were proposed. Members of the group submitted lists of people to be approached. Other names, like Silvan Jones<sup>138</sup> and C A B Pulham<sup>139</sup> were gleaned from letters written to the press. The procedure followed was straightforward and designed to minimise the danger of leaks to the press. The need for secrecy was stressed throughout.<sup>140</sup> In the first instance the combined meeting of the group assembled on May 16 in London and the group assembled on May 22 in Oxford was organised by word of mouth through existing contacts. When it was decided to expand the number of signatories this was done in stages. Firstly a member of the Steering

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135. CDS Papers: Manifesto File, Undated Manifesto.

136. CDS Papers: Origins File, Pickstock to Rodgers, August 8 1960.

137. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minutes of meetings.

138. See Spectator, March 11 1960.

139. Manchester Guardian, week before Scarborough, CDS Papers: Manifesto Texts File, Williams to Pickstock undated.

140. CDS Papers: Signatories File, for example Pickstock to Matthews, August 29 or Waterhouse Papers, Pickstock to Waterhouse August 29 or CDS Papers: Origins File Parker to Rodgers, September 20 1960.

Committee would personally contact the target person. The people designated to contact the possible signatories were allocated as indicated in the list below.<sup>141</sup> When a link was made Pickstock was informed and he dispatched a copy of the Manifesto with a covering letter asking for support.<sup>142</sup> If there was no link but the target person was felt to be worth trying then a general letter was sent and followed up if necessary.<sup>143</sup>

This procedure was time consuming but despite some fears it ensured that no news of the Campaign leaked before Scarborough.<sup>144</sup> Rodgers was particularly important in helping to track people down; addresses were supplied from the Fabian Society files<sup>145</sup> and as part of Rodgers' job at the Fabian Society he had travelled around the country, especially at elections,<sup>146</sup> thereby making many contacts.<sup>147</sup>

Of those designated to be contacted nothing further appeared concerning Peter Parker, J Madin, Alderman Swales, Ian Winterbottom, John Murray, Ross Wyld or A J Champion. The assumption must be that either they did not want to take part or they were not contacted. Of those that were contacted the Steering Committee was reasonably successful in achieving the mix of grass roots supporters it required. The MPs in the original group were excluded

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141. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock members of Steering Committee August 29 1960, undated list of people for each committee member to contact personally.

142. CDS Papers: Signatories File, for example Pickstock to Rodgers, October 1 1960, "Bill Rodgers has informed me that you have agreed in principle to join us in signing a Manifesto to the Labour Movement. I am enclosing a final draft...".

143. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Jim (Conway) August 29 1960, "A small group of us who are very concerned about the way the Party is going have been discussing issuing a manifesto to try to rally the centre. "

144. CDS Papers: Manifesto Texts File Crosland to Pickstock with enclosure, Crosland includes a typewritten comment by "a very reliable friend" who commented : "I think your proposed time-table is mad. . . it's sure to leak into the press during the summer."

145. CDS Papers: Origins File Gladys (Fabian Society) to Rodgers, August 31 1960.

146. Fabian Society Papers, A14/2 Rodgers to Vowles, May 19 1955, "The last week has been spent in Manchester, Widnes, Liverpool and York, mainly electioneering. "

147. Rodgers in Interview with author.

from the list of signatories. This was an early policy decision to ensure that the Campaign appeared as grass roots based as possible.<sup>148</sup> The journalists, Oleg Kerensky and Ivan Yates, also decided not to sign for professional reasons.<sup>149</sup>

There were those who although approached did not in the end sign the Manifesto. Harold Campbell who was assistant secretary of the Co-operative Party was personally contacted by Ivan Yates and invited to the September 26 1960 meeting, he agreed to sign and submitted his biographical details but failed to confirm before publication of Manifesto.<sup>150</sup> Alderman Clowes was personally contacted by Frank Pickstock and invited to the meeting on September 26. However due to illness he could neither sign nor attend the meeting.<sup>151</sup> Mr E G Coles was suggested by the MP Austin Albu, and was written to by Pickstock who outlined the groups plans without mentioning the meeting. There is no reply from Coles in the files.<sup>152</sup> David Currie was personally contacted by Denis Howell and then written to by Pickstock. Currie refused to take part, replying that "there is no real alternative to a lead from the Parliamentary Party."<sup>153</sup> Percy Morris was suggested by Pickstock himself, but replied in a "very queer letter" that he would have signed if the Manifesto had confined itself to domestic matters or the need for Party unity, but could not agree about defence.<sup>154</sup> Alderman Onions was

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148. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting June 27 1960, point 7. Minute of meeting on August 28 1960, Minutes File, Original List with note, undated

149. CDS Papers: Minutes File, Original List with note, undated

150. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Yates to Pickstock undated, List of Biographies, undated, invitation to meeting September 26 1960.

151. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Clowes, September 20 1960, Eric Tams to Pickstock October 5 1960.

152. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Albu to Pickstock, September 19 1960, Pickstock to Cole September 20 1960.

153. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Currie, October 10 1960, Currie to Pickstock, October 17 1960.

154. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Morris to Pickstock October 12 1960, Pickstock to Morris and to Rodgers October 13 1960.

personally contacted by Denis Howell, but cried off signing without giving a specific reason saying simply that "Denis Howell knew why."<sup>155</sup> As has been noted the MPs and two of the journalists who took part in the first meeting did not sign the Manifesto, two others from the original group also did not appear on the final list. Julius Gould who attended the original group on June 27 withdrew, stating that he had "good reasons", without being more specific but continued to support the Campaign.<sup>156</sup> Fred Jarvis, who was one of the Group and was contacted by Ivan Yates, submitted a biography, but later withdrew, it is unclear when or why.<sup>157</sup>

There were in the end twenty-six signatories, Ron Owen, Brian Walden and Philip Williams from the Oxford group, Bill Rodgers, Michael Shanks and Dick Taverne from the London group.<sup>158</sup> Then there were those recruited after the first meeting of the Steering Committee who attended the meeting on June 26.

Jim Conway, who was suggested by Denis Howell, was a national organiser of the AEU, an early recruit from outside the group and one of the first important trade union figures.

Harry Dickson, who was suggested by another of the signatories, Frank Price, agreed to sign but his confirmation arrived too late for inclusion in the Manifesto when it was first duplicated, he did however appear on the later printed editions. He was a chief whip of the Labour group on Dundee City Council.<sup>159</sup>

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155. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Onions to Pickstock, September 29 1960.

156. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Gould to Pickstock, October 10 1960.

157. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Yates to Pickstock, undated.

158. The actual importance of the signatories should not be underestimated. Existing studies, Windlesham 1966, Seyd 1968 and Haseler 1969, made no attempt to describe those who signed the manifesto. The signatories were the basis of the Campaign's claim to be grass roots and not Hampstead Set.

159. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Price to Pickstock, September 29 1960, Pickstock to Dixon, September 29 1960, Dixon to Pickstock, October 17 1960, Pickstock to Dixon, October 17 1960.

Anthony Dumont, who was a member of the Group and a figure who was generally known by the original organisers could have been personally contacted by any of them. He submitted lists of sympathisers and his biography and served as the Campaign's solicitor. He had been a candidate in 1959 and was a councillor in Paddington.<sup>160</sup>

Alec Grant had attended some meetings of the Group, but he was actually recruited for the first CDS meeting by Brian Walden whom he had known at university.<sup>161</sup> He took part in all the early meetings except the October 9 meeting which he could not make because his plane from Israel was grounded in France for the day. He eventually got back to England and his confirmation arrived just in time to be included. He was an officer in the Finchley Constituency Labour Party.<sup>162</sup>

T H Hockton was personally contacted by Rodgers. He was invited to the first meeting and signed the Manifesto but seemed to play little part after that. He had been a Labour and Co-operative Party candidate in 1955 and 1959.<sup>163</sup>

David T Jones was personally contacted by Rodgers. A long-standing member of the Party and ex-MP, Rodgers wrote to Pickstock of him: "He isn't in the best of health but otherwise he is likely to be very helpful...just count him in."<sup>164</sup>

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160. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Dumont to Pickstock, September 20 and September 29 1960.

161. CDS Papers: CDS Questionnaire, Alec Grant.

162. CDS Papers: Grant to Pickstock, October 11 1960, Pickstock to Grant, October 13 1960.

163. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Hockton, September 26 1960.

164. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Rodgers to Pickstock, undated, Pickstock to Jones, September 26 1960.

Silvan Jones, as mentioned above, had written to the Spectator in support of Gaitskell. He was contacted by Rodgers and then received a letter from Pickstock. His reply carried a number of suggested amendments to the Manifesto, Pickstock replied appreciating the comments "and especially your willingness to agree even if they are not accepted...I had almost forgotten that political activity could be as happy as this." Jones had been a candidate in 1959 and was chairman of Conway Constituency Labour Party.<sup>165</sup>

Bryan Magee was a member of the Group and could have been personally contacted by any of the Steering Committee. Pickstock sent him a copy of the Manifesto to which he replied "I approve..without reservation." He had been a candidate in 1959 and at a by-election in 1960.<sup>166</sup>

Gerry McQuade was contacted after writing to Tony Crosland and asking "Do you think it would be possible to launch a campaign against unilateral disarmament in opposition to CND". He was from Scunthorpe and had been a candidate in 1951.<sup>167</sup> Rodgers invited him to the first meeting on June 27. He agreed to sign and offered "complete support";<sup>168</sup> at a later meeting he suggested the name Campaign for Democratic Socialism.<sup>169</sup>

Dennis Matthews was contacted by Pickstock on the advice of Rodgers, and was a very early and strong supporter.<sup>170</sup>

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165. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Jones, September 26 1960, Jones to Pickstock, September 28 1960 and Pickstock to Jones September 29 1960.

166. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Magee to Pickstock, September 29 1960.

167. CDS Papers: Origins File, McQuade to Crosland, June 6 1960.

168. CDS Papers: Signatories File, McQuade to Pickstock, September 30 1960. CDS Papers: Origins File, McQuade to Rodgers, September 22 1960.

169. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History and Rodgers interview with author.

170. CDS Papers: Rodgers to Pickstock, October 1 1960, Pickstock to Matthews, September 29 1960.

J H Matthews was personally contacted by Pickstock. He was an early contact in Southampton and wrote of his own feelings on the situation in the Party; "In their helplessness and fear people are falling back on a crude traditionalism and a sentimental pacifism." He was a candidate in 1955 and 1959 and honorary treasurer of Leeds N W 1951-1959.<sup>171</sup>

Kenneth May was personally contacted by Rodgers and replied to Pickstock with "wholehearted support." He was a candidate in Tonbridge in 1959.<sup>172</sup>

Ronald Parker was personally contacted by Rodgers but didn't attend the first meeting. However he replied immediately and agreed to the post-Scarborough revisions. Parker was a trade union divisional officer in the Iron and Steel Trade Confederation.<sup>173</sup>

Alderman Frank Price was personally contacted by Howell. Price in turn recommended Harry Dickson.<sup>174</sup>

Vivan Ramsbottom was a councillor in Cambridge and was personally contacted by Pickstock. He signed but then played little further role.<sup>175</sup>

Helen Walker was personally contacted by Howell. She was Co-operative Society director and former head of a national union.<sup>176</sup>

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171. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Matthews, August 29 1960, Matthews to Pickstock August 31 1960.

172. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to May, September 26 1960, May to Pickstock, September 27 1960.

173. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Parker, September 26 1960, Parker to Pickstock, September 27 1960. CDS Papers: Origins File, Parker to Rodgers, September 14 and 20 1960.

174. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Price, September 28 1960, Price to Pickstock September 29 1960.

175. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Ramsbottom, October 1 1960, Ramsbottom to Pickstock, October 2 1960.

176. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Walker, September 26 1960.



Ronald Waterhouse was a member of the Group and remembers being recruited by "friends and contemporaries".<sup>177</sup> He attended the first full meeting on June 27 1960, was invited to sign and agreed in early October.<sup>178</sup> He was later on the CDS Parliamentary candidate lists.<sup>179</sup>

Harry Waterman was personally contacted by Rodgers, accepted and signed the Manifesto without playing any major role. He was a candidate in 1955, 1956 and 1959 and councillor on Leeds City Council.<sup>180</sup>

There was nothing particularly unique about the recruiting of grass roots signatories for manifestoes. The unilateralists also issued statements and had these signed by large numbers of rank and file members. In October 1960 the 'Conference Must Decide' group issued an 'Appeal for Unity' which was signed by 183 Labour activists.<sup>181</sup> The following year a CND activist organised another leaflet called "This Way to Peace" which was signed by 60 rank and file members of the Labour Party.<sup>182</sup>

Aside from finalising the list of people to be invited to sign,<sup>183</sup> the August meeting discussed the plan for the launch itself. Each member was asked to submit an annotated list of names of people who were felt to be sound enough to receive the Manifesto. It was also to be issued to the press (with an invitation to a press conference to be held by Pickstock, Rodgers and Howell)

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177. Questionnaire on CDS, Waterhouse.

178. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Waterhouse to Pickstock, October 5 1960.

179. See below on the selection of Parliamentary candidates.

180. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to Waterman, September 26 1960.

181. Manchester Guardian, November 14 1960.

182. Noel-Baker Papers: Correspondence 1959-1964, 2/124, Fletcher to Noel-Baker, November 28 1961.

183. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, August 28 1960, point 2: Signatures to the Manifesto.

and to all Labour MPs. In order that it should appear to be as spontaneous as possible it was duplicated rather than printed. A covering letter was included indicating that Alderman Pickstock would like to hear from supporters.<sup>184</sup> It was also decided to organise a national conference in January and to establish a permanent organisation.<sup>185</sup>

Rodgers and Pickstock remained as chairman and secretary with Taverne as treasurer. As such he was instructed to issue an appeal to original members for two hundred pounds and Crosland was asked to approach Jack Diamond for additional money.<sup>186</sup> By September Taverne had raised seventy five pounds<sup>187</sup> which financed the postage of the first circulation of Manifestoes to the signatories and then to the press and the early lists of supporters.<sup>188</sup> The crucial figure in financing the activity of CDS from the outset was Jack Diamond. Rodgers described Diamond's role in his CDS History as follows:

I had known Jack for nine years and had worked closely with him when he was Treasurer of the Fabian Society. But he was not thought of in a political capacity: he was the technician - in particular the technician who knew how to raise money.

As far as I can remember we did not consult him at all until after the Manifesto had been published. Certainly he was not approached to contribute towards the cost of publishing the Manifesto. We raised £200 from amongst the 25 or so people who had been responsible for launching it. However, he must have been approached as soon as the Manifesto was published and I think it was by Tony Crosland. From then on I was in close contact with him and he became the main organiser of funds not only for us but for any claimants amongst supporters of Hugh...Jack worked on the principle that if you

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184. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, August 28 1960, Point 3, Issue of Manifesto.

185. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, August 28 1960, Point 5, Future Organisation.

186. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, August 28 1960, Point 7, Officers and Finance.

187. CDS Papers: Origins File, Pickstock to Rodgers, September 7 1960.

188. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting on September 25 1960.

wanted to raise a lot of money, and to do so quickly, you should go to the few people with a lot of money to spare...The key occasion was a dinner given by Charles Forte in the Cafe Royal early in 1961. Hugh was there and Jack, Patrick Gordon Walker, Fred Hayday and myself. There were I think no more than half a dozen of us but from this something over £5000 was raised.<sup>189</sup>

Diamond was consistent in his efforts on the Campaign's behalf. The initial donation which recorded in the accounts as £5500 was "from Jack Diamond" for the period December 1 1960 to December 31 1961.<sup>190</sup> Expenditure was reduced in 1962 with Rodgers estimating it to be £2500 and expecting the following year to be approximately the same.<sup>191</sup> The vast majority of these funds came through Jack Diamond. At the height of the Campaign's activity in 1960-1961 income from sources other than Diamond amounted to £1652 out of a total income of £7153. Donations from other sources amounted to £868, in addition the sale of publications provided £134.<sup>192</sup> The proportion derived from Jack Diamond, and in turn from business interests that were well disposed towards the Labour Party hardly reinforces the image of the CDS as a grass roots movement. These figures can put into perspective by comparing them with with figures from CND which had a total income of £14,367<sup>193</sup> for the same period and the Fabian Society which had an income of some £10,000.

Rodgers drafted a set of possible questions and answers for the press conference. This detailed brief read in part :

### **Some possible key questions**

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189. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History pp 14-16.

190. CDS Papers: Office Administration, Revenue Account for the period December 1, 1960 -December 31 1961.

191. CDS Papers: Editorial Committee, Rodgers to Dumont, May 23 1963.

192. CDS Papers: Office Administration, Revenue Account for the period December 1 1960 to December 31 1961, Income Account.

193. The Left in Britain, The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Income and Expenditure Account for year ending December 31 1961, Reel Four, W3/12.

Q: Would you like to hear from Liberals? Is this a Manifesto for them as well?

A: Only in so far as it encourages them to join the Labour Party. The Manifesto is addressed to the Labour Movement in which we have spent our political lives. We aren't looking outside and are certainly not interested in any nonsense about an alliance between the moderates in the Labour Party and Mr Grimond.

Q: You say that you are rallying opinion as a first step and then ?

A: At the moment we don't know. Preparing and getting out the Manifesto has been a considerable undertaking. We expect to have our hands very full dealing with the response. Clearly we would not want to waste the goodwill we had secured when there is a very important job ahead of all of us in the next year. But it is too early to say precisely what we shall do.

Q: Some years ago the Bevanites were censured for being a Party within a Party. Aren't you setting out to be that?

A: Not at all, on the contrary we believe that we represent the great **majority**<sup>194</sup> of opinion within the Party...There certainly isn't anything conspiratorial about us.

Q: How representative are you really? Aren't you the intellectuals again - London and Oxford?

A: That isn't the conclusion that I would draw from the list of signatories. We are very varied in our interests and backgrounds. What we have in common is considerable service to the Labour Movement in one capacity or another - as Parliamentary candidates (two of us as MPs) and in local government, for example. We are a pretty good sample of what a constituency Labour Party looks like.

Q: How much stress do you lay on Party unity?

A: Of course we want unity - but not at the price of meaningless compromise and endless papering over of cracks...The left itself never moves towards the moderate centre or genuinely accepts a compromise and works within it. There are deep differences on defence and they have to be thrashed out. We certainly have no time for those leaders who always endeavour to be facing both ways - or sit trembling on the fence, wondering where it would be safest to come down.

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194. Emphasis as original.

Q: In fact, the purpose of this Manifesto is to support Mr Gaitskell?

A: Not solely. We had no ideas that he would be in his present position when we began to prepare it. He doesn't know about the Manifesto; he may not think that our initiative is well-judged. But of course we support him and what he stands for.<sup>195</sup>

As has been shown the reality of the background of the CDS was far removed from the way it was presented in this press conference. Especially interesting to note is the way the specific charge that "this is just the intellectuals again, London and Oxford", was feared and this reinforced the need to exclude the Hampstead Set MPs from the public face of the launch.

Rodgers and Pickstock outlined the procedure they were going to follow in an exchange of letters through September. During this exchange the question arose of the possibility that Gaitskell might not be defeated at Scarborough, "I very much agree with you about the danger of being lulled back. And I was concerned at the suggestion that we might find it wiser to postpone publication. If we hesitate I'm sure that we won't pick up the threads again and all our work - yours especially - will be wasted."<sup>196</sup>

The basic plan for the launch was worked out at the July meeting and then polished at the meeting on September 25. The full Manifesto was issued to the press with explanations of how the group came into existence and a contact address for those who wanted to give support.<sup>197</sup> The press conference was held in Room 15 at Caxton Hall on Tuesday October 18 at 3pm,<sup>198</sup> with the release embargoed until midnight on the October 18.<sup>199</sup> The room

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195. CDS Papers: Origins File, Notes for press conference, October 18 1960.

196. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Rodgers to Pickstock, September 28 1960.

197. CDS Papers: To Lie With File, Notes on meeting of July 29 1960.

198. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Pickstock to Manager Caxton Hall, the time was first set at 12 noon to 2pm but was changed on October 10 to 2.30 to 4.30.

199. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of the meeting, September 25 1960.

was booked under the name Labour Manifesto Group<sup>200</sup> and the title Victory for Sanity was adopted in the short term. This was developed from Rodgers who had written across the top of his agenda for the September meeting of the Steering Committee: "Forces of Sanity".<sup>201</sup> A detailed press list was prepared and Rodgers used his experience at the Fabian Society to identify those journalists that "would bother".<sup>202</sup> Rather than leave it to chance the list was annotated and members of the Steering Committee were allocated people to contact.<sup>203</sup>

Ten days after the initial launch Pickstock<sup>204</sup> drafted a progress report. It is probable that this report was meant for Gaitskell, as Howell and Rodgers met with the Party leader at about this time.<sup>205</sup> The initial mailing of the Manifesto was in duplicate form with 500 going out from Pickstock's office at the Oxford University Delegacy for Extra Mural Studies.<sup>206</sup> Each was dispatched with a postcard for response.<sup>207</sup> The envelopes were addressed and the response dealt with by Pickstock's helpers and Philip Williams' students, including George Jones: "...much of the early going through letters, sorting them out, doing the card indexes, was done in [Williams] room by myself and a number of his research students."<sup>208</sup> The first round was sent to the press, Labour MPs and Peers, the National Executive Committee and Regional

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200. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Pickstock to Manager Caxton Hall.

201. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, September 25 1960.

202. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Rodgers to Pickstock, September 30 1960.

203. CDS Papers: Origins File, Annotated press list.

204. CDS Papers: Untitled File, A Manifesto to the Labour movement, Report, October 28 1960, Pickstock frequently omitted the "Addressed from the title".

205. CDS History: Rodgers' CDS History, p 8.

206. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Report, October 28 1960.

207. Waterhouse Papers: Postcard. CDS Papers: Finance, bill for printing 1,500 postcards.

208. Witness Seminar Transcript.

Organisers.<sup>209</sup> At the September meeting of the Steering Committee it was decided that Taverne would try and obtain names and addresses from IRIS<sup>210</sup> a violently anti-communist organisation working within the trade union movement,<sup>211</sup> and Pickstock agreed to see Allan Flanders to obtain the addresses of the Friends of Socialist Commentary.

In addition to the possible questions and answers Rodgers drafted a statement with which he planned to open the news conference. His intention was to be economical with the truth as far as the press was concerned, "I don't want to be tied to a written statement - I don't think the press would like it - but this is what I would have in mind to say. As you will see, it is the truth, if not quite all of it."<sup>212</sup> Rodgers put the launch of the Campaign into the context of events since the General Election, claiming that it had been "universally accepted that considerable changes were required if Labour was to climb back to power again. But within three months this mood had evaporated",<sup>213</sup> He highlighted the NEC's decision not to use the "Amplification of Aims" as an addition to the constitution but simply to publish it<sup>214</sup> as an indication of how far the Party had turned back on the need for reform. Throughout the period of preparation of the Campaign and in this statement for the launch, it was the Clause Four dispute, the need for reform and modernisation, which was central.<sup>215</sup> Rodgers made plain in this statement that it was after the compromise on

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209. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Report, October 28 1960.

210. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, September 25 1960.

211. Seyd 1968 p 115.

212. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Rodgers to Pickstock, September 28 1960.

213. CDS Papers: Origins File, Basis of Statement by WTR at press conference, October 18 1960, emphasis in original.

214. NEC Minutes July 13 1960.

215. Windlesham 1966 p 95 and Seyd p 117 are clear that modernisation rather than unilateralism was the primary motivating force for the launch of the campaign, but Haseler 1969 p 209 concentrates almost exclusively on unilateralism.

Clause Four that "a number of us in London began to talk together about what we could do. Not only had the proposal to modernise Clause 4 caused uproar; there was now the chance that the Party would go unilateralist. These seemed to us to be symptoms of a very dangerous trend."<sup>216</sup>

The press coverage that resulted from the conference was in the main favourable and either welcomed the initiative or reported the statements by the organisers uncritically. The tabloids made much of the launch. Victor Knight, in the Daily Mirror,<sup>217</sup> reported the Campaign in the desired way, "The call to support Mr Gaitskell was made in a manifesto issued by a group of Labour Party members, including Parliamentary candidates and Party officials". He stressed the value of the manifesto and quoted two paragraphs in full. The Daily Sketch, under the headline, "Stand and Fight", quoted directly from the organiser's statements and answers:

Alderman Pickstock said, "We are the NCOs and the platoon commanders of the Party. We are after the people whom we think will stand and fight,"..."We are the rank and file," said Mr Rodgers..."There are no MPs on the list of signatories" said Mr Howell, "because this is a grass root organisation." He said that Mr Gaitskell knew nothing before hand about the manifesto and agreed that it was a declaration of hostilities against Victory for Socialism, "Call us Victory for Sanity"...The sentiments it expresses and the people who have launched it are just those Mr Gaitskell will appeal to in the next four weeks. Mr Rodgers said, "We have to begin to do what we don't like to do - begin to fight."

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216. CDS Papers: Origins File, Basis of Statement, October 18 1960.

217. Daily Mirror, October 19 1960.



The Times<sup>218</sup> said the Manifesto was issued by a number of members of Constituency Labour Parties and then simply reprinted the bulk of it with no other comments. In contrast the Manchester Guardian<sup>219</sup> gave the story front page coverage and in the longest article to appear the day after the launch reflected all the things the organisers hoped to put across at the news conference. Welcoming the initiative the paper said that the Manifesto was:

A positive move to rally the Labour Party behind the leadership of Mr Gaitskell...its instigators hinted that an organised group of moderates might emerge as an antidote to the Victory for Socialism pressure within the Party...Twenty-six rank and filers who describe themselves as "long standing members of the Labour Party"...Introducing the document yesterday, Mr W Rodgers, until recently general secretary of the Fabian Society, Alderman F V Pickstock, Vice-Chairman of the Oxford City Labour Group and a member of Mr Cousin's Transport and General Workers Union, and Mr Denis Howell, member for All Saints Birmingham until the last election, said the immediate object was to raise the morale of the moderates in the Party. "But we are not going pack up after today and go home," said Mr Rodgers. Pressed on the question of organising in formal groups, he said, "We have not made any decisions not to organise." It was clear that the authors of the manifesto considered that the Victory for Socialism group had had things its own way for long enough..."It was not a gestion of splitting the Labour Party", Mr Rodgers said, but of "rallying what we believe to be its central tradition"...He described supporters of the manifesto as the "hard centre".

But the most positive reaction came from one of the organisers, Ivan Yates. Writing in Reynold News<sup>220</sup> Yates warmly welcomed his own organisation:

...this long overdue decision to counter the extremism of Victory for Socialism could go a long way to restore the balance of the Party. In three

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218. The Times, October 19 1960.

219. Manchester Guardian, October 19 1960.

220. Reynold News, October 23 1960.

days more than 200 people from all over the country have written or telephoned their support. They include constituency party chairmen, shop stewards, regional officers of trade unions. Their response makes clear that this is just what they've been waiting for. Incidentally the manifesto is brilliantly written in flowing sonorous language...It deserves to be widely read. Any of our readers interested in obtaining a copy should write to Alderman F V Pickstock, 78 Sandfield Road, Oxford.

The theme which emerged from the earlier meetings that set up the CDS, the Walden-Pickstock meeting of May 11<sup>221</sup> and the Rodgers-Crosland meeting of April 11,<sup>222</sup> was of alienation from the way the Party was going, a feeling that this direction was somehow illegitimate. Their reaction to this was to assert the "central tradition" that they felt they represented.

At the same time we were convinced that the voices which were mainly from the rank and file of the Party - against change and for unilateralism, for example - were not representative of the Party or even a majority in it, let alone the millions who had voted Labour. They were winning because they were loud, persistent and organised. The potential support for sanity was great but nothing was being done to rally it. The moderates underestimated their own strength; some were giving up active political work because they thought they stood alone. Even MPs had grown cautious in the face of what seemed to be unassailable and militant left-wing majorities in the constituencies.<sup>223</sup>

The newspapers picked up this theme in their coverage of the news conference. The Times writing of the Manifesto, quoted Rodgers, slightly polishing the draft version of the statement: "All of us working in constituencies were conscious that the voices raised were not rank and file voices at all. They were the voices of a loud, persistent and organised minority."<sup>224</sup>

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221. CDS Papers: Untitled File, unsigned note describing Pickstock's movements in May and June.

222. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 5.

223. CDS Papers: Origins File, Basis of Statement.

224. The Times, October 19 1960.

The silent majority had to assert itself if the Party was not to perish, "We were not prepared - as long standing and responsible members of the Party - to see this. We decided to make some demonstration of our own. We discovered a very similar group in Oxford that had been convened by Alderman Pickstock and joined with them and one or two others including Mr Denis Howell. We agreed as a first step in our campaign to publish a Manifesto and rally support. We approached a number of active rank and file people in the Party and they agreed to sign. We didn't want to take a final decision until the Party conference but of course Scarborough settled it."<sup>225</sup>

Of course Scarborough did not settle it, it had already been decided to go ahead. In the short term Scarborough was a slight inconvenience as well as being an opportunity. Rodgers realised that defence was critical to the credibility of the Campaign but that this had to be balanced by not appearing to be the splitters.<sup>226</sup> The rest of the statement shows both working in combination:

The Manifesto explains what we stand for. This is clearly not splitting the Party or introducing new divisions but rallying it round its own central tradition. Of course, we want unity - everyone does - but on whose terms? Time and time again there has been a compromise in response to the cry of unity: and time and time again the left has failed to respect it. One prominent member of the NEC now believes that unity consists of standing against Mr Gaitskell for the leadership. Someone else yesterday spoke of "a new statement of policy" on defence. What has either of these done to campaign for united support for the agreed policies and for Mr Gaitskell in the past? There are deep differences on defence that have to be thrashed out. We have had enough of those who face both ways.

Some of those who speak of another compromise say that it is for the sake of the rank and file. But up to 70% of the constituency parties at Scarborough

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225. CDS Papers: Origins File, Basis of Statement.

226. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of November 6 1960 meeting, the point is stressed.

supported Mr Gaitskell and, as we know, very many of Mr Cousins' union do so also. The authors of this Manifesto are rank and file. We know that we speak for many who don't normally raise their voices - and other who have been drifting out of active politics in disgust at the antics of the left and contempt for the soft-centre. We are the - if you like - hard centre: we know that we have a majority of decent, thoughtful, loyal and long-service members on our side.<sup>227</sup>

The economy with the truth employed so effectively in the press conference statement extended beyond just the press. A full meeting with all the signatories, so painstakingly recruited, was to be held on October 9. Rodgers worried what these new people would make of the MPs presence at this grass roots movement: "I'm wondering a bit about the function of the MPs on the 9th. I'm not quite sure what they could contribute and what the newcomers may think of them. In public we are intending to deny that we have any contact. Some of the newcomers may be a little more scrupulous about the truth. Could we ask them in the afternoon instead? Perhaps you could talk to Tony - who I think should be present...It is Patrick G-W and Douglas Jay I am most concerned about. The difficulty applies less to Roy."<sup>228</sup> The mood of the organisers was however generally improving. This was partly because they were actually doing something, but also because the response they received was generally welcoming. As Pickstock put it to Matthews, "Our plot seems to be going well, and it looks as though it needs to."<sup>229</sup>

Rodgers was also optimistic, especially after the meeting of the signatories on October 9: "The more I hear the more it seems that the mood is exactly right for our Manifesto. More important, there is real support for an

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227. CDS Papers: Origins File Basis of Statement by WTR at press conference, October 18 1960.

228. CDS Papers: Untitled File Rodgers to Pickstock, September 30 1960.

229. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to J H Matthews, September 30 1960.

organisation and recognition that the battle must be joined and will have to be carried on for several years. Our meeting yesterday was far more solid than I expected: no backsliding."<sup>230</sup>

The effect of the vote at Scarborough had been predicted, Gaitskell's speech had not. The defiance of the speech appealed to CDS organisers like Taverne who had never wanted to see a compromise on Clause 4: "It was deliberately not a Gaitskell fan club...it wasn't until Hugh Gaitskell's speech at Scarborough that we then said 'of course now there is no question whatsoever, from now on the cause we believe in is personally identified with Gaitskell and the issue we must fight is now CND and unilateral disarmament because that is the issue we may be able to win.'"<sup>231</sup> Williams reacted to the events of the conference directly; "It's all ghastly - but at least we shouldn't have to worry much now about momentum...After this week I am sure we ought to revise para 1 as well as 4 of the Manifesto if only for topicality."<sup>232</sup> After the inevitable re-drafting by Crosland and Pickstock the opening paragraph read: "We are long-standing members of the Labour Party who are convinced that our Movement cannot afford another Scarborough. Rank-and-file opinion must now assert itself in support of Hugh Gaitskell and of those Labour MPs - the great majority - who are determined to resist and then reverse the present disastrous trend towards unilateralism and neutralism."<sup>233</sup>

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230. CDS Papers: Signatories File Rodgers to Pickstock October 10 1960

231. Witness Seminar Transcript, Taverne.

232. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Williams to Pickstock undated.

233. CDS Papers: Origins File, A Manifesto addressed to the Labour Movement.

The press list as compiled by Rodgers was extensive. In addition to the list of those to be contacted personally, Rodgers listed forty-one other publications to send the Manifesto to, including the editor of Tribune and the Daily Worker.<sup>234</sup> Extending the mailing beyond the MPs and to the NEC to Regional Organisers was suggested at the end of September.<sup>235</sup> This gave Pickstock some organisational problems especially when Rodgers suggested adding Peers to the list.<sup>236</sup> The problem gives an insight into just how haphazard the early organisation was in many ways: "If we are to send to Labour Peers, Regional Organisers, N.E.C. members, T.U. leaders, etc., we ought to get someone getting the names and addresses out. I have not organised myself for that job, and could not manage it now. Is there any member of the group, or another sympathiser who could tackle it?"<sup>237</sup> Somebody was obviously found for the job because the draft report shows that, "at the same time and in the following two days about 500 copies were sent to selected members of the Party all over the country, although there were some major gaps in our contacts, notably in Wales and Scotland."<sup>238</sup> These gaps were partially filled by two initiatives. Rodgers organised a meeting with Scottish MPs to get lists of contacts in Scotland. Present at the meeting were Margaret Herbison, James McInnes, George Willis, Tom Steele, Tom Fraser, Bruce Millan, William Hamilton, George Lawson, Willie Ross, Williams Hannan, David Hannan and Margaret McCusket.<sup>239</sup> Of these MPs Will Hannan was to be helpful to the Campaign later on.<sup>240</sup> For Wales the slack was partially taken up by the vigorous

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234. CDS Papers: Origins File, press List, undated.

235. CDS Papers: Origins File, Pickstock to Rodgers, September 29 1960.

236. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Rodgers to Pickstock, September 30 1960.

237. CDS Papers: Origins File, Pickstock to Rodgers, October 1 1960.

238. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Report, October 28 1960.

239. CDS Papers: Origins File, Scottish MPs at meeting addressed by WTR November 1961, with note George's initiative.

240. See below: The Selection of Parliamentary Candidates.

support of Silvan Jones<sup>241</sup> who was sent "several hundreds" for distribution in Wales.<sup>242</sup>

After the first mailing and the considerable press coverage the response "was much greater than we had expected"<sup>243</sup> and the duplicated Manifestoes were replaced by printed ones. The first 225 were dispatched from the Church Army Press on October 25, followed by 1750 on October 26 and a steady flow thereafter.<sup>244</sup> The breakdown of the first five hundred responses was estimated as follows:

Local Party Officers	70
Councillors and JPs	150
T.U. Secretaries, etc	50
Candidates and ex MPs	40
Journalists, Lecturers etc	40
Co-op Officers	10
Unclassified Members	<u>130</u>
Total, approx.	500

Area Distribution	
London	100
Home Counties	100
South and S.W	30
W Midlands	40
E Midlands	40
E Anglia	20
Yorks	50
North	20
Lancs and Ches	80
Wales and Mon	10
Scotland	10 <sup>245</sup>

The bulk of the letters in response to this early mailing went to Pickstock in Oxford. The names and addresses were transferred onto the index cards. Rodgers also received letters which reflected a range of reactions to the Manifesto. Peggy Crane, writing from Transport House, was

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241. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Jones to Pickstock October 26 1960.

242. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Pickstock to Jones, October 28 1960.

243. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Report, October 28 1960.

244. CDS Papers: Finance, Goods Dispatch notes for October 25 and 26.

245. CDS Papers: Origins File, Report October 28 1960

disappointed that public ownership was played down and she feared that the group would not be "a centre group but a dedicated pro-Gaitskell one".<sup>246</sup> This was rather an exceptional view. Support was generally based on Gaitskell as leader.<sup>247</sup> Michael Pease, a member of forty years standing in the Party, not someone who was "young in the movement", wrote offering help and support.<sup>248</sup> The television interview Rodgers gave the day after the launch also produced responses.<sup>249</sup> Support came from within the NEC. From Eirene White who while welcoming the Manifesto was not optimistic of its chances: "My own feeling is that we shall have to split. I don't think we can go any longer with the Tribune crowd. But how to do this with least damage and how to cope with the organic connection with the unions, which slows up any line of action one might wish to take, is exceedingly difficult, unless Silverman and Co oblige by cutting themselves off and so relieve us of the job."<sup>250</sup> Letters sent to Rodgers through the Fabian Society were passed on<sup>251</sup> and Gaitskell forwarded letters he received.<sup>252</sup>

To keep the momentum up and maintain contacts with the signatories a further meeting was arranged for November 6 1960 and a statement On Unity was issued to the press on Wednesday 26 October 1960:

The Manifesto which we published last week has brought a magnificent response. The spontaneous reaction of correspondents all over the country entitles us to express our views on the burning question of Party unity.

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246. CDS Papers: Origins File, Crane to Pickstock, October 25 1960.

247. CDS Papers: Origins File, for example Gean to Rodgers, October 23 1960.

248. CDS Papers: Origins File, Pease to Rodgers, October 19 1960.

249. CDS Papers: Origins File for example Deeny to Rodgers, October 20 1960.

250. CDS Papers: Origins File, White to Rodgers, October 20 1960.

251. CDS Papers: Origins File, for example Gladys to Rodgers, November 7 1960.

252. CDS Papers: Origins File, Stephen to Gaitskell, October 23 1960 and Graham to Gaitskell, October 21 1960.



The charge has been made that Hugh Gaitskell's leadership is an obstacle to unity. But to the central mass of Labour supporters, his replacement under pressure would be a far worse obstacle to unity (let alone victory). We are convinced that if we were now to sacrifice Hugh Gaitskell, the trickle out of the Party would become a torrent - and still unity would not be achieved....But unity will not be achieved by accepting terms dictated by a narrow and unrepresentative minority. The genuine unity we need must be based on terms acceptable to the great majority - to the 70 per cent of the constituency parties who supported the NEC's defence policy at Scarborough, and to the mass of Labour voters who are so frequently ignored.

Peace within the Party requires far more mutual tolerance than the perpetual malcontents have shown for a long time.

Signed W.T.Rodgers, D. Howell, F.V. Pickstock

The meeting of November 6 1960 marked the end of the initial phase of the CDS. Rodgers had left the Consumers Association<sup>253</sup> and was therefore free to take over the full time task of running what was quickly becoming a substantial campaign.<sup>254</sup> At first he moved into a makeshift office in Yates' flat and then into a similar one in Taverne's, before finally the CDS itself took an office in Red Lion Street.<sup>255</sup> The Steering Committee was confirmed but reduced to Rodgers (chairman), Taverne (treasurer), Pickstock (secretary), Howell, Williams and Yates.<sup>256</sup> This meeting also considered plans for the future. These were to be based on an organisation comprising supporters, local groups, regional groups and a "council to be constituted on a basis yet to be determined".<sup>257</sup> They decided to publish a regular newsletter to circulate among these supporters, to establish a panel of speakers to put forward their case,

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253. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History, p 11.

254. CDS Papers: Origins File, Confidential minute of meeting, November 6 1960, Point 4c.

255. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History p 10.

256. CDS Papers: Origins File, Confidential minute of meeting, November 6 1960 point 4a.

257. CDS Papers: Origins File, Confidential minute of meeting, November 6 1960, point 4g

to sponsor resolutions to go before local parties and branches and run slates of candidates for party offices.<sup>258</sup>

The planning and launch of the CDS had been a "considerable undertaking"<sup>259</sup> which was carried out with considerable skill. With the established expertise of Rodgers and Howell,<sup>260</sup> the organisational ability of Pickstock and the "willing helpers" at Oxford<sup>261</sup> the initial period was carried off quite smoothly. The organisation was stretched at times but it came through. In the course of this activity a closeness and camaraderie was quickly built up. There are touches in the letters which reflect the mutual esteem the campaigners felt for each other and their dislike of their opponents. For instance, Pickstock writing to Rodgers in September 1960: "I am sorry to hear about your 'flu and to know that your family too is down with it. So far as you are concerned, it is an ill wind that bodes no good. My first reaction to your draft statement and questions and answers is that I have nothing to add; both seem to me magnificent...I hope that you and your family soon recover. Your typing may be affected but flu does not appear to affect your clarity of thought."<sup>262</sup> Later Pickstock wrote to one of the signatories and offered his view of Crossman and Benn: "It looks as though they have been contorting themselves in the service of Party unity for so long they can no longer see a problem when it stares them in the face".<sup>263</sup> The solidarity between the CDS organisers was undoubtedly important in ensuring the speed and secrecy of the organising in the early period.

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258. CDS Papers: Origins File, Confidential minute of meeting, November 6 1960 point 5d.

259. CDS Papers: Origins File, Notes for press Conference, October 18 1960 p 9.

260. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History.

261. Witness Seminar Transcript.

262. CDS Papers: Untitled File, Pickstock to Rodgers, September 29 1960.

263. CDS Papers: Signatories File, Pickstock to J H Matthews, September 30 1960.

The care taken with the preparation ensured that the launch of the CDS was extremely successful and this success carried the Campaign through much of its first year.

The task that the original Steering Committee had set itself was to rally opinion in the Party behind the leadership by organising at grass roots level.<sup>264</sup> For some the primary purpose of this group was to be the defence of Gaitskell's leadership.<sup>265</sup> For others it was a more general need to rally the centre and right of the Party against the left and only became centred on Gaitskell after Scarborough.<sup>266</sup> All of the original group and those who joined through the summer of 1960 agreed that the best way to do this was to issue a Manifesto which outlined their view of socialism and the "central tradition" of the Labour Party. Their aim was to create "a new given factor in the Party" and from the time they moved into Red Lion Street they set about doing this. Their first priority was to reverse the vote for unilateralism and the key to this was a lobbying operation in the trade unions.

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264. CDS Papers: Origins File, Minute of meeting, June 27 1960.

265. CDS Papers: Rodgers' CDS History, McQuade left the CDS when it disagreed with Gaitskell over Europe.

266. This was true of the main organisers, Rodgers, Pickstock and Taverne.

## Chapter 4:

### Reversing the Scarborough Votes.

The period from the last meeting of the signatories in November 1960<sup>1</sup> until the end of the year was taken up with six main tasks:<sup>2</sup>

- a) Establishing a properly equipped and staffed London office.
- b) Achieving a settled organisational structure by increasing the size of the Steering Committee, calling together a Council of regional representatives who will also be our agents in the country, and determining our relationship with MPs.
- c) Developing close and continuous liaison with other groups having a similar purpose e.g. MPs multilateral campaign,<sup>3</sup> trade unions, Socialist Commentary;
- d) Continuing to build up the directory of supporters by distributing the Manifesto, asking for replies and collecting names, especially from TU's.
- e) Encouraging sufficient press publicity to keep the Campaign in the news and to raise the morale of those supporters with whom we shall have little personal contact - and of other well-disposed people.

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1. CDS Papers: Minutes File, Meeting of November 6 1960.

2. CDS Papers: Minutes File, The First Phase, SC 1: 18. 11. 60: WTR. There is also a copy of this in the Taverne Papers.

3. Witness Seminar Transcript: Mayhew. The Socialist Campaign for Multilateral Disarmament organised the Multilateral Marathon and other similar events.

This chapter will be concerned with a detailed exploration of these activities as they related to the trade unions and the Constituency Labour Parties to assess the extent of the Campaign's influence on the successful reversal of the defence votes at Blackpool in 1961.

Previous writers on the Campaign have offered different assessments of the role of CDS in the reversing of the votes on defence that took place at Scarborough in 1960. Lord Windlesham concluded his study of the CDS with the contention that the CDS was not the decisive factor. "What then, was the role of CDS? It did not change the defence policy of the Labour Party. The policy was changed, as it had been made, by the union vote at the Party conference."<sup>4</sup> He identified three factors which were critical in the change, "the first was the leadership of Gaitskell...The second factor was the consistent support of the Parliamentary Party...the desire for unity was the third factor."<sup>5</sup> But he maintained that CDS,

by analysing the power structure of the party, by identifying individuals with power at its grass roots and by effectively communicating to many of them the reasoned argument for Mr Gaitskell and his policy...played an important part in the reversal of an historic political decision. But the campaign was an agent and not a cause of change.<sup>6</sup>

Professor Haseler was in broad agreement with Lord Windlesham. He mentioned the role of the CDS in the decision in USDAW and the AEU<sup>7</sup> and maintained that "their change of policy was not basically due to the organisational activity of CDS".<sup>8</sup> "The contribution of

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4. Windlesham 1966, p 143.

5. Windlesham 1966, pp 143-145.

6. Windlesham 1966, p 149.

7. Discussed in detail below, pp 161-164.

8. Haseler 1969, p 222.

the CDS was less obvious", than that of Gaitskell himself, "but nevertheless real". The fact that an organisation was at work in the Party at "grass roots level with attendant publicity and propaganda methods no doubt raised the morale of loyalist elements".<sup>9</sup> Haseler maintained that the Campaign was a significant factor, among others, in the reversal of the votes but it was not the decisive factor.

Dr Seyd, generally less favourable to the CDS than Haseler, concluded that although the CDS was definitely active its role was insignificant in the overall picture:

How much of the change of heart was due to CDS? I think the answer is little. The main cause of the policy change was Gaitskell's leadership...it is fair to claim that CDS created the conditions within the constituency parties that enabled moderate opinion to be roused, but it is doubtful if this was the case within trade union branches.<sup>10</sup>

The problem with all three accounts was that, because of the limited access to information about what the Campaign actually did, they failed to ask certain basic questions. These questions related to the possible assessments that could be put forward about the extent of the Campaign's influence on the voting at the Blackpool Conference in 1961. Four possibilities present themselves:

- 1) CDS was the decisive factor in the results in 1961.
- 2) CDS played a significant role but it was not the decisive factor.
- 3) CDS had a role to play but it was not a significant factor in the unions' voting.
- 4) CDS was irrelevant in the change of opinion in the unions.

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9. Haseler 1969, p 226.

10. Seyd 1968, pp 158-161.

These options force one to ask basic questions. Firstly, what would have constituted the CDS being a decisive factor? If the Campaign had personally lobbied each and every delegate to each and every trade union conference and persuaded a majority on each to vote for the official policy and against unilateralism, would this have constituted a decisive factor? If so, this the Campaign did not achieve, nor could it have expected to do so. As it was, from a standing start, it succeeded in lobbying all the important delegates in the critical medium sized unions that were needed for Gaitskell's victory.<sup>11</sup> If decisive is taken to mean that the Campaign was the single most important factor in tipping the balance in unions then it would have had to have been more influential than Gaitskell's own campaign, the influence of the Parliamentary Party and the natural movement towards unity in the trade unions. Given that the bulk of the Campaign's propaganda material was made up of the virtues of Gaitskell's leadership, the need for unity and the arguments of Policy for Peace it could hardly be seen independently to have been the most important factor. Therefore the first possible conclusion can be dismissed.

In a similar respect the final option must also be dismissed because the existence of the Campaign and the level of activity described in this chapter prove that it must have had some influence. None of the commentators at the time or writers on the CDS since have claimed that it was irrelevant.

We are therefore left with the two options which are differences of degree. The problem with assessing these options is one of comparison. No comparable organisation putting a case in support for the leadership, stressing the need for unity and backed by the bulk of the trade union leadership had existed before. We cannot compare

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11. USDAW, AEU and NUR.

the efforts of CND in the period leading up to Scarborough because it was not operating in the same way and the external factors during the period of October 1959 to October 1960 were very different from those of October 1960 to October 1961. Moreover, the operation of CND was better funded and it was not a solely Labour Party affair because it directed its campaigning to targets outside the Party in the general public. As the Campaign cannot be compared it must be assessed in its own terms and judged by its actions.

The three largest unions to switch illustrated the CDS in action. The CDS played a definite role in USDAW. This is agreed on by all the previous writers on the Campaign and borne out by the evidence.<sup>12</sup> The USDAW vote was followed by the AEU conference. The influence of CDS in the AEU is disputed. Seyd<sup>13</sup> and Minkin<sup>14</sup> give the credit for the vote at the executive to Bill Carron and his supporters. Windlesham<sup>15</sup> and Haseler<sup>16</sup> agree with this in general terms but also give credit to the CDS. As we shall see the dividing line between Jim Boyd and Jim Conway operating as AEU officials and them operating as supporters of the Campaign was rather thin. It was a combination of the AEU leadership's desire to change the vote and the Campaign's extensive lobbying and briefing which turned the AEU. It should be stressed therefore that it is not always possible to separate the influence of the individual officials and the influence of the collective Campaign. However, by combining a detailed examination of the actions of the Campaign in each union and the changes in constituency votes, this Chapter will attempt to assess the degree of CDS influence. It is

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12. Seyd 1968, p 142, Haseler 1969, pp 221-222 and Windlesham 1966, p 135.

13. Seyd 1968, p 143.

14. Minkin 1978, pp 190-191.

15. Windlesham 1966, pp 121-122.

16. Haseler 1969, pp 222-223.



important to keep the CDS in perspective as part of a combination of factors working towards unity and against unilateralism.

In the Constituency Labour Parties the proportion that voted for the official defence policy at Scarborough and Blackpool has been debated.<sup>17</sup> Immediately after the Scarborough Conference Denis Healey claimed 80%<sup>18</sup> of the Constituency Labour Parties for multilateralism.<sup>19</sup> The official CDS view was:<sup>20</sup>

Before Blackpool the views of the majority of trade unions were already known. Between them the unions opposing Policy for Peace commanded 1,400,000 votes at Conference. This means that the constituency Parties contributed fewer than 400,000 votes to the total, i.e., almost 60% of them supported the official policy. There is also evidence that some unilateral delegates, appointed at annual party meetings early in the year, broke the mandates given to them by parties which had later swung to multilateralism. The number of multilateral parties is now clearly more than even the vote would suggest.<sup>21</sup>

A later analysis claimed that rather than there being an increase in the number of multilateralist parties, this total decreased over the period:

The total union vote at the 1960 Conference was 5,573,000 while accounted union votes totalled 5,560,000, leaving only 13,000 votes unaccounted for. Also unknown is the way the 8,000 votes of the Socialist Societies were cast. If one assumes of these 21,000 votes that 10,000 were cast both for

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17. The actual size of the constituency vote in 1960 was 781,000 votes out of a total of 6,381,000, for 1961 the vote was 868,000 out of a total of 6,282,000. All these figures are for the votes cast in the defence debate rather than the overall total possible conference votes. Williams 1962, p 308.

18. Seyd 1968, p 152, claims this was a CDS claim, there is no record of the Campaign making such a claim and although Healey was well disposed towards the CDS he was not an active organiser.

19. Williams 1962, p 306.

20. CDS Papers: Philip Williams Nuffield, Correspondance File, undated draft What Happened at Blackpool, The Facts on Record. This analysis was drafted by Philip Williams and based on preliminary research carried out for the Political Quarterly article which appeared in 1962.

21. Campaign 10, November 1961.

and against, and 1,000 were cast as abstentions, then the estimated breakdown of CLP and Federation voting would be:

For: 501,000 Against: 280,000

Thus in 1960 65% of CLP and Federation votes were cast in favour of the official policy...The total union vote at the 1961 Conference was 5,384,000 and committed union votes total 5,376,000, leaving 8,000 trade union votes unaccounted for. If one adds the 8,000 unknown Socialist Societies votes, the total unknown votes of these two is 16,000. Again assuming that these unknown votes split 50:50 then the estimated CLP and Federation voting would be

For: 529,000 Against 341,000

This shows an increase of 28,000 (6%) votes for the official defence policy, but an increase of 61,000 (22%) against the policy. Only 60% of CLP and Federation votes were cast in favour of the official policy as compared with 65% in 1960.<sup>22</sup>

There is actually little difference in the figures. The key figure in 1960 is the level of abstentions. In 1960 this was 208,000 out of the total possible constituency party vote of 1,070,000 or 989,000 if one uses the votes cast for the constituency section of the NEC as a guide.<sup>23</sup> It is probable that the bulk of these abstentions came about because of Gaitskell's passionate speech. It is also likely that, as CDS claimed, some unilateralists broke their mandates to support the platform. Rather than stressing, as Seyd does, the fact that in 1961 the platform only held onto 60% as against 65% in 1960, it should be stressed that 65% at Scarborough represented a remarkable achievement and to keep this to 60% in 1961 when only 20,000 votes out of 1,012,000 failed to be cast in the defence debate was extraordinary. Moreover, Seyd's conclusion that "it would seem that within this section of the Labour Party CDS lost ground between 1960 and 1961" is false.<sup>24</sup> The vote in 1960 was an artificial high point in which a proportion of the vote, impossible to estimate, was

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22. Seyd 1968, pp 151-152.

23. Williams 1962, p 308.

24. Seyd 1968, p 152.

achieved not because of support for the leadership's policy but because of a desire to see Party unity. The increase in the unilateralist vote by 21,000 does not represent new votes but the return to the fold of previously committed unilateralists. The stability and increase in the multilateralist vote represented the holding of a high watermark.

The extent to which the CDS was responsible for holding this high watermark is difficult to assess. The Campaign's own work in assessing the impact of its activity consisted of a questionnaire circulated to 148 Constituency Labour Parties in which the Campaign was active. The findings of the survey were initially used by the CDS for its own information before Philip Williams pushed for publication:

If no objection in principle [to publication], have you a view between an academic and a popular article? The advantages of the second are (1) that the academic journals are horribly slow (2) that of course it would get more immediate publicity. But the great advantage of academic publication is that one can then set out the evidence much more fully than a daily newspaper would want to do; and as a lot of people will want to discredit some of the conclusions, the less these rest on speculation and the more they are proved the better.<sup>25</sup>

The findings were used in the article published in Political Quarterly. There were five main conclusions:

1. The sample includes less than a quarter of the Parties, more than a quarter of the votes (so they tend to be big parties)...The sample was two-thirds unilateral in 1960, evenly divided in 1961; this suggests it is rather leftish. Its NEC voting is pretty representative; those who do better than average are Castle, Greenwood, Mayhew, Gordon

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25. CDS Papers: Philip Williams Nuffield, Correspondance File, Williams to Rodgers December 3 1961. The same letter contains a reference to David Hennessy, later Lord Windlesham, who had started research on his book Communication and Political Power which featured a case study of the CDS: "And I've just heard from David Butler that he (Hennessy) thinks he has found out a lot of interesting information about where we get our funds from. I don't know who he's been talking to or what they have told him-or what can be done about it-but I thought you ought to know. (Also, less seriously, that when asked by one of us whether he was CND and he replied no, he was a Tory, the answer was "Oh, that's all right." I see what was meant but it doesn't sound to me as if Mr H's bar conversations are doing us any good?")

Walker. No prominent candidate does significantly worse than average except perhaps Wilson (this probably because of insufficiently precise information, of details).

## 2. Votes on Defence.

1960: parties 46 M, 86 U                      votes 95 M, 192 U

1961                      73    65                      142    143

If our tentative estimates of total CLP voting are right (and they may not be): then

1. The non-sample parties were 9-5 in both years (no change, perhaps a slight tendency for Us to gain)

2. The whole shift towards M came in the sample parties. In any event, in the sample three U parties in eight were won over (one M party in ten lost) nearly half of the rest of the Us could be won in future (by a generous interpretation of the comments) though we have not checked how many of ours might be lost again.

## 3. Mandating

Over three-quarters of the parties mandated both years. Most that didn't in 1960 were U; in 1961, M (but difference not significant.) Two-thirds of the delegates mandated to vote against their own views in 1960 were M; two thirds of those in 1961 were U. (Suggests U gains in the 6 months before Conference in 1960 and M gains in this period 1961; as does no.4)

## 4. Dates delegates chosen (figures incomplete).

Parties voting M both years not yet checked. U both years: 19 chose by April, 25 June or later.

U 60, M 61 : 12 chose by April, 19 June or later

But there is some evidence that (of parties voting U 1960) in the spring three-quarters were still U by Conference nearly half had gone M.

## 5. NEC Voting.

The sample seems pretty representative (see under 1). Contrary to our first impression, CDS candidates did not do much worse in U parties than the far left (Mikardo-Driberg-Davies) in M parties; though the "responsible left" (Castle-Greenwood) and "Soft centre" (Crossman-Wilson) did better than either.<sup>26</sup>

The differences in the sample over the year were unrepresentative of the overall picture as there was a "swing towards us (CDS) in the sample (from minus 101 to plus 7)" and a "a small swing against us otherwise (from plus 201 to minus 173)".<sup>27</sup> The sample also reflected the

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26. CDS Papers: Philip Williams Nuffield, Correspondence File, CDS Sample of 1960 and 1961 Labour Conference Voting pp 9-10. U: denotes unilateralist Party, M: denotes multilateralist Party

27. CDS Papers: Philip Williams Nuffield, Correspondence File, CDS Sample of 1960 and 1961 Labour Conference Voting p 4.

geographical distribution of the Campaign. In a more general way this was the conclusion presented in the article published in Political Quarterly, in 1962.

Williams was aware of the limitations and problems with the research and the picture in the Constituency Labour Parties was rather confused. However, it is clear from the evidence presented by Williams that where the CDS was active the multilateralist gains of 1960 were held or improved on, and the slippage of multilateralist parties back to unilateralist parties was reduced.

In the period before the 1960 conference there was no organisation putting the multilateralist case in the constituencies.<sup>28</sup> The information that moderate and right-wing grass roots members received was through the activities of the leadership. In the period before the Blackpool Conference the CDS was, as will be shown, extremely active in putting the multilateralist case. Moreover, this complemented a personal campaign by Gaitskell himself. The CDS campaign was matched by left-wing and unilateralist organisations like Victory for Socialism and Conference Must Decide, as well as by CND. The activities of these organisations contributed to the desire for unity, and it should be stressed that for many who supported the leadership the activity of CDS was equally resented. Philip Williams summed up the effect of the bitter internal feud:

The excesses of Gaitskell's opponents made his task much easier...Many unilateralists, being neither sectarian nor vicious, were also shocked by their colleagues who were. One of the former, an MP, wrote to Gaitskell deploring the attacks as "most unfair, irresponsible and sometimes pathological"; another, a T&GWU member, broke with CND because of its tactics within the Party; a third, a Co-operative councillor, felt "ashamed" at the Scarborough mood, a fourth, a Yorkshire teenager, who made the best-received speech at one conference session, said that Young Socialists deplored the tone of the argument and the "unfounded and baseless suspicions"

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28. Although the TUC/NEC policy was circulated through official channels.

of the leadership, and were "sick to death of the petty bickering"...His [Gaitskell's] opponents never understood that many voters wisely judged a political leader not on policies (which may soon be out of date) but on character (which suggests his response to the unforeseen crisis). To such people Gaitskell seemed "a lion beset by jackals".<sup>29</sup>

His position was further enhanced by Wilson's decision to challenge him for the leadership. Anthony Greenwood, a strong unilateralist, made the initial move by resigning from the Shadow Cabinet on October 14 to fight Gaitskell for the leadership. Once a contest was made inevitable "the left wanted the strongest possible candidate to oppose Gaitskell",<sup>30</sup> that meant Harold Wilson.

The week that followed Greenwood's resignation witnessed what Crossman described as "the most elaborate fencing and manoeuvring I have experienced in the long and dreary history of the last nine years."<sup>31</sup> The result, after an extraordinary meeting between Wilson and Crossman on a sleeper at Euston station,<sup>32</sup> was Greenwood's withdrawal and Wilson running as an anti-unilateralist and unity candidate.<sup>33</sup> In the ballot Gaitskell defeated Wilson by 166 votes to 81 thereby consolidating Gaitskell's hold on the Parliamentary Party and effectively endorsing his defiance of Conference. Although the battle continued to be launched by the left this victory marked the beginning of Gaitskell's full recovery. His personal contribution to the victory at Blackpool was centred on his ability to appear increasingly as a unifying leader and to capitalise on the desire for an end to the internal battle. After Blackpool as the General Election drew closer this mood

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29. Williams 1979, p 623.

30. Williams 1979, p 624.

31. Crossman 1983, entry for October 19 1960, p 884.

32. Crossman 1983, entry for October 19 1960 p 886.

33. Williams 1979, p 625.

for unity was further enhanced by his stance on the Common Market, although this produced many difficulties for his loyal allies on the defence issue.

The other main contributory factor to the success on defence was the eclipse of CND. In April 1961 a Gallup Poll "found support for unilateralism down to lowest level, 19 percent of all voters and 28 per cent of Labour ones".<sup>34</sup> This was in part due to the increasingly desperate tactics employed by the break away Committee of 100. The Aldermaston Marches, peaceful and supported by a cross section of groups, including many church figures, had gradually been replaced by sit down demonstrations and extreme rhetoric. This was picked up on and used against CND by groups like CDS.<sup>35</sup>

Alongside the activity in the constituency parties and factors external to the CDS, the Campaign concentrated on the trade unions. Rodgers first plan for the Campaign, quoted above,<sup>36</sup> made clear his awareness of the need to take careful notice of the unions. Traditionally the unions had resisted interference in their internal affairs by outside bodies so there was need for caution in how the lobbying was carried out.<sup>37</sup> Canvassing only started once the Campaign had established a network of supporters and the names of trade unionists to contact.

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34. Williams 1979, p 640.

35. There were other groups active against the unilateralists and one of these approached Rodgers in April 1961. Sir John Slessor, Marshal of the Royal Airforce wrote inviting Rodgers to a dinner to be held in May. The idea was to set up a cross party group to oppose CND. Rodgers was reluctant to take part and he analysed the position in the Labour Party, concluding "...I am not immediately convinced that this is the moment for a special effort." CDS Papers: Campaign (General), Rodgers to Sir John Slessor, May 21 1962.

36. See p 144.

37. Witness Seminar Transcript, Seyd. For a discussion of the relationship between the Trade Unions and the Labour Party see Martin Harrison Trade Unions and the Labour Party since 1945, George Allen, London 1960 pp 129-262, for more recent debates, Ben Pimlott and Chris Cook, (editors), Trade Unions and British Politics Longman, London 1982, pp 258-272 and pp 171-215 and Andrew Taylor The Trade Unions and the Labour Party Croom Helm, London 1987 pp 288-298, which concentrates on the later period.

The objective of the lobbying operation in the unions was to reverse the Scarborough Vote. Specifically it was to maximise the majority for Policy for Peace, defeat the TGWU resolution and neutralise the AEU. To achieve these objectives the Campaign attempted to fill what the Campaign organisers saw as a vacuum in the defence debate: no one was putting the multilateralist case. They provided briefing and propaganda material, circulated approved amendments and resolutions and established contacts in all the major unions.

The existing accounts of CDS activities in the unions either concentrate simply on the Big Six unions or give few details as to what the Campaign actually did.<sup>38</sup> Out of the seventy three unions listed by Hindall and Williams<sup>39</sup> there is documentary evidence for CDS activity in twenty-six.<sup>40</sup> If these figures are broken down by size and position we see that CDS concentrated on the bigger unions and ones that were judged to be susceptible to pressure. They did not however exclude any union in which they had contacts. The objective was not just to win in 1961, it was to produce the biggest majority possible. Tables 4.1 to 4.5 in the appendix to this chapter summarise the spread of CDS activity and show the size of the trade union voting.

Before trying to establish the extent of the Campaign's influence on the successful results at Blackpool in 1961, it is necessary to establish what the Campaign actually did in each of the 26 unions in which it was active. In general the Campaign first established who it was necessary to contact in each trade union. These individuals were either approached directly or others

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38. Windlesham 1966, pp 110-114, and Seyd 1969, pp 149-163. Windlesham concentrates on the Big Unions and gives no details, Seyd explores the CLPs and gives no details of the efforts in the Unions.

39. Williams 1962, p 309.

40. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File and Red File.



were encouraged to see them. In addition, small groups were assembled and the multilateralist case was put to these groups, either by local supporters or by the trade union organisers of the Campaign. According to the leading CDS organiser in this field, Denis Howell, it was not made explicit that the speakers were from the CDS but "everyone knew what was going on".<sup>41</sup> A similar technique was applied to the Constituency Labour Parties and "Tea Meetings" were organised at which small groups of activists heard the multilateralists case.<sup>42</sup>

The most valuable group of unions who voted for the leadership in 1961 were those that actually changed sides between the two conferences, in the main doing so at their own delegate conferences held in May, June and July 1961. Of these unions that changed sides the CDS was active in the AEU, USDAW, NUR, Foundry Workers, Vehicle Builders, Metal Mechanics and ASLEF.<sup>43</sup> These unions had a total block vote of 1,419,000.<sup>44</sup> There is no recorded activity by the CDS in the Musicians, Electrotypers, Stove Grate Workers and Tailors and Garment Workers who also changed sides. But these unions had a total block vote of only 98,000.<sup>45</sup> The CDS was active among all the numerically significant unions that swung. This does not of itself prove anything, it merely establishes that the Campaign's assessment of which unions were likely to reverse their votes was sound. But only two unions which remained unilateralist received comparable attention, the Boilermakers and the Sheet Metal Workers.<sup>46</sup>

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41. Denis Howell in interview with author.

42. Denis Howell in interview with author.

43. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File and Brown File.

44. Williams 1962, p 309.

45. Williams 1962, p 309.

46. Williams 1962, p 309, CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown and Red File, section on the Boilermakers and Sheet Metal Workers, both stayed unilateralist.

The armoury that the CDS employed in its campaign in the unions consisted of the quality of the multilateralist case, the major pressure for unity being exerted throughout the union movement and the organisational resources to get their message across. This message was based on the agreed joint TUC-NEC Policy for Peace, which advocated:

Multilateral and comprehensive disarmament under international control ...accompanied by a steady increase in the authority and scope of the United Nations...Fresh negotiations on general disarmament with neutral countries taking part. Agreements to ban nuclear tests and stop the spread of atomic weapons. The establishment of a non-nuclear zone of controlled disarmament in Central Europe as a first step to disengagement...It may well be that within a few years western defence will not require America to have bases overseas. Meanwhile, as a loyal member of the alliance, Britain cannot oppose on principle the establishment of allied bases on her territory. But she must remain free to decide according to the circumstances of the case whether or not any particular project should be accepted and under what conditions...We seek the banning of all nuclear weapons everywhere. But the West cannot renounce nuclear weapons so long as the Communist bloc possesses them...**Britain however should cease the attempt to remain an independent nuclear power, since this neither strengthens the alliance nor is it now a sensible use of our limited resource.**<sup>47</sup>

This policy can be summarised as "an international multilateralist case, but a national unilateralist case."<sup>48</sup>

Copies of this policy were dispatched to unions along with the Campaign's own Ten Points on Defence and Disarmament which were:

1) A unilaterally disarmed Britain would increase the possibility of war by encouraging an aggressor to believe he could win. This is what happened in the 1930s.

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47. CDS Papers: CDS Handouts, Policy for Peace.

48. See above, Chapter 2.

- 2) If all countries gave up their arms, or reduced them to a low level, none would be in a position to consider war.
- 3) Disarmament can be negotiated by governments...No trade union would voluntarily surrender a position of strength before entering a negotiation. It is as silly for Britain to do so.
- 4) If unilateralism is the best way to peace, why isn't Mr Khrushchev a unilateralist?
- 5) Would the world be safer and the chance of nuclear war more remote with the Germans armed with H-bombs and leading Western Europe?
- 6) As for NATO, if Mr Khrushchev and his British allies dislike it, why don't they set an example and renounce their own Warsaw Pact?
- 7) In any case there is real hope of achieving all-round multilateral disarmament.
- 8) The Arab-Asian bloc believes in disarmament only by negotiation. This applies to all the Commonwealth governments at the recent London Conference. If Britain went unilateralist we would not only let down the Western Alliance, we would desert the Commonwealth too.
- 9) The Labour Party would betray the cause of solidarity amongst socialist working people throughout the democratic world.
- 10) Ordinary men and women don't believe in it - as public opinion polls have shown. In recent Parliamentary by-elections they have voted firmly against it. IF LABOUR IS UNILATERALIST - THERE WILL NEVER BE A LABOUR GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE DECISION.<sup>49</sup>

Armed with these policy statements the CDS set out to spread the word in the trade unions. The largest union to switch was the AEU.<sup>50</sup> It was this union that had sponsored the most straightforwardly unilateralist motion at the 1960 conference, which had achieved the largest majority against the platform.<sup>51</sup> The first task for CDS was to establish who it was necessary to target within the union. The structure of the AEU was more complex than most unions and therefore at once more difficult and easier to lobby. More difficult because one body within the union could override the other, easier because the AEU could be made to be facing both ways.<sup>52</sup>

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 49. CDS Papers: CDS Handouts, Ten Points on Defence and Disarmament.

50. Williams 1962, p 309 and see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in appendix.

51. LPACR 1960, p 202.

52. Minkin 1978, p 175.

The structure of the AEU was as follows:

It had an elected National Committee as its national policy-making body, an elected Executive Council to govern the union and an elected Final Appeal Court to adjudicate on constitutionality. The membership directly elected, for limited terms of office, its President and General Secretary. And they also directly elected, annually, the delegation of union members to be sent to the TUC and the Labour Conference.<sup>53</sup>

The CDS was helped considerably by the support of the union's President Bill Carron; Jim Boyd, a member of the executive council and one of the three National Organisers; and Jim Conway, who had signed the Manifesto. These highly placed officials operated within the union and supplied CDS with a list of the delegates to the National Committee, the TUC and the Labour Party Conference. The nature of the campaign to influence these delegates has never been described, although it has been mentioned:

By early spring, with Gaitskell high and dry as Party leader, a new policy document agreed and the anti-unilateralist campaign gathering momentum, the chances of reversing the decision through National Committee looked better. But again the results of much hard organising were disappointing. Of the resolutions submitted for the National Council agenda, fourteen were explicitly unilateralist whilst only five were explicitly "anti".<sup>54</sup>

and

The open hostility with which the contest had been conducted made it a comparatively easy matter for any diligent outsider to find out who the key men in the union were and what policies they supported. In the application of pressure CDS never varied their technique. Avoiding large meetings where there were likely to be as many opponents as supporters, they sought out potential sympathisers either in small groups or individually and put the case for collective security and Mr Gaitskell's leadership.<sup>55</sup>

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53. Minkin 1978, p 176.

54. Minkin 1978, p 190.

Neither account deals with the detailed actions of the Campaign. Rodgers obtained the delegate lists from Bill Carron and additional names were sent from Bill Webber.<sup>56</sup> Rodgers and Howell then analysed the list to identify those delegates who needed to be contacted and sent briefing material. The analysis was done in columns labeled Patrick Gordon Walker, Jim Boyd and CDS from which a "picture" of each delegate was built.<sup>57</sup> It was a fairly rudimentary form of analysis, mainly just a tick or a "no" with occasional comments.<sup>58</sup>

The list identified 18 possible or definite supporters of the official defence policy and the approaches made to them. Of the 18, the 14 who were deemed to be "For" the official policy received Campaign, defence statements and a letter.<sup>59</sup> The four who were thought to be uncertain were assessed this way largely because of a lack of information or information from only one source which not could be confirmed. The unknowns were chased by Rodgers who tried to get more information about two of these, E Frow and W Jump, from James Hennessy who was in the AEU.<sup>60</sup> One of the delegates, a Mr Sharpe, presented a difficulty because he was a firm supporter of the

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55. Windlesham 1966, pp 122-123. This passage is inaccurate in two respects. Firstly CDS varied its tactics with each union and each situation, secondly, CDS were not "outsiders" they had links within the union from the President downwards.

56. Denis Howell in interview with author and CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, AEU Delegate List.

57. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, AEU Delegate List annotated.

58. see Table 4.4 in appendix, AEU Delegate List, annotated.

59. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers did a mailing to the AEU supporters on March 30 1961 enclosing "A short note of information and arguments on defence and a copy of the joint Labour Party-TUC policy statement". This was a follow up to the week before when copies of Campaign had been dispatched. They were sent to Jones of Merthyr Tydfil, Richards of Cwmbran, Butler of Coventry, Careless of Crewe, Smith of Consett, Aitken of Kilamarnock, Flowers of Dumbarton, Maley of Refrewshire, Shelton of Leicester, McColl of Glasgow, Calder of Kendal. At the same time Hooley of Chilwell was sent Ten points on defence and Campaign. In April Ramsden of Chapel Fields, Sharpe of Barton-on-Humber, were approached. Red File, Rodgers to Ramsden, April 13 1961.

60. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Hennessy, March 27 1960.

official defence policy but had also supported the local unilateralist MP, Mallalieu. Rodgers utilised a signatory,<sup>61</sup> Gerry McQuade, to check out Sharpe. McQuade reported that Sharpe was sound.<sup>62</sup>

Earlier in 1961 Rodgers wrote to Shelton, who was on the AEU National Committee and marked on the list as a supporter of CDS: "Certainly in our experience there is a very wide spread feeling that the Scarborough Conference decision must be reversed, and that militant and unrepresentative minorities must not be allowed to drown the voice of men and women of goodwill and commonsense."<sup>63</sup> Shelton replied:

This year I am the delegate for No.17 Division along with G Butler from Coventry at National Committee. We are two new delegates replacing two who have been delegates for a number of years mainly because of their voting on the resolution on Unilateral Disarmament...I would like you to give me advice also names and address of AEU National Committee Delegates for this year's Conference.<sup>64</sup>

The letter concludes with the resolution submitted to the conference by Division 17 which illustrates the complex structure of the AEU:

That this Divisional Committee requests National Committee to instruct Executive Council to ensure that the policy of our union shall be that Her Majesty's Government pursue at all levels the need for complete world disarmament of all destructive weapons but whilst the United Kingdom remain a

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61. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Newer supporters were also used in this way. Colin Gray was asked to check Arnold, Red File, Rodgers to Gray, March 27 1961. Bob Wilton was asked to check up on Mr W Heaton of Dursely and Porter of Bridgewater. Red File, Rodgers to Wilton, March 28 1961. Rodgers checked with Mrs B Baxter on Hooley of Chilwell, Nottingham, Green of Mansfield and Spendlove of Carlton. After a little prompting Baxter reported on Spendlove that "He is a delegate to the AEU annual conference and a Mr Hadden who is an AEU official is prepared to vouch for him. Hadden is on your list of supporters." Red File, Rodgers to Mrs Baxter, March 13 1961, Rodgers to Mrs Baxter, March 27 1961, Mrs Baxter to Rodgers, March 28 1960.

62. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to McQuade, March 27 1960.

63. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Shelton to Rodgers, undated.

64. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Shelton, March 3 1961.

member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation we continue to accept the responsibilities and duties incumbent in being a member of this organisation.

Rodgers forwarded a copy of the resolution to Gaitskell and George Brown.<sup>65</sup> The Campaign's activity was concentrated on the delegates' voting on defence.<sup>66</sup> Once a delegate was established as being an opponent he received no material from CDS to ensure that the knowledge of outside interference were kept to a minimum. There were two categories of opponents in the AEU, the communists and the unilateralists. The fight against the communists had been prolonged within the union and they had concentrated support in certain areas.<sup>67</sup> Rodgers jotted down his prediction on the end of the National Committee list:

FOR 14 PROBABLY FOR 4 POSSIBLY FOR 9  
CP AGAINST 14 PROBABLY AGAINST 9  
NO INFORMATION 2<sup>68</sup>

He was almost exactly right: "the unilateralist resolution was defeated by twenty-eight votes to twenty three with one abstention".<sup>69</sup>

Another large union that switched was USDAW, the shop and distribution workers organisation. The Annual Delegate Meeting of USDAW presented a complex problem for the CDS

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65. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Note on House of Commons Note Paper, Gordon Walker was kept up to date on all these developments. Red File, Rodgers to Walker, March 30 1961.

66. The Campaign got further involved in the internal workings of the AEU when Jim O'Hagen of the AEU North London District contacted Gordon Walker in July 1961 to try and enlist CDS help in the election for President of the District. The area contained 36,000 members but in the election of 1960 only 2100 voted. O'Hagen recounted that he lost to Jones and found himself in a rather isolated position which he described to Gordon Walker: "I was a delegate to the London Labour Party Conference last weekend. We were mandated by the Commies who sit on the Political sub committee of the London North District Committee. They choose the delegates and make the resolutions. Its a farcical set up! On the actual District Committee acting on behalf of 34 thousand engineers. There are 30 delegates. There is a regular attendance of 26. Twenty are party members, with 5 fellow traveller and yours truly." See CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, O'Hagan to Gordon Walker July 15 1961, forwarded by Gordon Walker and CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, O'Hagan to Gordon Walker, March 29 1962.

67. Minkin 1978, pp 180.

68. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, AEU National Committee Delegate list, back page.

69. Minkin 1978, p 191.

because the General Secretary, Walter Padley, was sponsoring a compromise defence policy that he had worked out with Richard Crossman.<sup>70</sup> Padley asked the CDS supporters proposing the official policy to withdraw it in favour of the compromise he was putting forward.

[Padley] was not anxious that the official policy should be put to a vote and made an attempt to get the multilateralist resolution withdrawn by its mover, T Fyfe. As a supporter of CDS Fyfe, together with W Kemp, an area organiser in the union's Scottish division, turned to the Campaign for advice. The result was that Fyfe declined to withdraw, although after hearing Padley's speech he said he intended to vote for Padley's proposal as well as his own.<sup>71</sup>

CDS had a base of 40 supporters spread around the branches of USDAW, none of whom appeared on the list of the National Executive Committee delegates.<sup>72</sup> The CDS Whip in Aberdeenshire was S Davidson.<sup>73</sup> He informed Rodgers that Fyfe had moved the successful multilateralist resolution and that he himself had moved an amendment to the unilateralist resolution. In replying to Davidson Rodgers revealed that the CDS was supplying resolutions to Fyfe and Kemp, although these particular resolutions were sent after Conference, "I am enclosing a copy of resolutions which I sent to Mr. Fyfe and Mr. Kemp last Friday."<sup>74</sup> The consultation mentioned by Windlesham could have been with Kemp and Davidson - Davidson described Fyfe as a friend -<sup>75</sup> or they may have telephoned Rodgers at the CDS Office.<sup>76</sup> All the main participants in this resolution were involved in the CDS.

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70. On the Padley-Crossman plan see Crossman 1981, entry for February 23 1961, pp 929-934 and p 950 and Williams 1979 pp 643-644.

71. Windlesham 1966, pp 134-135.

72. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, List of USDAW supporters, handwritten, unsigned, undated.

73. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Davidson to Rodgers, May 3 1961.

74. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Davidson, May 8 1961.

75. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Davidson to Rodgers, May 3 1961.

76. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Kemp to Rodgers, February 22 1962. Rodgers and Kemp were certainly talking on the telephone about the 1962 Conference.



Seyd claimed that the CDS drafted the resolution although he gave no source for this claim. It is likely that the resolution was drafted by the Campaign but there is no documentary or oral evidence for this.<sup>77</sup> However, the CDS clearly intervened and stiffened the resolve of its supporters in USDAW to ensure that the official policy was passed. This in combination with the AEU vote started the bandwagon rolling as well as ensuring the maximum possible majority for the official policy.

In February 1962 Rodgers wrote to Kemp asking about the situation in USDAW and telling him that Frank Nodes was coming to Scotland: "In the next two or three weeks I am hoping that we shall be able to send up to Scotland Mr Frank Nodes, a former Labour Party Agent, who did some very useful work for us in the TGWU last summer. There is a general feeling that we ought to try and do more in Scotland, particularly in the Lowlands, and I am sure that Frank is the man for the job."<sup>78</sup> Kemp replied from Aberdeen<sup>79</sup> with an amendment to the unilateralist resolution No.81 and asked Rodgers to get other branches to submit amendments. He also enclosed two copies of the agenda.

The activity of the CDS in both the AEU and USDAW was limited but influential. The decision not to withdraw the official policy from the USDAW conference was important because it established a momentum for Policy for Peace. In the AEU the right-wing leadership made use of the Campaign's resources to help influence the different bodies and delegates concerned.

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77. Seyd 1968, p 141, Seyd also states that George Lindgren was to be appointed a full time organiser in Scotland but was unable to do this and Denis Howell took the job with William Hannan working in Scotland. Again he gives no source for this information. Frank Nodes, see below, was also employed as a field organiser but there is no mention of the offer to Lingren in the Papers.

78. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Kemp, January 5 1962.

79. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Kemp to Rodgers, February 22 1962.

The CDS started from a very hopeful position in the NUR because the decision to mandate delegates to vote for unilateralism had been made by a majority of only one.<sup>80</sup> As early as May 4 1961 Rodgers was being assured by Solly Pearce, editor of Leeds Weekly Citizen, that "the NUR is in the bag or will be when it meets. It is thought that about 27 of the 75 delegates can be described as left."<sup>81</sup> Even with this information Rodgers sent out a mailing with a letter from a signatory to the manifesto, David T Jones, accompanied by the pamphlet Nuclear Disarmament, the official Policy for Peace and Ten Points on Defence and Disarmament.<sup>82</sup> The letter from Jones read:

In the last General Election, in October 1959, I lost my seat in Parliament after fourteen years in the House of Commons. Since then I have been working for the British Transport Commission.

But with a lifetime of activity in the Labour Movement behind me, I have not lost my interest in politics - or my deep concern for seeing a Labour Government in power again. It is because of this, and my membership of the NUR since 1912, that I am writing to you now.

Six months ago I was a signatory of a manifesto issued by long-standing members of the Labour Party which, amongst other things, declared support for Labour's traditional policy of collective security and multilateral disarmament. The great success of the manifesto led to the founding of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism with Lord Attlee as its President and pledged to work for the reversal of the Scarborough decision on defence.

As I have reason to believe that you share my point of view, I would like to say, as one NUR member to another, that this year's Annual General Meeting at Edinburgh could have far reaching consequences for the Labour Party. The NUR was responsible for the resolution which brought the Party into existence. A vote now for unilateralism could mean a vote for its virtual extinction as a major political force. On

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80. Witness Seminar Transcript, Rodgers. Confirmed in Williams 1979, p 593 and Wyatt in The Sunday Times, October 30 1960, see Windlesham 1966, p 139.

81. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Pearce to Rodgers, May 4 1961. The Leeds Weekly Citizen was a consistent supporter of CDS.

82. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, David T Jones to Delegates, May 26 1961.

the other hand, if our union firmly supports the official policy agreed between the Labour Party and the TUC, there is a real chance that Labour will after all win the next General Election.

I am enclosing one or two items which may interest and help you when it comes to putting the case. I should be very glad to hear from you if you would like additional copies, or there is any further assistance I can give.

Much as in the AEU, detailed lists of the delegates to the Annual General Meeting were compiled with notes as to the position of delegates on the defence issue. The lists for 1962 came from an MP, Popplewell.<sup>83</sup> There were 77 delegates in all. The 44 delegates felt to be sound received briefing material and the letter from David T Jones.<sup>84</sup> There were a number of sources of information on the others. Patrick Gordon Walker, Popplewell, the CDS itself and two others identified only by their initials, NK and CW.<sup>85</sup> Denis Howell and HB, possible Herbert Bowden, also made comments.

The analysis of the NUR delegates followed a familiar pattern. Established contacts were asked to check the "soundness" of delegates and these were followed up accordingly.<sup>86</sup> Denis Howell was also active in this respect and forwarded his information to Rodgers at the London Office.<sup>87</sup> Occasionally they would not track the person down, and would base their assessments on discreet enquiry, for example, Bob Mitchell was asked to find out about Mr T Allen and replied:<sup>88</sup>

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83. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, List of delegates with note from Popplewell. See Appendix to this chapter, Table 4.5.

84. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, NUR Delegate list, annotated.

85. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, there is no other indication who these individuals were.

86. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, For example, William Hannan the Scottish MP was sent the full list of delegates for comment, March 13 1961 and Robert Scarth was asked for his views on Mr Butler. Scarth replied that he was an ex-communist who was "believed to be sound generally." Another MP, Robert Mitchell, was asked for his views on NUR delegates on March 13 1961.

87. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Mellors was a Communist, Benton and Denis Howell to Rodgers, March 21 1961.

88. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Mitchell, March 13 1961.

He is not an active member of the Labour Party and plays no part locally...he is described as a constant critic and opposed to 'academics'. From our point of view I doubt whether he is reliable. I have not been able to find out his views on defence... With regard to Mr E B Cox my only contact in the Eastleigh constituency has never heard of him.<sup>89</sup>

Rodgers contacted Phyllis Stedman concerning Mr G W Wilson. Stedman replied, "I have had a word unofficially with an NUR branch secretary locally re. Wilson of Stanground and they do not know where he stands on defence, but he is a bit erratic at times. Hubert Turner is the local NUR EC member and he comes from that side of the city. Again I do not know how sound he is on defence but if you have any knowledge of him, he might be able to influence Wilson."<sup>90</sup>

Labour Party officials also helped the Campaign, for example Rodgers asked Bill Gray<sup>91</sup> the agent in Faversham for an opinion of Mr S Wimble. Gray replied, "He appears not to have any definite views for or against unilateralism, but would, in my opinion, be worth working on for our case. His branch is not "left" and I think in the end would support multilateralism."<sup>92</sup>

Patrick Gordon Walker forwarded an agenda for the NUR conference to Rodgers.<sup>93</sup> As with McQuade, Rodgers

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89. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Mitchell to Rodgers, March 16 1961. Another example of this in the NUR was over Adcock who Rodgers asked Bob Wilton to comment on. Brown File, Rodgers to Wilton, March 13 1961. Wilton replied, "The gentlemen is certainly not well known in the local party as he has never come to my notice. I would have been particularly interested as about five or six years ago a man of that name took over one of the best hotels here...I came into contact with him as he was a football referee, although he did very little here. This man suddenly left for a much smaller pub...and I seem to remember that subsequently he was in a Court case as a defendant. Unfortunately my football handbooks do not go back far enough to check the initials, but they look familiar. I doubt whether this is the man, but if he is care is needed." Wilton to Rodgers, March 14 1961.

90. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Stedman, March 13 1961, Stedman to Rodgers, undated.

91. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Brown, March 13 1961.

92. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Brown to Rodgers, March 27 1961.

93. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Gordon Walker to Rodgers, April 12 1961.

utilised signatories to check up on people. He asked Kenneth May about the political views of NUR delegate T F Braithwaite.<sup>94</sup> At the same time he contacted John Cannon about J E H Wood of Bristol<sup>95</sup> and Albert Smith and James Hennessy, of the AEU,<sup>96</sup> about the NUR in general, enclosing the list of NUR delegates and asking for comments. Rodgers also wrote to Roy Hattersley, "could you possibly let me know, in confidence, the views on defence of Mr F Hill...He is a member of the NUR and could turn out to be important. Any influence you can bring to bear on him will be very worthwhile."<sup>97</sup>

Before the move to Red Lion Street, when the London office was still running from Dick Taverne's flat at Charlebert Court,<sup>98</sup> Rodgers sent 14 letters to members of the NUR.<sup>99</sup> This was part of a much larger set of mailings which accompanied the first edition of Campaign. In part this letter read:

As you may know, shortly after the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough, a number of long standing members of the Party published a manifesto addressed to the movement. This covered a wide range of policy but its immediate purpose was to pledge support to Mr Gaitskell in the fight for collective security and multilateral disarmament.

Since then the manifesto has won wide support and the "Campaign for Democratic Socialism" has been launched to provide a rallying point for the majority of men and women of good will in the movement who want to see Labour united and on the road to power. In the coming months we shall have

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94. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to May, May 1 1961.

95. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Cannon, May 1 1961, no reply in file.

96. CDS Papers: Whips Conference November 17 1961, Hennessy was was a whip for the CDS in Manchester.

97. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Hattersley, May 1 1961. There is no reply in the file.

98. CDS Papers: Rodger's CDS History, pp 9-10, Windlesham states that the headquarters at Red Lion Street were established on January 25 1961, however as correspondence was still be dispatched from the Charlebert address on the 30th it was some time after this.

99. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Edgar of Illford, Barker of Hull, Slade of Swindon, Wakenshaw of Normanton, Cllr. Hill of Norfolk, Ald. Curry of Blyth, Hodgson of South Shields, McKelvie of Romsey, Gould of Exeter, Anteney of Eastleigh, Devine of Galsgow, Hards of Brighton, Moulder of Gloucester, Cousins of Aylesbry, January 13 1961.

two principal objects: one to help our supporters to come together in different parts of the country so that they will be able to put forward our views more effectively, and two to supply them with the arguments and information that they want. We shall be publishing monthly, for example, a broadsheet Campaign a copy of the first issue of which I enclose.

I am writing now in the hope that you will feel prepared to support our Campaign in every way you can and that you may be able to help us by letting us have the names of other active members of the NUR - and also of individual members of the Party and other trade unions in your district.

These three paragraphs became the basis for the "standard letter" of approach which was modified slightly for each union depending on its circumstances and allegiances.<sup>100</sup>

Despite this CDS activity the NUR failed to pass either Policy for Peace or a unilateralist resolution. The unilateralist resolution was defeated 39 votes to 37 and there was a tie on the multilateralist resolution which was declared not carried.<sup>101</sup> Sidney Greene, the General Secretary of the NUR, cast 254,000 votes for the official policy on the basis of these votes.

The smaller unions that switched presented smaller targets for the CDS to aim their propaganda at. The Amalgamated union of Foundry Workers had a conference vote of 45,000. Rodgers was sure that the leadership wanted these votes at Blackpool.<sup>102</sup> The standard first contact was made with the same letter sent to the NUR contacts. The AFW conference was held on May 29.<sup>103</sup> One of the Foundry workers, King, replied on May 22

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100. See for example the NUGMW letter below.

101. Seyd 1968, p 145 and Windlesham 1966, pp 139-140.

102. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, see for example Rodgers to Hennessy, May 1 1961.

103. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to AFW supporters, April 19 1961.

apologising for the delay and that he had to hang on to the agenda. He predicted a fight but in the end a victory at the Annual Delegate Conference by 37 to 23.<sup>104</sup> Rodgers replied offering help: "If you would like literature to send to the delegates or would prefer us to do this, please let me know."<sup>105</sup> The Foundry Workers duly switched. The following year Rodgers recontacted King, confirming that the Foundry men had switched and asking about the prospect for 1962.<sup>106</sup> In addition to King, Rodgers also wrote to a R H Ward, who had been suggested by Jim Callaghan. Rodgers firstly congratulated him on his "fine work" in "reversing the union's previous support for unilateralism," then asked him what position the union would take in 1962.<sup>107</sup> Ward replied by telephone and gave Rodgers details of the position in the union. He mentioned that although the issue would be debated he was sure there would be no change, in fact an increased majority. He also let Rodgers know that there was unrest among "Scottish people" about Polaris bases and this might damage the position of the leadership.<sup>108</sup> Polaris was in fact a continuous problem for the Campaign and something that the leadership did not win on in either 1961 or 1962.

One of the even smaller unions, the Vehicle Builders union, with 40,000 votes, were initially thought to be hopeless.<sup>109</sup> But contacts were still made and the letters duly dispatched before their conference of June 5-9 1961.<sup>110</sup> Of those contacted Musgrove replied with the

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104. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to King, May 22 1961.

105. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to King, May 24 1961.

106. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to King February 7 1962.

107. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Ward, July 7 1961 and February 6 1962.

108. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Note of Telephone conversation, February 2 1962.

109. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, List of Unions and Votes with notation by Rodgers: "Hopeless, Denis will have a go. "

110. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Nicel of Andover, Donnelly of Kirkcaldy, Musgrave of Wakefield, Edwards of Cheshire and Councillor Cole of Croydon, April 19 1961.

resolutions for Conference and commented:

What we are trying to do is influence the delegates from this area and I am working to that end here, locally we have boycotted the Polaris march and our Local Trades Council also boycotted this after a bit of argument amongst the delegates so we are moving in the right direction.<sup>111</sup>

Musgrove became a whip for CDS in the Wakefield area.<sup>112</sup> Another reply came from Edwards. He sent another copy of the resolutions for the conference and commented: "I shall make it my business to speak against the resolution I've marked with a cross." Mr Cole also sent Rodgers an agenda; "I quite expect that they will still support the same line, but I doubt whether that is the view of the membership."<sup>113</sup>

Offers of help, as in the case of the Post Office Workers, came from sponsored MPs. Harry Gourlay the MP for Kirkcaldy forwarded Gordon Walker the names and addresses of the year's president R F Cogley and a S W Sissons.<sup>114</sup> Gourlay's branch of the Vehicle Workers also proposed a multilateralist resolution.<sup>115</sup> Gordon Walker forwarded this to Rodgers the next day with a note, "I think you might approach Sissons direct for names; but perhaps Hayday should approach the President." Gordon Walker also forwarded a second note (included with the letter) which concerned the voting at the Brighton branch of the union, noting that "it is confidential". The vote was 140 for the Labour Party policy and 37 for the Frank Cousins policy. Walker goes on "incidentally, the multilateralist motion is a neat one. I think the Vehicle

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111. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Musgrove to Rodgers, April 27 1961.

112. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Musgrove, January 23 1962, Musgrove to Rodgers, January 3 and 25 1962.

113. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Cole to Rodgers, May 3 1961.

114. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Gourlay to Gordon Walker, May 9 1961, Gordon Walker to Rodgers, May 10 1961.

115. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Resolutions for Policy Conference, 1961, Vehicle Builders Quarterly Journal, undated. Resolution 123-Kilmarnock.



Builders are certainly worth working on." The resolution read: "We seek the banning of Nuclear Weapons everywhere, but the West cannot renounce Nuclear Weapons so long as the Communist bloc possess them."

Rodgers followed up with a letter to Sissons.<sup>116</sup> On May 31 Rodgers' secretary wrote on his behalf to ask Pickstock to check up on the Oxford Branch of the Vehicle Builders to find out if "the delegates from the Oxford area are on the Campaign's side" and "if there is anything that can be done to help them at this late stage".<sup>117</sup>

Even on May 31, two days before Conference was due to open, Rodgers sent Edwards a "dozen copies of Ten Points on Defence and disarmament and set up a meeting between Harry Gourlay and Edwards.<sup>118</sup> Rodgers also sent leaflets to Boardman of Portsmouth for distribution at the conference.<sup>119</sup>

The Metal Mechanics Union held their conference in Birmingham and switched sides. Rodgers later described how Denis Howell persuaded the executive to switch votes over a pint of beer in a pub.<sup>120</sup> Howell himself later recalled that he visited the executive in the pub next door to their headquarters in Birmingham. He reminded them of their sons in National Service and asked them if they were going to send their sons into battle without the proper weapons, "they went back to their executive

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116. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Sissons, May 17 1961, no reply was filed.

117. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers secretary to Pickstock, May 1 1960.

118. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Edwards, May 31 1961.

119. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Boardman, May 31 1961. On February 7 1962, he wrote back to Boardman and asked him to brief CDS on the 1962 conference. The same letter with more specific questions was sent to Edwards.

120. Witness Seminar Transcript, Rodgers.

meeting and voted against unilateralism."<sup>121</sup> Before this successful operation Rodgers had tried to check his contact through Albert Smith.<sup>122</sup> The contact was Mr J E Stirling and Rodgers had written, "they are a small union, but open to influence and we want their votes at Blackpool." Similarly he had asked Hennessy to "see what you can do about" R W Preston, R Gromley and R Halliwell of the Metal Mechanics.<sup>123</sup>

In ASLEF, the conference was due to take place on May 30 and Rodgers sent out the standard first mailing to his contacts in the union.<sup>124</sup> Only one of those contacted replied in writing. This was Paterson who enclosed an agenda the day before the conference. One section of the letter described the way ASLEF operated: "The decision by the ASLEF at the Labour Party Conference last year to support unilateralism was taken by the EC (Executive Committee) I would say that our EC acts "right-wing" industrially and then appeases the "militants" by acting "left-wing" politically. However I know having attended a number of Labour Party conferences - the last in 1958 - that Mr Ray Gunter MP has a considerable influence both with my General Secretary Mr L J Evans and our president Mr Jack Simons and if you can approach Mr Gunter he may be able to help in our interests."<sup>125</sup> Rodgers replied and asked for the voting figures of the conference which had supported the official policy.<sup>126</sup> In February 1962, Rodgers recontacted Paterson and asked two questions: "1)

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121. Denis Howell in interview with author.

122. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Smith, May 1 1961.

123. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Hennessy, May 1 1961.

124. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to This letter was sent to Swift, Cllr Whittaker of Cambridge, Robert Ratcliffe of Ipswich, Doxey of Derbyshire, Paterson of Dundee, April 20 1961.

125. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Patterson to Rodgers, June 13 1961.

126. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Patterson, June 13 1961.

whether it will be possible under your rules to debate defence and 2) If it is debated what the likely outcome will be."<sup>127</sup> Paterson replied that the item voted on could not be "raised again for three years."<sup>128</sup>

The loyalist unions who supported the leadership in 1960 and 1961 were obviously easier targets for the CDS. Although the Campaign still made the contacts and distributed the information in the same way as in hostile unions, the objective was to keep the unions in line and maximise the majorities rather than to win hearts and minds. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in the appendix to this chapter list those unions that voted multilateralist in 1960 and 1961. Amongst these unions the CDS was active in NUGMW, NUM, Post Office Workers, Woodworkers, Agricultural Workers, TSSA, Boot and Shoe Workers, Building Trade Workers, Furniture Trade Operatives, National Union of Seamen, Plumber's Union, COHSE and the Patternmakers Union. These unions had a total block vote at Blackpool of 1,938,000.<sup>129</sup> The CDS was not active in the Textile Factory Workers, Steelworkers, Tailors and Garment Workers, Dyers, Clerks, Bookbinders, Typographical Association, Bakers, Blastfurnacemen, Potters, Scottish Bakers, Colliery Overmen, Plasterers, Prudential Staff, NATKE, Shipwrights, Rossendale Boot and Shoe Operatives, Textile Workers, National League for the Deaf and the National Federation of the Builders. These unions had a total block vote at Blackpool of 580,161.

Even among these loyal unions the detail of the approach varied depending on the view taken of the soundness of the recipients. To the Gaitskellite stronghold the

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127. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Patterson, February 6 1962.

128. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Patterson to Rodgers, February 16 1962.

129. see Table 4.2 in appendix to this chapter.

National Union of General and Municipal Workers,<sup>130</sup> the Campaign could be direct:

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Sir Thomas Williamson...We are not recruiting members but we have asked all those who support the manifesto to let us have their names and all these are being put into a directory of supporters. It is most important that it should be as complete as possible, both in terms of individual members of the Labour Party active in constituencies, and active trade unionists. I am writing now in the belief that you will be able to let me have confidentially a list of active people in your district to whom we might make a direct approach.<sup>131</sup>

The NUGMW General Secretary was a keen CDS supporter and purchased 120 copies of Campaign each month for his head office.<sup>132</sup> In 1960 and 1961 the NUGMW was solidly behind the leadership.

On January 23 and 24 eleven letters were dispatched to the NUM. The text was the same as the NUR letter quoted above. One of these letters was sent to the General Secretary of the Yorkshire Area, Mr F Collingworth. He replied: "Without wishing to discourage you or giving the impression of criticism, I would like to state that, contrary to what personal opinions I might have, I think it is not desirable, even though other Sections may be doing so, to continue to stir up controversy by publications of whatever kind they might be".<sup>133</sup> But the NUM under the direction of Gaitskell's ally Sam Watson, supported the leadership in all the major defence votes; in fact the miners had been loyal supporters of Gaitskell since his time as Minister of State at Fuel and Power under Manny Shinwell.<sup>134</sup>

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130. This Union supported Gaitskell on Clause 4, see above, Chapter 2.

131. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Wright, London District Secretary, Swindell, Lancashire District Secretary, Sterland, Yorkshire District Secretary, Yarwood Northern District Secretary, McLoughlin, Liverpool District Secretary and Crane, Southern District Secretary, January 13 1961.

132. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Williamson to Rodgers, April 25 1961.

133. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Collingworth to Rodgers, January 27 1961.

134. Williams 1979, p 133.

The names and addresses of 88 contacts in the Post Office Workers Union were supplied by Ron Smith through Fred Hayday and then to Gordon Walker and the Campaign.<sup>135</sup> Hayday noted that, "he advised that each of the contacts should be approached with a certain amount of discretion". The people on the list were contacted on February 23 with a slightly toned down version of the NUR letter.<sup>136</sup> The Post Office Workers became something of a CDS stronghold and were loyal to the leadership in 1960 and 1961. The Finsbury district of the Post Office Workers, based at Mount Pleasant sorting office were the base for the campaign against Clive Jenkins' adoption as a Parliamentary candidate for the Finsbury constituency.<sup>137</sup>

In the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers,<sup>138</sup> the contacts were limited but the reception was helpful. An early CDS supporter, Jack Richards, sent Rodgers<sup>139</sup> names of people that he could contact in the ASW and warned him of Communist influence in the Mid-East District of ASW. Only three names were supplied and these received the standard initial letter on January 24.<sup>140</sup> Later in the spring, sometime before the ASW conference, the Campaign received a request from the ASW to circulate branches with a reminder that amendments had to be received by April 17 for the Annual Delegate Conference: "As you will know, there are a number of resolutions on the preliminary Agenda on defence policy, but only one of

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135. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Walker to Rodgers, January 12 1961.

136. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Davies, February 23 1961.

137. Witness Seminar Transcript, Donoghue.

138. Associated Society of Woodworkers, ASW.

139. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Richards to Rodgers, January 2 1961.

140. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Dale of Irvine, Wood of Croydon and Lodd of Newcastle on Tyne, undated.

these firmly supports multilateral disarmament. Any amendments to the others to make them more representative of our point of view would be very welcome indeed."<sup>141</sup>

In the National Union of Agricultural Workers a contact was made with a Hanson, who offered support and a donation.<sup>142</sup> Rodgers wrote to Mr Collinson asking if the union would like to place an order for Campaign,<sup>143</sup> but the General Secretary replied saying no.<sup>144</sup> This response and the one from the Yorkshire NUM were the most negative responses received during the trade union lobbying.

Between January 16 and 23 twenty one letters were dispatched around the country to TSSA members. They carried the same text as the NUR letter reproduced above.<sup>145</sup> In response Bailey of Liverpool requested leaflets for his twenty collectors.<sup>146</sup> Bill Webber the General Secretary of TSSA, subscribed for a bulk order of 50 copies of Campaign<sup>147</sup> and was a significant factor in keeping the trade union in line.<sup>148</sup>

The Building Trade Workers were another trade union that stuck by the Party leader. They received the standard first letter from CDS on April 19.<sup>149</sup> Their conference

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141. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Circular, two copies.

142. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Hanson to Rodgers, February 6 1961.

143. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Collinson, March 23 1961.

144. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Collinson to Rodgers April 27 1961.

145. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Ms Kent of Glasgow, Haines of Plymouth, Ward of Barnehurst, Walker of Manchester, Howarth of Edgeware, Monday of Leeds, Paterson of Glasgow, Davies of N7, Powell of Caerphilly, Cllr Ms Patrick of Glasgow, Grayer of E12, Cllr Lucas of Bolton, Williams of Ashstead, Podmore of Newcastle, Reynolds of Surbiton, Cllr Etherington of Preston, Rose of Southampton, Baldock of Guildford, Silling of Saltash, Bradley of Kettering, Brown of Caterham, January 16 1961.

146. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Bailey to Rodgers, June 25 1961.

147. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Webber to Rodgers, May 15 1961.

148. Denis Howell in interview with author.

149. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Cllr Buchanan of Flakirk, Cllr Hanson of Airedale, J S Stewart of Edinburgh, A H Thorn of Vauxhall and Alden of Camberwell, April 19 1961. In May Rodgers sent a general letter to A Loughton of Wandsworth.

was to take place on June 5-9 1961. Although Rodgers thought they were unilateralist in 1960, in fact Williams<sup>150</sup> had this union down as being multilateralist in both years and later correspondence from Rodgers showed he had realised his mistake.<sup>151</sup> Rodgers wrote to five members of this union.<sup>152</sup> Only one of those to receive the April letter replied; this was Alend and he forwarded an agenda for the trade union's conference.<sup>153</sup> Alend was recontacted about the 1962 vote.

In terms of voting one of the most straight-forward Unions was the National Union of Seamen. Rodgers sent a standard letter to Brown of Dover.<sup>154</sup> On May 30 Rodgers heard from Brown that the union "National Executive had mandated our delegates, attending the Annual Conference, to support the joint Labour Party TUC statement on defence". Similarly the Patternmakers stayed loyal.<sup>155</sup>

The Boot and Shoes Operatives,<sup>156</sup> COHSE,<sup>157</sup> Furniture Trade Operatives<sup>158</sup> and Plumbing Trade Union<sup>159</sup> contacted by Rodgers in April but none replied. They were all loyal unions and very small, so the effect of the CDS in keeping them in line is difficult to assess. The Painters

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150. Williams 1962 p 309.

151. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Alden, February 7 1962.

152. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Cllr Buchannon of Falkirk, Cllr Hanson of Castleford, Stewart of Edinburgh, Thorn of SE11, April 19 1961. Rodgers to Loughton of SW18, May 9 1961.

153. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Alden to Rodgers, April 29 1961.

154. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Brown, April 17 1961.

155. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to J M Birkhead of Sheffield and Mr Chaundy of Birmingham, standard April 17 letters. Birkhead replied with extracts from the Societies Journal on May 1.

156. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Albert Smith, April 17 1961.

157. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Merritt (a contact of Denis Howell), April 17 1961.

158. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Dennison, April 17 1961.

159. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Michael Prater, April 17 1961.

whose conference was held from 25 to 27 April 1961, also failed to reply and this was the only union to switch to unilateralist in 1962.<sup>160</sup>

The task among those unions that were hostile to the official policy, but not obviously open to influence, was very different. After those unions that were felt to be open to influence were removed from the scene Rodgers acknowledged that the chances of changing the vote in the TGWU was remote but that nevertheless it was important for the message to get across.<sup>161</sup> To this end he recruited Frank Nodes, an ex-Labour Party agent, to campaign in the citadel of the enemy. Rodgers held a meeting with Frank Nodes in May 1961 and they agreed a course of action for the the TGWU.

There were ten parts to the plan:

1) Write to supporters in the TGWU, asking them to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire read as follows:

Has your branch voted on defence? Yes /No

If it has, did it vote for or against unilateralism?

Has your branch a resolution down for the BDC?<sup>162</sup>

Yes/No

If it has, do you know its number on the agenda or what it says?

Has your branch a delegate to the BDC? Yes/No

If it has what is his name and address?

Do you know his personal views on defence?

If you do what are they?

Do you know of any other delegates to the BDC?

Yes/No

If you do, can you give their names and addresses, branch names and/or numbers, and any information you have about the way their branches voted on defence and their own personal views?

Do you know of any members of other trade unions who are definitely in sympathy with us? Yes/No. If you do, please give names and addresses and trade unions to which they belong:

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160. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Harris of Ripon, April 17 1961 and Williams 1962 p309.

161. CDS Papers: Rodgers CDS History, p 12.

162. Biannual Delegate Conference.



If our Organiser wishes to visit you, when are you usually at home - on which days or evenings of the week?

- 2) Arrange to visit supporters who are delegates .
- 3) Form a group.
- 4) Select a leader and a deputy leader.
- 5) Select two or three resolutions on the agenda which are likely to split the C.P away from Conference. Preferably a resolution on Unity.
- 6) Composite our own resolutions.
- 7) Call a meeting if possible prior to Conference of our own supporters and brief them on the tactics to be adopted.
- 8) Certainly call together the leading speakers and work out the salient points that they must put to Conference.
- 9) Call a group meeting at Conference the evening before the defence debate. I hope then to have a clear indication of the feel of Conference - Review our tactics.<sup>163</sup>

The Transport Workers did not of course change sides but Rodgers was able nevertheless to help some of the moderates within the union. Support from within the TGWU, although limited, did exist. There were 76 listed supporters around the country, and some like H D Duff were active.<sup>164</sup> Duff urged Rodgers to take steps to "organise like-minded delegates in the next month or two. If you can put me in touch with any I should indeed be grateful." Rodgers in replying forwarded a list of supporters and suggested Ten Points on Defence be sent round.<sup>165</sup>

In addition to Ten Points on Defence a circular was circulated with a recommended amendment.<sup>166</sup> Mr E Jones from the Power Workers Section of the TGWU wrote to Rodgers asking for help with his speech to Conference which was held in Morecambe on June 12 and 13.<sup>167</sup> Rodgers was happy to supply Jones with a speech. The most

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163. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers and Nodes, May 17 1961.

164. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Duff to Rodgers, April 23 1961.

165. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Duff, May 1 1961.

166. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, TGWU Circular.

167. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Jones to Rodgers May 17 1961.

effective passage of the speech read:

Twenty five years ago we failed to arm quickly enough - and Hitler went to war because he thought he could get away with it. Let us learn that lesson. While one power is armed others must be if they want to defend themselves. We in the West have a defensive alliance in NATO. This was set up only because of the threat from the East after the Berlin blockade. And do not forget that it was set up by that great trade unionist Ernest Bevin. We need NATO as long as there is a threat of war. Mr Khrushchev would like us to give it up. We will - on condition that he and his allies give up their own Warsaw Pact.<sup>168</sup>

This was one of a number of speeches Rodgers wrote for Transport Workers delegates.<sup>169</sup> One paragraph in a speech read:

It has been said that there has been outside interference in the affairs of this union, that delegates who disagree with the General Secretary have been got at by some body or another. All I want to say is that I have certainly not been got at. No one has ever told me what to think and they aren't going to do so now.

But in the main they were forthright presentations of the multilateralist case:

Let us be quite clear about what is at stake. The question is this: should Britain stand alone in the world, without adequate defences and - in the long run, without allies - or should we do all we can to make sure that an enemy will hesitate to attack because he knows very well what the consequences will be?

In June there was a slip in security when a letter from Frank Nodes to "one of the people in Birmingham" was handed to Frank Cousins who reported the matter to the NEC.<sup>170</sup> The leak provoked a general NEC enquiry into

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168. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers to Jones May 31 1961.

169. CDS Papers : Untitled Red File, Transport Workers speeches, copies of eleven are on file.

170. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File, Rodgers Secretary to Nodes, June 22 1961.

"organisations whose purpose inter alia is to influence organisations affiliated to the Labour Party." The NEC raised three main questions:

1. What are the conditions for membership of "The Campaign for Democratic Socialism"?
2. Are the members organised in groups or branches throughout the country?
3. In addition to publishing pamphlets etc., and holding public meetings, does "The Campaign for Democratic Socialism" nationally or through its branches make a direct approach to Labour Party local organisations and to trade union branches, with the purpose of seeking their support within their national organisation for the views of "The Campaign for Democratic Socialism"?<sup>171</sup>

Rodgers' reply was worthy of a career diplomat in its economy with the truth:

...I am sure, incidentally, that you will not attach too much importance to press reports of our activities. Many of them have been mischievous and positively inaccurate and nearly all of them exaggerated and misleading.

As to your three questions:

1. The Campaign for Democratic Socialism has no members. We merely treat as supporters those members of the Labour Party - and only members of the Labour Party - who say they agree with the views set out in our original Manifesto. These are placed on our mailing list and receive Campaign regularly.

2. Our supporters are not organised in groups or branches or in any other way. If they have organised themselves, it has been quite without our authority - but only two cases of this happening have been brought to our attention.

3. We do not make any approach to local Labour Party organisations or to trade unions branches with a view to seeking their support. We have once circularised constituency parties-in January. This was to let them have a copy of the manifesto, many of them having asked for it, and to say that we would be happy to provide them with a speaker on defence if they wished.<sup>172</sup>

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171. CDS Papers: Enquiry File, A L Williams to Rodgers July 12 1961.

172. CDS Papers: Enquiry File, Rodgers to Williams, July 19 1961.

At the same time Rodgers forwarded the reply to Gordon Walker and Callaghan. The covering letter to Callaghan read in part:

I would be very grateful if you would let me know whether you think my letter meets the bill. The real question is how much information we should give. We are quite prepared to be helpful in so far as the greater part of what we have done cannot properly cause offence. On the other hand, to say little may leave less room for the awkward people to argue.<sup>173</sup>

Len Williams replied quoting the leaked letter that had fallen into the hands of Frank Cousins:

When Mr Cousins wrote to the NEC he enclosed a copy of a letter on the notepaper of the "Campaign for Democratic Socialism" which he said had been addressed to a branch secretary of his union concerning the resolution it had on the union's Conference agenda, which was signed by Frank Nodes, who described himself as Organiser, T.U Section...I mention this because of your answer to my question No.3, and this point is sure to be raised when I make my reply to the National Executive Committee.<sup>174</sup>

Rodgers replied denying that Nodes had authority from CDS to act on the Campaign's behalf or that the Campaign had a "Organiser trade unions" section, Denis Howell later described Nodes as a mysterious figure from the ETU and was not "quite sure where his funds came from".<sup>175</sup> Yet Rodgers portrayed Nodes as an ordinary member of the TGWU who came along to the Campaign and asked for briefing material.<sup>176</sup> As is shown by the plan, worked out for Nodes by Rodgers, the link between the CDS and Nodes was actually rather more formal than Rodger implied. Early in 1962 it became even more formal when Nodes was paid expenses by the Campaign to report on the situation in Scotland.<sup>177</sup>

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173. CDS Papers: Enquiry File, Rodgers to Gordon Walker and Callaghan, July 18 1961.

174. CDS Papers: Enquiry File, Williams to Rodgers, July 24 1961.

175. Denis Howell in interview with author.

176. CDS Papers: Enquiry File, Rodgers to Williams, July 26 1961.

In another unilateralist union the Boilermakers Union, which had 61,000 votes at Conference and voted unilateralist in 1960 and 1961, there were again some contacts.<sup>178</sup> Rodgers sent the standard opening contact letter to Lee of Enfield<sup>179</sup> who returned an agenda, also to Rignall of Hammersmith who replied:

I feel very much with you that we must make our presence felt in the trade unions. Here we find a tremendous apathy, but feel that we must rouse people to action...I belong to LONDON NO3 BRANCH of the boilermakers union, and we almost unanimously rejected nuclear disarmament...This branch is one of the best in the society and the secretary who fought the issue with me is a delegate to the annual Conference. He is Mr A Tallboy...no doubt he could be given some ammunition because he is a fearless fighter and a sound Labour man. In the meantime I will try and get a copy of the agenda for the annual Conference...Further to the boilermakers, I feel that Ted Hill is the danger man, and that he has built a load of yes men around him. We may have to oppose his men at the next election. I myself mean to fight for a seat on the London Executive later in the year. I would like to meet you at some point because unless we win the unions we cannot win the party. I wish you well and will do all I can to help you.<sup>180</sup>

Rodgers replied<sup>181</sup> thanking Rignall and asking him for a full list of delegates so that they could all be contacted. Rignall forwarded the list of delegates.<sup>182</sup> The Boilermakers remained unilateralist but "certainly the multilateralists put up a very good fight".<sup>183</sup> Rodgers wrote again in February 1962 but there is no

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177. CDS Papers: Untitled File, containing details of Norman Selwym and Frank Node's association with the Campaign. Between January 9 1962 and March 27 1962, Nodes travelled a total of 4716 miles and ran up expenses of £263. 13. 2.

178. Williams 1962 p 309.

179. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Enfield, April 19 1961.

180. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rignall to Rodgers, May 23 1961.

181. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Rignall, May 1 1961.

182. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rignall to Rodgers, May 7 1961.

183. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Rignall, June 9 1961.

reply from Rignall.<sup>184</sup>

In addition Rodgers was supplied information from Cliff Tucker.<sup>185</sup> Tucker was helping a Mr Baker who was going to make the speech in favour of multilateralism at the Boilermakers conference: "I am now enclosing a copy of the official statement on defence Policy for Peace, something on Polaris, a copy of an interview which John Freeman had with Hugh Gaitskell, reprinted in the News of the World, and a short pamphlet published by the British Atlantic Committee called Nuclear Disarmament."<sup>186</sup> Mr Rignall also suggested Mr Tallboy to contact and Rodgers forwarded Ten Points on Defence.<sup>187</sup> Tallboy reported to his branch and was instructed to request more copies.<sup>188</sup>

Tucker was contacted by Rodgers again in February 1962<sup>189</sup> to see if he could get in touch with Mr Baker to renew the challenge to the Boilermakers' unilateralism, which Tucker agreed to do.<sup>190</sup> He called the Campaign office and said that Baker was prepared to have a go and would get his branch to move an amendment to the union's defence resolution.<sup>191</sup> Rodgers forwarded amendments to the resolution through Tucker with a copy of the letter to Donoughue.<sup>192</sup> Donoughue later briefed Rodgers on the Baker position: "...Apparently Fred Baker was pleased with them (the amendments), particularly because they

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184. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Rignall, February 7 1962.

185. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Tucker, May 5 1961 and Tucker to Rodgers May 9 1961.

186. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Burke of Harrow, Redrup of Watford, Hughes of SE7, Stevens of Bexley Heath, Stirling of Consett, Cllr G Dixon of Redcar, Molyneux of Wirral, Arnold of Belfast, he introduced the Campaign and supplied unspecified briefing material. May 9 1961.

187. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Tallboy May 1 1961.

188. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Tallboy to Rodgers May 20 1961.

189. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Tucker February 7 1961.

190. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Tucker to Rodgers, February 8 1962.

191. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Note of Telephone Conversation undated.

192. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to Tucker March 20.

were simple enough for the lads to handle, while still turning it into a straight multilateralist resolution."<sup>193</sup> However, the Boilermakers remained unilateralist.

The Campaign materially effected the outcome in the small Sheetmetal Workers Union, but unfortunately a year too late. Although they had a few contacts in the union these were given whatever help they needed.<sup>194</sup> The main contact was Hardie who sent Rodgers a long reply to a standard first letter.<sup>195</sup> The Sheet Metal Workers cast 30,000 votes at Scarborough and did not hold a conference in 1961 so the decision as to how to vote in 1961 was made by the union's NEC: "It is difficult of course to influence the NEC, but what I am doing is to indicate in the enclosed current Journal those members whose influence is extremely powerful, and who are known to be anti-unilateralist."<sup>196</sup> Rodgers recontacted him in 1962 and according to Hardie: "At our Biennial Conference just concluded, I was successful in killing a unilateralist composite from our powerful London/Midlands/Belfast C/P Bloc. I regret very much to say that our NEC put forward no opposition, as of course they should have done in view of union Policy. I was the only speaker against, and I had prepared my reply on the CDS leaflet Ten Points on Defence. You personally will no doubt be pleased to know that it had a tremendous impact on our delegates, so much so that when I left the rostrum I had no doubt of the result."<sup>197</sup>

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193. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Donoghue to Rodgers March 22 1962.

194. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Rodgers to W A Robinson of Islington, Liverpool and J Sanders of Portsmouth May 9 1961. These names had been passed on by Jack Hardie of Southampton. Rodgers to Hardies April 19 1961.

195. CDS Papers: Rodgers to Hardie, April 19 1961. Rodgers also contacted Sanders fo Portsmouth and Robinson of Liverpool. Both names were given by Hardie. May 9 1961.

196. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Hardie to Rodgers, April 29 1961.

197. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Hardie to Rodgers, July 15 1962.

The nature of the Campaign's activity in the unions as described above illustrates that previous writers have formulated the basic question in the wrong way. If one asks "Did CDS change the defence policy of the Labour Party?" the answer is bound to be no. If one asks "What role did the CDS play in changing the Labour Party's defence policy?" then the answer is: the role of the multilateralist lobbying, press and publicity office. Finally if you then ask "Was this role significant?" the answer would have to be that in key unions and in motivating the moderates in the constituency parties, the influence of CDS was significant but was never the decisive factor because it cannot be viewed in isolation from the policies that it was advocating and the leader it was supporting.



Appendix

Table 4.1: Unions that voted multilateralist in 1960<sup>198</sup>

Union	Vote	CDS Activity <sup>199</sup>	Pro/Anti Response to CDS <sup>200</sup>
1) NUGMW	650,000	Yes	Pro
2) NUM	642,000	Yes	Neutral
3) Post Office Workers	160,000	Yes	Pro
4) Woodworkers	119,000	Yes	Pro
5) Textile Factory <sup>201</sup>	113,161	No	-
6) Agricultural Workers	100,000	Yes	Anti
7) Steelworkers	91,000	No	-
8) TSSA	74,000	Yes	Pro
9) Boot and Shoe Workers	70,000	Yes	Unknown
10) Building Trade Workers	70,000	Yes	Pro
11) Dyers	50,000	No	-
12) Painters <sup>202</sup>	44,000	Yes	Unknown
13) Clerks	41,000	No	-
14) Furniture Trade Op.	28,000	Yes	Unknown
15) Bookbinders	27,000	No	-
16) Seamen	25,000	Yes	Neutral
17) Typographical Association	25,000	No	-
18) Plumbers	25,000	Yes	Unknown
19) Bakers	19,000	No	-
20) Blastfurnacemen	17,000	No	-
21) Potters	16,000	No	-
22) Scottish Bakers	15,000	No	-
23) Colliery Overmen	15,000	No	-
24) Plasterers	13,000	No	-
25) COHSE	12,000	Yes	Unknown
26) Patternmakers	12,000	Yes	Pro
27) Prudential Staff	9,000	No	-
28) NATKE	6,000	No	-
29) Shipwrights	6,000	No	-
30) Rossendale Boot and Shoe	5,000	No	-
31) Textile Workers	4,000	No	-
32) Nat League of the Blind	3,000	No	-
33) Nat Fed of Builders	2,000	No	-
34) Iron Fitters	1,000	No	-
Total	2,484,161		

Table 4.2: Unions that voted multilateralist in 1961

Union	Vote	CDS Activity	Pro/Anti CDS
1) AEU	705,000	Yes	Pro
2) NUGMW	650,000	Yes	Pro
3) NUM	584,000	Yes	Neutral
4) USDAW	27,000	Yes	Pro
5) NUR	254,000	Yes	Pro
6) Post Office Workers	160,000	Yes	Pro
7) Woodworkers	123,000	Yes	Pro
8) Textile Factory <sup>203</sup>	112,161	No	-
9) Agricultural Workers	100,000	Yes	Anti
10) Steelworkers	98,000	No	-
11) Tailors and Garment	82,000	No	-
12) TSSA	72,000	Yes	Pro
13) Boot and Shoe Workers	70,000	Yes	Unknown
14) Building Trade Workers	70,000	Yes	Pro

198. Figures based on voting for Policy for Peace.

199. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Red File and Brown File, this indicates any detectable CDS activity.

200. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File and Red File, this indicates any clear response in correspondence between the Unions and the CDS.

201. CDS Papers: Patrick Seyd/Frank Pickstock Papers: Trade Unions Votes. More accurate figure that that given in Williams 1962.

202. Williams 1962 p 309, the only union to switch from multilateralist to unilateralist.

203. CDS Papers: Patrick Seyd/Frank Pickstock Papers: Trade Unions Votes. More accurate figure that that given in Williams 1962.

15) Vehicle Builders	52,000	Yes	Pro
16) Dyers	50,000	No	-
17) Foundry Workers	42,000	Yes	Pro
18) Clerks	41,000	No	-
19) Metal Mechanics	35,000	Yes	Pro
20) Furniture Trade Op.	35,000	Yes	Unknown
21) ASLEF	31,000	Yes	Pro
22) Bookbinders	27,000	No	-
23) Seamen	25,000	Yes	Neutral
24) Typographical Ass.	25,000	No	-
25) Plumbers	25,000	Yes	Unknown
26) Bakers	21,000	No	-
27) Blastfurnacemen	17,000	No	-
28) Potters	16,000	No	-
29) Scottish Bakers	15,000	No	-
30) Colliery Overmen	15,000	No	-
31) Plasterers	13,000	No	-
32) COHSE	12,000	Yes	Unknown
33) Patternmakers	12,000	Yes	Pro
34) Musicians	10,000	No	-
35) Prudential Staff	9,000	No	-
36) NATKE	6,000	No	-
37) Shipwrights	6,000	No	-
40) Rossendale Boot	5,000	No	-
41) Textile Workers	4,000	No	-
42) Nat Lea of the Blind	3,000	No	-
43) Electricians	3,000	No	-
44) Stove Grate	2,000	No	-
45) Nat Fed of Builders	2,000	No	-
46) Four Unions with 1,000 votes	4,000	-	-
Total	4,035,161		

Table 4.3: Unions Voting Unilateralist in 1960

Union	Vote	CDS Activity	Pro/Anti CDS
1) T&GWU	1,000,000	Yes	Pro
2) ETU	140,000	No	-
3) Public Employees	100,000	No	-
4) Boilermakers	61,000	Yes	Pro
5) NATSOPA	41,000	No	-
6) Sheetmetal Workers	30,000	Yes	Pro
7) Draughtsmen	25,000	No	-
8) Construction Engineers	19,000	No	-
9) Fire Brigades Union	18,000	No	-
10) Scottish House	16,000	No	-
11) London Typog Society	12,000	No	-
12) Lithog. Artists	10,000	No	-
13) Chemical Workers	6,000	No	-
14) Tobacco Workers	4,000	No	-
15) ASSET	4,000	No	-
16) Life Assurance Workers	3,000	No	-
17) Blacksmiths	3,000	No	-
18) Shale Miners	2,000	No	-
19) Scottish Painters	2,000	No	-
20) Cinema Technicians	1,000	No	-
21) Packing Case Makers	1,000	No	-
Total	1,498,000		

Table 4.4: CDS Activity in the AEU. <sup>204</sup>

Delegates	Comments
E Ormonde	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
N Young	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
J W Brown	JB:CP, Against.
D Martin	JB:CP, Against.
E Leslie	JB:CP, Against.
J Dalziel	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
D McColl	CDS:Supporter, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
J Maley	JB:Tick, CDS:Supporter, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
H Flowers	JB:Tick, CDS:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
Wm Aitken	JB:Tick, JB:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
G Arnold	PGW:Cross, CDS:CND <sup>205</sup>
J Cellini	Probably Against.

204. CDS Papers: Red File, AEU Delegate List, Annotated, Undated.

H Robson	PGW:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements.
E SMith	JB:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
W Fleming	No information
D W Calder	PGW:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
K Carwell	PGW:Unilateralist.
J Ramsden	JB:Tick, PGW:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
W Jump	CDS:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
K Slater	CDS:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
J W Tocher	CP, No information.
E Frow	CDS:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
B Sharpe	JB:Tick, PGW:Tick?, CDS:Tick (Supported Mallalieu as MP), Campaign, Defence, Statements and Letter.
L Johnson	JB:Tick, PGW:Unilateralist.
E Hancock	PGW:Unilateralist
H Howarth	PGW:Unilateralist, CP?
K Hooley	JB:Tick, PGW:Tick?, CDS:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
S Carless	JB:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
J Kelly	JB: CP.
J Leigh	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
W J Daniel	JB:CP.
R A Etheridge	JB:CP, CDS:CP.
G Butler	JB:Tick, CDS:Tick?, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
W C Shelton	JB:Tick, PGW:Tick, CDS:Tick (supporter), Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
D B Richards	JB:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
D M Jones	JB:Tick, Campaign, Defence Statements and Letter.
W Heaton	PGW:Tick, CDS:Tick? Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
L J Porter	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
S Escott	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
F C Prentice	JB:Tick, PGW: Unilateralist.
A Harvey	JB:Tick, PGW: Unilateralist.
C Dunnett	JB:Tick, PGW: Unilateralist.
W H Bailey	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
D Knott	JB:Tick, Ten Points on Defence & Polaris.
K Graham	JB:CP
A Calow	JB:CP
W Rawlinson	JB:CP
L Smith	JB:CP
T Roycraft	JB:CP
G T Bridges	JB:CP
L Doust	JB:CP
R Vines	JB:CP

Table 4.5: CDS Activity in National Union of Railwaymen.<sup>208</sup>

Delegates and Branch	Comments
J Robb, Keith.	CW:OK, DTJ.
A Williamson, Dundee	CW:No
D H Penmah, Edinburgh No 5	CW:OK, DTJ.
J Grant, Wishaw	CW:OK, DTJ.
W C Allan, Glasgow No 5	PGW:Unilateralist.
W Adamson, Glasgow No 5	CW:No, CDS:No.
F Knapp, Kilmarnock No 2	CW:No, CDS:No.
A Meekley, Carlisle No 8	CW:OK, DTJ.
M Hailes, Newcastle No 2	CW:OK, PGW:OK, DTJ.
J R Curry, Blyth No 1	CW:OK, CDS:For, PGW:? DTJ.
W Wood, Shildon No 2	CW:OK, CDS:For, PGW:? DTJ.
W R Colling, Faverdale	CW:OK, CDS:For, PGW:? DTJ.
W Mitchell, W Hartlepool	CW:? PGW:? DTJ
J Hair, Carlisle No 3	CW:OK, CDS: For, DTJ.
E A Savage, York No 7	CW:? CDS:OK.
J S Metcalf Leeds No 5	CW:OK, CDS:OK.
W Robinson Preston No 1	CW:OK DH:OK, DTJ.
S Elliott, Hull No 1	CW:OK, CDS:OK, DTJ.

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205. Not marked in usual way, put underlined with broken green line which indicates stance.

206. Marker with a black box.

207. Although marked with black box which indicated "No Information" Tocher was marked CP on the far right of the table with no indication who thought so.

208. CDS Papers: Trade Unions, Brown File, Annotated List of NUR Delegates. One Master and two copies with different notes are combined in the table below.

H Turnbull, Normanton	CW:OK, CDS:OK, DTJ.
H Foster, Manningham	CW:OK, CDS:OK, DTJ.
F Wilkinson, Blackburn	Nothing Known.
J P Woodward, Pendlebury	CW:No, CDS:No
G Walmsley, Manchester	CW:No, CDS:No.
H Bleakham, Ardwick	CW:? DH:says mandated against, CDS:OK.
L Roberts, Stockport No 3	CW:? CDS:Unilateralist opposed to G.
G C B Davies, Warrington	CW:? PGW:? DH: Against.
E J Webb, Lincoln No 1	CW:No, PGW:Against.
T B Blenkinsop, Doncaster No 1	CW:OK, CDS:OK, DTJ.
W Uttley, Staveley Town	CW:? Unilateralist.
F Hill, Sheffield No 1	CW:OK, CDS:OK, DTJ.
T Roberts, Garston No 1	CW:? SF:Probably not ok, CDS:Special Check. <sup>209</sup>
A W B Green, Shirebrook	CW:OK, DTJ.
T Birch, Liverpool No 5	CW:? SF:Probably OK. CDS:Special Check. <sup>210</sup>
G W Wilson, Peterborough No 2	CDS:A Bit erratic, PGW:? <sup>211</sup>
W Spendlove, Colwick Junction	CW:OK, CDS:Possibly OK, DTJ.
F C Horobin, Newcastle	CW:? Unilateralist.
D W Green, Crewe No 2	CW:No, DH:OK, HB:No.
J W Roberts, Bala	CW:OK, DTJ.
W H Seale, Derby No 10	CW:OK, PGW:Maybe OK, DTJ.
C W Patterson, Buxton	CW:OK, DH:OK, HB:OK, DTJ.
H J Fordham, Norwich No 1	HB:OK, PGW:Uncommitted.
T S Selby, Kettering	HB:? PGW:?
A Russell, Wolverhampton No 1	HB:OK, DH:OK, DTJ.
A H Jones, Solihull	HB:OK, DH:OK, DTJ.
E S Mellors, Birmingham No 5	HB:OK, DH:OK, DTJ.
H L Self, Ipswich No 1	HB:? PGW:Unilateralist: ex:CP.
S G Adcock, Gloucester No 2	HB:OK, DTJ, CDS:No trace in party.
E W Workman, Seven Jct. No 1	HB:OK, DTJ.
F S Gowen, Swansea No 1	HB:OK, DTJ.
A Impey, Cardiff No 6	HB:OK, DTJ.
F E Winniatt, Aberdare No 3	JB:OK, DTJ.
A D Buglar, Barry No 4	JB:No, CDS:Unilateralist.
C G Cousins, Quainton	JB:OK, DTJ.
C C Galvin, Hornsey No 1	JB:OK, DTJ.
W H Willden, East Ham	JB:? PGW:?
W C Coles, Forest Gate	JB:? PGW:?
E W Bowers, Bethnal Green	JB:OK.
H Mundy, Kings Cross No 2	JB:?
F G Franklin, Kentish Town	JB:OK, CDS:OK, DTJ.
W E J Kirkby, Paddington No 2	JB:OK, DTJ.
R H Trench, Neasden No 1	JB:No.
W T Fitch, Covent Garden	JB:No.
W J Sheppard, Earls Court	JB:No.
B V Colling, Clapham Jct.	JB:No, CDS:No.
D F Everson, Deptford	HB:OK, WTR:No
T J Leonard, West Ealing	JB:No.
T Evans, Reading No 2	JB:OK, DTJ.
F Tilley, Swindon No 1	JB:OK, DTJ.
J E H Wood, Bristol No 8	JB:OK, DTJ.
S R Mills, Croydon No 1	JB:No, CDS:Against.
S G Wimple, Faversham	JB:OK, CDS:Worth working on, DTJ.
T F Braithwaite, Tonbridge	JB:OK, CDS:Unilateralist.
E B Cox, Eastleigh No 3	JB:OK, DTJ.
T Allen, S'hampton No 5	JB:?, CDS:doubtful.
H J Frost, Taunton No 1	JB:OK, DH:OK, Mandated.
H Gould, Exeter No 1	JB:OK, DTJ.
W Adams, Plymouth No 1	JB:OK, DTJ.

Key:

Against: Opposed to Policy for Peace  
 CDS: Campaign for Democratic Socialism  
 CP: Communist Party  
 CW: Unknown  
 DH: Denis Howell  
 DTJ: David T Jones  
 For: In favour of Policy for Peace  
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209. Sent Ten Points on Defence & Polaris but not Jones letter.

210. Sent Ten Points on Defence & Polaris but not Jones letter.

211. Also marker "Literature" which could have meant dispatching defence literature. In the margin is a black "U" which could indicate Wilson was seen as being unilateralist.

HB: Unknown, possibly Herbert Bowden  
ND: Unknown  
PGW: Patrick Gordon Walker  
SF: Unknown  
Unknown: Voting intention not known.

## Chapter 5:

### The Campaign in the Constituencies.

In parallel to the battle over the defence vote the CDS was active in the Constituency Labour Parties. The purpose of this activity was fourfold. First, to maximise the vote in favour of the official defence policy at the Blackpool Conference of 1961. Second, to improve the votes for friendly candidates in the constituency elections to the National Executive Committee, which had, since the early 1950s, been dominated by the left. Third, to motivate supporters of the Campaign to take part in the selection of Parliamentary candidates. Finally, the Campaign's general objective of educating the Labour Party in the ideas of revisionism and modernisation needed support from rank and file members.

To achieve these objectives the Campaign set out to establish a national network of supporters. The initial publicity for the launch of the CDS Manifesto quickly led to the compiling of a card index of supporters around the country. The most committed of these became constituency "Whips" responsible for organising other like-minded individuals and for disseminating the

propaganda of the Campaign. An inner group of these Whips became Regional Representatives responsible for reporting on a group of constituencies.

In April 1961 Rodgers drafted a memorandum to Regional Representatives about Organisation in the Constituencies<sup>1</sup> in which he summed up the activity of the first six months of the Campaign:

From the beginning of the Campaign it was clear that in the time available - effectively six months - it was impossible to organise in all constituencies. It was hoped that in the great majority we would have one or more supporters who would take a personal initiative on the basis of Campaign and confidential circular letters. But we could not hope to have closer contact, even once removed, with all of these supporters, or to receive regular reports. In practice, CDS probably has supporters in 400 constituencies and this should rise to 500 by the end of May, which must be our target organisationally.

A measure of the support<sup>2</sup> for CDS after the launch was given in the first issues of Campaign, the official CDS newsletter. In the first three editions the number of offers of support were presented in a box accompanied by the words "Up and Up, We have now received...separate offers of support from key Party workers." The figures given were 2373 in February 1961, 2751 in March 1961, 2856 in April 1961 and 3011 in May 1961.<sup>3</sup> The last figures published in Campaign were accompanied by a breakdown of who the CDS were:

Over a third of them hold office in constituency organisations many of these serving in local government. Altogether almost half of all supporters are Aldermen and Councillors. Several hundred are

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1. CDS Papers: Organisation in the Constituencies, Rodgers, April 6 1961.

2. A comparative figure would be for the Fabian Society, although there was considerable overlap in membership and CDS people were only asked to "support" the Campaign not to "join". The Campaign actually received more offers of support than the Fabian Society had members: In 1960 the Fabians had 2586 members and in 1961 2711. Fabian Society Annual Report, July 1960 to June 1961, p 2.

3. Campaign 2-5.

JPs. Over two hundred have been Parliamentary Candidates and there are nearly as many Young Socialists.

At least a third are active trade unionists and several hundred hold trade union office. All major unions are represented and all but a few of the minor ones.

The breakdown of this support across the country was not uniform and tended to be concentrated in urban areas. An analysis of the geographical location of 1563<sup>4</sup> CDS supporters illustrates this.<sup>5</sup> The main centres of CDS activity among this part of the CDS supporters were- Birmingham (53), Birkenhead (42), Bristol (51), Cambridge (29), Glasgow (85), Kent (69), Leeds (111), London (146),<sup>6</sup> Manchester (90), Nottingham (28), Oxford (49) and Sheffield (41).<sup>7</sup> Some of these main centres established a formal organisation. In Glasgow, Birkenhead and Leeds the organisation duplicated that of a Constituency Labour Party with Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen, Whips, Press Officers and Women's sections.<sup>8</sup> In these main centres the situation varied, but as a general rule support for the Campaign was at its peak in the spring and summer of 1961.

Given the rather conservative nature of Labour's Constituency Labour Parties it was at times extremely difficult to mobilise the "silent majority". Janosik's study, Constituency Labour Parties in Britain, was based on research in the period 1962-1963, and revealed a

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4. This figure is based on an analysis of the details of supporters of the CDS contained in the CDS Papers File, "Supporters", it is not a representative sample but it includes over half the supporters of the Campaign.

5. See Table 5.1, in the appendix to this chapter.

6. Including Battersea (42).

7. CDS. Papers: Supporters Lists File, assorted lists of supporters for the period from the launch up to November 1961. The numbers in brackets are the numbers of supporters in each constituency given in this file.

8. CDS Papers: Supporters Lists File, Howell to Rodgers, undated for Glasgow details: Chairman: Alex Cameron, Joint Secretaries John Urhart, John Smith and Mrs Clayton, Agents for each Constituency. Howell to Rodgers, undated for Birkenhead details: Chairman: Richard Kimberley, Vice-Chairmen: John Davis and Stuart Robinson, Women's Section Dorothy Tomlinson and Press Officer: Walter Smith. Solly Pearce to Rodgers, undated for Leeds details: Organiser: Denis Matthews, Yorks Organiser: Harry Waterman, Divisional Whips for each constituency, trade unions: Alfred Smith.



number of the problems that the Campaign came up against from the outset of its activity in the constituencies in 1961. A majority of constituencies surveyed by Janosik were lead by individuals favouring a more left-wing policy,<sup>9</sup> especially on nationalisation.<sup>10</sup> The problem for the Campaign was not so much the predominance of the left as the ingrained nature of the character of Constituency Labour Parties, which tended to be dominated by a particular policy view:

Moderate or left-wing opinion so completely dominated some constituency parties that opposition to the prevailing view was abortive. Even though minority opinions were freely expressed they were seldom accepted...Under these circumstances there is justification for the belief that parties with a narrow range of policy views might unwittingly discourage those with divergent opinions from becoming active in Party affairs.<sup>11</sup>

The task was to motivate the rank and file supporters of the leadership to become active in "party affairs".

In early 1961 Rodgers requested assessments of the situation in a number of the main centres. In Sheffield, Denis Matthews<sup>12</sup> sent him a report of a meeting of CDS organisers. Of the Sheffield divisions Park, Brightside and Attercliffe were all supporting the unilateralists but did not "play an effective role in the [city's] party". In Hallam and Hillsborough the parties and the Trades and Labour Council were unilateralist. The only multilateralist stronghold was the City Council Group but they were not participating in "party activity". The most

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9. Edward G. Janosik, Constituency Labour Parties in Britain, Pall Mall Press 1968, p 29, states that 54% favoured a move slightly or sharply to the left and 46% favoured the status quo or a move to the right.

10. Janosik 1968 p 31.

11. Janosik 1968 p 103.

12. A signatory to the Manifesto.

active CDS supporters in the area were Councillor Roy Hattersley and Councillor Sharpe. Matthews' advice to the Sheffield organisers was direct and practical:

When we started those present seemed disheartened and hesitant to counter-organise in the party. If they will do this, I should guess that they are in a position to transform the party. Their trade union contacts are poor and they will need help with this. We ought to arrange meetings of Sheffield MP's and get them to help in (a) Getting the Council Labour Group, especially the influential senior men, to take part in party activity. (b) Getting the help of friendly T U Leaders to get them to send their men to attend GMC and TCMP meetings.<sup>13</sup>

He also recommended that the Campaign should get a friendly speaker (Denis Healey was suggested) and that the CDS should help them with the cost of a "better central meeting place" because they were planning to meet at the home of an active multilateralist. Similar reports were filed from Coventry, Oxford, Surrey, Cambridge, Norwich, Greater Liverpool, Peterborough and Southampton. The meeting in Nottingham was small but "there was every prospect here of things being done".<sup>14</sup> In Coventry the convener was Robert Scarth and he was confident that he could muster one hundred supporters. Whips were appointed for all the city constituencies and Rodgers stressed the importance of the general objective of motivating the rank and file.<sup>15</sup>

In Oxford,<sup>16</sup> Peterborough<sup>17</sup> and Southampton<sup>18</sup> the basis existed for good organisation. Pickstock was chairman and secretary in Oxford and they organised quickly to act as a caucus in local politics. Phyllis Stedman and her

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13. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Denis Matthews' report on Sheffield, April 23 1961.

14. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report on Rodgers, March 10 1960.

15. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report from Frank Pickstock, January 24 1961.

16. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report from Frank Pickstock, January 3 1961.

17. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report by Rodgers, December 10 1960.

18. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report by Rodgers, December 21 1960.

husband, friends of Hugh Gaitskell, organised in Peterborough. Bob Mitchell and Alderman Matthews declared their readiness to look after constituencies throughout Hampshire. Less promising areas were Kent<sup>19</sup> and rural Surrey and Sussex, because the spread of the constituencies made coverage more difficult. Problems were encountered in Norwich<sup>20</sup> where there was a local truce between the unilateralists and the multilateralists, and Cambridge<sup>21</sup> where the group trying to organise in the county was not highly rated by Rodgers. However within the university a considerable CDS group did develop. One of the most complex situations existed in Liverpool:

The Exchange and Scotland divisions appear to be all right. Exchange is not without its problems but Bessie (Braddock) and her agent seem to have the measure of them: Scotland is ruled by David Logan in the tradition of T.P. O'Connor. Two others, Walton and Garston, are run by the Trots. There are small opposition groups but very much in the minority (and remember here that threats of physical violence are frequently used). Toxteth was Trot but appears to be coming over and certainly needs to be worked up. Kirkdale - difficult because of the docks dispute is fairly evenly balanced but there seems to be some Co-op influence, which means Howell James, a strong anti-Gaitskellite. This leaves Wavertree, where there is a small party run by a middle class unilateralist (unusual for Liverpool); Edgehill, which probably needs attention; and West Derby, the Braddocks' own Party, which they hold together, although not without a fight.<sup>22</sup>

In Liverpool, where the "battle has long been joined", the Campaign could only complement the activities of those already fighting. In other places the best tactic was to keep the role of the Campaign secret; for example Mrs P Savage wrote to Rodgers in October 1963 discussing the selection of Parliamentary candidates:

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19. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Kenneth May to Rodgers, December 27 1961.

20. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report from Rodgers, December 12 1960.

21. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Report by Rodgers, December 12 1960.

22. CDS Papers: Regional Conferences, Unsigned, undated report.

We never publicise the fact that we are connected with CDS, feeling that we can exert more influence in a quieter way, than by being known to belong to a "splinter group", as it's so misguidedly called by the Tory press!<sup>23</sup>

Having established an elementary network, partly through personal contacts given by the original signatories and partly through the publicity associated with the launch, the practice of sending out circulars was established. Different circulars were sent to different supporters of the Campaign. To the Regional Representatives<sup>24</sup> detailed and frank briefings were offered.<sup>25</sup> For others, who supported the Campaign but did not become really involved, copies of Campaign and other propaganda material were dispatched. These contained only superficial information about the Campaign which tended to play down its factional nature and stress the importance of unity.

After the publication of the Manifesto the first circular was the generalised statement On Unity.<sup>26</sup> This was circulated to those who had responded to the press coverage of the launch. This was followed by the first regular briefing circular on November 24 1960.<sup>27</sup> The initial theme of the Campaign was stressed, the importance of the Manifesto underlined and the impression that the Campaign was simply a reaction to events was reinforced. This letter also identified the officers of the CDS:

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23. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Mrs P Savage to Rodgers, October 13 1963.

24. CDS Papers: Organisation in the Constituencies, circular by Rodgers April 6 1961, refers to 'Regional Representatives' but by November 1961 Rodgers was inviting the same people to a 'Whips Conference'.

25. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs File, for example Circular of March 10 1961.

26. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs File, On Unity undated and signed by Rodgers, Howell and Pickstock.

27. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs, Howell et al to Friends, November 24 1960.

We have therefore decided to set up a London office just as soon as we can. This will be in charge of W.T. Rodgers, who is Chairman of our Campaign Committee. Frank Pickstock will be Honorary Secretary...Denis Howell is taking on special responsibility for keeping in touch with our supporters throughout the country and Dick Taverne will be Honorary Treasurer.

These remained the main public face of the Campaign until the reorganisations of 1963 by which time all but Frank Pickstock were in the House of Commons.<sup>28</sup>

On Unity was followed on December 9 1960 with Must Conference Decide?<sup>29</sup> This contained the first mention of organising in the constituencies. The circular advocated opposition to the "pressure being put on a number of Constituency Labour Parties to pass resolutions which assert that the Parliamentary Labour Party should 'abide by' Conference decisions". The circular advised that these resolutions could be opposed on the grounds that many of those now advocating "obedience to Conference decisions" had in the past opposed Conference votes of which they did not approve, that the Parliamentary Party was "independent of Conference" and that MPs were elected on a mandate to uphold "collective security". The object was to give the multilateralists in the constituencies ammunition to fire at the "other side".

Information, propaganda, encouragement and ideas continued to flow from the Red Lion Street office throughout 1961 and 1962.<sup>30</sup> At times the advice would be specific, particularly in the form of resolutions for the Party Conference. Model resolutions were offered on defence:

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28. See below on the CDS and by-elections, pp 233-235. The early decision to minimise the involvement of MPs in the public face of the CDS was adhered to except when speakers were required. The reorganisation of 1963 was prompted because the organisers were uneasy about the way their grass root movement was now run predominately by newly elected MPs. To reduce this appearance the original officers were replaced by Bernard Donoughue and Anthony Dumont.

29. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs, Must Conference Decide December 9 1960, unsigned.

30. Specific instances are explored below.

This organisation recognising that Britain should remain a member of NATO and that the western alliance should not renounce nuclear weapons while the Russians retain theirs, urges the Labour Party to intensify its efforts to bring about all-round multilateral disarmament.<sup>31</sup>

Resolutions continued to be issued until the 1963 conference when a full list was circulated containing resolutions on defence, domestic and international affairs. A typical CDS resolution on domestic policy was the resolution on housing:

Conference recognises that Labour's response to the housing problem must be flexible and sensitive to different needs. Believing this to be possible only on the basis of local information and co-operation, Conference calls upon the next Labour Government to require all major housing authorities to submit a phased ten year housing plan which shall provide for:

- a) a separate dwelling for each family;
- b) the replacement or modernisation of all sub-standard dwellings.
- c) meeting the needs of all classes of society whether this be for rented dwellings, co-operative housing associations, or owner occupation;
- d) improvements in the design of dwellings and their physical environment.<sup>32</sup>

The circulars were also a convenient way of getting action on specific events that the CDS felt needed a response. An example of this was over the ETU case. The ETU had been Communist-dominated since 1956 and the battle for control of the Union reached its height in June 1961 when the High Court found Communist leaders guilty of ballot rigging.<sup>33</sup> In September 1961 new elections were held in the Union and there was a "broad

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31. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs, Circular letter, January 11 1961.

32. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs, Resolutions for 1963 Party Conference, undated.

33. Minkin 1978 pp 112-114

front liberal-democratic 'revolution' in the Union".<sup>34</sup> Rodgers' circular of September 1961 was devoted to the ETU and ended with an appeal.

We have been asked by supporters in the ETU to ask you to do all that you can to make the appropriate name known in your locality and encourage members of the union to vote.<sup>35</sup>

This appeal was backed up by a short piece in Campaign outlining the facts of the case and calling for vigilance against the Communist Party.<sup>36</sup>

With the apparatus in place the Campaign could organise a quick response to events and the network was employed in a number of instances to put one side of an argument that otherwise might not have been put. Rodgers' relentless energy sometimes generated schemes that the other members of the Committee held back from. This was so in November 1961 when Rodgers circulated 64 "key supporters" with the text of a letter he wanted to send to Arthur Greenwood and Barbara Castle. The idea came out of a conversation between Rodgers and Dai Jones;<sup>37</sup> they wanted to write to the defeated candidates for leader and deputy leader<sup>38</sup> and ask them to declare publicly their loyalty to Gaitskell. The proposed letter read:

We the undersigned are deeply disturbed by signs that the rift in the Labour Party is widening instead of closing. The recent by-elections show that it is demoralising our supporters and discouraging the electorate. Yet a section of the Party still acts as if it were more interested in changing the leadership of the Opposition than in turning out the Tory Government.

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34. Minkin 1978 p 111

35. Underlining in the original.

36. Campaign 8, August-September 1961.

37. CDS Papers: Greenwood/Castle letter, Rodgers to Jones, November 15 1961.

38. Butler 1986 p 143. Gaitskell defeated Greenwood by 171 votes to 59 and George Brown defeated Castle by 169 votes to 56.

We believe that the greatest contribution the spokesmen of the responsible left could now make to our common cause would be to declare their full support for the Party leadership and their determination to work unreservedly with their colleagues to win the next General Election.

Will you make such a declaration in order to heal the breach and bring Labour back to power? If so you may be sure of a warm response and a new beginning on the part of us all.<sup>39</sup>

The letter would have come from Dai Jones rather than from the CDS itself and Rodgers was specific about the way to present the letter to the press.

In order not to give the impression that you had taken on the whole burden of getting the signatures - which might raise doubts - you might like to call in three or four people and refer to them, if necessary, as your accomplices.<sup>40</sup>

The scheme was hatched on November 11, the letters were prepared at the CDS office the following week and by November 21 there were forty-six replies. Although everything was ready the scheme was killed off by the Campaign Committee at the beginning of December. Rodgers reluctantly accepted the "majority opinion". A contributory factor was opposition from Gaitskell to the proposed letter.<sup>41</sup> Jones was therefore informed that he could not send the letter out.<sup>42</sup> The episode illustrated the extent to which the CDS machine had become very well oiled. It also showed that although Rodgers was given a great deal of freedom in the running of the Campaign, the CDS was by no means completely under his control.

The instance of Carlisle Cathedral was a more successful operation for Rodgers and illustrated what he felt was one of the main objections that the left had about the

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39. CDS Papers: Greenwood/Castle Letter, 46 signed copies on file.

40. CDS Papers: Greenwood/Castle Letter, Rodgers to Jones, November 15 1961.

41. CDS Papers: Philip Williams (Nuffield), Rodgers to Williams, November 16 1961.

42. CDS Papers: Greenwood/Castle Letter, Rodgers to Jones, December 6 1961.



existence of CDS - that it was for the left to organise because the right had the organisation in the form of the Party administration.<sup>43</sup> It also showed that with a national organisation the right could respond even in constituencies where there were no actual CDS supporters.<sup>44</sup> On January 17 1961 the Carlisle CND group organised a meeting in the "precincts" of Carlisle Cathedral that was addressed by the unilateralist MPs Konni Zilliacus and Harold Davies. Rodgers, seeing a report in a newspaper, wrote to the Canon Holtby, who had also addressed the meeting and criticised Gaitskell, requesting the same facilities be granted to the multilateralists.<sup>45</sup> After an exchange of acidic letters the Dean, to whom the matter had been referred, refused to allow the Cathedral to be used by a political party. Rodgers refuted this and said he simply wanted two Labour MPs to put the case for multilateralism and that if the Dean refused then he would have to make the correspondence public.<sup>46</sup> The correspondence was released on February 15 and Rodgers was pleased that the CND had been matched.<sup>47</sup> The postscript to the episode was the offer by the local CND of a joint meeting. Rodgers lined up Alan Fitch to speak but the local group failed to organise the event and in the end no multilateralist meeting was held in Carlisle.<sup>48</sup>

Keeping CDS supporters in touch and trying to match CND organisationally were aspects of CDS activity that could be described as "practical politics". The other side to the conflict with the left and indeed the conflict with the Conservatives was winning the ideological argument.

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43. Bill Rodgers in interview with author.

44. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Rodgers to Fitch, May 19 1961.

45. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Rodgers to Canon Holtby, January 18 1961.

46. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Rodgers to Dean, February 13 1961.

47. Bill Rodgers in interview with author.

48. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Roberts to Rodgers, May 17 1961, Rodgers to Roberts, May 19 and Rodgers to Fitch May 19 and May 23 1961.

The main weapons the CDS employed to get its ideology across were Campaign and the contributions supporters made to the revisionist journal Socialist Commentary.

The idea of a newsletter emerged from the early planning discussions. Tony Crosland, Philip Williams and Bill Rodgers worked out the details in November and December 1960.

As Tony will have told you, we want to produce the first issue of "Campaign" - which is what the newsletter is to be called - on or about 1st January. It will deal mainly with defence and the constitutional question.

It is easier at the moment to visualise what it may look like than to describe it. There is general agreement that there should be as many short pieces as possible, including quotations from friends and enemies. The one point in principle raised was whether we should limit ourselves to replying to the left or whether we should try to be anti-Tory at the same time. This was resolved by agreeing that our anti-Toryism should be implicit but that it should be reinforced by, for example, quotations from the speeches of the people we were running for the NEC.<sup>49</sup>

Responsibility for producing Campaign was with the Campaign Committee, from January 1961 until the end of the year, when the organisation was revised and the Organisation Sub-Committee took over responsibility.

In July 1962 the organisation was again revised with the creation of an Executive Committee<sup>50</sup> and finally in April 1963, as part of a general re-organisation, an Editorial Committee was established.<sup>51</sup> The personnel on these different committees was fairly consistent. In addition

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49. CDS Papers: Editorial Committee, Rodgers to Williams, November 25 1960.

50. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, 'Future Organisation and Activities.' undated memoranda for Campaign Council by Rodgers.

51. CDS Papers: To lie with Minutes, 'Reorganisation' minute of joint meeting of the Executive Committee and the Campaign Council, April 17 1963.

existence of CDS - that it was for the left to organise because the right had the organisation in the form of the Party administration.<sup>43</sup> It also showed that with a national organisation the right could respond even in constituencies where there were no actual CDS supporters.<sup>44</sup> On January 17 1961 the Carlisle CND group organised a meeting in the "precincts" of Carlisle Cathedral that was addressed by the unilateralist MPs Konni Zilliacus and Harold Davies. Rodgers, seeing a report in a newspaper, wrote to the Canon Holtby, who had also addressed the meeting and criticised Gaitskell, requesting the same facilities be granted to the multilateralists.<sup>45</sup> After an exchange of acidic letters the Dean, to whom the matter had been referred, refused to allow the Cathedral to be used by a political party. Rodgers refuted this and said he simply wanted two Labour MPs to put the case for multilateralism and that if the Dean refused then he would have to make the correspondence public.<sup>46</sup> The correspondence was released on February 15 and Rodgers was pleased that the CND had been matched.<sup>47</sup> The postscript to the episode was the offer by the local CND of a joint meeting. Rodgers lined up Alan Fitch to speak but the local group failed to organise the event and in the end no multilateralist meeting was held in Carlisle.<sup>48</sup>

Keeping CDS supporters in touch and trying to match CND organisationally were aspects of CDS activity that could be described as "practical politics". The other side to the conflict with the left and indeed the conflict with the Conservatives was winning the ideological argument.

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43. Bill Rodgers in interview with author.

44. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Rodgers to Fitch, May 19 1961.

45. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Rodgers to Canon Holtby, January 18 1961.

46. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Rodgers to Dean, February 13 1961.

47. Bill Rodgers in interview with author.

48. CDS Papers: Carlisle, Roberts to Rodgers, May 17 1961, Rodgers to Roberts, May 19 and Rodgers to Fitch May 19 and May 23 1961.

The main weapons the CDS employed to get its ideology across were Campaign and the contributions supporters made to the revisionist journal Socialist Commentary.

The idea of a newsletter emerged from the early planning discussions. Tony Crosland, Philip Williams and Bill Rodgers worked out the details in November and December 1960.

As Tony will have told you, we want to produce the first issue of "Campaign" - which is what the newsletter is to be called - on or about 1st January. It will deal mainly with defence and the constitutional question.

It is easier at the moment to visualise what it may look like than to describe it. There is general agreement that there should be as many short pieces as possible, including quotations from friends and enemies. The one point in principle raised was whether we should limit ourselves to replying to the left or whether we should try to be anti-Tory at the same time. This was resolved by agreeing that our anti-Toryism should be implicit but that it should be reinforced by, for example, quotations from the speeches of the people we were running for the NEC.<sup>49</sup>

Responsibility for producing Campaign was with the Campaign Committee, from January 1961 until the end of the year, when the organisation was revised and the Organisation Sub-Committee took over responsibility.

In July 1962 the organisation was again revised with the creation of an Executive Committee<sup>50</sup> and finally in April 1963, as part of a general re-organisation, an Editorial Committee was established.<sup>51</sup> The personnel on these different committees was fairly consistent. In addition

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49. CDS Papers: Editorial Committee, Rodgers to Williams, November 25 1960.

50. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, 'Future Organisation and Activities.' undated memoranda for Campaign Council by Rodgers.

51. CDS Papers: To lie with Minutes, 'Reorganisation' minute of joint meeting of the Executive Committee and the Campaign Council, April 17 1963.

to the officers of the Campaign a number of MPs and supporters contributed. These included Tony Crosland, Tom Bradley, Patrick Gordon Walker and Roy Jenkins. Non-MPs who did much of the writing included Tony King, Philip Williams, Michael Shanks, David Marquand, Bernard Donoghue and Anthony Dumont. Rita Hinden, the editor of Socialist Commentary was also active on the committee and other members of the editorial board of Socialist Commentary also wrote for Campaign, including Allan Flanders and Anne Godwin.<sup>52</sup>

The content of Campaign as it emerged over 1961 was to develop as the task of the CDS developed. The objective of Campaign was clear to Rodgers:

We then provided briefing, in a sense we tried to match Tribune. Tribune every week always telling the activists in the constituency parties which motions they should be putting down - which issues they should be advancing, a marvellously effective campaign and in our very moderate way we produced Campaign from February 1961.<sup>53</sup>

The first twelve issues were dominated by the defence issue. Only one article appeared that was critical of the Conservatives;<sup>54</sup> in contrast each issue contained attacks on the left. The favoured targets of the CDS writers were Frank Cousins,<sup>55</sup> instances of Labour Party bodies rejecting CND<sup>56</sup> and, after May 1962 a series of articles highlighting the increasing extremism of CND.<sup>57</sup> However

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52. In October 1963 it was proposed to publish the names of all the contributors to Campaign in a special last edition. In addition to those already mentioned the list of contributors included J Richardson, Ivan Yates, Alan Fox, Douglas Jay, Uwe Kitzinger, David Saunders, George Jones, Peter Pulzer, John Vaisey, Evan Luard, J B Cullingworth and David Shapiro. CDS Papers: Campaign Letters (consent to publication), undated list.

53. Witness Seminar Transcript, Rodgers.

54. Campaign 8, August-September 1961, 'Selwyn Lloyd's Wage Pause'.

55. For example, Campaign 1, January 1961, Campaign 2, February 1961, Campaign 3, March 1961.

56. For example, Campaign 3, April 4 1961 and Campaign 5, May 1961.

57. For example, Campaign 17, June 1962 and Campaign 28, July 1963.

the tone of Campaign was never predominantly negative, indeed a great deal of space was devoted to getting the CDS case across.<sup>58</sup>

The overall impression that Campaign tried to convey was of a responsible organisation concerned with broad policy issues and defending the leadership against irresponsible elements on the left of the Party. There were frequent quotations from Gaitskell<sup>59</sup> and other multilateralists on the defence issue. These were accompanied by analysis of world events<sup>60</sup> not directly concerned with the defence issue. On all of these issues the writers took positions which were in broad agreement with the front bench of the Party and, over for example the controversy surrounding the treatment of communist prisoners held by the Greek government, the paper used the issue to attack the left. Defence-related issues tended to follow the run of events and offer the Campaign's opinions. Up to the Blackpool Conference the articles which did not directly attack CND were concerned with putting across the official policy. After Blackpool the defence issue became centred on the negotiations that lead to the Test Ban Treaty<sup>61</sup>. In these articles and in an article advocating the surrendering of the British independent nuclear deterrent,<sup>62</sup> the Campaign took a markedly anti-nuclear line to emphasise the genuine nature of the multilateralist commitment to disarmament. The article attacking the deterrent opened with a sharp attack on Macmillan's policy:

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58. Of particular interest on the defence issue are the front page articles of Campaign 2, February 1961 and Campaign 3, March 1961.

59. Campaign 1, January 1961, Campaign 2, February 1961, Campaign 7, July 1961, Campaign 16, April 1962 and Campaign 18, July 1962. There was also a special edition to mark Gaitskell's death (Campaign 24, March 1963) with a photograph of the Labour leader on the front page, the only photograph ever to appear in Campaign.

60. Campaign 8, August-September 1961, 'The Berlin Crisis'. Campaign 9, September-October 1961, 'Crisis at the UN'. Campaign 21, November 1962, 'Cuba'. Campaign 22, December 1962. Campaign 26, May-June 1963, 'Greek Prisoners'. 'China and India' Campaign 32, January 1964, Campaign 34, March 1964 and Campaign 35, April-May 1964, 'Cyprus'.

61. Campaign 14, March 1962. Campaign 15, April 1962, Campaign 16, May 1962, Campaign 20, October 1962. Campaign 22, December 1962. Campaign 28, August-September 1962.

62. Campaign 23, January 1963, 'Neither Skybolt nor Polaris'.

In spite of Macmillan's doubletalk, the Nassau conference between him and President Kennedy marked the final, humiliating collapse of the defence policy which the Tory Government has followed for nearly three years. Since the spring of 1960, the British deterrent...has been independent in name only. The failure of Blue Streak showed that a country of Britain's size cannot afford to remain an independent nuclear power in any meaningful sense, without an intolerable strain on its resources. But the Tories refused to face reality. They clung to the myth of the independent deterrent, and hoped to prolong the life of Britain's ageing force of V-Bombers by buying Skybolt missiles from the United States.

Another main element in Campaign was analysis of local and by-elections. The 1962<sup>63</sup> and 1963<sup>64</sup> local government elections received attention; the main emphasis in 1962 was on the importance of the contests as an indication of the country's mood after an extended period of Conservative rule and Campaign claimed the excellent results of 1963 were the basis for a General Election victory. As the General Election neared, attacks on the Tory Government and the Liberal Party were stepped up. From November 1962 to July 1963 each edition contained an attack on the Conservative Government. Taken together they were a concerted critique of the Macmillan years, ranging from the Government's economic<sup>65</sup> and social policies<sup>66</sup> to the appointment of Lord Halisham as Minister for the North East,<sup>67</sup> culminating in a "Macmillan must go" front page in July 1963.<sup>68</sup>

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63. Campaign 16, May 1962, 'Importance of Municipal Elections'. and Campaign 17, June 1962, 'The Results'.

64. Campaign 26, May-June 1963, 'Labour in Asecendent'.

65. Campaign 23, January 1963, Campaign 25, April 1963, 'Mandling's first budget'.

66. Campaign 26, May-June 1963, 'The Social Services'.

67. Campaign 24, March 1963.

68. Campaign 27.

Preparation for the General Election also inspired a series of articles on Labour's domestic programme, which chimed in with the general critique of the Conservative Governments being put forward by the Labour Party, but offered the Campaign's particular, if not very distinctive, view. These articles characteristically centred on the official Party policy statement Signposts for the Sixties. This was analysed in a series of five articles from September 1961 through to March 1962.<sup>69</sup> Three quotations from these articles give the flavour of Campaign's view of Signposts for the Sixties:

Britain's great political issues are no longer massive unemployment and widespread poverty...If Britain had a government which realised that we are in the midst of a scientific revolution, and which was prepared to harness this and to plan to expand our national wealth the British people could have both more money in their pockets and better social services...Commitment to the doctrinaire theory of state-monopoly nationalisation of whole industries is abandoned.<sup>70</sup>

Signposts for the Sixties is a timely attack on complacency and the current laissez-faire philosophy.<sup>71</sup>

So a new and sweeping redistribution of income through the budget, by taxation and social expenditure, must be Labour's main weapon for achieving its primary aim of greater social justice.<sup>72</sup>

The underlying assumption was that increased economic growth would enable a Labour Government to improve social services and education. The Campaign's attitude was classic and mainstream Labour thinking of the early 1960s. The extent to which the policy document endorsed

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69. Campaign 9, September-October 1961- Campaign 14, March 1962.

70. Campaign 9, September-October 1961.

71. Campaign 12, January 1962.

72. Campaign 13, February 1962.



the objectives of the CDS is striking. There was little in Signposts for the Sixties that was not in line with general revisionist principles.

The objective of Campaign was limited. It was not designed to take on Tribune, which as a long established Labour weekly had a wide circulation, and it was beyond the resources of the Campaign to produce anything as ambitious. It was designed to be the internal newsletter of the CDS and as such it provided a great deal of useful information and analysis.

Communicating with the supporters through Campaign was complemented by getting the supporters together. National and regional meetings of CDS supporters were held from January 1961<sup>73</sup> and supplemented by a series of under-25 Conferences and special one-off meetings. There were four Whips conferences held between November 1961 and May 1963. The objective of these conferences was to discuss organisation and policy.<sup>74</sup> Attendance varied from a high point of 95 in 1961 to a low of 33 in 1963.<sup>75</sup> The first "Whips Conference" took place in Caxton Hall, London on November 11 1961. It was attended by "100 key supporters":

We discussed the lessons of the last year and the problems now ahead. In particular, it was unanimously agreed that a great effort must be made on the constituency section of the NEC and to make sure that good Parliamentary candidates are adopted.<sup>76</sup>

As well as being forums for discussion and briefing the meetings allowed the supporters of the Campaign to come into contact with each other. The only other occasions

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73. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, Notice of Rally at Caxton Hall, January 1961.

74. CDS Papers: Whips Conference, May 26 1962, Circular invitation, May 1 1962.

75. CDS Papers: Whips Conference, November 11 1961 and May 23 1963, Attendance Lists.

76. CDS Papers: Whips Conference, November 11 1961, Rodgers to W H Doxey, November 16 1961.

for national gatherings were at the Party Conferences when the officers of the Campaign would make themselves available:

During the period of the Blackpool Conference Denis Howell, Frank Pickstock and I will be staying at the Crescent Hotel, North Promenade. We would be very pleased if you were to contact us there. This applies to other supporters of CDS to whom you might like to pass our address. We hope that we shall be able to arrange an informal social gathering of supporters during the week.<sup>77</sup>

The social side of the Campaign extended for the inner circle to the continuation of the parties organised through the late 1950s for the Group. Informal parties were held in July 1962 and June 1963 and attended by 26 and 36 CDS members respectively.<sup>78</sup> A further social gathering was held in April 1963 after the official gathering of Labour Party members and candidates. About 20 CDS candidates and supporters gathered at Rodgers' house.<sup>79</sup> The social nucleus of CDS continued after the official close of the Campaign in the 1963 dining club.<sup>80</sup>

The schools for under-25s were rather more serious affairs. The first of these took place in April 1962. The two day school was directed by Dick Taverne with Brian Walden, Tyrell Burgess and Alan Day as speakers.<sup>81</sup> This was followed up in January 1963 by a one-day school boldly entitled "Creating the New Society", addressed by Tom Bradley on "The Role of Trade Unions" and Tony Crosland on his book "The Conservative Enemy". This school was directed by Brian Walden and attended by 73 young Labour supporters. Tony Crosland was a considerable

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77. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs, Circular, September 15 1961.

78. CDS Papers: CDS Party 1962, note on attendance undated and CDS Party 1963, note on attendance undated.

79. CDS Papers: Candidates, April 20, Attendance List, undated.

80. Susan Crosland 1982, p 123, Rodgers and Taverne interview with author.

81. CDS Papers: Weekend School April 13/14 1962.

success, with many people assuring Rodgers that they would attend again if they could be sure that Crosland was to speak.<sup>82</sup> One of the leading members of CDS at Cambridge University reviewed the school in a letter to Rodgers: "Bradley was good but pedestrian in the morning. Crosland was provocative, rude, arrogant, brilliant, witty and outspoken."<sup>83</sup> A further School was held in January 1964, this time directed by Bernard Donoghue with Jeremy Bray and Guy Barnett. It was well attended and was again considered a success.<sup>84</sup>

The CDS established in a relatively short time a national network of contacts which met in conferences and had a closer central group who were based in London. The Campaign decided that it would use its Constituency Party network to try and influence the voting for constituency section of the National Executive Party. A brief was prepared for circulation to the Regional Representatives. After outlining the details of the voting procedure and the composition of the NEC, it then suggested five things that the Whips could do:

1. Discover NOW the date of the meeting of your General Management Committee when the decision on which candidates to support will be taken;
2. Ensure well in advance that there will be a good attendance of delegates and ensure on the day that they attend;
3. Let these delegates know about the candidates so they may be able to judge who best to support;
4. Acquaint yourself with the procedure to be followed at the meeting so that you can take steps to see that candidates are fairly considered;
5. Allocate responsibility for putting forward names and getting them seconded so that your GMC has them all before it. DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING TO CHANCE.<sup>85</sup>

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82. CDS Papers: Under 25s Conference January 1963, Rodgers to Crosland, January 7 1963.

83. CDS Papers: Under 25s General Correspondence, Walston to Rodgers, January 7 1963.

84. CDS Papers: Under 25s School, January 4 1964.

85. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, "Voting for the National Executive Committee," undated.

The brief went on to outline the different procedures used by the local parties in deciding who to mandate their Annual Conference delegates to vote for. This detailed brief was accompanied by the CDS slate of candidates and notes on their virtues. In 1962 this concentrated on four candidates. The CDS slate was composed of Jim Callaghan, described as "outstanding amongst existing members",<sup>86</sup> and Denis Healey, Chris Mayhew and Patrick Gordon Walker as candidates who had won "substantial support" in the past. Ian Mikardo and Tom Driberg were singled out as members of the NEC who least deserved support.

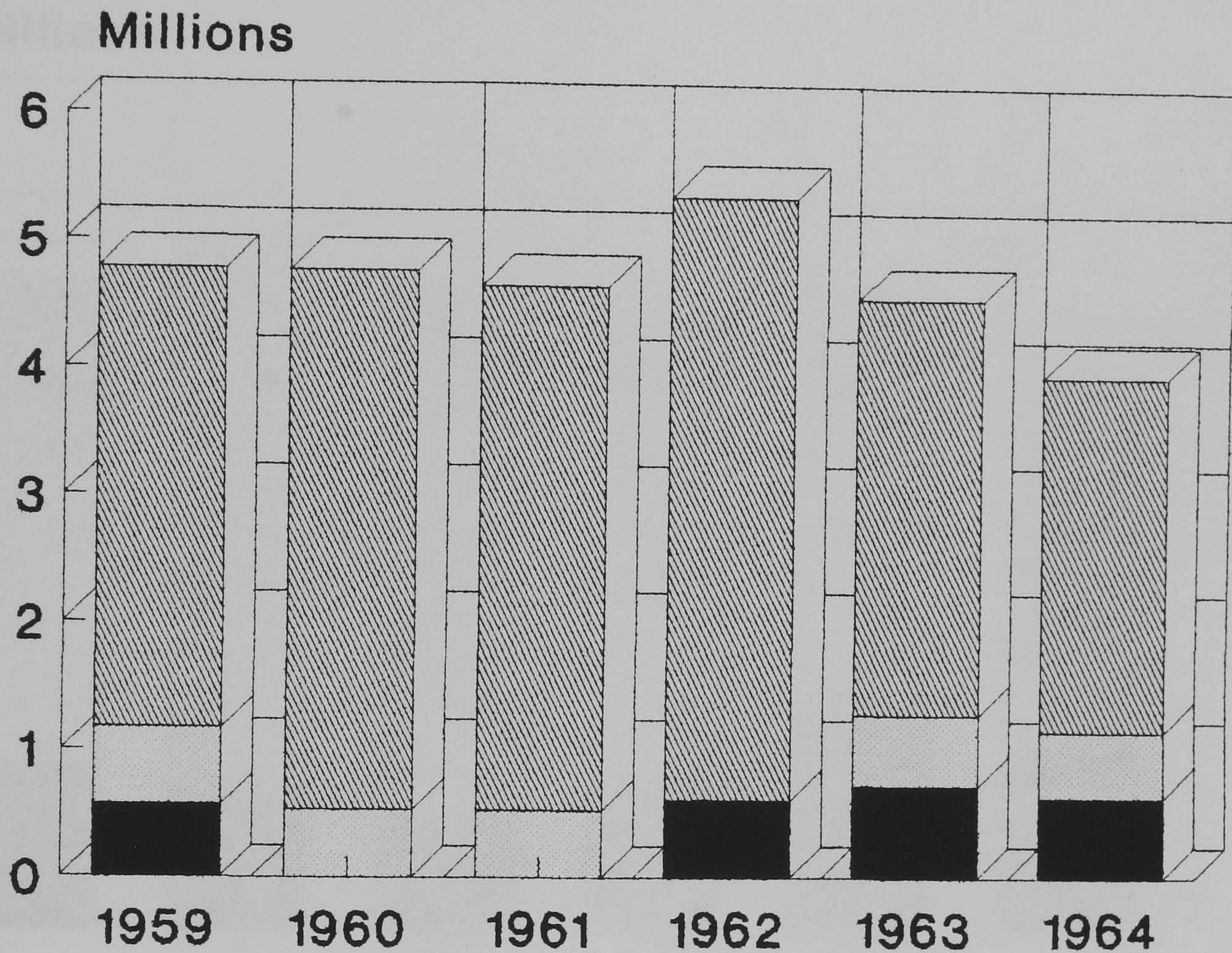
There was a minor improvement in the votes for right-wing candidates during the CDS years, but the overall domination of this section of the NEC was not affected. Chart 5.1 shows the extent of this domination in terms of the candidates actually elected. The only non left-wing candidates that feature in the figures are Tony Benn and Jim Callaghan. The other places were taken by the old Bevanite MPs, Barbara Castle, Harold Wilson, Arthur Greenwood, Dick Crossman, Tom Driberg and Ian Mikardo. If the figures for the top twelve places are taken, as in Chart 5.2, then an increase of approximately a third was achieved in right-wing votes for 1962 and 1963. Only Jim Callaghan and Denis Healey managed to improve their standing and the hold of the left on the constituency section of the NEC was not affected. Aside from Callaghan the only significant newcomer to the section was Tony Benn and although Benn was not at this time a left-winger neither was he a candidate endorsed by the CDS.

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86. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, "National Executive Committee: Annual Ballot 1962," undated.

# NEC Elections

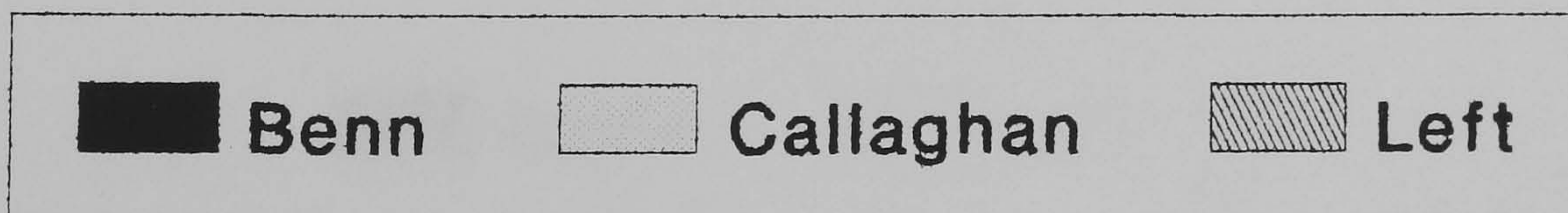
## Constituency Section

### Chart 5.1



	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
Left	3.613	4.244	4.128	4.755	3.289	2.809
Callaghan	0.606	0.53	0.528		0.562	0.524
Benn	0.566			0.613	0.725	0.639

Year



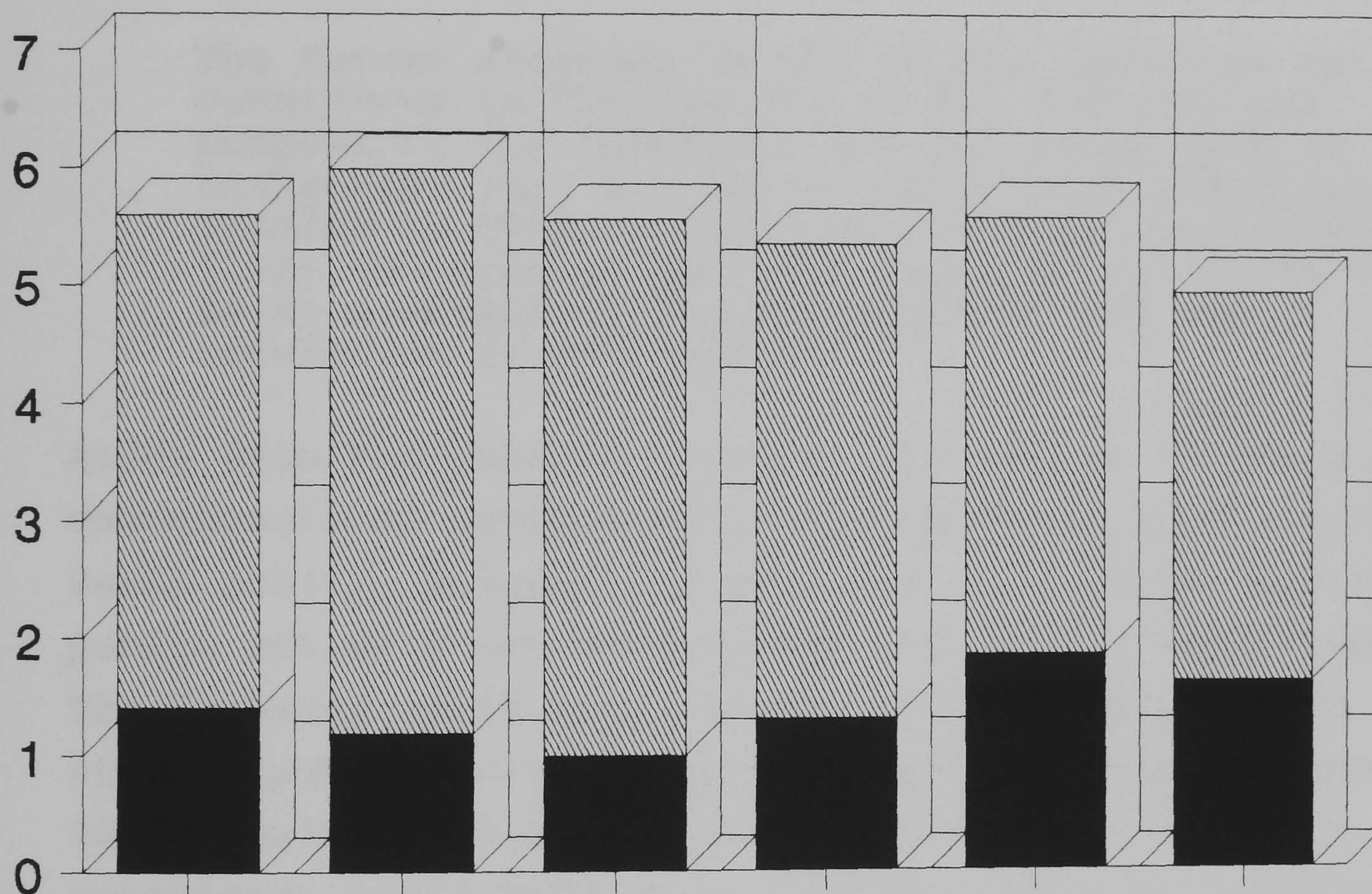
Candidates elected

# NEC Elections

## Constituency Section

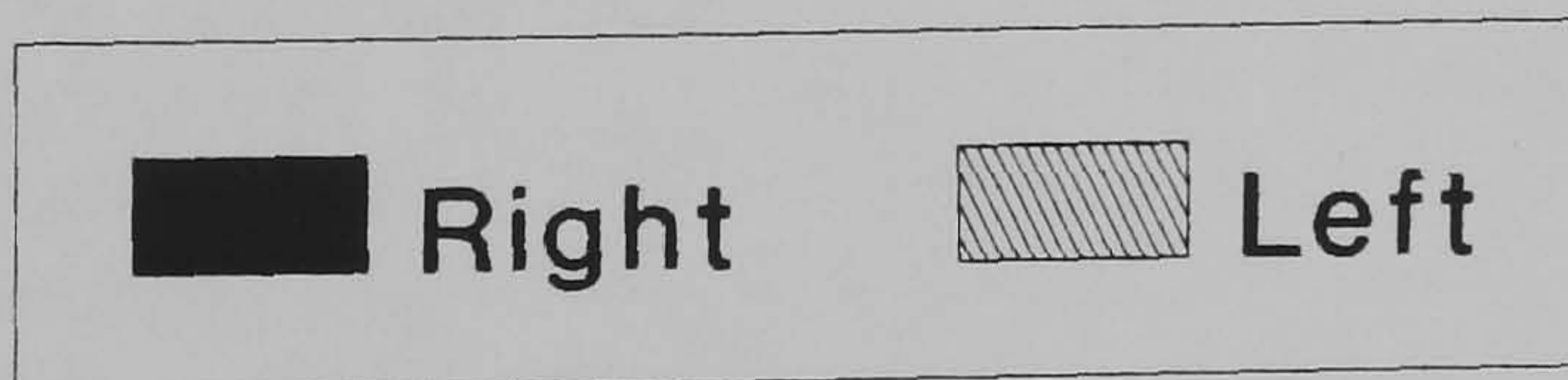
### Chart 5.2

Millions



	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
Left	4.19	4.795	4.573	4.054	3.733	3.326
Right	1.405	1.185	0.985	1.296	1.844	1.609

Year



Figures are for the top 12 candidates

Prior to the success at Blackpool the Campaign faced a crisis about its future. From the outset the long term objectives of modernising the Labour Party in line with the aims of revisionism and the short term task of overturning the vote on unilateralism had been pursued in tandem. The emphasis though had been on the defence issue. The debate inside the Campaign Committee centred on a paper presented by Rodgers in July 1961:<sup>87</sup>

The future strategy of CDS should therefore be considered in the context of (i) the original purpose of the Manifesto and the broad mood it reflected; (ii) the current political situation insofar as this is different from two years ago; and (iii) the special position that CDS now finds itself in as a result of its achievements and the reputation it has acquired.<sup>88</sup>

Aside from the need to increase the number of whips and concentrate on developing publicity for official Labour Party policy, Rodgers was prepared to consider ending public activity and turning the CDS into a Think Tank. The Campaign would have closed its headquarters and stopped publishing Campaign but the links between the individuals would have been maintained and the main organisers would have come together again if a situation similar to that of 1960 occurred again. This point of the document sums up the central problem that the CDS never really overcame:

An end to public activities would not mean the dispersal of records or losing contact with key workers. In the event of a crisis, supporters could be quickly circularised; and confidential advice could continue to be given on voting for the NEC and resolutions for Conference. The existing arrangements for Parliamentary Candidates could be maintained. When necessary, the present officers of the Campaign...could act together in a personal capacity to convene a meeting or issue a directive. In general, the personal contacts between the

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87. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, Minutes of Campaign Committee, July 17 1961.

88. CDS Papers: To Lie with Minutes, The Future of the Campaign, Point 3.

Officers and many of the key CDS supporters are such that advice could be sought from them directly when it was needed. In practice, the public suspension of the Campaign would not end our present work, although it would reduce its scale.

The influence of younger members of the Campaign like Bernard Donoghue,<sup>89</sup> and the desire of the more radical right wingers, like Tony Crosland, to keep the ideological battle going, led to the rejection of this plan and the decision to continue the Campaign. However from the vote at Blackpool onwards much of the organisational impetus for the Campaign was removed. The co-ordination of a national loyalist organisation, through regular circulars and other activity, needed a focus if it was not to simply merge with the general activity of the Party. Once the defence vote was achieved the focus was reduced. The necessity for a Campaign was effectively removed. What continued, although at times very dynamic and useful, was increasingly just a network of like-minded people trying to influence the direction of the Labour Party. However the impetus that had been built since the launch was such that those closest to the Campaign decided that there was progress to be made across a broad front. Individuals like Bernard Donoghue, who came into the CDS later in 1961 felt they were joining a vigorous Campaign<sup>90</sup> but from this July meeting onwards the nature of the Campaign was different. On a personal level, with Bill Rodgers, Dick Taverne and Denis Howell elected to the House of Commons the amount of time spent on running the Campaign was gradually reduced. Rodgers became increasingly concerned with influencing the selection of Parliamentary candidates.

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89. Bernard Donoghue in interview with author.

90. David Marquand and Bernard Donoghue in interview with author, Witness Seminar Transcript, Bernard Donoghue.



The ability of an internal party group like CDS to influence the selection of Parliamentary candidates was very limited.<sup>91</sup> Each Constituency Labour Party was technically an independent part of the Labour Party with other affiliated organisations like trade unions and the Socialist Societies attached to it as the local entity. Candidates were nominated by these organisations or sponsored in the case of trade unions. Sponsorship could be an important consideration in circumstances when the local Party was short of money, and trade unions could increase their number of delegates to the local party at the time of selections and thereby swamp a meeting. Labour Party headquarters maintained two lists of candidates which were circulated to the local parties, an A list of candidates sponsored by trade unions and a B list of unsponsored candidates. However any Labour Party member could attempt to gain adoption as a candidate.

Eric Shaw, in his study Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party, discussed the way in which attempts to control the selection of Parliamentary candidates had developed in the 1950s.<sup>92</sup> Shaw was primarily concerned with the power of the NEC in placing candidates and the potential influence of the party organisation. External influence could be exerted on constituencies at the initial stage when the timing of the selection was fixed, when the short list of candidates was being drawn-up and even at the time of the selection conference. The Regional Organiser could influence things at each stage of these proceedings and as a last resort the NEC could withhold approval of the candidates after selection. This last procedure was rarely used.<sup>93</sup> The period in which the CDS was active in this field was described by Shaw as "the high point of central control".

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91. Jim Cattermole and David Marquand interview with author.

92. Eric Shaw, Discipline and Discord in the Labour Party, Manchester University Press 1988, pp 90-93.

93. Shaw 1988 pp 96-100.

In the early 1960s - a time of acute intra-party strife - some regional officials do appear to have become unusually embroiled in factional activities. During these years regular meetings of an informal Committee, consisting of the Party Leader, the Chief Whip, Bill Rodgers, the secretary of the right-wing ginger group the Campaign for Democratic Socialism and other influential figures met regularly to secure the selection of right-wing candidates for winnable constituencies. This relied upon the co-operation of at least some Regional Organisers; indeed Seyd suggests that Gaitskell's private Militia, the CDS, received help from no less than seven out of twelve organisers.<sup>94</sup>

The position of CDS as both an independent and a loyalist organisation made the relationship between the Campaign and the Regional Organisers a sensitive issue. The scope for Organisers materially to effect the outcome of selections was limited, although, as Shaw put it, "between overt manipulation and absolute neutrality lay sufficient territory to allow organisers if they so chose to exert a significant degree of influence".<sup>95</sup> The seven named by Seyd were Donald Alger, John Anson, Jim Cattermole, Ron Hayward, Jim Raisin, Len Sims and Reg Wallis.<sup>96</sup>

The Labour Party Organiser most overtly supportive of the CDS was undoubtedly Jim Cattermole in the East Midlands region. He took an active view of his role in the Parliamentary selections in his area and helped when he could with "sound" or CDS candidates.<sup>97</sup> His role was valued by Rodgers; he was one of the "key supporters" consulted in August 1961 when the future of the Campaign was under review,<sup>98</sup> and he also helped in getting resolutions for the Party Conference adopted by

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94. Shaw 1988 p 114.

95. Shaw 1988 p 108.

96. Seyd 1968 p 197.

97. Bill Rodgers and Jim Cattermole interview with author.

98. CDS Papers: Labour Party Organisers, Rodgers to Cattermole, August 24 1961.

constituencies in his area.<sup>99</sup> Donald Alger was also in sympathy with the Campaign in general and Rodgers in particular but he seems to have operated in a less overt way than Cattermole, preferring to go through MPs like Gordon Walker rather than straight to the Campaign. Alger, the Northern Area organiser, supplied Patrick Gordon Walker with a complete list of the selections that were due in his region and this was passed on to Rodgers.<sup>100</sup> However his personal regard for Rodgers was clear in their correspondence over Rodgers' prospects for adoption at the by-election at Stockton. Alger offered advice but also stressed that Regional Organisers could not use "their influence to get a person nominated".<sup>101</sup> The position with Alger was further complicated when his wife wrote to Rodgers asking for help with finding a candidate for their local party at Hexham; Rodgers replied recommending Edward Pearce.<sup>102</sup> John Anson, the Yorkshire Area Organiser, also supplied lists of candidates through Gordon Walker and seems to have been generally well disposed towards the Campaign.<sup>103</sup> In contrast Len Sims, who also supplied the information, did so with a marked reluctance:

I have been holding back on Parliamentary selection conferences in the hope that our internal difficulties would be resolved and candidates chosen for their ability as candidates rather than for being "pro" or "anti".

However he was broadly sympathetic to the Campaign. Reg Wallis was asked to supply comments on lists of trade union delegates to the Blackpool Conference.<sup>104</sup> There is no evidence in the CDS Papers that Ron Hayward was

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99. CDS Papers: Labour Party Organisers, Rodgers to Cattermole, May 9 1961.

100. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Alger to Gordon Walker, May 5 1961.

101. CDS Papers: Labour Party Organisers, Rodgers to Alger, December 6 1961 and Alger to Rodgers, December 12 1961.

102. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Rodgers to Mrs D Alger, July 21 1961.

103. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Anson to Gordon Walker, April 27 1961.

104. CDS Papers: Labour Party Organisers, Gordon Walker to Reg Wallis, March 16 1961.

involved and he has denied any involvement,<sup>105</sup> but Rodgers and Cattermole maintain that his role in the early 1960s was very different from his subsequently careful career.<sup>106</sup>

The relationship between CDS and the central organisation, especially the National Agent's Department, was complex. The Colne Valley by-election is probably the best example of the complexity of this relationship and the limitations of the Campaign's activity in the selection of Parliamentary candidates. The by-election contains all the main elements; it was held in what was then a safe Labour seat, there were plenty of candidates, the local CDS contact was very active and the liaison committee with the Chief Whip and the trade unions was involved. The by-election was occasioned by the death of the sitting MP, Will Hall, in October 1962.<sup>107</sup> Florence Price, a very active local Party member and CDS supporter, immediately contacted Rodgers.

I wonder if you could suggest to me a few names of people whom you would recommend for consideration? If you could suggest some former members who are at present out of Parliament but would be prepared to return, I think that might be preferable - as we shall be up against a very strong Liberal candidate who has nursed the constituency for something like 6 years.<sup>108</sup>

Rodgers' first thoughts were Ian Winterbottom, who had been MP for Nottingham Central from 1950-1955, and Shirley Williams, who had contested three seats in the past. In his reply to Price he pushed Williams harder than Winterbottom.

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105. Shaw 1988 p 331.

106. Jim Cattermole and Bil Rodgers in interview with author.

107. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, October 15 1962.

108. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, October 15 1962.

She is an old friend of mine and in the opinion of many people outstanding amongst the younger women in the Labour Party. I know that she would make a first rate candidate and she would be a great asset in the House of Commons.<sup>109</sup>

A week later he contacted Winterbottom and Williams and asked them to get in touch with Price.<sup>110</sup> After the NEC set the date for the special meeting of the local Party, Price asked Rodgers for more help with possible candidates.<sup>111</sup> In response Rodgers offered the names of Harry Waterman and Dick Leonard, he also offered some practical help.

It may be that I will be able to give you some advice after your meeting this Sunday. If you cared to let me have the names of anyone who was mentioned there I could probably indicate to you whether they are worthy of support.<sup>112</sup>

Florence Price met all the people Rodgers put forward and decided to back Ian Winterbottom.<sup>113</sup> In fact Winterbottom emerged as the official candidate. This was decided at a meeting of the liaison committee that tried to co-ordinate the activity of the leadership and the CDS in candidate selections, this meeting was held on November 6.

Meeting consisting of Patrick Gordon Walker, the Chief Whip, Fred Hayday, Denis Howell and I to discuss Colne Valley, agreeing that Ian Winterbottom was the right choice but noting also that Mrs Price had shown interest in Dick Leonard as a second string.<sup>114</sup>

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109. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Price, October 16 1962.

110. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Winterbottom October 24 1962 and Rodgers to Williams October 24 1962.

111. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, October 18 1962.

112. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Price, October 25 1962.

113. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, November 2 1962.

114. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Gaitskell, December 5 1962.

Three weeks later George Brown informed Rodgers that Merlyn Rees was the official candidate.<sup>115</sup> The problem was that although Winterbottom was generally favoured there were worries that he was too old<sup>116</sup> and George Brown had not been present at the earlier meetings. Brown had been appointed chairman of the NEC Organisation Committee, responsible for selections, in March 1962 "in a deliberate move to step up the importance of the post and place the Party machine more firmly at the service of the Parliamentary leadership" and along with the National Agent's Department was taking a keen interest in selections.<sup>117</sup> In the three weeks between the meeting of the secret liaison committee and Brown's bombshell, the CDS was active in pushing Winterbottom as Rodgers saw him as the choice of the leadership. The objective was to support Winterbottom while not deterring others who the Campaign supported from entering the contest. If possible, although this could create difficulties for Rodgers, to have a completely "sound" list. Specific help that could be given was limited. Co-ordination, through Fred Hayday, of the lobbying of the only Union that was strong locally, the textile workers, was one thing Rodgers could do. Price supplied the lists of local Union activists and Hayday contacted them for information and to encourage nominations.<sup>118</sup>

The main left-wing candidate for the seat, Pat Duffy, was also busy lobbying for organisations to nominate him. By the time of the special meeting he had been nominated by seven organisations. At the beginning of this meeting the Regional Organiser, John Anson, announced that two of the local branches who had submitted nominations had done so without informing their memberships. The secretary of the

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115. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Gaitskell, December 5 1962.

116. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Bowden, November 8 1962.

117. Shaw 1988 p 98.

118. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Hayday, November 8 1962.

branch had simply filled in the form. The two branches that had acted in this way had both nominated Duffy. The meeting was in uproar and Anson's intervention, designed to discredit Duffy, backfired badly. Price sent Rodgers a full account of the meeting and detailed the left's response to Anson's announcement:

Attacks were made on John Hare - he was too old - on Roy Hattersley - he was the regional office blue eyed boy and had ambitions to become MP for all Yorkshire - but the real fury came at the end for Winterbottom. He was a company director and a gentlemen farmer, so we couldn't possibly ask working class socialists to support him; his membership of a trade union was simply to put himself right with the rules in order that he could stand as a Labour candidate: people educated at public schools were not socialists and the final blow was "People don't vote for a chap just because he sits up straight on a horse!" Winterbottom's long service to the Labour movement was put to the meeting, his undoubted ability and success when he was in the House - but to no avail. He was defeated by one vote.<sup>119</sup>

Price's response was to try and force his inclusion on the ballot at the following Sunday's meeting. The short list included Dick Leonard and Merlyn Rees. Price's final efforts to get Winterbottom on to the short list were blocked by Sara Barker, the National Agent, because the local executive had agreed the short list and the leadership's choice, Rees, was already on it.<sup>120</sup> When the selection meeting finally took place Merlyn Rees put up a good fight against Duffy but Dick Leonard's performance was reported by Price to have been disappointing. The voting in the first ballot was Bishop 2, Duffy 66, Haire 12<sup>121</sup>, Leonard 1 and Rees 52, in the second it was Duffy 69 and Rees 63. Price was naturally very disappointed and decided to dedicate herself to "getting the left-wing

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119. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, November 28 1962.

120. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, December 12 1962.

121. A local candidate.

element voted off the Executive Committee".<sup>122</sup> The Colne Valley by-election was won by Duffy, but the seat was eventually lost at the 1966 General Election.

The events illustrate the difficulties the CDS faced when dealing with George Brown. There had been problems earlier in the year when Brown "took Bradley out of Bristol without warning or consultation".<sup>123</sup> Brown's action over Colne Valley angered Rodgers sufficiently for him to take the unusual step of sending a full account directly to Gaitskell.

The answer clearly is and Denis Howell and I agreed on this with George on Monday - that liaison must take place at a very early stage. Miss Price was quick off the mark and we were ready to help her at once. Experience has told us that it is essential to move at once in a case like this. In future Denis will consult with George at the beginning. This ought to avoid this sort of muddle...I understand that Sara Barker is irritated with us over Colne Valley. I don't believe she has any reason to be but frankly if she devoted more attention to the Lancashire seats the dividends could be great.<sup>124</sup>

Gaitskell replied:

As you say, there is no doubt about the source of the trouble which is inadequate liaison sufficiently early on. I spoke yesterday to Patrick Gordon Walker and the Chief Whip about this and I think more satisfactory arrangements will now be made.

However the story also shows the ambiguous role CDS was playing in the selection procedure. It had no official position as an organ of the Labour Party, which was part of the reason for the conflict with the National Agent,<sup>125</sup> yet it was operating in support of the leadership and had direct contact with the Chief Whip and

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122. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Price to Rodgers, December 11 1962.

123. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Gordon Walker, March 16 1962.

124. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (General), Rodgers to Gaitskell, December 5 1962.

125. Shaw 1988 p 114.



other high officials. It was not supposed to be Gaitskell's private army, yet it was only Gaitskell's intervention that prevented Sara Barker from pressing for a full enquiry into the Campaign's activity - an enquiry that might have exposed the direct links between the Campaign and the leadership.<sup>126</sup> As is clear from Rodgers' letter this caused considerable frustration.

The selection battle in Salford illustrated the role the trade unions could play, although here as in Colne Valley the apparatus does not seem to have worked particularly well. The local CDS activist was Sam Goldberg and he reported to Rodgers:

NUGMW - this is where you can help. They have about 3,000 levy paying members in Salford, but only pay fees for about 300 so they are only entitled to 3 delegates instead of 30 or more. Bill Anson is their local full-time man and assures me that if they will pay their fees for more delegates, he will ensure that they are appointed and properly briefed. I told him I would see what I could do through Reg Wallis (with whom I have discussed this problem of under affiliation in the past)...Swindell [District Secretary] was very sore when they didn't get Warrington, despite a large number of NUGMW delegates and is now reluctant to pay up, on the other hand their last annual conference passed a resolution that they ought to affiliate their full strength locally. If you can do anything through NUGMW Head Office it could be invaluable. But on no account must it be known that its anything to do with Gaitskell, CDS or you, it must appear to be a decision by the District Secretary.<sup>127</sup>

In the event there was no increase in the delegation from the General Workers Union but an increase in the AEU delegation which supported the eventual winner of the seat, Stan Orme.<sup>128</sup>

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126. Shaw 1988 p 114 and Seyd 1968 pp 209-210.

127. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Goldberg to Rodgers, November 14 1962.

128. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Goldberg to Rodgers, November 14 1962.

A more successful operation was launched against the left-wing nominated candidate for the Pollok constituency in Glasgow, John Mack Smith. Will Hannan MP, one of the most active CDS supporters in Scotland, sent Rodgers a six page report on the situation in Glasgow in January 1963.<sup>129</sup> He concluded the section on John Mack Smith ("Not to be confused with our John Smith"):

This man is a member of the Clerical and Administrative Union. I am informed that the NEC of the Union has already threatened the Political Committee with disbandment because of the disruptive tactics. Mack Smith was, and may be still is, a council member in Glasgow.

Rodgers passed on the report to Denis Howell who was a member of the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union. Howell met with the Union's President David Currie and together they organised action against Mack Smith.

The National Executive have ordered the Glasgow Political Committee of our Union to disband and have made it known through the Union Head Office circular that the body is entirely unauthorised. At their meeting this week the National Committee [of the C&AWU] sent a letter to the NEC of the Labour Party, drawing their attention to the fact that Mr John Mack Smith who has been nominated by a branch of our Union for the Pollok division, was in fact not an authorised candidate and that in accordance with the rule of the Union, the branch who had nominated had no authority to do so.<sup>130</sup>

Mack Smith lost the nomination and a local candidate, Alex Garrow, was eventually adopted. It was one of the most straightforwardly successful operations mounted by the Campaign.

An area in which CDS had some success and was a by-product of Rodgers particular attachment to younger politically active people was the encouragement of younger candidates. In June 1963 Campaign made a feature

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129. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Hannan to Rodgers January 11 1963.

130. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates General, Howell to Rodgers, January 30 1963.

of the younger looking Party, although it did not as Seyd claimed maintain that it was "its moderate socialism" which was instrumental in "encouraging young people into the Labour Party."<sup>131</sup> The article highlighted some of the younger CDS candidates and concluded that "this is an encouraging trend. A younger-looking Labour Party can make a more convincing claim to lead the country in the second half of the twentieth century."<sup>132</sup> The objective of the revisionists was to counter act the more trendy left-wing politics of the time. From the launch of CDS, when Philip Williams used research students to mail out the manifesto, a group of young activists had been involved with CDS.

A number of those active in the "Counterblast" youth section of the Campaign became Parliamentary candidates through "the good offices of Bill Rodgers" and CDS. George Jones, who as a research student at Nuffield had helped with the initial mailings became the Parliamentary candidate at Kidderminster. He in turn supplied Rodgers with the names of other young hopefuls including Robert Skidelsky, Tom Nossiter, Harold Lind, Edward Pearce, John Gyford and Colin Pepworth.<sup>133</sup> Another leading light of the Counterblast group, David Saunders, was adopted as candidate in Peterborough. The chairman of Counterblast, Stephen Haseler was still under twenty-one and so was too young for adoption as a candidate.<sup>134</sup>

The motivation behind the CDS Campaign over selections operated on different levels, a point stressed by both Shaw and Seyd. Firstly there was the straightforward anti-left motivation, keeping ex-communists and unilateralists out of the Parliamentary Party. Second

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131. Seyd 1968 p 207.

132. Campaign 26. May-June 1963.

133. CDS Papers: Possible Parliamentary Candidates, Jones to Rodgers, November 11 1961.

134. CDS Papers: Possible Parliamentary Candidates, Rodgers to Haseler, August 8 1962.

there was the positive objective of trying to get "sound" candidates selected. The nature of a candidate's "soundness" reflected the broader aims of the Campaign, the aim of modernisation and revisionism in domestic policy, as well as the candidate's stance on the defence issue.

The Campaign was successful in the by-elections that were held during its active life. Denis Howell was the first to win a seat. He had been MP for Birmingham All Saints between 1955 and 1959 and secured the nomination for the Small Heath by-election in March 1961. His nomination had little to do with the direct involvement of CDS but was a tribute to his network of local contacts.<sup>135</sup> Dick Taverne won the by-election at Lincoln in March 1962. Hugh Gaitskell suggested Taverne to the retiring member Geoffrey de Freitas, a keen CDS supporter and he in turn helped Taverne with introductions in the constituency:<sup>136</sup>

I received a telephone call one day from John Harris, who was Gaitskell's aide at the time, asking me whether I was still interested in standing for Parliament...Gaitskell suggested me for the seat for two reasons; firstly, he was keen to see leading younger figures of CDS brought into Parliament and Bill Rodgers and myself were the two most obvious candidates. Secondly, it was thought I would be a suitable horse for the Lincoln course...The fact that I was an officer of CDS personally recommended to Geoffrey by Hugh Gaitskell and duly selected for the seat later created a myth about my selection conference...It is firmly believed by some, and has been reported in the New Statesman, that my election was somehow "rigged" and that I was foisted as a right-winger on an unwilling left-wing local party.<sup>137</sup>

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135. Rodgers interview with author. The impression in underlined by the work Howell did for CDS in the local area.

136. Taverne interview with author.

137. Dick Taverne, The Future of the Left, Lincoln and After, Cape, London 1974, p 26.

For a short time after news of the by-election was announced there was a conflict between Rodgers and Taverne who both had designs on the seat. However Rodgers withdrew in favour of Taverne. In turn Taverne received the aid of the local CDS whip, Ken Rawding, who helped get a nomination from a ward. The short list at Lincoln was solely CDS or sound candidates, Terry Boston, Neil Macdermott and Arthur Bottomley and all these candidates eventually found their own seats. Taverne with the help of De Freitas and as the youngest candidate was duly selected and won the by-election.<sup>138</sup> So even if the selection conference was not actually fixed, the local Party was offered a choice between right-wing candidates, all of whom were choices of the leadership and the CDS, and for the left in the local Party this amounted to the fixing of the selection. One man walked out of the selection meeting.<sup>139</sup>

At the other by-elections held during the active life of the CDS, other supporters of the Campaign were elected: Niall Macdermott at Derby North; Tom Bradley at Leicester North-East; Joel Barnett at Dorset South, Merlyn Rees at Leeds South, Will Howie at Luton and Terry Boston at Faversham. Tam Dalyell, who spoke on CDS platforms was also returned for West Lothian in the period. Thus of the 27 by-elections won or held by Labour, which took place from Denis Howell's victory onwards, ten were won by CDS candidates.

The Campaign's experience in influencing selections led to an article in Campaign which advocated the reform of the selection process:

The case for a thorough-going reform of the methods by which candidates are put forward is strong. One object would be to improve the list of sponsored names available. The trade unions ought to be in a

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138. Taverne 1974 p 28.

139. See John Ramsden and Chris Cook, By-Elections in British Politics, Macmillan, London 1973.

position to maintain their representation in the Parliamentary Party. But it is no secret that, with a few notable exceptions, the calibre of available union candidates is low. Many excellent young officials prefer to stick to industrial work that yields both satisfaction and security.

But in the absence of reform it is the duty of the National Executive Committee to follow vigilantly the selection of all candidates and be prepared to use its veto. This does not mean a rigid screening to eliminate all non-conforming views. But if, after careful investigation a candidate is found to be unsuitable there should be no hesitation in refusing to endorse him. Some will resent firmness on the NEC's part. But thoughtful Labour Party members will reflect that it is not asking much to expect Parliamentary candidates to be worthy standard-bearers of democratic socialism.<sup>140</sup>

Criticism of the candidate selection procedure also came from the left of the Party. After Ian Mikardo's experience in Reading and Poplar he wrote a pamphlet criticising the process. Mikardo felt that the process by which the candidates were selected was "too short, too casual and too superficial to ensure that most times the best nominee will be chosen".<sup>141</sup>

Rodgers' method of assessing the suitability or otherwise of candidates was developed in the period before the General Election. He described his technique to Anthony King:

I have been looking into the question raised the other day about the likely views of new Labour Members of Parliament...As I mention in my short paper it is very difficult to know precisely where people stand. Accordingly, to get the proportions I have invented a rather elaborate scheme by which I gave people points for soundness. My proportions were not based on a strict allocation of individuals to categories but on a proportion of points.<sup>142</sup>

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140. Campaign 14, March 1962.

141. He quotes from the pamphlet in Ian Mikardo, Back-Bencher, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1989, p 170.

142. CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates, Rodgers to King, May 12 1964.

The complete analysis which Rodgers forwarded to Tony King summed up the extent of the Campaign's achievement:

- 1) Labour held seats: in proportion of 2-1 sound to unsound.
- 2) Tory Majorities of up to 2,500: in proportion of 4-1 sound to unsound.
- 3) Tory Majorities of 2,500-5,000: sound and unsound about equally divided.

At the least favourable 30% of all newcomers will be unsound and the most favourable 25% of the newcomers will be unsound. Of all this 30%, however, half are likely to be reliable on run-of-mill occasions. On the other hand, the remaining 15% ought to be regarded as hard core dissentients who cannot be relied upon on any occasions and may take an active part in organising opposition to the leadership.<sup>143</sup>

Charts 5.3-5.7, in the appendix to this chapter, summarise Bill Rodgers' findings. Chart 5.3 shows the number of candidates selected in seats with a Tory majority over Labour of under 2,500, using Rodgers' classification system. In these seats 25 candidates were found to be sound as far as the Campaign was concerned and of these 9 were felt to be CDS candidates. All 9 of the CDS candidates were elected and 12 of the sound candidates also won seats. Chart 5.4 shows the proportion of candidates selected in seats with a Tory majority over Labour of between 2500 and 5000 votes and including the Liberal seat, Bolton West, which went to Labour in 1964.<sup>144</sup> In these seats 11 candidates were found to be sound and 2 were felt to be CDS candidates. In the election 5 sound candidates and 1 sound CDS candidate were elected. Chart 5.5 shows the proportion of candidates selected in safe Labour seats with retiring members. None of these seats were lost and 13 sound candidates were elected, of whom 3 were CDS candidates. Chart 5.6 shows the proportion of the sound candidates in

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143. CDS Papers: CDS Hand-outs, Possible Labour Winners, cover page, undated.

144. The other Liberal seat to fall to Labour was Huddersfield. In addition the Labour seat Caithness and Sunderland was won by the Liberals and the Conservatives won five seats from Labour, including Patrick Gordon Walker's seat at Smethwick.

each of the first three charts that were CDS. Out of a total of 51 sound candidates identified by Rodgers in these seats, 14 were felt to be close to the Campaign. Finally, Chart 5.7 shows the breakdown of the new intake of Labour MPs in the 61 seats Labour won at the 1964 General Election. They are dominated by sound candidates, and of these 25 sound candidates, 11 were marked by Rodgers as CDS.

Combining these figures with the successful election of CDS candidates in by-elections from 1961 onwards, one can estimate that 35 Labour MPs acceptable to the CDS found seats in the House during the lifetime of the Campaign. If one includes the 14 candidates marked down as soundish and broadly acceptable to the Campaign then this amounts to 49 Labour MPs. If one adds to this the 43 of the 45 MPs who signed the letter of support to the Campaign in 1961 and were re-elected in 1964,<sup>145</sup> then an estimate of the Parliamentary strength of the CDS in 1964 would be approximately 90 out of a total Parliamentary Party after the 1964 election of 317. This group of MPs can be tentatively characterised as a core which in alliance with the centre of the Party substantially outnumbered the left.<sup>146</sup>

The bare figures conceal a number of disparities. The actual influence of the Campaign was not equal in each of the selections, nor is it possible to quantify the significance of this influence. However, it is possible to conclude that by actively promoting candidates and informing them of coming selections, the CDS helped launch the Parliamentary careers of a substantial number of sound MPs. This achievement was possible because of

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145. Haseler 1969 p 217.

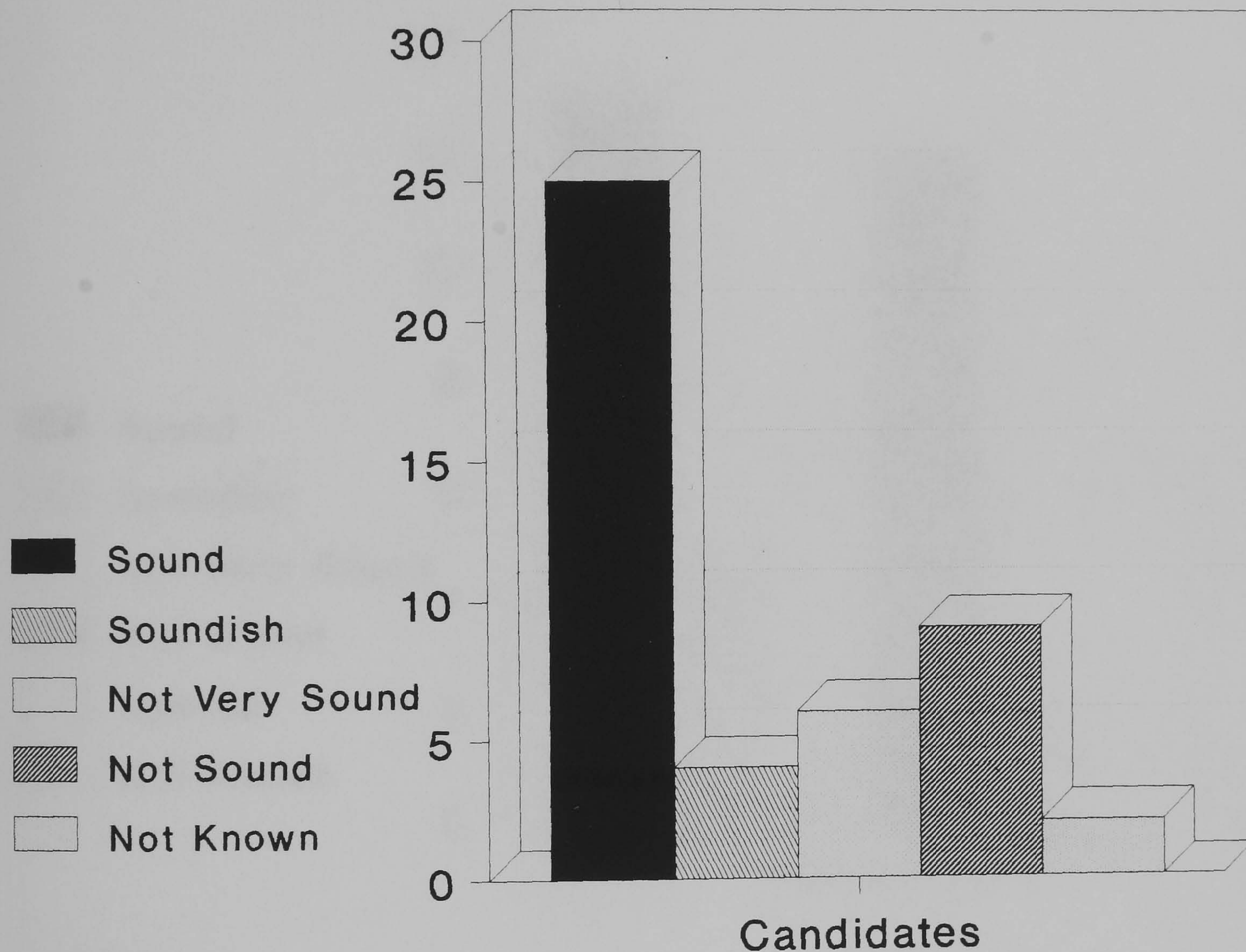
146. As late as 1971 Tony Benn characterised the pro-Community MPs as "CDS" and felt they had a majority in the PLP. In an entry in his diary for Wednesday November 10 1971 he wrote, "It means that the Bill Rodgers' CDS group have got a majority in the PLP and that is something one will have to accept." Tony Benn, Office without Power, Diaries 1968-1972, Hutchinson, London 1988, p 384.



the co-operation of the leadership and the acquiescence or active support of a number of key Regional Organisers. It was also due to the energy and resourcefulness of the CDS organisers.

# Chart 5.3: CDS Classification

Candidates selected for seats with a  
Tory majority over Labour of >2,500

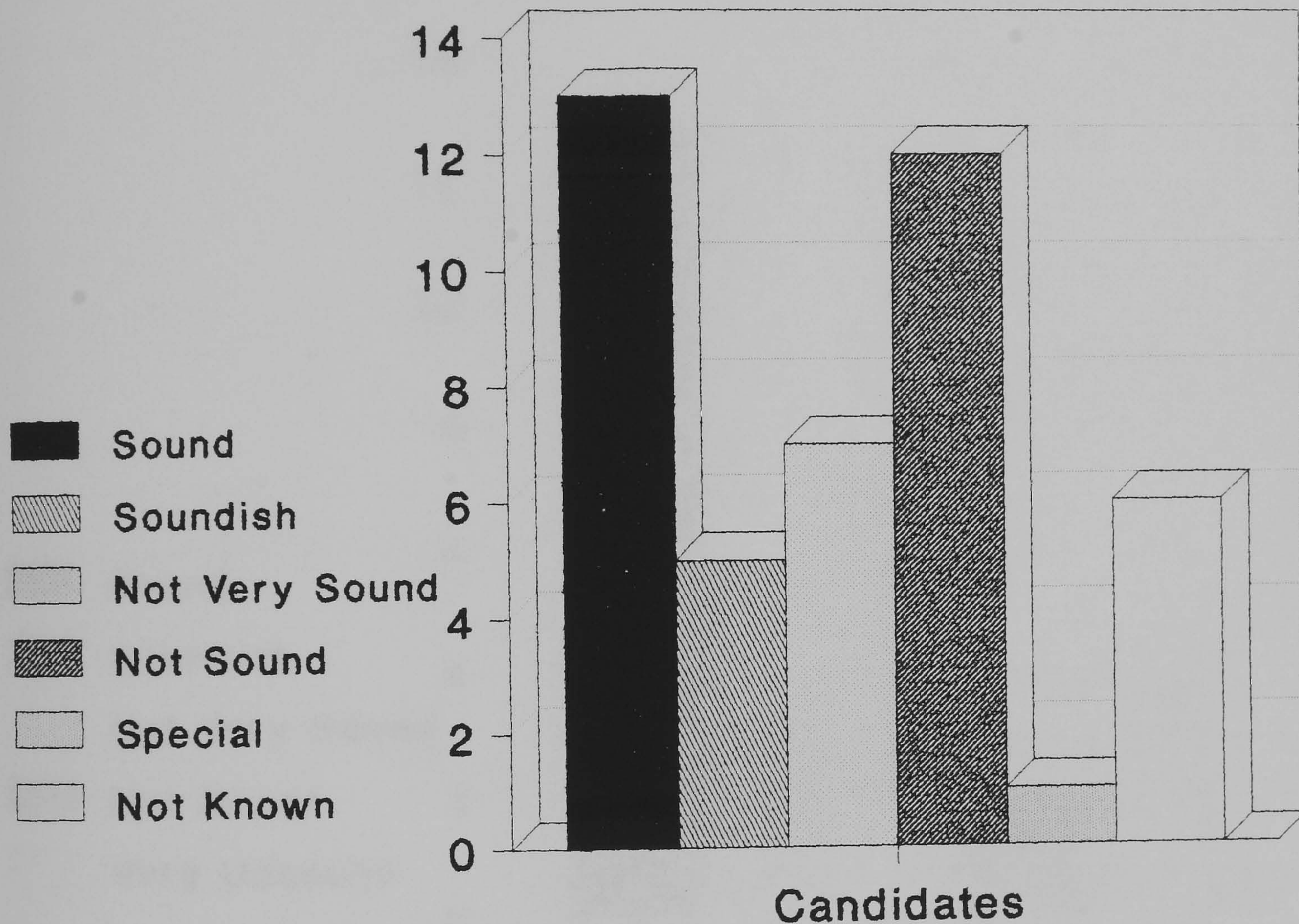


Sound	25
Soundish	4
Not Very Sound	6
Not Sound	9
Not Known	2

Source: CDS Papers: Parliamentary  
Candidates (Red File) Undated reports  
by Bill Rodgers.

# Chart 5.4: CDS Classification

Candidates selected for seats with  
Tory majority over Labour of 2500-5000

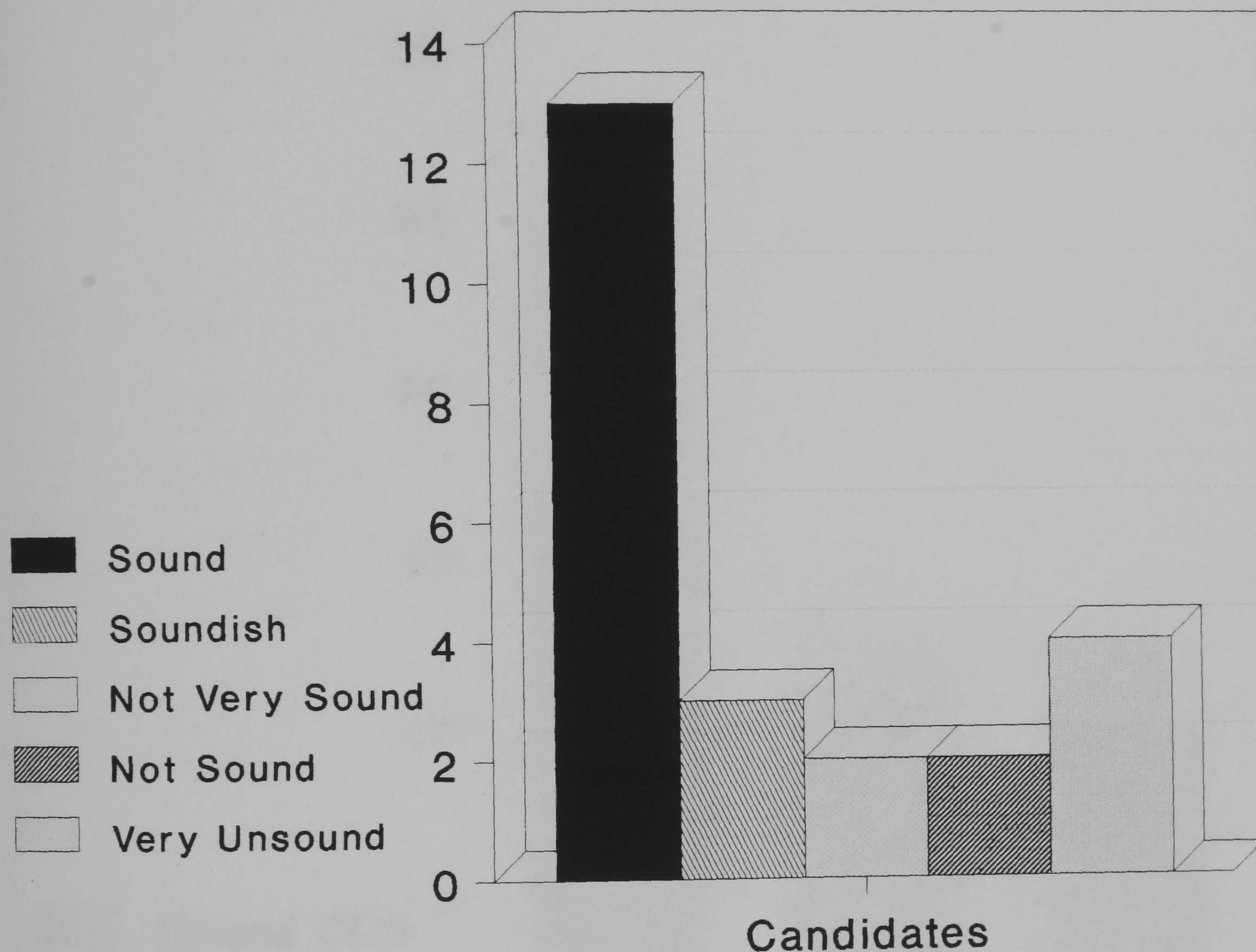


Sound	13
Soundish	5
Not Very Sound	7
Not Sound	12
Special	1
Not Known	6

Source: CDS Papers: Parliamentary  
Candidates (Red File) Undated reports  
by Bill Rodgers.

# Chart 5.5: CDS Classification

Candidates in Labour held seats with retiring members.

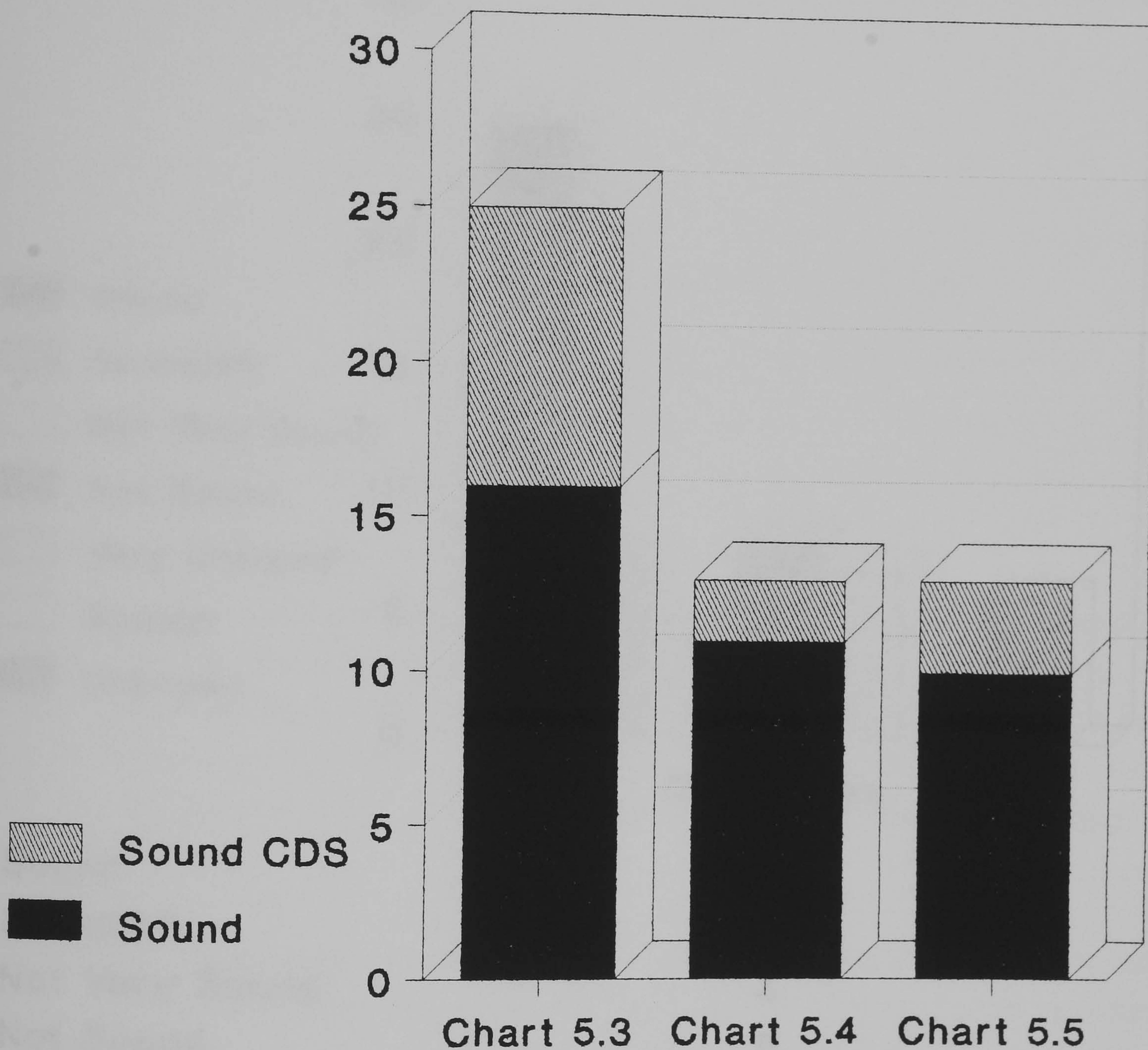


Sound	13
Soundish	3
Not Very Sound	2
Not Sound	2
Very Unsound	4

Source: CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (Red File), Undated Reports by Bill Rodgers.

# Chart 5.6: CDS Classification

The proportion of "Sound" candidates classified as "Sound CDS".



Sound CDS

9

2

3

Sound

16

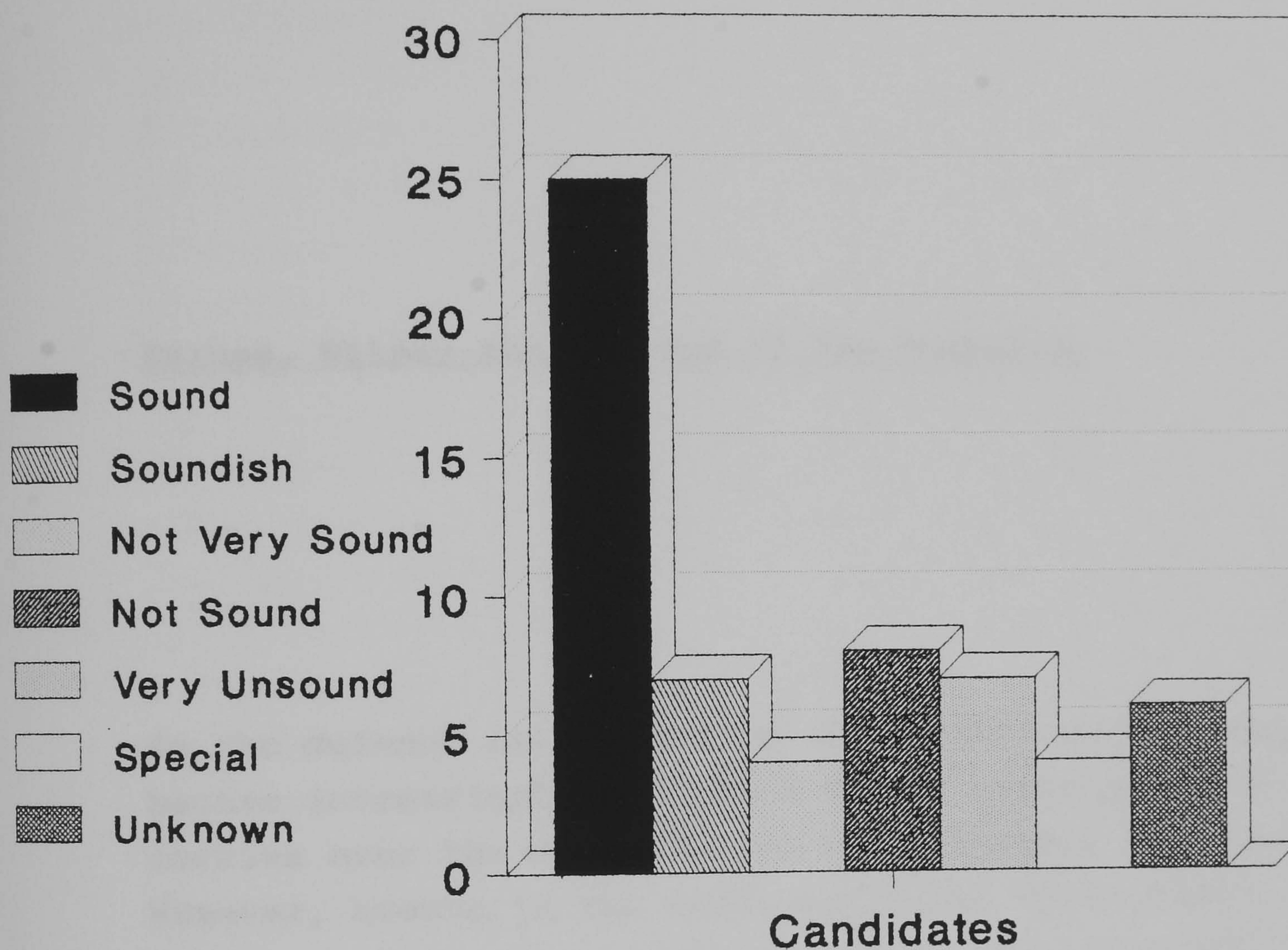
11

10

Source: CDS Papers: Parliamentary Candidates (Red File) Undated reports by Bill Rodgers.

# Chart 5.7: CDS Classification

New MPs elected in 1964



Sound	25
Soundish	7
Not Very Sound	4
Not Sound	8
Very Unsound	7
Special	4
Unknown	6

Source: As Chart 5.1 and Times Guide to the House of Commons, 1964.

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## Chapter 6:

### Europe, Wilson and the end of the Campaign.

As the defence issue declined in importance the Campaign became increasingly dominated by the internal party battles over the selection of Parliamentary candidates. However, events in the wider political world began to impinge on the CDS - indeed to raise questions about its future.

The most important of these was the European issue, which came to the centre of the political stage in July 1961 when Macmillan launched Britain's bid for entry to the European Economic Community.<sup>1</sup> Gaitskell's initial handling of the issue provided few problems for his friends, he had approved a compromise which accepted the principle of membership providing the conditions of entry guaranteed various national interests.<sup>2</sup> However, signs of unrest were soon apparent.

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1. Macmillan's application to join the Community was made in July 1961 and negotiations went on from that date. In March Britain applied to join E.C.S.C. and Euroatom. From then until September the pace of talks accelerated. Common Market and Commonwealth, A new survey by The Times. The Times Publishing Company, London 1962 pp 3-4.

2. Williams 1979 p 706 and Crossman 1981, entry for June 14 1961, pp 951-952.



The first dissent came from Roy Jenkins. In response to the conditions which Harold Wilson laid out in the House of Commons as being acceptable to the Labour Party, he resigned from the front bench.<sup>3</sup> This also allowed one of the keenest Europeans greater scope to speak freely on Europe - "the first but not the last time he put his European commitment before his career".<sup>4</sup> Despite the powerful advocacy of close friends like Jenkins, Gaitskell, while continuing to state his belief in European Unity and keeping a well-balanced tone to his statements on the particular merits of the Community, turned increasingly against the bid for entry. The conditions that Macmillan was going to place on Britain's entry seemed to Gaitskell to undermine the position of the Commonwealth. Moreover, the prospect of another huge split in the Labour Party, so soon after the one over defence, had the likelihood of ending Labour's bid for electoral victory. The anticipation of another five years in frustrating opposition must have weighed heavily with the "government minded" Gaitskell<sup>5</sup> but many of the emotional arguments of the anti-marketeters chimed with Gaitskell's instincts.

The consequence, in the autumn of 1962, was a markedly anti-Community broadcast, followed by Gaitskell's second most famous speech to Conference. Although he tried to reconcile his friends to his volte face there was little time for fences to be mended. What all the CDS organisers agreed on, even in the depths of the Common Market controversy, was that Gaitskell's position was unassailable. Within three months of the conference

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3. Williams 1979 p 706.

4. John Campbell, Roy Jenkins, A biography, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1983 p 50.

5. Williams 1979 pp 777-778.

speech Gaitskell was dead. His death and the election of the Harold Wilson marked the beginning of final scene in the story of the CDS.

The place of the European conflict in the internal politics of the Labour Party was not a straightforward one. It did not fit into the left-right divide as this had expressed itself over the defence issue and over the debates about the future of public ownership. The essence of the Common Market issue was the nature of Britain's relationship with the rest of the world. If the Conservative Government was successful in bringing Britain into the European Community the place of Britain in relation to the Commonwealth and the "special relationship" with the United States would be questioned.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Bevanite disputes of the 1950s had often centred on defence and foreign policy issues - most notably German rearmament. But these were only part of a much broader foreign policy debate concerning Britain's post-imperial role in the world. The left's attitude to these questions tended to be coloured by an anti-American perspective, while the right of the Party, and Gaitskell in particular, nurtured a strong Atlanticist prejudice.<sup>6</sup> The motivation behind both positions was the search for Britain's elusive "role". However there was a notable difference between the generals of the rival factions and the soldiers. Both Bevan<sup>7</sup> and Gaitskell shared a residual belief in Britain's global responsibilities, especially where the Commonwealth was concerned. This presented Gaitskell with problems when his younger colleagues, like Roy Jenkins, increasingly came to see Britain's future as lying with closer links to the Community.

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6. See below pp 75-76.

7. Foot 1975 p 575.

The detailed developments of European integration through the stages of the Council of Europe, the European Coal and Steel Community and the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community of the Six,<sup>8</sup> created a number of difficult problems for British politicians.

There were three main dimensions to the debate. The peculiarity of Britain's post-war position (comprising the sterling area as an economic unit; the Commonwealth as a political entity and the "special relationship" with the United States) had to be counterbalanced with the role of Britain as a European power. In turn the conflict between Britain as a European power and as a world power created a number of difficulties. Given the other roles the UK was called on to play, what would its real commitment to the Community be? From a European perspective the suspicion arose that a United Kingdom only partially committed to the Community would not be able to play a positive role. On the other hand the dynamic being created on the Continent forced British statesmen to ask themselves if they could afford not to join the Community.<sup>9</sup>

This led naturally into the second main problem - the form the association of nations should take. Many in the Labour Party saw the "capitalist" association represented by the Treaty of Rome as an external force that might prevent a future Labour Government planning the British economy.<sup>10</sup> The counter-argument was that only if the progressive force of the British Labour Party was present in the institutions of the Community would it develop

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8. For the development of the European Community see, William Diebold, The Schuman Plan, Praeger, New York, 1959, Edward Fursdon, The European Defence Community: A History, Macmillan, London 1980 and Stephen George, An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990.

9. See David Reynolds, Britannia Overruled, British Policy And World Power in the 20th Century Longmans, London 1991, for a synthesis of the developing role of Britain in the 20th Century, especially Chapter 8, "Circles 1955-1970" pp 202-226.

10. For the debate on the Community inside the Labour Party see L J Robbins, The Reluctant Party: Labour and the EEC 1961-1975, G W and A Hesketh, London 1979.

along lines in tune with democratic socialism. Related to this was the effect that the EEC would have on existing trading patterns. The pro-marketeters maintained that entry would open up the markets of Europe and, so long as safeguards were built in, this would not adversely effect the Commonwealth. The anti-marketeters believed that the gains in European markets would not offset the losses in the Commonwealth markets.

The Labour Party faced these complex questions which the European Community poised through a period in which it was dealing with and then recovering from deep divisions over Clause Four and unilateralism. There was no hard and fast correlation that could predict on which side of the European debate the protagonists in these other debates would fall. Those on the left tended to be anti-European but those who came from an ILP background tended to be in favour of the Community as an international organisation.<sup>11</sup> Among the Gaitskellites the pro-marketeters were a majority but there was an effective minority of anti-marketeters, including the leading figures Douglas Jay and Denis Healey. In the overall Parliamentary Party there was a majority of anti-marketeters. Stephen Haseler estimated the position of "revisionist" MPs as dividing roughly 75% pro-Common Market and 25% anti-Common Market.<sup>12</sup> The opinions of MPs who declared support for the CDS is shown in Table 6.1 in the Appendix to this Chapter.

In the wider Party, opposition to the Community was widespread. As Uwe Kitzinger, an early CDS supporter and advocate of British entry to the Community, stated, the EEC created a series of problems:

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11. Bert Oram in interview with author.

12. Haseler 1969 pp 228.

As freedom of movement clashes with xenophobia, so the problem of supranationalism touches the deeper suspicions against the outside world. In defence Britain has long abandoned independence; in economics, a country as heavily dependent on the rest of the world can only ever be master of its own fate to a very limited degree; but the formal merger of decision-making procedures, the absence of a formal veto on proposals by a body on which the British government is not itself formally represented, go against the grain even of many who in most other grounds would like to see Britain join the Community<sup>13</sup>

For the Labour Party the way these feelings were expressed reflected the underlying characteristics of the Movement. Janosik found that among his sample of leading members of Constituency Labour Parties in 1963 "three out of four respondents were either strongly or moderately opposed to the idea of entry, while less than one respondent in five gave moderate or strong support".<sup>14</sup> The reasons the respondents gave for opposing entry tended to reflect the main issues in the wider debate:

To most respondents, France and Germany were dominating the Market and would continue to do so. De Gaulle and Adenauer were not admired by CLP leaders, who considered them old, inflexible and very conservative. The Treaty of Rome was, by its phraseology a "capitalist device" since it assumed the existence of competitive economies in the member states. British membership in EEC would make achieving socialism in Britain more difficult, and would prevent a British government from directing industry to areas of persistent unemployment. Although a number of respondents referred to the fact that both De Gaulle and Adenauer were Roman Catholic and attributed the conservatism of both men to their common religious persuasion, only one, an MP, viewed the whole Common Market proposal as a "Catholic Plot". He noted that President Kennedy, also a Roman Catholic, was urging British entry into EEC, and concluded his comment by saying meaningfully: "It is called the Treaty of Rome, you know, and we all know what is in Rome." The general impression gathered was that Labour Party members in

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13. Uwe Kitzinger The Challenge of the Common Market, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1961 pp 150-151.

14. Janosik 1968 p 42.

general objected to the ideology of the Treaty of Rome, to its supra-national implications, and to the nations and the leaders who concluded it.<sup>15</sup>

The Labour Party was divided in more or less the opposite way to the divisions created over the defence issue, with the moderate trade union MPs and the leader this time siding with those suspicious of the Community. Unlike the defence issue, when the leader could count on an overwhelming majority in the Parliamentary Party, if Gaitskell had come out in favour of the Common Market he would have faced a battle with all sections of the Party: the Parliamentary Party, the trade unions and the Constituency Labour Parties. On the other hand if he came out against the Common Market he risked alienating his more loyal supporters. One of the CDS organisers maintained later that Gaitskell's stance on Europe was primarily designed to unify the Party.<sup>16</sup>

Gaitskell's own view on the Community was based on an acceptance of underlying inspiration for the European movement tempered by a deep suspicion of the implications for Britain if she joined. This view manifested itself most clearly in a profound concern about the precise terms of entry:

From the start not only the Opposition but the Government as well were not in favour of "going in and trying to get the best possible terms" but only for "going in if certain conditions were fulfilled"...we certainly took the conditions very seriously and always meant to stand by them. There were two reasons for this attitude. First, I myself and my leading colleagues all happened to believe and still believe that the arguments of principle were fairly evenly balanced for and against and that the balance would be tipped in favour of our entry only if our conditions were fulfilled. Secondly, this policy of making our final judgement depend on conditions was the only one which could have been accepted by the Party as a whole. If I had urged unconditional entry (thus going further than the

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15. Janosik 1968, p 42.

16. Denis Howell in interview with author.

Government) there would have been bitter opposition from a minority which was basically hostile to our entry. If I had urged opposition whatever the terms this would also have been bitterly opposed...In either case, there would have been a major split in the Party, which, following the great dispute on defence would have been fatal to our prospects.<sup>17</sup>

The conditions Gaitskell outlined for membership were guarantees for British agriculture; a fair deal for the E.F.T.A. partners; ability to plan economic policy and the safeguarding of the Commonwealth. In a broadcast in May 1962 Gaitskell actually leaned a little towards the Community. In a well balanced account that summed up the arguments on both sides, stressing the 50-50 nature of the economic argument, he put the political argument in fairly positive tones:

You hear people speaking as though if we go into the Common Market, on the basis of the Treaty of Rome, that this is the end as far as an independent Britain is concerned. That we're finished, we are going to be sucked up in a tunnel of giant capitalist, Catholic conspiracy, our lives dominated by Adenauer and de Gaulle, unable to conduct any independent foreign policy at all. Now frankly, this is rubbish on the basis of the Treaty of Rome.<sup>18</sup>

Having dismissed the gloomy picture he went on to make the case that without Britain and its Commonwealth links, the Community would be a much more introverted organisation:

If we go in and make it a kind of link between the Commonwealth and Europe, and if Europe were also to adopt the kind of modern attitude that I think we should be adopting, that would be a tremendous step forward. And I'll go further than that, if we don't go in, if we stay out, you might get a very tightly formed state in Europe with high tariffs, inward looking, rather reactionary, and conservative and nationalistic in its attitude. If we can prevent that by going in I think we've certainly done a good job.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Williams 1979 p 705. Quoting Gaitskell's letter to Kennedy.

18. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence File, Hugh Gaitskell, A Party Political Broadcast on behalf of the Labour Party, May 8 1962, Transcription from broadcast.

Between May and September 1962 the details of the conditions became known and Gaitskell's position hardened against the Common Market. From the strict neutrality of his early stance, through his mildly positive broadcast in May, he now came out clearly against the conditions as negotiated by the Macmillan Government. In another political broadcast in September 1962 he stated:

There is a case for entry. And it's like this: if we don't get in there is a possibility that the six countries will form themselves into a European State, and there is a danger that this state's policy could be reactionary, nationalistic and possibly dangerous to peace as well. And the idea is that if we go in, we could prevent that. We might be able to persuade the Six and the others to let in the rest of Western Europe, Scandinavian States, and Austria and Switzerland. We might have a loose association which would be outward-looking, in favour of low tariffs, progressive in its foreign policy and its home policy, anxious to help under-developed countries, supporting the United Nations. This would be certainly a force for good in the world, and it would be a great ideal. But what is really involved in this is building a bridge between the Commonwealth and Europe; and we cannot do that if we destroy the Commonwealth by our entry. And if by our entry we are committed to European Federation or anything of that kind, we do destroy the Commonwealth. And if by our entry the economic damage to the Commonwealth countries is so serious the links are all broken, and the Commonwealth fades out, we cannot do it either.<sup>20</sup>

Most of the organisers of the CDS watched Gaitskell's progress with trepidation. Their views on the Community were made clear in the initial manifesto which covered Europe in paragraph 12:

We favour two radical changes in Britain's relations with the outside world. First, as a matter of conscience as well as of policy, we urge a great new

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19. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Hugh Gaitskell, A Party Political Broadcast on behalf of the Labour Party, May 8 1962, Transcription from broadcast.

20. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Hugh Gaitskell The Common Market-Text of a television broadcast September 21 1962 reproduced in This Week Volume 4, Number 30, September 27 1962, p 158a.



effort to share our prosperity with the under-developed countries of Asia and Africa. Secondly, we are convinced Europeans, certain that Britain's destinies are inextricably bound up with those of a resurgent and united Europe.<sup>21</sup>

The first public comment by the Campaign after Macmillan's approach to join appeared in Campaign in July 1961. Stressing that the most important thing was for the Labour Party to remain united, it set out to refute the charges of the anti-marketeters. In marked contrast to Gaitskell's line which was consistently to state that the economic argument was 50-50,<sup>22</sup> Campaign rejected the notion that entry would mean higher food prices and an invasion of Italian workers and concluded: "Indeed from an economic point of view it is scarcely open to question that Britain would benefit from membership."<sup>23</sup> This pro-market line was kept up in subsequent editions. Small pieces were published with quotations from leading Party figures in favour of the Common Market.<sup>24</sup> These were followed up with two large articles "Common Market Facts", Campaign 14, March 1962 and "The Common Market, More Arguments Refuted" Campaign 16, May 1962. Both were in the style of questions and answers and dealt with the familiar set of objections to the Community. However, with the conference approaching, the tone of the articles became more positive. In "Socialists and the Common Market"<sup>25</sup> the case for a socialist justification for entry was made:

There are few greater illusions than the view that an isolated Britain would be a socialist Britain. Our national record is that of only two effective

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21. CDS Papers: Manifesto Texts File, A Manifesto Addressed to the Labour Movement, Paragraph 12.

22. Williams 1979 p 713.

23. Campaign 7, July 1961, "Labour and the Common Market" unsigned but probably written by Tony King.

24. Campaign 8, August-September 1961, "Opinions on the Common Market" from Lord Morrison and Bill Carron. Campaign 11, December 1961, "More Common Market Views" from Sir Alan Birch and Roy Jenkins.

25. Campaign 18, July 1962.

left-wing governments in the 62 years of this century. And an inward-looking re-orientation would encourage the conservative and not the progressive forces in Britain. Those who are most suspicious of foreigners are most nervous of change.

This was followed by a forthright attack on the possibilities of the Commonwealth being an effective world force. The stance of the Campaign was clearly pro-European. Until Gaitskell's second broadcast, in September 1962, the neutrality of the Labour leader produced few problems for the loyalist Campaign. Gaitskell was persuaded against the Community primarily because of the conditions of entry that Heath had negotiated. However the pro-marketeters had not helped their case by arranging a meeting between Gaitskell and "the father of the European idea", Jean Monnet. Gaitskell interrogated Monnet about the effect of tariffs on particular Commonwealth countries and was unimpressed by Monnet's answers. Finally Monnet protested, "You must have faith" to which Gaitskell replied "I don't believe in faith, I believe in reason and you have not shown me any."<sup>26</sup>

After the September broadcast and even more so after the conference speech the paths of the leader and the Campaign were seen to diverge. The Executive Committee of the CDS wrote to Hugh Gaitskell asking the leader to maintain neutrality on the European issue: "The maintenance of the official benevolence of the Party towards the Common Market will give time for those of us who are for, as well as those who are against, to crystallise problems and opinions in the coming months in a fairly amicable spirit."<sup>27</sup> Gaitskell replied that he did not "think anything in your letter was inconsistent with the statement of the Commonwealth Labour leaders"; he went on to re-state the view he had expressed in his

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26. Williams 1979 p 708 and Campbell 1983 p 71.

27. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Pickstock to Gaitskell, September 21 1962.

broadcast, that it was necessary to go in to prevent undesirable developments in Europe but that Britain should only go in on the best possible terms. He went on:

At the same time, we have all along insisted that certain conditions must be fulfilled. Perhaps the most important of these is the safeguarding of our ties with the Commonwealth. I do not see how anybody can possibly believe that this condition is fulfilled by the terms so far negotiated and set out in the White Paper...It is, of course, possible to argue that the condition should not be laid down but it has been laid down not only by us but by the Government as well...From all this I think you will see that you have no reason to fear that we shall take an out and out anti-Common Market line. Our attitude will be precisely the same as it has been in the last fortnight - simply that the terms as at present negotiated are not good enough and we must have better ones.<sup>28</sup>

The assurance given by Gaitskell that he would not take an "out and out anti-Common Market line" was to be flatly contradicted by his conference speech. At the same time as Pickstock wrote to Gaitskell he made the Campaign's views clear in similar letters to George Brown, Denis Healey and Herbert Bowden, the Chief Whip.<sup>29</sup> Gaitskell's letter did not quieten the anxiety of Rodgers and on September 25 he circulated a letter to key supporters stating the problem presented to the Campaign by Gaitskell's change of stance:

As we see it, the position is that the leadership of the Party has given the impression both within the Party and to the general public that Labour is now flatly against entry to the Common Market.

It is not simply a question of insisting on adequate terms; we all want the best terms Britain can get. The danger is in saying that the Commonwealth is the supreme consideration and implying that Britain really has little in common with Europe. Labour's position may not have been stated in precisely this way but equally Hugh Gaitskell has expressed no

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28. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Gaitskell to Pickstock, undated copy.

29. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Pickstock to George-Brown, September 21 1962, a note on this letter indicates that letters were sent to Healey and Bowden.

positive sympathies at all towards Europe. Everyone believes that he has come down off the fence against the Common Market.

This means that within the next few days everything must be done to persuade the leadership of the Party that there is a very substantial body of most loyal supporters who would regard a firm commitment against entry to the Common Market as a disaster. We do not ask Labour to declare unequivocally in favour of the Common Market. What we must do is redress the balance against the anti-Common Marketeers and try and bring Labour back to a balanced position again. If this is not achieved by next week's debate we believe that the consequences for the Labour Party could be far reaching.<sup>30</sup>

The letter also gave an insight into Rodgers' personal view of the Common Market debate:

If I may add an entirely personal point, I think that I was less committed than some other members of the CDS Committee to entry to the Common Market. Certainly there were a number of us who were particularly reluctant that the Campaign should come out firmly on that side.

However, the events of the last few days have greatly disturbed us all. I confess that from being personally only a cautious supporter of Britain's entry I now feel personally obliged to take a public initiative on the side of those who want Britain to go in.

This point was echoed in the letters Rodgers dispatched to supporters of CDS on the NEC on September 26, asking them to try and get a resolution for Conference that expressed "that for Labour the best solution could still be terms which enable Britain to join".<sup>31</sup>

The CDS was feeling considerable disquiet about Gaitskell's position even before the leader's speech on the Common Market on October 3 1962. After this speech the organisation was left in something approaching chaos.

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30. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Rodgers, September 25 1962.

31. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Rodgers to Braddock, Gordon Walker, Mulley, Callaghan and White, September 26 1962.

The point of a loyalist Campaign is that it favours unity of the Party behind the elected leader. Although the organisers were keen to stress their independence from Gaitskell when he differed from them over Europe,<sup>32</sup> until this point they effectively deployed their loyalty over defence to capitalise on the general feeling of unity and they had campaigned actively for candidates who supported the leadership and indeed were endorsed by the Chief Whip. What happened at Brighton, and particularly the way it happened, undermined this position and forced the CDS to try and develop a more independent identity.

Gaitskell's speech was an exceptionally powerful mastering of the debate on the Community which through its combination of rational argument and emotional tone stunned or delighted many in the hall. In the weeks after Conference a critical difference emerged among the CDS between those who had actually been in the hall and those who read the speech afterwards.<sup>33</sup> The strident anti-market tone was especially shocking because, just before the conference Gaitskell had met two CDS trade unionists, Hayday and Webber, and had assured them "Don't worry, wait till you hear what I say. I intend to speak to my friends."<sup>34</sup> The centre of Gaitskell's case was rather contradictory. He insisted that the debate had to be based on the facts, especially the economic facts,<sup>35</sup> but the most effective passages in his speech were pure emotion, for example in discussing the prospects for a Federal Europe:

We must be clear about this: it does mean, if this is the idea, the end of Britain as an independent European state. I make no apology for repeating it. It means the end of a thousand years of history. You

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32. See Rodgers' replies to Mcquade, Biggar and Smith below.

33. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence: Rodgers to Smith, October 15 1962 and Williams to Rodgers, October 10 1962.

34. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Rodgers to Williams, October 10 1962.

35. LPACR p 155, "I say this to start with, because I do not think the level of argument in the Press has been all that high...I also prefer to rely on facts."

may say, "Let it end," but my goodness, it is a decision that needs a little care and thought. And it does mean the end of the Commonwealth. How can one seriously suppose that if the mother country, the centre of the Commonwealth, is a province of Europe (which is what Federation means) it could continue to exist as the mother country of a series of independent nations? It is sheer nonsense.<sup>36</sup>

Gaitskell also foresaw the extension of majority voting from economic to political issues and the faster pace of integration. He finished his speech by laying out the terms that he thought would be acceptable:

If we carry the Commonwealth with us, safeguarded, flourishing, prosperous, if we could safeguard our agriculture, and our E.F.T.A. friends were all in it, if we were secure in our employment policy, and if we were able to maintain our independent foreign policy and yet have this wider looser association with Europe, it would indeed be a great ideal. But if this should not prove to be possible; if the Six will not give it to us; if the British Government will not even ask for it, then we must stand firm by what we believe, for the sake of Britain and the World; and we shall not flinch from our duty if that moment comes.<sup>37</sup>

Douglas Jay described the effect of the speech from the point of view of an anti-marketeer: "It was unique among all the political speeches I ever heard; not merely the finest, but in a class apart, even from Gaitskell's Suez speeches. It can only be described as an intellectual massacre. Nobody had anything else to say. For its uniqueness rested in its ring of truth."<sup>38</sup> In the hall the ovation was "unparalleled",<sup>39</sup> although Rodgers stayed firmly in his place. Gaitskell united the Party behind his leadership in a single speech. However in the process he left many of his friends confused and angry. Anthony

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36. LPACR 1962 p 159.

37. LPACR 1962 p 166.

38. Jay 1980 p 286.

39. LPACR 1962 p 166.

Howard, writing in the New Statesman, saw Brighton as "as ruthless a power struggle as has been seen for a long time in a British political party".<sup>40</sup> If Gaitskell was talking to his friends then he was trying to persuade them that they were wrong, just as he had tried to persuade the left by force of rational argument that they were wrong on Clause 4 and defence. But the way in which he did it raised a number of questions. Anthony Howard described the impact on the pro-marketeters:

Why did the Labour Party leader decide to go as far - sparing the feelings of none of his former associates in the process? There is some evidence that at first he may not quite have realised how intransigent the opposition of his former friends would turn out to be. But once he realised this he clearly made his decision that if they could not be shaken they must be destroyed...The proof of it was to be seen in the well-known faces which could be noticed primly sitting down on the ex-officio benches as the rest of the Conference rose to give Hugh Gaitskell the greatest ovation of his career. Men like Jack Diamond and Bill Rodgers (Roy Jenkins had the sense to stand up and make a brave shot at making the best of it) certainly looked angry; but they also looked beaten and betrayed.<sup>41</sup>

The response to the disquiet expressed by the CDS about Gaitskell's attitude to the Community was mixed. From the NEC Jim Callaghan replied saying that he would take Rodgers' views into account but that "the present terms for entry are not good enough and I could not conscientiously vote for them".<sup>42</sup> In response to his circular letter David Saunders<sup>43</sup> and Keith Hindle<sup>44</sup> wrote in supporting Rodgers. Hindle analysed the effect of Gaitskell's change of position on CDS: "CDS will never feel the same personal loyalty to Gaitskell again but there is no justification for indulging in bitter

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40. New Statesmen, October 5 1962, p 438.

41. New Statesmen October 5 1962, p 438.

42. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Callaghan to Rodgers, September 27 1962.

43. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Saunders to Rodgers, October 1 1962.

44. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Hindle to Rodgers, October 10 1962.

recrimination...We may need Gaitskell's leadership again some time - indeed we need him now, for who else?" A view shared by Philip Williams: "If we are going to stay in the Party, Hugh Gaitskell is still not just the best leader we have but the only one in sight."<sup>45</sup>

But not all the CDS supporters took this line, Gerry McQuade, a signatory to the Manifesto, could not countenance a break with the leader:

I regret the impression has been created that CDS is aligned against the leadership on this issue. I feel that the statement which the NEC is to submit to Conference is one which should command wide support and I am writing to Hugh Gaitskell to this effect. While I have much in common with the general outlook of CDS on policy I had never anticipated that we would find ourselves aligned against the leadership on a major issue and I regret therefore that I feel compelled to withdraw my support from CDS for this reason.<sup>46</sup>

Another wrote in similar vein, "I am not happy about the way CDS is handling the Common Market. CDS was formed to get more united support for a democratically appointed leader - in this case Gaitskell...But quite apart from the merits of this question, it seems to me that the CDS are in danger of creating just the kind of split which we set out to repair."<sup>47</sup> John Grieve Smith wrote to Rodgers expressing even more marked disquiet about the direction of the Campaign:

Like most of your supporters, that I know, we did not join CDS because we agreed in detail with the Manifesto but because we felt it was vital for the right and centre of the Party to regain its traditional ascendancy over the left. We regarded the organising work and its publicity on the defence question as its most important tasks...There seems to be a danger that in the constituencies at any rate CDS is fixing its support in say the most right-wing 5% of the Party as opposed to the 60% in

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45. CDS Papers: Envelope CDS '63, '64, '65, Williams to Rodgers, October 8 1962.

46. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, McQuade to Rodgers September 30 1962.

47. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Biggar to Rodgers, October 31 1962.



the centre and right wings. To take my own case: everybody I know regards me as well on the right of the party, but I am beginning to feel a fanatical left winger compared with those who came to your last London meeting.<sup>48</sup>

However support came in for Rodgers' views from some of the key CDS people: Harry Waterman,<sup>49</sup> a signatory and whip; Bob Mitchell, who helped with candidate selections;<sup>50</sup> Kenneth May, a signatory and whip;<sup>51</sup> Tom Fyfe, the mover of the CDS resolution at the USDAW conference<sup>52</sup> as well as Pickstock and Howell. The Oxford people were more cautious. According to Williams, Walden, King and Sharprio were less outraged by the speech, partly because they had not been there:

I'm worried by the difference between the reaction to Brighton of all of you who were there and some who were not (David Shapiro, Brian Walden, myself and from a recent letter almost certainly Tony King too). Obviously I don't like the line Gaitskell is taking and obviously it might face us with a not very pleasant choice in the future. I can quite see that a passionate enthusiast for the Market might now feel he had to leave the party. But if we don't intend to go that far, then surely our reaction has to be governed by prospects for the future rather than resentment about the last week.<sup>53</sup>

After the conference Gaitskell acknowledged the considerable misquiet amongst his CDS supporters by meeting them in private. This took place on October 21 1962 at Bill Rodgers' house. He made plain in this meeting that he had never seen himself as a pro-European.<sup>54</sup> As late as July 1962, however, he was

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48. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Rodgers to Smith, October 15 1962.

49. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Waterman to Rodgers, September 29 1962.

50. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Mitchell to Rodgers, September 27 1962.

51. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, May to Rodgers, October 11 1962.

52. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Fyfe to Rodgers, September 26 1962, Fyfe wrote: "I was so disgusted by Hugh Gaitskell's speech (which to me smacked of unconvincing expediency) that I almost wrote to him at the time - I wish I had."

53. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Williams to Rodgers, October 8 1962.

54. Williams 1979 p 702, there is no record of this meeting in the CDS Papers.

prepared to give a similar lead against the left on the European issue as he had successfully done on unilateralism.<sup>55</sup> But once the detailed terms were known he felt duty bound to oppose entry because the Government was behaving in a "shabby" way<sup>56</sup> and was prepared to enter on any terms.<sup>57</sup> He made plain that he thought the Common Market "had nothing to do with the basic principles for which CDS stood". He regarded the matter as "A bore and nuisance and it always had been...As the evening wore on, he showed increasing signs of weariness. A number of those present thought this reflected his regret that he'd been forced to take the stand on an issue about which he cared little."<sup>58</sup>

Once he had taken the stand, as Jenkins acknowledged, his old friends discovered that when opposing Gaitskell rather than supporting him, what had seemed like courage became stubbornness:

I inevitably felt a little more sympathy with those who had differed from him in the past! Courage could be interpreted as inflexibility and an aggressive respect for rationality as a tendency to equate little points and big ones. Yet, by and large, he appeared just as impressive as a temporary opponent as he had so long done as an ally and leader...Nor did this difference make close personal relationships with him impossible. At first I thought it would, but that was under the shock of a sudden break in a long habit of agreement. But then he made it clear that he was still faithful to his old rule of the primacy of private relations. For the last few weeks of his active life we were back on terms of closest friendship.<sup>59</sup>

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55. Williams 1979 p 712.

56. Williams 1979 p 728.

57. Williams 1979 p 728.

58. S Crosland 1983 p 111.

59. J Campbell, Roy Jenkins: A biography, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1983 p 72.

Hugh Gaitskell died of lupus erythematosus on January 18 1963. He was fifty-six years old and had lead the Labour Party for just over seven rather turbulent years. The fact that he had only been admitted to hospital on December 8 1962 made the shock of his sudden death even more profound. His biographer summed up the impact:

To those who had worked closely with Gaitskell the loss went deep, like the unexpected and premature death of a parent. For a generation of politically-minded people, most of whom had not known him personally - teachers, journalists, trade unionists, civil servants - an inspiration went out of public life which has yet to be renewed.<sup>60</sup>

Although his death had a major impact, Gaitskell's leadership of the Labour Party had not been conspicuously successful in terms of the Party itself. He had led it through a series of highly damaging and public disputes that could arguably have been avoided by a more "political" leader. Compromises like the Crossman-Padley plan on defence were rejected in favour of confrontations and a bitter personal atmosphere pervaded the Party for much of the period. However it was perhaps this feature of Gaitskell's leadership, this lack of the more "slippery" aspects of Labour leadership, that made him appeal to a broad cross section of people outside the Party. For younger members of the Party, who had supported his leadership, the loss of Gaitskell was a stunning blow.<sup>61</sup> For the organisers of the CDS the shock was both personal and political. As has been stressed, even the disagreement over the Community had not reduced the extent to which for the Campaign there was no leader but Gaitskell.

As Susan Crosland bluntly stated: "As is the custom, before Hugh Gaitskell's body was cold others were moving into positions to determine who would succeed him."<sup>62</sup>

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60. Williams 1979 p 763.

61. Bernard Donoghue, George Jones, Michael Summerskill and Nicholas Cox in interview with author all made this point forcefully.

62. Susan Crosland 1982 p 115.

There were two, [meetings to discuss the succession]<sup>63</sup> an initial one in Jack Diamond's flat, but the elaborate analysis of who we should back was at Tony Crosland's flat at Bolton Gardens...what happened there was that there was a lot of analysis of the candidates. George Brown had certain weaknesses which could be regarded very seriously. That Jim Callaghan was inexperienced and some said shallow. And that Harold Wilson won't put a foot wrong, win us the next elections but would then run the party into the ground, and nobody supported Harold, but the votes were divided between those who backed Callaghan which certainly included Tony Crosland, George Thomson and yourself [indicates Jay] and those who felt that in the end there was only one person of real calibre whatever his faults and that was George Brown and that was really the rest of us.<sup>64</sup>

Since he had fought Gaitskell in 1960, the left had only one possible candidate: Harold Wilson. There seems to have been some muted discussion of Wilson's candidature among the CDS organisers. Dick Taverne later recalled:

When [Gaitskell] was in the Middlesex I rang my brother-in-law who was a medical student in the Middlesex. I said, "I hope you're looking after my leader." He said, "Well, I hope he is going to be alright." I said, "Good God are you being serious." "Yes he is very seriously ill." And he said it's going to be touch and go whether he survives. I remember ringing up Bill [Rodgers] and saying "What the hell do we do if he dies?" We both then agreed that we weren't exactly necessarily sure that we would vote for George Brown but that we might even feel that Harold Wilson was the only alternative and in fact Tony Howard wrote an article about it because he got wind of it, saying that some of the young CDS people are even thinking about electing Harold Wilson.<sup>65</sup>

A similar story was recalled by David Marquand:

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63. New Statesman, February 1 1963, "The Making of a Premier", Anthony Howard, gives the dates as January 21 and 22 1963. Howard's articles formed the basis for Anthony Howard and Richard West, The Making of the Prime Minister, Cape, London 1965.

64. Witness Seminar Transcript, Taverne.

65. Witness Seminar Transcript, Taverne.

I have it so strongly in my mind that I think it must be true: a lunch I had with Bill in the House of Commons dining room and it was just before Gaitskell died and indeed before he was even ill. And I am almost certain that I said in the curious way you sometimes do: "Just suppose Hugh was to fall under this fatal bus, what would happen?" And Bill, I am 95% convinced, said to me: "Well of course it would have to be Harold."<sup>66</sup>

Anthony Howard actually wrote: "At least one prominent member of the right-wing CDS is on record as saying in a first shock reaction to Mr Gaitskell's illness: 'I suppose there's nothing for it - if anything happens to Hugh, it'll just have to be Harold'".<sup>67</sup> However, once the meetings were arranged and the Gaitskellites began to get over the shock of the leader's death, the more senior MPs asserted their influence. The discussions produced a split. Crosland, Thomson and Jay felt that they could not back George Brown as potential Prime Minister, but most of the group decided to back Gaitskell's deputy. Some did it with little initial enthusiasm but out of a sense of loyalty: "I met Bill immediately after, or very soon after, that key meeting and Bill said to me 'Our problem is that it seems that our campaign slogan would be: Better George drunk than Harold sober'".<sup>68</sup> The split among the CDS group was the first real division: "For the highly professional CDS, which until then had always known that it was going somewhere together, even if it was never quite sure where exactly it was, this was perhaps the first moment of palpable failure."<sup>69</sup>

The way loyalty to George Brown was manifested tended to alienate the more independently minded Gaitskellites. The tactics used by the Brown supporters were characterised by Crossman:

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66. Witness Seminar Transcript, Marquand.

67. New Statesmen, "Labour's Duel at the Top", February 8 1963, p 174.

68. Witness Seminar Transcript, Donoghue.

69. New Statesman, February 1 1963.

The Callaghan candidature was precipitated by the strong-arm methods of the Brownites, combined with the agonised awareness of some of Gaitskell's closest friends that, if Harold Wilson was an odious and impossible man, George Brown was plain impossible.<sup>70</sup>

These "strong-arm" methods included "some crude appeals... made to honour, some fairly rough threats...issued that men would lose their Shadow jobs and chance of office if they voted wrong".<sup>71</sup>

The basis of the Brown campaign was the sense that the followers of Gaitskell had a duty to follow the choice of the majority of the group. Crosland described this as "gang mentality",<sup>72</sup> but it was a natural extension of the solidarity that had made the CDS so successful; the problem was that the unifying element, Gaitskell's leadership, was now removed. The effect of Gaitskell's death and the split at the top of the Gaitskellite group over the succession had its effect at the grass roots of the Campaign. Some like George Jones expressed their disillusionment:

One felt at the bottom that "is this what it was all for?" Many people started to think that perhaps the whole point of the thing had been to get Dick and Bill and Denis and the others into Parliament. Because we knew the left was still there and Wilson was seen as our enemy.<sup>73</sup>

The resolution of the leadership issue<sup>74</sup> with Wilson's victory presented the CDS with its most serious internal crisis since its launch:

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70. Crossman 1981, entry for February 8 1963, p 969.

71. Crossman 1981, entry for February 8 1963, p 970.

72. Susan Crosland 1982 p 116.

73. Witness Seminar Transcript, Jones.

74. Callaghan was eliminated on the first ballot and Wilson beat George Brown on the second by 133 votes to 103, Butler 1986 p 143.

In keeping with what we had achieved, and in keeping with what we anticipated at that time to be the likely election date, when Hugh died early in 1963 it did make a great deal of difference. We said and we meant it, in Campaign, I remember the discussion we had about it and Philip Williams wrote the piece saying that we welcomed Harold Wilson's election and we put everything behind us and we were very anxious that we should win the election under Harold.<sup>75</sup>

The stance the Campaign took was the only really viable one. If they had come out against Wilson's leadership they would have been repudiating all the talk of loyalty that had been directed at the left. The piece which appeared in Campaign<sup>76</sup> in March 1963 is worth quoting in full because it illustrates the consistency represented by the attitude adopted to the new leader:

The Parliamentary Labour Party has elected the new leader in an open and democratic way which has enhanced the Party's standing in the country and must have aroused the secret envy of many of our opponents. Whatever our personal preferences may have been all members of CDS accept without recrimination the decision of a body in whose judgement we have always had confidence. We congratulate Harold Wilson on his election, and welcome his endorsement of Hugh Gaitskell's policies, his repudiation of neutralism and his clear statement that the next Labour Government will make its own decisions based on its own assessment of the country's needs.

No CDS supporter will quarrel with these principles or object if a different voice makes them acceptable to some sections of the Party. We are delighted that George Brown is deputy leader and that James Callaghan returns to the National Executive. And in the striking fact that all three candidates were committed by past acts or present statements to Hugh Gaitskell's policies and principles we see the best proof of the transformation his leadership wrought. He leaves behind a Party united, self-confident, fit and eager to govern.

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75. Witness Seminar Transcript, Rodgers.

76. Campaign 24, March 1963.

In private the discussions over how to deal with the new leader produced more uncertainty. In the main the MPs, especially Tony Crosland and Roy Jenkins, were unwilling to deal with Wilson. Those outside the House of Commons took rather a different view. Philip Williams wrote to Tony Crosland about his feelings about an approach to Wilson:

Of course it will be a distasteful operation...I'd be very sorry, but not too surprised if you or some others dropped out of politics now; but if you stay in you have to take the world as it is and not as we'd like it to be (as we have so often said to the left). This is not only my view but that of every CDS non-MP I've spoken to...Bernard Donoghue...and (I'm told) David Marquand.<sup>77</sup>

The danger which Williams saw was that the CDS would be isolated by being seen as an "anti-leadership group" which was "sulking in corners, rancorous at losing, interpreting everything HW does in the worst possible light and waiting for a chance to unseat him".<sup>78</sup> He continued to urge a meeting even though Rodgers was discouraging. In March he laid out the three things Rodgers should say to Wilson:

- (1) an assurance that you aren't going to oppose for the sake of opposition and that CDS wants as much as ever to win the next election; HW must be wondering how far he can afford to go in alienating the left and whether his old enemies will support him against any new ones he makes; if your answer is yes you strengthen the likelihood he will move right.
- (2) a warning that there would be some policies you might feel obliged to oppose? If you are going to have a tough talk with GB, why not also HW?
- (3) if you do see him as a group, haven't you more chance of impressing him with a solidarity of which he may at the moment be somewhat sceptical and therefore of strengthening your hand with him?<sup>79</sup>

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77. Susan Crosland 1982 p 117.

78. CDS Papers: Philip Williams (Nuffield), Williams to Rodgers, February 28 1963.

79. CDS Papers: Philip Williams (Nuffield), Williams to Rodgers, March 2 1963.



Frank Pickstock shared Williams' view that an approach to Wilson would be beneficial. He advocated a meeting similar in style to the meeting between CDS supporters and Gaitskell which had taken place after Gaitskell's Common Market speech. He felt that "Whether Harold would agree and whether it would achieve our purpose of establishing a relationship...is another matter".<sup>80</sup> Rodgers, in his replies to Pickstock and Williams, made clear that Jenkins and Crosland were not prepared to make an approach. He favoured a social invitation from Jenkins to Wilson but "Roy was...quite unprepared to do this and even adamant about not attending any such meeting which had been contrived".<sup>81</sup> To Pickstock he pointed out that "in the case of Hugh there was a fundamental relationship of confidence" but with Wilson "it is quite a different matter."<sup>82</sup> That the CDS made no approach towards Wilson was made rather irrelevant when Wilson called for the winding up of all internal groups. In response Victory for Socialism dropped hints that it would wind up if CDS agreed to do so.<sup>83</sup> Rodgers speculated that this could go as far as a further enquiry by the NEC. In the event an informal meeting took place between Ray Gunter, the National Agent, and Frank Pickstock and Denis Howell. A note prepared prior to the meeting outlined the line Pickstock intended to take. The objective was to stress the extent to which the CDS was dedicated to Party unity and would work with the leadership, to leave Ray Gunter with the final impression that "Our price is Tribune" and "We want HW's views from HW himself".<sup>84</sup> In the event CDS did not close but it did gradually scale down its level of activity.

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80. CDS Papers: Correspondence with F.V. Pickstock, Pickstock to Rodgers, March 10 1963.

81. CDS Papers: Philip Williams (Nuffield), Rodgers to Williams, March 5 1963.

82. CDS Papers: Correspondence with F.V.Pickstock, Rodgers to Pickstock, March 13 1963.

83. CDS Papers: Correspondence with F.V.Pickstock, Rodgers to Pickstock, April 10 1963.

84. CDS Papers: Editorial Committee, Undated notes for meeting.

Wilson's attitude to CDS was conditioned by the impression that had been created by both sides in the defence debate that the Campaign had been even better organised than it really was. This combined with the place of Rodgers and others in supporting George Brown made them suspect in Wilson's eyes. This suspicion led to the early blocking of CDS MPs in the new Wilson leadership. Dick Taverne was the subject of such suspicion as the following exchange between Crossman and Wilson illustrates:

"But shouldn't you train up one of these bright new men to be your P.P.S.?" I asked. "Which one?" Harold said, looking at me sharply. I thought rather desperately and said, "Dick Taverne is voting for you in the second ballot." "But what reason have I to think he is trustworthy?" Harold said sharply. "Oh, no reason at all, but what reasons have you to think him untrustworthy?" "I don't give people jobs if I don't know whether they are trustworthy," he said.

Wilson's distrust of those who had been involved in CDS was not dissipated over the years. In 1969 after the death of Stephen Swingle the Minister of State at the D.H.S.S., Wilson and Crossman discussed who should succeed him.

When I was asked whom I wanted I said, "Roy Hattersley, of course". Harold said, "You can't have him, partly because Barbara can't do without him and partly because he is disloyal and belongs to the wrong side. I must have the political balance kept. We must have another left-winger, and Reg Freeson is on the left." "Well", I said, "I must consider competence and Roy Hattersley and Dick Taverne, both of whom I know are CDS, are the only two." Harold said "Oh, do be serious, that's impossible..."<sup>85</sup>

Further discussion ensued and Crossman still did not want Freeson. The second discussion produced a remarkable exchange between Wilson and Crossman:

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85. Richard Crossman The Crossman Diaries, Selections from the Diaries of a Cabinet Minister 1964-1970, Book Club Associates, London 1979 p 511. Entry for Wednesday February 19 1969.

He had further reports. Roy Hattersley had made three disloyal remarks recently and we couldn't promote him. What about other people? "Well", I said, "do a few remarks matter?" We cast around and I suggested Dick Taverne. He said "Have you lost all your political antennae that you fail to remember what our loyalties are? Dick Taverne, he is a silken, treacherous member of the CDS group, he is most unpopular in the Parliamentary Party. If you have him it will be a betrayal of all we stand for. I am amazed at your forgetting." I said, "It's not I who have forgotten, Harold. I think these young men have forgotten their past. I know Roy Hattersley is no more loyal to Roy Jenkins than he is to you. He is just an able young man on the way up and I think Dick Taverne has rather more loyalty and decency about him. He is a loyal Jenkins supporter but he is not going to be disloyal to you in his job for me." Then Harold said, "It's out of the question." "Look", I said, "can I perhaps move David Ennals from Health?" "Yes", said Harold, "you can, and put somebody else into the Health side in his place. What about Shirley Williams?" I said, "Shirley Williams is much more CDS than Roy Hattersley or Dick Taverne." "But she is a woman, it would suit you. Shirley Williams, that's a good idea." I don't know what to think.<sup>86</sup>

Other members of CDS were luckier than Dick Taverne and Bernard Donoughue in particular managed to escape his past in Harold Wilson's eyes.<sup>87</sup> However the general atmosphere of the Party was no longer particularly conducive to the activity of the Campaign. As has been shown in the previous Chapter, 1963 was a year of continued activity by the Campaign but with a number of important changes in the organisational framework. In part these changes were needed to maintain the facade of a grass roots organisation and partly because the election of Wilson had raised questions about the future role of the Campaign. Another factor was Rodgers consideration of his own position. In April 1963 he wrote to Williams revealing that:

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86. Crossman 1979 p 513, entry for February 20 1969.

87. Donoughue was initially employed by Wilson to monitor opinion polls before being appointed a Senior Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister. See Bernard Donoughue, Prime Minister, Cape, London 1987 p 1 and p 78.

During the week following Harold's election and after Patrick's [Gordon Walker] apparent defection, I came to the decision that I wished to give up running CDS. I feel that I am doing too much and would also like to give more time to the House. In addition, as you will fully appreciate, there are many family reasons for trying to get financial stability. It is not, I should say, that CDS takes much time - or that I can be relieved of anything that I do - but it is a responsibility which I must constantly bear in mind and makes demands out of all proportion to the time it takes.

I mentioned this conclusion to Tony and John Diamond as I was discussing the future with them generally. They pressed me to delay a final decision for a fortnight, which in any case I intended to do because I wished to discuss the whole matter with you first. As it turned out I felt after a week's reflection that I could not really give up CDS now when it was bound to be misunderstood and when there had to be at least one fixed point in a rapidly changing situation.<sup>88</sup>

Although Rodgers and Howell remained active in the CDS, especially in the selection of Parliamentary candidates, a restructuring that took into account the changed circumstances became inevitable. The critical meeting took place in April 1963. The MPs Rodgers, Howell and Taverne were replaced as the officers of the Campaign by non-MPs, Bernard Donoghue and Anthony Dumont.<sup>89</sup> Another consideration which became clear at the time of the Common Market debate was the problem that the MPs faced as officers of a pressure group if it opposed the policy of the leader. Williams made this point to Rodgers: "It seems to me we ought to say that we claim the same rights as other minorities to express our views but have no intention of using differences over major policy as cover

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88. CDS Papers: Correspondence with F.V. Pickstock, Rodgers to Pickstock, April 1 1963.

89. Seyd 1968 p 218. Seyd states that: "A joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Campaign Council in March 1963 voiced its disapproval of the dominance of MPs amongst the Officers, the Executive Committee and the Campaign Council." Given Rodgers' views expressed in his letter to Pickstock and the general recognition of the need for a change, the relative importance of the "disapproval" should be noted, in fact, the MPs seem to have shared the general view rather than there being a split.

for undermining the leadership. This will no doubt be a lot harder for you who are in the House when the legislation comes up."<sup>90</sup> Rodgers continued to run the Campaign but his public position was that of editor of Campaign.<sup>91</sup> In a sense this change in formal representation marked the end of the CDS as originally conceived. This was reflected in June when Rodgers wrote to Pickstock outlining his intention to "dictate a fairly full account of CDS from its beginnings...we all have a duty to posterity - if that doesn't sound too pompous - to make sure that the story of the CDS is sufficiently complete for future historians to draw up".<sup>92</sup>

The feeling at the end of 1963, following the Profumo scandal and the generally difficult year for the Government, was that the election would come in early 1964. Crossman recorded in his diary his feeling that the Government would "find it better to go to the country quickly in March or April rather than taking the risk of waiting until July or August".<sup>93</sup> The Campaign was certainly expecting this and the committee planned to close down the office at Red Lion Street in June 1964.<sup>94</sup> The telephone was disconnected and Oliver Walston was responsible for collecting any remaining messages for the Campaign. There was considerable difficulty getting rid of the office and this was not finally done until the middle of 1965.<sup>95</sup> After the General Election took place

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90. CDS Papers: Common Market Correspondence, Williams to Rodgers, October 8 1962.

91. Seyd 1968 p 218.

92. CDS Papers: Correspondence with F V Pickstock, Rodgers to Pickstock, June 28 1963. The Campaign did not have to wait long for attention from historians. In October 1963 Stephen Haseler wrote to Rodgers requesting access to the CDS files for a proposed thesis on the Labour Party in the 1959-1964 period. After consulting Philip Williams, Tony Crosland and Denis Howell Rodgers reluctantly declined Haseler's request. Editorial Committee, Haseler to Rodgers, undated, Rodgers to Haseler, November 6 1963.

93. Crossman 1981, entry for December 19 1963, p 1044.

94. CDS Papers: Envelope CDS '63 '64 '65, Untitled notification of running down the Red Lion Street Office.

95. CDS Papers: Envelope CDS '63 '64' '65, Untitled notification of running down the Red Lion Street Office and various correspondence between Rodgers and Dumont concerning disposal of the property at Red Lion Street.

in October an announcement was sent to the press that the CDS had wound up and this was followed by a formal letter to CDS supporters:

You may have seen the announcement that the Campaign for Democratic Socialism has now closed down. We could not let the occasion pass, however, without writing a final letter to all our supporters.

It is just four years since the publication of our Manifesto and its immediate success led to the founding of CDS. We first wrote to many of our supporters from the address - Frank Pickstock's - that we are writing from now: our office at Red Lion Street has already been closed. A great deal has happened during these years.

At the time when CDS was launched it looked doubtful whether the Labour Party would ever win power again. The party was deeply divided and seemed unable to find a sense of direction. There was strong resistance to modernisation and a militant minority appeared to be gaining control. It was the task of CDS to help to rally the rank-and-file in the constituencies and trade unions and create the climate of opinion in which a General Election could be won.

Now, sooner than we dared hope, Labour is the government of the country with the biggest swing to any party since 1945. First under the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell and latterly under Harold Wilson, Labour regained its momentum as a party fit to govern. Unity has been achieved and in Parliament and in the country we are setting out to ensure a long and memorable period of office.

We would like to thank you for your support over the years. In particular through Campaign we have tried to meet your needs and to keep in touch with rank-and-file opinion throughout the country. Although CDS is closing down, many friendships forged in difficult times will survive. We should have preferred to write a personal letter to many hundreds amongst our supporters with whom we have had the closest contact but you will understand the difficulty of this. We shall always be glad to hear from you.

Yours sincerely

Frank Pickstock (Chairman)  
Bernard Donoghue (Secretary)  
Anthony Dumont (Treasurer)<sup>96</sup>

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96. CDS Papers: Enevelope '63 '64 '65, Pickstock et al to Colleague, December 1965, after the inevitable redrafting by Philip Williams on a draft of November 25 1964.

## Appendix

Table 6.1: The views of CDS MPs on the Common Market.

Pro-Market	Anti-Market	Undecided
W. Ainsley	G Barnett	J Boydon
A Albu	W Blyton	J Callaghan
C Bence	T Dalyell	P Wells
G Chetwyn	H Gaitskell	J Cronin
T Bradley	P Gordon Walker	W Hannan
J Bray	D Healey	H Hayman
W Hannan	D Jay	J H Hoy
D Chapman	H Hughes	T Crosland
J McCann		R Prentice
G de Fretis		G Rogers
J Diamond		
D Donnelly		
A Fitch		
E Fletcher		
D Foot		
M Lloyd-George		
D Ginsburg		
C Grey		
D Howell		
S Irving		
G Jeger		
R Jenkins		
H King		
E L Mallalieu		
R Mason		
F Mulley		
R Paget		
G Reynolds		
G Strauss		
D Taverne		
G Thomson		

## Conclusion

The two central concerns of the CDS were the long term objective of modernising the Labour Party so that it could win power, and the short term objective of reversing the 1960 defence votes at Blackpool in 1961 to save the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell. Both had their roots in the battles of the 1950s. The experiences of the Parliamentary supporters of Gaitskell in the 1950s led them to form an initial, tentative, revisionist organisation.<sup>1</sup> This could not continue once Gaitskell was elected leader. In contrast the rank and file did not feel the need to organise to the same extent, because the leadership controlled the Party through the block vote system<sup>2</sup> at Party Conferences and through the exercise of democratic centralism.<sup>3</sup> This situation altered in the late 1950s and early 1960s when the leadership lost control of the block vote.<sup>4</sup> The Party was then brought to a crisis by the reaction to Gaitskell's unsuccessful

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1. See below pp 65-66.

2. Minkin 1978 pp 3-33 and below p 23.

3. Shaw 1988 pp 31-51.

4. Minkin 1978 p 273 and below pp 84-97.



attempt to reform Clause Four of the Party constitution. The failure of the Parliamentary supporters of Gaitskell to come to his aid during this crisis inspired some rank and file members of the Party to organise in support of the policies Gaitskell was advocating - to become the organisational expression of revisionist ideology. They found an instant response from the leading revisionist MPs and, together, a group of non-Parliamentary and Parliamentary revisionists planned the launch of a new pressure group.<sup>5</sup> The objective of this group was the modernisation of the Labour Party. Rodgers described this process:

A small group of friends, all long standing members of the Labour Party met to consider what they could do to reverse what they saw to be a steady slide to disaster. They believed that they were more representative of majority opinion within the Party than the shrill voices sometimes raised in its name. They saw that winning power and getting into government was the only ultimate justification for a political party worthy of the name. They were concerned that the fundamentalist principles of the Party could be given a modern setting which would make it attractive to the electorate.<sup>6</sup>

Initially it was the objective of modernising the Party which predominated. Despite the reservations many revisionists felt about Gaitskell's tactics on Clause Four, they all believed that the underlying objective was right. The other element in the initial formulation of the CDS was that its activity was not contingent on loyalty to Gaitskell's leadership. In their initial long term objectives the CDS was unsuccessful.

It was unsuccessful because the defence issue, which overtook the Campaign, was intrinsically tied to the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell. The events at Scarborough

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5. See above pp 105-117.

6. CDS Papers: Envelope CDS '63 '64 '65, Draft article for final post-election edition of Campaign by Rodgers, undated.

in 1960 transformed Gaitskell's position. His speech made the dominant issue loyalty to the Party and by extension, unity.<sup>7</sup> In order to support the leader over defence the CDS became wedded to ideas of loyalty and unity which meant that as a campaign for the revision of Labour's basic ideological orientation it had limited room for manoeuvre if the leader should disagree with the Campaign's definition of the modernising ideology or if the leadership was lost. The dichotomy between loyalty to a body of ideas - revisionism - and loyalty to a leader who supported those ideas ultimately spelled the end of the Campaign. First the leader disagreed with a majority of the CDS over the European Community and then, with the Campaign having survived the disagreement for want of an alternative leader, Hugh Gaitskell died. In the final analysis loyalty to the leader was a necessary condition for a campaign dedicated, as Gerry Macquade thought the CDS should have been, to the support of Hugh Gaitskell, but it was not a necessary feature of a campaign dedicated to a body of ideas. However the loyalty fixation of the CDS extended beyond just the leadership. The objective was to have a Labour Government, preferably one which would follow revisionist lines in policy, but, so long as the defence policy was sound, virtually any form of Labour Government would do. Once this was achieved in 1964 there was little reason for the Campaign to continue.

If the government did not follow the policies they believed in, the leading figures in the CDS were not, unlike their counterparts on the left, prepared to languish on the backbenches preaching the one true faith. Moreover, Roy Jenkins emerged during the Wilson Government as the leading revisionist and Jenkins did not have a killer instinct. As he acknowledged in his autobiography, "[I] lacked at least one of the essential

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7. See above p 94-95.

ingredients of a capacity to seize power. I may have avoided doing too much stooping, but I also missed conquering."<sup>8</sup>

The essence of revisionism was that the Labour Party needed power to put its principles into practice. It needed to win - and the best way of winning was to modernise the Labour Party - but what this meant in practice was pragmatism. The best way to exercise influence was from inside government. While the leading revisionists were in government they had by implication to accept the dictates of power, which were based on loyalty to the leadership. They could not therefore continue to fight a factional battle for the policy orientation they favoured, and the initiative slipped back to the left in the constituency parties. The battles which were eventually fought, and the organisations which continued to operate<sup>9</sup> concerned the issue of British entry into European Community. That this replaced multilateralism as the central issue of principle for the revisionist right made the outcome of renewed factional organisation in the mid-1970s more problematic for their future in the Party because Europe in the 1970s was not an issue that they were ever likely to prevail on in the Labour Party, in contrast opposing unilateralism in 1960 was something that could be, and was, won. In both cases the underlying issue was a patriotic attachment to Britain's world role. In the case of unilateralism the CDS was supporting the contention of Nye Bevan, at the 1957 Conference, that unilateralism would involve the breaking of international agreements without consultation and would thereby sabotage Britain's role in the world. In the case of the Community, a key argument of the anti-marketeters, and of Gaitskell himself, was that joining the Community would undermine the Commonwealth

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8. Roy Jenkins, A Life at the Centre, Macmillan, London 1991, p 622.

9. Like the Labour Committee for Europe.

and reduce Britain's capacity to act as a world power. In both cases the stance that was seen as supporting a world role ultimately won in the Labour Party.

The Government which Harold Wilson formed in October 1964 was a masterly balancing of interests. Inheriting a shadow cabinet still dominated by former supporters of Gaitskell, Wilson had only limited room for manoeuvre, but used it effectively. Within the Cabinet Wilson was faced by Callaghan<sup>10</sup> and Brown,<sup>11</sup> his two opponents in the leadership contest and numbers two and three in the Government. The leading revisionist MPs also found places in the Government: Tony Crosland<sup>12</sup> went to the DEA as George Brown's number 2; Roy Jenkins<sup>13</sup> went to the Ministry of Aviation; Douglas Jay<sup>14</sup> went to the Board of Trade, Patrick Gordon Walker<sup>15</sup> went to the Foreign Office, Jack Diamond became Chief Secretary and Herbert Bowden was made Lord President. Further down the ministerial batting order, the CDS continued to be represented: Bill Rodgers and Maurice Foley were Under-Secretaries at the DEA; Niall Macdermott was Financial Secretary to the Treasury; Denis Howell was Under-Secretary at Education and Science and Chris Mayhew became Minister for the Navy. Later, Dick Taverne, Austen Albu, Edmund Dell, Jim Boyden and Roy Hattersley all found places in the administration. While this did not preclude factional activity, it did minimise the danger of such action.

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10. Callaghan was Chancellor from October 16 1964 to November 30 1967 and Home Secretary from then until the election in 1970.

11. Brown was First Secretary at the DEA from October 16 1964 to August 11 1966 and Foreign Secretary until March 6 1968 when he resigned.

12. Crosland was Minister of State at the DEA October 20 1964 to January 27 1965 and then Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Local Government and Regional Planning.

13. Jenkins went from Aviation to the Home Office in December 1965 and then became Chancellor in November 1967.

14. Jay stayed at the Board of Trade until August 1967 when he was sacked for his position on the Community.

15. Gordon Walker lost his seat in 1964 but Wilson appointed him Foreign Secretary anyway. He could not sustain this position after losing the Leyton by-election. He was eventually returned in 1966 and was Minister without Portfolio.

Even before George Brown's emotional resignation from the Government the leadership of the scattered CDS group had moved to Roy Jenkins.<sup>16</sup> From the late 1960s onwards the future of the revisionists, who increasingly styled themselves as social democrats, became wedded to the European issue.

The experience of the Wilson Government and the left-wing backlash which followed it<sup>17</sup> in the early 1970s, left the already scattered CDS rather stranded. In some ways the early 1970s were a re-run of the 1950s, except that the "floor" of Conference achieved many more victories over the "platform". In response to the political polarisation of much of the membership there were calls to revive right-wing organisation. However, when Dick Taverne faced his de-selection, after defying the whip to vote for British entry to the EEC,<sup>18</sup> many of the old campaigners held back from openly helping the Democratic Labour Party which Taverne launched to fight and win the resulting by-election.<sup>19</sup> For others the record of the Wilson Government needed to be defended and the Community was not the central issue. For these revisionists the future could still lie with the Labour Party.<sup>20</sup> From the time of the vote for entry to the Community on October 28 1971, when 69 Labour MPs voted with the Heath Government, the paths between those whose primary cause had become the Community and those who shared Gaitskell's exasperation with the subject, increasingly diverged.

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16. George Brown gave his reasons for resigning as the "Presidential" style of government introduced by Harold Wilson. George Brown In My Way Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972 p 161.

17. Minkin 1978 p 336.

18. Taverne 1974 p 64.

19. Ramsden and Jay, in Cook and Ramsden, 1973 p 279 state that Roy Jenkins tried in vain to persuade Taverne not to force a by-election, but many were well disposed. Bill Rodgers' wife went to Lincoln to help Taverne, but Rodgers himself felt the move was premature. Rodgers interview with author.

20. This position was exemplified by Tony Crosland and his book Socialism Now, Cape, London 1974.

The Labour Party was perhaps saved from immediate division by the unexpected electoral victory of 1974.<sup>21</sup> Once again Wilson had to blend the warring factions into a Government and the leading social democrats continued their ministerial careers. In marked contrast to the 1964-1970 Government when only the Labour Committee for Europe had been active, the 1974-1979 Governments saw the formation of the Manifesto Group of MPs in 1974, the grass roots Social Democratic Alliance, run by the former chairman of the CDS student wing Stephen Haseler, in 1975, and finally Bill Rodgers back in the chair of a right-wing pressure group in the Campaign for Labour Victory in 1977.<sup>22</sup>

The crisis on the right of the Party, already compounded by Jenkins' resignation from the deputy leadership in 1972, was made worse by his resignation from the Government. Having been offered the job of President of the European Commission in January 1976 he had held on to fight for the Party leadership before eventually going to Brussels in 1977.<sup>23</sup> Tony Crosland, although he had split with many of his old colleagues over the European issue, was still seen as a potential leader. His tragically early death in 1977 again left the social democrats leaderless. The 1979 defeat of the Callaghan Government precipitated a further leftward swing in the Labour Party, particularly in the make-up of the Parliamentary Labour Party. An indication of this change was the fact that not a single MP of the 1979 intake joined the right-wing Manifesto Group in the House of Commons. Despite the efforts of the Campaign for Labour Victory, there was no "unilateralist" issue to fight on, and no leader to give unqualified support to. There was no logic

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21. Williams and Williams, Labour's Decline and the Social Democrats Fall, Macmillan 1989 p 104.

22. This activity was in part a reaction to the organisation of the left of the Labour Party. A full account of this grass roots organisation is contained in Patrick Seyd, The Rise and Fall of the Labour Left, Macmillan Education, London 1987.

23. Roy Jenkins, European Diary 1977-1981, Collins, London pp 2-6.

to the events of the early 1980s that would have brought the remnants of the CDS group back into a powerful position in the Labour Party. Perhaps the last hope was the election of Denis Healey as leader. With the choice of Michael Foot as leader, most of the old CDS organisers still active in British politics finally gave up the battle for the Labour Party and left to establish the SDP.

The idea that there was a consistent development from the factionalism of the CDS to the succession of the SDP is mistaken.<sup>24</sup> Not only were the political circumstances radically different by 1981, the nature of the CDS and the context in which it campaigned was also profoundly changed. The CDS was an emotional bond between some of those who set up the SDP and it was a precedent for action when the CLV was established. But the CDS was an overtly loyalist Labour Party organisation and it operated by motivating those elements in the Labour Party who naturally favoured unity behind the elected leader.<sup>25</sup>

The extent of the Campaign's failure to maintain this motivation and have a permanent impact on the Party was finally illustrated by the division of 1981. This failure was tied into the nature of support for the Campaign. The support which the 1960 Manifesto tapped into was substantial but it was also conditional. It was conditional on the particular circumstances of the early 1960s and the threat these circumstances posed to the future prospects of the Labour Party for those active in the Labour Party. For many it was also conditional on the

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24. Williams and Williams 1989 sets out to give this impression.

25. Although things might have been very different if Gaitskell had been defeated on the defence issue in 1961 and forced to resign the leadership. Some of the Gaitskellites contemplated leaving politics if Gaitskell were defeated, see above pp 105-108. It is unlikely that a major realignment of the centre-left would have taken place in 1961, but many would have questioned their futures in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Without this core of revisionist MPs it is arguable that the swing to the left of the 1960s and 1970s would have been faster and gone further. This exercise in counter-factual history is unprovable, but the existence of a solid group of moderate MPs in the House of Commons in the 1960s and 1970s significantly slowed the rise of the left.

leadership of Hugh Gaitskell. In contrast the circumstances of 1981 found a majority of activists inside the Labour Party supportive of the policies that the social democrats found most disagreeable - withdrawal from the Community, unilateralism and reform of the Party constitution to elect the leader by an electoral college. The constituency that the the social democrats needed to rally in 1981 was largely outside the Labour Party.

What then did the CDS achieve? The positive promotion of candidates for Parliamentary selections influenced the shape of the PLP in the Wilson years. The CDS was one of a number of factors that helped in the adoption of these MPs, not least being the candidates' own abilities, but the CDS was an important factor in a number of key selections, especially in the by-elections held between 1961 and 1964.<sup>26</sup> This organising had a knock-on effect in the 1966 General Election, although the CDS had closed down by this time and the politics of the Labour Party had been altered by the constraints of power. Moreover, with the swing to the left of the trade unions, like the TGWU in the 1950s, and the activity of CND and VFS, the CDS effectively put the alternative case and organised against the increasing dominance of Labour Constituency Parties by the left. Once the CDS had stopped organising the way was open for the left to organise unopposed at grass-roots level, which in turn came to alter the structure of the Party at national level.

What was supposed to be the secondary consideration of the Campaign effectively became its most significant contribution. This contribution was such that the CDS rallied the rank and file, which, in combination with the Policy for Peace and the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell, materially affected the outcome of the defence votes at Blackpool in 1961<sup>27</sup> and saved Gaitskell's leadership. By

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26. See above pp 234-235.

27. See Chapter 4.



challenging the left-wing monopoly in the constituencies and taking the fight to the trade unions, it succeeded in motivating the rank and file supporters of Gaitskell's leadership and of his defence policy. It achieved this in a remarkably short-time and with considerable professionalism. As an extension of the network established to lobby on defence, the CDS was also successful in operating as a clearing house for prospective Parliamentary candidates. In fact its campaigning in these two fields was actually more successful than the equivalent Bevanite activity of the 1950s or the CND campaign in the 1960s. As Bill Rodgers summed it up:

There was a great deal of hard-work, many risks taken, harsh words written and spoken, abuse and misrepresentation to put up with. It was often exhausting and sometimes hurtful. But the object was always clear - to see the Labour Party, acting in its democratic socialist tradition, modernised and united, back again as the Government of Britain.<sup>28</sup>

The reputation of this short lived organisation lived on into the 1970s, at least among its opponents. Harold Wilson was recorded by Tony Benn in his diary for July 1971 making the following boast:

I don't know, I may just give up the Party leadership, they can stuff it as far as I am concerned. I pay out of my own pocket £15,000 a year to be Party leader. I finance my own office. I have got an overdraft with my bank. All the money from my memoirs has gone. I don't know why I go on. But I'll smash CDS (the Campaign for Democratic Socialism) before I go.<sup>29</sup>

High praise seven years after the CDS had liquidated itself.

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28. CDS Papers: Envelope marked CDS 1963, 1964, 1965, Draft article for final post-election edition of Campaign by Rodgers, undated.

29. Benn 1988, entry for Tuesday July 20 1971, p 359.

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Michael Summerskill  
Patrick Seyd  
Lord Windlesham

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Alec Grant  
Jim Boydon  
Jeremy Bray MP  
Lord Diamond  
Roy Hattersley MP  
Dick Leonard  
Lord Mellish  
Lord Jay  
Alan Thomson  
Ronald Waterhouse

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Ivan Alexander

Gordon Borrie  
Tyrell Burgess  
Conrad Dehn  
David Donnison  
Bruce Douglas Mann  
Ben Hooberman  
Keith Kyle  
David Lane  
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