Chapter 2

THE LABOUR PARTY AND EUROPEAN UNITY, 1950-64

1. Labour party releases 'European Unity', its official policy statement on the Unification of Europe - 'European Unity' rejects federal idea and Schuman plan. Reaction to the 'European Unity' - from within the party and the European Socialists.

2. The 'Pleven Plan' - tensions within the Labour Party on German Rearmament - the 'Attlee conditions' - Labour votes with the conservatives on the Paris Agreements.

3. Britain's application for the EEC membership - Labour's initial lack of policy on the issue - Labour's Five Conditions' - Gaitskell's Brighton speech amounts to opposition to Britain's entry into the EEC - division with the party on the issue: pro-marketeers and anti-marketeers.

4. The 'five conditions' examined - entry into the EEC on the basis of 'five conditions' difficult.
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UNITY, 1950-1964

The earlier discussion has been an analytical account of the post-war efforts to unify Europe and the successive British Governments' - Labour and Conservative, response to such efforts. What follows now is an examination of how the British Labour Party, its rank and file, responded to the European movement. In doing so, proper care would be taken to present the divergence of opinion and differing approaches to a given European issue within the party.

About a month after Robert Schuman, the French Foreign Affairs Minister embarked upon his grand design to integrate in a common pool the coal and steel of Europe, the Labour Party issued on 11 June 1950, an official policy statement. The statement entitled "European Unity" was the first clear statement of the Labour Party on the issue of European unification. It made a frontal attack on the idea of European unification in general and the Schuman Plan in particular,

The Labour Party's attitude towards problems of European Unity, as towards all other problems of domestic or foreign policy, is determined by the principles of democratic socialism and by the interests of the Britain's people as members of the Commonwealth and of the world community.1

The document reflected the typical Labourite fears of a 'capitalist' and 'Catholic' composition of West European leadership. It felt that since the European organizations such as the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe were having few socialists, any attempt to endow an organization with supranational functions would be unrepresentative of European peoples. Hence the document in a fiery language declared:

No Socialist Party with the prospect of forming a government could accept a system by which important fields of national policy were surrendered to a supranational European representative authority, since such an authority would have a permanent anti-socialist majority and would arouse the hostility of European workers.²

Transferring 'important fields of industrial policy' (Coal and Steel) into the hands of a 'Supranational European representative authority (High Authority of the coal and steel community)' would only enhance the force of free enterprise. Private industrialists:

will try to re-organise restrictive cartels as in the past. They will seek to pervert the Schuman proposals for their own selfish and monopolistic ends. A co-ordinated perversion of the type would be far worse than our present uncoordinated competition.³

Europe, the party contended, was faced with twin dangers: 'Russian imperialism' and the 'dollar gap'.

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2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 12.
And the immediate task of European unity, whatever be its ultimate purposes, should be to eliminate these two dangers. But what form of European unity the Labour Party wants:

The Labour Party considers that it is neither possible nor desirable under existing circumstances to form a complete union, political or economic, in this way (i.e., supranational way). Instead national policies must be progressively harmonised or co-ordinated by consent through co-operation between governments. Whether or not this process will ultimately lead to a complete union cannot be foreseen. But it will be enough to solve the urgent problems of the immediate future.4

Then the party repeatedly reminded the Labour's attachment to the Commonwealth, rather passionately:

In every respect except distance we in Britain are closer to our Kinsmen in Australia and New Zealand on the far side of the world, than we are to Europe. We are closer in language and in origins, in social habits and institutions, in political outlook and in economic interest. The economics of the commonwealth countries are complementary to that of Britain to a degree which those of Western Europe could never equal.5

The gist of Labour's document is that it did not want to treat European Unity as a matter of principle or of a permanent value. Whatever be the form of European Unity, uncharacterized by supranational element and political or

4. Ibid., p. 6.
5. Ibid., p. 4.
economic union, the Labour Party wanted it more to meet urgent problems, the Russian threat and the dollar shortage. Except this the party refused to view European Unity as a long term policy goal. On the other hand, the document was more vocal in emphasizing Britain's role as the centre of Commonwealth and the latter's importance to it. The document was also an unequivocal statement of Labour Party's preference for plural inter-governmental agencies to find solutions to European problems. Underlying the document was the Party's adherence to the formula of 'three-legged policy' in foreign affairs, with Europe ranking the last.

The reaction to European Unity was quite sharp from many corners. The continental socialists saw their British counterpart as deviating from the earlier understanding between the Socialist parties on European unity. Thus at the International Socialist Conference held at London in June 1950, about a week after the "European Unity", the Labour Party came under attack from the Belgian, Dutch, French and the Italian socialist leaders. Guy Mollet, Secretary of the French Socialist Party pointed out that the Labour's statement amounted to the rejection of the resolution passed unanimously at the International Socialist Conference held in Paris in April 1948. The 1948 Socialist resolution on "European Unity" read:
The delegates of the European Socialist Parties represented here declared that the social, economic, political, cultural purposes of workers of their respective countries can best be achieved in peace within the framework of a United States of Europe, considered as a step towards world unity.

Guy Mollet further said that the Labour Party should not depart from such an accepted policy without consulting other socialist parties.

The Labour Party might have consented to the above Socialist resolution perhaps to avoid isolating itself from the other European socialist parties which were enthusiastic about "European Unity". But such consent was hardly a commitment. Joseph Retinger, the Polish Resistance leader records in his memoirs that at the Socialist International in March 1949, at Surrey Guy Mollet proposed that the European socialist parties should start a big campaign before the Hague Congress. The campaign should aim at mobilizing socialist opinion and giving socialist direction to the European movement. Mollet's proposal was defeated by the Labour Party which asked for another meeting of socialist parties "to deter-

6. Mackey Papers: These papers are the collection of the diaries, personal notes, official documents, etc. of R.W.G. Mackay, a Labour MP. They are deposited at the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.

7. Ibid.
mine policy and coordinate efforts towards a United States of Europe.\footnote{8}

At the International Socialist Conference at Paris, there was no positive change in Labour's attitude, or rather it toughened on "European Unity". While the French socialist leader Leon Blum pressed the Labour Party to attend the Hague Congress, the Labour delegates, in Retinger's words, "not only maintained their (lukewarm) attitude, but tried to dissuade others from going. In this they did not succeed and the other socialist parties sent important and numerous delegates to the Hague."\footnote{9}

Against this background Labour's consent to the 1948 Socialist resolution on "European Unity" was only formal and lacking conviction.

An important political consideration in Labour's refusal to attend the historic Hague Congress was that the Opposition Party was strongly supporting it and that the Leader of Opposition, Churchill would dominate the Hague. Retinger recalls that in his two-hour conversation with Ernst Bevin preceding the Hague Congress he tried to persuade the Labour Foreign Secretary to send his party to the Congress. Retinger continues:


\footnote{9} Ibid., p. 219.
...the only argument he (Bevin) put forward against joining the Movement was the fact that Churchill was its official leader in Great Britain. Churchill was a political opponent, and the Labour Party could not support its political opponent. Mr. Bevin said, among other things, that naturally the personality of Winston would dominate the Hague Congress, and when I suggested that Sir Stafford Cripps should take part (as he was willing to do) in order to counteract Churchill's personal influence, Bevin pooh-poohed the idea. I then suggested that he himself should go to the Hague, but he confessed frankly that he was not of sufficient stature in Europe to be a counter-balance to the immense popularity of Winston Churchill.10

Considerations of domestic party politics, thus made the Labour Party to take a partisan view of the European Unity movement.

At the London Conference of Socialists the French were willing to concede that the control of coal and steel should be in the hands of an intergovernmental authority in the first place, so long as it was accepted that a supranational authority was the ultimate aim. The British Labour Party was, however, unwilling to go to that extent. Agreement could not be reached on the ultimate objectives of the Schuman plan.11

The Labour's "European Unity", whose publication coincided with Attlee's statement on the Schuman Plan

10. Ibid., p. 220.
in the House of Commons certainly put the Labour Prime Minister in a very embarrassing position. Pressed by the Opposition Leader Churchill as to whether the Prime Minister had any earlier knowledge of the publication of the document, Attlee said that he did not know the date of its publication. But the Prime Minister did admit that the timing of the publication was 'unfortunate'. Attlee also drew a clear distinction between the Government's policy and his party's policy. Answering Churchill, he said that the "Labour Party's document is not, of course, a statement of Government policy in this matter." 12 Attlee also "denied heatedly (in the house) that ideology had anything to do with Britain's relations with Europe ..." 13

A statement of this sort, viewed from a different angle, would also imply that the ideological commitment of his party to a 'socialist foreign policy' would have nothing to do with the Labour Government's foreign policy based on traditionalism.

Within the Labour Party there was a general approval of the "European Unity." If there was any opposition to it, it was from the committed "Europeans" like Dingle Foot.

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and R.W.G. Mackay. In fact the latter made a blistering attack on "European Unity" through his book "Heads in the Sand". 14 Making a point by point critical analysis of the statement, Mackay, a committed federalist, questioned the fundamental premises on which the "European Unity" was argued.

Calling the document as 'blunt and almost blimpish' Mackay questioned its claim that Britain made 'extraordinary success' in solving her own problems by attaining full employment and public ownership of major industries. On the other hand, "full employment in Britain is as much due to American aid as to any act of British Government" and the "extraordinary success" that Britain made was "not due to the successful application of socialist principles in Great Britain", but due to the "successful working of capitalism in the United States." 15

Mackay also disputed Commonwealth's importance to Britain. Of the total value of Britain's overseas investments that still remain, only 40 per cent were in Commonwealth and the Empire, while 60 per cent were in the non-Empire countries. Moreover,

15. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
every Dominion Government has welcomed the developments towards European Union. No one has ever suggested that only West European integration should develop without Commonwealth countries being associated with it.16

Lastly, about the Labour argument that the "European people do not want supranational authority", Mackay contended that public opinion polls in France, Holland, Italy, Norway and West Germany showed that 60 per cent of people favoured a European Union which would enable every European to move freely and work in any country of his choice, 13 per cent were opposed to it, and 21 per cent were undecided.17

Next to Mackay's pamphlet, the Labour supporters of the 'Federal Union' issued their own statement "Let the Argument Proceed". 'Federal Union' was the British brand of 'World Movement for World Federal Government'. R.W.G. Mackay was one of its Vice-Presidents, and C.E.M. Joad one of its treasurers. The above statement deplored that "European Unity" holds out little hope for a foreign policy "which will progressively lead us towards world socialism." The statement also saw a contradiction in the Labour's document that supranational European bodies "would have a permanent anti-socialist majority and would

16. Ibid., p. 31.
17. Ibid., p. 41.
arouse the hostility of European workers. The Federal
Union's pamphlet raised the following doubts:

Why is it assumed that a European Parliament
would have a permanent anti-socialist majority?
The authors of this pamphlet believe that the
workers constitute a minority of the European
population (which is absurd), or else they feel
a majority of the population can never be won
over to socialism (which is shamefully pessimistic). 18 (Emphasis in original).

Whatever was the quality of criticism, the Labour's
"European Unity" by and large received the wider support
of the party's rank and file. Thus at the Labour Party
Annual Conference in 1950, "European Unity" received the
overwhelming support of the members. It was here that
Dalton defending his "European Unity" asserted that he
was right then as before. He continued that "it (European
Unity) is a plain-spoken essay in practical international
coopiration, based upon realism and common sense, and
not upon empty verbiage and airy-fairy theories". 19

The controversy about "European Unity" was soon
overwhelmed, as in the case of the Schuman debate, by the
Korean war.

The Korean war plunged Britain into a bitter national
debate on two related issues. One concerned the domestic

18. Federal Union, Let the Argument Proceed (London,
1950), p. 3.

19. Report of the Forty-Ninth Annual Conference of
front and the other external. Urged by the United States to make massive contribution to its military operations in Korea, the Labour Government had to increase manifold her military expenditure thereby committing herself to the policy of rearmament. Such a policy forcing cuts in the welfare measures resulted in the resignation of three Ministers led by Aneurin Bevan. Bevan and his followers saw in the Government's rearmament policy a submission to 'American militarism' and the "beginning of the destruction of those services ... which were giving to Britain the moral leadership of the world."\[20\] The rearmament issue soon was to drive the Labour Party into two opposite camps, with uncharitable effects on the party's electoral prospects in the forthcoming General Election.

On the external front, the "Pleven Plan" born out of the Korean crisis, proposed rearmament of West Germany. The invitation of the French Government to Britain to participate in the Pleven Plan negotiations put the Labour Government in irksome position. For the ruling party, which was already deeply divided on the national rearmament the idea of German rearmament would have

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further aggravated tensions among its embittered factions. After much delay, the Government spelt out its policy in February 1951. Speaking to the House on the Pleven Plan which envisaged a European Defence Community (EDC), Attlee said:

As originally put forward, there were a number of features of that plan which we could not accept. There was the linking of it with a political superstructures; a Minister of Defence for Europe; and even an Assembly; we also were not entirely agreed that this was a really possible plan.21

Attlee, however, agreed to send observers to the forthcoming conference on Pleven Plan in March 1951 at Paris. But while accepting the German rearmament in principle, Attlee laid down what came to be called the four 'Attlee conditions'. They were:

1. The rearmament of countries of the Atlantic Treaty must precede that of West Germany;
2. The building of forces in the democratic states should precede the creation of German forces;
3. The arrangements must be such that German units were integrated in the defence forces in a way which would preclude the emergence again of German military menace;
4. There must be agreement with the German themselves.22

22. Ibid., col. 67.
These "Attlee conditions" remained as the Labour's policy even long after the party was voted out of power. It would appear that Attlee had three objectives in mind in laying down the above policy. Firstly, to placate the tensions within his party on the issue. Thus the acceptance of German rearmament in principle but on conditions that could not be realized at least in the near future might pacify the contending groups over the issue in the party. Secondly, to appease the United States which was very enthusiastic about the Pleven Plan, and lastly, Attlee also hoped to use the German rearmament issue as a bargaining counter with Russia in any future Four-Power talks on Germany. As Dalton in a letter to Attlee put it:

"Your (Attlee's) view ... was that we should play this (German rearmament) very long. We may have been 'committed in principle to arming the West Germans, some time ago. But it was always clear that we were not committed as to the manner, the extent or speed of this operation.... It was also in our minds to use this as a bargaining counter with the Russians, if ever we succeed in getting a Four-Power Conference."

By 1954, the Labour thought that several events had gone in the way of fulfilling the Attlee conditions. In a party pamphlet entitled *In Defence of Europe: Labour's*

23. *Dalton Papers*: These papers are the collection of the diaries, personal notes, official papers, etc. of Hugh Dalton (Lord Dalton) deposited at the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.
View on the Question of a West German Contribution to the European Defence Community (issued in June 1954) were listed the following developments that fulfilled the Four conditions of Attlee. There had been the provision of arms for the NATO countries and also forces had been built up in democratic states, thereby fulfilling the first two conditions. Integration of German forces into European army completed the third one. And lastly the German electoral support to the Adenauer party (CDU) which made EDC the main plank of its programme fulfilled the fourth condition.

It was in view of such reassessment of the European situation that the Labour leadership officially decided to vote in favour of the Nine-Power Paris Agreements which also created the Western European Union (WEU).

The early years of Nineteen Sixties were indisputably the years of great national debate in Britain. Britain was once again confronted with the problem of choosing between the neighbouring continent and the open sea. The issue whether Britain should join or not the European Economic Community (EEC), commonly known as "Common Market", was regarded by many as decisive to Britain's destiny in the changed world. Moreover, not unnaturally it divided the major parties into two rival groups. For the Labour Party, with its more democratic
character, the Common Market issue threatened to be as ominous and divisive as the 'Clause IV' and Unilateralism.*

When the Conservative Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan announced on 31 July 1961 his decision to apply for the membership of the EEC, the Labour Party had no definite policy on the issue. During the Commons debate on the membership issue, the Leader of the party, Hugh Gaitskell's

* 'Clause IV' and 'Unilateralism' were the two issues on which very serious debate took place within the Labour Party, even threatening its unity. 'Clause IV' of the Party's constitution declares as one of its 'Principal Objects' -

To secure for the producers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry, and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

When Gaitskell urged the party to abandon this Clause in 1959 in order to gain the middle class support, there was sharp controversy. Gaitskell's move was dropped but the party remained badly split.

After 'Clause IV', 'Unilateralism' was another issue that further sharpened existing rivalries within the party. The official position of the party on defence was multilateralism, backed by American support. But the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) which advocated unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons by Britain was receiving growing support, particularly from the left within the party. Thus at the 1960 Labour Party Annual Conference the official party policy was defeated and the CND resolution was carried. Intra-party controversy on the above two issues reflected the rivalry between 'revisionists' (Gaitskellites) and 'fundamentalists' (Bevanites).
speech was deliberately non-committal and even equivocal. The Leader of the Opposition moved an amendment to the official motion which read that the Government would be conducting the negotiations on Common Market "from a position of grave weakness". It demanded that Britain's entry should be conditional upon Parliament's approval and

if the conditions negotiated are generally acceptable to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and accord with our obligations and pledges to other members of the European Free Trade Association.24

Then Gaitskell made a very balanced speech presenting both the sides of the Common Market membership. He however felt that both the arguments for and against membership were extreme position, and he added

We have not the certainty of the extremists. We feel that whether we accept the one picture or the other depends upon profoundly difficult judgments — about a matter of guesswork — and that on that account they are inevitably greatly influenced not by cool calculation, but by emotional attitudes. We also suspect that both extremes are wrong, that the issue is not as clear-cut and that a more careful analysis will show that it is much more a matter of balance.25

Gaitskell however clearly expressed himself against a federal union, when he said, "there is no question of

25. Ibid., cols. 1495–96.
Britain entering into a Federal Europe now" since it would be "completely incompatible with all our pledges and promises which have been made about the Commonwealth. 26

Participating in the debate, Harold Wilson, the Party's spokesman on economic matters, said that from the long-term point of view "there is a case for saying that in terms of our own industry and our trade in Europe, we may gain from being in Europe." Wilson's speech, however, was marked by several nuances. Thus, in the same speech, Wilson would say that economic planning was impossible in the EEC with its exchange controls, control over capital investments and the import controls which may one day have to be introduced. Concluding his speech he declared that his party would not approve the negotiations and would utterly reserve our position about the package that the Government will bring back. 27 The Opposition abstained from voting on the Government motion.

The Commons debate on the Common Market issue was soon followed by the Annual Conference of the Labour Party in October 1961. There was no change in Party's policy on this issue. George Brown, speaking for the Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) announced that his

27. Ibid., cols. 166-70.
Party was not willing to commit itself until the Government's negotiations have produced answers to a complex of difficult questions. Brown's own speech, however, was slightly pro-market. Then, without pressing for card votes, the Conference passed a resolution which refused to approve entry into the Common Market.

Unless guarantees protecting the position of British agriculture and horticulture, EFTA countries and Commonwealth are obtained, and Britain retains the power of using public economic ownership and planning and measures to ensure social progress within the United Kingdom.

The non-committal, or what the Press termed, the 'Wait and See' policy, remained substantially unchanged until the next annual conference of the Labour Party. Thus on 8 May 1962, in a T.V. Broadcast, Gaitskell, still maintaining his equivocal position on the question of Common Market membership would say that -

not to go in would be a pity but it would not be a catastrophe. And to go in on bad terms which really meant the end of the Commonwealth would be a step which I think, we would regret all our lives, and for which history would not forgive us.

In fact there was an overwhelming concern for the Commonwealth interests all through his speech. Gaitskell

29. Ibid., p. 208.
continued that if the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference scheduled for September was not satisfied with the safeguards offered by the Conservative Government then "it will be a much more serious situation."  

As far as the economic arguments were concerned Gaitskell said that they were very balanced and 'fifty-fifty'. He felt that there "was probably a slight economic advantage on going in the long run, though there would be some nasty shocks in the short-run." Gaitskell reiterated his stand that his Party would not have a definite policy until the terms of entry agreed upon by the Government were known.

Meanwhile, the 'wait and see' policy of the Labour Party and its Leader was coming under growing criticism from several sections of the Party. On 20 April 1962, Frank Cousins, the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) called Gaitskell to come off his fence and declare the Party's policy on the Common Market immediately. He also wanted Gaitskell to prepare his Labour Party to fight the next elections on the Common Market issue.

31. Ibid.
The TUC, however, followed Gaitskell's policy of reserving judgement until final terms were known.

A week after Cousins' call, Walter Padley, President of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) wanted the Labour Party to decide soon on the Common Market, otherwise it might become the cause of another 'internecine warfare' within the party. His Union, at its annual Conference, however, passed a resolution favouring entry into the Common Market.33

If the Party was not heading for what the USDAW leader called 'internecine warfare', hectic organized campaign on the part of both the protagonists and antagonists of the Common Market membership was already under way within the Party. The intra-party debate and group activity was gaining momentum by the beginning of 1962. Those who favoured entry formed the Labour Committee for Europe with Roy Jenkins as its President. The other leading members of this Committee were Anthony Crosland, John Diamond, Charles Pannell and Austen Albu. George Brown, though a staunch pro-marketeer did not concern himself seriously with the activities of the Committee, since he was holding the position of Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). The Committee apart from

33. The Times (London), 30 April 1962.
its active campaign in and outside the Party, expressed its views through its organ 'Campaign' and the Labour Monthly 'Socialist Commentary'. In September 1962 the Labour Committee claimed membership of 41 including 6 peers. The leading members of the Labour Committee were also the members of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism (CDS). Also known as the 'Manifesto Group' these members belonged to the 'revisionist' section of the Labour Party and were the strong supporters of Gaitskell.

The anti-marketeers largely belonging to the Victory for Socialism group also formed the 'Labour Committee on Europe and Common Market'. The more vocal members of this group were the 'fundamentalists' and the left-wingers like Michael Foot, Barbara Castle, Ian Mikardo, Philip Drieberg. They voiced their case against the Common Market through Tribune and New Statesman. As the year 1962 set in the anti-marketeers started making more frequent display of their respective cases through the daily press. Thus in January 1962, the left-wing weekly Tribune stated that Common Market membership might prevent a future Labour Government from carrying out nationalization. Membership also might lead to sharp rise in prices. It called the Common Market an instrument of U.S. policy in West Europe. The statement expressed
its unhappiness over the Party's neutral stand on the EEC membership issue. Though the Party as far as the Common Market was concerned, was not divided on Left versus Right basis, a greater majority of pro-marketeers were from the right while the anti-marketeers generally belonged to Left and the moderates divided between them.

By February 1962 there were feeble voices of impatience on both anti and pro-market fronts on the party's inability to take stand on the Common Market issue. In order to buy more time in view of growing restlessness, Gaitskell announced in April that a Committee of Parliamentary Members and the NEC would be asked to make detailed and specialist studies of the issue involved in the Common Market.

On 5 August, Britain's membership negotiations with the Six reached a deadlock after an all-night session between them failed to reach agreement on the import of temperate food-stuffs from the old Dominions. The next session of negotiations was to open only after three months. Following the adjournment of talks the Conservative Government published a White Paper on the terms of agreement between the U.K. and "the Six" in the same month. The

major points of agreement according to this White Paper were: first, the Common market would allow a stage-wise application of its common external tariff (CET) to the Commonwealth imports from Canada, Australia and New Zealand into the enlarged community; secondly, agreement was also reached on general policy of trade with the Asian Commonwealth countries. A phase-wise elimination of tariff concessions to the import of cotton textiles and jute from India and Pakistan was agreed upon; thirdly, the Common Market members agreed to offer Associate Membership status to the African and Caribbean Common Market members; and lastly, as far as the issue of farm products from temperate food zones was concerned it was broadly agreed that the enlarged community would offer "reasonable opportunities in its markets for export of temperate food-stuffs from other countries." Readiness was also expressed by the Six to consider special provisions to deal with the difficulties of New Zealand on Britain's entry.36

The White Paper also declared that the British Government accepted fully the recently evolved Common Market accord on financing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

About five weeks after the Government's White Paper on the terms of agreement, the Commonwealth socialist leaders held their conference at London. On this occasion, pending his Party's final decision on the Common Market, Gaitskell opined that the terms of agreement were 'too vague' and 'too damaging' to accept. If the Government decided to enter on these terms, he said, the Labour Party would come into open opposition and demand a general election.\(^{37}\) Gaitskell also demanded that the Government must not take final decision until the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.

At the end of the three-day Conference, the Commonwealth socialist leaders in their joint communiqué said that -

> if Britain were to enter into Common Market on the basis of what has so far been agreed, great damage would inevitably be done to many countries in the Commonwealth, and therefore to the unity of Commonwealth itself.\(^{38}\)

It may, however be observed here that Gaitskell in attacking the terms was not attacking in principle the membership of the Common Market itself. In accordance with his 'wait and see' policy he was still keeping his options open by calling the Government to postpone the

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final decision until the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Obviously, the Opposition Leader was waiting for the reaction of the Prime Ministers' Conference and thereby could buy some more time to declare his Party's policy.

The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference opened on 12 September 1962 and lasted about a week. As the Government expected, the speeches by the various Prime Ministers were critical of Britain's decision to enter the Common Market, the damage such decision would cause to the Commonwealth and the harmful effect of the terms so far negotiated on their economies. Particularly, many of those speeches by the African leaders, representing the developing world, were emotional and even hostile such as the one by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, who said the "Treaty of Rome is like a surgeon's knife stuck into the body of the Commonwealth." 39 Though the communique issued at the end of the Conference contained all the critical speeches of the Prime Ministers, the British Government could take comfort in the fact that the communique demanded neither the revocation of the terms already negotiated with the Common Market nor the calling of another Conference of Prime Ministers after the final round of negotiations.

With the Commonwealth Conference over, and the annual Labour Party Conference to be held in less than two weeks, there was a general expectation that Gaitskell would at last come out clearly on his Party's policy on Common Market. But it was not to be. The Labour Chief continued to maintain his equivocation. He interpreted the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' communique to mean that its leaders feared the terms negotiated were harmful to them and since the British Government pledged "that we should only go in if the interests of the Commonwealth are fully safeguarded, it follows that we must either obtain terms or stay out." 40

Without waiting for the party leader's final decision, rival groups within the Labour Party were presenting their arguments more vocally, with each group claiming supporters more than that of the other. The battle became more keen in view of the forthcoming party conference. Thus in September the pro-market Labour Committee on Common Market claimed that 80 Labour M.P.s favoured Britain's entry into the Common Market. The Committee's mouthpiece Campaign stated that "it is our view that Britain, far from being in a permanent minority position would find herself in extremely strong position

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40. The Times (London), 22 September 1962.
within the community". The Committee also opposed the idea of calling a general election on the Common Market issue.41

The pro-marketeers claim was immediately countered by Douglas Jay, who was emerging as one of the most vocal opponents of the Common Market. In fact, Roy Jenkins and Douglas Jay, both belonging to the right-wing section of the Labour Party and sharing an elitist background, were the two important Labour members who represented two poles on the Common Market issue. Making a frontal attack on the Common Market, Douglas Jay demanded a general election before the Government committed the country to join the Common Market. Politically, Jay argued, that Heath's terms would "bind us more closely to Germany and Italy than to Canada, Australia and New Zealand". Economically, Heath's terms would only lead to higher prices, forcing Britain to forego Commonwealth preferences in favour of Germany and Italy.42

By the time of the Party conference, it thus seemed that the battle lines between the two groups were clearly drawn. Each group intensified its campaign through their respective media, the pro-marketeers writing in The

41. Campaign (London), no. 9, September 1962.
42. The Guardian, 22 September 1962.
Socialist Commentary and Campaign, while the anti-marketeers in Tribune and New Statesman. It may however be mentioned that both in and outside the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), a sizeable number still remained non-committal, waiting for their chief to come out with a clear policy statement.

The trade unions, contributing bulk of the Labour's strength both politically and financially, presented a mixed picture on the Common Market issue. While some unions took the rival positions of for and against entry, others followed the Gaitskellite policy of 'wait and see' or at least waiting for Gaitskell's own position. Thus, the President of the TUC, George Woodcock adopting a Gaitskellite line advised in May 1962 'a certain amount of fence-sitting' before deciding whether Britain should join or not. However, "despite cautious statements in public, TUC's General Council was the most pro-market decision-making centre in the wider Labour movement and extensively worked behind the scenes to make the application successful."43 In fact most members of the TUC Economic Committee regarded European inhibitions outdated.44

The General Secretary of the largest Union, Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), Frank Cousins, a long political adversary of Gaitskell, called for a General Election to decide the issue since Heath's terms, according to him, were unacceptable. Though it was generally known that Cousins was opposed to entry, he took a middle-of-the-road position publicly to carry wider support at the Annual Conference. To oppose entry unconditionally might reduce his Union to a minority. His Union carried a million votes. Among those big unions that took a pro-market stand were the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (NUGMM); Chemical Workers' Union; Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW); National Union of Miners (NUM) and the Transport and Salaried Staff Association. Those unions that declared themselves against membership were the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) and the Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians Association (DATA). As the Party's Annual Conference was nearing, there was no doubt that Common Market would dominate the proceedings.

The Labour's NEC policy statement, "Labour and the Common Market" was issued on 29 September 1962, on the

45. The Times (London), 22 September 1962.
eve of the Party Conference. Two days later Gaitskell addressed the delegates to the Conference on the same issue. The speech, a political rhetoric taking more than one and a quarter hour, was certainly one of the greatest and perhaps the last of Gaitskell's political career. It was also a shrewed attempt by the Labour Leader to balance the rivals within the Party and keep it undivided on the issue. By the time the Labour chief had finished his speech, it was clear he had turned/driven his Party against Britain going into the Common Market at least on the Heath terms. Though Gaitskell did not openly say 'No' to the Common Market membership, the 'Five Conditions' of entry he had put forward would certainly have made membership of the Common Market difficult under the existing circumstances. The 'Five Conditions' themselves were laid down at the 1961 Labour Party Annual Conference, but Gaitskell never elaborated them clearly during the past one year. These conditions as laid down in 1961 and repeated in 1962 policy statement were:

(a) Strong and binding safeguards for the trade and other interests of Britain's friends and partners in the Commonwealth;

(b) Freedom as at present to pursue our own foreign policy;

(c) Fulfilment of Government's pledge to our associates in the European Free Trade Area;

(d) The right to plan our own economy;
(e) Guarantees to safeguard the position of British agriculture.46

Gaitskell said, "I am content to stand where I have stood and say the arguments are no more than evenly balanced". But in reality Gaitskell's speech was far from a balanced one. It overemphasized the harmful effects of the membership to Britain rather than the gains that might accrue to her. The figures and statistics that Gaitskell provided in evidence of economic disadvantages were not altogether accurate or at least sound enough. Thus, talking about the EFTA's trade value to Britain, Gaitskell said, "our exports to EFTA, to the rest of Western Europe (are) three to four times as much as to the Common Market."47 But facts speak differently. The following figures for the period 1958 to 1961 show that the share of SEC was more than the share of EFTA in Britain's total exports to Western Europe.

Exports of United Kingdom to Western Europe48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Exports to Western Europe</th>
<th>Share of EFTA Area</th>
<th>Share of SEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Ibid., p. 157.
Gaitskell's arguments about the economic value of the Commonwealth also were not sound enough. He rejected the argument that the value of the Commonwealth preference system was declining and that the Commonwealth was no better than a static market to British goods. "We are told that the Commonwealth is static. Is It?" Gaitskell contended himself by saying that trade with Commonwealth is "not a story of stagnation but a story of expansion". Yet, the truth was that the Commonwealth proved to be comparatively stagnant market during fifties as well as thereafter. The share of the Sterling Area in Britain's world exports between 1958 and 1961 was a story of near-stagnation except in 1960. In 1958, the figure was £113.6 million, 1959 - £113.9 million, 1960 - £211.2 million and 1961 - £119.9 million. On the other hand the share of

the EEC during the same period, as the above table shows, was progressing despite its common external tariff.\textsuperscript{50}

As a matter of fact, Britain's trade with the primary producing countries of which Afro-Asian countries contributed the largest, had been falling since the end of the war compared to other manufacturing countries. A Treasury Bulletin in 1964 stated that the Commonwealth preferences, though still important, "declined in value since the war". Such decline was caused by

A world-wide reduction in the general level of tariffs, and this had reduced the importance of both the preferences we earn and those we give. Many countries, including the U.K., have reduced their duties on non-Commonwealth imports either to secure them more cheaply or to obtain advantages for their own exports in other markets. Most Commonwealth countries are members of the GATT, which precludes new preferences.\textsuperscript{51}

The review further said that the main reason for the decline in Britain's trade with the Commonwealth in fifties was "because of the rapid increase in our trade with Western Europe."\textsuperscript{52}

It is against such background of the change as in the pattern of world trade and the rapid economic strides


\textsuperscript{52.} Ibid., p. 129.
made by the EEC that the future economic value of the Commonwealth to Britain needed to be decided. Gaitskell, however, had taken great pains to impress his audience about the continued importance of the Commonwealth preference system to Britain. As a matter of fact, and not surprisingly, a great part of his speech was dominated by the Commonwealth factor punctuated by poignant recollections and emotional outpourings. His attachment to the Commonwealth could perhaps be traced to his boyhood that he spent in India. The Labour Leaders' Commonwealth sentiment ran like this:

We are not just a part of Europe - at least not yet. We have a different history. We have ties and links which run across the whole world, and for me at least the Commonwealth ... is something I want to cherish.

In fact many Labourites of the post-war generation shared a sense of sentiment with the Commonwealth countries, particularly the new Commonwealth.

Gaitskell also expressed his fears about the Common Market evolving one day into a 'European Federation' and decisions taken by a 'majority vote'. He said: "(But) we would be foolish to deny, not to recognize and indeed sympathise with the desire of those who created the Economic Community for political federation". And if Britain joins such a federation, "we are no more than a State (as it
were) in the United States of Europe, such as Texas and California" and "it does mean the end of Britain as an independent nation State". 53

The Treaty of Rome is neither 'supranational' nor 'federal' in nature nor was the Common Market in practice operating that way in 1962. As a matter of fact, 'the Rome Treaty is vague about the political future of Europe'. 54 Moreover, since the reliance European 'supranationality' as a concept increasingly came to be abandoned, the Common Market could be said as based upon, what the first President of the European Commission, Walter Hallstein termed, the "Community method" — by which the member states renounce merely a part of their sovereignty, or rather that they put parts of their national sovereignty into a common pool which is controlled by 'community' institutions. The community "is not a federation because it is not a State". 55 Decisions in the Common Market are evolved as a result of constant consultation between the Commission and the Council of Permanent Representatives. No attempt had been made by

the Common Market until 1962 to take a decision by majority vote and impose it on the unwilling member-states. Moreover, the final abandonment of the Pouchet Plan talks in April 1962 could have allayed whatever fears that Gaitskell voiced about a European federation.

In labouring his fears about a Federal Europe, Gaitskell rather clinched the issue too far and made certain statements uncharacteristic of a socialist. Gaitskell said that joining a "Federal Europe" would "mean the end of a thousand years of history. And it does mean the end of the Commonwealth". This is certainly the language appropriate not to a Labour internationalist but a Tory nationalist, for, here the Leader of the Labour Party was harping upon the imperial glory, and grandeur of Pax Britanica. As Tom Nairn subtly put it, "abandoned by the right nationalism was embraced by the great party of the 'left'."57

Having given both economic and political treatment to the Common Market from all angles and the disadvantages of its membership to Britain, Gaitskell, moved on to demand the fulfilment of the 'Five conditions' before Britain

56. Ibid., p. 159.
entered the EEC. Three of those conditions — those demanding safeguards for the interests of Commonwealth, EFTA and British agriculture — while outwardly resembling the Government's own pledges on the issues, could remain unattainable in the existing circumstances, given the way they were interpreted by Gaitskell.

For the Commonwealth, Gaitskell demanded that the proposed world commodity agreements, agreed upon by both Britain and "the Six" as an alternative to compensate for the loss of Commonwealth preferences on Britain's entry should be worked out immediately. As Gaitskell put it:

Make these vague promises of the Six into precise agreements. That is what the Government should do — go back and try and fulfil their pledges. And it must be done ... the special treatment for New Zealand, the world commodity agreements, the Trade Agreements for India, Pakistan and Ceylon and new arrangements for those Commonwealth countries, which for political reasons refuse to be Associated Overseas Territories — all this must be done before we go in, before we start dismantling the preference system...

Gaitskell was demanding here something which the Six had already refused to concede. Even whatever that had been agreed to in August 1962, such as the World Commodity Agreements, it was a product of hard bargaining. The British negotiator Edward Heath, in his opening speech

58. Labour Party Conference, n. 46, p. 163.
demanded 'comparable outlets' i.e., to provide markets of comparable size in the enlarged community to those Commonwealth countries which would suffer losses as a result of British entry. But, he had to give up this demand, in view of the Six and particularly the French opposition and consent to the idea of world commodity agreement. Moreover, as Nora Beloff, a keen observer of the Brussels negotiations records:

...from the very outset the Six made it absolutely clear that after an agreed transitional period they would not allow special preferential trading links between the community and the Commonwealth. The only exception they conceded was for a group of African and Caribbean countries which, they felt, would qualify as associate members. Other members of the Commonwealth family would be treated as 'third countries' - outsiders on whose behalf, under GATT Rules, there could be no discrimination.\(^59\)

When the negotiations were adjourned in August 1962, the Six and Britain parted without any agreement on the import of temperate food products from the old Commonwealth.

Another Labour condition of equally complex character, though put in vague language was the demand for 'strong and binding safeguards' for the interests of the British farmers. The issue raised two difficult but interrelated issues. One was the conflict of principles. The British

\(^{59}\) Nora Beloff, n. 39, p. 117.
agricultural policy provided guaranteed prices and production grants to its farmers, known as the 'deficiency payments', the system was in direct conflict with the highly protectionist Common Market agricultural system. The Common Market levied heavy external tariffs on the food imports from non-member states. Secondly, France, with her largest farming community was also the single largest beneficiary of the community's protectionist farm policy. At the same time, the Common Market had no guaranteed price policy for its farmers. If joined, with no guaranteed price system in the Common Market, Britain would be jeopardising the interests of its farming community. Moreover, with higher levies on Commonwealth food imports, Britain would be required to pay dearly for her food. This was the crux of the whole issue and the Lord Privy Seals' (Heath's) several overnight sessions led nowhere in reaching agreement on the issue of agriculture. Ultimately, as Seloff would observe:

it was British agriculture, not the Commonwealth problem, which bogged the Conference down from October (1962) to January and gave the General his opportunity for alleging that the negotiations were going round in circles and should be stopped.60

60. Ibid., p. 155.
Then, coming to EFTA, Gaitskell wanted that full membership of Common Market should be given to those EFTA members which preferred it and associate membership to those members, particularly the neutrals, Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland, if they preferred.

In so far as the fourth condition — 'right to plan our own economy' — was concerned, Gaitskell's reasoning was weak and unconvincing. He was not rejecting the argument that in France and Italy planning was possible inspite of their Common Market membership, but yet "in certain other fields we have legitimate anxieties". What were these anxieties and in what way Britain's membership would have affected Labour's future planning was not explained. Nor did the NEC statement. Making a rather generalized statement, the document said that:

some features of economic planning cannot be easily combined with membership of the Common Market. This is done in part to the Laissez-faire assumptions underlying the Rome Treaty, in part to its basic aim of creating a single and competitive market.

Neither the ideological character of the Labour Party nor the philosophy of the Common Market justified the Labour's fears about planning. There is no need

61. Ibid., p. 160.
62. Ibid., p. 156.
to report here the intense and acrimonious ideological battle between the fundamentalists and the revisionists (consolidationists) as they came to be called, during fifties within the Labour Party. The revisionists who, led by Gaitskell ultimately gained upper hand wanted their party to evolve as a progressive, reformist political force with the objectives of social egalitarianism, efficiency and justice under the material affluence in the West. According to the revisionists, a socialist party could no longer rigidly adhere to the traditional principles of total public ownership, nationalization and state interference. Influenced by the Galbraith's theory of "affluent society" the revisionists argued that capitalism no longer represented the waste of 1930's and 1940's and that a new and buoyant economic system, enabling high socio-economic benefits was developing in Western Europe.

Thus, right from 1950 onwards fresh proposals of public ownership were either absent or deemphasized in the successive manifestos and the party's major preoccupation was to ensure the declining support of the middle-class, professionals and the white-collar employees. Labour's annual policy statements such as "Labour in Sixtees" (1960) and "Signposts for the Sixtees" (1961) clearly reflected

this view, the latter particularly "carrying the shadow of Galbraith beneath it". Anthony Crosland's "Future of Socialism", the revisionists' inspiration, had paid comparatively little attention to economic matters and it "implied that Labour's central concern in this area had been largely met with the achievement of full employment and the apparent end of acute poverty", and it defended, implicitly, existing market morality.65

Thus, relieved of the traditional socialist trappings and aiming at consolidation of what had been achieved the Labour Party could hardly fear the Common Market, which, in fact, was not opposed to planning. Nor the Rome Treaty aimed at creating an unregulated free market. Perhaps, the true nature of the Common Market was best summarized by one of its serious students, Uwe Kitzinger, as follows: The Common Market, according to him, is neither one of centralized public planning, nor one of laissez-faire competition. It is neither one of nationalism nor one of purely private enterprise. The system neither encourages nor prevents nationalization or de-nationalization. And it is this pragmatic un-ideological approach which allowed the Rome Treaties to be ratified

64. Ibid., p. 156.

by such overwhelming majorities of the Socialists and Liberals no less than the Christian Democrats of member states.66

That planning was possible within the Common Market was testified by no less a person than Etinne Hirsch who succeeded Jean Monnet as Head of the French Planning Commission and till 1961 President of the European Commission. Hirsch informs that Holland for many years engaged in planning; that Belgium, after being in touch with the French Commissariat was developing what they call 'programming'; and Italy was implementing its Vannone Plan in its south.67

The fifth and the last condition of the Labour Party to enter Common Market—freedom to pursue an independent Foreign Policy—looked very much a political anachronism in an increasingly interdependent world. Nor the practice of the Common Market demanded from the members common stance on Foreign Policy issues. Nothing stopped De Gaulle from adopting a more independent attitude towards America, rather more independent than Britain herself.


Concluding his speech, Gaitskell rejected entry on terms so far negotiated but yet he reserved the right to take final decision "until we know the final terms, and when that moment comes, we shall judge it in the light of the conditions that we have laid down."68 Though, these concluding remarks might have been meant more as a sop to the pro-marketeers, when the speech came to an end the general impression left behind was that Gaitskell came out of his fence and declared himself against membership. The general sense of delegates, as the *The Times* put it, was that Gaitskell delivered more devastating attack on the British entry into the EEC than had come from any British politician so far and the Paper's editorial remarked that "it is fair to conclude that the Labour Party is committed to opposing to British entry on any terms that seem likely to be negotiated by the Government."69

The tone and tenor of Gaitskell's speech delighted the anti-marketeers and the left-wingers who felt that their leader had at last come off the fence and for all practical purposes swung against membership. So great was their enthusiasm that the TGWU leader Frank Cousins, a known political adversary of Gaitskell and left-winger.

68. n. 46, p. 160.
announced soon after the speech that his Union would undertake printing a million copies of Gaitskell's speech. While Emanuel Shinwell, another staunch opponent of Gaitskell, suggested that the leader's speech should replace the NEC statement on Common Market.

On the other hand the pro-marketeers and a majority of them right-wingers, were conspicuously dismayed by the FLB leader's speech. They felt that Gaitskell in presenting the NEC statement had gone much beyond that compromise statement and hardened himself against membership.

Political considerations were dominant in hardening Gaitskell's attitude from what was a non-committal one earlier. For one thing, Gaitskell did not want another acrimonious debate on the Common Market issue such as the one on Clause IV or Unilateralism. As early as December 1961, he said, "I do not want another party row about this (Common Market)."70

His 'wait and see' policy explained nothing but adopting a non-committal attitude in the wake of sharpening debate in the party between the pro and anti marketeers, each group roughly representing within the party the right

and left hue respectively. Past lessons of party disunity leading to electoral defeat and the prospect of general election looming large, the Labourite Leader did not want to take a divided party once again to the polls. The Opposition's electoral prospects were also brightening. The Labour Party won two bye-elections, one in April and the other in June 1962, this latter being a landslide one with the other two parties losing deposits. Labour also won another landslide victory in the boroughs. Preservation of party unity was politically imminence if the party was to win the next general election. Thus "from intra-party point of view, Gaitskell, though, right-wing partisan he was, made a left-wing speech (anti-market) that would so that strengthen his position with that group."

Gaitskell also needed the support of the moderates and left-wing sections of the party against the possible candidature of Harold Wilson, a moderate for Party leadership. Wilson had already contested and lost to Gaitskell in the 1960 leadership election.

Gaitskell's meeting with the Commonwealth socialist leaders in the third week of September was the final and consummate factor that turned the Labour chief to repudiate the Government terms. These leaders explained to Gaitskell

the effect on their respective nations if Britain were to join the community on terms negotiated so far. Gaitskell was tremendously influenced by his discussions with the above leaders. As David Wood, a close associate of Gaitskell observed:

...he went on to say how deeply he had been moved by the fears of India and New Zealand as he heard them expressed at the meeting of Commonwealth Socialist leaders. That meeting, I have no doubt was decisive in Gaitskell's attitude towards the Brussels negotiations.72

George Brown, the Labour Party's Deputy Leader also feels that it was the influence of the then New Zealand Prime Minister Walter Nash, who was a close friend of Gaitskell and Gaitskell's own Indian background helped his leader to turn against the Common Market. Brown says:

I found Mr. Nash who was then Prime Minister of New Zealand, and who was a specially close friend of Hugh's, had done a tremendous job to persuade everybody of the dangers which would come about for New Zealand, if Britain joined the Market, and that he had been backed by delegates from India....Gaitskell had an Indian background...and he was always susceptible to emotional pressure from India. The result was to put a distinctly different interpretation on what I had believed to be the Labour's policy.73

Gaitskell's father served in India.

At the same meeting apart from Mr. Nash, the Indian Ambassador to the EEC, K.B. Lall made greater impact on Gaitskell's mind. "No single man contributed more to Gaitskell's final resolve to fight the Government's Common Market decision", says Nora Beloff, "than the brilliantly persuasive Indian Ambassador, K.B. Lall, accredited in Brussels". K.B. Lall was substituted for Ashok Mehta, the Indian socialist leader, due to the latter's inability to attend the meeting.

Gaitskell's move against the Common Market was also quite untypical of his political conviction and background. Gaitskell was known to be very closer to the United States and believed in strengthening the Anglo-American 'special relationship'. In the words of Harold Wilson, Gaitskell was "passionately pro-American". He was also closer to the Kennedy Administration and supported America's military presence in West Europe. In fact it was on the issue of multilateralism which preferred strengthening the NATO that Gaitskell vowed to "fight, fight and fight" at the 1960 Labour Party Conference when the CND defeated his defence policy. But in the case of Common Market, Gaitskell's stand went against the American policy in Europe. The Kennedy Administration very much wanted the British membership of the Common Market. Kennedy thought that:

74. Beloff, n. 39, p. 156.
...with Britain inside the Common Market, London would be able to counterbalance the eccentricities of policy in Paris and Bonn, and also help to prevent Gaullism creeping into Germany. But Kennedy further hoped that with her world-wide commitments Britain would present the Common Market from becoming an inward-looking and purely commercial organization.75

It was with this policy goal in Europe that Kennedy strongly wanted Gaitskell to extend his Party's support to Macmillan's European move. In fact, Arthur Schlesinger notes that when Gaitskell visited Kennedy in early 1962 the President mobilized half of his Cabinet to persuade the Labour leader to support Britain's entry into the Common Market.76 Gaitskell sent a long memorandum to Kennedy explaining reasons against joining the Common Market.77

By turning himself against Common Market, Gaitskell also broke with his right-wing colleagues like Roy Jenkins, George Brown, Anthony Crosland, Walter Radley, etc. These leaders who belonged to the right-wing "Manifesto Group" within the Labour Party were the strongest supporters of Gaitskell in his 'Clause IV', and 'Unilateralism'


77. George Ball, The Discipline of Power (Boston, 1968), p. 68.
battles with the left-wingers. The right-wingers, with few exceptions were generally pro-marketeers.

The NEC statement, "Labour and the Common Market" was approved by the Conference without taking vote. However, the pro-marketeers did not fail to present their arguments and voice their disagreement with the leader in the general debate. Roy Jenkins, a close associate of Gaitskell and known pro-marketeer, said that:

I am not going to pretend that there are not those of us who believe—and I am still as convinced as ever that Britain's destiny lies with Europe and that unless we go in we shall be both poorer and weaker than we need be.

Implicitly warning his leader against the dangers of overplaying the Commonwealth factor, Jenkins said,

Let us guard ourselves against the danger that by taking up too rigid an attitude now we might be in a few months' time find ourselves pleading more for Commonwealth interests than the Commonwealth itself. There are certain indications that this may be happening. 78

George Brown, also known for his pro-marketeer views, had to play the delicate role of asking the Conference, as Party's Deputy Leader, to support the NEC statement, without at the same time compromising his views. While

not contradicting the leader anywhere and trying to steer party back to the equilibrium from the 'shift in emphasis' in Gaitskell's speech, Brown said:

First, there are some economic advantages. Hugh Gaitskell put it at 50-50. There is no law which says that the Leader and the Deputy Leader have to say the same thing in the same words about everything...I frankly put it (the figure) higher than he does. But nobody will claim that it is more than marginally so.

He further said that "there are some economic advantages if we go in, and this view lies behind the document." Brown's speech after that of his leader "sought to shift the balance of argument back towards the centre, but it was clearly anti-climatic". But Brown himself felt that his was "a worst speech and yet made impact".

In the aftermath of the Party Conference there had been some protest from important trade union leaders like Jack Cooper, Roy Gunter, Bill Carron, all right-wingers against Gaitskell's Common Market speech. As Roy Jenkins commented, "many of the most important trade union leaders as well as a substantial group of M.P.s feel that the positive case for Britain's entry should be at least equally strea-

79. Ibid., p. 191.
81. George Brown, n. 72, p. 218.
Though it was rumoured that the dissenting pro-marketeers might exacerbate the Common Market to the point of threatening the party unity, it, however, soon passed off with both the Labour leadership and the pro-marketeers soft-pedalling the subject. The party was switching its attack on Government from the Common Market to other issues when Brown declared that "we must concentrate nation's attention on the industrial and social problems which inescapably take Britain, whatever, the Common Market decision is".

After De Gaulle's veto on Britain's entry in January 1963, the subject of Common Market soon ceased to be a live issue with both the parties deliberately soft-pedalling it. In the 1964 General Election, Common Market was hardly a public issue in the British politics. But the 'Five conditions' did remain as the Labour Party's official policy on the question of Britain's entry into the Common Market.

82. Observer, 7 October 1962.