

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE LABOUR PARTY'S DISCOURSE ON
EUROPE, 1961-2000: A MATTER OF NATIONAL IDENTITY**

PhD THESIS

BY

ANTONIOS KARVOUNIS

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ABSTRACT

A common view of the British Labour Party's troubled relationship with Europe since the early nineteen sixties explains the changes in policy purely in terms of inter-party and intra-party competition. However, globally induced changes such as the disintegration of the Commonwealth along with the foundation and further development of the European Community have given rise to fundamental debates about identity. Accordingly, by delineating the nationalist arguments voiced by the party representatives during five crucial moments of the intra-party debate on Europe (1961-2, 1967, 1970-75, 1980-83 and 1997-2000), this thesis points out that the European issue has been primarily an issue of national identity for the Labour Party, which, since its inception, has been embedded within the British culture. As a result, by placing the party's nationalism against the background of its intellectual traditions, this study argues that, what the different sides of the argument have exposed has not been merely partisan feuds, but, instead, three competing and interrelated narratives of British nationalism: the space of the nation (the imperial and the Atlantic links, the British isles and the Continent), the culture of the nation (constitution, Parliament, Protestantism, and the enduring values), and the time of the nation (war memories and memories and practice of a benevolent empire). These three narratives have been defined not only by their inter-relationships with each other, but have been also produced through a process of negation. They have been primarily defined against the 'other': race and alien have constituted the conceptual partners of the British nation in the Labour Party's discourse. In particular, immigrants, European workers, asylum seekers, and their corresponding 'different' cultural and temporal backgrounds have been some of the 'significant others' that have conditioned the existence of Labour Britishness during the last forty years.

Key words: Labour, Europe, party traditions, nation and the 'other' race

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PART 1

A BASIS FOR EXPLORING THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY'S NATIONAL IDENTITY

C H A P T E R 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Rationale of the Thesis

The British Labour party has had a troubled relationship with Europe throughout the post-war period. Kevin Featherstone has remarked that, 'few political parties have been troubled by questions concerned with European integration as much as the British Labour party' (Featherstone 1988, 41). This troubled relationship can be graphically illustrated by a quick look at the six related changes in policy on Europe adopted by the Labour party between 1961 and 1997.

First, during the Conservative Prime Minister Macmillan's first bid for British membership of the then Common Market (1961), the revisionist Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell, attacked the move, defending 'one thousand years of history', during the party conference at the Brighton ice rink in 1962: «A Federal Europe...does mean the end of Britain as an independent European state...it means the end of a thousand years of history...and it does mean the end of the Commonwealth» (Gaitskell 1962b, 159). Second, Gaitskell's successor, the left-winger Harold Wilson made the second application giving a qualified yes in 1966, though, as he said in the Commons, «we have our links based on history with the countries, old and new...(so) we have still a long way to go before we get a truly European unity» (Wilson 1967b, col.1094). Third, when in 1971, the Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath managed to gain the consent of the House on the terms he secured for Britain's membership of the EC, it was only because of the support from the sixty-nine Labour

pro-European rebels led by Roy Jenkins who dismissed Gaitskell's and Wilson's imperial attachments and defied the already altered party policy by saying that «the Commonwealth can no longer give us a special role in the world» (Jenkins 1970, 5). Fourth, during the referendum campaign in 1975, the Wilson government allowed disagreements within the cabinet and recommended the British public to vote for British membership stressing that «membership of the Common Market does not deprive us of our national identity» (HSMO 1975, 11). Fifth, five years later, Jenkins and his pro-European colleagues abandoned Labour, and the party leader, Michael Foot, sought Britain's withdrawal from the EC: «You could perfectly well have an international policy without necessarily being a member of the Common Market» (Clark 1981, 2; Foot 1982b, 83). Sixth, the election of the Labour government in May 1997, led by Tony Blair, produced a positive rapprochement with Europe. New Labour's calls for a re-negotiation of Britain's relationship with Europe supplanted the previous intra-party tension, and appeared to be a new departure for the party. When confronted with the first challenge of his premiership in the Amsterdam Treaty negotiations in June 1997, Blair set out his vision of «a Europe of free, independent sovereign nations» in which «in all the areas - tax, immigration, defence - the British national interest, the British veto, is secured» (Blair 1997b).

Bearing in mind the above intra-party frictions and these 'zigzags' (conditional no in 1962, qualified yes in 1966, no in 1971, yes in 1975, no in 1980, yes in 1997), what first attracted my interest was the existence of an ever-present subtext that the accompanying justifications of the opposing policies suggest. In particular, I wished to examine not the short-term motives of the party factions, which led to such policy inconsistencies, but, rather, the stable core of their beliefs in the nation-state as the aforementioned quotes reveal. In my contention, the different sides of the argument appeared to share more than they could possibly imagine. Despite their apparently partisan and policy differences, the anti-European biased Gaitskell's cry God for England and «a thousand years of history» and Foot's Little Englander

«internationalism» on the one hand, and Jenkins' quest for «a special role» for his country in the Continent and Blair's equally Europhile vision of a «Europe of separate identities» (Blair 2000e), on the other hand, they seem to have in common an adherence to the nation-state and a mutual dislike of Britain being sucked into a European superstate.

Following on from this central issue, three controversies arose which informed my research. First, why has a supposedly internationalist socialist party such as Labour sided with nationalist arguments? Are there any ideological, historical or cultural reasons that have prompted Labour to defend vigorously the privileges of the nation-state? Second, due to the constant changes in Labour policy, have all the ideological party factions shared one vision of Britishness during the European debates? If not, what have been the competing visions of nationhood that the different ideological fractions have espoused, and what does this tell us about the possible theoretical implications concerning the character of Labour nationalism? Finally, there is the centrality of Europe in the party's perception of the British nation. What makes Europe so special that Labour defined and continues to define its Britishness against her?

Below, the literature review aims to address the aforementioned controversies by tackling the involved ambiguities.

1.2 Literature Review

Starting from the first issue, this introductory note argues that, in contrast with the bulk of the literature on the relationship between the British Labour party and Europe, the historic-political context in which the concept of national identity can be understood, the concept of national identity itself, and the party traditions which nurtured these nationalist beliefs, and, as a result, against which these webs of beliefs can be comprehended, appear crucial points before we begin to explore the British Labour party's view of British identity.

Accounts of the Labour party, which involve an interrogation of its national identity on the European question, are ignored by a significant section of the literature. The European question has received only a descriptive treatment by many scholars whose research interests are confined to the party decision-making process and balance of power and the conventions of the British political system. There are two distinct strands of literature on this subject: the first strand attributes Labour's European policies to the issue of inter- and intra-party politics; the second strand explains Labour's European policy in terms of the debate over the legitimacy of the British state.

The first strand of literature assumes that the adversarial nature of British politics is one of the major factors in Labour's response to the European question during the major part of the post-war period. For example, Nigel Ashford argues that the convention of adversarial politics is for the opposition parties to oppose the policies of the government, even while behaviour in government may reflect a high degree of continuity. This was seen in Labour's opposition to Europe in 1962, 1971 and 1980: any movement towards integration was used as a weapon by the opposition to attack the incumbent government (Ashford 1992, 119).

Similarly, Michael Newman in his *Socialism and European Unity* has asserted that pragmatic politics played a major role in the reorientation of policy. For instance, he said that, in the early seventies, because the EEC issue appeared to provide the only major opportunity to bring down the Heath Government before its term of office expired, enormous pressure was exerted on the pro-Marketeters to subordinate their enthusiasm for the EEC to the domestic political struggle (Newman 1983, 222). Likewise, the Europeanisation of the party in the late eighties is also attributed to the character of British politics. Andrew Geddes maintains that for Labour the effects of four successive general election defeats and, more recently, the adversarial political advantage to be gained from a pro-European stance when the Conservatives were suffering bitter divisions over the issue, may have helped prompt

a pro-EC stance (Geddes 1994, 374). In addition, Daniels underlines the domestic political context in shaping Labour's strategy and asserts that the Europeanisation of the party may be seen as a response to its long exclusion from national office (Daniels 1998, 79).

Moreover, the European question has been also seen as an issue of party management and internal balance of power. Tudor Jones has said that the party controversy over the European policy reflected not only deeply held differences over the European issue but also the configuration of power within the party during the early seventies (Jones 1996, 99).

Similarly, J. R. Robins in his classic work on the tumultuous period of the European debate in the sixties and seventies, links the adversarial nature of British politics with the intra-party struggle between the ideological factions. In Robins's account, the first consideration in party policy was the internal struggle between the fundamentalist and revisionist wings of the party to win support from the centre of the party and thereby influence policy. The second consideration had to do with policy-making and the accompanying problems of party management (Robins 1979, 7). Official policy had much more to do than face the specific problems that it was directed towards. For example, the party leader was forced into supporting a particular position in order to placate a cabal of senior colleagues. At the same time, the party in the Parliament and in the country had to be satisfied and maintained as an electoral coalition. The leader might frequently be concerned with maximising party unity in circumstances where the level of consensus on policy issues might be low. Often the demands of party management, Robins alleged, pulled the leadership in different directions and to be successful, deft political conjuring or precisely calculated ambiguity was required to gratify at one and the same time as many of the rival cliques as possible (Robins *ibid*, 8).

The shattered morale after the Clause IV and defence policy battles reduced the European issue to a matter of political manoeuvres at the beginning of the

European debates in the early sixties. The EEC provided Gaitskell in 1962 with a balm for the party, providing it did not develop into an issue demanding a clear choice one way or another. Gaitskell moved from a relatively uncommitted position regarding EEC membership, to emotional opposition at conference, and back to a more moderate position in the parliamentary party. This erratic behaviour can be explained, in Robins' view, in terms of short-term tactical moves by Gaitskell to win unity in various Labour fora in anticipation that these inconsistent stands would not catch up with him since the issue would never materialise (Robins *ibid*, 41).

It is argued that, from Gaitskell's five conditions with their subtle nuances, to the disintegration of that approach into its distinctive strands in 1970-1, Labour's decision on the issue of principle had been one of no decision. According to Robins, this strategy was rational for a party that invariably suffered from conflict over major issues such as party constitution, defence and trade union rights. Party leaders saw obvious advantages for avoiding conflict until such time as a real choice was available on Britain's entry into the EEC. In the seventies, it is argued, Wilson's prime concern was that EEC policy should be fashioned so as to cause minimum damage to the fabric of the party. His management is claimed to have kept the party intact, with the exception of the disillusioned revisionists, and the party quickly ceased feuding and, still leaving the principle of Europeanism undecided, headed for a position promising unity on the platform of renegotiating the terms of entry. Finally, it was deemed that the advantage of holding a referendum, as far as the party managers were concerned, was that it made the EEC conflict largely external to the party (Robins *ibid*, 128).

In the same vein, Rosamond, citing Gaitskell's 1962 party conference speech and Wilson's elusive posture and innovative use of the referendum, argued that Labour's attitude to the EC has tended to be influenced more by contemporary debates and intra-party trends than by a considered view of the merits of European integration (Rosamond 1990, 41).

Similarly, Bilski's account of the Labour left shows how the latter utilised Europe as a launch pad for its attempt to achieve control of the party from the early seventies (Bilski 1977). She has stressed that the Common Market issue provided the arena for a power struggle not only between the two major parties, but also between the rival factions within each party. Her attention focused particularly on the influence of the Common Market issue on the formation of groups within the Labour party. The nature of these groups, the degree to which they corresponded to the traditional Left/Right continuum, shifts of power among them and the overall effects of the Common Market issue on the character of the Labour party in the 1970s, are some of the issues discussed in Bilski's study (Bilski *ibid*, 307). She argued that when the party was in opposition, the power of the backbenchers, the rank and file, the trade unions and the conference became stronger, whereas when the party was in power, the tendency was usually towards an ideological compromise around which the party could unite. In other words, when in opposition, the ideological differences became much more acute, while in power, a compromise was necessary to enable the government to function (Bilski *ibid*, 308).

Likewise, Geyer and Daniels saw the fluctuations of Labour party policy in terms of the rise and fall of pro- and anti-Europeans within the party (Geyer 1992; Daniels 1998). Like the previous accounts on Labour's European policy, both have claimed that attitudes towards Europe within Labour party became entangled with intra-party factional conflicts over the control and ideological direction of the party (Daniels 1998, 74). For instance, it is argued that Kinnock's acceptance of the European Community and its social policy was a way of weakening the hard Left within the party and indirectly strengthening his own internal reforms (Geyer 1992, 23).

However, as we shall see, these attempts to explain Labour party policy on Europe purely in terms of inter-party and intra-party competition, are not wholly convincing, since they overlook the enduring belief structure within the party with

regard to the British nation. The second strand of literature has linked the party's policy with the contested legitimacy of the British state.

For example, Stephen Tindale suggests that to assume that the changes in the party's attitudes in seventies and eighties can be explained simply by the rise and fall of the Bennite left is an oversimplification (Tindale 1992, 276). Probably the most significant factor, he claimed, was the recognition that the belief in the nation state's legitimacy was weakening (Tindale *ibid*, 185). Indeed, Andrew Geddes claims that Labour's changed European stance on the issue of sovereignty has had a strong domestic impetus centred around a growing discontent about the British constitution, which has prompted the promulgation of a reform agenda, by groups such as Charter 88 calling for constitutional reform. Questioning the constitutional status quo has made it easier to accept the ceding of powers to supranational authorities (Geddes *ibid*, 375). Similarly, Russell Holden's study on New Labour tells us that Europe became more than an issue of party management and played the role of mainspring for promoting the change urgently required for party renewal, in that it provided both a context and a primer for change in which the strength and viability of the nation-state were being questioned (Holden 1999b, 104).

However, the previous studies cannot explain the persistent nationalism among the main party representatives throughout all these years. The legitimacy crisis of British state did not lead to disaffection with the British nation. For New Labour, the exaltation of the nation and its symbols is the essence of its pro-European case.

By adopting purely descriptive approaches, therefore, neither of the first two strands of literature has been able to establish a dialectical process of interchange between the party beliefs and the national culture. The Labour party's views on Europe have been seen as a reactive formation either to the interior balance of power in the party, or to the issue of constitutional reform. The fault of those explanations is that they failed to realise that the policies of the Labour party cannot be studied fruitfully in isolation from its own beliefs and traditions in relation to the British

nation. This thesis will show that the European policy of the party is largely shaped by its national considerations and beliefs. After all, Geoffrey Foote has portrayed the party as a «particularly British institution» (Foote 1997, 5 & 13). In fact, Foote has claimed that one of the fundamental labourist tenets of the Labour party has been its loyalty to the nation state: «The liberal internationalism which was to be so strong in the Labour party was always based on adherence and loyal obedience to the nation state. Any threat to that loyalty, as posed in their very different ways by revolutionary Leninism and by the European integrationism, could find no real home in a labourist party» (Foote 1997, 12).

Tom Nairn's perspective on the European policy of the Labour party has been put along these lines (Nairn 1971, 1972a & b). For him, the European question has had to do more with the real nature of the Labour party than with Europe itself. Nairn has provided us with the seminal beliefs and traditions of Labour nationalism through an exploration of the relationship between concepts of nation and class. In his view, the British Labour party appears as more of a national-minded political organisation than a class-conscious political movement; an assertion shared by several scholars of Labour history (Miliband 1964; Howell 1980, 273; Jones and Keating 1985; Wallace 1989; Elliott 1993, 181; Hutton 1995; Marquand 1995b; Kenny and Smith 1997). The subordination of the sectional interests of the labour movement to the national/imperial interests of the late nineteenth century has been the core of his argument (Nairn 1971, 22; 1972a, 41; 1972b, 43; 1972c). In *The European Problem*, Nairn demonstrates how the working-class was nationalised, jumping on the bandwagon of imperialism: 'Labour party's infancy coincided with the definitive victory of liberal imperialism', Nairn wrote (Nairn 1972a, 57). 'The working class', he continued, 'was politically integrated into the nation when the latter was most confused with Empire, and when the Empire had the most effective ideological camouflage at its disposal' (Nairn 1972a, 58). From the outset, consequently, Labourist nationalism took on this strong 'internationalist' coloration. The latter

proved the perfect moral legitimisation of national sentiment: it set the seal of conscience upon that pragmatic acceptance of the old nation-state to which Labour was borne by its close alliance with the Liberal party and its evolutionist philosophy (Nairn 1972a, 59). This is an internationalism, Nairn notes, whose special rootedness in Labourism arose from the fact of imperialism (Nairn 1972a, 59).

Several other scholars of the party's European policy, drawing on Nairn's analysis, have shifted the focus of the debate from the sterile assumptions about party management and the nature of British politics and, instead, linked Labour beliefs about Europe with concerns about national sovereignty (Featherstone 1981a & b; 1988; Rosamond 1990; Jones and Keating 1985; Grahl and Teague 1988; Pilkington 1995; George and Heythorne 1996). This thesis broadly endorses the scope of this approach, even though its arguments are not restricted to the issue of national sovereignty.

However, Michael Newman has partially challenged Nairn's case. In his *Socialism and European Unity* he said that the claim that hostility to Europe necessarily stems from nationalism is oversimplified, and that the negative attitudes exhibited by some of the left are too complex to be labelled with this single term (Newman 1983, xii). Newman asserts that the European attitude and policies of the left can be fully explained in terms of their adherence to neither national interests nor socialism. Rather they must be seen as the product of a complex and variable interaction between the two (Newman *ibid*, xiv).

Yet, Newman attributes nationalism only to those who took an anti-European stance, whereas we have seen that the pro-Europeans have also adopted the nationalist rhetoric, because even for them, the nation-state is more important than any transnational association in the international arena. As Nairn has noted, "even fervent Europeanists still regularly transmitted surreal notions on how good it would be for the Continent to have lessons in democracy from the Mother of Parliaments. The fact is that neither side in the debate relaxed its grip on the udders of island

constitutionalism for a moment” (Nairn 1977, 54). Moreover, when Newman puts forward the socialist case, what he actually means is the preservation of parliamentary sovereignty for the implementation of socialist planning - even though, he notes, there has been a very marked tendency within the Labour party for such socialist beliefs to be expressed in a chauvinist manner and for a potentially socialist argument against West European integration to be subsumed by a traditional nationalistic campaign (Newman *ibid*, 274).

Although Newman fails to undermine Nairn’s argument, Nairn’s analysis does have three weaknesses. For one thing, Nairn’s analysis was published almost thirty years ago and requires updating in order to accommodate the elements of Labour nationhood that have appeared in the following years. Apart from the three applications for British membership of the EC, the debates of the early eighties, which coincided with the imperial adventure in the South Atlantic, this thesis also examines New Labour’s view of Britishness, which appears to re-define the party’s view of national identity. The focus of this study therefore is not narrowly confined to the imperial context of the sixties but also embraces the European context of the nineties. Second, imperialism has not been the only vision, which affected the nationalist thinking of the party. Little Englanderism and Europeanism were also of prime concern for the intellectual forebears and pressure groups of the party such as the Fabian Society, the ethical Independent Labour party and, to a lesser extent, the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (Webb 1975; Wainwright 1989; Hassan 1995; Foote 1997; Gordon 1969; Jones and Keating 1985; Gott 1989; Howe 1989; Ward 1998; Andrews 1995; Marquand 1995b; 1998; Beer 1998; Minion 1999). This thesis takes all these traditions into account in order to explain the nationalist beliefs of the various ideological party camps. For instance, since its inception, the Fabian Society, perhaps the most important pressure group of the party, became the forum in which imperialism, Little Englanderism and Europeanism found expression in varying degrees each of them. In the same way, during its first steps the ILP nurtured an

insular radicalism whereas in the post-war period, already disaffiliated from the party (1932) and in terminal decline, despite its pacifist vision of a United Europe of Socialist States, at the end, favoured the 'functional', inter-governmental, approach to the European problem - a vision adopted by all the subsequent party leaderships.

Turning now to the second controversy, the previous comments imply that one should look at more than one vision of nationhood within a political organisation with apparently diverse spatial, historical and cultural attachments.

In fact, the *spatial* element of Labour nationhood has been mainly associated with arguments over national sovereignty as embodied in three overlapping types: the imperialist vision of 'Britain rules the waves'; the isolationist 'defence of the island' vision of 'Little Englanderism'; and the pro-European 'Britain in Europe as a leading partner' have all maintained that each nation better serves its own interests within its own territory. The space of the nation emerges as the most important element of Labour Britishness. For some scholars, it is perhaps the most salient aspect of the conceptions of 'nation' (Cohen 1994; Miller 1995, 23; Smith 1995, 111; Guibernau 1996, 47). That is why it constitutes the main part of thesis and around which the other two aspects of nationhood (culture and time) revolve, as will become clear below.

Nevertheless, despite its centrality in the definition of Labour Britishness, the space of the nation is defined by both cultural and temporal elements in the same way that the time element integrates space and culture. As it is argued in the next chapter, dichotomous classifications of nationalisms such as ethnic/civic appear inadequate to encapsulate the wholeness of the party's perception of national identity. In reality, few modern national states possess only one form of nationalism; in most states the two types overlap (Kershner 1998, 2).

As a consequence, the *culture* of the nation, consisting of symbols and historical shared ways of life such as Protestantism, Houses of Parliament, Ancient Constitution, enduring Values, and the *time* of Labour nationhood as shared possession in the form of war memories (Britain's 'finest hour') and as a journey to

perfection in the form of development either in the imperial or, more recently, the European context (as ‘citizenship capacity’ and ‘modernisation’ respectively) overlap and define the spatial element. Yet, it is not just the interrelationship of its three elements that defines Labour nationhood.

In this thesis, national identity cannot be defined without the ‘other’. The analysis of nationalist discourse cannot be confined to nation and state institutions. Labour nationhood is understood as a relationship. Labour Britishness is a matter of boundary negotiation and construction against the ‘other’. Labour Britishness can be understood only as a relationship between nation and the ‘other’ - imperial dominions and continental states, ‘traditional’ societies and Western nations. The effects of global politics within the imperial or European contexts have defied the limits of the British nation-state. The interdependence of ‘national’ and ‘alien’ emerges as the crucial precondition in our endeavour to look at the party’s view of national identity. As it is argued in chapter 2, the definition of nationalism given in this thesis takes us beyond the accounts of the modernist paradigm of state-building and national development, and consists of those practices, which create and maintain boundaries between those who belong to the nation-state and those who lie outside its confines. ‘Alien’ and ‘race’ are the conceptual partners of nation. Balibar explains that ‘the discourses of race and nation are never far apart’ (Balibar 1991a, 37). They are relational terms, interdependent and inseparable in nationalist practice.

Here lies the third weakness of Nairn’s approach. As will become clear in the next chapter, because of Nairn’s narrow definition of racism («racism is the symptom of an absence of popular nationalism among the English» (Nairn 1977, 294), he failed to explore the Labour conception of national identity adequately. That is, he ignored the racial implications of the spatial, cultural and temporal components of its nationhood. The latter become understood within the inter-relationship between the local and the global.

Indeed - turning to the third controversy which concerns the centrality of Europe in the party's perception of the British nation - one of the major issues that most previous scholars failed to address, and subsequently led them to a very superficial treatment of the European question, is the context in which one makes sense of the idea of national identity. It should be made clear from the beginning that the examination of Labour nationhood can be possible only within a wider canvas than the narrow one of the British nation-state. As Kate Manzo notes, throughout British history, debates about identity have been most evident during periods of globally induced change - transformations occasioned by wars against France and later Germany; by the administration of the British Empire and its subsequent transformation into a Commonwealth; and, highly relevant to this thesis, by the formation of the European Economic Community, which evolved into the European Community (Manzo 1996, 113).

As a matter of fact, apart from its historical identity, Britain's political culture and the specificity of its ancient political regime, Richard Heffernan has pointed out that Labour's post-war Euro-scepticism also reflected the country's established geopolitical worldview (Heffernan 2000, 397). After 1945, the Empire-Commonwealth aside, Britain saw itself as far more Atlanticist than it was European; and for its part Labour most certainly did as well. In addition, the impact of economic and political globalisation and the internationalisation of decision-taking along with the pursuit of national interests and preferences through interstate bargaining conducted within European institutions appear as some of the most notable reasons for the Europeanisation of New Labour in the 1990s (Heffernan 2001, 182). In both cases, the global context has influenced the way Labour saw Britain in the European context.

In this way, Labour nationalism only becomes understood when situated within a larger historical and political context than that of the nation state. Nationalism inevitably involves a mixture of the particular and the universal (Billig

1995, 83). The Commonwealth on the one hand, and Europe on the other, have provided this historical and political context. The dissolution of the former and the formation of the latter equally posed a challenge to British boundaries. As a result, the changing nature of the British nation-state highlighted concerns about 'who' belongs 'where'. Hall has noted that 'identity comes to the fore when there are doubts about belonging' (Kershen 1998, 2). As the debates on the immigration and asylum reveal, the construction of racial differences (in character, customs, language, and social standards) between the British nation and their Commonwealth and European counterparts that set them apart, underlines the fact that geographical, spatial separation goes hand in hand with cultural distinctiveness. Those people who cannot conform to the above cultural standards (Protestantism, Houses of Parliament, enduring values) have been considered un-British, whereas, the absence from memory (war memories, memories of Empire) inscribes alienness and inferiority. In this sense, space further overlaps with the cultural and temporal components producing thus a less 'pure' Labour nationhood.

This last failure of Nairn's was not unique to him; on the contrary, especially in relation to the race concept, the Labour literature as a whole has shown little interest. The little that has been published has treated race as an immutable biological construct and is confined to a particular context, focused usually on black immigration from the New Commonwealth. Different interpretations have been given to explain the shift from the Labour party's open door policy on New Commonwealth to the highly restrictive position adopted in the sixties. Economic needs (Saggar 1993), a hostile public opinion (Katznelson 1973; Messina 1989; Leyton-Henry and Rich 1986), a wavering political leadership (Foot 1965; Gupta 1975; Saggar 1993) and lack of commitment to traditional ideological credos (Hiro 1971; Ben-Tovim and Gabriel 1982; Reeves 1983; Howe 1989) were some of the interpretations given for the changing climate of political debate about race in the sixties and seventies.

But it is far too simplistic to see Labour as a reactive instrument of either economic forces or popular pressures in relation to the control of immigration, as the more recent restrictive immigration policies have also revealed. This thesis makes clear that nation and race concepts are units of structure, which draw on specific patterns of culture and history. As the chapter 2 will make evident, race is primarily a political concept constructed in relation to a field of other concepts such as culture, class, gender, ethnicity, nation and discursive or extra-discursive practices upon which the Labour party draws to sustain the character and identity of British society.

1.3 The Methodological Approach

The work, which follows, is based upon an empirical analysis and a diachronic interpretation of suitable archival deposits. Whereas the empirical analysis is perfectly suitable for the historical aspect of this thesis, why then do we need a diachronic treatment of our material? Narratives emerge from traditions of political thought. In the same way, as Benedict Anderson has noted «nationalism has to be understood with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which it came into being» (Anderson 1991). As seen above, in order to examine the various narratives of nation that figured in the Labour party's discourse on Europe we need first to relate their nationalist beliefs to the intellectual traditions of Labour in which they were developed.

All our beliefs and actions emerge against the background of a political tradition or a set of theories. The latter provide the explanatory framework that enable us to describe better these beliefs and concepts (Marquand 1988; Bevir 1996). Samuel Beer has also noted that political traditions with their values, beliefs and emotional symbols remain one of the variables determining the behaviour of individuals, groups and parties (Beer 1971, 3). Traditions are contingent, constantly evolving, necessarily in a historical context. Traditions emerge out of specific instances and the relations between them. The instances that make up a tradition must have passed from

generation to generation. They must encompass relationships as they develop over time with each case the starting point for later cases; for example, traditions include beliefs and practices relayed from teacher to pupil. Moreover, because traditions are not fixed and static, we cannot identify or construct instances by comparing them with the key features of the tradition. Traditions are the product of the ways in which people develop ideas and practices. We can only identify any given tradition by tracing the appropriate historical connections back through time (Marquand 1988, 2 & 12; Bevir and Rhodes 1998, 98).

Traditions in turn consist of theories. Theories explain discourses or facts by postulating significant relationships - parallels, overlaps, and distinctions - between them. In this study, a discourse acquires its particular character from its relationship to the other discourses that fix its content. Theories reveal the particular character of a discourse by uncovering its relationship to these other discourses that locate it in time and space and thereby define the preconditions of its unfolding. Of course, just as theories reveal the particular character of discourses, so they often help to define the way we regard the discourse. Theories do not reveal pre-given discourses; rather, they create the character of facts and even guide our decisions as to what should count as a discourse. Thus, we cannot say simply that such and such a theory does or does not fit the discourses or facts. All we can do is to compare bundles of theories in terms of their ability to relate innumerable facts to one another by highlighting pertinent similarities and differences, and continuities and disjunctions (Bevir 1999a, 93).

In this thesis, our theories on nationalism and racism reveal the particular senses of nation and race which here appeared in Labour discourse across time and space since the early sixties in the European debate. Our concern is that these theories should cover a wide range of discourses from different sides of the party. As Bevir maintains, a comprehensive web of theories covers a wide range of discourses and bring them together from different areas, some of which we previously had not related to one another (Bevir 1999a, 102). In this way, my endeavour is to reveal particular

relationships, such as overlaps and parallels, between representatives of different traditions who share common beliefs in the British nation. I also make clear that Labour nationhood is composed of overlapping elements that intersect with each other and are derived from different ideological positions. So, our theoretical background - see chapter 2 - should provide a map, questions, and a language for the analysis of Labour nationalist discourse.

How we understand the Labour view of Britishness depends, therefore, on the particular party traditions and the theories of nationalism and racism with which they are connected.

1.4 Source Material

In this thesis, discourse refers to a collection of statements. Discourses and statements are constructed and registered in texts. Empirical analysis of suitable archival deposits forms the backbone of this project. Two criteria are used in the selection of texts for analysis in this thesis. Firstly, they must deal with issues, which have a bearing on national identity, that is, nation and race, and secondly, they must have something to do with the Labour party and the European debates.

Most of the material is drawn from five crucial moments of the intra-party debate on Europe. The first three (1961-2, 1967, 1970-75) refer to the three applications for British membership of the EC, the 1975 referendum and the debates over the immigration Acts; the fourth (1980-83) refers to one of the most turbulent periods of the party history in which, among others, Labour put aside its internationalist credentials by seeking Britain's withdrawal from the EC and backing the Conservative government's handling of the Falklands war; finally, the fifth turning-point of the party's relationship with Europe refers to the Europeanisation period in the 1990s, and especially the Europeanism of the Blair-led New Labour government. Although Neil Kinnock and John Smith paved the way for Labour's contemporary unmistakable Europeanism, as has been suggested, the election in May

1997 of the Labour government headed by Tony Blair marked a significant shift in the dominant discourses and rhetorics of British politics over the European Union (Painter 2000, 229). Blair sought to differentiate 'New Labour' sharply from his predecessor's unco-operative and narrowly nationalistic approach to European affairs while, as will become clear, being careful to emphasise the importance of protecting what he calls 'national interest'. The issue of the asylum shows how the debate over Europe continues to be framed by the discourse of sovereignty.

Labour statements may be official policy statements, or they may occur in parliamentary debates, or in conference speeches or newspaper and magazine articles. Most of the texts examined were culled from the archives of the Labour party. Clearly not all statements carry equal weight, and official declarations of policy and intent are distinguished from other statements, and from political action.

1.5 Chapter Outlines

The thesis is divided into five parts. Part 1 is consisted of two chapters: having taken into consideration the questions and concerns outlined in this introductory chapter, in what follows, the second chapter provides an overview of the theories on national identity in which race has been a constitutive element of nation, and breaks down the main themes of Labour Britishness - space, culture and time.

Having analysed the relational character of Labour nationalism (national identity in 'otherness'), Part 2 examines the space of the nation in three separate chapters (3-5). Each chapter is devoted to a different vision of spatial nationhood: the imperialist vision; the insular Little Englanderism of the 1970s and early 1980s; and the Europeanism of the 1990s. In each case, the nationalist argumentation is examined against the background of the beliefs expressed within the intellectual traditions and pressure groups of the party. In parallel with the nationalist argumentation each chapter makes an analysis of its racist implications as have emerged in the debates on the immigration and the asylum.

The third part (chapters 6-8), considering the culture of the nation, looks into the relationship of three overlapping 'border guards' - Protestantism, Houses of Parliament, and enduring values - to constructions of racial difference in Labour nationalism. The isolation of cultures conditions the preservation of the national context of each race across time.

The fourth part (chapters 9-10) looks at the time of Labour nationhood as possession of common memories (memories of war and memories of a benevolent Empire).

Finally, the fifth part (chapter 11) makes a synthesis of the elements of the complex and variable nature of Labour Britishness, indicates the future policy implications of New Labour's Euronationalism and suggests further research directions emerging from this work.

1.6 Conclusion

In short, this thesis goes beyond descriptive accounts of the European policy of the British Labour party and places particular emphasis on its underlying nationalist and racist dispositions. The European question has not been confined either to inter and intra-party competition or to the considerations surrounding the legitimacy of the British state, as some strands of the literature suggest; instead, I argue that the party's discourse on Europe is a matter of national identity which is explored in a wider context than that of the nation-state, and whose salient elements - space, time and culture - are engaged in a complex relationship. For this reason, Labour's discourse on Europe is examined against the party's intellectual traditions and related theoretical frameworks on nationalism and racism. As the following chapter makes clear, nationalism's conceptual partners are not simply nation and state institutions. They are also race and alien that intersect with nation in a particular spatio-temporal context.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss issues arising from the question of national identity, nationalism and racism, to enable us to address adequately the multi-dimensional character of Labour Britishness on the European question. There are three arguments developed in the following three sections. First, I assert that the definition of nationalism is not monolithic and pure (2.2). In any society, and even in a political party, there is a variety of nationalisms. Second, I argue that nationalism cannot be defined without the ‘other’, the alien (2.3). The attainment of nationhood presupposes practice, and most often, exclusionary activity against the stranger. And, thirdly, I maintain that a look at the competing meanings of race reveals their continued hold on the three main themes of nationalism, that is, space, culture and time (2.4). The emergence of new racism or ‘cultural’ racism in the post-war years came to affirm the social, and not just, biological determination of race (2.5).

2.2 Competing Nationalisms: In Search of Purism

Despite gaining relatively little attention from social psychologists, national identity is the most powerful social identity an individual might adopt (Tajfel 1978). Yet, its nebulous nature has meant that there is no agreement among academics on the basic question of how the nation and national identity can be best defined, prompting scholars to produce overlapping or competing accounts of the nation. However, we can usefully distinguish two broad forms of nationalism: civic and ethnic nationalisms. These have found expression under various terms in several works: subjective and objective (Kellas 1998), civic and ethnic (Alter 1989; Brubaker 1992; Hobsbawm

1990; Greenfeld 1992; Ignatieff 1994; Smith 1991; 1995), political and cultural (Hutchinson 1987), voluntarist and organic (Kohn 1967).

Let us begin with ethnic nationalism, i.e., the idea that the concept of national identity should be conflated with that of ethnic identity. In Connor's words, for example, the nation can be seen as 'a self-aware ethnic group' (Connor 1978, 388). On this view, nationalism is an irrational, primordial force, 'an attachment to one's people' and arises in ethnic groups, which claim common origins of blood (Connor 1993, 385). According to this approach, one can best understand the power and intensity of national allegiances, as modern manifestations of a phenomenon that has existed throughout history and across the world, namely the phenomenon of ethnicity. Alter comments on the elements of the pre-political community:

«The spirit of community that obtains in a cultural nation is founded upon seemingly objective criteria such as common heritage and language, a distinct area of settlement, religion, culture and history, and does not need to be mediated by a national state or other political form. Consciousness of unity, the sense of belonging together, develops independent of the state» (Alter 1989, 15).

Plamenatz and Kohn contend that the ethnic definition of the nation has been predominant in Central and Eastern Europe where it has given rise to exclusivist nationalisms (Plamenatz 1976; Kohn 1967). Fichte was one of the first writers to offer a coherent ethnic account of the nation, arguing that individuals owe their identity to the nation and culture into which they are born (Reiss 1955). His was an organic and deterministic nationalism defining the nation as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous group, superior to the state and the individual. The nation is a natural social unit, linking man with his forefathers and has language as its key external feature. The maintenance of ethnic unity and the cultural superiority of the German Volk was Fichte's paramount objective. To achieve this he advocated national self-sufficiency and a closed nation-state.

The ethnic definition of the nation is not though confined to Central Europe: one of the major expressions of ethnic nationalism was the integral nationalism of Barres and Maurras in the late nineteenth century France (Soucy 1972). Again the nation is a pre-political community, defined in ethnic and cultural terms. The individual owes his identity to the nation, and the nation is to be purged of alien elements: 'Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture' (Gellner 1983, 7). The ethnic nation tends to produce exclusivist, anti-pluralist and anti-democratic nationalisms which propagate myths of dead heroes and a golden age of authoritarian rule. In short, it is the nationalism of intolerant bigots (Billig 1995, 47).

The alternative civic or political model of the nation is frequently cited as the predominant one in Western Europe, stressing equal citizenship in a legal-political community (Smith 1991; 1995). The emphasis here is on individual and national self-determination. The civic model is a state-based, top-down, spatially bound account in which membership of the nation depends on citizenship rather than ethnic origins: citizenship and nationality are coterminous (Hobsbawm 1990). Here, the idea of the national territory is essentially potent as it embodies three of the most important kinds of motives that bind human groups together - traditions, interests and ideals: «The territory is regarded as a heritage of the national past, and is the basis of the whole present existence of the nation...and encourages the idea of the naturalness of national consciousness» (Loughlin 1995, 4). Patriotism or allegiance to the nation-state is a by-product of political citizenship and active participation in a shared civic culture. Whereas the ethnic model produces exclusivist nationalisms, the civic model advocates a pluralist nationalism in which ethnic diversity is welcomed and democratic government is the norm. This style of 'civic or citizenship nationalism' was evident in the French Revolution when Abbe Sieyes defined the nation as an association of free and equal citizens exercising popular sovereignty. The liberal nationalisms of Mill and Mazzini linked individual autonomy with national

determination, while Renan provided the classic account of the political nation as based on a shared (democratic) history and on active consent of the people. For Renan, the nation is a «daily plebiscite» resting on democratic values and active participation (Renan 1990, 19).

It is my contention, however, that the division between the ethnic and civic accounts of the nation is not clear-cut. To some extent the civic-ethnic divide is an artificial one. In reality, few modern national states possess only one form of nationalism; in most states the two types overlap. So, it is a misleading perception of national identity to portray the differences between ethnic and civic accounts of the nation as essential dichotomy or unbridgeable divide. As Kershner notes, “identity can never, nor will ever, be static; it is multifaceted and variable” (Kershner 1998, 2).

Further, the nation, Nairn maintains, is Janus-faced, in that the ‘uneven development’ of capitalism embodies both progression and regression, political rationality and irrationality: on the one hand, oriented to an ancient (often imaginary) ethnic past; on the other, futuristic in mobilising populations for collective autonomy and progress (Nairn 1977, 348). Greenfeld too declares that individualistic (political) nationalism cannot but be civic, but civic nationalism can also be collectivistic (ethnic) (Greenfeld 1992, 11). Renan also recognised the importance of shared historical experiences and feelings of communal belonging and identity, but noted that these tend to be at their strongest in nations based on a dominant ethnic group. According to Renan, the nation has both «soul and body»: “It is a ‘spiritual principle’ based on communal (primarily ethnic) memories as well as political institutions and culture” (Renan 1990, 18-19).

Similarly, Kellas claims that Britain is in part an ethnic and social nation (Kellas 1998, 67). Smith also refers to the dual civic-ethnic nature of many nationalisms - their «chameleon-like permutations» - noting that «a national identity is fundamentally multi-dimensional; it can never be reduced to a single element» (Smith 1991, 14). Likewise, Schopflin emphasises the multi-dimensionality of national

identity: «Ethnicity is the consciousness of sharing, while nationhood implies political demands legitimated by the doctrine of nationalism which declares that cultural and political boundaries should be congruent» (Schophflin 1995, 42). And Guibernau has argued that the force of nationalism springs not from rational thought alone, but also from the irrational power of emotions that stem from the feelings of belonging to a particular group. The double face of nationalism explains how these emotions are either transformed into a peaceful and democratic movement seeking the recognition and development of one's nation (civic nationalism), or turned into xenophobia, the will to put one's nation above others and eradicate the different (ethnic nationalism) (Guibernau 1996, 76).

Moreover, not only is civic nationalism frequently conjoined with ethnic nationalism, it embodies ethnic assumptions within itself. Civic nationalism cannot be neutral in a cultural sense: politics and bureaucracy prefer to speak one language, usually a language of eponymous ('titular') group or a language of former metropolis. The civic Western model ('good civic nationalism' in the tradition of Kohn and Plamenatz) is not devoid of racist implications of the so-called Eastern model or (even more) of the nationalism, which, in Ignatieff's words, "has been a defence of the backwardness of economically beleaguered or declining classes and regions" (Ignatieff 1993, 154).

Smith has pointed out that civic nationalism is neither as tolerant nor as unbiased as its self-image suggests. In fact, it can be every bit as severe and uncompromising as ethnic nationalisms. For civic nationalisms often demand the surrender of ethnic community and individuality, the privatisation of ethnic religion and the marginalisation of the ethnic culture and heritage of minorities within the borders of the national state. Hence, not only ethnic but also civic nationalisms may demand the eradication of minority cultures and communities qua communities, on the common assumption not just of equality through uniformity, but that 'high cultures'

and ‘great nations’ are necessarily of greater value than ‘low’ cultures and small nations or ethnies (Smith 1995, 101).

The idea that civic nationalism characterises the first world, and that ethnic nationalism characterises the third world is therefore an illusion. Ignatieff’s assertion that ‘European racism is a form of white ethnic nationalism’ (ibid, 5), casts serious doubts on the claim that the ethnic nationalism of the colonised was purely ‘a revolt against modernity’ rather than a derivative or imitation of the nationalism of their rulers (Manzo 1996, 20). Conversely, ethno-nationalism cannot avoid claiming authority and state and to be a political project as well (Tishkov 2000, 627). So, the predominance/superiority of the Western civic (‘good’) model over the ethnic (‘bad’) model of nationalism cannot be sustained and consequently the exclusive, race-based nationalism of the latter can be ascribed to the former as well (Manzo 1996, 22).

In the Labour party we can find evidence of both civic and ethnic nationalisms. One cannot expect to find just one account of nationhood within a political party such as Labour, which appears more as “a reflection of potentially unstable relationships between a number of groups or factions within and without the party’s internal structure” (Bale 1999, 7). The parliamentary debates around the European question disclosed that there was not a unanimous view of what it meant to be British among the front- and backbenchers of the party. The concept of the nation found in the British Labour party is a prime example of an account, which transcends the civic-ethnic divide. It is not just a Western civic concept in its attachment to the evolving spatial aspect of the party’s Britishness (imperialism, re-baptised as the Commonwealth, Little Englanderism and Euro-nationalism) and civic culture (Houses of Parliament, unwritten constitution), but also one which recognises that adherence to the national community is enhanced by enduring values and ethnic sentiments of collective belonging (Protestantism, the memories of war). Its focus then is neither exclusively political nor cultural, but a fusion of the two.

The Labour nation, then, is a hybrid of civic and ethnic accounts of the British nation. It is a concept in which political and pre-political components of identity are recognised. This amalgamation has been reflected by the internal tensions over the European question. Indeed, it gets its particular shape and characteristics from the political traditions with which they are associated and from their spatio-temporal context. In addition, this civic-ethnic mix in Labour Britishness means that although membership of the national community has not been defined along purely ethnic lines, groups or populations not sharing the values and traditions of the majority British community are not easily integrated.

One of my central contentions is that Labour Britishness cannot be understood as a category, but rather as a relationship. The components of Labour Britishness become a matter of boundary negotiation and construction against the 'other', the 'alien', the enemy. Inevitably, to understand what we mean when we talk of someone's having a national identity, we must first be clear that the nation's conceptual partner is not just the state as Gellner (1983), Giddens (1985) and Hobsbawm (1990) contend; nationalism is not just a political ideology either as theorists such as Smith (1981) and Kellas (1998) suggest. It is my contention, that a racialised understanding of identity is inherent in nationalist practices.

In fact, nationalism is a practice of boundary creation and maintenance in which *Race* and *Nation*, *Alien* and *National* are interdependent terms and socially constructed. The category of alien derives from an implicit contrast with the category of national. As Balibar has made clear, "the concept of nationalism never functions alone" and "the discourses of race and nation are never very far apart" (Balibar 1991a, 37). So, contrary to what Hobsbawm, Giddens and other have argued - that the nation "relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state" (Hobsbawm 1990, 10; Giddens 1985, 120) - Labour's notion of the British nation is relational and contextual, that is, it becomes understood only in opposition to another *race* coded as the 'other', the 'different', or, recently, 'the immigrant' in a particular space, time, and culture.

Racialisation marks the boundary of the nation, defining who We are by reference to a racialised Other (Miles 1993b, 148). The Other emerges as a representative translator of culture, so the impact of racism is mediated through a wider set of social relations (Goldberg 1993, 155). Because, as will become clear in the third section, the concept of race has never been put just in terms of biological and phenotypical distinctiveness (blood, skin, color and genetic traits), but has been embedded in the historical and cultural constructions of nationhood - either as 'difference', or 'culture' or 'ethnicity', in other words as an essential 'other'. Because, as Geoffrey Bennington has noted, 'the idea of the nation is inseparable from its narration; that narration attempts, interminably, to constitute identity against difference, inside against outside' (Bennington 1990, 132).

2.3 The National Identity in-Otherness

This study maintains that without an 'other' to identify with or differ from, self-recognition would be impossible. In particular, national identity is produced through a process of negation, the creation of self through explicit rejections and denials; it is a dynamic relationship defined through the exclusion of groups deemed not to belong (Lunn 2000). The Commonwealth, the immigrants from the former British colonies, the continentals and the asylum seekers and refugees have been some of the 'significant others' that have arisen from the Labour nationalist discourse during the last forty years.

The concept of the Other was developed in the phenomenological tradition, particularly by Edmund Husserl, as a constitutive factor in the subject's self-image. The Other was conceived as the perceiving, conscious, meaning-conferring other person who helps, or forces, the conscious subject to define its own world picture and its view of its place in it. Through the work of writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Claude Levi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan and Michael Foucault, the concept of the Other entered post-structuralist discourse (Sartre 1957; Levi-Strauss 1966; 1972; Lacan 1977;

Derrida 1973; 1976; 1978; Foucault 1967; 1970; 1972a & b). In Michel Foucault's seminal work, *Folie et Deraison*, lepers were the Others of medieval society, a prime source of contamination, whose exclusion from everyday life helped provide society with a sense of its normality. As leprosy became less common, so it was less able to play its previous symbolic role. Instead, argues Foucault, a new Other was born: those who were non-productive - the criminal, the homeless, and, especially the mad. 'A new leper is born', writes Foucault, 'who takes the place of the first' (Foucault 1972b, 17). The Other, then, is that which lies outside a particular culture or society's epistemological boundaries. To exist, Bhabba notes, is to be called into being in relation to an Otherness, in its look or locus (Bhabba 1990a, 187).

Likewise, turning to nationalist thought, Smith argues that identity is never purely possible, for identity is always dependent on that which is «outside» identity, and it always differentiates itself in its shifting relations with its othernesses; but identity is never purely impossible, because there always remains something irreducibly other against which an «inside» can be constructed; otherness is that which makes identity impossible and possible at the same time (Smith 1991).

For Bhabba, national identities are composed of narratives of 'the people', and they operate under a 'doubled' and 'split' signifier - split between the past and present, the self and the other. Homi Bhabba directs our attention to the impact of the stranger and the outsider in defining the national identity of the host group. What both Hall and Bhabba stress in the definition of identity is the psychoanalytic process of splitting; splitting between that which one is, and that which is the other, and above all between pedagogical (the process of identification constituted by historical sedimentation) and performative (the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification) narratives (Hall 1990, 48; Bhabba 1990b, 304).

British identity has never been defined as the affirmation of a pregiven identity. For Stuart Hall, there is no English/British history without 'other' history (Hall 1991b, 49). Colley's *Britons* is a salutary reminder that a nation as a social

construct, and a territorialised identity is very often formed in opposition to some specific other nation which is seen as posing a threat, and whose qualities are regarded as diametrically opposed to those of one's own country (Colley 1992b). Britishness, she says, was superimposed in response to contact with the Other, and above all in response to conflict with the Other (Colley 1992b, 6). Robin Cohen suggests that who constitutes the self (the acceptable, the insider, the familial), and who the other (the stranger, the outsider, the alien), is the basic ingredient of a British identity (Cohen 1994, 35). Equally, Dodd tells us that Englishness/Britishness is not so much a category as a relationship (Dodd 1986, 12). The exotic Empire, the militant Catholic France and the hostile continentals were some of the 'significant others' in British history. To be English/British was to know yourself in relation to the French, the colonised Other and the hot-blooded Mediterraneans (Hall 1991a, 22). The 'significant other' is perceived as threatening to wipe out the nation (Triandafyllidou 1998, 603). 'Others' usually become salient in periods of social, political or economic crisis during which the identity of the nation is put in question. The significant other in these cases serves in overcoming the crisis because it unites the people in the face of a common enemy, it reminds them 'who we are' and emphasises that 'we are different and unique'.

Gilroy has said that the modern history of race and racism is the product of the complex historical processes involving contact with, and theorising about, the 'other' (Gilroy 1993). Race is a way of naming the difference between members of a particular collectivity and the 'other', the 'alien' (Guibernau 1996, 85). Although the 'other' is an integral element in most accounts of nationalist theory, the main theorists do not consider the racialisation of the 'alien' as a prerequisite of national identity. For example, one strand of theory asserts that race is an ideological construct within a restrictive historical context, whereas a second thread treats race as an objective condition, that is, a biological given construct.

In respect of the first view of race as an ideological construct, Guibernau considers as one of the defining criteria of identity the differentiation from 'others': 'differentiation stems from the consciousness of forming a community with a shared culture, attached to a concrete territory, both elements leading to the distinction between members and 'strangers', 'the rest' and 'the different' (Guibernau *ibid*, 73). Yet, Guibernau considers the relationship between racism and nationalism as antithetical: 'Racism and nationalism offer radically different messages'. Nationalism, as 'a common project', he claims, is about building, dreaming and working for a better future for the new generations whereas, racism does not attempt to construct anything (Guibernau *ibid*, 90).

Although Guibernau sees a way in which racism is incorporated in the nationalist discourse, when 'nationalism sees in the 'other' a potential or factual enemy...someone inferior', at the same time, he restricts their relationship to the colonial setting: 'Racism accompanied a certain type of nationalism inspired by the idea of Empire beyond the frontiers of the metropolis'. Guibernau associates race strictly with skin color and defines racism as an ideological effect in the sense of a 'false consciousness' that explains how other 'material' relationships can only account for the origins of race thinking and then only in one social context (colonial):

'Racism emerged as a doctrine of exclusion to legitimise domination of phenotypically diverse groups, and it has proved crucial in the creation and reproduction of class-structures grounded on the subordination of those defined as inferior by nature. Racism does not cut across national boundaries, it determines the relation between groups that live together in a compartmentalised society' (Guibernau *ibid*, 89).

Whereas Guibernau restricts the significance of race in the colonial setting, most of Nairn's comments on the relationship between racism and nationalism equally focus on a single historical example - the role of racism in the expression of English nationalism since 1945. Nairn (1977) claims that British nationalism has been

patrician in its character because there was never a need to mobilise the English working class in order to carry out a bourgeois revolution. As a result, he maintains, racism has only limited potential for political mobilisation under the banner of a right-wing nationalism in England and the resort to racism in England results from the absence of the main mobilising myth of nationalism, an idea of 'the people' as an active political subject. In other words, the expression of racism is a secondary substitute for the absence of a coherent, modern and bourgeois English nationalism: 'There is no coherent, sufficiently democratic myth of Englishness...this missing factor explains the precipitous descent into racism' (Nairn 1977, 294).

By insisting, as Guibernau does, that the *raison d'être* of the racist ideological structure is to rationalise some underlying form of economic, social or political oppression, Nairn fails to acknowledge the materiality of racially defined effects in their own right. As Goldberg notes, such a view fails to acknowledge that racist expressions may at times define and promote rather than merely rationalise social arrangements and institutions (Goldberg 1993, 97).

Further, both Guibernau and Nairn do not recognise the salience of race as a social construct that has developed over half a millennium or more into a fundamental principle of social organisation and identity formation. The longevity of the race concept and the enormous number of effects race thinking has produced, guarantee that race will remain a feature of social reality across the globe. They also fail to recognise that at the level of experience, of everyday life, race is a relatively impermeable part of our identities (Omi & Winant 1994, 16; Winant 2000, 184).

Let us see how the second strand of nationalist theory, in its configuration of the 'other', treats race as an immutable objective condition. Even though theorists, such as Smith, who concentrate on the ethnic origins of nations, refer to the importance of symbolic or real 'others' for the shaping of national identity, they view the race concept as an ideological construct (Smith 1981; 1986; 1991).

In respect of the importance of the symbolic ‘others’, Smith has pointed out that in the context of the philosophical and historical discourses developed in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, identity is conceptualised as sameness (Smith 1991, 75). In other words, the members of one community have a number of features in common, for example, language or dress code that constitute the markers of their identity. ‘Others’ differ from the members of the community precisely in these features, they speak a different language for instance or they have a different dress style. Even though Smith agrees that ‘this pattern of similarity-cum-dissimilarity is one meaning of national identity’ (Smith 1991), he does not consider that there might be an interaction between the two. Do the members of the community come together because of their common language, tradition or cultural codes? Or do they, like the Ruritaniens, become aware of their common features only as a means of differentiating themselves from a privileged Megalomaniac?

The relationship between national identity and the ‘other’ underlies the typology of nationalist movements proposed by Smith (1991, 82). This typology is based on the distinction between ethnic and territorial nationalisms and their pre- or post- independence context. The pre- or post- independence condition mainly indicates whether the ‘other’ is within or outside the territory of the state. Yet, it is not clear in the typology whether the goals of the movement are derived from the ethnic or territorial character of the nation or whether the nation is conceptualised as an ethnic or a civic community because of the specific context and situation in which the nationalist movement develops (Triandafyllidou 1998, 610). Although these arguments do not put in question the validity of the typology, they demonstrate, that the notion of the ‘other’ is inextricably linked with the concept of national identity. However, Smith has concluded that there is no overlap or relationship between nationalism and racism and that they should always be carefully distinguished. Smith incorrectly suggests that racism, as an ideological construct, is a purely biological doctrine and has no cultural referent (Smith 1979).

Likewise, Karl Deutsch argues that the conception of the 'other' is a functional element intrinsic to the notion of nationality. Membership of a national community consists in the ability to communicate more effectively with fellow nationals than with outsiders (Deutsch 1966, 97). This is the fundamental quality of a nation: 'peoples are held together 'from within' by this communicative efficiency' (ibid, 98). Nationality from this functional perspective is not an absolute concept; all it means is that members share with one another more than they share with foreigners. Accordingly, like most scholars of nationalism, Deutsch claim that 'nationality is not biological and has little if anything to do with race' (Deutsch 1966, 13).

In addition, Anderson's 'imagined communities' can only be imagined by imagining the foreignness. Nevertheless, Anderson argues that nationalism and racism are antithetical ideologies. For him, nations are made possible in and through print languages rather than notions of biological difference and kinship. While he takes the language of nation to be historical, that of race is deemed ahistorical and as a biological given, though it has never been understood solely in this way. He thus insists that the language of race erases nationhood by substituting biology for it: 'Nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history' (Anderson 1991, 149).

Finally, James Kellas has noted that 'boundary maintenance' is the aim of groups, which feel threatened by other groups, and this applies both to ethnic groups and nations (Kellas 1998, 18). But he immediately adds that nationalism is an ideology for the justification of the pursuit of self-interest not ethnic purity (ibid, 31). Although boundary maintenance or, alternatively, boundary creation is a form of both nationalist and racist practice, Kellas, like Anderson, thinks of race in biological terms. 'Race' is distinguished from 'nation' mainly because races are discussed in predominantly biological terms, with particular emphasis on 'phenotypical distinctions such as skin colour, stature, etc. and presumed genetic discussions' (Kellas 1998, 5). Kellas

subsequently maintains that the relationship between nationalism and racism is one-way: “Nationalism does not entail racism or genocide, but racism and genocide entail some form of nationalist ideology” (ibid, 41). His analysis of the link between nationalism and racism is restricted to black nationalisms in the US, Britain and Africa, ignoring the fact that whiteness like blackness is socially constructed and not a mere biological category.

However, as will become clear later, race is not a fixed biological category, but a socially constructed way of differentiating between human beings (Omi & Winant 1994, 56) in particular time and space and not ‘outside history’. The scholars, who regard race as a biological given, seek to remove the concept of race from the historical context in which it arose and developed. They employ an essentialist approach which suggests that race is a matter of innate characteristics, of which skin colour and other physical attributes provide only the most obvious, and in some respects more superficial, indicators. But racism is increasingly not an ideology, which can be easily reduced to biological arguments as such. Contemporary racial thought invokes a range of markers of ‘difference’ in order to construct the stereotypes and images on which racism relies (Solomos and Black 1996, 58). The essentialist discourse, by viewing race as an objective condition or ‘natural’ attribute, cannot grasp the processual and relational character of racial identity and racial meaning, denies the historicity and social comprehensiveness of the race concept, and cannot account for the way actors, both individual and collective, have to manage incoherent and conflictual racial meanings and identities in everyday life (Winant 2000, 185).

Other scholars have remained silent on the race concept. In Gellner’s account, the awareness of a shared nationality on the part of the population of a backward region is initially based on a negative trait: their exclusion from the nation of the privileged. ‘Even though’, he states, ‘nationalism does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on’, these may be purely negative (Gellner 1964, 168). But if the aim of the Ruritians is to differentiate themselves from the inhabitants of

Megalomania, this must bear some effect on the development of their identity. Indeed, according to Gellner, common habits or traditions of the Ruritarians become significant because they provide a basis for identification in contrast to the privileged Megalomanians. Cultural difference coded as race is common currency in racial thought and, more recently, in the new racist discourse. Yet, Gellner remains silent on race itself.

On the other hand, in 1882 the French philologist Ernest Renan (1990) delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris that was to prove immensely influential. Entitled 'What is a Nation?', the lecture sought to establish the difference between the Enlightenment and the Romantic traditions of nationhood. The first conceives of a nation as a voluntary association or contract, the second as a predetermined community bound by blood and heredity. In this understanding of the distinction between the Enlightenment and the Romantic traditions, the former is seen as positing human differences in terms of culture, and the latter in terms of race (Malik 1996, 131). However, Renan's argument is more blurred and confusing. 'What is a nation?' can be read not so much as a triumphant vindication of the Enlightenment tradition as a text that subverts the essence of Enlightenment discourse. 'A community of interest', he declared, did not 'suffice to make a nation'. He alleged that 'it is no more soil than it is race which makes a nation. The soil furnishes the substratum, the field of struggle and of labour; man furnishes the soul'. Renan used *race* as synonymous with family due to the emergent discipline of anthropology: "A Nation is a spiritual principle...it is a spiritual family not a group determined by the shape of the earth". Two aspects ('which in truth are but one') constitute this spiritual principle: "One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together...the nation, like the individual, is the culmination of the long past of endeavours, sacrifice and devotion". His concept of culture was homologous to race. The important distinctions in contemporary human society were those of culture and language. 'These are linguistic races', Renan believed, 'but they have nothing to do

with anthropological races' (Renan 1947-61a). He also made the blood relationship more clear by saying that, 'the instinctive consciousness which presided over the construction of the map of Europe took no account of race, and the leading nations of Europe are nations of essentially mixed blood' (Renan 1990, 15). Race as lineage (races united by common descent), found in Renan's work was in contention with race as type (different stocks of races subdivided on geographic and climate grounds) ('language, religion, laws, mores brought the race into being much more than blood did' (Renan 1947-61a; b) in the mid-nineteenth century and both gave way to the notion of race as subspecies (evolution of human races by means of natural selection).

In Kohn's work, nationalism and racism overlapped because the former was grounded in the very nature of scientific racism, which asserted a deterministic link between biology and cultural variation and expression, following the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection: Or the Preservation of Favored Races in Struggle for Life*. Because 'nations' were identified as naturally occurring groups identifiable by cultural differentiae, it was logically possible to assert that these symbols of 'nation' were themselves grounded in 'race', that 'blood race is the basis of the nationality, and that it exists externally and carries with it an unchangeable inheritance' (Kohn 1967, 13).

Kohn is right in the sense that racial thought has played a significant role in the perception of the main elements of nationhood. Race brings together in self-conception individuals who have literally nothing to do with each other. In this, race pushes to its extreme the logic of national identification; hence the gratuitous ease with which racism and patriotism seem to intersect (Goldberg 1993, 79).

From this perspective, the important point is the rejection of a unified identity that can be justified in terms of a biological essence. As said earlier, essentialism is understood as belief in real, true human essences, existing outside or impervious to social and historical contexts (Omi and Winant 1994, 78). In contrast, the debates on post-modern and post-colonial cultural theory underline what Stuart Hall calls the

‘dynamic process of identification’, rather than a static notion of identity (Hall 1990). Racism - like nationalism - operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, and its typically binary system of representation constantly marks and attempts to fix and naturalise the difference between belongingness and otherness. National and racial boundaries may naturally be seen to map onto each other. Here, each nation must be taken to have a unique set of characteristics that constitute its nationhood, and these are considered just the characteristics that mark them off as distinct races (Goldberg 1993, 97). Along this frontier there arises what Gayatri Spivak calls the ‘epistemic violence’ of the discourses of the Other (Hall 1992, 256; 1996, 445). Race, coded as identity and difference, becomes a constitutive element in the definition of nation as the following historical account of how race has been used at different times will make clear.

2.4 Nation and Race in Racial Thought

A short account of the three rival meanings of race as lineage, race as type and race as subspecies reveals that they have considerable affinities with the nationalist conceptions of time, culture and space.

2.4.1 Race as Lineage: Time and Culture of National Community

As Goldberg has said, nation has both a conceptual and social history intersecting with that of *race*. The term nation was originally used to refer to those claimed to be of common birth or extended family - dating to approximately 1584 (Goldberg 1992, 557). Theoretical works on nationalism have substantiated this claim. Liah Greenfeld has said that it is possible to locate the emergence of national sentiment in England in the first third of the 16th century having an anti-alien feeling (Greenfeld 1992, 42). The so-called founding fathers of sociology, Marx and Weber did not treat the national idea as peculiarly modern either (Greenfeld *ibid*, 17). What is more, the ‘simple family’ has been a core element in nationalist readings of identity

and other themes central to Marx's discussions of state and civil society (Manzo 1996, 10). Indeed, in early sixteenth century England, the word «nation» in its conciliar meaning of an «elite» was applied to the population of the country and made synonymous with the word «people» (Greenfeld *ibid*, 6). In that sense, Goldberg asserts, nation stimulated the early significance of race as lineage (Goldberg 1993, 78).

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries the principal use of race was lineage, to refer to a group of persons, animals, or, plants connected by common descent origin - the notion of a Great Chain of Being. Two broad schools of thought developed. The older of these was that of monogenism, the belief that all humankind was directly descended from Adam. Racial distinctions were ascribed to group - correlated geographic, climatic, and social differences (Hay 1957). The other school, polygenism held that different 'racial' communities had different origins. Writers in this school believed that ethnic features were innate and permanent, undergoing no significant modifications through environmental change. Though polygenism continued to read 'race' in terms of origins, it differed from monogenism in emphasising biological inheritance and hierarchy over pedigree (Goldberg 1992, 545). Thus, race as a lineage harboured mythologies of collective kinship. It designated a family line sustaining the integrity of noble lineages and provided a natural foundation for the hierarchy of virtues and prerogatives (Malik *ibid*, 80).

Myths by origin enable people to locate themselves in time and space. They offer an explanation of the unknown and hallowed traditions by linking them to heroic events and personages of the distant past. In addition, they form the ground for belief systems providing a moral validation for attitudes and activities (MacDougall 1982, 1). In fact, they hold up before us the virtues of our ancestors and encourage us to live up to them (Miller 1995, 36).

In English history two national myths predominate. The first, best represented in a twelfth-century work by Geoffrey de Monmouth, a Welsh bishop, located the origins of the early inhabitants of Britain in Troy. The second great national myth,

asserting the Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon origins of Englishmen, claimed a higher degree of historicity than Geoffrey's account (MacDougall 1982). It was suggested here that 'Englishmen are descended from German race and were therefore called Saxons'. The German nation was 'the Tree from which English men, as a most stately and flourishing branch, are issued and sprung forth', as Richard Verstegen, the staunch advocate of Germanic superiority and Saxon virtue, alleged (MacDougall 1982, 47). Verstegen's work ran to five editions by 1673 and represents the first comprehensive presentation in English of a theory of national origin based on a belief in the racial superiority of the Germanic people, a theme which appeared a thousand times in succeeding centuries (MacDougall 1982, 49).

The German race had settled in England from AD 449 and as a result the claims of the Stuart monarchs who wanted to weaken the power of parliament by divine right seemed unfounded, because it ran contrary to the nature of the people. 'Back to the Golden Age', 'back to the free Anglo-Saxons', 'back to the Old Testament', 'back to the Noble Savage' were so many different expressions demanding the return to a shared glorious past in order to make a future (Hill 1954; 1958, 55). The Anglo-Saxon centuries were alleged to be a golden age, before the arrival of Norman rulers. In this way, according to Banton, an ancestral myth was created which derived the chief English virtues from their Anglo-Saxon forebears (Banton 1987, 13). Hence in mid-seventeenth century England, the ideas of the existence of an Anglo-Saxon Church and Parliament and of an original Anglo-Saxon 'race' suppressed and oppressed by a foreign 'race' since the Norman invasion in 1066 legitimated political revolution. The result was a conception of Englishness, which was associated with a supposedly natural capacity for freedom. Thereafter, a proportion of the English population regarded themselves as a discrete biological 'race' whose superiority allegedly originated in their German origins, in the inherent courage and freedom on the part of the Saxons, in the innate superiority of their language and institutions (especially Parliament) and in a natural ability for reason and

science representing the traditional genius of their ancestors and thereby carrying a special burden of leadership in the world community (MacDougall 1982, 2).

Apart from the affinity with the temporal element of nationalism, race as lineage sustained the division of races on cultural grounds. During the late eighteenth century the obsession with measurement and statistics generated a conception of race founded upon the idea of difference and inequality. People could be conveniently divided and classified not merely in terms of geographical origin or colour but equally by virtue of cranial capacity or shape (Solomos and Black 1996, 34). Blumenbach, the father of anthropology who first advanced the fivefold classification: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, Malayan, wrote of degeneration as an explanation of variation within a species. The climate was supposed to exert great influence (Banton 1987, 6). The German physician Gustav Klemm distinguished stages of cultural evolution dividing the mankind into active and passive races, emphasising the environmental and cultural influence upon human development (ibid, 20). James Cowles Prichard, the most respected writer on race after Blumenbach, found no evidence to indicate that acquired characters could be transmitted by heredity to the next generation, and used race to refer to physically distinctive nations (ibid, 23). The three types of cranium found amongst Negroes seemed to be associated with degrees of civilisation rather than geographical populations (ibid, 24). It can be argued that race as lineage may be identified with the discovery, physical and conceptual, of the racial 'other' of the initial empirical observation of significant difference in the drive to Empire and domination (Goldberg 1993, 91). For instance, contemplating reports about the life of peoples in the newly discovered regions of America, Europeans were bound to ask, 'Why are they not like us?' (Banton 1987, 7). The answer was that 'they' belonged to a genealogical group, which had acquired special characteristics either because of divine intervention or because of its distinctive environmental experience. The cultural inferiority of West Africa was ascribed to 'the African environment' and not to biology. As Banton notes, the contending parties were united

in their belief that because of their bad environment and their cultural backwardness, it could be to the Africans' advantage to be removed from their existing society if that could not be reorganised along European lines (ibid, 9). Of course, this answer could not explain how the environment affected the transmission of inherited characters. But what mattered was that the Africans, either because of divine intervention or climatic reasons, could not be members of nations defined in cultural terms.

2.4.2 Race as Type: Culture and Space of the National Community

Only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century does race come to refer to supposedly discrete categories of people defined according to their physical characteristics which implied particular cultural identities. During the late eighteenth century the obsession with measurement and statistics generated a conception of race founded upon the idea of difference and inequality. People could be conveniently divided and classified not merely in terms of geographical origin or colour but equally by virtue of cranial capacity or shape (Solomos and Black 1996, 36).

A new phase in the history of racial thought was inaugurated in 1800 by Georges Cuvier who treated races as separate species and maintained that their cultural development corresponded to variations in their cranial capacity (Banton 1987, 60). The identification of three types of human varieties (Caucasian, Mongolian and Ethiopian) was accompanied, first, by their representation as a hierarchy with whites at the top and blacks at the bottom, and, second, by Cuvier's contention that differences in culture and mental quality were produced by differences in physique (Banton 1987, 30).

Furthermore, in typological thinking each race was adapted to a particular climate and a particular zone of the earth, and inherited characters had to be understood in relation to different environments, not of genetic material. According to Banton, each race was superior in its own zone or province (ibid, 37). Josiah Clark Nott, a physician in Alabama was the first to argue that the various races, being

permanent and lacking in adaptability, had been created in their several environments (ibid, 39). Likewise, a more pugnacious propagandist for typology, Robert Knox (*The Races of men*), claimed that each 'race' struggled to form its own laws, literature and language more in accordance with its intelligence than its physique (ibid, 57). And because these cultural phenomena were biologically determined, they could not be socially transmitted. By implication, «races thrive best in the land on which they were originally found.... (because) each race can produce its own kind of civilisation» (Banton 1987, 58). Knox wanted to awaken his contemporaries to the fundamentally racial nature of the chief political conflicts within Europe. As Banton puts it, four main races were the parties to these conflicts:

“The first was that of the Scandinavians, who were naturally democratic but refused to extend to subordinated peoples their own principles of freedom and justice. Second came the Celts, who were notable warriors but had less understanding of liberty, being incapable of implementing ideas of freedom in government. Third were the Slovians who had great intellectual and political potential...and fourth came the Sarmatians or Russ who were incapable of real achievement in literature or science. Their blind obedience to despots made them a threat to liberty” (Banton 1987, 57).

For Knox, 'race' and 'nation' were interrelated, even synonymous. This is evident in Knox's concern about the multiracial character of Britain: “The really momentous question for England, as a nation, is the presence of three sections of the Celtic race still on her soil...the race must be forced from the soil...England's safety requires it...nations must ever act as Machiavelli advised: look to yourself” (ibid, 57). In Knox's racist theory of history, the all-determining character of 'race' shaped all aspects of cultural expression and capacity with the result that the category of 'nation' dissolved into that of 'race' (Miles 1993b, 63). A professor of anatomy at Giessen in Germany, Karl Vogt made the relationship between nation and race even more explicit, arguing that new nations are synonymous with new races when he predicted the formation of an American race out of racial mixing of immigrant groups (Banton 1987, 61).

In sum, race as type attempted to explain its conflation with cultural-physical difference and spatial configuration. It is a relationship, which makes the relationship between the race and nation concepts explicit.

2.4.3 Race as Subspecies: Space and Time of the National Community

Finally, the race as subspecies - Darwin's notion that human races evolve and multiply by means of natural selection - made it easier to appreciate the significance of the conception of a geographical race or subspecies as a distinct local form which maintains its special characteristics and can evolve to a point such that it is no longer able to inter-breed with other forms that have split off from the same stock (ibid, 70). This suggestion is appealing to nationalists who argue that autonomy is required for progress against any kind of interbreeding. Also in Darwin's work, the number of races was not fixed permitting multiple races, which assumed provinces that were smaller than entire continents. This enabled the idea of a 'British race', a 'French race' and so on, whereby race coincided with political sovereignty rather than continental divide (Banton 1987, 37; Manzo 1996, 63).

In addition to its spatial conception, race as subspecies was temporal as well. The evolutionary explanation of human diversity depicted a process whereby higher forms had developed from lower in the great chain of being (Banton 1987, 16). Those who favoured an evolutionary explanation were inclined to see races as inter-grading rather than as distinct (ibid, 18). According to this view the higher forms had to pass through the earlier phases of evolution before reaching their own stage. If those lower races had not reached the higher, they could be in the same national community, in other words, have a shared time. After all, the word 'primitive' was first used in the late fifteenth century thought to accompany the image of an early, ancient, or first stage, age or period: old-fashioned, or rough, or rude (Goldberg 1993, 155). As a temporal signifier, it put race in non-biological terms and presupposed the national exclusion of those who represent the past in the present. The separate development of

the New Commonwealth populations appeared to the British political establishment as an obstacle for their final accommodation to the supposedly 'superior' British social standards throughout the post-war era.

In this respect, as Goldberg maintains, race brings together in self-conception individuals who otherwise have literally nothing to do with each other and pushes to its extreme the logic of national identification; hence the gratuitous ease with which racism and nationalism seem to intersect in Anderson's shared time (Anderson 1991).

As the race theory has demonstrated race has been historically equated with culture, space and time in such a way as to conflate race with nation. Before the rise of modern scientific racism in the 19th century 'race' intersected with 'culture'. Race inscribed and circumscribed the experiences of space and time, of geography and history. No surprise then that in its post-war retreat from racism the term has once again acquired an explicitly cultural rather than a biological inflection. In fact, the revival of the cultural racism or new racism in the decolonisation period made more evident these links between race and nation.

2.5 The New Racism

Throughout the sixties and seventies, British writing on racism evolved largely in isolation from other European work. As Miles (1993a) has suggested, much of the recent British literature assumed and sometimes argued that the only or the most important racism was that which had 'black' people as its sole object. The outcome was often an exclusive conception of racism, which was blind to, or could not permit the existence of other modalities of racism. The 'race relations' paradigm was challenged during the eighties when a number of British writers concluded that a sufficient expression of racism in Britain could not be adequately explained without taking account of nationalism (Barker 1981; Gordon and Klug 1985). It was mostly found in the discourse of right-wing politicians during the seventies, but as this thesis will show, elements of this discourse were evident in the Labour party's as well. It is

no wonder then, that, as Hunt suggests, talking the language of its opponents is a problem that has preoccupied New Labour since its inception (Hunt 2001).

The form that racism took in the specific historical circumstances of the decolonisation era has been labelled alternatively as 'new racism' (Barker 1981), 'cultural racism' (Seidel 1986), 'differentialist racism' (Taguieff 1990), 'neo-racism' or 'post-racism' (Balibar 1991a & b).

This is a theory linking race and nation. According to Paul Gilroy this is a racism which is able to link «race» with nationhood, patriotism and nationalism, a racism which has taken a necessary distance from crude ideas of biological inferiority and superiority and now seeks to present an imaginary definition of the nation as unified cultural community (Gilroy 1990, 266). Three features of new racism justify considering it a departure from previous biological perceptions of race: a sanitised, coded language about race that adheres to, more than it departs from, generally accepted liberal principles and values, mobilised for illiberal ends; avid disavowals of racist intent and circumvention of classical anti-racist discourse; and a shift from a focus on race and biological relations of inequality to a concern for cultural differentiation and national identity (Ansell 1997, 59). Thus, drawing on the school of instinctivism (Barker 1981, 22), the new racism may be summarised as a cluster of beliefs which holds that it is natural for people who share a way of life, a culture, to bond together in a group and to be antagonistic towards outsiders who are different and who are seen to threaten their identity as a group.

In this, the proponents of the new racism claim that they are not being racist or prejudiced, nor are they making any value judgements about the 'others', but simply recognising that they are different. The significance of what is called 'racial difference' is something, which is socially defined. As Gilroy (1990) has asserted, culturalism of the new racism has gone hand in hand with a definition of race as a matter of difference rather than a question of hierarchy. In another context Fanon (1961) refers to a similar shift as a progression from vulgar to cultural racism.

In other words, groups, which are classed as ‘outsiders’ in one period or in one country, may be defined as ‘insiders’ in another. For instance, people from southern Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Italy were frequently described as ‘dark aliens’ in 19th century English literature. Today, as citizens of EEC countries with full rights to live and work here, they are more likely to be accepted as part of British society (Gordon and Klug 1985, 22).

So, it is important that the Labour party’s discourse on the European question should be located at all times in the specific historico-political context, because what the previous scholarship on racism has made clear is that racism is intersecting with elements of the social formation, cannot be treated as an external factor, and in this way essentialist analyses which emphasise its unalterable nature and are biologically driven will certainly lead us to mistaken conclusions.

2.6 Conclusion

The analysis of national identity as a multifaceted concept cannot confine itself to accounts of the nationalist phenomenon, which give priority over nation and state institutions, and advocate a reductive perspective of the race concept. Race has always been the conceptual partner of nation and explanations of racialised phenomena cannot be simply reduced to merely biological terms. The failure of scholars of the nationalist phenomenon, such as Anderson, Gellner, Deutsch, Smith and other to see how race is coded in practices of boundary creation has led them to assume that race appears, often, as an objective biologically given or ideological construct. But ‘race’ is only partially determined by biology and is otherwise in complex interplay with environmental, cultural and social factors, which entail certain boundary conditions (Outlaw 1990, 68). The new racist paradigm of the post-war period reaffirms the conclusions drawn from the historical analysis of race.

The following three parts look into the intersections of the nationalist and racist practices across the space, culture and time of the British Labour party's nationhood, as it emerged during the European debates in the early sixties.

P A R T 2

THE SPACE OF THE NATION

For most scholars of nationalist thought one of the most affect-laden symbols associated with national identity is a clearly demarcated territory, not least because the spatial component is perhaps the most salient aspect of the conceptions of 'nation' by providing the discovery of self-definition and location at the heart of any shared sense of national identity (Cohen 1994; Miller 1995, 23; Smith 1995, 111; Guibernau 1996, 47). Indeed, the logic of identity is «limited» by being spatially organised (Anderson 1991, 6; Walzer 1981, 15; Hall 1991b, 43). As Nairn notes, location explain most things for students of nationalism (Nairn 1997, 211). In other words, nationalism is never beyond geography (Billig 1995, 74). In this thesis, as the first component of the Labour party's nationhood over the European question, the space component has taken three forms: the widest boundaries of the Empire, the narrow confines of the British Isles and the frontiers of the European Community.

As becomes clear, geographical boundaries are not only tangible (Armstrong 1982, 9). The geography is not mere geography, or physical setting: the national place has also to be imagined, just as much as the national community does. The imagining of a country involves the imagining of a bounded totality beyond immediate experience of the place (Anderson 1991; Billig 1995, 74). Anderson rightly points out that the community has to be imagined because it is conceived to stretch beyond immediate experience: it embraces far more people than those with which citizens are personally acquainted. In fact, since the early 1960s, the European debates have been dominated by the arguments concerning the relationship of Britain with the English-speaking world. Even nowadays, as the following analysis will demonstrate, the New Labour government has not repudiated the world links that have bound Britain with the dominions and, especially, the Atlantic ally. Inevitably, a

national community is not just «limited» but «imagined» as well, because even the largest of them has finite, if elastic, boundaries beyond which lie other nations (Anderson 1991, 7).

However, the act of «imagining» between national communities implies that the spatial element of Britishness is also defined and conditioned by the configuration of the 'Other', the 'other patriae' (Grainger 1986). In fact, the boundary, Cohen (1994) argues, symbolises the community to its members in two different ways: it is the sense they have of its perception by people on the other side and it is their sense of the community as refracted through all the complexities of their lives and experiences. The point is well expressed by Julia Kristeva who points out that with the establishment of nation-states 'we come to the only modern, acceptable and clear definition of foreignness' (Billig 1995, 79).

As chapter 2 made clear, the racial 'Other' contributes to the constitution of the national identity. The articulation of national identity as narration is inseparable from and premised upon the identification of the difference: in respect of the bounded aspect of nationhood, the 'inside' is supplemented by the 'outside', the assumed superiority of inside over outside (Smith 1994; Bennington 1990, 132). Racism as a boundary creation practice involves a negative evaluation of the other that requires an active censorship of any tendency to regard him or her as an equal (Goldberg 1993, 205). Race inscribes and circumscribes the experiences of space, just as race itself acquires its specificity in terms of space (Guibernau 1996, 87). The Labour spatial nationhood was dependent upon the movements of people from the former colonies and non-European world to the British Isles.

Even though this thesis sides with the assertion expressed by the modernist paradigm of the nationalist theory and some scholars of the Labour party politics that place is a crucial factor in the bonding process of individuals, it does not accept that nation is solely defined by the nature of the sovereign authority of the state (Anderson 1991; Breuilly 1993; Nairn 1977; 1997, 212; 2000, 128; Ward 1998). The

debates over the locational effect of British sovereignty during the European debates were not just about the nature of the political power - whether it resided in the British Parliament (parliamentary or legal sovereignty), in the British people (popular sovereignty or democracy) or in the supra-national institutions of the EC (democratic deficit).

The following three competing and overlapping particular forms of Labour nationalism - the imperial vision of the Commonwealth and the Atlantic ally, the insular Little Englanderism and the Euro-nationalism - all rely on racial thinking in order to construct racial collectivities as inherently different in terms of social and, generally, culturally characteristics. As the following analysis will exhibit, according to the Labour representatives, the character of the British has been also constructed against, and conditioned by the suppression of the differences of the 'lesser breeds', 'illegal immigrants', 'welfare scroungers', 'asylum seekers' who, as the essential 'others' or different 'races', have been defining elements of the party Britishness during the last forty years.

This duality of the boundary means that either the imperial Britain or Britain of the Little Englanders or the European Britain is 'positioned' in a particular context and is constituted from within, but perhaps more importantly, from without. Accordingly, the following three chapters on Commonwealth (chapter 3), Little Englanderism (chapter 4) and Euro-nationalism (chapter 5) examine respectively three competing and complementary visions of Labour's spatial nationhood.

CHAPTER 3

THE COMMONWEALTH

3.1 Introduction

For some scholars, the transoceanic identity of Labour Britishness, that is, the identification with the English-speaking world, remains, in a diachronic sense, stronger than Little Englanderism and Europeanism (Ash 2001). As a matter of fact, since the early 1960s, the Commonwealth and the ‘special’ Anglo-American relationship were given primacy over a potentially ‘limited’ Anglo-Continental association. For a long time after the official demise of the Empire - in 1968 with the end of the ‘east of Suez’ role - Labour pro- and anti-Europeans did not cease to reflect on the imperial heritage. Hence, the importance of a conceptual analysis of the imperialist vision that has emerged in the party discourse.

In this chapter, the Commonwealth is initially analysed as element of the British identity. It is approached primarily as a relationship, as a duality (‘inside’ against ‘outside’) (3.2). That is, its historical formation makes clear that its character was formed in opposition to specific cultures and populations. It has not been a self-defined concept but has been constructed within relationships of power, which implied the suppression, exploitation, and exclusion of specific populations, or alien ‘races’ on biological and cultural grounds. Most of these views were passed on to the Labour party’s forebears (3.3). The post-war imperial attitudes of the party representatives should be examined against the background of the prior webs of beliefs in the Empire. Hence, the analysis of the late Victorian views of the first socialists (Fabians, ethical socialists and Marxists) on the imperial nation and race will help us to make sense of the historical and intellectual background out of which the Labour party emerged, and more importantly, establish a continuity or mark a

difference from the way the imperial nationalism of the contemporary Labour party has been constructed throughout the European debates (3.4). As a matter of fact, in each of the five examined periods the imperial identity was re-invented, not immensely altered, by Labour in order to address the changing global politico-economic environment.

In the early 1960s, the Commonwealth was one of the main reasons that deterred the party leaderships from espousing the European commitment. Politico-economic archipelagic fantasies made the Common Market look in the party's eyes a narrow association with no significant world influence. The Wilson government's second application for British entry (1967) was dictated more by the declining economic framework of the imperial centre and was less a result of a prior abandonment of the 'kith and kin' arguments. After the end of the east of Suez role in the early 1970s and in the face of Heath's final bid for British entry, although much narrower than earlier, the 'imagined' community of the English-speaking world did not loose its grip on Labour's conscience. Besides, the 'great power syndrome' of these times also delineated the continental destiny of the pro-European faction of the party in more 'outward-looking' terms. The Falklands episode and its implications for the European debate (1982-83) came to affirm that issues of national identity such as a war or the European question cannot be merely reduced to the narrow intra- or inter-party antagonisms as a section of the scholarship suggests. Finally, as said above, geography is not mere geographic setting. The Atlanticism of the New Labour government, as the issues of the single market and defence have made clear, demonstrates that the identification with the transoceanic world remains no less strong than in the past.

On the other hand, Labour's imperial Britishness cannot be defined just in affirmative terms. As said in the previous chapter, national and racial boundaries map onto each other. During the debates concerning the European question, the imperial grandeur was at the same time defined by, supplanted with and depended on the

negative signification of the 'Other' whose 'different' norms challenged the extra-territorial vision (3.5). The suppression of the 'differences' has been constitutive element of Britishness (Hall 1991a, 22). The Commonwealth Acts of 1962 and 1968, the Immigration Act 1971 and the British Nationality Act 1981 gives us an illuminating account of the way the British negotiated with the 'difference' and the eventual exclusion of those who represented national decline, preserved and complemented the exceptionalism of the Labour party's kith and kin arguments on Europe.

3.2 The Commonwealth as Element of the British Identity

As already said, national identity is defined by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and its implicit negation, the other (Colley 1992a, 325). In other words, men and women decide who they are by reference to who and what they are not. Once confronted with an obviously alien «Them», an otherwise diverse community can become a reassuring - or merely desperate - «Us». This was how it was with the British after 1707; as Linda Colley has said, they came to define themselves as a single people not because of any consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other (Colley 1992b, 6). The Empire, which was dated from the third decade of the seventeenth century (Barker 1951, 32), was one of the main points of reference, the Other.

Linda Colley implies that a negative content to the 'Other' - i.e. foreign enemies or rivals, 'backward people', 'lesser breeds' - carried also a positive meaning, as the unifying bond of the British. Norman Davies has argued that the United Kingdom was established to serve the interests of Empire (Davies 1999, 1053). Marquand (1995b) has also pointed out that the Empire was not an optional extra for the British, in the way that republicanism was an optional extra for the French. It was their vocation, their reason for being British as opposed to English or Scots or Welsh. In fact, either as an expression of the multi-national British Isles

(Kearney 1991, 3; Colley 1992b; Wright 2000, 8), or as an index of England's ascendancy - as the supposedly representative of the perceived imperial cosmopolitan ethos of London and the centre of economic, political and ideological power - over the other three nations (Lunn 1996, 87; Barnett 1997, 293; Jacobson 1997; Noakes 1998, 10; Nairn 2000), Britishness was cemented in symbolic and historic sense by the Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries among the Welsh, Scottish and English as 'four nations in one' (Kearney 1991, 3) in opposition to 'alien' populations and cultures. It has been the essence of Britishness to suppress and absorb the differences. As Hall has put it (1991a), it was only by dint of excluding or absorbing all the differences that constituted Englishness/Britishness, the multitude of different regions, peoples, classes and genders that composed the people gathered together in the Act of Union, that Englishness could stand for everybody in the British Isles. It was always negotiated against difference. It always had to absorb all the differences in order to present itself as a homogeneous entity (Hall 1991a, 22). In this way, they could contrast their law, their standard of living, and their political stability against societies that they only imperfectly understood but usually perceived as far less developed. Whatever their own individual ethnic backgrounds, Britons could join together vis-a-vis the Empire and act out the flattering parts of heroic conqueror, humane judge, and civilising agent (Colley 1992a, 326). As Thornton puts it, 'the essence of Empire was control' (Thornton 1966, 378). Likewise, Ernest Barker has noted that the word 'Empire' signifies primarily a particular form of authority, and secondarily, by a natural expansion, the area over which that particular form of authority is exercised (Barker 1951, 1).

During the early period of imperial expansion, this 'control' was associated with the endeavours to transmit to other parts of the world the principles that made up British identity itself, such as Protestantism, constitutional government, free commerce (Miller 1995, 167). Apart from materialist considerations, Empire was partly an exportation of English stock and ideas (Barker 1951, 7). Britons tried to cement in

these distant lands those structures of power through which their interests would be served. Passion for power, passion for wealth, and passion for justice were the motives (Barker 1951, 51). As Tom Nairn maintains, the early misdeeds of Empire were compensated by the export of Westminster and the Law to backward areas and peoples (Nairn 1988, 189); in the second phase of imperial expansion, when the structures of power were firmly established, a different idea emerged: Empire as the rule of the civilised peoples over the uncivilised who were not yet fit to govern themselves. As Miller notes, the mission was not to transmit British principles but to supply a partial version - good administration, imperial justice - in the expectation that sooner or later the 'barbarians' would be fit for self-government (Miller 1995, 167).

The moral strands of thought was summarised in the concept of trusteeship (Hinden 1949, 14; Fryer 1984). Moral considerations involved a paternal attitude towards 'backward' or weaker people within the Empire (the moral crusade of imperialism was captured in Rudyard Kipling's idea of 'the White Man's Burden'). Paternalism had many gradations of thought, ranging from a protective kindness to a recognition of the economic and political rights of subject races, as long as they remained to some degree subject. It came from a conviction that a special 'mission' had to be fulfilled in spreading the virtues of a superior civilization throughout the world or from a high sense of trusteeship (Hinden, 1949, 12). As Kathreen Tidrick has said, moral display served a dual purpose; being intended not only to improve native character but also to stimulate native loyalty (Tidrick 1990, 213). In fact, the Great British state was compatible with an overwhelming sense of superiority over other peoples (Nairn 1977, 298).

In the late Victorian period, the whole bias of the British imperialist state embodied a particular governing ethos which was based on the practice of the synchronic exclusion and inclusion of the indigenous working class or 'dangerous classes' (Samuel 1989b, xiii; Malik 1996, 114) which led the British people, when faced with the colonised, to feel themselves as something naturally bigger, more open

and more important than just another nation-state. At the time of social Darwinism, the superiority was not established just on biological grounds but echoed the domestic stratification of the British national community - something that will become clearer in the views of the first socialists. But in these times there emerged another idea.

Above all, the term Commonwealth referred originally to a white Commonwealth. Tidrick has noted that we first find it employed by the Liberal Imperialist Lord Rosebery in 1884. 'Does this fact of your being a nation', he inquired of an Australian audience, 'imply separation from the Empire? God forbid! There is no need for any nation, however great, leaving the Empire, because the Empire is a commonwealth of nations' (Tidrick *ibid*, 227). Around the turn of the century, the term Commonwealth began to gain currency among people who wished to acknowledge the increasing political and economic maturity of the colonies of white settlement. Behind all this was discernible the dim outlines of an even grander vision - the social Darwinist inspired vision of an Anglo-Saxon world state, in which Britain, the white dominions and America would in concert undertake to ensure the peace and prosperity of the world (Tidrick *ibid*, 231). Victorian paternalistic humanism contributed to hierarchical racial stereotype (Gupta 1975, 57).

In short, structured by the discourses of race and power, ideas of the allegedly superior British national character were refracted by the inferiority of 'backward' populations. The Empire was absolutely central to the organisation of British nationalism since the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the discourse of imperial nationalism included elements of racial superiority on cultural and biological grounds. The imperial nationalist discourse constituted a «world view», which united the various fragments of the British nation in terms of a shared superiority over and against the non-European world. The 'outside' had in fact contributed to the constitution of the 'inside' in the sense that Empire or Commonwealth played a key role in the construction of an imaginary national space, which transcended class differences.

The conditions of emergence of the Labour party articulated this value-loaded duality of the frontier of the imperial Britishness under the influence of the liberal imperialism, as the discourse of the first socialists will make clear. The analysis of the relational character of the imperial space in the discourse of the Fabians, ethical socialists and Marxists provides us with the background and a guide for the analysis of the post-war discourse of the Labour party on the European question.

3.3 The British Labour Party: 'A Relic of the Empire'

The early socialists did not object to British imperialism *per se*, but to the particular aggressive form, which it was perceived to take after the Jameson raid of 1895. More significantly the left was disoriented by the widespread support that the new imperialism appeared to attract (Jones 1983; Taylor 1990, 974).

Perry Anderson, Tom Nairn and Raymond Williams all observed that Britain's long record of imperialism had «corrupted» the working-class, not by bringing economic benefits, but by inculcating habits and attitudes of insularity and superiority (Lin 1989, 119, 186). The German journalist, Egon Wertheimer noted that among the workers there prevailed a naive and rapturous pride in the fact that by men of their class and in their name, their name, the mightiest Empire of the world was ruled (Wertheimer 1929, x). Robert Tressell (1940), in the opening chapter 'An Imperial Banquet' of his novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, captured and portrayed the dominant covert imperialism and racism of the English working class with insight and accuracy. Writing in 1883 Jules Valles, a French writer, depicted the patriotism of English working men and women: «They are proud of being English; that's enough. Without a shirt on their backs they find consolation in seeing a scrap of bunting on the wind - a Union Jack; shoeless, they are happy to see the British lion with the globe beneath its paw» (Bedarida 1979, 147). This was the era of the imperialist idea. As Francois Bedarida put it: «The basic idea was quite simple: the

English were a chosen race entrusted with a mission that was both human and divine, and which it was their duty to discharge» (Bedarida *ibid*, 145).

In opposition to Anderson and Nairn, E. P. Thompson played down the economic reductionist thesis and emphasised the importance of an unbroken tradition of English popular radical and anti-imperialist currents in the labour movement. However, he admitted that «imperialism penetrated deeply into the labour movement and even into socialist groups» (Thompson 1978, 67). Yet, while shocked by the irrationality of jingoism, the founding groups of the Labour party refused to give up imperialism. Young (1989) maintains that this imperialist culture impinged on the consciousness of the founding groups of the Labour party such as the Fabian Society, the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and the ethical Independent Labour party (ILP). In particular, Labour's infancy coincided with the definitive victory of 'liberal imperialism' over the more right-wing variety, which had asserted itself in the 1890s (Derry 1967; Nairn 1971; Cunningham 1989).

Liberal imperialism represented the central free trade traditions and clung to the moral internationalism of Cobden and Bright, to their abstract liberal belief in 'freedom' at home and abroad and the simpler and less doctrinaire view of Empire which fitted such old beliefs (Derry *ibid*, 231; Nairn 1972a, 57). For Haldane, Asquith, Grey, Acland and Munro-Ferguson, 'the Empire' meant white settlement. The Empire was 'composed of free self-governing communities, bound together, not by force, but by sentiment and affection. It was in essence a Liberal Empire'. For them, 'race' was defined culturally, not biologically. Rosebery thought the 'sympathy of the race' was based on linguistic, 'moral, intellectual and political influences'. Immigration from 'foreign races' was acceptable as long as it was assimilated. In this respect, Americans were part of the 'British or Anglo-Saxon' race (Matthew 1973, 163). Although their opposing views of social reform made the fusion of Fabian socialism and Liberal Imperialism not feasible (Joyce 1999, 30), their imperialist tendencies made great impact on the Fabians. Actually, Rosebery and Haldane were both delighted with the

Fabian manifesto *Fabianism and Imperialism*; ‘one of the most brilliant and incisive analyses’ which Haldane had seen (Matthew 1973, 183).

3.3.1 The Fabian Society and the Empire

The Fabian Society has been portrayed as the embodiment of gradual constitutional reformism, to be brought about by middle-class ‘administrators, professionals and technicians’ (Wright 1996). Founding as a socialist discussion group in 1884 the Society went on to co-found the Labour Representation Committee in 1900, which in turn became the Labour party after the 1906 general election.

The Fabian Society was probably the socialist grouping that was most outspoken in its support for imperialism (Kaarsholm 1989, 115; Porter 1984, 54). Yet, the imperialist issue did not appeal equally within the ranks of the Society, but threatened to split it. As chapter 5 will explain further, in relation to its European ideas, the Society should be categorised as a ‘hybrid’ organisation. Throughout its life, it has acted as a debating chamber providing valuable space for imperialist and European ideas. With regard to imperialism, the differing sympathies of individual Fabians were already, before the outbreak of the South African war, becoming apparent. William Clarke contributed to the *Progressive Review* in February 1897 a brilliant, anti-imperialist article under the title ‘The Genesis of Jingoism’. On the other hand, Sidney Webb had come closely into contact with the Liberal Imperialists, Haldane and Rosebery, in his work and was thought to be drifting into the camp of the Liberal Imperialists, and Shaw and Band with him (McBriar 1962, 120; Pierson 1979, 96; MacKenzie 1984, 170, 184; Clarke 1978; Porter 1984, 55; Joyce 1999).

Nevertheless, the Fabians’ first major sortie into foreign affairs came when George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was charged by the Executive Committee of the Society with writing a study of the Boer War. His resultant piece *Fabianism and the Empire* caused great consternation within the Society: thirteen Fabians resigned including the future Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937). In

essence, Shaw argued that imperialism was an established fact and therefore Britain should maintain and develop her Empire but along the lines of a 'great socialist Commonwealth'.

Yet, the curious nature of the Society's Tract *Fabianism and the Empire* and the reason why it was issued at all is explained by the Webb's and Shaw's expectations of the Liberal Imperialists. The fact that *Fabianism and the Empire* was concerned for half its length with domestic rather than imperial affairs was neither an accident, nor merely a sign that the Fabians were preoccupied with domestic reform (McBriar 1962, 243). In the manifesto *Fabianism and the Empire* edited by Shaw in 1900, the Society dedicated itself to the spread of 'efficiency' and 'civilisation' at both national and international levels (Shaw 1900, 3-4, 23, 41). In particular, Beatrice Webb wrote in her diaries that the manifesto was «a restatement of municipal socialism» and that the Fabians pressed for «a national minimum of Health, Education and Efficiency» while Rosebery placed the interests of the Empire first (Mackenzie 1984, 187-8). The question at issue was whether the British Empire could be made into an agency for good. The main tenet of the Fabian view was that the 'interests of civilization as a whole' should govern imperial policy (Shaw 1900, 3; Porter 1968, 231). Empire-building by its very nature meant growing units of diverse peoples under one government which in turn was deemed one step nearer the Society's definition of internationalism. Discussing Shaw's work, Pease noted that, 'we must accept the most responsible imperial federations available as a 'substitute for [internationalism]'' (Pease 1963, 31).

They seem to have been of the opinion that the states of Western Europe could and would benefit 'less developed' communities by taking them over or ruling them. Like the Liberals, they saw Empire as a 'partnership' between the races and considered that they had a moral obligation and not just a dedication to trade and power interests (Shaw 1900, 4; Porter 1968, 115). However, this partnership of 'races' was not based on equality in terms of political capacity. Ion Davis (1963) has said that

for many years the Fabians continued to treat, in particular, Africans as sub-human. The Webbs saw in Asia and Africa, with the one notable exception of Japan, a world of politically immature people, not yet sufficiently advanced to be able to master the arts of administration. «The whole Chinese nation remind us, in fact, of a race of ants or bees of gregarious habits, but incapable of the organisation of the anthill or hive», Sidney Webb argued, pressing his social Darwinism (Winter 1974, 184). They held that only parts of the Anglo-Saxon race possessed those qualities most conducive to the development of socialism.

Yet, as said earlier, their prime concern was domestic. Their benign imperialist plans were threatened by a perceived quantitative and qualitative decline in the English or British 'race' (Davin 1989). In the Webbs' writings in the years before the First World War we can see the extent to which they accepted and helped to propagate a number of crude assumptions about racial character, which were shared in late-Victorian society. In essence, according to Winter (1974) and Berger and Smith (1999), the Webbs argued that municipal socialism could be achieved only when the white race became the dominant one in world affairs. As seen in the liberal case, the racial Anglo-Saxonism became in some respects a natural accompaniment of British overseas imperialism since it embodied a view of historical past as well as stressing the common racial make up of the British colonisers (Malik *ibid*, 13). For the Fabians, Sidney Webb and for many others, whose views were woven out of diverse strands in late Victorian thought, reproducing the 'race' was a domestic necessity.

For the Victorians, race was a description of social distinctions. The view of non-Europeans as an inferior race was but an extension of the already existing view of the working class at home and took considerable time to become established as the normative view (Malik *ibid*, 91). The working class people and the poor were nature's failures, the 'residuum', by no means, an 'imperial race'. Samuel (1989a) writes that the outcast poor, or at any rate the 'undeserving', 'mendicant' poor, were, for some three centuries, the untouchables of British society. From the Tudor statutes against

‘sturdy vagabonds’ down to the abolition of the Poor Law they were the objects of administrative deterrence and repression. For the Malthusians they were an ‘extra’ population, increasing geometrically by reason of their improvidence and threatening to overwhelm society by their number. For the social investigators of the 1830s, they were the carriers of cholera and crime. For the social Darwinists they were nature’s failures, the ‘Residuum’. Class divisions denoted of ‘perpetual superior to perpetual inferior’ (Malik *ibid*, 94). They were ‘examples of the race reverting to some inferior type from which ages of civilisation and culture have raised it. The characteristics of this class are entirely those of the inferior races of mankind - wandering habits, utter laziness, absence of forethought and provision; want of moral sense, cunning, dirt, and instances may be found in which their physical characteristics approach those of the lower animals or what Professor Darwin calls ‘our arboreal ancestors’ (Malik *ibid*, 95).

By espousing these views, Webb asserted that «(London) the largest city in the world, the capital of the Empire, cannot, in these democratic days, safely be abandoned to the insidious influence of its festering centres of social ulceration. We dare not neglect the sullen discontent now spreading among its toiling millions. Metropolitan reform has become a national if not yet an imperial question» (Webb 1891, 6). In fact, by 1901 metropolitan reform had become an imperial question when Webb noted that eight million destitute persons constituted ‘not merely a disgrace but a positive danger to our civilisation’ and asked ‘what is the use of an Empire if it does not breed and maintain in the truest and fullest sense of the word an Imperial race?’ (Clough 1992, 30). It was not accidental that the eugenics, an influential current of opinion in the birth control movement of the 1920s, were naturally linked with the Fabians (Rich 1986; Samuel 1989b; S. Cohen 1994). The Fabian vision of a welfare state was eugenic, combining racism, nationalism and a hatred of the native ‘unfit’ (S. Cohen 1994, 80). In the *New Statesman* in 1913, the Webbs commenting on the failing white birth rate, they wrote: ‘Into the scarcity thus created in particular districts, in

particular sections of the labour market, or in particular social strata, there rush the offspring of the less thrifty, the less intellectual, the less foreseeing of races and classes - the unskilled casual labourers of our great cities, the races of Eastern or Southern Europe, the negroes, the Chinese - possibly resulting as already parts in parts of the USA, in such a heterogeneous and mongrel population that democratic self-government, or even the effective application of the policy of a national minimum of civilised life will become increasingly unattainable. If anything like this happens, it is difficult to avoid the melancholy conclusion that, in some cataclysm that is impossible for us to foresee, that civilisation characteristic of the Western European races may go the way of half a dozen other civilisations that have within historic times preceded it; to be succeeded by a new social order developed by one or other of the coloured races, the negro, the kaffir or the Chinese» (Clough *ibid*, 31). Their fellow Fabian, H. G. Wells went as far as advocating 'the sterilisation of the failures' (Clough *ibid*). Indeed, under the optic of 'race hygiene', a Parliamentary Commission in 1933 was pondering the compulsory sterilisation of the 'sub-normal types' (Samuel 1989a, xii). In this sense, the British working class was 'white' in colonial settings but something less than, or other to, white in the context of Britain's internal social hierarchy. In the latter context, the excessive nature of the bourgeois construction of whiteness, its exclusionary zeal, brought about its own impossibility: most whites, at least within Britain, were unworthy of whiteness (Bonnett 2000, 32). As a result, the Fabian elitist view of the inferiority of non-white races was to a large extent driven by domestic considerations. The perceived inferiority of the indigenous was projected over the assumed cultural and biological inferiority of the alien. Consequently, the party document in 1918, *Labour and the New Social Order*, referred to the 'moral claims upon us of the non-adult races', and to the 'great Commonwealth', which was 'not an Empire in the old sense, but a Britannic Alliance' (Labour Party 1918, 22).

Finally, after the Second World War the Fabian Society retained the attitude of superiority held by many socialists in the western half of Europe. For the British

Left, rejection of Europe was based on the premise of being more ‘internationally’ focused, especially on the Commonwealth which was increasingly seen as the democratic ideal, above the creeping ‘undemocratic’ nature of non-Western Europe (Minion 1999, 306). In this sense, for some within the Fabian International Bureau, any development of intra-continental co-operation was to be secondary to Britain’s primary economic relationship with the Commonwealth (Minion *ibid*, 191).

However, it was not just the Fabian Society that provided us with an insight of the duality of the imperial space: ethical socialists and Marxists contributed too.

3.3.2 Ethical Socialists, Marxists and the Empire

Despite their moralistic, radical anti-imperialism, both ethical socialists and Marxists could not disassociate themselves from this paternalistic view of the Empire. Although the more progressive Liberals and Marxists in the labour movement were sympathetic to the blacks, they were almost always motivated by a sort of paternalism influenced and shaped by the stereotypes of ‘scientific racism’ (Young 1989, 43).

3.3.2.1 The ILP, the Ethical Socialists and the Commonwealth

The Independent Labour party (ILP) was launched in 1893 at a time of growing resonance for socialism; at the same juncture the Fabian Society and the Marxist SDF were also exerting greater influence upon British politics (Minion *ibid*, 256). The ILP stressed the ethical dimension to its own brand of socialism. Foote (1997) stresses the religious underpinning to the ILP, which was ‘committed to a socialist objective - the collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange - interpreted in the light of Christian nonconformity rather than Marxism (of the SDF) or Fabian elitism’. One of the party’s early theorists, J. Bruce Glasier (1859-1920) expressed this outlook as an ‘ideology [which] was in no sense materialistic or just political; rather it was an ethical doctrine, a religion even. It was intended not simply to abolish poverty but rather to save the soul as well’ (Greenleaf

1983, 414). In relation to the ILP's wider international outlook, historians are in some disagreement. P. J. Twaites (1976), in his study of the party's later years (1938-50), suggests that the ILP was an international party from its inception. Robert Dowse (1966) in contrast argues that up until the First World War the ILP was overwhelmingly focused on domestic matters. The publications though of the ILP would tend to favour Twaites' position.

Among the representatives of the ethical tradition, Robert Blatchford (1851-1943), an internationalist and follower of the Tory radical tradition of William Cobbett, came to believe that the Empire was necessary for the achievement of socialism in England (Barrow 1975, 392, 394). As will become clear later on, Blatchford was the most representative Little Englander of the labour movement at the time. Yet, as Gott (1989) has argued, Little Englanders of the 19th century never had any particular desire to make England 'little'. Most of them had a more positive attitude to what would happen in a post-colonial age.

In fact, during the Boer War Blatchford's chauvinism did not deter him from coming out to defend the Empire. His nationalism was a precondition of his international beliefs: «I am not a jingo, I am opposed to war but I cannot go with those socialists whose sympathies are with the enemy...I am for peace and for international brotherhood. But when England is at war I'm English. I have no politics and no party. I am English» (Ward 1998, 60). His support for imperialism was on the grounds that England was the best colonising power the world had ever known and the 'gentlest' and 'wisest' ruler over 'subject' races (Ward *ibid*, 60-2). «We never ought to have conquered India», he wrote; yet, «we did conquer and we must govern and defend it», he added (Thompson 1951, 9).

Likewise, Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), a leading member of the ILP, strongly defended the idea of Empire on the grounds that it was England's mission to spread freedom to the rest of the world (Porter 1968, 189; Ward *ibid*; Berger 1999).

He argued for a democratised and humanised Empire, which had to fulfill its civilising mission in the world (Berger 1999, 61).

Like the Fabians, he thought that the European states had a 'civilising mission' in the world due to the superiority of the white races' (Berger and Smith 1999, 17). During a debate on 'socialist colonialism' at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, he supported the resolution that 'congress does not, in principle and for all times, reject the colonial policy, which, under a socialist regime may have a civilising effect'. In this he merely echoed the position of the German Social Democrat Bernstein, who had argued that 'a certain guardianship of cultured peoples over non-cultured peoples is a necessity which should also be recognised by socialists' (Fox 1933, 110; Clough *ibid*, 141). Hence, imperial racism constituted a 'world view' by erecting Eurocentric cultural standards in such a way that the colonised were equated with a total lack of culture.

As a consequence, it is no wonder that in the post-war period, as will become clear in chapter 5, Britain had a special position in the ILP's vision of the United Socialist States of Europe due to her imperial past and manufacturing capabilities.

3.3.2.2 The Marxists and the Commonwealth

Henry Myers Hyndman, the founder of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (SDF), wanted to maintain Britain's proud history of leading the world in political reform. Of no leading socialist other than Hyndman could Max Beer have written that he was 'a patriot burning with zeal to see all his countrymen, the scions of a great race, well-housed and warlike, having a stake in their world-wide Empire, the boundaries of which they should be prepared to defend and to extend' (Beer 1929, 230). Hyndman's path to socialism was paved with conservative influences. He belongs to the tradition of radical conservatism (Bevir 1991, 126), which began with Burke and links Coleridge and Southey with Carlyle and Disraeli - see chapter 4 on 'Little Englanderism and Labour'. His early writings concentrated on the conservative

theme of Empire. He argued that the Empire was in danger of falling apart and that the solution lay in a self-governing Commonwealth and parliamentary representation for the colonies (Hyndman 1877; 1881, 443-62). He was a strong believer in the beneficent mission of Empire and an advocate of heavy expenditure on the Royal Navy (Tsuzuki 1961, 2). 'A true imperial policy', said Hyndman, 'means a constant endeavour on the part of the whole nation to secure liberality, welfare, and contentment in every part of the British dominions, to knit together the various communities under our flag and to exercise far and wide that continuous influence in favour of the principles that have made the greatness of this country - justice, freedom, and respect for each one's rights' (Tsuzuki *ibid*, 25).

Like Liberal Imperialists and Fabians, Hyndman's Empire was white: «In America, in Australia, all the world over, the Anglo-Saxon blood is still second to none» (Hyndman 1884, 31). He actually wondered, «why should not Britain strive to achieve a closer union with Australia, Canada and other 'democratic Colonies'?» (Hyndman 1884, 34). Although his views on race, nation and imperialism were challenged from within the SDF, Hyndman took a route based on race rather than class: «Surely those who are in favour of a unity of all peoples...cannot fail ere long to understand that the first step towards this great unity end must be a closer and yet closer unity of peoples of the same race, language and political traditions working together for the good of all portions of that noble federation» (Hobsbawm 1968, 233-4). Hyndman identified the natural leaders with the upper 'classes' (Bevir 1991, 133). Like the elitism of the Fabians, Hyndman thought that the working classes were blind unless given suitable leadership (Bevir 1991, 139).

In fact, his attachment to the old Liberal tradition of the 'rights of the little peoples' was accompanied by a strong element of paternalism in Hyndman's attitude to the working class: he felt almost towards them as he did towards the Fijians, the Africans and the Indians. He, like Fabians, was a different 'species', a member of the 'educated classes' (Tsuzuki *ibid*, 271). Furthermore, Hyndman was perhaps the most

infamous anti-Semite among early socialists (Tsuzuki *ibid*, 128). His first comments on the Boer War described it as «The Jew's war on the Transvaal» and blamed the «Jew-jingo press» and the British ruling class run by «their masters, the capitalist Jews» (Baker 1974, 5-6). Once more, paternalism over other races drew on the domestic front. Hyndman and his like-minded in the SDF such as Balfort Bax believed in the ultimate emancipation of the black peoples in the 'backward' underdeveloped countries but they did not transcend racist stereotypes of the 'backward', 'child-like' black Africans. They actually thought that black Africans were incapable of playing any role in political struggles (Porter 1968, 116; Young 1989, 57). J. R. Widdup, another prominent member of the SDF, defended the 'progressive' and 'civilising' role of English imperialism in Africa by arguing that when socialism came the English would be the first to 'drop the thought of any superior racial characteristics' (Young 1989, 45).

It can hardly be accepted that the views of Shaw, Hyndman, Blatchford and McDonald were identical with those of the majority of the members of the founding groups of the Labour party. Nonetheless, as Ward (1998) has noted, the real problem about Labour anti-imperialists was the uncritical backing given to imperialist political programmes in which both liberal and socialist anti-imperialism incorporated and mirrored basic imperial nationalist assumptions, which intersected with particular racial constructions of the colonised on social and biological grounds.

The 'social imperialism' of the Labour party in the 1960s reflected many of the above assumptions already made in the late Victorian period by the first socialist groups. Some of them were destined to last for many years. For example, as seen, the racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxons was not based on merely biological grounds. Cultural traits were equally important for the best 'governing race' of the world. Similarly, second, the 'backwardness' of the non-English speaking world, which sustained the Anglo-Saxon superiority, reflected domestic considerations and was not

made in terms of biology either. Third, it was apparent that in the vision of the multicultural Commonwealth or the ‘partnership of races’ lurked the seeds of exclusion for those populations, which were incapable in terms of political capacity. The post-war Labour official discourse on Commonwealth reproduced, re-worked and adapted many of the elements of the late Victorian imperialist discourse to the changing politico-economic environment of the post-colonial period.

What follows then is the analysis of the imperial identity in others: that is, first the analysis of the imperial nationalism as emerged in diverse forms in the party discourse in each of the five examined periods; and, second, an analysis of its complementary racial implications.

3.4 The Labour Commonwealth: Symbol of Greatness

What makes the imperial vision of Labour Britishness the most significant element of the party’s identity has been its continuity throughout the European debates. In particular, since the first application for British membership of the Common Market in 1961 (in July 1961 Macmillan announced British application to join EEC), either in the form of the Commonwealth, or in the form of the Atlantic ‘special relationship’ or in both, the extra-territorial space of the English-speaking world has remained a source of British superiority for all the post-war Labour leaders and the bulk of the party members. As Marquand has argued, in the post-war period, Britishness was firmly situated in relation to a history of global expansion and imperialism (Marquand 1995b, 189). When explaining Britain’s policy concerning the Schuman Plan in 1950, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stafford Cripps, stated: «In our view, participation in a political federation, limited to Western Europe, is not compatible either with our Commonwealth ties, our obligations as a member of the wider Atlantic community, or as a world power» (Cripps 1950, col.1948). These views, which allegedly represented «a rehash of Beaverbrook’s Empire policy»

(Edwards 1950, 5), were destined to influence heavily the attitudes of the following party leaderships and members.

3.4.1 The Defence of 'One Thousand Years of History'

Between 1961, at the time of the Macmillan Government's first bid for British membership of the Common Market, and, 1967, when Wilson made the second try, for the Labour party the European issue was a matter of global «political considerations», that is, Britain's role as a world power (Labour Party 1961; 1962; 1964; 1966). Tom Nairn has alleged that Labour's determined idealism about the Commonwealth suggested an ignorance of what at the time the Commonwealth really stood for; and hence an ignorance of the true terms of the problem of British capitalism in its fight for revival (Nairn 1965a, 8). In fact, at times of crisis for Britain, when the maintenance of the imperial grandeur proved financially unbearable, the Commonwealth started to disintegrate under the impact of the decolonisation process and the Common Market had emerged in 1957 as a promising politico-economic association of medium sized countries, Labour resorted to prior forms of belonging.

For generations, the growth of British industrial capitalism was relatively neglected for the sake of investment in this parasitic imperial system. This was because imperial preferences and the sterling area had offered a financial buffer against Britain's true plight of accumulated wartime debts, major infrastructural damage and neglect. When the rest of Europe, particularly Germany, was reconstructing its industries and infrastructure with a judicious mix of capital and labour, it was easier and cheaper for Britain to retreat into an as yet unexploited part of one of those favoured zones in the Commonwealth rather than meet competition face-to-face. Thus, Britain was becoming a parasitic rather than a competitive economy living off the vestiges of her world monopoly, the underdeveloped world, and her past accumulations of wealth (Nairn 1965a, 5). In the early 1960s, doubts about the

Commonwealth's worth had begun to be widespread. Britain no longer possessed the military and economic capability to sustain its imperial role in the third world. By then, it was also recognised that a fairly rapid withdrawal would be less painful for all concerned than a lengthy campaign to retain control of possessions that would eventually be lost anyway (Sanders 1990, 104).

Especially, after the enlargement that followed Suez - between 1957 and 1966 Britain granted formal autonomy to some 22 major colonial territories (Sanders *ibid*, 104; Curtis 1995, 56) - the Commonwealth could not become a unified prosperous economic unit because the newly free developing nations did not want to be led by anybody but themselves, certainly not by an ex-colonial Power. For all the Commonwealth sentiment and emotion, the Commonwealth countries did not try to trade with Britain to the exclusion of all others just because they happened to belong to the Commonwealth (Hynd 1961, col.1562). The last thing they were prepared to do was to give United Kingdom manufacturers a free rein in their markets. Before the 1960s, Canada was becoming more dependent on the United States, and Australia was starting to recognise her Asian destiny. They were not good markets as the basis of British trade any more. Others would soon be looking to the Common Market, with or without Britain, because of the quantity and quality of what it offered (Young 1998, 139).

Indeed, Labour's imperial fervour defied trading patterns that were already visible. On the one hand, Commonwealth exports to Europe were rising while those to Britain were declining: as a result of the aggregate effect of innumerable individual business decisions in Europe and the United States, trade with the Empire circle was becoming progressively less important to the British economy (Sanders *ibid*, 119); on the other hand, the economic needs of those countries could not afford any more the paternalistic strangulation of the mother country and some, as already mentioned, had already chosen other economic partners. Sanders talks about a black political

conscience emerging that was all too aware of the nature and extent of the oppression and exploitation that colonialism engendered. (Sanders *ibid*, 115; Young 1998).

However, the bonds of history and culture were stronger than the economic facts. Whatever the uncertainties surrounding it, the idea of nationality remained deeply embedded in the Labour party's political unconscious, and the sleeping images sprang to life in the time of crisis. As Samuel suggests, fantasies of national rebirth remain a stock-in-trade of political rhetoric (Samuel 1989a, xxxii). The white bonds, connected to the old rather than the new Commonwealth, gripped hard on Labour's mind (Young 1998, 139). Even though Richard Crossman recognised that «despite all pretensions for fifteen years we have been going downhill, while France and Germany have been overtaking us and forging ahead» (Morgan 1981, 951), the majority of his party colleagues maintained that Britain was «still a great nation» (Blyton 1962, col. 570); «a world power» (Wilson 1986, 188) with a role to play on issues that went beyond Europe (Wilson 1962a, col.1282). George and Heythorne (1996) have noted that from the beginning the British Labour party approached the European Community from a very distinctive national political tradition in which imperialism featured strongly. This was sensible since, according to Jones and Keating, one of the historic forms of Labour nationalism has been patriotic - the idea of Britain as a world power (Jones and Keating 1985, 186).

More specifically, politically down to the 1960s, for Labour, Britain was still the 'Mother country' of the Empire, a Commonwealth of nations covering a fifth of the earth's surface and accounting for a quarter of its population (Samuel 1989a, 27). In 1961, the Finance and Economic Policy Sub-Committee of the National Executive Committee of the party argued that «Britain's leading part in world affairs as the centre and founder of member of the Commonwealth would be sharply and quickly reduced in Europe» (Labour Party 1961, 6). In the 1962 National Executive Committee statement 'Labour and the Common Market', it was argued that Britain could still 'go it alone'. It asked for «strong and binding safeguards for the trading and

other interests of our friends and partners in the Commonwealth» and «freedom as at present to pursue our own foreign policy» (Labour Party 1962, 219). Reminiscent of the Fabian inspired 'partnership of races' as an agency for good, the Labour Commonwealth then represented the possibility of international harmony, peace and co-operation (Labour Party 1958, 2). It offered the prospect of a multi-racial community in which Britain would have a central part, which was justifiable for a country of 'higher civilisation' as Bernard Shaw might have said. As Stephen Howe has argued, much of this aspiration fell into the category acidly described by Ronald Robinson of radicals who 'ceased to decry the wickedness of Empire past and exalted a better Empire to come' (Howe 1989, 133). Labour, the party of the Commonwealth of partnership, offered the way in which Britain could continue to give a political, economic, and perhaps above all moral, lead to world-wide association of nations. The party leader of the time, Hugh Gaitskell gave his full support to this vision.

Like other Fabian efficiency experts (he was vice-chairman of the New Fabian Research Bureau in 1934), Gaitskell's vision of the multiracial Commonwealth was determined by a particular set of political concerns and standards of citizenship (Williams 1979, 61; Milward 1997, 149). «Belief in freedom, democracy, and self-government» were the ideals that held the Commonwealth countries together, according to the party leader (Gaitskell 1970, 209). The fundamental basis of British nationalism from the time of its emergence as a secular body of ideas in the seventeenth century had always been closely associated with Puritan ideas of liberty, though always expressed in a quiet and covert manner. These liberal ideas became incorporated into imperialism and ultimately acted on it to shape the emergence of the Commonwealth ideal, as seen above. In the 1960s, Labour imperialism, re-baptised as British Commonwealth, was a monument to British exuberance, British abilities, and British institutions (Thornton 1966). This gave British a sense of national pride in the civilising mission of British imperialism and a sense of moral superiority over the rest of the world - Europe included.

In particular, according to the Labour leader, the Commonwealth countries, especially the old white ones such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand were thought to be «very British indeed» because they embodied «our traditions, our political institutions and our monarchy» (Gaitskell 1962a). The Anglo-Saxon countries shared national traits of the political culture that put them in a superior position over the other nations - on Labour's view of political culture, see also chapter 7. As Rich has argued, the British success in Empire building had to be ascribed to the respective merits not of breed but of institutions (Rich 1986, 66). Gaitskell, echoing the teachings of the liberal imperialists, assumed that those 'democratic' countries had the «obligation» to 'spread' those institutions and help the «backward countries of Asia and Africa» to go through «the process of swift transition from static economy under democratic conditions» (Gaitskell 1970, 211) - on Labour's 'benevolent Empire', see also chapter 10. Labour's concept of imperialism was still reminiscent of the moral crusade which Rudyard Kipling had captured in the idea of the White Man's Burden - a notion which embodied the sense both of Western superiority and of a moral obligation placed upon the West to act for the good of humankind (Cohen 1994, 22; Malik 1996, 115). After all, as seen earlier, the essence of Empire was control and authority; the confidence to wield it; and the capacity to enforce it, if necessary (Thornton 1966, 383). By both birth and formation, Gaitskell had some of these instincts within him. He was infused with the imperial connection that found its way into the lives of so many of the British professional classes (Postan 1964; Williams 1979; Young 1998, 156). His father joined the Indian Civil Service and spent all his professional life in Burma, though Hugh was born in Kensington. His elder brother, Arthur Jr, the founder of a peasant co-operative in the Sudan, spoke for the same dutiful attachment to public service on the global scale, and Hugh absorbed this family tradition (Williams 1979; Pimlott 1993).

As Robins (1979) has pointed out, in the early 1960s, for most of the members and the MPs of the party, their leader's vision was common ground on which they

could build up their own political and economic toothless fantasies for the old Commonwealth and their country as the head of it. First, even though the confident certainties of the Churchillian vision had already dissolved, they persuaded themselves that this heterogeneous entity would play a vital role «in improving East-West relations by helping to develop international co-operation» (Blyton 1962, col.576). A strong, free and independent Britain sustained and supported by her Commonwealth friends, white, black and yellow, it was argued that, would become «a beacon of hope for the world, a mitigating influence between the two muscle-bound giants» (Carr 1961, 215). Further, Gaitskell's prime concern, as he often said, was with the economic reckoning. The Commonwealth, Labour persuaded themselves, could be made into a viable economic partner, a growing force, if only London set its mind to the task. The charge started developing then by Labour was that Britain had shamefully neglected Commonwealth trade, which should now be boosted by all manners and devices. George and Haythorne have remarked that protecting the national interests required steering Britain away from a European alliance and concentrating on the traditional trading relationship with the Commonwealth partners (George and Haythorne 1996, 113).

In particular, Clive Jenkins proposed a Commonwealth Bank to help those colonies that desperately needed capital: «We could have a Commonwealth Bank and we could say to the emerging African nations and to the non committed nations: 'Join us. We will give you help with goods, factories and universities'» (Jenkins 1961, 21). Likewise, Barbara Castle had envisaged a mutually beneficial «co-operative Commonwealth» (Castle 1957, 724) on the development of which the Labour party pledged to spend 1% of the national income. By reinforcing financial aid by deliberate planning, trading agreements and preferential rates of interest for some of the colonial loans, Labour's aspiration was to revive the rusting skein of ties and make them into a more robust association of states and business networks (Young 1998, 157). It was said that the colonial territories would no longer accept a system based on the

exploitation of their extractive industries and export profits on the current scale. «We must give them a share in the physical as well as financial priorities», because, as Healey claimed, «we in the Labour Movement have got to make the Commonwealth the nervous system, the spinal column of a new world order» (Healey 1962, 175). The debates of 1961 and 1962 contained much wild thrashing about in search of Commonwealth oriented economic nostrums, to avert the unthinkable political outcome of membership of the Common Market. But as seen above, the extra-national ('outward-looking') polity of the party was dependent upon the retention and reinforcement of the Commonwealth's economic parasitism.

Preserving the sterling area, where Commonwealth countries kept their funds, continued to eclipse any thought of European solidarity. The sterling area gave some lingering substance to the notion that Britain was still a World Power. It was to uphold that notion that Britain was at Suez (Young 1998, 111). As Gupta has claimed, this was one of the weakest points in Hugh Gaitskell's ideal of «Commonwealth standards» (Gaitskell 1970, 209-211), that is, the notion that it embodied the principle of the richer members helping the poorer ones, when it was well known that the Commonwealth's own interests, country by country, diverged sharply and none of the member states could really pursue this moral goal without harming their internal political goals (Gupta 1975, 384). In these cases, as Nairn has remarked, 'emergencies' define national identity (Nairn 1972b, 22). The changing global context prompted Labour to recover the imperial grandeur.

Thus, by appealing to the imperial identity, the party leader could compensate for the failures of the British state and give it a continuity it might otherwise lack. In fact, British membership of the Common Market was presented as a suicidal action that would have broken the 'great chain of being': «It does mean the end of Britain as an independent nation state... it means the end of a thousand years of history...it does mean the end of the Commonwealth» (Gaitskell 1962b, 159), as Gaitskell said in an epoch-making speech at the Brighton ice rink on 3 October 1962, driven by a concern

for global internationalism. The widest boundaries of the British national collectivity came to signify a national symbol of a global superiority. According to David Marquand, more than anything else, this 'imperialist vision' solidified Labour's attitude towards the European Community at the time (Marquand 1995b, 186).

But imperialism itself was not something that distinguished the British from other European powers. As Colley has said, what was distinctive about Britain's Empire (for a century or so) was its sheer size (Colley 1999a, 28). Possession of such a vast and obvious alien Empire encouraged the British to see themselves as a distinct, special and - often - superior people (Young 1998). The extra-territorial, extra-European vision of the British Commonwealth provided Britain with a world role and influence that the narrow confines of the Common Market could not guarantee. As Tom Nairn has argued, extra-territoriality has been the true genetic code of Britishness (Nairn 1988, 246). In his study over Labour's Commonwealth at the time, Davis maintained that Labour plans for the Commonwealth read strikingly like Chamberlain's Greater Britain or Leopold Amery's Commonwealth Empire (Davis 1963, 94).

Gaitskell and, his successor, Harold Wilson thought that Britain could not become just another state of a supranational association. For Labour, the genuine opposite of 'Great' in the inherited - history sense would naturally be small, or smallish: diplomatically resourceless, without a special relationship to call one's own, an absence unnoticed at Top Tables, an ordinary country comfortably distanced from today's global crossroads and with parochial problems like those of such un-Great nations as Italy, Spain and Holland (Nairn 1988, 255), or what Gaitskell called, «no more than a state in the US of Europe, such as Texas and California» (Gaitskell 1962b, 159). George and Heythorne have claimed that Labour enjoyed a sense of national superiority over its Continental counterparts and an assumption of a privileged position and a duty to spread enlightenment to others (George and Heythorne 1996, 113). Indeed, for Labour, the British state was a uniquely imperial

state, and the British a uniquely imperial people, with a role to play on issues that went beyond Europe (Blyton 1962, col. 570; Jay and Jenkins 1962, 2; Wilson 1962a, col.1282; 1986, 188). On the contrary, it was argued that, as «a seventh state of Europe», instead of bridging the great gulfs that divided humanity - the gulf between the committed and the uncommitted, and the gulf between white and coloured, rich and poor - Britain would be hopelessly reduced to a «powerless Little England on the margin of the Continent» (Edelman 1962, col. 590).

Contrary to Robins' (1979) assertions that the Commonwealth's significance declined by the time of Wilson's second application, this thesis maintains that Commonwealth retained its grip on Labour's minds for much longer than this scholar has assumed.

3.4.2 The British Frontiers...at the 'Himalayas'

In the 1964 election manifesto «The New Britain», Labour thinking was still riveted to traditional British doctrines which stressed Atlantic and Commonwealth ties: «The first responsibility of a British Government is still to the Commonwealth», it said (Labour Party 1964, 56). In «Time for Decision», the party's manifesto for the 1966 General election, it was maintained that «Britain...should be ready to enter the EEC provided essential British and Commonwealth interests are safeguarded» (Labour Party 1966). George and Haythorne (1996) have argued that protecting the Commonwealth was one of the fundamental conditions on which the Labour government entered into the unsuccessful membership negotiations of 1966. On 2 May 1967, when Wilson announced in the Commons the decision of the government to make a second application for British membership of the EEC, he said «we do not see European unity as something narrow or inward looking. Britain has her own vital links through the Commonwealth with other continents». And he continued, assuring the House that, «together we can assure that Europe plays in world affairs the part which Europe of

today is not at present playing (...) contributing to the solution of the world's North-South problem, to the needs of the developing world» (Wilson 1967a, 314).

Nairn (1972b) has observed that Labour's Britain felt that its proper place remained the whole world, nothing else would do: only the globe could measure up to the demands of this particular national ego. The sheer breadth of this largesse would naturally enfold the world's poor shielding them from Brussels (Nairn 1972b, 14). Even though the party Conference in 1967 supported the government's decision to apply for entry into the Common Market by a great majority, if we read carefully the speeches of the Labour members, we will realise that the Labour party as a whole did not address the issue. In their arguments we can easily notice their reluctance to restrict Britain's role within the Common Market. Their perspective remained worldwide, or as a Labour MP put it, «across the Continent and across the seas» (De Freitas 1967, col.1550), whereas their feelings were lukewarm towards the Continental countries. James Griffiths, the former Secretary for the Colonies in 1950-1, who had a long memory of the first years of decolonisation, was undoubtedly the most prominent proponent for the dutiful role of Britain towards the Commonwealth. «We all have an obligation», Griffiths said, «to the countries which in the past were conquered, acquired and...exploited by us» (Griffiths 1967, col.1130). The left-wing MP Michael Foot saw the Commonwealth as the key factor for any substantial role for Britain within the Common Market: «This country will still able to exercise its power in the affairs of the world...if we could keep the Commonwealth together...then we could greatly enhance our influence in Europe too...» (Foot 1967, col.1121).

Indeed, from the most prominent anti-European of the Cabinet, such as Douglas Jay to the most voluble pro-Europeans such as George Brown, Michael Stewart and George Thomson, the Commonwealth still remained a vital vehicle of Britain's influence in the world (Jay 1968b, 125; Brown 1966a, 268; Thomson 1968, col.545). The pro-Europeans especially put their arguments in imperial perspective and did not see Britain's influence as that of a medium sized country within the Common Market.

They claimed that membership was the only route left to the 'top table' and they thus presented themselves as the true protectors of Britain's greatness. None of them, though, could get rid of the imperial legacy. Actually Stewart and Thomson conceded that «adaptation to our position in the second rank is not easy, for Britain still has post-imperial commitments all over the world» (Stewart 1980, 144). George Thomson believed that, although Britain had to consolidate her position on Europe, «the Commonwealth still has a great potential usefulness in the world...the Commonwealth will remain a vital vehicle of Britain's influence in the world» (Thomson 1968, col.545).

In this way, as Barnett (1997, 294) Fishman (1998, 102) and Nairn (2000, 15) have all argued, the pro-European faction of the party supported the Common Market negatively from a neo-imperialist position. This was not a pro-European argument; it was a pro-British one. George Brown, the pro-European Foreign Secretary in the Wilson Cabinet (from August 1966 till March 1968) was one of the most eloquent advocates of this claim:

«We *have* a role: our role is to lead Europe...It is our business to provide political leadership that for so long has eluded the democracies of the mainland of Europe. I have as much arrogant patriotism in me as anybody else, and I do not want to see Britain's becoming just one of a number of *small* European states. That is why I feel that we must support the idea of a United Europe, play our full part in bringing it about, and offer leadership wherever we can. I do not see where else leadership can come from other than from this country» (Brown 1971, 202).

This contradicts Robins' claim that many within the Labour party were in the habit of posing Europeanism and the Commonwealth role in an 'either/or' relation (Robins 1979, 21). The pro-Europeans of the time could not abandon the imperial heritage in order to assume a European identity. The issue was not so clear-cut as a section of the scholarship suggests (Ashford 1991; Newman 1983).

Although, in 1966, Wilson and his colleagues had no strong admiration for European integration, the severe economic crisis of that year, which was to culminate in

the devaluation of the pound by 14.3 in November 1967, brought about a change of tune, and in May 1967 the second application was made. Britain's entry into the EEC had every appearance of being a policy of last resort. For the party leader, Britain's entry was based on mere pragmatism («we mean business» (Wilson 1967a, cols.310-332), whereas the party's loyalties and attachments lay beyond the Atlantic. Newman (1983, 218) has commented that the adopted Europeanism did not entail any real shift in political outlook while the nebulous world-wide consciousness associated with Commonwealth continued to underlie Labour party attitudes.

As Northedge has also claimed, so long as Britain was able to maintain an influential position within the Commonwealth and the Atlantic Community, British governments were bound to work hard to preserve it (Northedge 1983, 27). In fact, the left-wing Minister Barbara Castle noted in her memoirs that despite the fact that he did not succeed in developing the economic links with the Commonwealth «Harold (Wilson) has tried very hard to develop them...» (Castle 1984, 249).

Wilson's attitude to the Commonwealth came from the Attlee heritage, as he shared the Attlee Government's pride in the notion of transforming the Empire into the Commonwealth (Pimlott 1993, 434). Wilson, like Gaitskell, was by temperament a Commonwealth man. Although the evidence of a long-term downward trend away from the Commonwealth trade could be refuted, this special relationship with a multi-racial Third World was something with great appeal to the Labour soul of which Wilson considered himself the prime custodian (Young 1998, 187). So it was possible to see the Commonwealth as a multi-racial community and potential force in the world, and one in which there was a post-colonial role for Britain, guiding the development of the poorer regions (Pimlott 1993, 434). Ziegler (1993) has pointed out that, Wilson's love for the Commonwealth was romantic and traditional as he relished the idea of Britain at the heart of this great international network. Wilson believed that Commonwealth represented the surest way by which his country could remain among the foremost powers, and he was also convinced that the British role in Africa and Asia was essential

for world peace. «On the Commonwealth», he wrote, «lies not only our economic strength but our potential for world leadership» (Wilson 1964a, 21). His illusions of imperial grandeur made him believe «in a world which is genuinely looking to Britain for a lead which no others can give» (Wilson 1964a, 11). In his eyes, Britain rose to a first rank world Power because of «our traditions, the skill of our diplomatic service at home and abroad, our pattern of alliances and our unique relationship with a great Commonwealth» (Wilson 1965b, col.1144).

In fact, Wilson reiterated a theme, which was destined to be recurrent in his speeches till 1968. Britain's duty was not to strut the world stage like a down-at-heel monarch, but to contribute to peacekeeping on a worldwide scale. Wilson, as Gaitskell before, took it for granted that this would be acceptable both to the new developing countries, in whose territories for the most part this role would be played out, and to the British taxpayer, especially the not too well-off taxpayer, who would be called upon to foot the bill (Pimlott 1993, 435). Wilson expressed these views in a statement made in the Commons, in his first speech on Foreign Affairs as Prime Minister:

«I want to make it clear that whatever we may do in the field of cost effectiveness, value for money and a stringent review of expenditure, we cannot afford to relinquish our world role - our role which, for shorthand purposes, is sometimes called our 'east of Suez' role, though this particular phrase, however convenient, lacks geographical accuracy» (Wilson 1964c, col.424).

The purest expression of Wilson's nationalism, of his belief in the Greater Britain and the modern version of the white man's burden - the peace-keeping role in Asia - and of the delusions of grandeur which inspired his whole foreign policy, till then, was to be found in the famous East of Suez speech made to a restless Parliamentary Labour party meeting in June 1966, in which he set Britain's frontier not on the Rhine but at the Himalayas (Allen 1988; Crossman 1975; Nairn 1965a). Significantly, while Wilson's books contain many lengthy extracts from his own speeches, this one was not included. Richard Crossman tells us that, «his theme was that, though, he was prepared to withdraw and reduce the number of troops East of

Suez (which he did later) he would never deny Britain the role of a world power» (Crossman 1975, 540). As Nairn has also pointed out, there was the same crypto-imperialist streak in the Labour internationalist ideology as there was in the liberal and free-trade dogmas that lent themselves so well to Anglo-Saxon Empire (Nairn 1997, 43). As a matter of fact, the *internationalism* of Labour was in terms of spheres of influence, constitutional dogma and the Atlantic alliance (Davis 1963, 88).

The EEC should have killed all illusions about the British Commonwealth and destroyed the last vestiges of social imperialism. Yet, it revealed the lack of any specific policy that was outside the limits of the Commonwealth and NATO.

This was a nationalism that hoped to conserve and transmute the national essence by embracing the power, which supplanted it (Nairn 1972b, 19). The Atlantic ally traditionally served as a buffer to cushion the shock of British declining power. This relationship goes back to the tacit alliance concluded between the British and American Empires before 1914 (Nairn 1971, 39). At that time, the differing interests of the two systems - one increasingly devoted to the export of capital, the other to rapid industrial growth and the export of commodities - allowed an implicit accommodation between them. This material conjuncture provided the basis for a conflation of ideologies. Like the British 'liberal imperialism', which triumphed, as already mentioned, in 1906, the American Empire easily assumed the guise of an anti-imperialist and internationalist movement (Jones 1972, 229). Many elements in the common culture of the two nations fostered this development, and rendered it palatable to the Labour party (Nairn 1971, 18).

This was made more evident during and after the Suez fiasco. Labour's apparently anti-imperialist opposition to the Conservative government's Suez adventure was in fact wholly consonant with its Atlantic nationalism. In tones of genuine outrage, it was pointed out by many a Labour spokesman at the time that the Tory government had not even informed the American ally of what they were up to (Young 1998, 135). In 1957, the Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell had expressed his

strong attachment to a wider world perspective, which incorporated the Commonwealth and the Atlantic Alliance (Williams 1979, 702). After the Suez expedition, Gaitskell frankly admitted that the Commonwealth was not enough for Britain to hold world role pretences: «In these circumstances we had to be realistic and recognise that all ideas of ‘going it alone’ were nonsense and that we must cut our losses and swallow our pride». And he continued: «in spite of our bargaining powers (Commonwealth) we cannot use them on our own...they are essentially weapons, which can only be used in collaboration with US» (Gaitskell 1957, 419).

Likewise, in the 1960s, as Nairn noted, the proudest, most arrogantly independent-looking of Wilson’s postures, the claim to a ‘world role’ east of Suez, in reality involved American backing (Nairn 1965a, 11). As long as America was so busy in Vietnam, she was quite happy to hear Wilson saying that Britain’s frontiers were along the Himalayas, defending the most important Asian country from the Chinese menace. As Pimlott has remarked, in 1964 Wilson had readily agreed to White House requests that Britain should keep a foothold in Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Persian Gulf while the following year, American demands became more specific, as the commitments to US troops in the Far East grew (Pimlott 1993, 385). Wilson maintained that «our Commonwealth history and connections mean that Britain can provide for the Alliances and for the world peace-keeping role a contribution which no other country, not excluding America, can provide» (Wilson 1964c, col.424). His Commonwealth peace initiative on Vietnam in 1965 was indicative of this determination, despite his critics’ claims that he had too high an opinion of Britain’s moral weight in world affairs, especially with regard to the Commonwealth as being a moral third force in world affairs, taking into account the strained relations over the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia in 1965 and the several economic crises of his government (Castle 1984; Crossman 1975; P. Jenkins 1971; Ponting 1989; Wilson 1965a; 1971e; Wrigley 1993, 126).

Despite Wilson's refusal to Lyndon Johnson's request for British troops, the Vietnam war was a very good opportunity for the Labour Prime Minister to harbour illusions that Britain, as head of the Commonwealth, was sitting on the same table with the Americans and that her world status was tantamount to a go-between role. Even if Britain, having abandoned all of its major colonies, no longer needed to protect exclusively British interests in the third world, it could still provide a useful supplement to American efforts to defend the general interests of the West which in an era of decolonisation the Soviet Union was doing its best to subvert.

Furthermore, for some British ministers, adherence to 'East of Suez' was simply an obligation of the British-American partnership. Patrick Gordon Walker, Michael Stewart and George Brown, who were, at the time, responsible for Labour's conduct of foreign policy, all prized the American connection, despite their different evaluations of the relative merits of European and Commonwealth entanglements. In several cases George Brown had underlined that «we remain firmly committed to the alliance as the basis of the security of this country» (Brown 1967b, col.345), and as «a corner-stone of our foreign policy» (Brown 1966a, 268). The collusion, so evident in Britain's role as chief executant of American designs and the re-structuring of the Atlantic Alliance, was in fact worldwide. As one of his biographer tells us, Wilson was determined to 'recreate the Anglo-American axis' (Ziegler 1993, 221) at the expense, if necessary, of Britain's links with Europe in order to maintain Britain's world position as an imperial, though toothless, Power. «He (Wilson) just saw that», as the then Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, Richard Crossman said, «one must either go into Europe or become a subsidiary of the Americans, and he chose the latter» (Crossman 1975, 156). In addition, as recent documentation revealed, Wilson went on to discuss with the American President Lyndon Johnson the possibility of Britain becoming America's 51st state which though was ruled out of the question «because the US was keen for Britain to join Europe to

restrain De Gaulle's erratic behaviour» (Little 1999, 15). In the late sixties, Britain's world role had become a mercenary one, as the United States' hired help.

However, the Commonwealth idea had lost much of its gloss, largely because of, as already seen, the second decolonisation wave; second, Wilson's half-hearted response (economic sanctions) to Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia in the period after 1965, which was not well-received by black Commonwealth leaders who naturally felt that Britain should have acted far more decisively in order to effect a speedy transition to majority rule (Frankel 1975; Berridge 1981, 151; Ponting 1989, 243; Sanders 1990, 149; Ziegler 1993, 235); third, Britain's persistent refusal either to withdraw its investments from South Africa or to boycott South African products continually aroused the resentment of the black Commonwealth states - see the arms sale affair which cost George Brown his post (Berridge 1981, 151; Brown 1971, 171; Castle 1984, 339; Crossman 1975, 477); fourth, the burden of successive economic crises, and the final abandonment of the Overseas Sterling Area in 1968 cost Britain a potential economic lever (Sanders *ibid*, 149). The decision of the British government to abandon the East of Suez role, announced by Wilson in the Commons on 16th January 1968, turned off the military engines of neo-imperialism and resulted in a reassessment of Britain's role (Wilson 1968, col.1580).

Yet, as Saunders (*ibid*, 291) has put it, the continued pursuit of the residual pretensions of the old Empire circle in the seventies and early eighties led to the 'post-imperial Great Power syndrome'.

3.4.3 The 'Great Power Syndrome'

In an overall examination of the European debates, Labour commented in 1973 that «throughout the whole period of applications and negotiations for the British entry from 1961 to 1971 the party's policy has consistently supported the view that

there are many essential British and Commonwealth interests which must be safeguarded in any negotiations for UK accession to the Community; failing the achievement of the necessary safeguards, it would be far better for Britain to remain outside the EEC than to go in on onerous and unacceptable terms» (Labour Party 1973b, 13).

In fact, the vestiges of imperial nationalism were visible in Labour discourse, even after Britain had officially abandoned her East of Suez role. Under the impact of the loss of the imperial space, all the factions of the party, the pro and anti-Europeans, and the agnostics such as Wilson, Callaghan and Healey, put their policies into a culturally homogenised context saturated with moral content and global reach. But the mental framework of this context was nationalist throughout.

George and Heythorne (1996) have argued that the Commonwealth was one of the central objections of Labour in opposition to the terms of entry negotiated by the Conservative government of Edward Heath in 1972. Even as late as 1975, during the renegotiation of the terms of entry, Harold Wilson made protection for agricultural exports to Britain from Australia and New Zealand one of the key issues at the summit meeting in Dublin to finalise the new terms. His statement that he had more relatives in New Zealand than he had in Huddersfield (his home town) struck exactly the right note with the British working classes: protecting the interests of 'our own people' (George and Heythorne 1996, 113) - a very familiar theme at a time when the party became more insular, as chapter 4 on Little Englanderism makes clear. Indeed, in a speech to a Welsh Rally at Newtown, Montgomery, Wilson outlined his first duty to the nation in terms of judging the arrangements for entry against traditional concerns such as Commonwealth sugar and New Zealand. Wilson had seen Heath's arrangements as «a betrayal of the Commonwealth», and in general, sensed «a conspiracy aimed at discounting» the developing countries (Wilson 1971d, col.2085). For Wilson, British and Commonwealth interests were still inseparable in the early 1970s. He and Callaghan spent a lot of time elucidating the special difficulties of New

Zealand whose traditional market in Britain had been affected by British membership. «He viewed it as a moral obligation», Callaghan later wrote (Callaghan 1987, 313).

Callaghan, because of his wartime service, attachment to Indian independence, and his relationships with Commonwealth leaders, made the world wide network of links that resulted central to his view of the world. «Our interests are closer to world interests than they are to the present policies of the European Community», Callaghan said at St. George's Hall Bradford on 8 September 1971 (Callaghan 1971c, 5). His biographer has remarked that, like Churchill, Callaghan saw Britain's world role as consisting of three concentric rings, the North Atlantic Alliance, the Commonwealth, and a relationship with western Europe, but the last of these was also last in importance (Morgan 1997, 393). Callaghan insisted that a world, not a regional answer was needed to the problems of global economy, because Britain was «a sea-going nation with great traditions...» (Callaghan 1973, col. 1741). This was also his message at the party conference in 1971:

«I know it is our history and our tradition to throw our weight into the world scales on these issues, not to talk as one submerged voice inside a grouping, inside Europe. I want us to speak up, to speak up for internationalism, to speak up for true world trade. We are large enough to do so» (Callaghan 1971b, 143).

Several Labour MPs, also, capitalising on the nationalism of the party leadership, maintained that «the membership of the EEC will inhibit us in many ways from playing the sort of role we should play in the world» (Prentice 1971, col.1335), and that instead of sinking in «our own prosperous provincialism in Europe, we had a duty to the outside world» (De Freitas 1970, col.497). The leftish Labour members wanted to see Britain assuming a peacekeeping role (Barnes 1971, col.1590), bridging the gap between the rich and the poor nations, in other words, a benevolent world role which had, though, in the past, proved illusory in political and economic terms for the declining British state.

As seen above, for the pro-European MPs, the European Economic Community was mostly presented as a surrogate for the lost Empire. It supplied the same sensation as in the past, of belonging to a great and glorious show (Price 1975, 611). As Tom Nairn (2000, 15) has put it, the English were the main builders of the old archipelago; they could hardly avoid being the architects of the new. Most of their arguments were drawing on the imperial extra-territoriality. They were not accustomed to seeing Britain as a medium sized country. Even a committed European, like Roy Jenkins wrote in his book that if Britain could make European unity

«an accepted force not only for European but for world progress, then we shall indeed be fulfilling a new *leadership* role» (Jenkins 1972a, 79).

According to his biographer, Roy Jenkins was one of the first British politicians of either party to shake off the wartime delusion of great power status (Campbell 1983, 49). However, Jenkins saw in a united Europe under British leadership a power for good in the world as a counterweight to America: «The best basis for a close continuing North Atlantic relationship is the nearest approach to equality...and this is far more likely to be achieved by a Europe of which Britain is a part than one from which Britain is excluded» (Jenkins 1971, col.1308).

Barnett (1997, 295) has pointed out that this was a pro-British argument that took a European form. It contained an enormous degree of suppressed resentment against Europe - for having developed such a dynamic project in which, to preserve its standing, Britain had to participate. In the pro-European arguments there were obvious presumptions of superiority and nostalgia for Empire, which underlined Britain's potential contribution to European affairs as bearer of an outward-looking attitude towards the world affairs. «I believe a distinctive British impact can and should be made on the Community as a whole because we have a vast experience as a world power: we have had a vast experience in terms of aid to developing countries and I believe that we should bring that experience to bear upon the decisions which

will be made when we are a member of the Community», it was argued (Oram 1972, col.83). In similar terms, David Owen asserted that the influence of the EC could not be confined to the European contours:

«our foreign policy in Europe had to be not solely concerned with the aspirations of Europeans, or with the short-term objectives of European economic policy, but had at all times to take a wider view of our role as Europeans and to look beyond regionally oriented European politics. There has never been a time when the need for internationalism was not just a Utopian dream. It is the very essence of our survival» (Owen 1973, col.222).

Even though they all recognised the limitations of the Commonwealth relationship, the withdrawal from the East of Suez role did not mean for them «the abandonment of our links» (Richard et al.1971, 17). Featherstone has argued that, although the pro-imperial arguments were more applicable to the anti-European faction, they applied no less to the majoritarian view within the party as a whole and were conclusions drawn from the broad sweep of party history. For this reason we must give them importance in our analysis (Featherstone 1981a, 10). As a result, in mid-seventies Labour still insisted that

«Our membership of the Commonwealth continued to be a key factor in British foreign policy» (Labour Party 1975, 84), and that

«in an increasingly interdependent world, the existence of the Commonwealth with its diversity of membership, cutting across divisions of race and culture and embracing nations at almost every level of economic development in every part of the world is an important contribution to world understanding» (Labour Party 1976b, 93).

As the previous analysis has showed, there was still the problem of the ‘imperial overhang’ within the ranks of the Labour party, the tendency to continue to view the world from the old imperial perspective, to persist with the old habits of thinking, long after the Empire itself had disappeared. This challenges Robins’ (1979) ‘government/opposition’ variable; the endeavours of the Wilson government to

maintain world role pretences were not abandoned when the party was in opposition. Even the pro-European MPs did not see Britain in Europe without her world links. In this sense, Britain could not become a fully-engaged European country, as Barnett rightly put it above. And, certainly it was not the case that Europe was seen just as a pretext to overthrow the Heath government, as Newman (1983) has assumed. For the bulk of the Labour party in the 1970s, the Commonwealth argument did not lose its attraction and, as Sanders suggests, 'the 'post-imperial Great Power syndrome' did continue to affect British foreign policy considerations long after the formal retreat from the world role in the late 1960s' (Sanders 1990, 290).

Another illustration of this syndrome was the position of the party during the Falklands war and the ensuing wrangling over the Common Agricultural Policy, as the following two sections reveal.

3.4.3.1 The Falklands Factor and the Commonwealth: The 'Last Episode of the Imperial Past'?

While the arguments surrounding the importance of the Commonwealth in European affairs appeared to settle down at the beginning of the eighties (it was really more apparent than real), a challenge to British sovereignty and imperial grandeur were adequate to bring to the surface the party's loyalty to the archipelagic family as an extension of the British nation. As Kershner (1998) has noted, nationalism in the broader and artificially constructed British context, ebbs and flows with external pressures and tensions; war, or its threat, is a major stimulus. The Falklands war was another proof that issues of national identity have not been for Labour just a matter of intra-party struggle or arenas for short-term electoral benefits. This incident makes untenable several of the claims of those scholars who have treated the European issue either as an issue of adversarial politics (Newman 1983; Ashford 1992, 119; Geddes 1994, 374; Daniels 1998, 79) or a matter of the intra-party balance of power (Geyer 1992; Robins 1979; Jones 1996, 99; Rosamond 1990, 41; Bilski 1977). The Labour attitudes towards the Atlantic adventure and its implications for the European debate

reveal the consistency and continuity of the party beliefs and loyalties with regard to the English-speaking world.

According to Tom Nairn, the Falklands war gave the Labour party the chance to re-frame a sense of national identity distanced from the chauvinism of its imperial tradition, the psychology of 'undefeated superiority' (Nairn 1982, 14) that accompanied it, and the Conservative institutional status quo as embodied in the very aura of sovereignty itself, the 'sacred cow of the world order', according to Anthony Barnett (1982, 11). But this did not happen because it would have meant that the party had to renounce its nationalist roots and the traditional background out of which it emerged.

Briefly, in the spring of 1982 a war was fought between Britain and Argentina over the sovereignty of the Falklands Islands or the Malvinas as they are known in Argentina. General Leopoldo Galtieri, the leader of the military junta in Argentina, ordered an invasion on 2 April 1982 and rallied a national cause to his faltering military regime. In Britain, immersed in perennial domestic and political crisis, the occupation of the islands was widely perceived as a demeaning slight by a Third World nation towards a world power with a special relationship with the USA. In retaliation, the British government with the full parliamentary support of the Labour opposition (HMSO 1982a), put a large Task Force of ships and military units to sea in record time. The fleet sailed over 8000 miles to where the islands are situated off the coast of Argentina in the South Atlantic. The British forces advanced across windswept terrain to liberate the capital, Port Stanley, on 14 June 1982 where most 2000 inhabitants lived. On the way there were over 1000 British and over 2000 Argentineans casualties in just 33 days of fighting (Aulich 1992; Barnett 1982; Charlton 1989; Dillon 1989; Freedman 1988; 1990; HMSO 1982b).

As an examination of the parliamentary debates of the time has exposed (HMSO 1982a), Labour chose the traditional way: an atavistic rhetoric and a re-enactment of a mythologised version of the national past as if it was the only source

of hope and identity to exorcise the facts of a declining present, all in combination with the Labourist discourse of moral internationalism - 'the rights of the people' -, which implied sheer imperialism, national superiority, paternalism, and fostering racism against the 'barbarian Argies' and those who 'look to us' to give them the lights of 'our' superior British civilisation respectively. Neil Kinnock, the subsequent successor to the party leader at the time (Michael Foot), lamented the fact that it was difficult for some to get rid «of the imperial grandeur» (Kinnock 1980, 422). During the Atlantic adventure, Labour responses were consistent with those of the previous decades, that is, were significantly characterised by a reluctance to challenge the model of national greatness inherited by its traditional imperial attitudes, the formation of the Commonwealth and the metaphysical order of belonging on which it rested. Lucy Noakes (1998) has argued that the war was an opportunity for Britain to prove that it was 'Great' again; a chance to recompense for the numerous 'end of Empire' wars of the past fifty years: wars in Malaya, Korea, Kenya, Aden, Suez, and Cyprus that symbolised Britain's declining role as an imperial world power. The Falklands War became a crusade to recapture lost British honour and values, an opportunity to prove that British military might still existed, at least enough to mount a relatively small and short campaign to recapture some small, sparsely populated islands thousands of miles away (Noakes *ibid*, 106).

As a matter of fact, the case for Labour in 1983 was very simple, or so it was claimed to be, as George Robertson said later: «It was on people with the right to choose» (Robertson 1982, 15). This theme of liberal imperialism became Labour motto since the first debate in the Commons:

«The *rights* and the circumstances of the people in the Falkland Islands must be uppermost in our minds....It is a question of *people who wish to be associated with this country* and who have *built their whole life on the basis of association with this country*. We have a *moral duty*, a political duty and every other kind of *duty to ensure that that is sustained*» (Foot 1982a, col.638).

The leader of the party, Michael Foot made it clear that it was people not territory that mattered, «the people who wish to be associated with this country (read: ruled by it)». Later, though, the left-wing MP Judith Hart left no doubt about what was at stake in this crisis:

«We know that there are implications for *other territories* that are part of the British Commonwealth to whose people and to *whose territory we owe very grave responsibilities*» (Hart 1982, col.1161)

As Miles (1993b) has noted, the Falklands episode celebrated the cultural and spiritual continuity, which could transcend 8000 miles and call the nation to arms in defence of its own distant people. As said above, nationhood involves the distinctive imagining of a bounded totality beyond immediate experience of place. The Labour party legitimated this stretching of the boundary of the imagined community of the British nation to include the people of the Falklands. For Labour, the war was about territory, national sovereignty - the everlasting element of British and Labour nationalism - and credibility. The role of Britain in the world was put in danger. In reality, the Labour MPs were not defending 1,800 islanders and their 600,000 sheep in 1982. At a time when the economy and social life were visibly falling apart in Britain (Thompson 1985, 103), Labour was defending Britain's standing in the world. The lives of the islanders were inextricably conflated with British rule over them and territorial conquest, under a cloud of moral purity (Barnett 1982, 19). As Foot put the case:

«The people of the Falkland Islands have the absolute right to *look to us* at this moment of their desperate plight, just as they have *looked to us over the past 150 years*» (Foot 1982a, col.639).

Labour was fighting for the Anglo-Saxon right to arbitrate across all frontiers under the pretext that a British voice must speak out against the Argentines' violations of humanity. Foot was expressing the liberal conscience of an

internationalism whose core was a presumption of national superiority. His real interest was to

«uphold the rights of our country *throughout the world* and the claim of our country to be a defender of people's freedom *throughout the world*, particularly those who *look to us for special protection*» (Foot 1982a, col.639).

His motivation could hardly have been a desire to ensure more peaceful relations internationally. But nor was it the case that he had radically changed his attitudes from the man who campaigned for British unilateral nuclear disarmament during the 1950s. There was an underlying continuity of attitude between the strand of opinion he belonged to then and his position on the Falklands crisis: the tradition of British liberalism.

It has long been remarked that the first CND campaign (1957-63) saw a renewal of the British liberal tradition of protest that goes back to opposition to the slave trade. Humanitarian antagonism to the unnecessary and inhuman excesses of the world was the characteristic feature of this stance (Wainwright 1987). As Barnett has noted, it never challenged the system, which produced such horrors and rather avoided any overall, systematic theory, for fear of dogmatism and ideological excess on its part (Barnett 1982, 21). Michael Foot was a contemporary embodiment of this tradition and exemplified one of its most paternalistic aspects: its moral imperialism. Foot's sentiments over the Falklands were an archetypal expression of this liberal imperialism. As Ken Coates has said, the left-wing Labour leader Michael Foot drifted along in an orgy of jingoism, going back to the famous jingoes of Hyndman and Blatchford, but not going forward to anything (Coates 1982, 13).

Actually, it did not take long for Foot's peaceful intentions to show their true colours. In 1933 he had stated firmly: 'Force is not the proper instrument to establish the rights and wrongs of any case; reasonable and just ends can only be achieved by reasonable and just methods' (Jones 1994, 27). Yet, fifty years later, winding up his

speech in the Commons, Foot made himself the voice of the House that day. He became the spokesperson for its fervid assent to the expedition. Advertising himself as the potential saviour of the nation (John Silkin, who was closely associated with the CND in the late fifties gave his verdict later: «The leader of the Opposition spoke for the nation» (Silkin 1982, col.661), Foot blamed the government for betrayal and neglect of the rights of the islanders in the Falklands and demanded that something had to be done for their protection:

«The government must now *prove by deeds* that they are not responsible for the betrayal and cannot be faced with that charge» (Foot 1982a, col.641).

As one of his biographers said, Foot required that Britain should somehow get the Argentineans out of the islands, whether by actual force, threat, pressure or *whatever method proved effectual* (Jones 1994, 487). Foster (1999) also noted that despite the remoteness of the fighting and the limited numbers of those directly involved in it, this was a struggle in which every member of the community could play an active role through the actual structures, historical associations and symbolic significance of the family. In fact, the corrosive relationship between national decline and nostalgia for a greater national past, the explosion of national feeling and the essentially backward-looking nostalgic nature of that national feeling, were embodied in the words of the leader of the Opposition. The party was giving the impression that they were living on the capital of past consciousness and successes (see also memories of Empire in chapter 10), but increasingly out of touch with what was going on in everyday life around it (Hall 1983, 11). According to Foot, Britain had to reinvent herself as a military power:

«More important than the question of what happened to British diplomacy or to British intelligence is what happened to *our power to act*...Of course this country *has the power to act* - often, taking military measures» (Foot 1982a, col.640).

The leader of the Opposition was wondering where the Dunkirk spirit had gone. E. P. Thompson commented that between the Britain of the 'Falklands Factor' - the strutting bully which made the world aghast by sinking the *General Belgrano*, an old battleship with a complement of more than one thousand souls, without warning and outside the exclusion zone which we ourselves had imposed and while it was stemming away from our fleet - and the alternative Britain of citizens and not subjects which, summoned up all the strengths of its long democratic past and cut through the world's nuclear knot, the leader of the opposition chose the former (Thompson 1985, 104).

In similar terms, all the Labour MPs gave their allegiance to the British nation and its superior mission (Goodwin 1982, 4-7; Hallas 1982, 5-7). The left wing MPs, apart from some exceptions such as Tony Benn and Tam Dalyell, either continued to rely on the UN chimera and a Utopian pacifist tradition (Christie 1984, 301), or, like their fellow like-minded MP Judith Hart, insisted that the 'responsibility' to the Commonwealth territories had to be reassumed. Michael English put this duty in its right dimensions:

«We are defending civilisation against barbarians as our ancestors did centuries ago elsewhere. That is what we are doing. That is what I hope we shall continue to do for the sake of the world» (English 1982, col.1025)

It was the duty of the 'White Man's Burden' that the British knew very well how to fulfill. The lesson of the Falklands was that this nation still had those sterling qualities, which shined through the island's history. Labour wanted to prove that their generation could match their fathers and grandfathers in ability, in courage and in resolution. The Brits stood for the civilisation that their ancestors bequeathed them, and the rest of the world was conspicuously classified as the innocent 'lesser breeds' (the islanders who 'look to us' and obviously all the other who depended upon the British race), and the 'barbarians' (the Argentineans who 'raped' British sovereignty,

and implicitly all these countries which did not respect it (sovereignty)- we suppose, Europeans including).

Therefore, it was not an irony that in 1972 Labour argued for six days against British entry to the Common Market and ten years later, it did not take more than three hours for the party to give its assent to the war. Throughout all these years, Labour's heart had been still in the Open Sea deeply rooted in a great machinery of tradition and interests. The imagery of a 'sceptred isle set in a silver sea', powerfully supported by the English-speaking peoples from across the seas, set the context for Labour's British foreign policy in the decades after the war (Gordon 1969, 146). The 'Falklands Factor' made clear that the sores of a lost Empire (and a lost world role for Britain) were still open; and they continued to irritate those sections of the Labour party that still had much emotional capital invested in British 'grandeur'. The litany of excess and national self-centredness was long throughout the European debates, but pride of place went to the mythic notion of Britain as 'the centre of the Commonwealth of nations'. The former Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan said in the Commons soon after the war:

«I wish that British foreign policy and British diplomacy had been more vigorous and more active. We are a leading member of the Commonwealth» (Callaghan 1983, col. 1031).

Thus, the involvement of the Commonwealth in the Falklands war proved once more that the British nation was not limited to a cramped and constricted nation-state. This explains the caution and hostility with which Labour was handling the European issue. We can see a similar practice in the party's hostility to the CAP.

3.4.3.2 The 'Patriotic Spirit of the Commonwealth' and the CAP

Although Britain's partners in the EEC agreed to support her in the Falkland Islands crisis in the early summer of 1982 by voting in favour of economic measures in restraint of trade with Argentina, they did so in a limited and restricted way: and two of them, Ireland and Italy dissociated themselves from those measures. When

Britain objected to the raising of Community farm prices during her conflict with Argentina, there was some suspicion in Britain that the prices were being raised as the *quid pro quo* exacted by the EEC for the support afforded to Britain against Argentina. Britain insisted that there was no connection between the Falkland crisis and farm prices. When, however, the other EEC states went to the point of raising farm prices despite British objections, thus, in the British view, violating the rule embodied in the Luxembourg compromise of 1966, which stated that 'where very important issues are at stake, discussion must continue until unanimous agreement is reached', they argued that the Luxembourg rule was not applicable. Britain on the other hand, contended that there was a link between the rule established in 1966 and the farm prices issue (Northedge 1983, 34). Thus, though the Falklands crisis seemed at first to strengthen Britain's ties with the EEC by creating a consensus on economic measures against Argentina, in the end, the Europeans were again the 'villains' and the Commonwealth 'our brothers'. Peter Kellner of the *New Statesman* has noted that it was a pity that none of Labour critics of the naval expedition spoke in favour of the Common Market's prompt action in mounting a trade embargo (Kellner 1982, 5). In this way, Labour was deluding itself if it supposed that the rest of the world, and in particular, the UK's Common Market partners, would regard a dispute over an insignificant outpost of a lost Empire as an event on the same footing as the Nazi invasion of Poland.

Nobody suggested that it was possible for Britain to go back to the cosy relationship with the Commonwealth. Yet, the higher farm prices in the Community led some to suggest that «we should once again open our ports to effectively produced food from the Commonwealth» (Leighton 1985b, col.205). The CAP was considered to be an «anti-British» policy. For Labour the British national essence ignored the confines of a miserable north European state:

«We are told by Europeans that that is our fault. In other words, we should change and adapt ourselves, *stop being internationalists*...We should seek to break off our relations

with the rest of the world and deal only with the Continent...
They are asking us to change our nature and history, and
basically *stop being British* - to become, perhaps, an imitation
of France» (Leighton 1982b, col.674).

Being British was equated with big, strategic questions, on a far grander canvas than the pettifogging debate of European economies. On the grounds of history and trade, Labour was attached to the old white Commonwealth. The CAP was not only «anti the interests of British taxpayers, agriculture and consumers», but also «of our friends in the world» (Leighton 1985a, col.826). There was no distinction between the two. The latter were part of the British 'family'. The degree of solidarity shown in the words of Dennis Sabin at the party Conference - «these people really are our kith and kin...they must not be abandoned by the UK» (Sabin 1979, 330) - was expressed vividly in the Commons before and after the Falklands war. Indeed, «of all the people», Labour MPs used to claim,

«hon. Members should have consideration for their kith and kin in New Zealand. They are *our people*. Let us make no mistake about that. They are *our descendants*... the New Zealander is another Briton who lives in a different part of the world» (Stoddart 1980b, col.619; Torney 1980, col.950).

Anderson's (1991) thesis that the nation is essentially an imagined concept, one that exists primarily in the minds of those who consider themselves its members, illustrates the importance of national identity, particularly in times of national crisis (here, Falklands War). The 1983 election manifesto stated that the Labour party «recognises the true political and geographical spread of international problems and interests» (Craig 1990, 383), whereas the Tories, as Leighton said, «are obsessed by this little part of the world (Europe)», which was the opposite of the «true internationalism (Commonwealth)» (Leighton 1986, col.612). Echoing the French socialist Jean Jaures, Eric Heffer also asserted that true internationalism «must begin from the position of loving and respecting one's own country» (Heffer 1982, col.203). In the same way as during the Falklands war, throughout the European debates, Labour constantly blamed the Tory government for betraying the nation (Britain

together with Commonwealth), leaving at the mercy of the EC the New Zealanders' butter. All the quotes taken from the debates over the CAP placed emphasis on the «blackmailing tactic of the French» and the «actions of small minded people», on the one hand, and the «patriotic spirit of the Commonwealth», on the other. In particular, it was argued that

«we saw during the Falkland crisis exactly those who would stand by us in a period of great trial. We saw how the EEC, at a crucial point in the negotiations at the UN, *stabbed us in the back* by refusing to continue sanctions for a reasonable period. We saw two members of the Community, one just across the water, withdraw sanctions completely and give comfort to an enemy that had invaded British territory and taken British people under its Fascist wing. We saw exactly *who our friends were*. They were *not in Europe*. The first to come to our aid and comfort were the people we sold out in 1973 - New Zealand and Australia» (Stoddart 1982a, col. 466).

The European role amounted to «the actions of small-minded people who are out for their own personal gain, irrespective of the harm it can do to other people» (Stoddart 1982b, col.805). As Mitchell wrote later,

«when we needed the EC, it did better as *a comedy routine* than a voice respected in the world...by stopping new contracts, not existing supplies and excluding the two nations who needed the trade most» (Mitchell 1983, 128).

On the contrary, on the part of the Commonwealth countries, it was argued, «there was no backsliding... there was no stabbing in the back» (Stoddart 1982b, col.806). It seems that in the early 1980s the party still basked in the glow of 'ostensibly a-national-grandeur- in the anti-narrowness of those born...to give examples to others' (Haseler 1989, 84). The Falklands episode and the debates on the CAP appeared to affirm the party's continuing attachment to liberal imperialism, and the English-speaking world. For E. P. Thompson, the Falklands War was the last episode of Britain's imperial past (Thompson 1985, 103). Perhaps it was then too early to claim so.

Incidents like a small scale crisis in one of the post-imperial leftovers or a temporary rupture in the relationship with its Continental neighbours might revitalise the imperial identity and bring to the surface the sentiments and ever lasting loyalties of a party that has been imperial born and bred. When the national essence is put into doubt a process of national self-realisation will surely draw on the narcissist wounds of the imperial identity.

In fact, as Schlesinger (1992) has noted, the ongoing difficult search for a transcendent unity by the EU - especially after the introduction of single market in 1999 - has contributed to the redefinition (or better, reassertion) of the national. In particular, the resurgent 'leading' rhetoric of the pro-European New Labour government has revealed an uneasy attitude towards the supranational institutions (see more in chapter 6) and an insistence on the traditional emphasis on Britain's independent global role. As Timothy Garton Ash (2001) has recently argued, Britain's current European identity is partial since the other identities are simply too strong--not so much the insular identity, but the western and transoceanic identity, the identification not just with the US but with all the English-speaking peoples.

3.4.4 The Independent Role of Britain in Europe: 'Greatness in Retreat'

In the practice of the New Labour government, the intimacy of co-operation with partners in the EU has no parallel in the party history, or even, in the history of Britain's relationship with Europe. It is true that Britain under New Labour has become much less insular, less separate. Moreover, if one looks at the nationalist discourse of the party and, in particular, the content of its European policy, especially its emphasis on the single market and defence, what one cannot possibly deny is that there emerges the spectre of the old links, especially the omnipresent 'special relationship' with the US.

Britain's leadership in Europe is now largely based on the American connection. David Marquand (1999b) has noted that, although New Labour seeks to run with European integration, like the Thatcher and Major governments, it looks across the Atlantic not across the Channel for ideological inspiration. «There is no more important task in international statesmanship today than to bind America and Europe close together», said the Prime Minister to the American Bar Association (Blair 2000d). Norman Davies (1999) has argued that the principal inhibitor to Britain's membership of the EEC lay not just in the memories of Empire, but also in the habit of clinging to America's apron strings.

Further, Tom Nairn maintains that New Labour's project has retained an unavoidable archaism in its genetic code. It depends upon symbiosis with the older core of the Anglo-British identity and also remains based upon instinctive attunement to the most backward-looking core of Britishism - imperial sovereignty (Nairn 2000, 10). In fact, the legacy of the Empire is praised and honoured by New Labour, not because it existed just as a famous war machine, but because it enabled Britain to acquire «a global view» of the world problems and remain «independent in outlook» (Quin 1999b). Reminiscent of Gaitskell's 1962 speech at the 1996 party conference, 34 years later, the leader of New Labour urged the delegates to «consider one thousand years of history» and «an Empire, the largest the world has ever known» (Blair 1996b, 87).

The twilight of Greatness has remained unextinguished in the British Labour party's psyche; even though, as Tom Nairn explains, a kind of 'Greatness in retreat' which can only be preserved by clinging to a 'crossroads' location and status, that is, a balancing influence between the American continent and Europe, for as long as possible (Nairn 1988, 253). Britons no longer possess the strength to think of either 'dominating' or 'helping' the world in a major way on their own. Yet, as Davies (1999) has noted, they could obtain a frisson of the old superiority complex by cultivating the supposed 'special' relationship with the USA. In particular, in two

major issues, the single market and defence, New Labour appears reluctant to shed the remnants of the imperial grandeur.

The issue at the top of Labour's European agenda - jobs - reflected a fairly traditional British approach with its emphasis on the single market and on responsibility lying with individual member states. As Hughes and Smith (1998) have argued, Labour's main ideas for tackling EU unemployment are, on the one hand, to work to complete the single market - thus improving competitiveness and, so the argument goes, prospects for employment - and, on the other hand, to increase flexibility and employability in labour markets. Labour's signature to the EU social chapter at Amsterdam - applying EU social legislation to Britain in areas such as the working week and maternity rights - has lowered some of the ideological barriers between Britain and its partners erected by the previous government, though Labour in power has been careful to qualify calls for greater flexibility, aware of continental suspicions of the concept. The new buzz word - 'employability' - essentially refers to improving skills, knowledge and adaptability of job-seekers (Hughes and Smith *ibid*, 103). In pursuit of that goal, Britain was placed at the forefront of this campaign during the special meeting of the European Council in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000. In Blair's words, this Council marked «a sea change in European economic thinking - away from heavy-handed intervention and regulation, towards a new approach based on enterprise, innovation and competition» (Blair 2000f, col.21). Aims and values that New Labour assumes that Britain has a responsibility to transplant into the Continent because they supposedly have enabled her and America to respond more effectively to the challenges of the new global economy:

«As the new government in Britain has begun to create a new Britain, we are also working with our European partners to *create a new Europe* - one that combines enterprise with social cohesion, more dynamic, more competitive, more open and thus learning from the entrepreneurial and flexible labour markets of the American economy»
(Brown 1998)

In his book *Capitalism Against Capitalism*, Michel Albert (1993) identifies Britain as part of an Anglo-American model, as opposed to a Rhine-Alpine model. Driver and Martell (1998, 50), Marquand (1999b, 239), Ash (2001) and Fishman (1998, 61) have all pointed out that Britain's leading role in Europe is focused on developing an Anglo-American model, extolling the virtues of flexible labour markets and building welfare around the needs of a flexible workforce, with training and education to deal with job insecurity. Setting the British agenda for European reform along the lines of employability, flexibility and entrepreneurship in the age of the knowledge-driven or e-commerce economy, the Chancellor maintained that this has been «the right way to express the British identity in the modern world» (Brown 1997c), not by remaining aloof. Using words, which were reminiscent of George Orwell, Gordon Brown said that 'the British Genius' would 'shape' the European course and benefit British interests into a more prosperous 21st century. As he put it at the Confederation of British Industry in 1997, «we should have the confidence to engage with Europe and *make* it better and - dare I say it - *more British*» (Brown 1997a).

Like the Greeks who controlled the Roman Empire, New Labour wants to shape the destiny and the course of the European social and economic model. For instance, statements such as «Europe needs us. For we have a vision of Europe» (Blair 1997b); «we want a Europe that proclaims our shared values...» (Blair 1998e, 19); «Europe needs us more than we need them» (Vaz 1999), give ammunition to those critics who accuse the European approach of the New Labour government of sheer «neo-imperialism» (Fishman 1998; Fairclough 2000; Hug 1998; Gamble 1996). It is argued that the allegedly 'neo-imperialist' posture of New Labour is no better displayed than when Blair trumpets himself as the most recent embodiment of the mythical connection between English speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic seeing the world wholly through American-centred eyes, by emulating the corpus of American domestic political culture and by trying to impose the aura of the USA's

success and glory and the American way of capitalism and flexible labour markets on European countries (Fishman 1998, 61). This means fewer barriers, regulations, and unfair state aids, and more active governments to enhance the potential of the working force through life long education. For the Minister of State for Europe in the first New Labour government, Keith Vaz, the Lisbon European Council was crucial in «marking the need to modernise Europe's various social models, while making sure that we maintain Europe's social values. This modernisation requires an active welfare state (where people are encouraged to work and are provided with the means to do so), a focus on social inclusion, and reform of our systems of social protection so that they are sustainable and viable into the future». According to Vaz, Lisbon indicated that, at last, «British perspective became Europe's perspective» with regard to the economic reform (Vaz 2000b)

However, for Hutton and Marquand, it seems that, whereas the British now define the political task as adapting to market forces whatever the social costs, the Europeans see the task as shaping market forces to sustain dearly held social and cultural values (Hutton 1999, 148). In turn, Marquand (1999b) assumes that part of the purpose of the European Union is to create a space where Europeans may remain true to a solidaristic model of society and economy, drawn from the continental social-democratic tradition and from the tradition of catholic social thought, which differs profoundly from the American model. In contrast, for Streeck (1996), the history of the European integration is one of continuous conflict between the two alternative political-economic projects. However, Marquand insists that behind this difference (continentals versus Anglo-Saxons) there lies a much more fundamental difference of approach, which in turn reflects an even deeper difference of culture and tradition - on the 'entrepreneurial Britishness', see also chapter 6. The British government, supported by British advocates of the enterprise culture *a l'anglaise* or *a l'americaine*, holds, in effect, that economic change and adjustment to economic change come, and can only come, through the market (Marquand 1997a, 156).

New Labour hoped to resolve the paradox by converting the rest of the EU to Americanisation by force of example - «What we can be is a shining example to all of what a modern state should aspire to», the Labour Prime Minister has incessantly reiterated (Blair 1998b). That is what the Lisbon European Council allegedly brought about. Ironically, though, from a European perspective and standards, the aim that New Labour set for the European Union, that is, «to match the entrepreneurial innovation and economic dynamism of the United States while at the same time maintaining the social cohesion of European societies» (Blair 1998a; 2000f; Cook 2000) appears self-deceptive. This is a circle that cannot be squared in reality (Fairclough 2000, 16). Hughes and Smith (1998) have noted that it would be a major shift if EU member states reorganised their social market systems to take on the main elements of the British system.

Marquand (1997b) leaves no doubt that in the struggle between globalisation and the European model - the central theme of European politics today - their instincts are with the globalisers - the United States. So, when American and European interests diverge, New Labour can be relied on to show more tenderness to the former. Overall, the emphasis on the single market reflects a strong element of continuity in British European policy. New Labour appears quite happy with its Thatcherite inheritance in the shape of deregulated markets, flexible labour practices, low rates of taxation, and a stress on entrepreneurial values. Nevertheless, in this way, as Marquand notes, New Labour cannot play more than a marginal role in European politics so long as it gives priority to its American ties and the American model of the political and moral economy (Marquand 1999b, 239).

The issue of *defence* policy has further weakened New Labour's commitment to European integration. After an interval of nearly four centuries since the loss of Calais in 1558, British have again made what the historian Michael Howard (1989) has called "the continental commitment." British troops are stationed permanently on the continent of Europe. But in what context? In the context of NATO: only as part of

the transatlantic organisation (Hix 2000, 50). The initiative that Tony Blair launched on European Defence in autumn 1998, which led to the statement at the St Malo Franco-British Summit in December 1998, and the European Defence Initiative two years later, signified Britain's desire to play a constructive role at the centre of European politics. Yet, during the European Summit in Nice in December 2000, the Prime Minister made clear that «we are going to end up with something that NATO supports, Britain supports and America supports - and the French can live with» (Jones and Evans-Pritchard 2000). From the 1950s to the early 1990s the EEC and NATO possessed a long list of common members interacting in a mutually complementary fashion. The one took care of economic development: the other of strategic security (Ash 2001). Nothing appears to put this relationship into doubt.

Although there is close co-operation between Britain and her European partners in defence and foreign policy issues, a look at the Balkans - the biggest European foreign policy challenge of the last ten years - shows, as Ash has noted, that the key policies have been made not in the EU, but in the Contact Group of four leading EU powers plus Russia and the US, and then in the so-called Quint, the same group without Russia. Who is the key partner, to whom the first telephone call would usually be made? The US (Ash 2001).

The Americans, after all, had inherited a considerable dose of English 'moralism' and they were the only people left to put it into practice. In 1999 an American President and British Prime Minister felt entirely justified in joining forces to break international law and to bomb a sovereign state in the name of their own interpretation of morality or liberal imperialism. The war in Kosovo - a war fought «not for territory but for values» (Blair 1999c), a war made «for the sake of humanity» (Blair 1999b) - was a demonstration of the shared morality between the two countries. One could praise or condemn their action. But one could not deny that NATO's campaign against Serbia was a good example of the old way of doing things.

In fact, the insistence of New Labour that Britishness must be projected abroad in terms of values (see also chapter 8) and of the much touted example that British should give to the other nations - «a belief in the capacity of the British people to improve themselves and be a force for good, *by deed and example in the wider world*» (Blair 1996a, 9); «the British Way is *to lead by example*» (Brown 1999b); «we can *set an example* for others to follow» (Blair 1997e); «what we can be is *a shining example* to all» (Blair 1998c) - gives indeed substance to the claims about a ‘new imperialism’ and, at least in their moralism, its close relationship with their Victorian and Edwardian forebears as the literature suggests (Tidrick 1990).

At the dawn of the new millennium, New Labour’s Britain possesses strong connections with both America and Europe. For New Labour, the old dilemma, which amounted to a choice between the EU and the US, does not exist: «Britain does not have to choose between America and Europe», insisted the Chancellor (Brown 1999b). As Blair also says, «we are listened to more closely in Washington if we are leading in Europe. And we have more weight in Europe if we are listened to in Washington» (Blair 1999m). However, as the above analysis revealed, Britain has still to deal with its imperial legacy if it is to project a new image because Britain was an imperial construct (Barnett 1997, 300). Blair seems to want Britain in Europe rather than completely out of it. But, as said earlier, Europe is simply one choice amongst others for Labour to project Britain’s identity against the significant ‘others’.

All symbolic constructions of the nation and national identity depend upon some kind of boundary between insiders and outsiders (Ansell 1997, 173). As Anne Marie Smith (1994) has argued, fantasies – like the transoceanic ones of Gaitskell, Wilson, Callaghan, Foot and Blair - are always accompanied by symptom-figures: since fantasies construct a perfect order, imperfections must be displaced onto the supplementary symptom; not only is the symptom external to the fantasy order, it demarcates its very frontiers; because it symbolizes that which cannot be integrated into the fantasy order, it marks out that order’s limits of tolerance. People coming

from the non-English-speaking community were at variance with the social norms of the British national community. As the immigration debates make clear below, their exclusion was a precondition for the maintenance of those cultural characteristics that once made Britain great.

3.5 Labour's Multiracial Commonwealth: The 'Decline' of the Nation

This section will argue that the *largesse* of the British Empire that shaped Labour imperial, oceanic and extra-European Britishness was conditioned by and linked with the normalisation of the differences between the indigenous population and the 'immigrants' from the New Commonwealth who represented the 'decline' and the diminution of the national ego. Britain's profound dependency on the imperial system itself for its identity meant that decolonisation provoked an identity crisis, and internal antagonisms seemed to threaten the total disintegration of the nation from within (Smith 1994, 26). Whereas, as seen in the European debates, the Commonwealth stood for British greatness, the postcolonial black immigration in the 1960s and 1970s questioned the standing of the British political community.

In the late 1890s, the immigrants were not excluded just on biological grounds, but also in terms of employment, cultural standards and citizenship capacity. In the same way, in the post-war period, although skin colour was still considered by some party representatives as an immutable feature of biology («you cannot change the colour of your skin» (Driberg 1970, 208), Labour's new racist discourse gave black skin a range of social significances in the debates of the time. Citizenship, disorder, and in general, cultural and social attributes accompanied skin. Labour had acknowledged that being a subject, rather than a beneficiary, of Empire created forms of poverty and a pressure to migrate to Britain in the first place (Labour Party 1958, 3). In this respect, Martin Barker's (1981) assertion that new racism begun in the discourse of the Conservatives in the mid-seventies offers a misreading of the

significance of the Labour party's discourse. Blackness and Britishness were constructed in Labour discourse, not just in biological, but also in culturally incompatible terms, as mutually exclusive identities.

Thus, by constructing in culturally negative terms the black populations and supporting exclusionary practices, the Labour party of that period attempted to defend and symbolically restore national greatness. As Knowles (1992) noted, the multiracial Commonwealth established a political distinctiveness but not a Britishness which could serve as the basis for a claim to access to Britain. The Commonwealth ideal had never been intended as a defence of black immigration to Britain (Solomos 1995, 161). The examination of the 1962-81 parliamentary debates on immigration will make clear that for Labour the multiracial Commonwealth for which the party took credit during the European debates, consisted of a bifurcated or racially divided political community. In this racially divided community the rights and entitlements of white Englishness were jeopardised by the social attributes and the demands made on behalf of the black section of the political community.

3.5.1 The Immigrant-Workers

In particular, the 1962 Commonwealth Act established the first de jure distinction between British passport-holders: every British passport-holder who had not been born in the UK or Ireland was subjected to new immigration controls. The Labour party under Gaitskell leadership opposed it, but soon afterwards, pledged to renew it in its 1964 manifesto (Labour Party 1964). Roy Hattersley, then Parliamentary Private Secretary, later said:

«Looking back on the original Act, which limited the entry of the Commonwealth citizens into this country, I feel that the Labour party of that time should have supported it»
(Hattersley 1965, 380)

In 1965 the Labour government published a White Paper on immigration which strengthened the 1962 black immigration controls and reaffirmed its basic

argument that race relations management depended primarily upon the controls of black immigration (Smith 1994). The White Paper on *Immigration from the Commonwealth* called for controls to be maintained in a stricter form than the Conservative's, along with measures to promote the integration of immigrants. If immigrants were workers whose entry to Britain was permitted by labour shortages, then, in the absence of any other right to entry, their access could be disallowed when there were no longer shortages (Knowles 1992, 99). The White Paper represented a shift in the direction of what some called a 'Little England' policy (Solomos 1995).

It is true that Labour opposed the Immigration Bill that Conservatives introduced in 1962 on economic grounds. They argued that the contribution of the immigrants to the economy was considerable, especially in the public sector, *as long as this did not affect the welfare of the indigenous population*. But this conditional opposition did not make Labour MPs less racist, as the right of the Commonwealth citizens to stay in Britain would depend on the shape of the economy. Hugh Gaitskell said that «the rate of immigrants into the country is closely related and will always be closely related to the rate of economic absorption» (Gaitskell 1961b, col.794). As Reeves (1983) has remarked, in the case of a period of economic crisis Labour remained silent, but it was obvious that the immigrant would be the first to suffer. «We oppose restriction of the immigration as long as there is a job to be done» (Pannell 1961, col.1713), it was argued. Foot (1965), Saggar (1993) and Gupta (1975) have stressed the leadership factor as an essential factor for the change of Labour policy in the sixties. In their accounts of the immigration policy Gaitskell appeared less racist than his successor Harold Wilson. However, the above evidence shows that this was not the case.

As Caroline Knowles (1992) has pointed out, Commonwealth citizens were no longer British subjects with a right to live in Britain. They were workers who with their dependent families were limited by employment vouchers issued by the Ministry of Labour. So, in future, access to Britain was to be conditional on skill shortages and

labour needs. This was a major shift redefining the relationship between Britain and the Commonwealth. The political community of the Commonwealth was ruptured by a notion of labour market, and the union of British brethren became a pool of mobile labour (Knowles 1992, 99). In the 1960s and 1970s, parliamentary debates on immigration referred to the «needs in the transport system of London» (Glyn 1961, col.1330), «vacancies in the building industry and civil engineering» (Howell 1961, col.764), and to the shortages in «industry, hospitals, railway yards, social services and factories» (Sorensen 1961, col.1990; Chapman 1965, col.352; Moyle 1968, col.1307), showing that the jobs which coloured immigrants found themselves in were the largely unskilled and low status ones for which white labour was unavailable or which white workers were unwilling to fill: «If in this country we are to encourage everyone to become a white-collared worker we have to get someone to do the other work» (Pargiter 1961, col.789). In these sentiments, Labour reinforced the image of the coloured minorities as suitable for the jobs that were menial and un-British: «we are exporting craftsmen, technicians and doctors and in their place we are importing a glut of unskilled and illiterate labour» (Binns 1965, col.1007).

Shamit Saggar (1993), examining the 1964-70 Labour government's race relations' strategy, has noted that, among other concerns, Labour had also to take account of industrial relations more generally (Saggar 1993, 269). It is argued that it had been the immediate post-war labour requirements of the economy, notably in semi-skilled and unskilled industrial sectors as well as in the public services such as health and transport that had originally fuelled the immigration boom of the fifties and early sixties (Saggar 1993, 268). However, the impact of the new immigration upon labour relations during the early and mid-sixties must be treated with caution.

Ben-Tovim and Gabriel (1982) noted that there was no single, over-determining economic rationale for the shift towards restrictive controls on the black presence in Britain. Attempts to interpret changes in Britain's immigration legislation in terms of the shifting economic needs and political interests of capital do not, by

themselves, provide an adequate and unambiguous explanation of the eventual political outcomes (Ben-Tovim and Gabriel 1982, 147). Likewise, Paul Foot's (1965, 141) remark that 'no one had the slightest idea what sort of effect the 1962 Immigration Act would have on the rate of immigration into Britain' is some indication of the area of economic indeterminacy involved in the whole issue. Messina (1989) has argued that central to Labour's approach was the belief that irrespective of the economic benefits to be derived from New Commonwealth immigration, non-whites could not easily be absorbed into English society.

The reconceptualisation of immigrants, as workers from the Commonwealth and not simply a union of British brethren, sustained the concerns that immigrants imposed on scarce resources. Knowles (1992) noted that, for Labour, immigrants as workers were a distinctive population whose impact on the indigenous population was of questionable value, and who had a lesser claim than others to society's scarce resources. Immigrant workers were distinguished from indigenous workers through arguments about social pressure and prior claims on resources.

In fact, some MPs expressed popular concern about perceived or experienced shortage of houses, schools, and jobs. It was argued that «on employment grounds, for reasons of our housing problems and for reasons of an excessive population; each of these is a reason for restricting immigration into the country» (Ennals 1965, col.393). Moreover, explanation of migration was given in terms of attraction to the good life with the presentation of an image of the immigrant as a welfare scrounger whose excesses in consuming hard-earned social benefits would exhaust the supply for the indigenous population. Miles (1993b) has alleged that the outcome of racist discourses is to deny to a racialised collectivity certain rights and resources or sometimes all rights and resources. By virtue of this alleged difference, this exclusion does not admit to the possibility of an equality of being at another level. The moment of discourse is the moment of marginalisation, which precedes exclusion in material practice. Thus, racism is not only the discourse, which creates the Other; it is also a

discourse of marginalisation which is integral to a process of domination: and those who articulate racism always necessarily situate themselves within relations of domination (Miles 1993b, 101). The following comments illustrated this view:

«We do not want people in the West Indies to regard this country as an El Dorado, as they do when they talk about it as the 'Great Trek to the North'. Why is that? It is because they think that there will be better opportunities and that the carpenter and mason will have a higher standard of living here than if he stays in his own country» (Henderson 1961, col.1962).

«people in far distant countries look towards this country as it were as a land flowing with milk and honey» (Bowden 1965, col.347)

«A picture is painted of these people rushing to this country. They seem to have an idea that Britain is an El dorado» (Hughes 1968, col.1536)

This theme of the social difficulties posed by immigrants, and organised around Britain's capacity to absorb, was popular among Labour MPs, who vociferously asserted the prior claims of their constituents in the context of immigration debates. Actually, statements such as «*Britishers* come first» (MacLeavy 1968, col.1021) appeared as a response to the «instincts» and «fears» of those who felt that the deteriorating social conditions were due to the presence of the immigrants (Henderson 1961, col.1960; MacLeavy 1968, col.1022; Fraser 1971, col.121).

Slavoj Zizek (2000) argues that what really bothers us about the 'other' is the peculiar way he organises his enjoyment, precisely the surplus, the 'excess' that pertains to this way: the smell of 'their' food, 'their' noisy songs and dances, 'their' strange manners, 'their' attitude to work. To the racist, the 'other' is either a workaholic stealing our jobs or an idler living on our labour, and it is quite amusing to notice the haste with which one passes from reproaching the other with a refusal to work to reproaching him for the theft of work. The basic paradox is that our Nation is conceived as something inaccessible to the other and at the same time threatened by him (Zizek *ibid*, 596). Labour MPs were aware of the «distress immigration must

cause to an English family» (Fletcher 1961, col.2007), the «genuine feelings on this matter» (Gordon-Walker 1961a, col.714) and the «public anxiety about the rate of entry from the New Commonwealth» (Bidwell 1973, col.1504).

Ansell (1997) claims that once natural instincts are conceived as being the basis of genuine fears, it follows that such natural instincts when unheeded or frustrated lead to 'natural' hostility towards the 'other'. When though Labour MPs were challenged they claimed that their views were not expressing racism but «common sense» (MacLeavy 1968, col.1022). Martin Barker (1981), Gordon and Klug (1985) and Ansell (1997) maintain that new racists disavow racist intent and assume that nations are built out of human nature and instincts, which in a «common sensical» way defend 'our' way of life, traditions, and customs against outsiders.

Actually, people of colour were offered as scapegoats in a long-effective political tactic to explain away social problems by identifying a certain group of individuals as personifying their cause (Ansell 1997, 14). The scapegoat model takes the outsider status of the black immigrant for granted, and assumes that the «British people» functioned like an already fully formed subject with completely organised desires (Solomos 1995, 166). The demand that immigration should take account of the effect on the «social and economic difficulties of this country» (Parkin 1961, 1948-9) was a fairly typical response of this time.

After a period of relative economic stability, the British political agenda in the 1960s was dominated by concerns about balance of payments deficits, unemployment and a decline in manufacturing investment. At the same time, the decentralisation and internationalisation of British manufacturing decreased the effectiveness of government interventions. Industrial disputes also escalated in number and intensity throughout the 1960s. Industrial management had secured agreements from union shop stewards for sustained productivity rates in exchange for greater union control over work practices. In response to lay-offs and downward pressures on wages, the rank and file ignored the management-union leadership

consensus and staged numerous short-term work stoppages (Leys 1983, 66-67).

Wilson's anti-elitist reforms were juxtaposed with disciplinary corporatist policies. In 1968 having failed to defend profits through voluntary wage agreements and legislated wage ceilings, the government proposed a bill, which would have outlawed unofficial industrial action. Wage-control councils, commissions and boards only provoked a greater sense of resentment among workers (Leys *ibid*, 70-1, 74, 75).

Furthermore, Leyton-Henry and Rich (1986) and Hall (1978) have argued that a high political salience for race and immigration was clearly a threat to Labour's electoral hopes in the 1960s and also to its priorities. This threat was highlighted for Labour by the Smethwick result in the 1964 general election and the subsequent defeat the following year of Patrick Gordon Walker. The Labour Cabinet acted hoping that reduced immigration would allow those already settled to be integrated more easily into the community. Labour wished for a consensus on race for electoral reasons (Leyton-Henry and Rich 1986, 10). Saggar has argued that Labour by mid-1963 recognised that it had moved dangerously out of line with grassroots public sentiment on the immigration issue. Labour became more aware of the grassroots hostility towards black immigrants among its own working class supporters (Saggar 1993, 255).

Yet, Labour was not just the political barometer responding to racist pressure that many scholars have suggested (Anwar 1986, 84; Foot 1965, 123). Rather than seeing public opinion as simply forcing the reluctant hand of the liberal politician, it can be argued that popular racism, undoubtedly a significant political force, has to be seen as itself encouraged by and reflecting official state policies and practices. Perhaps it would be more accurate to see the popular articulation of racist exclusivism and the enactment of racist policies as a dialectical process between politicians and people (Ben-Tovlin and Gabriel 1982, 152; Solomos 1989, 66).

Classical racial theory has shown that racism is not a static package of irrational attitudes rooted in human nature, nor is it an inevitable part of civilisation.

Rather, it is a socio-historical construct that emerged and is still evolving in the context of unfolding social relations and has assumed successive forms throughout history. Anne Marie Smith (1994) asserts that imperial nationalist discourse had a tremendous impact upon British society: it contributed to the complacent habit of superiority which created what might be called: «protected markets of the mind» in Britain. As seen in the late nineteenth century, the Empire played a key role in the construction of an imaginary national space, which transcended class differences. Yet, the racism of the sixties and seventies is different from the racism of the «high» colonial period; it is a racism «at home», not abroad; it is the racism, not of a dominant but, as seen above, of a declining social formation (Hall 1978, 26). As a result, in Etienne Balibar's words, the class struggle necessarily takes the form of racism, at times in competition with other forms (Balibar 1991c, 214).

This 'working class racism thesis' was a product of academic work on race in the 1970s. It was cogently explored in Miles and Phizacklea in their essay on 'Working Class Racist Beliefs in the Inner City'. Contrary to Westergaard and Resler, who regard immigrant workers as part of the working class, sharing common disadvantages with other workers (Westergaard and Resler 1976), Miles and Phizacklea's class fraction thesis states that classes are not homogeneous entities but are divided by economic and ideological factors. Racism within classes to some extent sets immigrant workers apart from fellow workers and professional colleagues. Black migrant workers are ascribed negative characteristics because of the widespread racist beliefs that pervade all areas and sections of British society (Miles and Phizacklea 1979, 65).

The best proponents of the divided working class thesis are Castles and Kosack who argue in *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* that racism is such an important component of working class consciousness that it becomes entrenched, dividing white workers from non-white immigrant workers who are seen as both cheap competitors for work and as culturally inferior because of their

Third World origins. In addition, they are regarded as foreigners even though they may be British citizens, and because of this they are seen as not having equal rights to economic and state benefits. Racism is high in the working class, according to Castles and Kosack: fearful of competition for jobs, workers are economically insecure; they experience a repressive socialisation which has inculcated in them middle class aspirations for a good life and standard of living but has denied them the chance of achieving these aspirations (Castle and Kosack 1973).

The rather more Weberian accounts by John Rex and Rex and Tomlinson, argue that black people form a separate class formation in British society: namely an 'underclass'. Black people are seen as constituting a class beneath the working class by virtue of their inferior economic and social circumstances and because they and their children face poorer life chances compared with other people in similar circumstances. Because of racism, black people are forced into a situation of defensive confrontation with white society, and are obliged to defend themselves through their own organisations, in conflict with white workers as well as with the white middle class (Rex and Tomlinson 1979, 62).

However, there is a problem with the Marxist approach in its attempt to establish a permanent relationship between race and class. It is assumed that class is always a more real or privileged social division around which other divisions are organised. Yet, class is simply a priority constructed in discourses concerned with socialism. Caroline Knowles in her *Race, Discourse and Labourism* maintains that when sections of the Labour party decided to support Indian nationalist activities, they damaged the interests of British trade unionists in the 1930s, whereas in the case of anti-Semitism, Labour decided that Jews could only be defended from anti-Semitic attacks as members of the working class, and not as Jews (Knowles 1992, 15). This suggests that the relationship between race and class in the Labour party is dynamic and contextual, taking different forms in different contexts.

In the post-war settlement, class took a low priority in Labour discourse. Alistair Bonnett, writing on working class whiteness, noted that the so-called post-war settlement, the formation of the welfare state, was routinely articulated in the 1950s and 1960s in racialised terms, as ‘our’ welfare system that should be used to benefit ‘us’ and should not be exploited by ‘them’. As long as British welfare capitalism and more generally the British national project, is construed as ‘ours’, as a white project only extended on sufferance to ‘them’, then the discourse of ‘unfairness’ continued to be central to white British identities (Bonnett 2000, 132). As seen above, race and not class was prevalent in British working class party towards the foreign workers. In this sense, Bonnett has pointed out that welfare was wrapped in the Union Jack (Bonnett 2000, 40).

Yet, by presenting the problem of equality between the two communities (multiracialism) as one of integration, Labour helped to transform the issue of race from a question of biology to one of culture and it provided a new language of race untainted by association with biological racism (Malik *ibid*, 25). The problem stemmed from the ‘difference’ of immigrants. The ‘underclass’ of the immigrants was seen as culturally distinct from the rest of society. The habits and morals that made it different were seen as being passed on from generation to generation through cultural not genetic, transmission (Malik *ibid*, 201). The new racism is thus less concerned with notions of racial superiority in the narrow sense than with the alleged ‘threat’ people of colour posed to the national order by the incoming subversive element.

3.5.2 Patriality: A Matter of Belongingness

Immigrant workers were differentiated from the indigenous population on the grounds of being bearers of lesser standards of development. Frank Reeves (1983) argues that while (old) racism has not disappeared in Britain, references to biologically oriented racial themes have given way to more covert racist legitimations that more often work through social reformist, humanitarian and seemingly liberal discourse.

The significance of what was called racial difference was socially defined. As Gilroy (1987) points out, the politics of race was primarily fired by conceptions of national belonging and homogeneity, which blurred the distinction between race and nation. Labour new racist language sought to present an imaginary definition of the nation as a unified cultural community. It constructed and defended an image of national culture - homogeneous in its whiteness yet precarious and perpetually vulnerable to attack from enemies within and without. As Malik notes, racialising immigration by rewriting the history of past immigration helped recast national identity through establishing the myth of a national homogeneity then being destroyed by the new immigrants (Malik *ibid*, 36).

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1968 was based on the racially divisive 1965 White Paper and arbitrarily invalidated the right of a particular population of British passport holders (i.e. Kenyan Asians) to enter the UK. The Act was racially discriminatory in that automatic entry to the UK was only retained for British passport holders who had one parent or grandparent born in the UK (patriality clause). This neatly protected the position of most white Commonwealth citizens but excluded the Kenyan Asians, who would be subject to a strict quota on entries (Ponting 1989, 256). As a result, the legislation aimed to adjust the definition of Britishness to the realities of decolonisation through the creation of a new British frontier. It set the white-British colonial administrators and the descendants of the white Britons who had migrated to Commonwealth countries, apart from the non-white colonised, even though both groups were British subjects (Smith 1994, 145). Since the concept of British nationality was connected to British sovereignty and the boundaries of the national collectivity expanded as the British Empire expanded, the exclusionary positions started to emerge in relation to the gradual process for the British to «cut their losses», to «come home» from the Empire (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 48). James Callaghan, then Home Secretary, admitted that the distinctions made by his Act were «geographical» (Callaghan 1968b, col.1251). Indeed, the

patriality clause in the British immigration law in 1968 demonstrated the way in which British immigration law reflected Britain's coming to terms with its loss of Empire. Marquand (1995b) has asserted that this statutory redefinition of British nationality made mockery of the imperialist vision.

True the expansive ideology of the Commonwealth and the Imperial family of nations bonded in common citizenship gave way to a more parochial and embittered perspective that saw culture in neat and tidy national formations. The family remained a key motif, but the multiracial family of nations was displaced by the racially homogeneous nation of families (Gilroy 1990, 268). Labour MPs provided us with plenty of arguments, trying to emphasise the irreconcilability of the British way of life with that of the coloured citizens of the Commonwealth. «We must consider that the ethnic groups which come within these islands have an entirely different way of life from ours», it was argued (Pannell 1968, col.1281). People from New Commonwealth were racialised as essentially different as a race «apart» (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 45). The immigrants from the New Commonwealth were differentiated as the bearers of lesser standards of health, education, and general living standards. Ben-Tovim and Gabriel (1984) argued that development operated as a discursive device for distinguishing indigenous from immigrant workers. It corresponds with a readiness by Labour to operate exclusion through controls and contains some damaging implications in construing the concept of the immigrant. The central feature of these processes was that the qualities of those populations, which were assumed to be fixed, became natural. Fears of bodily contact and contagion were explicit in statements like the following:

«The *question of public health* is seriously endangered by the way in which these people crowd together in the limited housing accommodation available. In Bradford this has caused one serious epidemic...» (MacLeavy 1968, col.1020)

«In the areas into which the immigrants come there are all the *social evils* - bad schools as well as bad housing - and the children are also required to be taught under some of the worst educational

conditions in the country» (Hattersley 1965, col.384)

«Where the number of immigrant children is rapidly approaching a very high proportion there is no doubt that the character of education begins to change. No longer is one trying to produce British children for the British way of life. The whole system of education is becoming *distorted* in the direction of trying to accommodate children, many of whom cannot speak the *language*, to the British way of life» (Moyle 1968, col.1307).

In this respect, immigrants were diseased and likely to infect an indigenous population, who were accustomed to higher standards of health and hygiene. As a consequence of the imminent threat, it was deemed necessary that some measures had to be taken. Labour MPs supported several measures which seemed to violate human integrity of the human being, such as medical tests in British airports and ports, and, also, tests on the immigrants' ability to be assimilated into the British way of life - language, work skills and so on.

«immigrants can be asked to undergo medical examination at the ports of entry, and subsequently to report to the medical officer of health for treatment» (Callaghan 1968a, col. 660)

«we must impose a test which tries to analyse which immigrants, as well as having jobs or special skills are most likely to be assimilated into our national life» (Hattersley 1965, col.381)

Notions of development also focused on the state of social, economic and political conditions in countries sourcing immigration. Labour parliamentary references to immigrants as «tribesmen (who) cannot speak a word of English» came «straight from the tribal villages of Pakistan and their ideas of personal hygiene are different from ours» (Binns 1965, 1005) invoked terms of anthropological discourse, to emphasise differences in living conditions and expectations between the immigrant and the indigenous population. The black populations were representative of a different 'Culture'.

Literacy, education and competence in English were concerns linked to a notion of development, and constituted indicatives of *difference*. «Most of the immigrants who have come here in the last 20 years», Alexander Lyon said, «have

come from relatively poor rural areas, and many of them are illiterate, even in their language» (Lyon 1975, col.1471). This created problems for the Ugandan Asians in the early seventies when they arrived in Britain, because they were coming from what was called «an alien culture» (Lestor 1973, col.1537). So they were considered as a problem of «different cultural standard and different cultural background which may come into conflict» (Lyon 1976, col.56), and subsequently they were deemed unfit for the British way of life. National belonging was given not by citizenship but by an indefinable quality of possessing the essence of Englishness (Malik *ibid*, 144). Inevitably, assertions of difference could not easily be distinguished from assertions of inferiority, and the more virulent strains of justification for controls in terms of difference merge imperceptibly with those of threat. In 1970s, Labour concerned itself with the problems of illegal immigration, violence and drug trade, which were assumed to accompany people from «alien cultures». Sydney Bidwell demanded provisions for police powers in the new Bill to tackle the new generation of black people who invaded and threatened British society:

«The dangers arise not with aliens or the white immigrants
but with coloured people - they are the people who are fearful.
These are the people we are talking
about and it is to them that we must relate the provisions
of the Bill about police powers» (Bidwell 1971, col.99)

Anne Marie Smith argues that the black communities were defined in racist discourse as the most potent signifier of the post-colonial national decline; the black immigration to post-colonial Britain represented a dangerous inversion of frontiers; the «outsiders» were represented as vicarious invaders (Smith 1994, 126). Black settlement was continually described in military metaphors, which offered war and conquest as the central analogies for immigration. «Our social and economic well-being», Henderson said, «is being threatened by the influx of these 250,000 immigrants» (Henderson 1961, col.1960). «Influx», «wave», «upsurge», «flood» encapsulated the very essence of the parliamentary language of immigration control.

Emphasis on the size and the quantity of the immigration played a part in convincing people that some sort of action must be taken.

The use of analogy, such as reference to 'population flows' in demography, adds suggestibility to the need for orderly control. «The recent *upsurge* in arrivals» (Callaghan 1968b, col.1251), «the *flow* of immigrants» (Callaghan 1968b, col.1248), «the great *influx* the last few months» (Callaghan 1968b, col.1255), «the *floodgates* were wide open» (Binns 1965, col.1005), «to secure agreement on ways in which they could limit the *flood* (of immigration)» (Ennals 1965, col.395), all these expressions depersonalised immigrants into things - hydraulic forces. The numbers game reduced them to statistics:

«the number of coloured immigrants at the moment in this country is round about the 800,000 mark; it may be more and is sometimes said to be nearer 1 million» (Soskice 1965, col.445)

«it would be irresponsible not to legislate on this vast issue of whether this country could afford in any circumstances to envisage the prospect of an *invasion* of 1 million or more Asians...» (Callaghan 1968b, col.1247)

«*hordes* of Asians coming into this country at an alarming rate...» (Pannell 1968, col.1280)

Paul Gilroy has argued that the language of war and invasion was the clearest illustration of the way in which the discourses, which together constituted 'race', directed attention to national boundaries (Gilroy 1987, 45). The popular solution lay in the social process of absorption, a slow and limited business.

Indeed, James Callaghan's «commitment to the development of a multi-racial society» (Callaghan 1968b, col.1241) and Roy Jenkins' abdication of the melting pot (Banton 1984, 71) rested on the premise of keeping immigrants and domestic society apart.

In the Labour government's 1965 White Paper 'Immigration from the Commonwealth', on which the Immigration Act was based, the need for controls was explained with reference to the country's «capacity to absorb [immigrants]». There

was a limit to that capacity since «the presence in this country of nearly one million immigrants from the Commonwealth with different social and cultural backgrounds raises a number of problems and creates various social tensions in those areas where they have concentrated» (HMSO 1965, 2, 10). One of those problems was specified as ‘the evil of racial strife’. Clearly the White Paper divided the national community into different racial groups and presented these groups as culturally distinct. It rationalised popular racism by suggesting ‘racial strife’ was the inevitable result when people belonging to different racial groups share a social space.

So, the new racism preserved the xenophobic intolerance of the imperial racism, but re-cast it in suitable «tolerant» post-colonial terms (Smith 1994). Roy Jenkins in 1968 announced that Britain had abandoned a policy of assimilation for immigrants and instead had embarked on a policy of pluralism, which he described as the promotion of ‘cultural diversity, coupled with equal opportunity, in the atmosphere of mutual tolerance’ (Knowles *ibid*). This is a new form of exclusionary politics that operates indirectly and through the rhetorical inclusion of people of colour and the sanitised nature of its racist appeal. The dispersal of immigrants, for instance, was not a way of promoting good relations but a means of pushing them to the margin of society. After all, British nationhood had always comprised various ethnicities with no intention of swallowing them (Joppke 1999, 224).

Most of the arguments embraced practices of inequality for the sake of multiracialism:

«I would like to see a dispersal of the immigrants throughout the country, and if this were done we would be well on the way towards producing *a multi-racial society*» (Moyle 1968, col.1310)

«The government are satisfied that these measures are necessary in fairness to the people of this country and in the interests of *equitable treatment for the citizens of the Commonwealth as a whole*» (Callaghan 1968a, col.660)

«I should like to see priority for vouchers given to people who are willing to settle in areas where there are few immigrants...to settle in areas where there are not undue concentrations of immigrants. This could be a dispersal system built in to the voucher scheme»

(Chapman 1965, col.366)

«I should like to see planned dispersal of the immigrants throughout the country to *lessen the social tensions*» (Moyle 1968, col.1310)

As immigrants remained ghettoised, excluded from mainstream society, subject to discrimination and clinging to their old habits and lifestyles as a familiar anchor in a hostile world, so such differences became rationalised not as the negative product of racism or discrimination but as the positive result of multiculturalism (Malik *ibid*, 177).

It seems that Labour's multicultural anti-prejudice discourse represented racism as an external accident, which could be added or taken away from post-colonial British society without any fundamental transformation of its most basic structures (Smith 1994, 145). The tendency within its multiculturalist discourse to portray ethnic groups or minorities as external to the national body arose from the language through which social differences could be understood without having to refer to the discredited discourse of race (Malik *ibid*, 177). Labour thus de-politicized racism: it became purely a matter of individual behaviour; the pro-tolerance, anti-prejudice discourse could be summed up in terms of a simple maxim: Be kind to «our friends from overseas», then racism will disappear (Hall 1978, 219).

Yet, multiculturalism represented not a means to an equal society but an alternative to one, where equality gave way to the toleration of difference, and indeed of inequality (Malik *ibid*, 170). The treatment of immigrants provided an important commentary on the character of the political community in Britain under the impact of black migration; because, above all, race is a political symbol (Ansell 1997, 14). It was the presence of black people, in conjunction with seeing them as problems, which brought to the surface the question of «who we are?»: the setting apart implied not only a definition of «them», but also of «us». This was what was necessary for those drawing such boundaries (Miles and Phizacklea 1979).

In fact, the 1971 Immigration Act which extended the notion of patriality - the «substantial connection» as Wilson called it - already set out in 1968 by Labour showed that the sense of self and identity was mediated through the concept of race. Although during the late 1960s the Labour party effectively accommodated itself to a 'White Britain policy', in 1971 it felt moved to question the treatment of Commonwealth immigrants along the same lines as aliens (Solomos 1995, 169). This removed the claims of black (and old) Commonwealth citizens to be immigrants to Britain and completed a process set in train by Labour which, in construing immigrants and indigenusness as separate and antagonistic political communities, legislatively and most effectively defended the intolerant from the undesirable (Knowles *ibid*, 103). In overturning the constitution of identity in the 1948 Nationality Act (it had stressed that regardless of national citizenships, the common nationality throughout the Empire would remain British (Paul 1995, 249), the 1971 Act retied the nation more tightly to the geographical space of the British isles (Manzo 1996, 132). Although Labour regretted patriality, it favoured the kind of immigration restriction which it offered - «it was a regrettable necessity», as it was said (Callaghan 1971a, col.76). It was argued that Labour had already made «a considerable contribution to the effective control of the numbers of people coming in» (Short 1971, col.131). The 1970 Labour Election Manifesto affirmed that «the rate of immigration was under firm control and much lower than in past years» (Craig 1975, 362). Subsequently, Callaghan and Jenkins did not consider the 1971 Act as racist in conception, as long as patriality secured a quest for «limited and low figures» (Jenkins 1973, col.1487).

As the Labour statements made clear, the prime object of the 1968 and 1971 Acts was the diminution of the number of immigrants coming to Britain. Smith (1994) points out that the entire imperial project had contributed significantly to the unification of the British nation. By re-naming the colonized as immigrants, these supplemental populations were suddenly identified as the late additions to an already complete body. Roy Hattersley's famous formula, «integration without control is

impossible, but control without integration is indefensible» (Hattersley 1965, cols. 378-85) was based on the idea that fewer immigrants the easier it would be to integrate them into the English way of life and its sociocultural lines. The mother country had reached her limits and more immigrants were undesirable. As Ansell (1997) maintains, the new racism erects «thresholds of tolerance»: the racial «others» could not be digested by the host race nation if they arrived in large numbers and retained their dangerous alien identities. The authors of Labour's *Opposition Green Paper: Citizenship, Immigration and Integration*, published in 1972 'wholeheartedly' rejected the 1971 Immigration Act. Labour's own proposals for future immigration policy should be 'both in theory and in practice, free from race or colour bias (...)' None of us objects in principle to immigration control, but the criteria must be rational and non-racial and must be seen to be so'. However the authors of the document failed to specify what those criteria should be other than stating that they should be 'clear and publicly known' (Labour Party 1972, 31, 35). When Labour was in government between 1974 and 1979, no action was taken to amend the existing legislation. By 1976 Labour party literature and publicity emphasised Labour's commitment to firm immigration control. A Labour party pamphlet entitled 'Labour against Racism' put it clearly:

«All immigrants face problems when they come to a new country. Differences in language and background are very obvious. But with previous groups of newcomers, the children have very quickly blended in. With black or brown immigrants it's not so easy»
(Labour Party 1976a, 5 & 6).

In a diary entry of 16 December 1970 in the published version of Tony Benn's diaries the man who succeeded Harold Wilson (James Callaghan) six years later would state his objection to more black immigrants:

«Executive this morning, where there was a frightful row about the Kenyan Asians resolution, which I had carried through the Home Policy and International Committees in support of Joan Lester and against Jim Callaghan. Jim was livid so I made a few amendments to meet some of Jim's points and this was carried. When Jim realised that he was up against it he simply said, 'We don't want any more blacks

in Britain': it really did reveal at bottom what is all about»
(Benn 1989, 320).

Even Arthur Bottomley's internationalist and multiculturalist sentiments were outweighed by the 'overcrowding' argument.

«I believe that over the generations the British way of life has benefited because of immigrants who have come here and blended their cultures with ours, bringing new skills and all kinds of opportunities and benefits. They have made Britain a stronger nation than it would otherwise have been. We cannot though escape the fact that Britain is an overcrowded island. For this reason we have to consider what population our island will bear, consistent with our economic and social development. I believe that we have reached saturation point» (Bottomley 1972, col.1376).

For his part, Jenkins, the liberal conscience of Labour in the late sixties, was convinced that the price for the low numbers could be high but, in the final analysis, it was worth it. His calculations about the exact number of immigrants, though, were not identical to Lyon's. In both cases, the quantification and the emphasis on size contributed to the demand for more and tighter controls:

«We must have limited and low figures but in some cases the price to be paid can be too high... We have a coloured population of about 1½ million and successive governments are responsible in varying degree for their being here»
(Jenkins 1973, col.1489)

«It does not matter whether Members of this House like coloured immigration or dislike it, whether they like coloured people in this country or dislike them. The fact is that there are now 1 3/4 million coloured people in this country...I do not complain of any hon. Member pointing to the problems that may arise as a result of that situation, but that is the fact that now exists. I accept that the demographic nature of this country is changing and that means that we are getting an increasing number of coloured people living here and that that may have certain consequences» (Lyon 1976, col.55)

Official labour statements throughout the seventies anxiously repeated the immigration figures, although there was some opposition from people who considered it wrong to play the 'numbers game' (Lestor 1976, 74). But, as Knowles (1992) has argued, in order to apply this argument, it would have been necessary to challenge the

field of concepts constructed around immigrant, blackness and race. This did not happen, even when the number of the immigrants fell significantly in the eighties.

3.5.3 The 1981 Nationality Act and After

From the early eighties Labour was very critical of post-war immigration policy, and it repeatedly assured the public in official statements that the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 Nationality Act would be among the highest priorities of the next Labour government. With a few exceptions, though, it refused to admit its own responsibility in developing that policy. Furthermore, Labour never dismissed the need for firm immigration controls (Winder 1982, 3).

In fact, one of Labour's arguments against the 1981 Tory Nationality Act - which brought citizenship into line with the right of abode (Knowles *ibid*, 104; Joppke 1999, 122) - concerned the nature of immigration controls. It was alleged that «primary immigration is no longer a feature of our society» (Hattersley 1982, col.635), and the existence of controls was by definition racist (Temple 1981, 50). However, it was also argued that a future Labour government «will operate a more humane, non-racial, but...firm immigration controls» (Kaufman 1985, col.1181) and «entry clearance procedures» (Madden 1985, col.1190). The NEC promised non-discriminatory controls on grounds of gender and race, which respect human rights, obligations to refugees (Labour Party 1982, 45). What all these statements meant in practice was that the immigrant from the New Commonwealth was still the unwanted, the undesirable whose impact in the political community had to be monitored, challenged and controlled (Knowles *ibid*, 105). Although Labour was not directly responsible for the 1981 Act, the fact was that, as this chapter has demonstrated so far, Labour played a significant part in sustaining and giving political direction to immigration controls in post-war politics. In the late seventies and early eighties, there was evidence that some attitudes remained intact towards the former British subjects,

despite the assurances given by some MPs for a less racist policy (Short 1985, col.1202).

For instance, the concept of the immigrant-worker and its accompanying negative connotations remained unchallenged. Once more, it was alleged that immigration controls were necessary for economic reasons. Labour MPs claimed that their policy had nothing to do with colour, but the controls were «based on jobs available and a host of other criteria» (Lestor 1979, col. 346). The decision on the controls, it was said, had to be taken «according to the priorities that this country can have in relation to its labour force and in relation to its services». Those criteria would determine «who should come and who should not» (Lyon 1978, 318), because as Merlyn Rees admitted «the problem of overstaying is real and should be dealt with» (Rees 1979, col.266). The role of the New Commonwealth immigrants was again measured by their «substantial contribution to the British economy». These were the people, it was said, «who often do unpleasant work, work unsocial hours, work in the public sector and who maintain services that would not otherwise be maintained» (Deakins 1984, col.689).

Furthermore, the multicultural anti-prejudice language, which disavowed racist intent, continued to stress the incompatibility of the immigrants with the norms of the national community. The Labour party sought fairness in the implementation of controls but, they also stated, «we are not asking for more people to become eligible for settlement» (Randall 1987, col.845). Bidwell addressed the issue confessing that, «I take second place to no one in acknowledging the anguish and the difficulties caused by the coming of immigration labour» (Bidwell 1983, col.205). It was alleged that these controls were regarded as beneficial for all sections of society, and the country in the longer term. Indeed, several arguments were based on non-racial grounds:

«it does not help race relations to bring great numbers of people into a country that already has a million and a half unemployed. It does not help black people or race

relations to bring additional black people or any immigrants
in when you have not got enough homes to go round
already...you have got to face the facts»
(Torney 1978, 317)

«I want that to be understood outside the House because
Asian constituents and others have written to me because they
are confused about the proposals before the House.
They believe that the Opposition are not welcoming the
government's measures. We welcome them, but we want
much more in the interests of justice, race relations and
the future of Britain» (Bidwell 1982, col.727).

Labour gave no indication of any intention to reconstruct immigration on principles different from it had applied the previous decades, despite the willingness of the party leadership of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley «to have a multiracial Parliament to reflect our multiracial society» (Kinnock 1987, 45). Labour was happy with the situation as it was. The inflow of significant numbers of black people with immediate access to the national community had effectively been stopped. No new measures needed to be taken.

By 1992, the first key point in a policy statement on immigration and nationality was that «Labour is committed to fair but firm immigration control» (Labour Party 1992). Readers of Labour's *Policy Handbook* of 1996 were told that «we want a fair, firm and efficient immigration and asylum policy» (Labour Party 1996a). Statements by Barbara Roche at the 1995 Labour party Conference revealed that 'firm' meant that under Labour only European Union citizens, close relatives and relations of British citizens and refugees would be allowed to migrate to Britain; 'fair' meant that nobody else would be allowed to migrate to Britain; and 'efficient' meant that the system would be run effectively (Lentze 1996, 135). The focus on the immigration laws started to change, as New Labour's immigration and asylum policies will make clear in a following section. The black immigrants started to give way to the refugees and asylum seekers; the latter were to portray the main threat to the European identity of the nation in the late nineteen nineties. Their 'whiteness' and not the

'blackness' will be racialised with elements drawn from the social structure and character of the British national community on the eve of the new millennium.

3.6 Conclusion

All the party leaderships since Gaitskell have subscribed to the 'outward-looking' oceanic vision of Britishness to less or greater extent. The vision provided an independent role and sustained the world role pretences that the developing European Community of medium sized countries could not allegedly provide. Under the impact of global changes, such as decolonisation, end of east of Suez role, crisis in a imperial leftover, and European integration, the defence of the 'imagined community' of the English speaking world was a consistent theme of the Labour party's nationalism throughout the European debates. The trans-oceanic identity was not claimed by the party because of its intra-balance of power or its electoral fortunes; both in opposition and in power the party has been in favour of the multi-national community. The supposedly anti-European Gaitskell and the pragmatic Europeans Wilson and Blair have in varying degrees been attached to the English-speaking world, and the disjuncture between the real declining imperial framework and the imagined exceptionalism was closed by attitudes of extreme hostility and xenophobia to those who were deemed undesirable aliens and unassimilable. Despite the emergence of the European Community and Britain's subsequent entry in 1973, the imperial grandeur exhibited consistently in the party's discourse during the European debates was sustained by the racialisation of those populations who threatened to reverse the superior status of the national community.

Labour chose to defend the national 'imagined' community, building barriers around it before the alien forces of the black immigrants eroded it. Labour's imperial spatial Britishness has been a racial concept since the issue of Britain's standing in the world as a head of the multiracial community was dependent upon «race relations», that is, a particular set of political concerns focusing on public order and standards of

citizenship, and not just on biological grounds. In this way, national sovereignty can be seen not just as a civic locational effect but also an ethno-cultural one. As the second chapter made clear, the quest for purism in the nationalist practices appears as a lost battle.

Especially after the loss of the Empire in the late sixties, the quest for definite and 'pure' boundaries for the nation coincided with fears about 'threats' to national identity from the movement of the populations to Britain from the former colonies. They provided the occasion for the re-closure of the broken body and the specifically anti-black immigration laws offered a solution to the post-colonial crisis of national identity. 'It is the 'greater' nations', as Nairn has noted, 'that remain grandly unaware of their narrowness, because their size, their culture, or their imagined centrality makes them identify with Humanity or Progress *tout court*. Great - British chauvinism belongs to this camp. But it does so with diminishing reason and increasing delusion, dragging British from Empire to something less than a modern nation-state' (Nairn 1977, 78). The insularisation of the party's nationhood embodied in Little Englanderism in the 1970s and early 1980s was no less important in its attitudes towards Europe. As the following chapter will demonstrate, for Labour, Britain belonged to the British and the rest of the world, but not to Europe.

CHAPTER 4

THE BRITISH ISLES

4.1 Introduction

Although imperialism appears to be in an historical perspective the dominant form of the Labour party's nationalism in respect of the European question, in this chapter I would like to analyse another form of nationalism, which, for some scholars, did not imply exclusively the dissolution of the imperial vision. After all, in the 1970s and early 1980s, at a time when Little Englanderism showed its true colours within the party ranks, Commonwealth was not discredited as, at least, an imagined national community.

The first part of this chapter (4.2) will argue that traditionally Little Englanders were not just the anti-imperialists. In their ranks there were several who argued for a different, more 'sane' form of imperialism; for them, anti-imperialism was associated with a populist criticism of the injustices of capitalism and industrialism. Like previously, the insular vision of the 'free born Englishman' was also defined by the exclusion of the aliens. The Little Englanderism of the Labour forebears (4.3) will make more explicit the connection of national populism and racism. Ethical socialists, Marxists and Fabians argued for a very English form of socialism, for an autarkic economy, independent from foreign influences. In this sense, the foreign workers were considered to be a threat to the national welfarism. In the 1970s and early 1980s, under the impact of the global economic crisis and the loss of the Atlantic financial support (4.4.1), the Labour representatives put their populism (4.4.2.2) in nationalist (economic) terms (4.4.2.1) in order to protect the indigenous workers from the injustices of the European capitalism. The amalgamation of nationalism and populism resulted in the negative representation of the European workforce (4.4.2.3).

4.2 The Origins of Little Englanderism

This section delineates the three main elements that have accompanied Little Englanderism as a competing vision of nationhood: an insular view of national identity; a radical agenda, which went back to the Civil War; and, perhaps, the most ambiguous one, racialism. The latter, as the subsequent analysis of the Labour party's intellectual traditions will further show, has been the complementary element of the insular nationalism. Like imperialism, Little Englanderism has been defined against the 'other'.

In particular, Little Englanderism grew from the 1880s primarily as a series of critical responses to the larger patriotism of British imperialism (Grainger 1986; Gott 1989; Green and Taylor 1989). The original notion of Little England referred to the small piece of the English-speaking world that happened to be located in the British Isles, as opposed to that Greater England beyond the seas - the remains of Britain's mercantile Empire (Gott 1989, 92). Old liberals and new liberals (John Morley, Leonard Courtney, Francis Hirst, J. M. Robertson, J. L. Hammond, L. T. Hobhouse, and J. A. Hobson) maintained continuity of ideology in censuring the vanity, irresponsible adventuring, improvidence and «lust for domination» of their fellow-countrymen (Grainger *ibid*, 141). They 'did not wish to liquidate dependent Empire but to prevent further expansion. Some - J. M. Robertson not among them - might even defend a 'true' against a 'false' imperialism. As a critique, Little Englanderism ranged from Harcourt's practical objections to 'extensionism' or 'inflationism' to Hammond's rejection of the new moral syllogism of Empire as he set it out: 'The British Empire is the greatest blessing known to mankind. Whatever helps to extend Empire is good. Although a particular course of action may be immoral, in the sense that it is a breach of faith, it becomes not merely innocent, but positively virtuous, if it helps to extend the Empire' (Hammond 1900, 160, 162). Critics of Empire were specifically ranged against what they regarded as something new: the

late nineteenth century conspiracy of Empire, financial and military. From Morley to John Hobson they reckoned the cost of this late imperialism in blood, money and energy and insisted that it was a subversion of the better part of English history, of the life and ideals of the people, of the British Constitution itself. As J. M. Robertson noted, England would be doing well enough in the world if she cultivated her own garden and solved her own domestic problems. Against the Roman ideal of the perpetual rule of others, Robertson proposed self-development and the rational construction of alternate bases for sounder civilization (Robertson 1899, 181, 182, 202-3).

Above all, the criticism of imperialism was a direct objection to a particular governing ethos, which deprived the majority of the people their rights. For J. A. Hobson and the mid-19th century radical critics of Empire and aggression, the problem with imperialism and war was not simply that they oppressed people in foreign lands but that they also led to the suppression of the rights of the 'free-born Englishman' whose heritage of liberty the Empire was supposed to export and Britain's wars were supposedly fought to preserve. The basic root of Little England thinking is concern for the ramifications of this kind of policy within the domestic sphere. It has always been the domestic aspect of radical Little Englanderism, which has given it its truly radical cutting edge (Green and Taylor 1989, 108).

Medievalism, the persistence of the continuity of the Common Law and the predisposition to refer back to an earlier golden age of Anglo-Saxon liberties destroyed by the Norman Yoke were part of the Little Englanderism tradition (Hill 1954; 1958). These qualities were mostly reflected by radical elements during the English civil war, notably, the Levellers and the Diggers (Hill 1958, 75). Their critique of English political, legal and spiritual institutions did not lead Levellers to seek a new constitutional settlement. Parliament retained its central role unquestioned, save for a demand that the franchise be extended, because sovereignty resided with the 'people'. For the Levellers this meant the whole adult male population and

threatened the 'old constitution' based on law and property, the Englishman's birthright. Likewise, the Diggers advocated the abolition of private property and provided much of the inspiration for the utopian socialist movements in the nineteenth century. But the strong religious emphasis of the Diggers and their commitment to communal rights, based on the Englishman's birthright of shared free land, were derived from the medieval ideas of a Christian commonwealth and firmly incorporated the Diggers into the English radical tradition. Thus both Levellers and Diggers sharing the common presumption of an assertion of an Englishman's rights, established a tradition of English radicalism, which was not only constitutional but also national and popular (Jones and Keating 1985, 17).

Yet, restricted nationhood and radicalism were not the sole attributes of Little Englanderism. Racialism was inextricably linked with an inward-looking radicalism. As Mercer (2000) has noted Little Englanderism is the peculiarly English combination of nationalism, radicalism and racism. The defence of the rights of the people involved the negation of rights to those aliens who do not belong to the national essence.

Cohen (1988) gives us an illuminating account of the Puritan tradition, which makes uncomfortable reading for those contemporary representatives of the labour movement who have been looking for radical inspiration back to that era. In the 1640s, at the height of the Puritan revolution, a great debate took place on whether the Jews should be readmitted into England. Monarchists and other radical sects supported readmittance because the historical legacy of Judaism lent biblical legitimacy to their own sense of political destiny. As the original 'chosen people', the Jewish presence was to confirm the Puritans' own divine calling to lead the nation out of bondage and into a promised land. Jewish culture was to be exploited to provide the freeborn Englishman with an additional set of ethnic credentials whilst Jewish people themselves were to be assimilated and lose their separate identity.

The anti-admittance faction took a different line. They emphasised that the Civil War was a war of bloods, and tried to link popular feeling against the aristocracy with anti-Semitism by suggesting that the Jewish community had only flourished because of Norman protection and no 'true-born Anglo-Saxon king' would have let them in. Judaism is presented as an ally of Rome, the secret agent of a Papist conspiracy to overthrow the Commonwealth. The English in contrast are portrayed as a chosen people by virtue not only of their true adherence to the Christian faith, but also in terms of their racial ancestry. As Cohen has noted, 'race is used as a genealogical principle linking nation and people in such a way as to exclude anyone who is not Anglo-Saxon born and bred from its privileged patrimony of freedom' (Cohen 1988, 30).

Only by excluding those who do not belong to the national body, one can make sense of one's identity. The labour movement provided adequate platforms from which to promote the elements of 'Little Englanderism'. The duality of Little Englanderism threw a long shadow over the radical arguments voiced from the forebears of the Labour party. The following section will elucidate this relationship.

4.3 Little Englanderism and the Early Socialists

Along with Liberal anti-imperialism, the forerunners of the Labour party, based on John Ruskin's Romantic critique of industrialisation and the research of the radical historian Thorold Rogers, came to see capitalism as bringing an absolute decline in the standard of living of the English people (Ward 1998, 22), and stressed the re-assertion of the rights of the 'free born Englishman' (Jones and Keating 1985, 17) and the exclusion of those who do not belong to the narrowly defined national space through the state power. The reassertion of radicalism against the injustices of the international capital within the narrow confines of the nation-state implied the exclusion of those who had no stake in the national essence. In addition, for Paul Ward

(1998), the attitudes to the state were crucial in the relationships between the left and ideas of national identity in the formative years of the labour movement.

First, in respect of the Marxist SDF, in his work on Labour Imperialism, Gupta asserts that despite his chauvinism, the Marxist Hyndman had brought some Liberal-Radical intellectual baggage with them, including the Cobdenite 'Little England' belief that industrial Britain need not and should not pursue annexationist and militarist policies to protect her economic interests (Gupta 1975, 10). Hyndman's Marxism incorporated the medievalist historiography and fear of impending anarchy that informed the politics of radical conservatism whose discourse echoed the country party (Bevir 1991; 1992; Robbins 1959; Pocock 1975; Peters 1971). His *Historical Basis of Socialism* (1883) owed as much to Cobbett as to Marx. Radical conservatism idealised the Middle Ages as a time of harmony and order when people were 'merrie' and devout: the stout yeomen of medieval England were attached to the land or an established trade and so economically *independent*; they were a free and vigorous people who, guided by an enlightened aristocracy, provided the backbone of an upright nation (Bevir 1991, 127). Radical conservatives were anxious about the commercialism which had created disinherited workers who were cut adrift from a stable order and lacked spiritual satisfaction; and they feared that these workers in desperation might overthrow society (Bevir 1991, 128).

Hyndman's *England for All* looked back to the 15th century as an age of English glory, the golden age of agricultural England, the 'golden age of the people' as he called it in his *Historical Basis of Socialism* (Hyndman 1883, 1-22). Medievalism was by no means the sole preserve of radical conservatism. The same historiography can be found in political Liberals such as Ruskin and the young William Morris (Morris 1910-5; Ruskin 1892). Indeed the popularity of medievalism during the nineteenth century was mainly due to its place within the romantic tradition, which, in turn, influenced many of Hyndman's fellow socialists. With William Morris, Hyndman described fourteenth-century England as 'inhabited by perhaps the most

vigorous, freedom-loving set of men the world ever saw' (Hyndman and Morris 1884, 13). In the late Victorian era, socialists wanted to find the cause of England's social problems in the advent of capitalism. The onset of capitalism in the countryside had diverted the course of English history and had reduced the standard of living of the English people (Hyndman 1973, 16, 17; Morris and Bax 1893, 122). Thus Hyndman's Tory radicalism spoke of 'restitution', reclaiming for the people what was theirs, rather than of 'confiscation' (Hyndman and Morris 1883, 60). Contrary to the respective arguments of his 'right' and 'left' critics Hyndman was neither a straightforward revolutionary nor a straightforward parliamentary pacifist. His Marxism allowed him to take a positive view of the state as an instrument of social reconciliation, «a state as the organised power of the people» (Bevir 1991, 141). Political reform along Chartist lines in which workers had the power to introduce change without bloodshed was an immediate necessity (Hyndman 1904).

Although Marxists often accepted the need for a more interventionist state, their economic theory did not compel them to do so. Socialist poet and designer William Morris, for example, defended a form of anarcho-communism (Morris 1910-15). Other Marxists, notably Tom Mann, favored a form of syndicalism (White 1991).

Turning to the ethical tradition, the more influential in his Little Englanderism was Robert Blatchford (Thompson 1996; Foote 1997, 36; Ward 1998, 27; Barrow 1975; Thompson 1951; Blatchford 1895; 1902). Like Hyndman, Blatchford argued that Britain's independence could not be secure while greed was the motivating power in society, and that greed was the outcome of industrialism (Blatchford 1895, 18, 35). Blatchford was worried about the social effects of industrialism, particularly the decay of the traditional ties that bound the national community together: «Don't you see that if we destroy our agriculture we destroy our independence at a blow, and become a defenseless nation?» (Blatchford 1895, 34). A rural economy, he believed, would achieve this security by taking advantage of English insularity and restoring the rights of the free Briton: «The British Islands do

not belong to the British people; they belong to a few thousands - certainly not half of a million - of rich men...If England could feed herself she would not be at the mercy of any foreign power. Suppose our agriculture is dead and we depend entirely upon foreigners for our daily bread! What will be our position then?...We are therefore entirely dependent upon foreigners for our existence...» (Blatchford 1895, 34).

Because Blatchford's socialism was above all other things national: «If you as a Briton are proud of your country and your race, if you as a man have any pride in your manhood, or as a worker have any pride in your class men, come over to us and help in the just and wise policy in winning *Britain for the British*, manhood for all men, womanhood for all women, and love to-day and hope to-morrow for the children, whom Christ loved, but who by many Christians have unhappily been forgotten» (Blatchford 1895, 172-3).

In both *Merrie England* and *Britain for the British*, Blatchford argued for an autarkic economy which expected to restore the rights of the Englishmen. Hence, «the people should make the best of their own country before attempting to trade with other people's» (Blatchford 1902, 133). Earlier in *Merrie England*, he defined «practical socialism» as «a kind of national scheme of co-operation, managed by the state. Its programme consists essentially of one demand that the land and other instruments of production shall be the common property of the people» (Blatchford 1895, 100).

Apart from Blatchford, ethical socialists, following the co-operative notions of Robert Owen and the medievalist values of John Ruskin, rarely evoked sophisticated economic theories to reveal the unjust or inefficient nature of industrialism or capitalism (Foote 1997, 34; Bevir 1999b, 340). The ethical socialists' ideal centred on a personal democracy in which relationships were based on equality and love. The particular role of the state was of little importance compared to personal transformations. Thus Edward Carpenter advocated a nongovernmental society based on co-operative units of production (Carpenter 1897, 174-92).

Turning to the Fabians, it cannot be easily sustained that the Society, as a hybrid organisation in terms of ideas, favoured Little Englanderism since its writings were mostly devoid of radicalism. Yet, we find that Fabian economic theories, unlike those of the Marxists and, even, of the ethical socialists, compelled their adherents to call for a more interventionist state, for a more English state socialism. Indeed, here the talk was less about radicalism and more about administration, hierarchy and efficiency.

George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb drew on marginalism to construct theories of rent as exploitation (Bevir 1989, 313-27). Shaw argued that capitalists exploited workers in part by the exercise of their monopoly of the means of production and in part because as landlords they appropriated the rents arising from natural advantages of fertility. Webb argued that interest was strictly analogous to land rent since it derived from an advantageous industrial situation. Both Shaw and Webb believed, therefore, that any economy necessarily produced rent understood as a social surplus (Bevir 1989, 320). The solution, therefore, was for the state to appropriate the rent (Webb 1888, 53-60, 79-89). But socialism was not just about rectifying distributive injustices; not just about securing the economic surplus for social use. Socialism was also about the elimination of waste and inefficiency through the social organisation and control of the nation's productive capacity (Thompson 1996, 19). Only in this way could socialism provide an effective antidote to the competitive anarchy of the market economy. So Fabians advocated the "taking over of the great centralised industries" by the state or municipalities in order to lay the basis for a "consciously regulated co-ordination of economic activity" (Webb 1896, 5). The extension of public ownership was therefore to be the means of organising and controlling economic activity in the interests of society as a whole.

In short, unlike the ethical and Marxist traditions, this was a socialism of administration and organisation, contemptuous of democracy and the working classes, and it found fertile ground in the limited concept of citizenship in Britain and the

autonomy of the state (Hassan 1995; Bevir 1999b). Although leading figures in the Independent Labour party and the Labour party - Keir Hardie, Philip Snowden, and Ramsay MacDonald - condemned capitalism in much the same terms as the ethical socialists, they turned to the Fabians to provide them with an economic analysis of the market economy. They turned to the state to correct the failings they believed were inherent in the market economy. They rejected traditional fears about a too powerful state by stressing the ethical nature of a truly democratic state. As MacDonald explained, «the democratic State is an organisation of the people, democratic government is self-government, democratic law is an expression of the will of the people who have to obey the law» (MacDonald 1905, 70).

As Hassan (1995) has noted, this was a very English type of socialism. The inward-looking vision of Britain for the British, which the above traditions favoured, meant that the nation and the working class of other nations were always potential enemies (Foote 1997, 36; Ward 1998, 53).

Indeed, underlying the whole subject of Little Englanderism was the dominance of ideas about race at the end of the nineteenth century. Blatchford's *Clarion* sided firmly with the British state and was prepared to use both xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments (Ward 1998, 41). Blatchford became contemptuous of internationalism: «We were out for socialism and nothing but socialism and were Britons first and socialists next» (Blatchford 1895, 199). Blatchford's *Clarion* saw the problem in terms of immigration combined with emigration. An editorial spoke of the mismanagement of the nation which meant that «the best of our bone and brain must seek a living in other lands, leaving their places to be filled with the mental and physical dregs of foreign peoples who did not mind serving as slaves and living as beasts» (Ward 1998, 55). As early as 1895 *Clarion* claimed that immigration control against Jews was a matter of «legitimate self-preservation» and that «there is scarcely any town of any dimensions in the country in which the foreign element has not injured and menaced the position of the local workmen» (Cohen 1994, 76). The health

of the nation was seen as the concern of the left and that health was seen to be determined by the origin and social status of its inhabitants. Immigration was linked to the problems of urban decay and the worst parts of the cities, which attracted immigrants, assumed the appearance of foreign enclaves. In 1896 *Clarion* spoke of being 'in a foreign country' in Whitechapel (A. Lee 1980, 111). The English were not known as great lovers of foreigners, especially in this heyday of imperialism, and, as said earlier, the working class were themselves rather parochial (A. Lee 1980, 113).

The attitude of the labour movement towards immigrants oscillated wildly. Labour attempted to defend them against discrimination, and, officially, the party always took a stance against restricting immigration. Britain in its view had to remain the 'home of freedom'. Yet, many Labour leaders also believed that foreigners made effective unionisation of the work force more difficult, that the importation of foreign labour would lead to blacklegging undercutting and deskilling. Expressions of racial hostility were closely tied to competition for employment and housing as well as to complaints about 'strange habits', i.e. an alien culture. It was after all, the internationalist Keir Hardie who before a Select Committee of the House of Commons argued in 1889: «Every foreigner throws one British workman out of employment» (Berger 1999, 55). At the 1903 ILP conference which reiterated a resolution proposing immigration restrictions, the ethical socialist and leading member of the ILP, Bruce Glasier spoke of the decline of the nation: «our internal freedom and external defence are less secure...our national character are in less repute...our young and virile population is quitting the country...and we are getting in pauper aliens and rich predatory aliens instead» (Ward 1998, 56). Moreover, Glasier, expressing irritation that immigrants might capitalise on welfare provisions, declared in 1905 that "neither the principle of the brotherhood of man nor the principle of social equality implies that brother nations or brother men may crowd upon us in such numbers as to abuse our hospitality, overturn our institutions or violate our customs" (Bourke 1994, 196; Berger 1999, 55).

As Ward (1998) has pointed out, for most of the early British socialists, internationalism was something desirable but it was also something distant. This led to socialists seeing no further than the English Channel. By employing a very English version of state socialism, as embodied in the slogan *Britain for the British*, saw 'splendid isolation' in terms of domestic policy (Ward 1998, 44).

As the following section will explain, their teachings apparently provided the framework on which a section of the contemporary British Labour party built their own insular vision of Britishness in relation to the European question in the 1970s and early 1980s.

4. 4 Little Englanderism in Labour discourse in the European debate, 1972-83

After the loss of the imperial space, the party, while still suffering from the 'great power syndrome' (see chapter 3), at the same time, started exhibiting a more insular outlook of Britain in relation to the European debate. During the particular period, although initially it did not enjoy the approval of the party representatives as a whole, in the early 1980s, especially after the departure of the 'Gang of Four' and the formation of the SDP, Little Englanderism managed to attract the majority of the opinion within the labour movement. Despite their various attachments and tactical considerations, all the Labour leaders of that period, Harold Wilson, Jim Callaghan and Michael Foot, expressed, to a less or greater extent, a genuine desire to recover national prestige, not by necessarily resorting to a kind of submissive relationship with the European Community; but, rather by developing a nationalist strategy within the limits of the British Isles and keeping contact with the remnants of the British imperialism, as seen in the previous chapter. As Tindale has argued, this hostility to the British membership of the EEC was not restricted to a specific ideological faction within the party. The issue cut across ideological boundaries and defied intra-party factional barriers (Tindale 1992, 276).

Richard Crossman, a member of the Wilson Cabinets in the sixties, set the tone of Little Englanderism. He publicly admitted that the only way to respond effectively to «British degeneracy» was not to go back to the old or new Commonwealth, which constituted then just a «legend», but, «to make ourselves an offshore island...and become a nation of Little Englanders» (Crossman 1972, 16). The future that Crossman envisaged for Britain was that of «an offshore island, cutting down all her overseas commitments, getting herself an economic position as favourable as that of Japan in the Far East and living on her own as an independent socialist community» (Kedourie 1984, 14).

At the time of the Heath government's successful bid for Britain's entry - a very well documented period in terms of Labour party's European party policy (Nairn 1971; 1972a; 1972b; Newman 1983; Robins 1979; Featherstone 1988; Byrd 1975; Butler and Kitinger 1976; Bilski 1977; Broad and Geiger 1996; Grahl and Teague 1988; Geyer 1997) no motion was passed at the party conferences (1971-73) in principle against membership of the EEC (Donoghue 1993, 91) - the party leadership confined themselves to an opposition to the terms of entry. The leader of the party till the mid-seventies, Harold Wilson, despite his ambiguous position, was not opposed to Britain's staying out if the negotiations with Europe were not satisfactory for the British interests. «If we were to be excluded by bureaucratic pedantry», he claimed, «a Britain confident to build up her economic strength outside the Community will seek its own destiny» (Wilson 1971a, 3). At that moment, the terms that Labour set for negotiation were extremely difficult, if not impossible, to be met by the European countries. So, these terms were actually a rejection of the very principle of British entry and a clear adoption of the isolationist argument. Wilson, at the Socialist International Conference in Helsinki on May 25th 1971, bluntly stated that «Britain is and will be strong enough to stand on her own feet outside» (Robins 1979, 96). During the 1971 summer, Wilson's eventual successor, James Callaghan was looking for an alternative strategy. He announced that he had uncovered an alternative policy

to entering the Common Market. All that the next Labour government needed to do was to 'run the economy flat out for five years' (Clark 1971b, 2). The proper national programme was to sacrifice everything else to industrial growth. Callaghan, like Wilson, a natural Commonwealth man (Morgan 1997, 393), insinuated that if British could pull their collective selves together in this fashion the open seas might still be theirs.

The referendum period unveiled the hostility of a significant part of the party to the prospect of British membership (for example, the NEC of the party - the supreme body which is custodian of the conference decisions (Minkin 1980; Hatfield 1978) - recommended to Labour's Special Conference in April support for British withdrawal, which was accepted by 3.72 million to 1.97 million (Featherstone 1988, 60). Newman underlines the pre-eminence of national economic sovereignty in the case against EC (Newman 1983, 246), while all the resolutions passed since 1977 talked about 'repeal of the European Communities 1972 Act' (Labour Party 1977, 249), 'extensive changes in Britain's relationship to the EC' (Labour Party 1978, 320) and finally the demand from the party 'to include the withdrawal of the UK from the EEC as a priority in the next general election manifesto (1983)' (Labour Party 1980, 125), following the NEC statement 'Withdrawal from the EEC' (Labour Party 1981, 2-3). Before the 1983 General Election, the then party leader, Michael Foot considered that «you could perfectly well have an international policy without necessarily being a member of the Common Market» (Clark 1981, 2). In fact, the Manifesto of 1983, *The New Hope for Britain*, presented a non-nuclear 'Fortress Britain': 'British withdrawal from the Community is the right policy for Britain', it declared and it would be 'completed well within the lifetime of the Parliament' (Labour Party 1983). After the general election, the left-wing *New Statesman* commented that «the residual Little Englanderism of the current Labour anti-European policy does not fit a party that proclaims its internationalism» (New

Statesman 1983, 3). Commentators have characterised, Labour's mentality over the European question as that of «a narrow restricted island party» (Hatfield 1978, 1).

What the historical account reveals is that the transition of the party's attitudes, or a significant section of it, from 'ruling the waves' to the 'defence of the island' was indeed noteworthy, at a time when Commonwealth was not discredited altogether, as seen in the previous chapter. In this sense, Little Englanderism did not imply an opposition to the grandeur of the imperial vision *per se*. Like the early socialists, the party representatives of the time were associated with a criticism of the contemporary form of capitalism and a more insular policy agenda in order to address the prize of a parasitic economy heavily dependent on the transatlantic links.

As Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) have noted, the boundaries often change over time and in response to concrete political, economic, and ideological conditions. Hence, Labour's Little Englanderism over the European issue of the 1970s and early 1980s was not just a result of adversarial, intra-party antagonisms such as the rise of the New Left (Ashford 1991; Newman 1983; Jones 1996), and solely domestic considerations (Bilski 1977; Robins 1979; Geddes 1994; Daniels 1998), as sections of the literature over Labour's European policy of that period suggest. Instead, the distinctive isolationist strategy that the New Left expressed and formulated in its populist strategy was also the outcome of a combination of the effects of global politico-economic and geopolitical changes that affected a former imperial power. As seen previously, nationalist discourse invents nations in moments of anxiety attendant upon shifting global power relations (Manzo 1996, 27). The dilemmas set by the international context, and especially the questioning of the 'special relationship' and, more importantly, its connection with the declining domestic economic front, touched the roots of the party's intellectual traditions and inevitably stimulated its national-populist defences. George and Heythorne (1996, 119) have stressed that the world economic crisis, which affected living conditions in Britain in the early 1970s, reinforced a rather negative view within the party about Europe. Thus, the

development of little Englander attitudes, which found expression in the amalgam of nationalism, populism and racism in the party politics, cannot be examined in separation from the changing pattern of Britain's international links.

4.4.1 The Global Politico-Economic Context

As seen earlier, the Wilson government's 1967 decision to withdraw from east of Suez reduced Britain's world role. However, the timing of the British withdrawal - between 1968 and 1972 - could not have been worse, coming as it did when the Americans' morale-draining involvement in Vietnam was at its peak. For twenty years the British presence east of Suez had lightened Washington's burden in its efforts to make the world safe for capitalism and liberal democracy: with the British gone, the burden was inevitably increased and the Americans became commensurately more resentful. By reducing the potential for Anglo-American collaboration in-out-of NATO area operations, the British withdrawal from east of Suez had further weakened the 'special relationship'. In essence, the withdrawal from east of Suez weakened Britain's ties with both the residue of the Empire and with the United States. And in so doing, of course, withdrawal paved the way for Britain's greater subsequent participation in the European circle (Sanders 1990, 176). In its desire to establish Britain's credentials as a 'good European', the Heath government then chose to ignore Henry Kissinger's somewhat extravagant plans to make 1973 the 'Year of Europe'. Worse still, in October 1973, Heath proceeded to make common cause with Britain's European partners in refusing base facilities to the American aircraft which were supplying Israel in its 'Yom Kippur' war with the Arab states (Watt 1986, 1-14). By 1973, Anglo-American relations were indeed becoming distinctly ordinary (Sanders 1990, 177).

At the same time, in the US there was a sense of vulnerability in that previously all-powerful nation on other fronts (Morgan 1997, 440). For example, Vietnam proved a military catastrophe, and caused a huge rift in domestic opinion.

The American economy was also experiencing unpleasant and unfamiliar difficulties, as the inflation of the dollar priced US goods out of world markets. This was a bad omen for Britain, which was itself already facing intractable economic conundrums.

As a result, Keynesianism found itself increasingly embattled in the Britain of the mid-seventies (Sassoon 1996; Thompson 1996, 235). On the one hand, it seemed to have lost its explanatory power. While most Keynesians had come to believe in the existence of a trade-off between unemployment and inflation, the late nineteenth sixties and early seventies saw inflation and unemployment increase in tandem. By 1975, Britain could boast a 25 per cent of inflation and a post-war high in the rate of unemployment of 5 per cent (Thompson 1996, 236). Such a state of affairs called into question both the efficacy of traditional macro-economic policy instruments and the theoretical justification for their use. A tight monetarist policy, fiscal self-discipline and a growing reliance on private initiative in a context of competitive market forces - this was the way forward that monetarists exhorted governments to take over the corpse of Keynesianism (Laidler 1976). The subsequent 1974-79 Labour government's obeisance to monetarism (Smith 1987; Bleaney 1985; Backhouse 1987; Britton 1991; Holmes 1985; Artis & Cobham 1991; Coates 1980) was summarised by the leading protagonists of that period as 'eclectic pragmatism' (Healey 1989) and 'frustrated Keynesianism' (Britton *ibid*, 20). The sterling crisis of 1976 (Burk & Cairncross 1991; Dell 1991), the intervention of the IMF and the government expenditure cuts signalled the end of Keynesian social democracy (Thompson 1996, 239).

Most of these difficulties were due to the old 'special relationship' which started to decline. Green and Metcalfe (1993, 146) have argued that due to the extremely close trading and financial relations between the US and Britain, the latter was strongly hit by US shocks. This influence took a number of forms. US deflationary policies after the oil shocks of 1973-74 and 1979-80, «added to the recessionary forces (in the UK) arising directly from the oil price rise» (Allsopp and

Mayes 1985, 401). With political tensions and racial troubles at home, the United States needed support and reassurance in the world, at a time when the European powers were grouping together inwardly in their Common Market. This period was thus marked by a growing distancing on the part of US from Britain and indeed Europe generally (Allen 1988, 174). The Conservative Prime Minister Ted Heath presented the whole EC entry procedure as a venture into a period of new national glory: «We have the chance of new greatness», he said, «we must go in if we want to remain Great Britain, and take the chance of becoming Greater Britain» (Young 1998, 230). The Labour leadership did not share Heath's triumphalism. Wilson and Callaghan were concerned that the Anglo-American relationship had badly deteriorated during the Heath years and the US had little interest in providing Britain with any special economic privileges. This was clearly demonstrated by the rigid terms that the US set for making a loan to the British Labour government in order to stabilise the pound in 1976 (Holmes 1985).

Taking into account the wider context in which Britain positioned itself in the seventies and eighties, Geyer (1997) suggests that Labour's European policy reflected the changes in relation to the declining political and economic importance of the US. The pressing question for Labour was to present an alternative strategy to overcome the economic decline given the fact that the Sterling Area and the US could not intervene to do so. The previous attempts made by the Wilson's governments instigating the Fabian-inspired National Plan had failed (Brittan 1971; Davis 1968; Graham 1972; Nairn 1972a, 63; Posner 1972; Thompson 1996, 183-92; Young 1974). As Nairn (1972a) said, the six years of historic Labour government did not alter the course of world history; more important, they did not stand the nation back on its feet. Worse, the Wilson government showed once more the asymmetry between the role as a party of the wider labour movement and the role as a party of government (Thompson 1996).

As a result, in the early 1970s, Labour was in danger of ideological paralysis, or what David Marquand then called «in a state of suspended doctrinal animation» (Marquand 1975, 398). Leading theorists of the movement questioned the relationship between class and nation, at a time of overt class conflict and Heath's confrontational approach towards the trade unions. It was argued that Labour's predominant orientation was consistently one of presenting itself as a national party in the conventional idealist sense of defining a 'national interest' above classes (Miliband 1964, 15; Panitch 1971, 193; Panitch 1977; Panitch 1985, 14; 1988). This implied a disregard of the interests of the working class, which appeared defenceless in the face of the growing economic crisis and was threatened by those governing elites and business circles who favoured British entry (Moravcsik 1998, 281). At a time when institutions are in disarray, as Marquand (2000a) and Miller (1995) have assumed, when an old order has fallen apart and there is no coherent alternative in sight, the easiest way to cut through the resulting contradictions is to appeal directly to the people, over the heads of such intermediaries as remain.

Under the impact of the global changed politico-economic context, the questioning of Britain's ability to solve her problems and the failures of the previous administrations to respond effectively to the new dilemmas paved the way for the rise of populism within the party ranks (the New Left); at the same time, they harboured chauvinist assumptions in relation to the European question, as the following sections reveal. As Newman put it, the reassertion of the control over the economy could succeed only if the increasing incorporation of Britain into the world economy was reversed (Newman 1983, 245).

For the bulk of the party, the issue of the EEC in the 1970s was again a national question with a national solution; but, as Coates (1980) has noted, it was also one of 'democracy' and the 'rights of the people'. G. S. Jones has suggested that although economic grievances are always important to populist movements, these are translated into political questions of democratic power (Jones 1983, 96 & 100). The

Labour party's nationalist discourse in the 1970s overlapped with the common agency of the 'people', which allegedly stood for the prime source of political authority. The radical and populist agenda provided by the New Left of the party were in accordance with the Little Englander attitudes of the party at the time. Above all, populism becomes dominant ('hegemonic') only as a national construction (Laclau 1982). The New Left's populism appealed to the nation, while it depended on concepts such as national independence and popular sovereignty. The latter was a prerequisite for the former and vice versa. According to Margaret Cannovan, one of the main facets of the populist discourse is an appeal to the *united people*, the nation. Merging with this stress on unity is the appeal to *our people* (Cannovan 1999, 5). This appeal appears divisive, distinguishing our people from those who do not belong - alien immigrants, for example. Hence, alongside the macro-economic questions, it was the prospective realignment of Britain internationally that moved the European debate in the 1970s: after the long detour of Empire, the British were home again. The defence of the island and the restoration of the rights of the people became a moral purpose for the antis.

4.4.2 The Defence of the Island: The New Left's National Populism

Populism is best seen as an appeal to the 'people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society (Canovan 1999, 3). More than anybody else, the so-called Labour New Left - led by Benn, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, who, along with Heffer, Maynard and Skinner split from Tribune and formed the so-called 'hard left' Campaign Group in 1982 - came to express the need for a different relationship between traditional structures of power and the 'people' (Seyd 1987; Panitch and Leys 1997).

In particular, a different type of state related in a different way to a different type of party as well as to the public at large, called for a leadership with a commitment to a socialist project, and one that did not see a *modus vivendi* with

international capital - with its corollary of a narrow, elitist conception of parliamentary democracy - as the first principle of government when in office. The aims of the Bennite New Left since the early 1970s for an inclusive kind of party democracy, the creation of a new popular base for democratic socialism, the radical reorganisation of the relationship between state and party and the accountability of the PLP and party leadership to the party Conference and hence to rank and file (Panitch and Leys 1997) bore fruits at the 1979 party Conference, when the policy of mandatory reselection on sitting MPs in each Parliament and the principle of establishing an electoral college to elect party leadership rather than leaving the decision in the hands of the PLP - a reform which eventually was implemented in 1981 - were accepted. The latter reform was the main reason for the departure of the pro-European 'Gang of Four' (Jenkins, Owen, Rodgers and Williams) from the party (Crew and King 1995, 10).

Bennism was an expression of the emergence of a new generation of community activists that understood that class identity and socialist consciousness had to be reconstructed (Panitch 1988, 339). Appealing to the grassroots looked like a democratic thing to do. The speeches made by Tony Benn in the early 1970s and later, echoing the radical traditions of the Levellers and the Diggers (Benn 1979), reflected the attitudes and activities then current among a new generation of political and industrial activists. The content of New Left's 'redemptive democracy' (Canovan 1999, 11) was power to the people: we the people take charge of our lives and decide our own future. Entwined with the redemptive strand of democracy is a deep revulsion against institutions that come between people and their actions, and a desire for direct, unmediated expression of the people's will (Canovan 1999, 13). As Paul Taggart puts it, populism is 'of the people but not of the system' (Taggart 1996, 32).

For example, the municipal socialist emphasis of the 1980s in many of the practices of the 'socialist republic of South Yorkshire' under David Blunkett, and the Greater London Council under Ken Livingstone came close to the 'new politics' articulated by Benn in the early 1970s. It was Blunkett who claimed that 'Sheffield

made me a socialist' and that 'the community has a sense of identity, a sense of purpose and solidarity' (Blunkett 1982, 56). If there was a theme that constantly resurfaced among the new activists it was their strong opposition to what Blunkett called 'legislative paternalism' (Body and Fudge 1984, 244; Blunkett 1982, 56). The real levers of economic and financial power were considered to be outside Parliament: «The parliamentary democracy we have developed and established in Britain», Tony Benn said, «is based, not upon the sovereignty of Parliament, but upon the sovereignty of the people» (Benn 1979, 95).

Although they did not dispute the role of the state, the New Left figured out that the failures of a strictly defined state management of British economy demanded interventionist policies, which would have made the party responsive and accountable to its traditional activists, strengthening thus the link between Labour, class and the British people. «The choice is between a growing concentration of private power held in a very few hands, or greater accountability to workers, consumers and to the people - from within the public sector», Tony Benn asserted (Benn 1979, 54). In this way, the workers, the consumers, the unprivileged, in general, became part of the British people in Benn's national populism. The nationalised industries were expected to find new ways of relating to the working-class communities in which their operations were conducted.

Public ownership of a good part of the financial sector was deemed necessary. This could not take the form of the mere legal transfer of banks from private to public hands as in the 1945 nationalisations; both the public and the banking workforce would need to have a different kind of relationship to publicly-owned banks. This in turn required that the party leadership must not only work out new models of public enterprise capable of providing this, but also work actively to win public support for them (Panitch and Leys 1997, 13). As it was alleged, «we must control economic events and not allow ourselves to be controlled by them» (H. Benn 1978, 307). In general, where economic policy is concerned, populists in one country

may embrace an agenda of economic liberalism, while other populists elsewhere are reacting against a free market hegemony by demanding protectionism and more state provision (Canovan 1999, 4). In the New Left's case, the British people were expected to take care of their own future and defend their own rights within the national context. Economic nationalism would bear fruits only when people was sovereign; the latter would become feasible only if Britain remained out of the capitalist-ridden EC.

As a result, by couching the argument in the language of popular sovereignty, Labour representatives strengthened the underlying thesis of the ruling class against which they struggled: that British workers and their rulers have interests in common against foreign capitalists and workers alike (Coates 1980, 255). In other words, against aliens. This sort of answer to the ambiguity of democratic power has recurred again and again in hard times: if the government is the people's government, why it is not looking after the people? Because it is in the hands of corrupt politicians, tools of the IMF, politically correct patrons of immigrant workers, the answer is to elect a people's government that will send the immigrants home, or whatever the local remedy happens to be at a particular time (Canovan 1999, 12). As Young (1998) has put it, the last thing the Labour anti-Europeans and their Conservative like-minded wanted now was to have a lot of foreigners trampling over their soil. So, nationalism does not involve just arguments around sovereignty but also imagining 'foreigners'. In sum, the New Left's national populism can be defined as call for an unmediated relationship between the people and the governing (political and economic) classes in defence of the national community, and primarily in opposition to the 'other' national communities and people which allegedly threatened it.

In this sense, as the following sections argue, the search for Britain's independence was couched in terms of economic nationalism (4.4.2.1), which in turn overlapped with populism (4.4.2.2), and racialism of the European 'other' (4.4.2.3).

4.4.2.1 The New Left's response to Europe: 'Britain for the British'

Stuart Holland, who had been in Wilson's political office in 1967-68 and the main instigator of the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) - the economic version of political isolation - assumed that what characterised not just the British but all Western capitalist economies was the large multinational corporation. It was these firms that represented the commanding heights of the economy and destroyed national sovereignty as regards the conduct of economic policy: «they had the power to arrange intra-company payments between subsidiaries and in such a way to minimise declared profits and maximise undeclared global profits» (Holland 1975, 368). Frank Judd also argued that «one of the weaknesses of Western democracy at present is that we see, on the one hand, the increasing accumulation of economic power on an international basis, and, on the other hand, the gravest difficulties of the so-called democratic political structures in trying to control and make accountable this economic power» (Judd 1971, 1138).

The New Left saw Europe embodying a capitalist and undemocratic ethos. Canovan (1999) maintains that although economic grievances are always important to populism, these are translated into political questions of democratic power. For Labour, the Treaty of Rome served to strengthen the capitalist ethos and throw up barriers against the encroachment of socialist policies and state interventionism: «The whole ethos of the EEC prevents any control», as was asserted (Clemitson 1974, col.918). It was argued that «the internationalism of capitalism means that these workers are used as whipping boys. All the ills of capitalism are blamed on upon them. This is no sort of internationalism which we as socialists should look towards» (Mooney 1973, 285). Those who would be responsible for Britain's economic policy were alleged to be «the industrialists and the bankers» (Baldwin 1972, 200). Indeed, the Labour left were not convinced that the banding together of the nation-states in an organisation like the EEC would be a significant step towards the assertion of political

control over the multinational corporations. «You cannot improve living standards of working people», it was claimed, «by reaching a pact with your exploiters» (Apps 1971, 318). In Labour's *Programme for Britain*, launched in 1972, the left opposed British membership of the EEC because the treaties demanded a degree of economic integration that would take control of the economy out of the hands of the British government and put it in the hands of European industrial and economic interests (Hatfield 1978, 127). Most of the motions at the 1973 conference declared that re-negotiations could not change the capitalist nature of the EEC (Bilski 1977, 327).

Instead, the main condition for a non-capitalist socialist Britain, which was expected to take care of the needs of the *people*, was the insulation of the British economy from the international pressures of competitive capitalism and that meant protection from an unregulated flow of foreign imports and closer control over inward and outward investment flows (Meacher 1982). In particular, the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES), which was embodied in *Programme for Britain* (1972), the *Programme 1973, 1976, Labour's Programme, 1982* and its 1983 election manifesto *The New Hope for Britain* (Jones 1996, 110), proposed the insulation of the country from the constraints of the international economy. While Britain was already plunged into a desperate economic crisis, this appeared to present «a greater possibility of socialist change than at any time in Britain's history» (Hodgson 1981, 7, 3). The proponents of the AES were in a strong position in the period until 1983, especially after the departure of the social-democratic wing, and their strength is reflected in the literature produced by the party, party members and those who sought to influence party opinion (Aaronovitch 1981; Meacher 1982; Hodgson 1981; Heffer 1986; Benn 1979; 1981).

The main arguments of the AES focused on the accountability of the multinationals and the protection of the indigenous industry. For Holland, one way for a Labour government «to ensure direct control of the strategic decision-making in a range of leading companies» was to purchase shares through the medium of a State

Holding Company (the National Enterprise Board) and pursue a planned programme of expansion that would reverse the decline of British economy (Holland 1975, 159). Holland saw the State Holding Company as providing the means of countering those actions of multinationals deemed to be harmful to the national economy. In addition, the «planning agreements» between a National Enterprise Board and major private companies would provide the means of making those companies wielding mesoeconomic power accountable for its use (Holland 1975, 224).

Further, the wall of capital controls around Britain, which involved the adoption of protectionism and the abandonment of the EEC, was expected to provide a kind of shield for «heavy industries such as steel, and the manufacturing industries» (G. Barnett 1982, col.777). Ron Leighton was complaining that «this country is being swamped by imports from the Common Market, and that is damaging our economy and pushing up unemployment. We are becoming an economic colony of West Germany» (Leighton 1979, col.682). Only, the «national context» was considered to be suitable for tackling this sort of problems. As a result, the only obvious solution for the proponents of the New Left agenda was to ‘rebuild our economy on the basis of an *independent nation* belonging to the rest of the world’ (Mitchell 1982, col.792), but, apparently, not to Europe. This was considered to be the only way «to put our people back to work and *to put Britain back on its feet*» (Heffer 1981, 243).

An unaccountable domestic executive was supposed to be more prone to establish a relationship with equally undemocratic foreign bureaucrats and monopolies that put the economic and political future of the country in danger. As seen above, populism is not just a reaction against power structures but an appeal to a recognised authority. Populists claim legitimacy on the grounds that they speak for *the people* (Canovan 1999, 4).

4.4.2.2 The New Left's response to Britain's Elitism: 'Trust the People'

Populism challenges not only established power-holders but also elite values. The demand for protectionism and state provision was naturally associated with an assault on the elitist structure of power, which obviously ignored the 'consent of the British people' (Mendelson 1971, col.1795). Benn has noted that, «the establishment and the media have cooperated to cover up the systematic transfer of power from the British Parliament to the Common Market» (Benn 1981, 16). Populists love transparency and distrust of mystification: they denounce backroom deals, shady compromises, complicated procedures, secret treaties, and technicalities that only experts can understand (Westlind 1996, 203; Shils 1956). As a consequence, the continuing membership of the EC allegedly reflected the «Vichy spirit in the top echelons of the establishment (City of London, Fleet Street and Whitehall)» and essentially meant the «end of Britain as a completely self-governing nation and of our democracy» (Benn 1979, 163 & 95). For Benn, Britain was «in law and in practice a colony of West European federal state» (Benn 1981, 15). The latter entailed the review of Britain's relationship with the EC for the restoration of the rights of the people.

During the negotiations conducted by the Conservative government, the NEC noted that «in the last twelve months the Conservative government has shown ruthless disregard for the welfare and living standards of millions of British people» (Labour Party 1971). British membership was considered to be «the elitist approach of those parties of privilege, the Tories and the Liberals» in contrast with «Labour, the party of the people that *trusts the people*» (Urwin 1974, 249). In this fashion, by achieving Britain's entry to the EC, the Heath government and the 69 Labour 'moderates', who voted for Britain's adhesion to EC, were accused of elitism, of «treachery», and of having lost «faith in their country's ability to solve her problems outside the wider free market of the Community» (Castle 1980, 11; Benn 1989, 109).

As a result, the 1975 Referendum was considered to be, after all, «the honourable and democratic way in taking people's verdict on questions of sovereignty» (Urwin 1974, 250). The referendums and popular initiatives favoured by populists are universally referred to within the literature of political science as 'direct democracy' (Budge 1996; Cronin 1989). As Tony Benn put it to his constituents, the EEC threatened five basic democratic rights:

«The power of the electors of Britain, through their direct representatives in Parliament, to make laws, levy taxes, change laws which the courts must uphold, and control the conduct of public affairs, has been substantially ceded to the European Community whose Council of Ministers and Commission are neither collectively elected, nor collectively dismissed by the British people, nor even by the people of all the Community countries put together» (Benn 1989, 108). The demand for 'sharing, altruism and co-operation' in contrast to 'elitism, materialism and excess competitiveness' (Meacher *ibid*, 234) also echoed medievalism, the moral critique of industrialism and the ethical vision of the writings of William Morris.

But the arguments against elitism primarily concerned the traditional structures of power. The 1974 Labour Manifesto committed the party to a substantial programme of nationalisation that contrasted with both the stance on public ownership in 1964 and 1966 and Gaitskell's earlier attempt to scrap Clause IV from the party constitution in 1959. In fact, the new left model of state socialism did not aim to assume the elitist, paternalistic character of Fabianism of the old left. One of the proponents of the AES, Geoff Hodgson made clear that democracy and the extension of democracy were the central agents of social transformation in the AES because that transformation was about empowerment, about a genuine decentralisation of decision-making power into the hands of the working class (Hodgson 1981). The extension of the public ownership had a role to play but only in so far as it brought a changed relationship between workers and management (Hodgson *ibid*, 201). As Miller (1995) has noted, the activist element in nationality

should be anathema to a certain kind of conservative structure of power as embodied in the paternalism of parliamentary sovereignty.

As a matter of fact, the underlying concern of the new left was the issue of popular as opposed to parliamentary sovereignty. Popular sovereignty was widely associated in new left's discourse, but not always rightly in the legal sense, with 'national independence', the 'autonomy of the state', 'the self-determination of the working class' (Heffer 1975, 648) and 'self-government of Britain' (Benn 1983, col.684). The popular dimension of sovereignty concerned the relationship between society and the authority of Parliament. Tony Benn, the republican of the Labour party, a devoted anti-Burkean - «Burke is dead and so is his view of democracy» (Benn 1971a, 17) -, assumed that parliamentary democracy was not based on the sovereignty of Parliament but upon the sovereignty of the people (Benn 1979, 95). In a letter sent to his constituents he defined sovereignty as «the power belonging to the people and being lent to Members of Parliament to use» (Benn 1989, 288). Parliament was either an instrument of the people or it was nothing, according to the chairman of the party in 1971-72 (Benn 1971b, 1760; 1994, 419).

This came in contrast with the definition of parliamentary sovereignty in maximalist terms, which was adopted by the left-wing Tribunate faction of the party - the heirs to the post-war Bevanite 'Keep Left' in which Richard Crossman and Michael Foot were among its most prominent members (Schneer 1988, 60-2). In contrast with the populist 'redemptive' vision of democracy, the 'pragmatic' point of view espoused by the Tribunes meant institutions not just to limit power, but also to constitute it and make it effective. On the issue of Europe, the nationalist Tribunes of the party, coming from all the ideological factions, left and right, such as Peter Shore, John Silkin and Michael Foot, were enthusiasts of the Westminster Parliament prerogatives. The Tribunate perception of sovereignty was equated either with the independent policy-making capacity of the executive or the primacy of Parliament and any attempt to draw a line between these two elements of sovereignty looked

rather futile. Westminster absolutism and executive autonomy were inextricable and essential to their project. The Tribunites adhered to the idea of Westminster as the only sun which provides light and around which other institutions move and have their being (Bogdanor 1994, 20).

Michael Foot, heir to Aneurin Bevan's famous epithet 'Parliament is a weapon and the most formidable one we have in the struggle' (Bevan 1961), was expressing in his speeches on the European issue the authority of parliament on the economic issues which was reminiscent of the principle around which its struggles against the Monarch in 1254 revolved («no taxation without representation»): «We are discussing the whole question of the rights of Parliament and its taxing rights», the leading left-winger of the party commented (Foot 1972, col.1215) - see more on the sovereignty of Parliament as a cultural concept in the next chapter. The old left Bevanites' socialism was epitomised by 'parliamentary paternalism', i.e. it wanted to extend the scope of nationalisation and the welfare state via legislative enactment and benign bureaucratic administration (Panitch 1988, 339). According to Labour theorists, that 'democratic collectivist' (Marquand 1998, 25) or 'centralised collectivist' (Hain 1995, 19) tradition was essentially top-down and *dirigiste*. The liberal socialist, Peter Hain (1999) considers that the blind attachment to whiggish doctrines, such as absolutist parliamentary sovereignty, had alienated the British state from the basic needs of the public, behaving like an ostrich towards the calls for an immediate adaptation to the changing post-imperial political and economic order. Such centralism left little or no scope for individual empowerment and local control; on the contrary, the state socialists saw these as obstacles to the grand design of a better society and its noble ideal of equality (Hain 1999, 25).

In Neil Kinnock's article in *Tribune* entitled 'Socialism and Sovereignty' on the eve of the 1975 Referendum, the independence of executive was dominant. He argued that socialist policies involving state intervention in the field of regional development and job creation would be impeded by Community rules (Jones and

Keating 1985, 189). The state, once the predatory war-making machine in the race for Empire, was to deliver the gradual amelioration of domestic economic conditions (Andrews 1996, 126). The object of all the post-war Labour leaders was to capture the state, and use it for planning economic and social change. This was mostly hierarchical; it depended on leadership, on authority, on structure (Marquand 1995a, 26). This kind of socialism was influenced by the Fabian collectivism, which imparted an indelible political coloration on Labourism (Hall 1982, 20). It was increasingly statist in that the reforms were expected to be brought down from above by the state through experts for the working class - see Wilson's managerial National Plan. As Marquand (2000a & b) has recently noted, the cadres of the Labour movement came largely from the professional service class and the trade union movement. Both were schools for leadership; the products of both displayed what A P Thornton (1966) once called the "habit of authority" as fully as any aristocratic Whig or Tory. Albeit with its own great strengths and achievements, it marginalised or ignored concerns about constitutional reform. In short, the Labourism of the old left had traditionally been a pillar of the old-state order rather than a radical-provincial protest movement (Nairn 1979, 249). At the time, Labour Britishness suffered from, what has been called, «institutional sclerosis» (Banton 1991, 18). A survey of Labour MPs and MEPs over the European issue has disclosed that the 1950-83 cohort were highly sceptical about the notion of the parliamentary sovereignty being pooled (Baker, et al. 1996, 369).

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Tribunate, top-down definition of sovereignty was termed Anglo-Gaullism, that is, the maintenance of the national veto over those issues deemed vital national interests. The outcome of the French policy in 1965-6 (the 'empty chair' crisis) was the famous 'Luxembourg Compromise' which was a recognition of the right of a member to exercise a veto where a Community proposal affected an issue it regarded as being of fundamental national importance (Williams 1990, 300; Moravcsik 1998, 177). It had no constitutional validity. It was simply an acknowledgement of the fact that the major Community countries could not

be compelled to accept and implement decisions they regarded as contrary to vital national interests. The General's nationalist opposition to Monnet's vision of Europe had made great impact on the Labour nationalist ranks. Austin Mitchell asserted in 1983 that «Anglo-Gaullism should govern our approach to the EEC, national assertiveness, mobilising popular dislike for national purposes» (Mitchell 1983, 174). Early in 1978, Douglas Jay made the same claim in the Commons over the British agricultural policy in Europe: «Unless we follow the example of De Gaulle and make clear that we are not prepared to co-operate unless some of our demands are met» (Jay 1978, col. 470). Throughout that period the NEC and the Conference demanded in the strongest terms, safeguards for Britain's «balance of payments, cost of living, control over sterling and guarantees that the EC would not interfere with the British state control of the economy needed to pursue effective regional, industrial and fiscal policies» (Geyer 1997, 24; Bellini 1972, 22; Newman 1983, 225).

In fact, one of the major controversies of the European debate in the 1970s and early 1980s was the emergence of European monetary integration (Moravcsik 1998, 238). The creation of the European Exchange Rate Agreement or 'Snake' in 1973 and the making of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979 provoked much turbulence within the ranks of the party. It was on the agenda when Heath signed the Treaty. When Wilson displaced him, joining the EMS was still nominally in place, though the oil shock meant that most bets were off (Young 1998, 286). Nevertheless, it appeared on the agenda of a summit Wilson attended in Paris in December 1974, and he signed up to the declaration which said that, on EMU, the will of heads of government 'has not weakened, and that their objective has not changed'. 'The time has come', it went on, 'for the Nine to agree as soon as possible on an overall concept of European Union' (Geyer 1997, 25). Wilson, in his agnosticism, said that the objective of the EMS was tacitly abandoned. But the fury at the prospect of joining the EMS was felt within the Labour anti-European camp and was a bad omen for what came two decades later. «To accept a common currency», Jay said,

«means the loss of effective control over all the main elements of economic policy...the essentials of economic independence are gone» (Jay 1970, col.383). For James Callaghan a monetary and economic union meant actually «the end of national sovereignty» (Callaghan 1972b, col.657). Already, at the 1971 party Conference, Callaghan insisted that if Britain were to accept it, «central decisions would be taken by Brussels bureaucracy» and the national identity would submerge in Europe «becoming a small part of a great enterprise» (Callaghan 1971b, 143). As Moravcsik has noted, Callaghan never seriously considered rejoining the Snake. One of the reasons was the political opposition from within the party to it. Even when he became Prime Minister, substantial elements of the Parliamentary Labour party and the National Executive Committee were openly critical on grounds connected with belief in the virtues of economic autarky (Moravcsik *ibid*, 280).

All the same, as Jones and Keating (1985) have suggested, the issue of the distinction between parliamentary and popular sovereignty appears confusing for constitutional and political thought. Even A.V. Dicey (1939, 18) came close to identifying the democratic ideal with the identity or sovereignty of the nation itself, whose ‘secret source of strength is the absolute omnipotence, the sovereignty of parliament’ since there is no written constitution, which means that there are no legal limits to the legislative authority of Parliament (Bradley 1994, 81). Moreover, the ‘sovereignty of the people’, as defined by Benn, is considered a wholly meaningless phrase because ‘the people’ even if 100 per cent unanimous, for example, in a referendum, would not have had the authority to make enforceable law. The people had no sovereignty in the parliamentary sense. Popular sovereignty is delegated rather than direct (Griffith 1975, 164; Budge 1996; Cronin 1989; Mather 2000, 37). This is minimal democracy since electors cannot initiate, sanction or repeal parliamentary legislation (Mather 2000, 37). Riker assumes that even supposing that ‘we, the people’ can combine our diverse interests and opinions into a coherent will’, the hard facts of political and economic interdependence often make that an empty promise

(Riker 1982). After all, just five years after he received the «very big message from the British people», Benn himself was successfully proposing at the 1980 Labour conference that Britain should leave the European Community without a referendum. In fact, Broad and Geiger (1996) have pointed out that the decision of ‘the people’ was not respected for very long by those who had pressed for a referendum in the first place.

However, the mixture of populism and nationalism fostered by the Labour party against EEC membership in the 1970s may have sought its rationale in an anti-capitalist, anti-elitist and radical discourse, but there can be little doubt that it was fed on popular chauvinism (Coates 1982; Lunn 1996). Populism is not just inclusive, but suffocating as well (Marquand 2000a & b); genial and manipulative. It marginalises dissent, blankets debate and fosters the banalisation of politics. It might also pave the way for an uglier populism, a populism of xenophobia and intolerance (Marquand 2000a & b). Even Tony Benn’s nationalism, which looked back for inspiration to the English radical tradition, was not devoid of racist implications. On the eve of the 1975 referendum, Benn claimed that those who were opposed to the idea of referendum were the minorities, «the rich, the immigrants...the people who are in favour of entering Europe and suspect the public that do not agree with them» (Benn 1988, 426). These particular parts of the population were considered not to belong to the national body, because, as seen above, the stress on unity is the appeal to *our people*, often in the sense of our ethnic kith and kin (Canovan 1999, 5; 2000). Dahl and Riker have noted that populism’s entwinement with nationalism appears uninhibited by liberal constraints, given to a crude majoritarianism that neglects or overrides the rights of minorities (Dahl 1956, 4,6 & 34; Riker 1982).

Indeed, as the following section will demonstrate, the Labour party’s radical definition of Britishness was permeated with and conditioned by the racialisation of the European ‘alien’.

4.4.2.3 The Island Under Threat of Invasion

As seen above, formative influences in labour movement culture in particular, were often drawn from situations involving white immigrants. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were particular concerns for immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, mainly Russian Jews (Lane 1980; Lee 1980; Miles and Kay 1994). The 'alien' became synonymous with the 'Jew' and the 'alien question' synonymous with the 'Jewish question' (Joyce 1980; Lee 1980, 114, 116; Miles and Kay 1994, 19). Clashes over jobs, conditions of work, pay and union membership were the basis for much broader questions of identity. The immigrants lived with the workers, were of the workers. But the responses bore a close resemblance to responses to other groups. As Lee (1980) has argued, the English were not known as great lovers of foreigners, perhaps especially in the heyday of imperialism, and the working class itself was rather parochial. But it was not just that. Working-class whiteness was bound up with the reformation of capitalism and its oppositional discourse was wrapped up with the 'gains' of the British state (Bonnett 2000, 132). Immigration coincided with the end of peak Victorian prosperity (Buckman 1980, 223), at the very time when Britain was under pressure both as an imperial and an economic power. The attitude towards the 'foreigner' was thus hardening precisely when there was a need to show more tolerance (Lee 1980, 114). Excluding the 'undesirable' meant not only the poor but also the 'racially inferior'. It was frequently the case that the definition of 'alien' was based on being 'non-British' (Lee 1980, 107; Lunn 2000, 116). The same appeared in post-war Labour Little Englanderism as well.

In the post-war Britain differentiations were made between categories of European workers, in which racialised hierarchies were constructed (Miles and Kay 1994, 17-32). Social and political repercussions of an increased East European presence were not neglected (Miles and Kay 1994, 23). Although economic interests dominated policy-making, the then Labour government had imported European labour

for reasons including racial prejudice and worries about integration and assimilation. At that time, they feared large-scale migration from the colonies and they preferred the European stock instead, though, even then, there were racialist conditions attached, as the 1949 Royal Commission declared

«it could only be welcomed into a fully established society like ours without reserve if the immigrants were of good human stock and were not prevented by religion or race from intermarrying with the host population and becoming merged with it» (Cambridge and Feuchtwang 1992, 17).

Similar concerns about Italians were voiced in the early sixties during the debates on the first application for British entry to the Common Market: «Do you remember what happened when we put Italians into the pits of this country? We have a terrible cry to clear out people from our colonies. Are we to replace these people and bring in Italians?» (Blyton 1961b, 217). If Italians were considered to present obstacles in the mines, this augured poorly for their adjustment to a wholly different way of life. Moreover, it was revealed that a large number of Italians came from the Southern part of Italy where the problems of poverty, overpopulation and unemployment were more acute than in Britain (Holmes 1988, 215). As the left-winger Jennie Lee had said, «the civilised people in the North of Italy were shocked at the desperately low standard of living in Southern Italy» (Lee 1961, col.1551). Shanks and Lambert noted that the picture of rapacious Latins, socially backward and politically unreliable, seeking to ‘horn in’ on Britain’s privileged position vis-a-vis Washington and the Commonwealth, flattered British pride and British insularity (Shanks and Lambert 1962, 16). According to Bonnett (2000) the so-called post-war settlement, the formation of the welfare state, was routinely articulated in the 1950s and 1960s in racialised terms, as ‘our’ welfare system that should be used to benefit ‘us’ and should not be exploited by ‘them’. Indeed, the spirit of the times was articulated by the National Executive Committee of the party, which argued that «we represent

Britain, we represent the working class of Britain and they are Britain» (Labour Party 1962, 182).

It appears then that Commonwealth immigrants and 'blackness' were not the sole object of the party racial considerations throughout the pre- and post-war period. Instead, the European experience of migration revealed that there was a gradation of whiteness in the party discourse. Although, the Western representation of whites as non-raced has placed them in the context of normality, and ordinariness, as Bonnett (1996; 2000) has argued, white identity needs to be understood as historically and geographically variable. So, in order to avoid the danger of reifying whiteness and reinforcing a unitary idea of 'race' we should constantly locate any discussion of whiteness in a particular empirical and historical context, because whiteness, like blackness, is a political definition (Solomos and Black 1996, 24).

In the early 1970s, domestic economic decline, loss of the traditional imperial or Anglo-Saxon financial backing and the instinctive movement towards the closure of the nation, made race the framework through which the crisis was experienced and the means by which the crisis was to be resolved (Hall 1978, 33). In this period, Labour racism needs to be situated within the specific state of economic policies and political relations. National identities involve the postulate of a necessary territorial separation and are thus tied to a specific political project (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 10). Indeed, the protectionism advocated by the AES contributed to a further racialisation of national welfarism. As seen above, the issues of state intervention, the restriction of imports in labour and capital and the protection of indigenous industry, were placed high on the political agenda of the Labour party's European policy. As a result, the reorganisation and redistribution of resources were expected to take place along particular racial lines and inevitably, British welfarism as a national project was construed in antithetical terms: 'Us' against 'them'.

First and foremost, the little Englanders of the party saw a future of «men living in their own nations» (Shore 1971a, 1127). Martin Barker (1990) has pointed

out that the creation of 'super families' or nations necessarily involved kin altruism within the community whose counterpart was hostility and aggression toward competitive outsiders. In particular, it was assumed that the British race had a special character that enabled it to stand alone. The rhetorical motif «if we do not go in we would survive» (Shinwell 1970, 190) was not just a nationalist shibboleth. It was closely associated with racial constructions of «a special character», «the genius of the British people» (Pannell 1971, col.1292), that made the British a unique and different nation in Europe; a nation whose members could survive alone due to their own personal, genetic, social and, in general, cultural characteristics. Miller (1995) suggests that personal characteristics presently seen as constitutive of national identity are projected back on to distant forebears. It was actually said that the British people had proved in the past that «their good sense and their mature democratic *instincts* had provided them with better judgement of the needs, aspirations and ideals» of the nation (Peart 1971, col.1097). Michael Foot considered that this «greatness of the British» instincts, which fixed British within the narrow geographical contours of the isles, could be summed up by

«their ingenuity, their compassion, intelligence, spirit of adventure, sense of community, understanding of how democracy must be effective» (Foot 1973, 293).

Phenomena of race depend on the constructs of collectivity and belongingness postulated through notions of common origin or destiny and in terms of the specific positing of boundaries (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 2). As a result, the association with the European Community insulted «the *instinct* of the British people which is so strongly against it» (Thomas 1971, col.1602). «We delude ourselves if we believe that we are one people with them now», Peter Shore said after British entry into the Common Market in 1973 (Shore 1973a, col.585). Devoid of any value judgements, biological attributes and prejudices these statements aimed to underline the incompatibility between two different cultural formations: «A great deal of

emotion...concerns the way of life of our people», it was argued (Thomas 1971, col.1591). The new racist discourse of the party considered it natural to isolate oneself behind cultural or genetic boundaries. As Barker said, these (neo-racist) attitudes are just the extension of loving one's family, as a unified cultural community (Barker 1990, 35).

In this sense, the Labour Prime Minister in the mid-nineteen seventies, James Callaghan, constructed cultural boundaries in his famous 'Chaucer's speech' at Southampton on 25 May 1971 (Callaghan 1971c, 5). He complained that President Pompidou wanted the language and global stance of the EEC determined by what he called a 'French continental-European approach' (Callaghan 1971c, 5). This would mean 'a complete rupture of our identity', Callaghan said. But what caused most comment was the passage in defence of the English language. Pompidou had commented about the desirability of having French as the language of Europe and had dismissed English as the language of the United States (Morgan 1997, 395).

Callaghan responded in robust populist style:

«Millions of British people in Britain have been surprised to hear that the language of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton must in future be regarded as an American import from which we must protect ourselves if we are to build a new Europe. We can agree that the French own the supreme prose literature in Europe [a debatable proposition in itself]. But if we are to prove our Europeanism by accepting that French is the dominant language in the Community, then the answer is quite clear and I will say it in French to prevent any misunderstanding: 'Non, merci beaucoup.'» (Morgan 1997, 395; Callaghan 1971c, 5).

As Samuel has argued, ideas of national character have typically been formed by processes of exclusion, where what it is to be British is defined in relations of opposition to enemies both without and within (Samuel 1989b, xvii). The invention of nations means organising against other competing groups. The constructions of collectivity involve mechanisms of both inclusion and exclusion of individuals on the basis of the categorisation of human subjects into those that can belong and those that cannot. Because race is one way by which the boundary is to be constructed between

those who can and those who cannot belong to a particular construction of collectivity or population (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, 4), the definition of British race as an essence, as a matter of innate, genetic characteristics becomes hard to sustain. Racism cannot be separated from the wider political culture and the given historical conjuncture (Solomos and Black 1996, 26; Omi and Winant 1994; Winant 2000). Omi and Winant (1994) have argued that we should think of race as a matter of both structure and representation. The structural condition of racism embodied in the questioning made by the Labour's AES of the merits of continuing a free movement of labour and capital (it was alleged that entry into Europe «will not and is not designed to benefit the ordinary people of Britain», but rather was «inimical to their interests» (Lestor 1971, 2; Short 1972, 742), led to negative representations of the European populations/races.

The ideas about the European race articulated and interacted with economic nationalism, which went beyond conflicts between races. In the nineteen seventies, Labour appeared to share most of the fears of the right-wing political circles that to join the EEC would encourage «a flood of foreign labour» which would further «dilute the national character» (Taylor 1971, 6). In particular, European immigrant workers became the target-group as people who were perceived as the 'alien trait' or 'alien wedge', and received the most abusive racial treatment from within the ranks of the Powellite faction of Labour and the corresponding Powellite faction of the Right. Goldberg (1990) has pointed out that racism exists as the effect of established relations between subjects and institutions, economic and social practices. Thus, the symbolic image of the undeserving and often criminal 'Euro-scrounger' of the new right discourse of the eighties, which was constructed to justify new definitions of the boundary, had its origins in Labour discourse already in the early seventies. Harold Wilson feared that,

«workers coming here from southern Italy, or other depressed parts of the Common Market, will be free to take jobs in British industry, to break long-established

industrial arrangements by securing employment regardless of the skill and craft which has always been required of British workers» (Wilson 1971b, 6).

In fact, there were particular fears about a possible influx of 'cheap foreign labour' into Britain from Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey (Rowley 1970, 27). Richard Dyer (2000) admits that, given the variety of whiteness, «I have sometimes thought that what I am really writing about is the whiteness of the English, Anglo-Saxons or North Europeans, that this whiteness would be unrecognisable to Southern or Eastern Europeans and their descendants». In this sense, Labour racism has to be located within specific economic relations rather than reified stereotypes of normality about the European populations. Within a declining economic framework, the danger of importing 'unfair competition' in the form of impoverished immigrants whose assumed willingness to work for lower wages could undercut and displace British workers apparently loomed large in Labour left's state of mind. It was assumed that,

«there is too much stress on the worker moving to where the work is...and the principal cause is the attraction of millions of people from lands that border the Mediterranean, including the two associated member states - Turkey and Greece...»
(Shore 1973a, 586).

The workers who were citizens of the European Community countries were entitled to move anywhere in the community. An EEC national did not need a work permit that the Immigration Act 1971 required for aliens and Commonwealth citizens. Limitations on the right of mobility were specified in the Treaty as «reasons of public order, public safety and public health» (Taylor 1971, 6). For this reason, James Callaghan, despite giving his consent to exemptions in the Immigration Bill for limited groups of people such as crews of ships or aircraft coming from the EEC, had no objection to stricter controls for immigrants if Britain decided to enter into arrangements with the other countries (*The Times* 1971, 7).

In fact, the well calculated employment of a discourse of renewed warfare - 'surrender', 'invasion', 'wreck', 'unscrupulous', 'monstrous', 'destroy' etc. - by the

party towards the European Community, for fear of attacks on the 'British way of life', denoted that its economic nationalism was conditioned by racial constructions which in turn contributed to an authoritative national identity. As Faist (1994, 61) has noted, these metaphors which help to dramatize the socio-economic problematic of the welfare state by framing it in experiences of economic and social uncertainty are translated into opposition to and fear of the 'aliens' and their culturally disruptive way of life. Mitchell of the late seventies was sounding like Thatcher of the late nineties: «Many of the *ills* are of the making of the Common Market» (Mitchell 1979, col.631), he said. The European Community was closely linked with images and practices of «a certain atmosphere of corruption» (Jay 1979, col.533), «swindles and frauds» (Leighton 1980, col.742), which propped up, in particular, «the *inefficient farmers* in France and Germany» (Hoyle 1983, col.728). The social conditions in the European states seemed rather repelling to the 'common sense Britishers' (Leadbitter 1978, col.506) of the party and the fear of the potential 'contamination' ditched any thought of association with them: «I would not swap the conditions that I have seen in those countries for the conditions that we have in this country» (Leadbitter 1978, col.505). Or, it was asserted that a potential harmonisation of the social standards on the European level would transform Britain into «Northern Europe's Calabria» (Judd 1971, col.1619).

More specifically, Harold Wilson deplored the fact that the Conservative Minister of Transport was accepting «those *monstrous* Continental lorries *wrecking* our roads and bridges and *destroying* our villages» (Wilson 1972, 214). In the same vein, Harry Urwin, representing the Transport and General Workers Union, accused the Continental drivers of the «40-ton lorries, which roll through our towns and villages», of dangerous behaviour defying «the standards that were legislated away in this country 40 years ago» (Urwin 1973, 283). Besides, Herbert Bowden, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs in 1966-67, denounced «skilled, determined and wholly unscrupulous» EEC civil servants who were trying «to wreck the English

education system» (Jessel 1973, 2). British entry into the European Community was seen as a subversive assault on the education system. Bowden stressed that

«they were trying effectively to take over the system and to destroy the autonomy of the chartered professions and the learned institutions...on accepting the European qualifications, we shall find people coming here wholly unqualified to do the work» (Jessel 1973, 2).

Moreover, the alleged efforts of the Europeans to remould British culture were also applied to the fishing industry. The latter was a complex and disastrous story for the British. Like CAP, the fisheries policy had been designed by the Six and carefully insulated from British influence (Moravcsik *ibid*, 282). It was one question on which the Labour was not hopelessly compromised by its own activities in government from 1967 to 1970, and Wilson and his colleagues leaped with special relish to attack the government, driving home the scandalous nature of the deprivation facing in-shore British fishermen at the hands of predatory Frenchmen who, at one stage, seemed likely to be able to fish 'right up to the beach'. The Common Fisheries Policy, which looked like an amazing piece of chicanery, opened the way for foreigners to enter what had always been regarded as British waters. The leftish MP Raphael Tuck had no doubt about this. He claimed that the Europeans «cast *envious* eyes and want to abolish the 12-limit because our waters are full of fish and the EEC water are depleted» (Tuck 1971, 1578). In the late seventies, as John Prescott put it, the starting point of Labour policy was Nye Bevan's vision of Britain: «We are an island of coal, surrounded by a sea of fish». Prescott strongly assented - and behind him lay the majority of the Labour members - saying, «we are determined to preserve those natural resources. Let us make no mistake about what will happen if we surrender them» (Prescott 1978, 310).

Finally, personal accounts about the destructive effects of European capital on small industries, whose future was tied with the welfare of local populations, provoked further denigration against the ruthless Europeans:

«I have been involved in an argument about the special steel industry in Sheffield, which is being *destroyed by German* dumping against which *we have no defences*. Our lack of defences has... aggravated our problems» (Hooley 1978, col.603)

The Joint Honorary Secretary of the Labour Committee for Europe - an organisation of the social democratic wing of the Labour party - stated that, throughout that period «there always had been quite a strong anti-feeling, a populist anti-European feeling ‘we do not like the foreigners, especially French’ etc.» (Stephenson 1993, 402). In this respect, the anti-alien feeling and the racialisation of the European movement of labour dispels simplistic notions that race politics in Britain is one based on black/white relations and on movements and identifications of ‘others’ from the immediate imperial experience. This misconception of migration has generated a specific political discourse and set of meanings, which have equated immigrants with ‘black’ people (Miles and Kay 1994, 17). This view does not give due recognition to other ways in which labour became racialised and shows a lack of understanding of the functioning of many aspects of British social, economic, political and cultural history (Lunn 2000, 111). In this way, we fail to dislodge whiteness from its centrality and authority (Dyer 2000, 542).

4.5 Conclusion

In short, the above analysis of the Labour party’s restricted view of Britishness revealed that national identity cannot be defined irrespective of forces which transcend and defy boundaries. Global economic crises, movements of labour and capital provoke and lead to the redefinition of national borders. The state policies adopted to control and manage these forces involved the reassertion of the national essence and the exclusion of those elements, which threatened it. The national populist vision of Little Englanderism of the Labour party’s New Left was not defined only by the ‘rights of the people’ and the state socialism in one country; but also by the exclusion and racialisation of the European ‘alien’. This section contextualises

reified meanings of 'whiteness' in the power relations and economic structures of the time. The object of the party's racist responses and negative construction was not just black immigrants who threatened to overturn the social norms of the British society, but also the 'white' Europeans who were perceived as illegitimate claimants of the national welfarism.

In this sense, if race was for Labour one of the elements in this wider crusade to 'clean up' Britain in the late sixties, in the following years it became the means of rolling up the map of progressive liberalism and turning the clock of history back to the times when the world was safe for ordinary Englishmen, free from foreign, at least European, entanglements. As the analysis of the party's discourse exhibited, in both cases, the 'other' held together Britain in a changed global context. Likewise, the following chapter will demonstrate that the European destiny of the country has been equally dependent on the foreigners.

CHAPTER 5

BRITAIN IN EUROPE

5.1 Introduction

The key question being asked of the party's positive approach to Europe under the New Labour government in the late nineties - the first Labour government for a generation - has been whether this is New Labour, New Europe or New Labour, Old Britain. This chapter will argue that the old certainties of national sovereignty and the 'other' remain stubbornly unchallenged in the party's Europhile discourse.

In his foreign policy mission statement, just two weeks after the 1997 general election, the new Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook stated that the aim of the New Labour government was to make the UK «a leading player in a Europe of independent nation states» (Cook 1997a). At the launch of the UK Presidency of the European Union, Blair called for the creation of a 'people's Europe' and announced that the British government 'shares the goal of a constructive partnership of nations in Europe' (Blair 1997g). Yet, in the aftermath of the Amsterdam Summit in June 1997, the 'leading' rhetoric and the radicalism of the previous two statements gave way to mere nationalism: «Not a single thing we have yielded up...in all the areas - tax, immigration, defence - where the British national interest, the British veto, is secured» (Blair 1997b). It appears that in the party's European approach there is a combination for a medium-sized country like Britain of working with and through the EU, with a more traditional emphasis on retaining sovereignty and independent policies such as border controls and taxation (Hughes and Smith 1998, 95). As Richard Heffernan has also noted, Labour continues to look toward Europe in terms of 'pooling' rather than 'surrendering' sovereignty; it is only European in a 'national' sense, an attitude

reflecting its well-established fidelity to the ways and means of the British state (Heffernan 2000, 397).

The self-proclaimed determination of the New Labour government to be in a 'constructive' way a leading player in Europe has been conditioned by a rather typical British unease with supranational structures. This approach to the nation state comes to defy all those scholars who recently have expressed fears concerning the viability of the nation state and its eventual suppression by supranational and global structures of power.

Hutchinson and Smith (1994) have pointed out that both the concepts of 'nation' and 'Europe' are contested categories. A particular section of the scholarship on nationalism makes more explicit these claims. Theories of postmodernity have argued for the obsolescence of the nation-state and heralded this as opening up potential new spaces for the 'stranger' (Bauman 1990, 239-60). According to this view, the demise of the nation state is imminent through an overwhelming combination of political dependence, economic globalisation, mass communications and cultural hybridisation (Castles et al. 1988, 140-4). Although the modernist paradigm of nationalism remains reticent about the fate of the national state, Eric Hobsbawm (1990) has argued about the dislocation and absorption of the nation states as a result of the «new supranational structuring of the globe». From an interactionist point of view, Albert Melucci (1989) has also suggested that with the crisis and decline of the nation-state, the revival of ethnicity in modern societies is to be expected.

Yet, despite the recurrent power of ethnic nationalism, the international society has remained reluctant to challenge the sovereignty of individual states. Despite being squeezed by the globalisation the nation state still remains a crucial point of reference. As the previous sections made very explicit, the global changes surrounding the position of Britain in the international order provoked the nationalist/racist response from within Labour ranks. There has been a dialectic

between the global and the national in the party discourse. Hall considers that the global is always composed of varieties of articulated particularities (Hall 1991b, 67). As the following analysis will make clear, the issue of immigration more than any other shows that the state has not withered away in the age of late capitalism (Billig 1995, 142). States retain control over immigration and the definition of citizenship. These most important functions of state show little sign of erosion. In particular, within the European Union, national boundaries may be eroded but as internal boundaries have been eroded, so the outer perimeter has been strengthened. Immigration has been a central concern in EU policy. In the face of the New Labour's Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act, 'Fortress Europe' is being constructed in order to keep at bay what in Delors' image becomes the non-Christian, non-European and non-civilised world (Billig *ibid.*, 142).

The rest of this section contains, first, a review of the pro-European attitudes of the main Labour party's pressure groups such as the Fabians and the ILP during the 1940s. In both cases, their European visions were conditioned by the existence of the non-Western 'other' (5.2). Second, an account of the positions held within the pro-European camp during the initial stages of the European debate exhibits that, despite some dissident voices, most of the European-minded MPs appeared to be reluctant to abandon national sovereignty altogether (5.3). Likewise, third, we will see how New Labour, whose leadership is considered to be, for a significant section of the literature, the most 'constructive' pro-European the party ever had (Hughes and Smith 1998; Daniels 1998; Holden 1999a; 2000; Heffernan 2000; 2001), puts the nation at the centre of its European vision which naturally remains of a qualified inter-governmental character (5.4). As a consequence, the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act will make clear that Britain as a 'civilised', European nation is primarily defined by and dependent on the 'non-civilised', non-European world (5.5).

5.2 Europe and the Labour Party's Pressure Groups

When Europe was spoken of within the main pressures groups of the Labour party a variety of constructs were meant in the 1940s. Especially in the late 1940s, when the first steps towards European organisation were made (see Churchill's Zurich speech calling for a 'United States of Europe' (1946), the Statute of Council of Europe (1949) and the Schuman Plan (1950), to speak of Europe could mean many different mutually conflicting notions.

The reformist Fabian Society and the ethical ILP (though disaffiliated from Labour since 1932) played a formative role - especially the former - in the configuration of three distinct approaches to Europe within the confines of the parliamentary 'Europe Group': firstly, a functional approach which focused upon economic relations with other Western European nations. The Attlee government rejected the Schuman Plan on these grounds because any alliance with Europe would involve compromises with non-socialist or undemocratic elements and endanger Labour's socialist programme. The second route taken within pro-European ranks was the federal approach. Labour's federalists, including Mackay and C. Sawcross, were small in number, and accordingly, their influence was diminished. The third European group was the fundamentalists. Support for trans-Continental European political and economic union across Europe was the dominant cause of the supporters of the fundamental position, such as William Warbey and Sydney Silverman. This vision was often called a United Socialist States of Europe (USSE) (Minion 1999, 6-7 & 170-303). Among the three, the functional one that defended national sovereignty and the nation-state's privileges became dominant.

In particular, the Fabian Society acted as a debating chamber for Labour throughout the whole of the 1940s, providing valuable space for European ideas to be formulated and defended, both by opponents and supporters of the Attlee government. Support for functional, federal and fundamental positions were all evident in the post-

war years. Already, in 1916 Leonard Woolf had developed the concept of a 'world government' for establishing a supranational machinery which could prevent future conflicts (Porter 1984, 59-61). Inescapably, during the Second World War, and even later, federalism was the only possible guarantee against war. For instance, during the summer months of 1940 Barbara Wootton, a leading member of Federal Union and D. N. Pritt MP debated 'Socialism and Federation'. Wootton stressed in *Fabian Quarterly* that a federation based on Anglo-Franco-German co-operation was the only force capable of eliminating war between national communities (Minion *ibid*, 177). Likewise, Austen Albu, William Warbey, Patrick Gordon Walker and Beatrice Kelly wrote *Labour's Next Step: A Wartime Strategy*, which was published by the Fabian Society and argued for Europe as a single unity where the powers of the nation state were to be limited (Albu et al. 1940, 3, 9, 12). Yet, within the Fabian Society primacy role was given for economic matters over political developments.

At the same time, Europe was perceived as an entity consisted of two different in cultural and political terms communities. As part of the Fabians' Research Series of publications Doreen Warriner examined the question of Eastern Europe post-war. *Eastern Europe After Hitler* sought to investigate the different economic and social developments of the eastern and western parts of the European continent, between which 'there [was] a real division, the outcome of centuries of differences in evolution'. Within Eastern Europe Warriner suggested there existed: low standards of living; overpopulation; low levels of labour productivity; and a lack of technical progress (Warriner 1940, 4-5). It is tempting to see this categorisation of East as economically 'backward', as part of the post-war ideological justification for the defence of 'Western civilisation' within a divided Europe. Interestingly, Warriner listed Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union as the former. Whereas, Britain, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, France and Belgium comprised the latter. Warriner's categorisation of Eastern Europe's economic structures as primitive implied that the latter had in turn made political

instability endemic. As Minion (1999) notes, Warriner's investigation of East Europe, and the 'tight' definition of what comprised Western Europe, pre-dated the post-war developments which eventually led to the acceptance of the division of Europe by the Attlee government and the Labour Left.

The notion of the existence of a politically and economically 'advanced' Western group of nations affected the subsequent European visions, and especially the federalist one. The incompatibility of the different ways of life was a significant reason for their diminished influence.

During 1944, the Fabian International Bureau (FIB) formed a study group to examine and publish a pamphlet on International Political Authority (IPA). As part of the Society's Research Series the group produced *Labour and Europe: The Need for a Socialist Strategy*. The authors - Albu, Parker, Warriner, Paul Yates and Lillian Chase - sought to develop a socialist foreign policy with particular reference to Europe. A Political Authority was envisaged by the pamphlet's authors with power passing from individual nation-states to a supranational body - it was not though indicated which parts of a government's control were to be surrendered. Nevertheless, background papers written by Woolf and Noel-Baker for the IPA Study Group suggest that members favoured a functional authority as the only viable alternative federal union was deemed impractical, as democracy was not yet sufficiently widespread in Europe. The issues raised in *Labour and Europe*, particularly Labour's leading role for the Continent, the preference for functional developments, and generally what should constitute a socialist foreign policy, were to set the tone for the Fabian Society, and of course mirrored the wider debate within the Labour party in the post-war years (Minion *ibid*, 187). Furthermore, charged by the FIB with preparing a statement on 'British foreign policy in relation to available resources and manpower', G. D. H. Cole argued for Britain being the leader of a 'Western Group' of nations along supranational lines- but only within the economic sphere (Cole 1946, 3-6). His criteria for inclusion in such a group were, among others, democratic participation and

consent of a country's electorate (capacity for citizenship); the sound development of limited economic resources (capacity for economic development). It becomes apparent that the Western Group of nations was primarily defined against those politically and economically backward non-Western nations. A similar point was made by Allan Flanders (1948) with regard to Western Union. Flanders hoped that WU, based upon the economic co-operation, could be a major factor for peace defending democracy.

In addition, Mackay, a long time keen federalist, argued within the *Fabian News* during September 1948 for a thoroughgoing merger of national sovereignty and the establishment of a new state with power to plan economic resources of Western Europe. He also went further and suggested that 'political union' of the European nations receiving aid as a result of the Marshall Plan was urgently required. A constituent assembly should be convened by the end of 1948, continued Mackay, as 'a European Federation' was the only guarantee against the 'economic and political ruin with which the states of Western Europe are today confronted' (Mackay 1948, 38). Yet, Mackay's article provoked a number of critical replies. On the grounds of the existence of differential political and economic variables within the Continent, Thomas Balogh and E. T. Lewis argued that only 'economic collaboration' was viable, as the nations of Western Europe did not share the necessary 'similar social structures' required for successful political union. For Balogh the 'real third solution of combining economic democracy with political liberty' was the only answer to Western Europe's problems. Lewis stressed the pertinent, and oft-raised point by many on the Labour Left, that Britain's political stability would be jeopardised by the fragile situation in the communist deputies (Minion *ibid*, 202).

From the outset the Society exhibited a propensity to concentrate on matters of economics, and subsequently, calls for European unity stressed the primacy of economic and political stability and inter-governmental co-operation. Dissident voices were apparent. Warbey (1947; 1948) and Woolf (1947), following Monck/Whyte

socialist foreign policy thesis (1946), for example, envisaged a ‘mediating’ third force based on the fundamentalist position (a wider economic Europe of the Continent allied with the colonies which could act as a peace-keeping body in international relations) whereas Mackay held firm to a federal vision for Western Europe. Yet, these federal visions could not supersede the perceived division between the politically and economically advanced Western and the relatively backward Eastern Europe.

Likewise, the ILP initially saw Europe as an economic unity, which followed from the ILP’s view of the negative attributes of the nation-state that had caused the First World War. Integral strand of the party’s international philosophy was its commitment to pacifism (Laybourn 1997; Pelling 1954; James, et al. 1992). The party had no attachment to any nation-state, including Britain. ‘All such entities’, argued Brockway, ‘were based on the capitalist mode of production, hence the proclamation of concepts such as a central federal European authority, international authorities for the utilities, transport, banking and heavy industries’ (Brockway 1942, 25). The ILP’s vision of a united Europe would appear to encompass all of the nations of the Continent, including Britain and Germany in a fully trans-Continental United Socialist States of Europe (USSE) (Brockway 1942, 10-11).

However, an important part of the ILP’s version of a united Europe also recognised the differences between nations, for example language and culture. Hence, the ILP saw Britain as head of a Western European bloc reinforced by their colonial Empires. In this way, the ILP’s adherence to the USSE in the guise of a peace-keeping neutralist ‘third force’ (‘World Socialist Commonwealth’, as Brockway (1940) called it) rested on the assumption that Britain would be part with a somewhat special position; a view that reflected both the country’s imperial past and manufacturing capabilities. As Minion (1999) tells us, Britain would be a leading economic component in a USSE because of its industrial heritage, current capacity and the obvious wartime devastation of Continental industries. The implied division

of industrial and agrarian sectors of the Continent echoed the West-East partition found within Fabian circles, such as that propounded by Warriner.

As a consequence, this suggestion of a West European construct was revealing and a clear move away from a trans-continental approach previously voiced within party publications. The suggestion that the majority of the British Left was favouring a 'European federation' in the form of that trans-Continental USSE was extremely doubtful (Minion *ibid*, 275). The Open Letter to Attlee (October 1946), the King's Speech amendment (November 1946) and Keep Left (May 1947) were part of the trend of the third force, which comprised an independent group of nations in Europe and the Colonies (Schneer *ibid*). It was not though clear whether the desired peace-keeping neutralist 'Third Force' in the form of the USSE was to be based upon Western Europe, or all of the Continent (Minion *ibid*, 275). By 1950, the ILP argued that there was no great support for federalism within the Labour movement, and that moreover it favoured the functional approach to solve Europe's current problems. As Minion points out, national considerations, which arose from the party's ideological milieu, would appear to have eventually been given primacy within the ILP's internationalist perspective (Minion *ibid*, 279). Previous adherence to an immediate and full-scale USSE did not show any approval of the gradual approach favoured by the Attlee government and by 1950 the majority of the Labour left. Europe was therefore to be democratic which centred USSE upon Western Europe, rather than the trans-continental ideal, which the ILP had previously supported.

As the previous concise account of the European ideas espoused by the main Labour party's pressure groups reveals, the majority of the left increasingly gave vocal support to functionalism within Western Europe. The latter in turn is defined against a politically and economically backward Eastern Europe. Any residue of European-ness on the Left became a subterranean presence in the case of the USSE. However, this increasing marginalisation of Labour's Europeans does not in any way

downplay the significance of Labour's European ideas and its impact on the attitudes and policies endorsed during the European debates from the early 1960s onwards.

5.3 Britain in Europe: The Rescue of the Post-War Nation

Raymond Aron reflected in the nineteen sixties, that 'the old nations will live in the hearts of men, and love of the European nation is not yet born' (Smith 1998, 217). Indeed, more economic pragmatism than diligent construction of Europeanness was the main consideration of the pro-European faction of the party since the first application for Britain's entry. Although there were dissident voices, the majority of the Labour MPs favoured the functional approach.

The resilience of the traditional national reflexes should be viewed once more in the wider canvas of world politics. The supranationalist quest of the Common Market compelled the party to rethink the nature of the nation-state in post-imperial times. In fact, the basic consideration of the anti- and pro-Europeans was the wider geopolitical and economic landscape of the post-war period, which had created conditions that defied national boundaries, inflicted Britain with economic crises, and deprived her of her traditional world links. As seen earlier, both camps shared common goals; the rescue of the nation and the maintenance of Britain's world role pretences. Unlike the anti-Europeans, the pro-Europeans considered that the rescue of the nation should be done not out but in Europe. Labour pro-European MPs such as Ivor Richard and Austen Albu maintained that «our influence inside the Communities and within an eventual political unity will be greater, particularly over those events which, if they do go wrong, are no longer under our direct control and will obviously affect our standard of living» (Richard 1971, col.2151; Albu 1971, col.1157).

Alain Bihr (1992) has identified a crisis in the post-war west European nation-state's capacity to manage its political-economic space that is due to the impact of economic internationalisation. The nation state was not regarded as the monopolist of effective decision-making on social, economic and military issues. The pro-

European camp arrived at the conclusion that «the present frontiers are entirely out of date and far too restrictive having regard to modern communications» (Hynd 1961, col.1563). John Hynd also noted that, although nobody wanted to give up any sovereignty, Britain had already «given up a lot of sovereignty to the United Nations, to EFTA, to GATT, to WEU, to NATO, to OEEC and so forth» (Hynd 1961, col.1563). So, the question of sovereignty «should not stick in our gullet» Hynd added. National sovereignty was not lost as a result of the membership of any of the above international organisations. In this way, Europe was perceived by European-minded Labour MPs in mere economic pragmatic terms. It was maintained that in a Europe of interdependence and not independence common problems ought to be tackled jointly. It was Europhile's conviction that Europe had questions to answer which could not be dealt with in any one country, and that there should be a European government and Parliament to handle these problems (Woodburn 1961, col.1521). The national instrumentalisation of the European idea, as Timothy Garton Ash (2001) has called it, was the essence of the Europhile MPs' arguments.

As a matter of fact, at the time of the first application for British membership in the early sixties, whereas the Labour leadership thought that Britain's world role would be secured by not merging her sovereignty with the Common Market and by retaining her ties with the Commonwealth (see the section on the imperial space), Roy Jenkins, who had resigned from Labour's front bench economic team on the European issue, stressed the need for Britain to redirect her exports away from the sterling area: «It is not the question of how much we gain in preference in Europe as against what we may lose in the Commonwealth...it is a question of giving our whole export effort a new strength which it has been so badly lacking» (Jay and Jenkins 1962, 10). Roy Jenkins claimed that the rapid rise in national incomes, the highly successful nationalised industries and the excellent family allowances in France, and the very developed system of retirement benefits in Germany «make anything that we have in this country look a disgrace» (R. Jenkins 1961, col.1587). If harmonisation of social

systems and the equalisation of wages and conditions were to mean that Britain could introduce a pension scheme as good as that of the Germans, and family allowances as high as those of the French, then, the social democrats of the party noted, that would indeed be a giant step forward in welfare state benefits and costs. David Owen maintained during the six-days long debate on the Conservative government's negotiated terms for Britain's entry in the early seventies that «a Labour government which is returned to power will find it easier to exercise the socialist priorities in social spending, in spending on health, education and welfare, which all of us in this party want, if we are within the EEC» (Owen 1971, 1638).

However, the production of a collective identity within the Euro-space is difficult to materialise in these instrumental terms. As Smith puts it, to pool sovereignties is not the same thing as fusing cultures or amalgamating identities: and the creation of a European super state is not the same as forming a 'supra-nation' of Europe (Smith 1995, 125). True, unlike the federalism of Mackay and Shawcross in the post-war period, for the Labour Europhiles of the 1960s and 1970s, 'federation' meant a looser idea of international organisation and not necessarily an imposed centralisation (Mulley 1960, col.1150). Furthermore, the emergence of fundamentalist and ethical positions similar to those that ILP put forward for a USSE in the 1940s and those voiced from the Fabian circles failed to supersede the predominant functional line. For instance, Europe was seen as «a new force for world peace» (Davies 1971, col. 1569) and «reconciliation» (MacLennan 1971, col.1967); «a third force» based upon the «brotherhood of man» towards a «world government» (Edwards 1962, 184; Hynd 1967, col. 321; Heffer 1967, 281); a «united Europe [allied] with the Commonwealth» (Woodburn 1961, col.1523; Dell 1971, col.2180). Yet, as it was also pointed out, «the supra-national authority can make the decisions, but still they have to be carried out by the individual nations» (Woodburn 1962, col.1040). In this respect, Kellas (1998) is right to point out that supranationalism

appears a weak competitor to nationalism and usually takes the limited form of economic common markets, intergovernmental institutions and military alliances.

In this sense, Roy Jenkins assured his party colleagues that there was nothing in the Treaty of Rome to prevent a Labour government from nationalising any industry they liked (Jenkins 1962a, 216). Besides, assuming the post of the Home Secretary in 1976, he did not consider abandoning the right of the nation state «to maintain a strict control over immigration» (Jenkins 1976, col.1548). Jenkins, along with his more European-minded colleagues adopted a trade-off between two competing objectives which became the guideline for the first New Labour government in the late 1990s: first pooling or surrendering sovereignty through political and economic integration in order to secure national prosperity, and second, retaining sovereignty in order to maintain the nation's autonomy (Heffernan 2001, 185). Smith (1995a, ch.4) and Billig (1995, 141) have argued that in the post-1945 era, the political and economic dependence of most states has been accompanied by a huge expansion of internal state power and penetration in the social and cultural spheres, notably in such fields as mass education, health, social welfare and border controls. These were not intended to lie outside nation-state's authority.

For the majority of the pro-European members of the party the right of the national government to implement its own policies would not be essentially challenged by a supranational authority. Prominent figures of the pro-European faction such as Shirley Williams, George Brown, John P. Mackintosh were reluctant to admit that national sovereignty was completely outdated as being part of the European Community. Their allegedly European 'internationalism' was put in purely national terms. For instance, Shirley Williams made clear that «we want to keep British sovereignty, and to set up a genuine Socialist Movement in Europe» (Williams 1961, 219). The leading voice of the pro-Europeans in the nineteen sixties, George Brown also stressed «the paramount need to protect our own internal planning and social capacity here» (Brown 1961, 227), and that there was not very much evidence

that «members of the six find it difficult to have an independent foreign policy because they belong to EEC» (Brown 1967a, 284). One of the prominent social democratic voices in the early seventies whose life was cut short tragically a few years later, John Mackintosh, defied the cries of the Labour antis who saw in Britain's entry the imminent end of the nation state and 'a thousand years of history'. Instead, he stated that «it cannot be said that Britain would lose its independence and sovereignty by becoming part of a more powerful independent Europe». On the contrary, he added, «in joining the Common Market we extend it and develop its potentiality so that we can find for our country a direction and purpose» (Mackintosh 1971, cols. 1192-94). As leading commentators have argued, the motif of the leading pro-Europeans throughout all these decades has been very familiar: our membership is vital, our assistance is imperative - but nothing you really care about will change (Young 1998, 293). Moravscik has also noted that on supranational institutions the pro-Europeans at the time remained sceptical of the increased powers for the European Parliament and Commission (Moravscik *ibid*, 282).

It is right to point out then that the Luxembourg Compromise, which preserved the right of national veto over essential national interests, did not serve only the Tribunate Anglo-Gaullists of the party but also strengthened the Europhile argumentation (Young 1998, 184). David Marquand, a voluble pro-European at the time, has argued that Labour social democrats were as zealous in their commitment to the British tradition of autonomous executive power and to the doctrine of absolute parliamentary sovereignty which accompanied and sustained it as the socialists of the party (Marquand 2000a).

Although the current record of the New Labour government's European engagement policy has surpassed those of the previous post-war British administrations, its attachment to the nation state has remained equally undiminished.

5.4 The Paradox of New Labour

As the previous comments have suggested, Europeanisation is an acknowledgment by party representatives that national actors and individual states alone can no longer be conceived of as the appropriate political units for either resolving key policy problems or managing effectively a broad range of public functions. In the face of a globalised, inter-dependent world New Labour's Europeanisation, as revealed in its policy initiatives, has bowed to national considerations in its endeavours to defend British privileges.

Heffernan (2001) has argued that two key perspectives can be identified as underpinning Europeanisation since 1945: the impact of economic and political globalisation and the internationalisation of decision-taking, which increases interdependence, encouraging regional forms of governance; and the pursuit of national interests and preferences through interstate bargaining conducted within European institutions, as reinforced by the supranational consequences that follow. Globalisation and its various impacts are thereby deemed inexorable; and because there is nothing to be done to stop it, it becomes almost a virtue in itself. Through the EU, national governments seek to 'effectively pool sovereignty in order to enhance, through collective action, their control over external forces' (Heffernan 2001, 183). The impact of a deepening internalisation of economic and political processes is thus felt in the need for co-operation arising from recognition of increasing interdependence. Nation-states, slowly acknowledging the possibilities of co-dependence with others, are encouraged to explore further forms of informal and increasingly formal institutionalised political co-operation. From this perspective, economic globalisation is deemed to promote political globalisation by facilitating a degree of internationalisation of decision-making in the form of international regimes and quasi-supranational institutions like the EU. If economic inter-dependence requires co-operation, it is also encouraged by the belief that nation-states have

become less independent and more inter-dependent. When globalisation is perceived to weaken the autonomy of the nation-state it becomes a factor in encouraging European co-operation and deepening Europeanisation. If, according to Alan Milward, the strength of the EU 'lies in the weakness of the nation state', William Wallace is also correct to suggest that the EU's weakness 'lies in the strength of national and sub-national identities' (Milward 1992, 446; Wallace 1991, 46). This is a key factor in European integration, both prompting Europeanisation and simultaneously qualifying it.

Thus, for New Labour and its precursors, the ideal of a federal Europe, one governed by a non-national, technocratic elite and structured around non-national geopolitical concerns, is a non-issue (Heffernan 2001, 184). What the remaining section will argue, against the background of the globalised world, the New Labour's Europeanism should be placed in the context of its continuing 'Britishness'.

In particular, like in the 1960s and 1970s, throughout the 1990s, within the Labour party it became common sense that in an era marked by the overwhelming impact of the globalised economies, the systems constructed around the nation state were called into question (Blair 2000f). It was accepted that globalisation changed the nature of the nation state as power became more diffuse and borders more porous (Blair 1995, 20). According to the guru of New Labour, Anthony Giddens, technological changes have reduced the power and capacity of government to control a domestic economy free from external influence. The global economy and the accompanying processes of technological change swamped nascent forms of governance (Giddens 1999, 25; 2000, 123). Of course, this is not to say that the nation state becomes obsolete - on the contrary, a prime goal of Third Way politics has been to reassert national identity and national purpose against a global backdrop (Giddens 1999, 26). As said earlier, Europe emerged as the context in which the nation state would reassert its influence and capacities on a series of issues, and not the context in which the national identity would be 'absorbed' or 'dislocated' as has been suggested

(Hobsbawm 1990). New Labour envisages, in opposition to the previous British administrations and the party leaderships, a Europe, which is not an identity-crushing and centralising nation-state but instead «the nation state's rational response to the modern world» (Blair 1998d). The nation-state has been a point of reference in the construction of the European identity of Labour Britishness. This became feasible by acknowledging a more flexible view of sovereignty.

From the outset, the New Labour government considered that an absolute definition of national sovereignty in regard to Europe has done much harm to the British people. Throughout the nineties, Labour argued that it was the Tories who had failed the nation, especially over Europe by standing on the sidelines. Under the Conservative government, it was argued, Britain had become «the sick man of Europe, the thick man of Europe, the dirty man of Europe» (Ford 1990, 183). The maintenance of absolute sovereignty was not a sign of power or independence anymore, but an indication of weakness, according to party representatives. On the other hand, the loss of sovereignty is out of the question. Although Tony Blair has made clear that «we as a country, our destiny, our future, lies in being a major European nation» (Blair 1998g), this did not imply, in his view, «a wholesale destruction of sovereignty» (Blair 1993b, col.1100). One of the preconditions for Britain being member of the European 'family of nations' has been the need to retain her sovereignty: «Integration where necessary, decentralisation everywhere else» (Blair 1998e, 19). The Blair government remains eager to preserve national autonomy and sovereignty wherever possible in looking towards Europe in terms of 'pooling' rather than 'surrendering' sovereignty (Heffernan 2001, 182). That is why there have been continual reassurances that national and constitutional characteristics will not be overridden by being a member of the European Union: «We want a Europe where there are national differences, where we hold many of our policies in common, but keep our distinct, separate identities», as the Prime Minister said at the

Warsaw Stock Exchange (Blair 2000e). This is how Tony Blair has summed up New Labour's renovated view of national sovereignty in light of the European question.

As a consequence, New Labour considered the growth of the European citizenship a complementary to the existing national citizenships. Explaining Labour's contemporary Europeanism, Blair said to the House of Commons in February 1999, that «to be pro-British, you do not have to be anti-European» - and vice versa. By taking a flexible view of sovereignty, as Hughes and Smith (1998) have pointed out, in comparison to the previous administrations, the New Labour government has adopted a new, positive tone towards the EU. And recently, as Blair and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder wrote in their common statement-manifesto on the Third Way/Die Neue Mitte, on the eve of the 1999 European elections,

«the politics of the New Centre and Third Way is about addressing the concerns of people who live and cope with societies undergoing rapid change - both winners and losers. In this newly emerging world people want politicians who approach issues without ideological preconceptions and who, applying their values and principles, search for practical solutions to their problems through honest well-constructed and pragmatic policies» (Blair and Schroeder 1999).

The British leader and his German counterpart recognised that the people's concerns transcended the narrow confines of the nation state, whether one thinks of trade and investment, environmental pollution, international crime and drugs, or peace and security. They deemed that member states had little future tackling these concerns by acting solely on their own. But by acting together in a co-operative spirit and pooling some elements of sovereignty, politics can still influence the course of events, which would otherwise elude the grasp of democratic action. A series of policy initiatives reflected the above thoughts.

First, the issue of subsidiarity. 'A People's Europe', 'Giving Europe Back to the People', 'Europe working for People' were not just populist shibboleths used by Cook and Blair before and during the British Presidency of the EU in 1998 (Blair 1997g; Cook 1997b; 1997c). Although the principle of subsidiarity, which appeared in Article 3b of the Maastricht Treaty and required that decisions should be taken at the

lowest level of government, applied only to relationships between member states and the European Union, and not between governments and subnational governments (Bogdanor 1999, 277), for New Labour it has been the structural precondition for the Europe of nation states. «Subsidiarity» Blair says, «is making Europe work, keeping it in touch with the people of Europe» (Blair 1999h). Echoing the calls of the German *Länder* and the leader of the government of the Catalan autonomous region in Spain, Jordi Pujol, Peter Hain (1993, col.554) and Tony Blair (2000d) have sought a bicameral European Parliament with a second chamber consisting of members of national Parliaments and regional assemblies as a countervailing force on the enormously powerful centralising tendencies of the EC. In this respect, Kershner (1998) is right to point out that it is becoming increasingly obvious that running parallel with Europeanisation, transnationalism and globalisation is a growing preoccupation with regionalism, particularism and the meaning and location of 'self'.

Further, on social policies such as drugs, crime and environment the New Labour government have taken initiatives and assumed joint operations with other European countries. At the European Council at Tampere (October 1999) the British proposal that the cornerstone of judicial co-operation in bringing criminals to justice should be mutual recognition of court decisions, rather than the harmonisation of laws, was adopted unanimously. On combating cross-border crime, at the United Kingdom's suggestion, there was to be a new Task Force of European Police chiefs working alongside EuroPol, to plan and organise joint police operations across Europe (Blair 1999j, col.253). Finally, the 'Environmental Project Development Manual' for Central and Eastern Europe developed by the British Know-How Fund and the European Union's Phare programme was an indication that New Labour's constructive engagement had far reaching effects (Cook 1997f), putting, thus, into practice the enlarged vision of the European Community. In addition, the 'European nation' as a «civilised continent» has been imagined sharing common values such as «human rights social justice, liberty, democracy, and tolerance» (Blair 2000e) - on the

issue of 'values', see also chapter 6. The latter are perceived as the basis of the cooperation between the members of the EU on a series of issues in which a notion of a European citizenship lurked. However, the implementation of those policies, which were expected to enhance the sense of common citizenship on the European basis, has been subjected to national considerations.

First, one of the first measures of the New Labour government was to give expression to citizens' rights. The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights to the British law in 1998 was «to give further effect to rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights» (HMSO 1998f). It was alleged to be a serious blow to the defenders of the ancient tradition of the English common law tradition of liberty and the sacred myth of parliamentary sovereignty (Young 1997a, 19; Philips 1997, 30). Despite the whiggish reflexes, even within the New Labour government (Verkaik 2000, 12), a Bill of Rights constitutes «a healthy antidote to the centralising tendency of Whitehall», ending the «tyranny of majority» as Blair has said, apparently influenced by the liberals Toqueville and Mill (White 1995, 1). It would enable the British to protect fundamental rights in their own courts rather than going to Strasbourg. The Convention on Human Rights allegedly promoted an «active citizenship», in essence, «the British way to champion civic engagement and local community initiative» (Brown 2000a, 12; HMSO 1998f). Yet, as Mather has noted, the Human Rights Act has more symbolic than substantial significance. Governmental autonomy is respected within the wording of the Act, and indeed the government has already exercised its right under the Article 15 (1) of the Convention to exclude the UK from the clause 5(3) which restricts the time a suspect may be held in captivity in respect of terrorist activities (Mather 2000, 182).

More important, the Social Charter, (the Social Policy Agreement), did not imply just common standards of welfare and working conditions in the Community, but also common citizenship since, as was argued, «the primary source of Community strength, the single most important element in our wealth creation, is people»

(Cunningham 1993, col.407). Under the Conservative government the British people were denied rights that the rest of the European citizens enjoyed. New Labour on coming to power, signed the Social Charter on the grounds of citizenship - though with reservations as will become clear below. Cook said, «we do not accept that the British people should be second class citizens with less rights than employees on the Continent». The Foreign Secretary also noted that this was «a democratic response» to the wishes of the British people and the interests of British employees» (Macaskill and Black 1997, 1). The Maastricht Treaty created a symbolic 'European citizenship' whose only substantive policy was a Spanish proposal to permit EC citizens to vote in local elections wherever they reside (Moravcsik *ibid*, 455). According to Blair, since citizenship followed entirely naturally from the fact that people were given certain rights and obligations in the Community, the Social Charter was seen as an enabling mechanism. It gave ordinary people a sense that they have, according to the Third Way language, some «stake» in the EU (Black 1997, 3). Yet, the notion of an incipient common European citizenship stops here.

The politics of rights go together with the politics of responsibility in Labour's *enlightened patriotism* (Blair 1999d) - see more on New Labour's notion of enlightened patriotism in chapter 8. The allocation of rights as a result of the social charter should not constrain the liberty of, or imply additional burdens for, the business but entail duties on the part of the recipients to adjust to the new economy according to the American-influenced New Labour's thinking. Brown was explicit before the elections that Labour would block any new regulations brought forward under the social chapter that were seen to burden business (Webster 1996, 8). Also, Tony Blair was arguing in a letter to ten thousand British businessmen and women (July 16, 1996) that 'he would use the national veto to prevent Brussels imposing backdoor social security burdens on British industry (Brown and Coates 1996, 161).

In this sense, as long as national veto overrides the notion of European citizenship, the existing national citizenships cannot be transcended. The possibility of

constructing a European identity within the Community is rather slim if we take as the model of supranational identity the continuing appeal of national identity. This model will not do, unless, as Schlesinger notes, we suppose a substantial transfer of identification to the supranational level (Schlesinger 1992, 14). On the part of the New Labour government this remains an illusive prospect. «Diversity», and not homogenisation, as Tony Blair said to the French Assembly, «becomes the source of our strength» (Blair 1998d). In fact, as Hix (2000, 52) and Heffernan (2001, 181) have argued, although New Labour government can lay claim to being Britain's most pro-European administration - excepting only Edward Heath's government (1970-74) - it is only moderately more 'integrationist' than the last Conservative government. Labour remains 'British' first and 'European' second.

In fact, the issues of border controls, the immigration and asylum policies touch a sensitive aspect of the Labour party's own view of national identity: «Because of our long historical and cultural ties with other parts of the world, it is important to retain control of our own immigration policy», Cook has insisted (Cook 1997d, col.910). Labour's desire was to keep as tight a check as possible on migration from the EU by maintaining internal border controls. Labour's position was already summarised in their Policy Handbook of 1996:

«Will Labour join other European countries in abolishing border controls to allow people to travel freely within the EU? No, Labour believes that immigration border controls are a matter for the UK government and parliament to decide. We have no intention of abolishing our border controls»
(Labour Party 1996a, 3.13.3.)

So, in Amsterdam in June 1997, the UK retained legal security for the frontier controls, and control over immigration, asylum and visas. «As an island country», the former Minister for Europe Joyce Quin said, «we feel it makes sense for us to do this» (Quin 1999c). The distinctive geographical position of Britain, her worldwide links and subsequently historical patterns of migration led her to adopt different policing traditions from those of the other European countries. As Hughes

and Smith (1998) have noted, Britain remains on this issue outside of the continental consensus. After all, according to Home Secretary, the distinctiveness of a nation state is an issue that the European Union ought to respect (Straw 1997, 22). On issues of national political sovereignty British policy preferences have been relatively stable over time. This explains why Blair will continue to oppose giving more powers to the EU institutions and extending QMV with EU enlargement, as these policies would lead to more movement from the status quo than Britain favours.

At the European Summit in Nice in December 2000, enlargement was one of the main issues for discussion. The previous Conservative government favoured enlargement of the EU because it lessened the pressure for deeper integration (Holden 2000, 169). Instead, the New Labour government saw EU enlargement as an historic opportunity to bring stability and prosperity to the greater part of the European Continent (Quin 1999a) - see New Labour's views on enlargement as a process of development for the applicant nations in chapter 10. The Nice Summit was regarded as one of the most important meeting of EU leaders in years and aimed to pave the way for the entry of some 13 new members. However, Tony Blair seemed for the most part preoccupied with his famous six "red lines" (national vetoes) on matters such as tax, social security harmonisation, border controls, immigration, defence and Treaty amendments (White and Black 2000). In this respect, in the British government there appears no overall political strategy for enlargement nor does have a clear view of the political role or institutional structure of an EU with 25 or 30 members. In the past, British governments of all parties have chosen to follow or object to European initiatives rather than lead or suggest them. Yet, while pro-European attitudes now run deeper in Britain than ever before, New Labour's position on enlargement does not reflect a positive endorsement of things European. The projection of a European citizenship and identity presupposes a long-standing social and political practice (Schlesinger 1992, 16-7). In the New Labour case, as will become clear below, this cannot be feasible by just assuming a paternalistic attitude

towards the applicant counties, imposing its own American-inspired agenda of economic reforms and remaining on the margins of the most important project of the European Union, the single currency.

When New Labour came to power, the government committed itself in principle to the benefits that a single currency would have in the single market: «In principle, a successful single currency within a single European market would be of benefit to Europe and Britain» (Brown 1997c, col.583). For Tony Blair the issue has not been a controversial one provided the economic benefits are clear. Economic pragmatism and not idealism has been the essence of the argument. «It is not a matter of Europe, it is a matter of Britain...it is economic union and what is good for British jobs, industry, investment is the test that I will apply...», the New Labour leader has constantly emphasised (Jones and Sylvester 1999; Blair 1997d; Blair 1998a; Blair 1998c, col.573). Likewise, Brown, in his statement in the Commons in October 1997 viewed British membership of the European Monetary Union in merely technical terms:

«If a single currency would be good for British jobs, British business and future prosperity, it is right in principle to join. The constitutional issue is a factor in the decision, but it is not an overriding one. Rather, it signifies that, in order for monetary union to be right for Britain, the economic benefit should be clear and unambiguous» (Brown 1997d, col.584)

Nevertheless, the government has explicitly admitted that «to share a common monetary policy with other states does represent a major pooling of economic sovereignty» (HMSO 2000, 3). This is why the Labour government has not yet entered the single currency, declaring in favour of monetary union only in ‘principle’ not in ‘practice’, pledging to join only when it is in Britain’s interest to do so. In fact, as Sassoon (1999) has argued, the key factor here has been the low level of business taxation in Britain. The single market under a single currency will dictate some convergence on taxation. That is why we have economic as well as monetary union. The distinctive competitive advantages of British industry are low wages, low

taxes, weak trade unions, flexible working force, limited job security. One way of defending national capitalism is to ensure that harmonisation does not eliminate these advantages. The New Labour leadership rules out harmonisation, as already seen. Labour is now committed to a high wage, high skill economy, and this requires cooperating with business (Sassoon 1999, 24-5). In this respect, according to Hughes and Smith (1998, 103), the New Labour government remains a pragmatic European without an overall vision and without being a dominant player.

As a consequence, critics of New Labour have accused it of nationalism over the euro and have pointed out that behind its apparent economic considerations and tactical reluctance lurk political and not merely technical considerations. More specifically, articles written in credible financial papers such as the *Financial Times* have tirelessly pointed out that the set of plausible economic reasons that have been advanced publicly by the Treasury as to why they would not contemplate taking Britain into the European single currency until 2002 were all moveable feasts (Fishman 1998, 101). Synchronising economic cycles, the strength of sterling and flexible labour markets would not and should not deter a government, which was determined for political reasons to participate in EMU. Also, the critics continue, the manifestly weak economic positions of Italy and Portugal have not deterred their governments from insisting on their places in the first wave (Crawford 1996). So, it is assumed that the principal unspoken but perfectly clear reason for not participating in the first wave is that Blair had not yet reconciled himself to the loss of sovereignty. In short, as Fishman has put it, 'he has not yet accepted the radical structural adjustment to which Edward Heath committed the state when he piloted Britain into the European Economic Community in 1972' (Fishman 1998, 102). Hughes and Smith (1998) have also pointed out that 'the longer Britain remains outside the single currency the more political influence in the EU it will lose' - there is no prospect of Britain being a 'dominant actor' as Blair intends, while the country is not in the EMU. The decision

to join or remain outside the single currency area will be a defining one for Britain's position in the EU (Hughes and Smith *ibid*, 98).

In conclusion, as Wallace (1999) has argued, the apparent paradox of New Labour's position on Europe reflects the equally real paradox of the European political system in the 1990s, that is, the governance is becoming increasingly a multi-level, intricately institutionalised activity, while representation, loyalty and identity remain stubbornly rooted in the traditional institutions of the nation state. Likewise, Miller maintains that most of the European nation states support membership of the EU on practical grounds but their emotional loyalty continues to be directed towards their country of origin (Miller 1995, 160). This gives credence to those scholars who have incessantly maintained that the supranationalising European Community is heavily dependent upon tales of solidarity of bounded communities (Billig 1995; Schlesinger 1992).

The latter selectively construct the walls that separate those who belong and those whose assimilation into the national body is impossible. The Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act also shows not just that the British nation enjoys pre-eminence in the European context by retaining control over the definition of citizenship and the regulation of the human flow across its borders, but also that the European dimension of the national essence is revealed only in opposition to the non-European 'Other'.

5.5 The Construction of the Non-European 'Other'

To some observers the concept of a common European space is meaningless without substantial freedom of movement. They argue that a new Berlin Wall to keep people out of Western Europe would be as offensive as the old one that kept people inside Eastern Europe (Budge et al. 1997, 383). However, immigration and the free movement of people raise fundamental issues not only about individual rights and human dignity but also about the character and the definition of the cultural identity - if there is any - of the 'European family of nations. For Labour and its forebears, the

latter was consisted of the Western group of nations, which was in turn conditioned by the non-Western world. In the 1960s, Roy Jenkins spoke of the “differential cultural status” of the Commonwealth people that made it impossible for them to become part of the British social fabric (Jenkins 1962, col.724). As seen above, Jenkins was one of the advocates of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1968, which invalidated the right of a particular population of British passport holders (i.e. Kenyan Asians) to enter the UK. In the 1970s, as Home Secretary, the bellwether of pro-Europeanism insisted that “it is in the interests of the racial minorities themselves to maintain a strict control over immigration” (Jenkins 1976, col.1548). It is no wonder then that the pro-European representatives of New Labour have espoused a similarly restrictive immigration policy.

Consequently, this section argues that, in view of the Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act, New Labour’s Britain as a European nation is largely dependent on non-Europeans - or better, non-English-speaking populations. The latter define precisely the confines of the European space of Labour Britishness.

An internal Cabinet Office report, which was circulated in Whitehall not long time ago, stated that «identity only ever thrives when there is an enemy to rally against» (Sylvester 2000). In particular, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants from countries outside Western Europe and the English speaking world in general appear to threaten the ‘civilised’ order and the values the British government wants to project over the ‘European family of nations’. In a leaked memo written by Tony Blair, “Standing up for Britain” (Pierce and Webster 2000), «asylum and crime» preoccupy the prime minister’s consciousness: «These may appear unlinked to patriotism. They are: partly because they are toughness issues», Tony Blair wrote. The fact that he sees asylum solely as a “toughness issue” rather than a “human rights issue” or a “decency issue” provides a vivid insight into the way he defines the character of the British national community within the European context. New Labour’s Britain seems to espouse a European identity with a hard edge. Because,

according to the Labour Prime Minister, asylum reaches «deep into British instincts» (Pierce and Webster 2000). Here the discourse of sovereignty creeps back in. 'Community' can become an exclusionary idea marking the line that separates 'us' from 'them' (Painter 2000, 234).

As previously, the construction of New Labour's nationhood involves hostility to those who are different. In the case of the Commonwealth, migration was assumed to be against the proper order of things, something that damaged the social fabric, offended the nation-state and intruded outsiders among the homogeneous citizen body. Now, as will become clear, the asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants are linked with criminality and economic leeching. The tightening of the borders policing and the tolerance of expressions of welfare chauvinism have become key features of the current government's policy.

The 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees to which the UK is signatory guarantees the right to asylum. It obliges states to consider all applications for asylum by people claiming to be fleeing from persecution. It provides that lawfully resident refugees should enjoy treatment at least as favourable as that given the indigenous population. Until the 1980s, on the European level it was recognised that asylum-seekers had a claim to admission arising from their own need to flee persecution, rather than from the receiving country's criteria for entry (Lunn 2000, 93). Yet, the recent government policies and proposals have already put in doubt the right to asylum of people coming from countries where there has been serious conflict or where grave human rights abuses are common. Emphasising restrictions and control implies the stigmatisation and in general a negative portrayal of groups of migrants.

In fact, in New Labour's discourse the asylum seekers and immigrants are connected with criminality and unlawfulness. Whereas Europe, that is, the members of the European Union, is «a civilised continent» (Blair 2000d), asylum seekers are associated with «illegality» (Straw 1999a, col.38); whereas British society «lives with rules and a sense of order» (Blair 1999k), immigration is linked with «criminal

gangs», «organised crime» (Ford 2001) and the «vile trade of smuggling and trafficking» (Roche 2000b, col.594).

Ansell (1997) points out that the nature of threat posed by the enemy without revolves less around the allegation of foreign loyalties and otherness than on alleged criminal behaviour. Because racism is not something static but an evolving socio-historical construct, part of the social structure which arises out of present conditions, people coming from countries with civil strife, disorder and violence such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Somalia and Sri Lanka and those from the East and Central Europe whose countries «have not improved their human rights record» (Straw 2001a, col.485) are seen by the New Labour government as just another group of outsiders who must be excluded. It was not accidental that the 1999 Act was introduced when the war in Kosovo was under way; the Labour government did not overlook the consequences of a globally induced change such as a change of borders following a military conflict within the European neighbourhood.

In this way, immigrants are presented as an acute problem challenging societal and political stability and the effective working of the internal market. In doing so, the British government, which, in Blair's words, «does not tolerate anti-social behaviour or lawlessness» (Blair 2001), feeds the idea that migrants do not belong to the British and European communities, that they are a serious burden for western societies and therefore that they should be kept at a distance. As a result, every airline serving Britain has been transformed into an arm of the immigration service through fines and other penalties imposed on them for carrying people without proper papers. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, the great-grandson of a refugee (Cohen 2001), speaking in the Commons, noted that the extension of the Carriers' Liability Act 1987 to Eurostar trains from Belgium and the French authorities and the introduction of the visa regimes were intended to «reduce the opportunity for illegal immigration for those coming in by air, train or ferry» (Straw 1999a, col. 38). In addition, the enforcement of the Bill is backed by the criminal law by extending «the

scope of the existing offences of obtaining leave to enter or remain by deception...» (Straw 1999a, col.37). In addition, Jack Straw's call for a redrafting of the 1951 Geneva Convention, a Europe-wide two-tier asylum system and the introduction of visa regimes for specific countries such as Ecuador, Colombia and Slovakia raises the spectre of a Fortress Europe (Eaglesham 2000; Woodward 2000; Ford 2001; Travis and Black 2001; Burrell 2001). The targeted populations have been associated with an unstable social order and consequently they appear as a destabilising challenge to west European societies (Huysmans 2000, 753). That is why, although the British government is staying outside the wider Schengen agreement for the gradual abolition of borders, they recently joined the Schengen information system to share criminal intelligence with EU partners (Black 2000).

Belonging is not only mediated through cultural identity and through policing borders. Asylum has been seen as an alternative route for economic immigration and for this reason it so easily connects to illegal immigration. Jack Straw has said that «illegal immigration represents a threat to the integrity of the control and costs the taxpayer many millions of pounds» (Straw 1999a, 38). Indeed, access to social and economic rights is crucial in the governance of belonging in the welfare state. Immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees are increasingly seen as having no legitimate right to social assistance and welfare provisions. As the Home Secretary has added, «we have decided to take them (asylum seekers and immigrants) out of the social security system because they are not British residents, although they can become if their case for asylum is accepted...» (Straw 1999a, col.47). It appears that the new discourse about the enemy within relies on the economic imperatives involved in rooting out illegal immigrants, 'bogus' asylum seekers and welfare cheats (Ansell 1997, 75). In April 2001, on these grounds, a report from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) accused the British government of creating a climate of 'acute' racism and xenophobia towards asylum-seekers and refugees (ECRI 2001, 20).

Thus, immigrants and asylum seekers are further stigmatised, not just on ethno-cultural grounds, but also, in a socio-economic way as strangers who exploit the society, and are portrayed as an additional burden for, rivals and competitors of the indigenous population and illegitimate recipients or claimants of socio-economic rights. «Public statements», the ECRI said, «have tended to depict asylum-seekers and ‘economic migrants’, explicitly or by inference, as a threat to security, economic stability and social peace» (ECRI 2001, 18). Curtailing their social assistance and access to other social rights can then be justified as an instrument for limiting the number of applications for asylum.

For example, the Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act has made provisions to keep asylum seekers out of the mainstream housing and social welfare provision putting them instead in «designated accommodation» and replacing social benefits with «vouchers» (HMSO 1999).

With regard to the establishing of a voucher system and provision in kind instead of cash benefits for asylum-seekers the government looked to Switzerland and Germany, whose policies of provision of assistance in kind (food and lodging) and coupons (for transport) and a small amount of pocket-money, devised in the early nineties, were an essential part of the ‘politics of dissuasion’. In Germany critics saw them as a regression from an inclusive post-war social security provision that reflected Constitutional protection of human dignity, back to a system based on exclusion, compulsion and denial of dignity last seen under National Socialism (IRR 1999). Although the purpose of the measure has been to keep down the cost of asylum seekers, estimates suggest that the cashless system could cost three times as much to administer as a more straightforward benefits set-up (Tran and Barkham 2000). Moreover, there has been widespread protest by civil rights and refugee aid groups. They say the voucher scheme is blatantly discriminatory, immoral and humiliating. Transport and General Workers' Union leader Bill Morris has campaigned vigorously against the vouchers, which he describes as "inhuman" and "degrading" (D. Brown

2000). Likewise, the ECRI report in turn described the replacement of asylum seekers benefits with vouchers as «degrading and stigmatising» (ECRI 2001, 19).

Also, the Immigration and Asylum Bill forcibly disperses asylum seekers around the country «to prevent concentrations overloading local services» (HMSO 1999). Asylum-seekers no longer have any choice about where they are placed and lose access to all state help if they refuse to co-operate. The dispersal policy has been designed to place ethnic groups together in clusters, with health, education and transition services geared to the different communities. The Institute of Race Relations argues that the government has looked to the system in Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Here asylum-seekers live in designated accommodation - reception centres and refugee hostels - while decisions on their application are made (IRR 1999). Yet, the climate of hostility generated by the local press and inflamed by the National Front in Dover in autumn 1999 threw a long shadow over the provisions of the Bill. Because of this, Kent social services were forced to move Romanian asylum seekers three times in ten days. It was the time when the liberal-minded Home Secretary tagged the Gypsies with «theft, burglary and antisocial behaviour» (Ford 1999). It should be noted that Roma/Gypsies are considered to be one of the most vulnerable group while they suffer from discrimination and disadvantage in vital areas such as education, employment and housing (ECRI 2001, 14).

For the ECRI «episodes of racial attacks and harassment against asylum seekers, notably Roma/Gypsies, demonstrate some of the dangers which the increasingly negative climate of opinion can bring about» - the killing of a Kurdish asylum seeker in Glasgow last summer vindicates the conclusions of the ECRI (Seenan 2001). The ECRI report, which was published just days after an official European Union survey showed Britain to be more hostile towards asylum-seekers than any other EU-nation with 23 per cent of Britons saying victims of human rights violation should be refused entry (Fletcher 2001), put the blame for this climate on those «politicians [who] direct the general public's feelings of insecurity on one

specific group of persons, irrespective of whether these persons have a valid claim to remain in the country or not». The New Labour government appears to share a huge part of the blame, while, as seen above, they have contributed to «the vilification of those who are considered not to have valid asylum claims and are sometimes defined as ‘economic migrants’, ‘economic refugees’ or ‘bogus asylum seekers’» (ECRI 2001, 19). This comes to throw into doubt those claims made by a section of scholarship that the political parties respond as political barometers to popular racism and not the other way round (Anwar 1986). The current official state policies and racist practices are evidently engaged in a dialectical process with the people.

As a matter of fact, the UN committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination has recognised the government’s toughness on institutional racism and racial attacks, its commitment to employment equality targets, and its strong support for the Lawrence family and inquiry, but it concludes that the dispersal system "may hamper the adequate access of asylum-seekers to legal and other necessary services, e.g. health and education" (Owers 2000). For the UN committee, racism is indivisible because there cannot be a trade-off between fair treatment of minority groups already here and those that newly arrive. Attacks on one group of strangers encourage hostility to all who are visibly different, especially by setting up a system that is likely to create disadvantage and exclusion for the present and future (Owers *ibid*).

As a matter of fact, the distinction, much laboured by the New Labour representatives, between «good» foreigners or «genuine» asylum seekers and «bad» foreigners» or «unfounded» asylum seekers makes a mockery of the goal of a «multi-racial Britain» that the New Labour government preaches (Straw 1999b). The racial and institutional discriminations between the communities imply that multiculturalism is a cause of societal disintegration. The commission on the future of multi-ethnic Britain, which included Labour peer, Lord Bhikhu Parekh, and Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Greater London assembly, have commented that Mr Straw’s policies of dispersing asylum seekers and forcing them to live on below-the-breadline vouchers

have created "statelessness and racial and ethnic divisions" (Travis 2000b). What the Bill does is to mediate the differentiation between 'them' and 'us' by identifying other cultures that endanger the survival of the home culture. Immigration is thus identified as being one of the main factors weakening national tradition and societal homogeneity. It is reified as an internal and external danger for the survival of the national community or western civilisation in general. As Huysmans (2000) has observed, this discourse frames the key question about the future of the political community as one choice for or against migration and undermines the initiatives for the institutionalisation of a more inclusive multicultural Europe which would provide extensive political, economic and social rights to immigrants (Huysmans *ibid*, 758 & 766).

Instead, by denying social provision for rejected asylum seekers the government is institutionalising social exclusion and creating Victorian-style conditions of poverty and destitution. As seen in chapter 3, the Fabian elitist view of the inferiority of non-white races was to a large extent driven by domestic considerations. In those late-Victorian times, the perceived inferiority of the indigenous was projected over the assumed cultural inferiority of the alien. Likewise, nowadays, what is most worrying about the structures of exclusion are the implications for the poor and deprived parts of the British society. For some, this kind of treatment of asylum-seekers is incompatible with the New Labour government's commitment to tackling poverty and social exclusion (Lister 2001, 67). True, the Home Secretary's depiction of homeless as «winos» and the Romanian beggars as «vile» (Watt 2000) have underlined the way the New Labour government considers the destitute parts of the British society - the immigrants and the asylum seekers are a prominent element of them - as a danger to public order, cultural identity and domestic and labour market stability. Hence, the announcement of increasingly punitive sanctions against unemployed claimants, cuts in some disability benefits and the deployment of deliberately tough language, which serves to construct social security

recipients as the 'others' to 'us' the taxpayers (Lister 2001, 66). Despite the introduction of an array of anti-poverty measures including the New Deal in employment, a comprehensive strategy for neighbourhood and community renewal, Health and Education Zones, the Sure Start programme designed to support deprived babies and young children, the National Child Care Strategy, tax credits and minimum wage, there is little public sense that the British live in a society of profoundly changed ethics and values, of greater fairness or economic or social equality. As Benn has noted, if the 'social exclusion paradigm' of New Labour suggests that the provision of work 'solves' the problem of welfare, it is not surprising that we hear so little in modern Britain of the reality of life on benefits, contributory or means-tested (Benn 2000, 315). How can one talk about what poverty really means if part of one's strategy is often to encourage people into low-waged employment? How can one talk about what poverty really means while existing government measures will bring 2 million out of poverty, leaving though 12 million citizens living under what used to be called 'the breadline': twice the number that existed in 1979 (Benn 2000, 317).

Then, it is no surprise that, according to Oxfam, the replacement of cash benefits with the voucher scheme means that asylum seekers will exist on less than 80% of basic income support levels (i.e. a significantly *lower* level than that for UK citizens). Consequently, asylum seekers are considered amongst the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the UK, and will be further stigmatised and demeaned by having to use vouchers (Oxfam 1999). In essence, the explicit privileging of nationals of Member states in contrast to third-country nationals and the generally restrictive regulation of migration sustains a wider process of delegitimizing the presence of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (Huysmans *ibid*). As it is rightly commented, «the European Union is concerned about human rights abuses in Turkey, and that this is the reason for keeping Turkey out of the EU. But the victims of those abuses are "bogus" once they are here» (Alibhai-Brown 2001).

Of course, the British neo-socialists vehemently have denied any racist intent: "It's nothing whatever to do with race, it is to do with . . . people who were masquerading as travellers and who are then committing crimes», as the Home Secretary said in August 1999 for the Roma (The Times 1999; Ford 1999). Rather than conceive racism as a product of unjust social arrangements (Omi and Winant 1994; Ansell 1997), racism is wholly detached from the social arena and personalised. For the Home Secretary racism is just «absurd, a poison, and a form of madness. May be we have all been mad to allow a society where such things matter» (Straw 1999b). In fact, as Malik (1996) and Ansell (1997) have argued, personal responsibility, moral degeneracy and not deliberate institutional discrimination underlines the new racist discourse, as such employed by the New Labour government. Instead, the social structures are deemed 'open' and 'fair', 'equal opportunity' is purported to exist and any proof of discrimination is attributed to 'personal responsibility' - in the case of the asylum seekers, to the lack of papers. Indeed, the asylum Bill is said to be revolved around «a fairer system that reflects our commitment to race equality and human rights» (Straw 1999a, col.37). Contrary to the government's claims, the ECRI report said that «the adoption of increasingly restrictive measures in the fields of asylum and immigration and the tone of the debate around the adoption of such measures run counter to British Government's efforts to improve race relations and to the development of a genuine culture of tolerance and respect for difference» (ECRI 2001, 19). Other critics of the New Labour government have assumed that «the hatred of asylum-seekers is generally-directed at any and every foreigner» (Cohen 2001).

Finally, the Home Office's plans for a differential treatment between asylum and immigration as a result of a potential open door policy for professional migrants (the concept of 'immigrant worker' is avoided) (Bennett and Adams 2000) are the consequence of a far broader reconfiguring of specialised labour markets under the impact of economic globalisation than of the foreign policy objectives or asylum sympathies of the New Labour government. The World Trade Organisation and the

North American Free Trade Agreement contain provisions concerning cross-border mobility of highly specialised workers (Bennett and Adams *ibid*). Over the last decade, the EU, while encouraging member states to harmonise asylum policy, has slowly been introducing measures to control 'migratory movements'. But it was only recently that the EU's approach coalesced into an overall philosophy, going under the name of 'global migration management'. Since the UN warned of the growing demographic crisis in Europe, brought on by an ageing workforce and declining birth rates, there has been a growing recognition within western Europe that immigration is necessary and that refugees might even provide an important source of skilled labour. Indeed, since the European Commission indicated in November 2000 that the EU should open up legal routes for migration, and national governments within Europe followed its lead by adopting skills-based recruitment programmes for foreign workers, European governments have been openly supporting 'managed migration' (Fekete 2001).

Once again, the immigrant will be constructed along the economic needs of the country and its contribution to the existing skills shortages and not on the grounds of the much-declared aims of «human dignity and equality». This, far from promoting the aims of a multiracial society, would lead to further unequal treatment of and divisions within the ethnic communities and, according to some commentators, would advance a kind of social Darwinism that says that those professionals from the poorest countries who survive the worst journeys should be awarded with a job and a legal status in their chosen countries (Travis 2000a). Fekete points out that global migration management heralds not the old Social Darwinism that believes that the advance of civilisation is dependent on the advancement of the superior race, but a socio-economic Social Darwinism that allows the rich First World to maintain its economic dominance by emptying the poorer worlds of their skilled work-force. In the era of globalisation, the skills pool, not the genes pool, is key (Fekete 2001).

As Miles has argued, since western markets seem to demand skilled labour, the restrictive policies would target primarily unskilled and semi-skilled migrants who tend to belong to non-OECD countries (Miles 1993a, 179-80). Even in this case, as Huysmans (2000) remarks, the regulation of asylum and the mediation of immigration through labour market would be on cultural grounds since the skilled foreign labour force tends to be culturally similar and the asylum seekers tend to be perceived as culturally different. The latter, and the aliens in general, are expected to find their rights only in their own countries of nationality. This is what, as seen in previous chapters, theorists of racism called 'cultural' or 'new racism' or what Sivanandan has recently termed as 'xeno-racism', which applies especially to the deprived and unskilled categories of immigrants:

«It is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial territories, but at the newer categories of the displaced, the dispossessed and the uprooted, who are beating at western Europe's doors, the Europe that helped to displace them in the first place. It is a racism, that is, that cannot be colour-coded, directed as it is at poor whites as well, and is therefore passed off as xenophobia, a "natural" fear of strangers. But in the way it denigrates and reifies people before segregating and/or expelling them, it is a xenophobia that bears all the marks of the old racism. It is racism in substance, but "xeno" in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism» (Sivanandan 2001)

This climate is deteriorated by proposals such as that of Jack Straw, that is, to compel refugees to remain in their region of origin, in huge refugee camps, from which Europe will 'select' a quota to be brought to Europe for resettlement (Fekete 2001). In this way, Fortress Europe's 'zero immigration' approach is not so much abandoned as refined.

5.6 Conclusion

The above analysis of the European dimension of the Labour party's Britishness has shown that nationalism overrides any kind of supranationalist ambitions and puts aside any kind of existentialist questions about Britain's future in a

federal Europe. Within the Labour movement this prospect has never been at the top of its agenda.

As a matter of fact, the inter-governmental European vision became dominant concept within the circles of the main pressure groups of the party such as the Fabians and the ILP since the immediate post-war period. More important, their Europeanism was defined against the non-Western world. The differential cultural, politico-economic standards within the Continent made federalism less attractive for the majority of Labour party opinion. Likewise, federalism was not favourable among the leading Europeans of the 1960s and 1970s. As a result, the willingness of the New Labour government to work closer with its EU partners on a series of social issues does not imply the abandonment of essential national rights. Instead, its opt-out from common border controls and immigration policy, on the one hand, strengthens the claims of those scholars who see supranationalism and internationalism taking the limited form of economic common markets, intergovernmental institutions and military alliances (Kellas 1998, 222), and on the other hand, re-affirms that Labour's spatial Britishness is primarily dependent on the construction of the 'other' - in New Labour's case, the non-European other. The nationalist and discriminating practices against the latter provide an illuminating account of the real character of the contemporary British society.

As an overall conclusion, the duality of the boundary remains central, not just to the imperial and insular vision, but also, to the European dimension of Labour Britishness. The process of exclusion and rejection of the immigrant, asylum seeker, and refugee have become constitutive of the British national identity itself and in this way the British socialists are delineating one or other cultural aspect of themselves. The grandeur of a benevolent multinational community, the economic nationalism and populism in defence of the isles and the rights of the islanders and the benefits of European intergovernmentalism constitute three different spatial and political

expressions of the Labour party's nationhood. Yet, against the background of global changes such as the disintegration and the subsequent loss of the Empire, and the ongoing European integration they tell us few things about the social norms and cultural standards of the British society. As assumed from the beginning of this thesis, only the racialisation and containment of the 'other', that is, the Immigration Acts, the racialisation of the European worker and the discriminatory practices against the asylum seeker, as a means of responding to global transformations that allegedly threatened the national essence, can account for the social norms and cultural standards of the British society. The intersection of space and culture results in the cultural definition of the border control. Civic and ethno-cultural elements are mixed producing a less 'pure' form of nationalism.

Hence, the analysis of the next part will further provide us with the main elements of Labour's cultural nationhood, as it appeared throughout the European debates.

PART 3

THE CULTURE OF THE NATION

In George Orwell's words «there is something distinctive and recognisable in English civilisation (...) it is continuous, it stretches into the future and the past, there is something in it that persists, as a living creature» (Orwell 1953, 37).

Continuity springs from the conception of the nation as a historically rooted entity that projects into the future (Guibernau 1996, 73). Kellas (1998) and Kelman (1969), in congruence with Smith (1986), have noted, the frequent emergence of the family as a metaphor for the nation states. 'Fatherland', 'Motherland', 'kith and kin' are ideas which are powerful political resources, appealing to human instincts and they have endured throughout the ages as objects of supreme emotion and loyalty. Thus, culture functions like nature, as a way of locking individuals into a genealogy (Balibar 1991a, 22). While the modernist paradigm remains silent on practices of cultural contestation, Gellner, in search of cultural sameness, states that nationalism engenders nations using «pre-existing, historical inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth» (Gellner 1983, 49).

Culture constitutes the core of the national identity, playing a unifying and differentiating role at the same time (Smith 1998, 187). Differentiation stems from the consciousness of forming a community with a shared culture leading to the distinction between members and 'strangers', the 'rest' and 'the different' (Guibernau 1996, 73).

Thus, continuity over time and differentiation from others seem to be the defining criteria of the party's cultural identity. As the second element of Labour nationhood, culture, first, demonstrates continuities of specific nationalist symbols, practices and 'tacit codes' such as religious intolerance, institutional deference, and enduring values, which as 'living creatures' have been treated as genes passed along from one generation to another, so denying the possibility that foreigners can ever

become British. It is no surprise then that Labour party, a «particularly British institution» (Foote 1997, 5), emerged as the true inheritor of a legacy which has endured for almost three centuries. On the other hand, the Labour party's cultural nationhood cannot be defined in an affirmative way. For instance, as will be argued, during the European debates the democratic myth of British institutions was primarily defined through juxtaposition with the allegedly autocratic nature of the European nations and the perceived political immaturity of the New Commonwealth. As seen in the space of the nation, citizenship capacity was indeed a matter of belongingness for the immigrants and those populations from the non-Western world. As Ignatieff has pointed out, «to belong is to understand the tacit codes of the people you live with» (Ignatieff 1994, 7). In this sense, culture mediates the way in which humans relate to themselves, others and the exterior world (Guibernau 1996, 79). Culture engenders symbolic boundaries, which cannot be reduced to the entrance card for a concrete labour market (Goldberg 1990). In other words, national culture embraces those ethnic notions of inheritance, destiny, myths and shared way of life that cannot be available to the 'others'.

This part is divided into three chapters, which delineate the symbols and shared ways of life found in the party discourse over the European debates - Protestantism (chapter 6), Houses of Parliament (chapter 7) and the Enduring Values of New Labour (chapter 8).

CHAPTER 6

PROTESTANTISM

6.1 Introduction

According to Linda Colley, Protestantism - together with the Empire and the war memories - has been considered as the *raison d'etre* of the British nation (Colley 1992b). As here will become clear (6.1.1), Protestantism was a shared religious allegiance that permitted a sense of national identity to emerge alongside, and not in competition with, older, more organic attachments to England, Wales or Scotland. Despite the subtle divisions that existed within the Protestant community itself, the most striking feature in the religious landscape was the gulf between Protestant and Catholic. Eric Hobsbawm has written that «there is no effective way of bounding together the disparate sections of restless people than to unite them against outsiders» (Hobsbawm 1990, 91). Above all, Protestantism was negatively defined by anti-Catholicism. For three centuries, after the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Britons saw themselves as inhabiting an island illuminated by true religion under threat, especially from French Catholicism. Imagining the French as their opposites became a way for Britons to contrive for themselves a flattering identity (Colley 1992b). Decadence, corruption and absolutism were considered foreign to the Protestant culture.

A bulk of these representations about the Catholic ‘other’ passed on to the British Labour party due to the integrative role of Christianity in the early stages of the British labour movement (Taylor 1935; Edwards 1943; Wearmouth 1957; Thompson 1991; Nairn 1972a & b; Kiernan 1952). As well as making easier the subordination of the working-class to the interests and institutions of the imperial state (see 6.1.2), Protestantism nourished the famous ‘insularity’ and ‘xenophobia’ of the

English, which, according to Orwell, was far stronger in the working class than in the bourgeoisie (Orwell 1982, 49). Here lies the hostility towards the members of the foreign working classes, black or white, as seen in the *space* of the nation, and the suspicion towards the Catholic 'other' in the post-war years.

As Tom Nairn (1965b, 166) has noted, the Independent Labour party's ethical socialism was derived from the religion of the Protestant sects. At the time of the party formation these were reduced to a kind of domesticated national conscience, for ever indignant at the 'excesses' of capitalism and at the iniquitous conduct of the very rich and the very poor alike. Socialism, hence, was apprehended as a moral crusade propelled by emotions of outrage at injustice and suffering. As Colley (1992b) has asserted, Protestantism meant much more in this society than just bombast, intolerance and chauvinism. It gave the majority of men and women a sense of their place in history and a sense of worth; it allowed them to feel pride in such advantages as they genuinely did enjoy, and helped them endure when hardship and danger threatened; it gave them identity.

Although in the second half of the twentieth century Protestantism was only a residual influence on British culture, as was Christianity itself (Cannadine 1983, 156; Colley 1992a, 328 & b, 374; Greenfeld 1992, 77), as will be argued, during the European debates (6.3), elements of Protestantism contributed to the perception of Europe as the predominantly Catholic Other (6.2). Especially in the early stages of the European question, Labour, by re-working the brotherly communal values of co-operation in the doctrines of ethical socialism, and the dutiful moralism of Protestantism - along with a hostility to European narrowness, corruption and profit-making competition - succeeded in forging their allegiance to the British nation as the dominant player in world affairs with a moral mission that was threatened by the forces of darkness represented by Catholicism.

6.2 Protestantism as an Element of British Identity

Protestantism was central to first English and then British nationalism (Manzo 1996, 139). Protestantism was central to the British experience after 1700. Yet, historians have preferred to concentrate on the more subtle divisions that existed within the Protestant community itself, on the tensions between Anglicans and nonconformists in England and Wales, between Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Scotland and older forms of Dissent (Samuel 1989a, 58; Greenfeld 1992, 63; Wolfe 1989, 189; Langlands 1999). In so doing, they should not obscure what remained the towering feature in the religious landscape, the gulf between Protestant and Catholic (Colley 1992a, 317).

As a matter of fact, confirmation of Britain's providential mission, especially in her endeavour to convert Ireland to Protestantism in order to promote her economic and social advance, was provided by the juxtaposition of the purest Protestantism and the most corrupt Catholicism. Ideas of national character have typically been formed by processes of exclusion, where what it is to be British is defined in relations of opposition to enemies both without and within. The discovery of such enemies is a normal condition of national life. Catholics occupied this symbolic space for some three centuries after the Reformation (Samuel 1989b, xvii). As Colley (1992a & b) has argued, this was how it was with the British after 1707; they came to define themselves as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores. The slang adjective most commonly applied to Catholics was «outlandish» and this was meant literally. Catholics were not just strange, they were out of bounds; they did not belong, and were therefore suspect (Colley 1992b, 23).

As the nation was thus defined and protected by virtue of her Protestantism, it followed that Roman Catholicism was the very antithesis of British values. Cotrell has argued that «the ecclesiastical despotism of Rome enslaved the will and the spirit

of Catholic nations, while leading them into estrangement from God and bringing down his judgement upon them. By contrast, Protestants rejoiced in their political and spiritual freedom and commercial prosperity, basking in the sunshine of divine favour» (Cotrell 1989, 267). Likewise, Wolfe has asserted that «if Rome was the root of all evil and Britain God's chosen Israel, it was imperative that the nation should be kept clear of any contamination with Catholicism» (Wolfe 1989, 189). Protestants saw themselves as a beleaguered garrison in a world in which all the great powers were Catholic (Hill 1989, 159). This is further evidence that the evolution of Britishness cannot be understood without reference to both European and world history.

British national identity was given sharper relief by the construction of a French 'Other'. Colley has commented that «the British defined themselves as Protestants struggling for survival against the world's foremost Catholic power, the French as they imagined them to be, superstitious, militarists, decadent and unfree France, as Britain's most dangerous enemy, had a larger population and a much bigger land mass than Great Britain; it was its greatest commercial and imperial rival and it was a Catholic state; this last point was the crucial one in shaping responses throughout Great Britain as a whole (old popish enemy)» (Colley 1992b, 25). France was thus presented as a threat to every facet of British life, to that 'existence under which life is alone valuable'. In fact, onto the Frenchman were projected all the forces, fantasies, contradictions and fears with which the British ruling classes, at least, were ill at ease and needed to repress. Cotrell has claimed that the French threatened «to unleash all that was contained, incarcerated, suppressed or made subordinate in British society, and to challenge or subvert all that seemed secure and natural» (Cotrell 1989, 267).

The British 'ingroup' and French 'outgroup' were polar opposites; the propaganda proscribed the possibility of there being any common ground between the two peoples. At the same time, each pole, or each set of binary opposites, was highly

valorised, and every British characteristic was given priority over every French characteristic.

In respect of the Labour party's discourse during the European debates, the broadsheets accounted for this extreme polarisation into good and evil, right and wrong, by making reference either to God, or to nature, or the character/government and constitution dialectic, or to a combination of these. Additionally, another characteristic of the intolerant Protestantism, which was to be found in the post-war Labour's discourse, was the invocation of British exceptionalism. The spiritual framework of the post-war imperial visions of the party leaderships can be traced in the religious element of the British culture. In fact, Britain's positive self-valorisation was made common-sense by associating itself with 'universals', all of which, according to the propaganda, France was trying to annihilate - Christianity, mankind, civilisation, order, nature, truth, right. In valorising the 'ingroup' by reference to universals, the cohesion of the group becomes weakened by its over-inclusiveness; it becomes everything except that which could be identified as French. Britons were not fighting simply to defend Britain, but for the independence of every nation. In order to resolve this contradiction between the particular and the universal nature of 'Britishness', that is, in order to retain the notion of an exclusively 'British patriot' rather than merely a 'Citizen of the World', Britain had to be given an exclusive role within the universal. It was Britain which gave order to the world. 'Has not Britain sustained the balance of Europe? Has she not given laws to the world?' All other nations, having at some stage succumbed to the French wiles, now looked to Britain for deliverance. In essence, Britain served, too, as a model and inspiration to other nations. Above all, «the propaganda suggested to Britons that they were a chosen people, with a particular part to play in the divine plan» (Cotrell 1989, 270). In particular, as Colley (1992a & b) suggests, Protestant Britons learned that particular kinds of trials, at the hands of particular enemies, were the necessary fate and the eventual salvation of a chosen people. Suffering and recurrent exposure to danger

were a sign of grace; this way of making sense of adversity, and of comforting themselves in the face of it, would persist subliminally into the 20th century - especially in the aftermath of the Second World War. Because, official intolerance of the Catholic 'Other' was rooted in something far more tangible, in fear most of all, and in the way that Britons chose to remember and interpret their own past.

In particular, in the early stages of the European debate the Labour discourse was a further proof of this claim, for the party's origins were embedded within a Protestant culture, which nurtured insularity and apartness.

6.3 The Labour Party, the Catholic 'Other' and the European Question

Post-war Britain was still an emphatically Protestant country, in which Catholicism was something foreign and therefore suspect (Young 1998, 50). The Protestants were still considered to be the chosen ones and anti-Catholic prejudice was instinctive. Ernest Bevin, the Labour Foreign Secretary of the Attlee administration (1945-51), was the first who exhibited anti-Catholic prejudice. Gladwyn Jebb records a scene on a journey with Mr and Mrs Bevin to a trade union conference in Southport: «the train was rather full and people often went by in the corridor, including from time to time a Catholic priest in a soutane. Whenever this happened Mr and Mrs Bevin became uneasy and Mr Bevin muttered 'black crows'. I understood that he believed that Catholic priests brought bad luck, and nothing that I could say had any effect» (Galdwyn 1972, 176). In fact, these feelings were not limited to superstition.

For the British, the Catholic nature of 'Europe' was a generous source of prejudice against it. Inevitably, the first moves towards a kind of European unification were thus stigmatised by these beliefs. They acquired a strong political formulation among people who saw in the Schuman Plan (1950) the beginnings of a Vatican conspiracy or, even more luridly, an attempt to recreate the Holy Roman Empire. For

representatives of the Labour party, Britain was the major power on the European stage while the French and Germans «gang up against her» (Hynd 1950, col.1979). The purpose of the Schuman plan was politically deemed to be a French plot «to tie the Germans up so tightly that they cannot be a menace to the French»; in this way, France could form a conspiracy with Germany against Britain so that «it could not do its service to the world» (Crossman 1950, col.2038). Indeed, suspicion about the motives of the Schuman plan and Franco-German involvement shadowed the economic arguments over the benefits expected to derive from the first post-war exercise in collaboration by which countries sank some of their aspirations that kept the competitive quest for leadership going. There were suspicions that Schuman and, still more Monnet, wanted all along to exclude Britain from the scheme. It was claimed that both schemes were deliberately constructed to exclude unwanted guests and their architects could, accordingly, well afford to go through the formalities of offering membership to those who were never going to join anyway. Christopher Lord has said that, in addition to the Labour suspicion that France was really engaged in a selfish scheme to re-order diplomatic relationships in its favour, Bevin accused France and the US of plotting against the UK's commercial interests by designing an industrial grouping with a constitution that they knew Britain could not join for political reasons (Lord 1996, 15).

And such speculations were not confined to fusty old imperialists, such as Bevin and Little Englanders such as Crossman. Kenneth Younger, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Bevin's astute and educated junior, was one of the few politicians or officials sympathetic to the Schuman Plan. But his suspicions on this account were evidently important to him. He wrote in his diary about the unsound motives behind the rejection of the Plan by the Labour government of Clement Attlee:

«Of course, the Labour's government's decision was not entirely rational. A proposal for European co-operation coming from the French was almost distasteful...Suspensions were sometimes expressed in Labour circles, that the conservative Christian Democratic governments most interested in the Schuman Plan were part of a faintly sinister

conspiracy...In view of the political complexion of the French and the German governments and their links with heavy industry, one cannot but expect that this will develop along old fashioned cartel lines...it may be just a step in the consolidation of the Catholic 'black international' which I have always thought to be a big driving force behind Europe...» (Greenwood 1996, 35; cited in Hennessy 1992, 400).

Such was the background beyond politics to the case of Schuman and the Labour party in the early fifties. According to Miriam Camps, ten years later, in the face of the first application for British membership, «Europe still had in Labour eyes the conservative, Catholic, cold-war image of the Adenauer-Schuman-De Gasperi period» (Camps 1967, 193).

In fact, the left wing representatives of the Labour party, before unfolding any well-founded counter-arguments, appealed to Harold Macmillan, the then Conservative Prime Minister, saying: «Keep Britain out of the Catholic dominated Europe» (The Times 1961, 17). As the left-wing Labour MP, Jennie Lee had said, Britain faced a «polarisation of world forces into one vast area of power and influence which is Communist-dominated and another vast area under Conservative-Catholic domination» (Lee 1961, col.1546). The «absolutist conception» of the European Catholic governments (Ungoed-Thomas 1961, col.1577) and the corresponding Communist absolutism were in conflict with the free-loving, «generous» British nation, which provided the «bridgehead» to the developing part of the world (Bottomley 1962, col.1203).

As a result of this, and out of a religious disposition, Labour's Protestant inner beliefs made British socialists feel as a people apart, in essence, an insular nation: «we can hold our own with a push, a vigorous struggle, discipline, and proper organisation» (Shinwell 1961, col.1731), «we do not need more orders» (Lee 1961, col.1552), «we will survive as a result of our own efforts» (Wilson 1961, col.1653), «by standing alone we have a peculiar world role» (Rodgers 1962, col.711). The nation that passed the test of war was considered to be in God's special care, entrusted with an Empire. The Labour representatives deeply believed that although Britain

«suffered great damage» during war-time (Woodburn 1962, col.1034), she was not occupied -contrary to most of the Europeans - because she was endowed with moral virility, «initiative and the spirit of adventure» (Warbey 1962, col.689). This was a classic Protestant tenet that the British were bound to be regularly tested by periods of suffering, and they took it for granted that struggle - especially against those who were not Protestants- was their birthright (Colley 1992a). These experiences, their profound patriotism and complacency in the superiority of their nation heightened the sense of solidarity and sharpened their awareness of ‘us’ against ‘them’.

Especially, the French - «the villains of the piece» for the majority of the British public, according to some Labour representatives (Edelman 1974, col. 900) - were considered to be merely untrustworthy: «they are very brave when they are fighting for France but the idea of their doing anything for an ally does not fit in» (Paget 1971, col.399). According to Linda Colley (1992b), Britons’ traditional assertion that «the millions of Frenchmen massed against them on the other side of the channel were in reality impoverished, downtrodden, credulous, even somehow unmanly» was a panacea for nagging anxieties and a way of coping with envy. Her post-war economic parasitism in combination with a lingering political clout resulted in the UK approaching the Franco-German alliance with suspicion. Whereas the Germans and the French, who were more confident about their unique identity, saw a Europe without frontiers in terms of opportunity, the British were far more inclined to view it as a threat; this partly because they have so often fought against Continental European states in the past (Colley 1992b, 375).

In the post-war period, the French governments were still regarded as harbouring «persistent hostility to this country» (Jay 1980, 430). As Hugh Brown put it, «one cannot trust them» (Brown 1971, col.984). Giles Radice has asserted that the British culture has had a strong Gallophobic streak: the French Revolution accentuated British fears, and subsequently, although the *entente cordiale* in 1914 settled colonial differences, the unilateral capitulation to the Germans in 1940 aroused old suspicions

(Radice 1992, 42). Drawing on these perceptions, Labour resuscitated the old spectres of the 'militarist' French who were occupied and collaborated with the Nazi regime, fomenting, thus, old anti-Catholic suspicions and mistrust within the party for potential plots and conspiracies of any kind against their country. The French were «an ally with a doubtful military and political value» (Parkin 1954, 96) - see more in the *time* of the nation.

In Peter Shore's eyes Europe remained a «French trap» for Britain (Shore 1971b, 796). British entry on French terms, Shore claimed, would make Britain «the sick man of Europe with negligible influence» (Shore 1971b, 796). The bulk of Shore's suspicions of the French derived from the Treaty of Rome:

«the Treaty gives unmistakable evidence of the harsh egotism of French policy. It would be folly to recognise that for the past 14 years the policies of Gaulliste France have been designed not merely to maximise the interests of France but to weaken and disrupt our own. Having excluded Britain from the Common Market and having insisted that negotiations this time should take place only on the basis of a total surrender of British and Commonwealth interests, France has gained not only a diplomatic triumph at our expense but has placed the most onerous burden upon us» (Shore 1972a, 173).

The author of *The Case Against Entry* rehearsed several times the familiar theme of the French Plot during the negotiations conducted by Heath in the early seventies. Shore's strain of patriot paranoia proved effective in the special Common Market party conference in July 1971. More than anything else he criticised the Heath government's «surrender to France in the Common Market negotiations» (Clark 1971a, 4). The cunning Frenchmen, he said, had been scheming to extract their pound of flesh from the British tax-payer to give to their miserable poor peasants: «It speaks volumes», he added, «about the French meaning of a 'Community' and gives some indication of the 'Community spirit' that we could expect to meet on other problems if we became a member, that they should prepare the trap for Britain before the negotiations began» (Shore 1971b, 796).

There was a pervasive emotion that the powers across the channel threatened to undermine the moral mission, the distinctive purpose of the British nation to help the deprived populations of the world, to 'fulfil our duty to mankind'. In Labour's view the Six suffered from the 'four c's'. They were conservative, clerical, cartelised and capitalist (Lord 1996, 51). Indeed, the European countries were morally condemned as a «conspiracy by property» (Bowles 1962, col.1051), overwhelmed by a «ruthless competitive spirit» (Blyton 1961, col.1537) and accused of deliberately raising «tariff walls and barriers cutting us from our friends (Commonwealth) outside and leaving us to the mercy of the stronger European industries» (Ungoed-Thomas 1961, col.1573).

Instead, Britain asserted a kind of moral authority in the underdeveloped countries through the alleged influence of the Commonwealth. As seen earlier, in the nineteenth century, Britain, in opposition to France, was given a universal, exclusive world role as an inspiration to the other nations. In the sixties, the 'brotherhood of man' as it took flesh and blood in the shape of the Commonwealth, the so-called «family of nations» (Collison 1961, 212), or, the «free voluntary association of people» (Ungoed-Thomas 1961, 1576) could not be served by the morally unacceptable image of the capitalist-ridden Common Market. The 'kith and kin' ideas suggest supreme emotion and loyalty and altruistic behaviour among those most closely related to each other (Kellas 1998, 14).

In particular, the so-called «co-operative Commonwealth» (Castle 1957, 724) was expected to materialise solidarity among its members, a mutual understanding for their problems, a community sense, a co-existence with no strings attached, by contrast to the unfree, conditional membership of the European Community. As a result, only the British nation was thought to have a unique grasp of the values of «friendship», «comradeship», «assistance», «friendly help», «mutuality», «fair play», and «solidarity» (Ungoed-Thomas 1961, col.1577; Bellenger 1961, col. 1694; Lee 1961, col.1550; Bagshaw 1962, 171) - a continuous thread of «trust» between the

abandoned, destitute populations and the British people, between the «British and our friends...our brothers and sisters» (Bagshaw 1962, 172), as Labour used to call them. Such values, sentiments and ties were non-existent within the boundaries of the Common Market that demanded tariff-walls for its members. Yet, this rhetoric of nationalist 'brotherhood' provides the necessary conditions for xenophobia and racial discrimination (Kellas 1998, 15).

In this sense, Catholicism was associated, amid others, with high taxation and iniquity (Jay 1980, 390). In the late sixties, the rallying point of the Europhobics, Douglas Jay, did not hesitate to raise this issue in relation to the comments he made on one of his colleagues in the Cabinet, Frank Longford who happened to be pro-Marketeer and Catholic:

«I felt no disillusion towards Frank Longford as a pro-Marketeer. He was a devout Catholic, and I noticed that to many the Common Market tended to be equated with Christendom and Eastern Europe with anti-Christ. This perfectly sincere attitude was even more common among Continental Catholics; including indeed the founding fathers of the Market: Monnet, Spaak, Adenauer and Schumann. But though I understood and respected it, I could not agree that this particular vision of Christendom justified a system of crushingly high taxes on the staple foods of the common people» (Jay 1980, 390).

Colley (1992a & b) has remarked that following Britain's entry in 1972, she could no longer comfortably define herself against the European powers at all. Greenfeld (1992) and McMillan (1995) have also stressed that there must be few cases in history when a tradition (i.e. Protestantism) and the world that describes it have lost so much status in so short a time. In particular, it is argued that religion lost its authority over the other fields of activity; it ceased to be the source of social values and instead of shaping them, had to adapt to social and national ideals. Yet as Colley (1992a & b) has also assumed, the agonies that British politicians of all partisan persuasions, Labour representatives included, so plainly experience in coming to terms with Brussels and its dictates show how rooted the perception of Continental

Europe as the Catholic Other still is. In these circumstances the re-emergence of British nationalism can be seen not just as the natural outcome of cultural diversity but as a response to a broader loss of national, in the sense of British identity. For instance, in the early nineties, during the parliamentary debates on the single currency the official support given by the Labour leadership for the *single currency* apparently touched a sensitive spot in the nationalist psyche of the party. Austin Mitchell asserted that the currency reflected «a nation's uniqueness» (Mitchell 1995, 18). It belonged to an open, dynamic and democratic tradition. Its abolition for the sake of «a *Catholic*, corporatist, continental tradition» was supposed to be «a symptom of impotence and depression» (Mitchell 1991, 18).

6.4 Conclusion

Although the last comment was one of the rare instances that British Protestantism or French anti-Catholicism made its appearance in Labour's discourse during the last two decades, as this chapter has demonstrated, it made its influence felt within the party ranks during the European question since the debates of the sixties and early seventies, and, as Miller has suggested, the latent Protestantism of the British, even in those who no longer subscribe to any formal religion at all, is likely to surface in similar circumstances (Miller 1995, 172). Especially, as seen above, the continuing Britishness of the Labour party with its nonconformist roots and its continuing strength in Scotland and Wales as well as England, allows us to see how much a common Protestantism contributed to an artificial British identity in the past, as primarily, a relational concept. Because the exploration of Britishness in relation to the European Union helps to explain its late twentieth century difficulties, at the time when there are not just doubts about the viability and influence of the Protestant beliefs, but also of the connecting belief in the superiority of British political arrangements.

Indeed, Colley (1992b) has pointed out that Parliament's importance in Britain distinguished its government from that existing in almost every other European state. There was an almost embarrassing consensus in the 18th and 19th centuries that Parliament was unique, splendid and sovereign, the hard-won prerogative of a free and Protestant people. Parliament was part of the Protestant inheritance and, as the following chapter will make clear, the Labour discourse on the European question placed particular emphasis on the institutional heritage of the British nation which was defined in opposition to the supposedly undemocratic nature of the European nations and the New Commonwealth countries.

C H A P T E R 7

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

7.1 Introduction

David Miller (1995) has suggested that the ending of Empire called into question a very long-standing set of beliefs about the intrinsic value of British institutions themselves. However, as I will argue in this chapter, throughout the European debates the Labour party has consistently expressed its loyalty to the institutional heritage of the nation. Because of its Protestant roots, since its inception Labour came to fully adopt the norms and practices of a parliamentary culture (7.3) and, particularly, throughout the post-war period, acknowledge, irrespective of ideological predilections and convictions in relation to the European question, the continuing symbolic significance of Parliament as the guarantor of democracy and the testimony of British uniqueness and exceptionalism (7.4; 7.5). In fact, Westminster nationalism, which emerged as the crucially unifying and differentiating element of a peculiarly religious-imbued political culture, has been the most fundamental part of the British historical tradition (7.2).

7.2 The Houses of Parliament as an Element of British Nationhood

As seen previously, English cultural nationhood was defined in terms of religious and political values and in opposition to the Catholic autocratic Continent. In particular, the concept of British parliamentary sovereignty was developed in opposition to the European Continent: a claim to independence by the weak against the strong, to self-protection against the pretensions of pope and emperor (Wallace 1986, 382). The English Reformation identified the existence of English interests with an autonomous Christian church in Saxon England (Gilroy 1987, 65). 'This Realm of England is an Empire' - the fundamental assertion of the Act of Supremacy of 1534 -

was a declaration of independence from the ties that until then had formally bound the English church and crown to Rome. Indeed, according to Greenfeld (1992), the assertion of the nationality of the English polity in the sixteenth century went hand in hand with the insistence on the people's right of participation in the political process and government through Parliament.

In this case, nationhood, England's being a nation, actually meant such participation. Nationalism in England legitimated and rationalised what Tocqueville later called 'democracy' - that is, the tendency toward equality of condition among different social strata (Greenfeld 1992, 45 & 50). So, the struggle for supremacy between Crown and Parliament, which followed over the next two centuries, was at the same time, as Trevelyan has noted, a struggle to maintain this separation from the Continent, increasingly identified with the autocratic monarchy of France and the dogmatic Roman Catholic Church (Trevelyan 1996, 63-261). Those opposed to monarchy claimed that Parliament was an institution of great antiquity, with origins in the German democratic tradition, from which the Saxons were considered to have originated (MacDougall 1982; Newman 1987; Loughlin 1995). They looked back for the origins of the English constitution to the old Teutonic assembly - the Witenagemot. This so-called «ancient» Parliament articulated and encapsulated a sense of national identity, based on a widespread stereotype about the racial character of the English people who were allegedly of the same blood as the race of conquering Teutons that invaded Britain from northern Germany after the fall of the Roman Empire - a race of superior stock and outstanding character, and possessing a form of parliamentary assembly, the Witenagemot, the prototype of the English Parliament (Loughlin 1995, 11). Hence in mid-seventeenth century England, the ideas of the existence of an Anglo-Saxon Church and Parliament and of an original Anglo-Saxon 'race' suppressed and oppressed by a foreign 'race' since the Norman invasion in 1066 legitimated political revolution (Jones and Keating 1985, 15-9; Miller 1995, 157).

Long before the inception of the British state, therefore the power of the Parliament and national consciousness fed on each other in opposition to Europe (Gilroy 1987, 65; MacDougall 1982; Newman 1987; Greenfeld 1992; Miller 1995). The British state established in the early eighteenth century was largely built upon pre-existing English institutions and governmental practices - the crown, parliament and the unwritten constitution (Ignatieff 1994, 4; Nairn 2000, 41; Langlands 1999, 61), which were associated with a supposedly inherent capacity for freedom (Gilroy 1987, 66). As Miller remarks, many things regarded as primordial features of the nation are in fact artificial inventions for purely political purposes (Miller 1995, 157).

In this respect, the 'ancient Parliament' and its traditional accoutrements - common law, constitution, crown - have provided the Labour party with the myth of British democracy which served as a public expression of the collective self-definition, and its differentiation from supposedly undemocratic nations/races. As the following section points out, due to its noncomfortist roots, Labour espoused wholeheartedly the norms and the practices of the British/English parliamentary culture.

7.3 Labour's Integration to the Parliamentary Political Culture

According to Thompson (1991), dissident Christianity played an integrative, national role throughout the period of the English working class's political formation. From the British triumph over the French Revolution and Napoleon to the imperialist hegemony of 1880-1914, the working class in Britain was adapted to the nation-state positively in the form of nationalism, and negatively in the form of the profound moralism and the ethical conscience that Christianity embodied (Nairn 1972a; c). During this period, radical movements combining a strong class sense and internationalism challenged the mainstream represented, eventually, by the Labour party. But such challenges were unequal to the great historical forces arrayed against them. Although class contestation cannot be eliminated even by all-conquering

nationalism, it can be 'contained' or neutralised over considerable periods of time - on the relationship between 'nation' and 'class' see also the *space* of the nation. In Great Britain the ideology available for this long defensive war of containment was a Christian one. As Kiernan has said, «the 'mythical cable of theology' kept at bay incipient class conflict» (Kiernan 1952, 46).

Energies and emotions, which were dangerous to social order, were released in the harmless congregations of band-meetings, or revivalist campaigns (Thompson *ibid*, 405). All the Nonconformist sects, Methodism included, manipulated the submissiveness of their followers and disciplined all deviant growths within the Church, which could give offence to authority. «They were not only a statement of ecclesiastical ideals but also a religious 'safety valve'», Taylor commented (Taylor 1935, 5).

English separateness and provincialism; English backwardness and traditionalism; English religiosity and moralistic vapouring; paltry English 'empiricism', or instinctive distrust of reason - all these features, which may be seen as distortions of bourgeois development in England, were hammered together during the infancy of the working class (Nairn 1972b; c). Any revolutionary impulse was strangled, and withdrawal was the only possibility, the turning-in of a whole class upon itself. Methodism, as a pitiless ideology of work, and in war periods as the 'chiliasm of the defeated or hopeless' in Karl Mannheim's words, offered the sole escape in the form of, what Thompson describes as 'a ritualised psychic masturbation' (Thompson 1991, 405). It was the paradox of 'a religion of the heart' that it should be notorious for the inhibition of all spontaneity.

Deprived of 'reason', the working class was beaten by repression and forced into a corporative mode of existence and consciousness generating its own values, organisations and manner of life distinct from the whole civilisation round about it. Nonconformity, as Thompson has noted, is self-effacing and apologetic: it asks to be left alone (Thompson 1991, 385). In the very secretiveness of the friendly societies

we had authentic evidence of the growth of independent working-class culture and institutions. This was the sub-culture out of which less stable trade unions grew.

Yet, this apartness of the working class implied a kind of deference - for it resigned everything else to those who possessed authority and wealth. Despite their efforts to create a separate world, a real 'apartheid' of one class (Nairn 1972b, 202), they became a vehicle of assimilation whereby the ruling values, beliefs, prejudice and customs were refracted downwards into the working class. There was a reverence for the state and a profound belief in the necessity and value of state action even when it limited individual liberty (Edwards 1943, 63).

Neither the Utopian-corporative ideology of Owenite trade-unionism (Beer 1920, 160-85; Thompson 1991, 857-87), an attempt to build socialism in and for the working class ignoring the rest of society, nor the Chartist movement (Beer 1920, 280-94; Ashton, Fyson and Roberts 1999), a radical-democratic programme dissociated from the social instinct of the class, could provide reliable answers to their problems. In the end, they were thrown into a timid form of corporate action imitating rather than initiating reforms. This was the time when Methodism began to lose momentum, and emphasis in Methodist thought and concern was transferred from 'what shall I do to be saved?' to entire dependence on state schemes for social and material salvation (Wearmouth 1957, 250) and to nourishing a sense of superiority to foreign exploited masses. In this sense, the leaders of the Labour party have always rejected any kind of political action, which fell outside the framework, and conventions of the parliamentary system. As Miliband noted, the Labour party has not only been a parliamentary party; it has been a party deeply imbued by parliamentarism (Miliband 1964, 14).

A plethora of scholars and academics of Labour party politics have extensively commented on Labour's integration into the British nation, and in particular, into the parliamentary process (Wertheimer 1929, 78; Miliband 1964, 13 & 15; Nairn 1977, 43 & 300; 1999, 25; Hindess 1983, 92; Wainwright 1989, 16;

Leighton 1995, 25; Barnett 1997, 15; Ward 1998, 197; Wickham-Jones 2000a, 17).

Robert Colls has noted that the infant Labour party convinced itself that it could only travel by full affiliation to a political culture where the omnipotence of Parliament was the crucial passport (Colls 1986, 38).

In particular, it has been suggested that unlike many European parties, Labour did not have a tradition of opposition to the state; and nor had it endured a period underground, persecuted as an illegal party (Fielding 1996, 11; Wickham-Jones 2000a, 17). British socialism rejected violence and revolution. The latter were not in accordance with the democratic principles of a Protestant people. Reinforcing the idea that such methods were foreign was the belief that parliamentary democracy also made them unnecessary (Ward *ibid*, 78). Syndicalism and industrial action menaced the parliamentary socialists' version of British national identity (Ward *ibid*, 101). Syndicalism was seen as foreign and could not take root in the political soil of Britain. The concentration on class by syndicalists was one reason why many socialists declared their methods un-English. Ramsay MacDonald had said that «syndicalism was a French stranger in our language with no registered abode as yet» (Ward *ibid*, 90). Instead, the ILP's perception was that its methods for achieving socialism were adopted to suit the British conditions and the national character. Thus in its battle against syndicalist ideas it found itself defending British political institutions as much as its conception of socialism. Its view of national history made parliament the legitimate arena for social change. The House of Commons stood at the centre of the advance to liberty (Ward *ibid*, 101).

Likewise, devoted to the piecemeal improvement of workers' conditions within the existing conservative social framework, trade unionism and Fabian gradualism moved only very slowly and reluctantly back towards any political challenge to the state. On the one hand, though increasingly strong in itself, trade unionism remained mainly deferential to the state and Constitution (Nairn 1977, 43). Rather than perceiving political revolution as the road to socio-economic betterment,

the British workers preferred to see a pragmatic politics evolve bit by bit out of their economic struggle. Thus, working class politics evolved on the back of trade unionism in Britain, emerging quite empirically as a kind of collective, parliamentary voice for a corporate class interest (Nairn 1977, 48). On the other hand, the Webbs praised the particular advantages of the political institutions of the democracy of Great Britain. They noted how parliament had acted upon the national political character. As Sidney Webb argued in 1923, «for the Labour party, it must be plain. Socialism is rooted in political democracy; which necessarily compels us to recognise that every step towards our goal is dependent on gaining the assent and support of at least a numerical majority of the whole people» (Labour Party 1923, 178).

For Paul Ward (1998) the party's deep complicity in the whole ancient institutional system was a prerequisite for Labour yearning to be a national party. Monarchy, Empire and parliament were historical components of Britain and Britishness which were overwhelmingly accepted. As Nairn has put it, the Labour party became just as Britishized as the Conservatives and Liberals had been (Nairn 2000, 41). British socialism was held to ransom by its national culture (Gilroy 1987, 54).

As the European debates will make clearer, the party unanimously never ceased to defend the institutional heritage of the nation against the 'alien' notions of political representation and democracy.

7.4 Labour's Parliamentarism and the Myth of British Democracy

In the early sixties the then party leader Hugh Gaitskell warned his colleagues of the dangers that «our ancient Parliament runs» if Britain eventually became a member of the then Common Market (Gaitskell 1961a, col.1495). His successor in the party leadership, Harold Wilson lamented the fact that «we shall have after 700 years a written constitution, not written by us...» (Wilson 1962b, 16). In the seventies, James Callaghan recalled the «civil war» where the roots of British parliamentarianism lay,

as he claimed (Callaghan 1972b, col.659), while the bellwether of Labour pro-Europeanism at the time, Roy Jenkins was in favour of Britain bringing «more democracy in the political institutions of the Community» (Jenkins 1972b, col.71). Likewise, before he became leader of the party, Michael Foot had already stated his loyalty to the «independent authority of the Parliament» because, according to him, it exemplified «the democratic power to control our destinies» (Foot 1973, 293). Finally, regardless of their intentions to revise the old constitutional order, Tony Blair and Robin Cook have both praised «the first Parliament of the world» (Blair 1996b, 87) as the institution, which has presumably been «the starting point for many democratic systems» (Cook 2000b).

Throughout the European debates, the British Labour party has consistently maintained that the House of Parliament embodies the essence of democracy. In reality, as the above quotes reveal, Labour has fought in defence of its own Whiggish interpretation of history and the British constitution (Butterfield 1931; Marquand 1995b; Ward 1998).

Professor Albert Venn Dicey (1939) noted in his book *The Law of the Constitution*, that «the Rule of Law and legal sovereignty of Parliament upon which the British constitution rests distinguishes the British (or ‘English’, as he preferred to call it) from all other constitutions» (Dicey 1939, 34). The British Constitution has been a typical characteristic of English culture and embodied a particular perception of democracy through the sovereign Parliament. Indeed, for Labour, the «700 years old British unwritten constitution», which rested on «moral than legal grounds» (Jay 1970, col.385), was «the real thing» (Bellenger 1961, col.1692), «embedded deeply in the *hearts and minds* of the British people» (Benn 1971b, col.1761), as the republican of the party, Tony Benn put it. Unlike the «rigid, written» Treaty of Rome which reflected the «undemocratic nature of Community» (Warbey 1962, col.692), the English constitution was considered to be a facet, of the wider life of the national community, springing out of British social history, structure, values and culture,

rather than being superimposed upon British citizens. In this way, an unwritten constitution distils the finest qualities of the national community and enshrines them in a historic compact to which foreigners could not adhere (Gilroy 1990). In this sense, cultural Englishness is a set of private characteristics and ways of doing things that are thought to be typically English (Miller 1995, 172). If character is not the principal organiser of a historical account then institutions are likely to play that role (Wright 1985, 144). Drawing more on historical precedent, mythologising Britain's constitutional past, and placing emphasis on the longevity of the British institutions the representatives of the party portrayed the Crown in Parliament as the unique, treasured possession of the people and home of individual liberty and popular democracy as defined against the supposedly autocratic Europe and the politically 'immature' New Commonwealth.

It was argued that unlike the Common Law, the guarantor of individual liberty and a principle of institutional morality (Jowell 1994, 72), on which, as mentioned above, the British constitution was based, the Roman Law, on which the Rome of Treaty was rested, included «2,000 years of history of several authoritarian Empires - Roman, German and French and the Russian too...» (English 1972, col.1197). Thus, according to the Eurosceptic Labour MPs, the Roman Law represented an authoritarian view of conducting the nation's way of life and a political structure replete with «dictators and military» (Abrahams 1971, 126), that is, «enemies of the democratic institutions of Britain, the sovereign will of the people» (Warbey 1962, col.695). Consequently, different forms of democracy, «different conceptions of law», «more slender parliamentary tradition», «shorter history of stable democratic government» were wholly alien to British democracy and in congruence with the European political traditions (Jay 1968b, 14). Britain's Continental partners were thus considered to be less susceptible to those constitutional values that constituted «the oldest democracy in Europe» (English 1971, col.1152). Hence, the Treaty of Rome was thought to be «pre-Magna Carta» wholly alien to the

British tradition and closely modelled «on the pre-1914 constitution of the German Reichstag» (Warbey 1962, col.692); the European Commission was regarded as «a bureaucratic, autocratic hierarchy» (Warbey 1962, col.693), «the most terrible tyranny» (Roberts 1971, col.1555); and the European Parliament, or merely «Assembly» (*L'Assemblée*) as it used to be called, was considered to be «the most futile talking shop ever invented» (Shore 1973b, 289; Leighton 1982a, col.455). In short, as the self-acclaimed 'True Briton' of the party, Peter Shore put it, «their institutions are certainly not our own and are not responsible to British democracy» (Shore 1971a, col.1123).

It was no wonder then that Labour representatives tended to regard all foreigners as what Kipling called «lesser breeds without the law». Myths and symbols act as 'border guards' distinguishing 'us' from 'them', ascribing permanent differences and leading thus to the construction of racial differences (Armstrong 1982, 6). For example, party representatives alleged that they preferred «the white Commonwealth to the 53 million emerging black people in Africa who at present, as we all know, are not following some of the well-defined democratic practices for which we stand...» (Bellenger 1962, col.540).

From the early stages of the European debates it was evident that blackness had acquired a negative political signification. The party pro and anti-Europeans reached the same conclusion. Roy Jenkins insisted that New Commonwealth's differential cultural status did not make them a coherent association with which Britain could integrate. It was just «a disparate group containing countries of different stages of development and peoples with different religions, different cultures and so on» (Jenkins 1962b, col.724). This amorphous entity was also incompatible with British living standards and in no way could have been an alternative to the Common Market. It was perceived as a «loose consultative unit based on mutual tolerance of very different regimes with very different outlooks» (Jay and Jenkins 1962, 12) to which Labour did not feel any instinctive allegiance. The isolation of an inherently

democratic, Protestant political culture conditioned the existence of the «House and the freedoms of the elected representatives of the people and the people themselves» (Spearing 1977, col.44). In this way, the nation is conceived as a community extended in history and with a distinct character that is natural to its members and alien to foreigners (Miller 1995, 157). As racial thought has exhibited, the isolation of cultures has been the condition for the preservation of the national context of each race (Balibar 1991b, 57). The post-war immigration debates have been a case in point. The exclusion of the black immigrants was based on social and cultural grounds. As Ansell (1997) has assumed, the national community is not open to new people who want to integrate; for «it is a community defined by culture, naturally constituted not only by geographical location» (Balibar 1994).

Already in the immediate post-war period, Rita Hinden of the Fabian Colonial Bureau had remarked that «once we come to the coloured peoples entirely different factors enter» (Hinden 1949, 188). «They are not after all part of a great Christian, Anglo-Saxon conglomeration; their languages and traditions are entirely distinct; they do not easily intermingle with the white people; nor do they always accept the same social values and institutions as the people of the West» (Hinden *ibid*). On the contrary, the ties with the white dominions have been based on racial, religions, sentimental and cultural affinities. «It has been easy for this community of peoples to feel a common loyalty to the Crown, to share the same forms of parliamentary democracy, and the same political and social values», Hinden noted (Hinden *ibid*).

Hence the cultural affinity of the Labour representatives with the transoceanic white Commonwealth, ‘the unique family of nations’ during the European debates. In the late sixties, Herbert Bowden, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, stressed Britain’s ‘kith and kin’ ideas and links with Australia, Canada and New Zealand: «we have links, and very special links, with what are sometimes known as the old Commonwealth countries - people largely from

our own stock, sharing our ideas and our traditions, and with ties that have been tested and have never been found wanting» (Bowden 1967, col.1184). As mentioned earlier, the nation represents the continuity of the extended family from one generation to the next (Anderson 1991, 143).

In his study of racial thought from the late 1890s to the early 1960s, Paul Rich (1986) has maintained that common Anglo-Saxon racial origins in the colonies of white settlement, and the belief that British parliamentary liberties were a product of Anglo-Saxon tribal institutions, have been carried down through centuries and underlay British imperial mission. The Anglo-Saxon racial ideal led some imperial advocates to stress the common ties of 'blood' with the United States and so make a natural ally for Britain as rival European powers like France and Germany challenged British imperial pre-eminence in the late nineteenth century. Inevitably, as mentioned above, the then infant Labour party inherited these notions and never renounced them.

What theoretical racism calls 'race' or 'culture' is therefore a continued origin of the nation, a concentrate of the qualities, which belong to the nationals as their own (Balibar 1991b, 59). For example, it was argued that

«...Australia and New Zealand have a political and parliamentary system based very closely on the British parliamentary tradition has prevailed to this day. Canada combines a parliamentary system modelled very closely on Westminster with a federal structure more like the United States (...) Despite all the contemporary differences (...) this community of language, ideas and political tradition represents something real and valuable which ought to be preserved as (...) the British public feels genuine and deep ties of sentiment towards it...» (Jay 1968b, 14).

The common political culture between Britain and the white Commonwealth was considered to be «a connection which no other European country has with any country in the world. It is a unique connection which arises out of the unique character of our own history» (Shore 1973a, col.580). English law and the parliamentary process were thus presented as the summit of the national, and in

general, Anglo-Saxon civilisation, the pinnacle of Britain's historic achievements worldwide.

During the decolonisation period, as the distance from crude biologism increased, so the question of law became more important as a marker for the cultural processes involved (Gilroy 1990, 267). The black immigrants (and more recently the asylum seekers) have allegedly been unable to adhere to it. Their 'illegal' immigration and propensity to crime have confirmed their alien status. That is why, as seen earlier, criminality provided the principal means to underscore the cultural concerns of the new racism. Yet, Britain's right to control the movement of the undesired aliens and to display welfare chauvinism against them was about to be abolished by the ceding of powers to the European Commission: «we would renounce control over movement of capital, labour and goods...» (Shore 1971a, col.1123). Consequently as «trustees» of their constituents, the Labour MPs considered that what was at stake was the will of the people who demanded «checks and balances in respect of the importation of foreign labour into many of our industries» (Bellenger 1960, col.1136). As a result, already in the sixties, the party leader, Hugh Gaitskell declared that, «the British people now, at this stage, are not prepared to accept supranational majority decisions being taken against them, either in a Council of Ministers or a Federal Parliament, on vital issues...» (Gaitskell 1962b, 161).

As seen in chapter 4, it has become part of the British constitutional conventional wisdom that sovereign power ultimately emanates from the people of the United Kingdom. Jones and Keating (1985) have observed that the sovereignty of Parliament has been closely identified with the nation-state. The English constitutional formula linked the public to the executive power through Parliament (Dyson 1980, 38). Thus, the will of Parliament has been synonymous with the will of the people. The system is said to be democratic because it ensures that government policies reflect «the will of the people» (Birch 1998, 22).

By contrast, Europe was seen as a discrete and separate issue, which could be tacked on to Parliament's traditional business as a kind of optional extra. It was seen as something extraneous, as a separate and insulated political system whose points of contact with the UK Parliament would be very few. It seemed natural to conceive of the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament as in competition with Parliament, rather than Parliament being complementary to Community institutions.

For instance, the proposals for harmonisation of taxation systems without prior authorisation by the national parliaments and the right of the Council of Ministers, as another Roman emperor - «Caesar Augustus» according to Mark Hughes (Hughes 1972, col.1209) - to levy taxes were seen as a direct challenge to the authority of British Parliament, the rights of the people and the British democracy. In fact, the Labour spokespersons, especially the anti-European faction, based their case on the constitutional history of the British Isles.

According to Peter Shore, «the strongest of all our constitutional principles is that Parliament, and in particular the House of Commons which represents the people of this country, alone has the right to levy taxation. That has been the basic constitutional doctrine. Because Parliament three centuries ago insisted on this right, we gradually brought the Crown and the Executive under the control of elected representatives. As we were reminded recently, Parliament made the supply of money to the Government conditional on the remedying of grievances. That was the way in which control by the House of Commons was brought about» (Shore 1972b, col.1165). These comments are part and parcel of the Whig interpretation of history, which studies the past with reference to the present (Butterfield 1931, 12). In this way, the national past worked powerfully in the context of the party consciousness and was mostly related to what Heller (1982) has called the «sense of national existence». As Miller (1995) has suggested, sometimes the back-projection has an explicitly political character.

In particular, Mackenzie has noted that the Commons owed their place in Parliament to the necessity of securing their assent to aids. It was the unwillingness of the Lords to take the responsibility for raising the subsidy demanded in 1254, which had brought the Commons to Westminster. From the moment of their arrival it was inevitable that the Commons, as the ultimate source of revenue, should eventually become the effective controllers of the taxation. This was a very slow process and it was only in the 1660s that the principle that no tax might be imposed without the consent of Parliament, was finally established (Mackenzie 1950, 67). So, for the Labour Eurosceptics it was unacceptable for British MPs to allow «decisions taken by foreigners» (Stonehouse 1961, 212), alien institutions to undo an historical right, the centrepiece of British parliamentarianism, reducing the House of Commons to a toothless institution, «an empty shell where democratic power will become a myth» (Castle 1962, col.691). As a result, after Britain's entry to the EC, the Eurosceptic MPs insisted on «patriating the British constitution» (Shore 1980, col.240), that is, the restoration of the fiscal and legal rights of Parliament from Brussels to Westminster. Because of Britain's different constitutional traditions and history, Labour MPs found it sometimes difficult to comprehend a legislative division of powers between two levers of government.

Practices common to European constitutional history but till then completely alien to British constitutional history were resisted by the majority of the Labour MPs. In fact, when in March 1972 Labour's Shadow Cabinet and NEC opted for a referendum, Roy Jenkins, the deputy leader, resigned, expressing his opposition to a referendum which would frustrate liberal reforms and change the balance of the parliamentary system (*The Times*, 11.4.72). In his memoirs, Jenkins wrote that he and his like-minded pro-European colleague, Shirley Williams, «were resistant on principle to the importation of the novel device of the referendum into our constitutional arrangement because we saw it as being the likely enemy of many progressive causes from the abolition of capital punishment to race relations

legislation to effective land-use planning controls» (Jenkins 1991, 341). In this respect, the referendum should not be seen just as «a device to hold the party together» as most of the literature suggests (Robins 1979, 127; Broad and Geiger 1996, 83; George and Heythorne 1996, 115). Even during the debates on devolution in the nineteen seventies Jenkins figured as the proponent of «an absolutely classic feudal definition of parliamentary sovereignty» (Wilson 1979, 49; Benn 1989, 303; Bogdanor 1999, 178).

Similarly, from the anti-European faction, for Maurice Edelman the referendum was not just a political device for inter or intra-party short-term benefits. Primarily it was regarded as «the instrument of the demagogue and the totalitarian states». As the Labour MP noted, it was «the means by which public opinion is exposed as a device for imposing on the public the views of those who seek to dictate opinion to the public» (Edelman 1971, col.1827). Likewise, amid others, David Ginsburg (1971, col.1532-7) and Dick Taverne (1974, col.1520-4) argued that «the problem (Britain's entry) has to be decided through British institutions of representative democracy» (Ginsburg 1971, col.1354), because «Parliament historically and traditionally is the agency by which the people of this country express their views and those who seek to challenge or attack the right of MPs to declare themselves in this situation are doing a disservice to parliamentary democracy» (Edelman 1971, col.1827).

The anti-Europeans were not alone in arguing that the so-called «Mother of Parliaments» (Ludbrook 1977, 252), the House of Commons, held long traditions, immensely superior to those of the Continentals and, for these reasons, «should give a lead towards democratic procedures» (Wood 1973, ii). As Nairn maintains, even fervent Europeanists still regularly transmitted surreal notions on how good it would be for the Continent to have lessons in democracy from the Mother of Parliaments. Neither side in the debate relaxed its grip on the udders of island constitutionalism for a moment (Nairn 1977, 54). For instance, Leo Abse exalted the «British genius to

create and foster democratic institutions» and, as a result, believed that Britain had «a special contribution to make in shaping new institutional forms and new institutional practices which will feed into the Commission the views and aspirations of the people of Europe» (Abse 1971, col.1890). Similarly, Frank Judd alleged that «only Britain of all nations, with its rugged and deeply rooted democratic traditions has an essential contribution to make in bringing more democratic accountability to the Community» (Judd 1978, col.451). Other pro-European MPs, such as A. Woodburn and D. Marquand, drawing on the war memories (see more in the *time* of the nation), remarked that Britain's absence from the European Community would only «strengthen the enemies of this country, the enemies of democracy and of the democratic left, on the Continent» (Marquand 1971, col.1916). It was even argued that every European country was waiting for Britain to prevent «the rise of other dictators». Woodburn was convinced that «they want us in a united Europe because they realise that this country with its stable institutions is a very important factor in preventing the return of dictatorships and preserving democracy» (Woodburn 1962, col.1035).

In the early 1990s, a considerable number of Labour MPs still adhered to an identity, which, according to David Marquand, still lay under the spell of the relics of the past, especially the Westminster nationalism that embodied the blanket of provincialism, which had enfolded the British political parties for the great part of the post-war period (Marquand 1990, 10). Labour MPs still presented the British Parliament as the bastion of British democracy, the centre of the Empire that «has caused us to be the envy of the greater part of the world» (Shore 1996, col.318). As Andrews has noted, almost half a century after the official demise of the Empire, 'the machinery that ran it is still mostly intact' (Andrews 1996, 131).

Indeed, for the bulk of the scholars of Labour party politics and the constitutional history of the British isles such as Anthony Barnett (1996), Tom Nairn (1988) and David Marquand (2000a), the claim that the British Parliament has been

the mother of democracy and that her Continental partners have been somehow inherently less democratic cannot be easily sustained. According to Miller, the democratic nature of the Westminster model has been more a myth than a living reality and that is why such claims cannot survive critical reflection and canons of rationality (Miller 1995, 157). They are part of artificial or deliberate inventions, which aim to preserve national prerogatives and defend an homogenised way of life from alien forces. The British Labour party has played a great part in sustaining such myths throughout the post-war period.

One myth concerned the democratic credentials of Parliamentary sovereignty. As Leo Amery wrote in *Thoughts on the Constitution*, the British system was "government of the people, for the people, with but not by the people" (Amery 1947). In a diary entry for 24 September 1966, Richard Crossman, who had served nearly two years as a Labour cabinet minister, observed that the idea of giving people a chance to decide things for themselves - the essence of social democracy to his mind - was "extremely unpopular" with most of his colleagues. "They believe," he wrote, "in getting power, making decisions and getting people to agree with the decisions after they've been made . . . The notion of creating . . . a live and articulate public opinion able to criticise actively and make its own choices is something which most socialist politicians keenly resent" (Crossman 1976, 50). Parliamentary sovereignty was built up as a barrier against democracy, as a way of keeping the elite in authority (Nairn 1988, 155). The settlement of 1688 did not divide power between crown, parliament and the law, as some believed. It did not create checks and balances. Instead, it shared undivided power amongst those who entered the political realm. Limited, at first, to a small oligarchy, then, widened after success in war to a greater franchise, the British system extended the sharing but retained its undivided power. This was the secret of its ability to evolve while staying the same (Barnett 1996, 20).

As for the claim enunciated throughout the post-war period that democratic values and practices cannot flourish within the European Union, one should recall that

in 1914, Switzerland, Sweden, Serbia, Norway, Italy, Greece, Germany, France, Finland, Bulgaria, Belgium and Austria all had wider franchises than Britain did. Indeed the only European state, which was even less democratic than Britain in 1914, was Hungary (Colley 1999a, 27-9). Between the Great Reform Act of 1832, which increased the size of the electorate from 4.5 per cent to 7 per cent of the adult population, and the arrival of manhood suffrage in 1918, women could not vote until they reached the age of 30. It is estimated that, in 1914, only 18 per cent of adults in the UK were enfranchised. Most of the men and all of the women who struggled for the country's freedom in the First World War had themselves no freedom to vote. This was not only unimpressive in itself, but it was certainly unimpressive by European standards. As Marquand has noted, the first general election in which every adult citizen had one vote, and no one had more than one, was that of 1950 (Marquand 2000a).

Far from being the embodiment of democracy, as Marquand puts it, the parliamentary culture of the nation has been a vision of insiders not outsiders, of establishments not dissenters (Marquand 2000a). As the recent debates over immigration and asylum showed, Marquand's comment applies no less to the New Labour's attachment to Westminster culture.

7.5 New Labour and the Westminster Culture

Throughout the eighties and early nineties, there were calls from commentators, intellectuals and political figures within the British left for a major transformation of the British constitutional *ancien regime*. Amid others, Tony Wright, David Marquand, Tony Benn and Anthony Barnett each put the case for a constitutional review from a different perspective.

Tony Wright, a political scientist and newly elected Labour MP, stated that democracy in Britain had been artificially grafted on to an «elaborately hierarchical social structure and a rigid class system in a manner which had preserved rather than

supplanted a profoundly authoritarian society» (Foote 1997, 335). He saw a continuation of the old doctrines of whiggism, that is, balance, continuity and adaptation, and as a result, representation and responsibility were transformed into fictions, concealing an increasing shift towards centralised executive power. Similarly, David Marquand, in *The Unprincipled Society* argued that Britain's adjustment problems have as much to do with politics as with economics, and with tacit political understandings as with political institutions. This political culture was one in which society was seen as a collection of separate, atomistic individuals pursuing their private interests without regard for any more general purpose (Marquand 1988). Moreover, Will Hutton's famous *The State We're In* saw Keynes' economics as a solution to a moral rather than an economic problem - the need for commitment and trust which was lacking in monetarist Britain, as John Smith had rightly pointed out earlier. Hutton maintained that co-operation and commitment could only result from the building of an interdependent institutional structure, and this required a very new type of British state. This did not involve the abolition of the monarchy necessarily but it did involve a civic culture based on citizens rather than subjects (Hutton 1995). The republican of old Labour, Tony Benn, in his *Common Sense* advocated a Commonwealth of Britain Bill, demanding a republic based on democratic institutions, with a decentralisation of power to the English regions, as well as to Scotland and Wales, together with the re-establishment of genuine power in local government. Also, he embraced a more institutional approach of radical popular sovereignty manifested in a decentralised polity (Benn and Hood 1993). Anthony Barnett, the creator of *Charter 88*, saw the Europeanisation of British politics as a way of overcoming the submissiveness that afflicted British life (Barnett 1990a, 16). He perceived Europe as a pluralist democratic model, which exposed the inadequacies of British parliamentary absolutism. The Europeanisation of Britain, according to Barnett, was about preserving English traditions of liberty and freedom and respect of law in a European way, which would transform the institutional settlement born in

1688 and formed in the heyday of the Empire. And the way of doing so, was the adoption of a written constitution and assemblies in Scotland and Wales as well as London (Barnett 1990a, 16). For the British Labour party, this should have been not a matter of losing Britain's identity in Europe, but of remaking it as part of European political culture (Barnett 1990b, 19).

The rise of New Labour in the mid nineties and its ensuing constitutional policies reflected Neil Kinnock's 'applied patriotism' («patriotism that springs from the love of people, the commitment to the people» (Kinnock 1991, 319) and John Smith's «new modern conception of citizenship» (Smith 1993a & b), and signaled a further distance from the old constitutional order. As Anthony Giddens notes, disenchantment with neoliberal policies, plus the problems of governability in the globalised world - see in the *space* of the nation more on the relationship between sovereignty and globalisation - were factors leading to the rise of communitarian thinking in Labour (Giddens 2000, 63). It was not accidental that, during a period in which Thatcherite neoliberal economics and bureaucratic rigidities of the central state were discredited, Labour started talking about the 'community'.

The incorporation of the European Human Rights Act (HMSO 1998f) into British law in combination with the radical, though timid devolution of power (Bogdanor 1999, 203; HMSO 1998e; Nairn 1998, 8; 1999; Marquand 1994; 1999a; 2000; Rawnsley 2000, 237; Tomaney 2000; Toynbee 2000; Young 1997a, 19) has shaken the already shaky doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of the Crown-in-Parliament, the so-called «keystone of the constitution» (Dicey 1939). For New Labour, the British institutions no longer reflected the sentiments, loyalties and allegiances of the British public. In particular, the *applied, civic or enlightened patriotism* (see more in chapter 8) of the party leadership (Blair 1999m; 2000c; Brown 1997a, b; Cook 1997b) appeared to draw on the teachings of the ethical tradition of British socialism (Mandelson & Liddle 1996, 4; Jones 1968; Pierson 1973, 1979; Dennis & Hasley 1988). Like Victorian civic patriotism (Wright 2000),

third way politics is assumed to be the politics of involvement in which the role of the local contexts and constituencies is highly appreciated because they are maintained by an internalised sense of identity, loyalty, responsibility and reciprocity.

Despite its initial radical rhetoric, New Labour has inherited the Westminster culture, which has suffered from continuity, traditionalism and complacency that have not been slow to reassert themselves. Marquand (1999b) has commented that although the Labour tribe has moved into new ideological territory, it is still the same tribe. It has carried its culture with it. While the narrow nationalism of the Tories is condemned, the Crown-in-Parliament, which still stands for authoritarianism in British politics, holds a supreme role over the democratic programme of devolution, according to New Labour (Labour Party 1996b). The transformation of Britain from being 'whig and paternal' to being 'modern and democratic' is conducted by means of the *ancien regime*. As Nairn has pointed out, the weak link in the new politics was all along on the Westminster side: «for an undefeated anachronistic state, self-preservation is always likely to be the determining issue» (Nairn 2000, 7).

For instance, the Scotland Act provides in section I for the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. Section 28 provides that this parliament may make laws within its area of competence; subsection 7 declares that

«This section does not affect the power of the Parliament
of the United Kingdom to make laws for Scotland» (HMSO 1998e)

This subsection succinctly lays out the central constitutional principle underlying devolution. It rejects both separatism, under which the Parliament of the United Kingdom would no longer have power to legislate for Scotland at all; and federalism under which the Parliament of the United Kingdom would have power to legislate for Scotland only in certain defined areas, other areas becoming the entire responsibility of the Scottish Parliament. Federalism would have entailed a limitation of parliamentary sovereignty and a legally defined attribution of responsibilities and functions. In a Federal Britain/United Kingdom a constitution would have made

transparent which matters were dealt with at a provincial/regional level and which were dealt with at the federal level (Robbins 1997). Instead, the Act, in theory at least, preserves parliamentary supremacy, and Westminster can, if it wishes, continue to legislate on matters devolved to Scotland (Bogdanor 1999, 203).

Trying to explain the 'New Labour paradox' (see also chapter 5), Marquand has commented that New Labour, in its endeavour to reconstruct the political order on lines appropriate to a modern, post-imperial, late twentieth century society, sought to renew the old Faustian bargain of the left with the old order: power within the existing system, in exchange for adherence to its norms (Marquand 2000a, 24). The former SDP member asserted that like their political ancestors, Blair and his entourage wanted to use the powers available to the autonomous executive of the republican tradition to re-engineer society from the top - not, any longer, in the name of social ownership, or even social citizenship, but in the no less compelling names of equal opportunity and international competitiveness (Marquand 2000a, 25).

Indeed, the undiminished authority of the Parliament makes Blair's populist rhetoric - «we are the servants of the people», he said just after the general election (White 1997a, 9) - and the espousal of a quasi-popular sovereignty, sound unconvincing. In Blair's lexicon, the British people and the British nation are synonymous (Beer 1998, 25). Yet, the populist rationale, which underlines New Labour's rhetoric, cannot undo the much-vaunted parliamentary sovereignty. The 'people's Britain' runs against the grain of British constitution. Popular will works through the filter of representative democracy. As the devolution programme makes clear, Parliament and not The People, is sovereign (Young 1997b, 19). So, a marriage of Burkeian whiggery and ethical socialism appears to loom large over the constitutional agenda of the New Labour government, as Marquand had predicted before the 1997 general election (Marquand 1994, 26).

In relation to Europe, the New Labour government, having initiated the modernisation of the Houses of Parliament with the partial abolition of hereditary

rights, has insisted that Parliament remains the «source of democracy» (Cook 2000d) and «can influence the shape and destination of Europe» (Blair 1998a), and, as seen in the space of the nation, in respect of the border controls, its «sovereignty will remain undiminished» (Blair 1996a, 274; Cook 1997g, 910). Further, the parliamentary debates on the 1999 Immigration Act have exposed, on the one hand, that the preservation of the national essence remains the prerogative of the ‘Mother of Parliaments’; but, on the other hand, according to ECRI, they have contributed to a «general negative climate» towards «specific groups of persons irrespective of whether these persons have a valid claim to remain in the country or not» and, consequently, a public debate which has taken on «racist and xenophobic overtones» (ECRI *ibid*, 18). The recent report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) rebuked the New Labour government for failing to develop «a genuine culture of tolerance and respect of difference», by its quasi-obsession with «security», «economic stability» and «social peace» as particularly embodied in the discriminatory and «restrictive measures» of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act (ECRI *ibid*, 19). Thus, cultural preservation through the construction of symbolic boundaries against the discourses of the Other - the non-EU refugees and asylum seekers- is still mediated through the Houses of Parliament. In other words, British socialism has abandoned its socialism but not its cultural Britishness: Parliament and the parliamentary class or elite. Both remain, primarily, as Nairn noted, «a technique for saving the *national family*» (Nairn 1988, 155).

7.6 Conclusion

Because of its non-conformist roots, Labour party had espoused the norms of the Protestant parliamentarian culture (Langlands 1999, 61). It had become a politically conservative force. During the European debates, the Westminster culture emerged as a kind of symbolic boundary in the party’s discourse against which nations and populations, who did not align with the superior British democratic

standards and common law and needed lessons in democracy from the Mother of Parliaments, were negatively signified and excluded from the national body. Despite the recent radical rhetoric of the party and the constitutional revision of the *ancien regime*, the habits, command structure and instinctive assumptions of parliamentary sovereignty have not largely disappeared from New Labour's cultural Britishness.

As a consequence, even though New Labour now prefers to talk more about allegedly inclusive 'values' and less about exclusive 'institutions' over the European question, as the following chapter also makes clear, its value-loaded, cultural nationhood is primarily top-down and defined through the exclusion and marginalisation of the 'others'.

CHAPTER 8

THE 'ENDURING' VALUES OF NEW LABOUR

8.1 Introduction

As seen previously, the rise of New Labour coincided with an array of timid constitutional changes. Yet, despite its adherence to the Westminster culture, New Labour defines Britishness in relation to Europe more «in terms of values rather than institutions» (Blair 1999h). Even though Parekh has assumed that the real difficulty with any picture of "Britishness" that relies predominantly on shared values is that it is very hard to create a consensus as to what exactly these "values" are and what they will mean in practice (Parekh 2000, 13), in a Downing Street lecture not long ago, the historian Linda Colley talked about «a new, revived citizen nation» (Colley 1999b, 15). The role of the state is crucial to create not clients but citizens. This would make people more relaxed about being citizens of the European Union if they could be brought to accept that such citizenship does not necessarily involve buying into an homogenised European identity, and discarding older, valued points of reference. The emphasis, here, is on values rather than detailed policies and old worn institutions. Even though New Labour government, for reasons explained previously, could not entirely get rid of the Westminster ethos, it continued to see Britain in Europe along these terms.

As a matter of fact, a few months after the 1997 general election, setting out the principles of modern British foreign policy, Tony Blair noted that «an *enlightened patriotism* is based on the right values and principles» (Blair 1997e). Later, at The Hague, putting forward his vision of 'a modern Britain in a modern Europe', the Prime Minister placed emphasis on the «British values of creativity, tolerance, fairness and democracy (which) can influence the shape and destination of Europe» (Blair 1998a). He also stressed that Britain had the ability to «project our values on the world stage, to be open, outward-looking, supportive of free trade, human rights

and democracy and playing a major role in the great international issues of the day» (Blair 1998a). Finally, on the eve of the EU Summit at Feira in June 2000, in a joint article published in the *Financial Times* and *El Mundo*, the British Prime Minister and his Spanish counterpart, Jose Maria Aznar noted that «Europe is based on shared values of liberty, democracy, tolerance and social justice» (Blair and Aznar 2000).

The basic assumption which arises from these quotes and informs the rest of the chapter, is that Britain appears to have a unique grasp of these values that enables her to project them on the European and, in general, world stage. Britain's right to these values is derived from notions of what Gordon Brown (2000a) has called «an internalised sense of kinship» and inherited cultural background, which retains the assumptions the command culture of the Westminster model. Hence, like Protestantism and Parliament, the so-called 'enduring' values, the allegedly defining element of the New Labour's cultural nationhood, suggests continuity over time. In this sense, they are the product of the old constitutional status quo.

Ironically, Gordon Brown is right to suggest that «Britishness lies in something far more subtle and more enduring - born of the qualities and values of our people, *rooted in our history* and land and evolved from *our collective experience over time*» (Brown 2000a). New Labour's cultural nationhood suggests a certain kind of fixity and inheritance of what Blair has called «the values of living that are timeless» (Blair 1993a, 11). Yet, Smith maintains that this sense of the irreplaceability of the cultural values and norms of the political culture very often involves a shared conviction of moral superiority (Smith 1995, 98). The New Labour's invocation of the Victorian entrepreneurialism and command of ethical values such as human rights and democracy implies cultural inequality, or, even, superiority over the rest of the nations (see New Labour's 'greatness in retreat' in the *space* of the nation), and, inevitably, differentiation from, and exclusion of those who do not seem to share the 'tacit codes' and norms of London.

As Vickers (2000) has suggested, this is one of the problematic aspects of the third way politics. The New Labour government's projection of the British notions of 'entrepreneurialism' and 'individual liberty and duty', in respect of the issue of the single market, on the one hand (8.1.1), and, 'democracy', 'internationalism', and 'human rights' in relation to the war in Kosovo, on the other (8.1.2), makes obvious that their perception of the British national culture is constituted through the locus of the 'Other', or, as Bhabba and Jenkins have called it, through the dialogical processes of both group identification and social categorisation, inclusion and exclusion (Bhabba 1990b, 313; Jenkins 1994, 209).

8.2 The 'Entrepreneurial' Britishness

According to David Marquand (1999b), the first New Labour government has espoused a new version of nineteenth century entrepreneurialism. As a matter of fact, at the annual party Conference in 1997, the Prime Minister proclaimed that he wanted «Britain to be a country of enterprise and ambition» (Blair 1997c). Similarly, two years later, at the US-UK joint Enterprise Conference, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown wanted to see «Britain as a world leader in enterprise» (Brown 1999c). Blair's and Brown's shared vision of their country was embodied in the European destiny of Britain. As a result, on the eve of the special meeting of the European Council in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000, which was hailed as «a turning point in Europe's approach to economic and social policy» (Blair 2000b; Schaefer 2000), the British government argued for a new «Entrepreneurial Europe» programme, focusing on innovation and economic dynamism (Vaz 2000a; Blair 2000b; Cook 2000a; b). As both Blair and Brown have argued, Britain's right to «shape the destiny of Europe» (Brown 1997a; b; Blair 1998e) derives from her «creative adaptability and Victorian values, (which have) consisted the essential ingredients of Labour's campaign to revitalise "the British genius"» (White 1997b,

12). In fact, the Victorian entrepreneurialism appears more inclusive in the party's discourse than in the Thatcherite's one of the eighties.

Along the lines of ethical socialism, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, has sought to revisit the meaning and the content of the Victorian entrepreneurialism that the New Right adopted during the previous decade. «Far from being an age of selfish free market individualism», Brown noted, «the Victorian era, so often evoked by Margaret Thatcher, saw 'entrepreneurial vigour' go hand in hand with 'a spirit of responsibility and mutuality'» (White 1997b, 12). A free-for-all market which glorified individualism did not encourage a community spirit, but, instead, created, as Gordon Brown has called, a Britain of strangers rather than a Britain of neighbours or «the little platoons» (Brown 1999a; 2000 a & b). Likewise, the post-war Fabian inspired centralised, managerial state did not leave room for the individual's initiatives. According to Jonathan Sacks, what the Victorians taught New Labour was that wherever people sought collectively to create, the way to do so was to focus more on character and less on governments. Nineteenth century benevolence was rooted in certain assumptions about character. The Victorian society was a society as much informed by moral character as by interests (Sacks 1997, 257).

As Sacks (1997) also tells us, the nineteenth century in Britain and in America had witnessed intense debates about welfare policy. There was a moral imperative to help those in need, but help sometimes provides an incentive to remain in need. On both sides of the Atlantic philanthropists wrestled with the problem of how to balance the alleviation of suffering with the encouragement of independence. There was no easy answer, but some rough-and-ready principles emerged: a Social Darwinist distinction between the 'idle' and the 'deserving' poor, a charitable effort that included education and character formation and a readiness to suspend benefits to those who seemed unwilling to help themselves. In fact, in the nineteenth century, the Victorians constructed their institutions in terms of the moral ideas: virtues and rules, praise and blame, reward and punishment, action and responsibility. These methods

became the model for thousands of philanthropic endeavours in the Victorian age (Sacks 1997, 119).

As a result, despite New Labour's claims to the opposite, exclusion and social classification were the necessary ingredients of the Victorian *civic patriotism*. Samuel (1989b) remarks that a spirit of caste imbued Victorian Britain, with rigid demarcations between 'in' and 'out' groups, and a strict order of preference between them. Hence, the social determination of race as seen in Victorian discourse about the 'residuum' or the 'dangerous classes' (see space of the nation). In spite of the apparent inclusionary rhetoric, New Labour's talk about 'entrepreneurialism' and 'individual liberty and duty' carries the seeds of the same exclusion. As David Marquand has argued, the New Labour government's aim to re-engineer the society and culture so that the economy can compete more effectively in the global market place has given the old, nineteenth century distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor a new lease of life (Marquand 1999a, 45). For example, the changes in their policies as delineated in the Third Way philosophy (Blair 1997e; f; 1998b; d; 1999a; Giddens 1998; 1999; Hargreaves and Christie 1998), away from the Thatcherite crude individualism and the post-war socialist collectivism, have resulted in the redefinition of the inclusive ethical socialist tradition (Bevir 2000) and the revival of the Victorian social classifications.

New Labour's Anglo-Saxon socio-economic model, as has been put forward on the domestic front and projected on the European context, have changed the ethical socialist values and inculcated them with the exclusionary spirit of the Victorian entrepreneurialism. In particular, by implementing the welfare programmes (HMSO 1998a; b; c; d), by putting the issue of employability at the centre of the European agenda (DEE 1998) (see also space of the nation on the issue of the single market) and by introducing the Human Rights Act, the New Labour government put into practice the vision of what Blair has called «one-nation society based on a modern citizenship of rights and duties together» (Blair 1998f). Thus, the moral and inclusive

ethical discourse of New Labour is combined with 'contractual' discourse (Fairclough 2000, 39), which is inevitably exclusionary - more on New Labour's exclusion paradigm see also the debates on asylum in chapter 5.

As Ansell (1997) has argued, while the call for a return to Victorian values is not inherently racist, the implicit moral distinction evoked between deserving and undeserving citizen operates on a terrain that is already heavily racially coded. One of the most allusive passages of the 1997 party manifesto talks of «a government that will govern in the interests of the many, the broad majority of people who work hard, play by the rules, pay their dues and feel let down by a political system that gives the breaks to the few, to an elite at the top» (Labour Party 1997). But the sub-text of this passage, borne in other utterances, is that there may be others (the so-called 'underclass'), on the marginalised outreaches of society, who do not utilise the opportunities of the 'enabling' state ('long-term unemployed', 'lone parents', 'disabled people', 'older benefit claimants') and who do not play by the rules ('illegal immigrants', 'unfounded asylum seekers'). The difficulty of reconciling what often appears to be a somewhat unitary concept of community with an increasingly diverse and multicultural society is evident (Painter 2000, 234). In fact, the distinctiveness of the above populations has been put in cultural and moral terms. The breakdown of the family structure of the underclass and its propensity to criminality do not just indicate social and personal inadequacies as the New Labour leadership asserts (Blair 1996a, 244), but also racial differences (Malik 1996, 202). Members of the 'underclass' are considered to carry some fixed cultural attributes that prevent them from making themselves into good citizens. «There are some people», Blair has said, «who are growing up in a culture almost entirely alienated from society's mainstream» (Blair 1996a, 244).

This notion of mutual rights and responsibilities is now expressed as a market relationship, a modern notion of social justice - «something for something» - which means that being human is comprehended not just in ethical terms of moral

personhood within the community as the ethical socialists argued in the late nineteenth century, but also in terms of responsible conduct. Blair wishes to retrieve from the older and more capitalist version of liberalism «the primacy of individual liberty in the market economy» (Blair 1998a). The skills that the individuals need to develop are instrumental and marketable ones that will increase employability, rather than their autonomy and well-being. Only one individual activity is singled out, that of successful entrepreneurs. The rhetoric of the enterprise culture, ‘choice’, ‘freedom’, ‘individualism’, ‘initiative’ and the rest gives increased scope for one’s identity as a consumer or entrepreneur, but not for other identities. It gives pride of place to entrepreneurial values and to the entrepreneurial character type, but extols particular moral values at the expense of others such as human dignity. Indeed, Marquand has pointed out that *civic patriotism* is positively hostile to identity-choices that threaten the authority of the entrepreneur and the supremacy of entrepreneurial values (Marquand 1997a, 162).

In relation to the European question, the New Labour government holds, in effect, the Social Darwinist doctrine that economic change and adjustment to economic change come, and can only come, through the market: in Albert Hirschman’s (1970) suggestive language, through Exit and the threat of Exit. This undistorted, competitive market rewards economic agents who adjust, and punishes those who fail to adjust; thus, the enterprising and adaptable (Americans and British) prosper, while the unenterprising and unadaptable fall by the wayside (Marquand 1997a, 156). The continental tradition embodied in the 1994 Brussels Commission’s White Paper on *European Social Policy*, having been codified to a limited extent in the Social Charter of the 1991 Maastricht Treaty (from which the Conservative government negotiated an ‘opt out’) approaches the processes of change and adjustment in a more complex way. It does not deny that Exit can and should be supplemented by what Hirschman called Voice: that economic agents are influenced not only by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, but by persuasion,

negotiation and mutual education. In the continental tradition, losers are bought off (as for example in the CAP): a degree of strict allocative economic efficiency is sacrificed for the sake of social peace and political consensus. On the contrary, implicit in the tradition of Anglo-Saxon economic liberalism is the assumption that losers or the non-adaptable must be swept aside - most obviously by the market, but also by the state, whose role is to ensure that market forces are not impeded and that market outcomes are not interfered with.

Etienne Balibar (1991a) has pointed out that behind this situation lie barely reworked variants of the idea that the historical cultures of humanity can be divided into two main groups, the one assumed to be universalistic and progressive, the other supposed irremediably particularistic and primitive. According to the French scholar, we encounter a paradox here: a 'logically coherent' differential racism would be uniformly conservative, arguing for the fixity of all cultures, since on the pretext of protecting European culture and the European way of life from 'Third Worldization', it closes off any path towards real development. But it immediately reintroduces the old distinction between 'closed' and 'static', 'static' and 'enterprising'. The *difference* between cultures, considered as separate entities or separate symbolic structures, refers to *cultural inequality* within the European space itself or more precisely to culture as a structure of inequalities tendentially reproduced. Nowadays, as the previous analysis has made clear, the cultures supposed implicitly *superior* are those, which appreciate and promote 'individual' enterprise, social and political individualism, as against those, which inhibit these things. These are said to be the cultures whose 'spirit of community' is constituted by individualism. Although the concepts of inferiority and superiority implicit in racial hierarchy are part of a buried scientific paradigm, we see how the return of the biological theme is permitted and with it the elaboration of new variants of the biological 'myth' within the framework of a cultural racism (Balibar 1991a, 26). This casts doubts on the accurate 'newness' of new racism as such (Miles 1993a, 36) and it seems that the suppression of the

theme of hierarchy is more apparent than real (Balibar 1991a, 24). The return of the biological themes and the revival of the traditions of Social Darwinism in the Anglo-Saxon countries aim to explain the vital importance of cultural closures and traditions for the accumulation of individual aptitudes and most importantly the 'natural' bases of xenophobia and social aggression (Balibar 1991a, 26). Indeed, behind the talk about entrepreneurialism lies the more elusive issue of national culture. In turn, the language of culture and nation involves a hidden racial narrative.

The party's invocation of the Victorian entrepreneurial Britishness thus contains the seeds of exclusion and intolerance, tending as it does to imply that those citizens who do not display enterprise, creativity and other desired qualities are destined to the social margin (Parekh 2000, 13), or - in the case of the European family of the nation-states - do not merit the same status with the other European nations. As Smith (1995) has argued, only those who share in the public culture of the people, who adhere to the 'civil religion' of the national state, are entitled to a share in those rights and duties. Being member of a 'family' means to understand the tacit codes and share the same values (Ignatieff 1994, 7). As in the case of the English-speaking Commonwealth, the New Labour's European dimension of Britishness draws on the idea of the 'European nation' as a family to isolate the false and exogenous elements.

Even if New Labour does not see Britishness suppressed within a European Community of 'enterprise', 'creativity', 'individuality', 'flexibility' (Blair 1999h), this may not apply to other national identities such as those of Central and Eastern Europe. According to the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, one of the necessary preconditions for the adhesion of the East and Central European countries to the «European family of nations» is the «the development of a democratic civil society and a market economy» (Cook 1997e). National consciousness is derived from sharing values, traditions and plans for the future contained within a particular culture (Guibernau 1996, 67). The failure of those countries to meet the economic and social

demands of 'Entrepreneurial Europe' will put them on the margin of the European 'family', especially as long as the doubts over their law-abiding culture persist. As previously in the case of the black Commonwealth, the question of law still remains important as a marker of cultural identification and differentiation. Lack of the language, the set of symbols and ways of life translates into the impossibility of entering a different culture (Guibernau 1996, 67). As a matter of fact, Barbara Roche has noted that «asylum seekers from Central Europe, especially Poland and the Czech Republic have been overwhelmingly unfounded» (Roche 2000a, col.20). Recently, Tony Blair has personally written to the leaders of the two nations demanding that they take immediate action to stop their nationals from illegally entering Britain (Bambell and Cracknell 2000). Close links between Britain and the two nations date back to the Second World War, when soldiers and airmen from Poland and the then Czechoslovakia fought alongside British forces (Cook 1997f; g) - see war memories in chapter 9. Yet this fact has hardly registered in the memory of some of the New Labour representatives whose concern for cultural preservation under the guise of entrepreneurialism surpasses other humanitarian concerns. Further, (as seen in the *space* of the nation), the Social Darwinist inspired recent predilection for non-EU 'economic migrants with special skills' singles out their enterprise spirit and not their human dignity. On the contrary, the 'illegal', 'unfounded' immigrants and 'bogus' asylum seekers are considered to be a threat to the national welfarism and public order. As Sivanandan (2001) has pointed out, the other side of the coin of fear of strangers is the defence and preservation of 'our people', our way of life, our standard of living, our 'race'.

Likewise, as the war in Kosovo exhibited, the government's projection of British values such as 'internationalism', 'democracy', 'tolerance' and 'human rights' in the context of its 'ethical' foreign policy has been dependent on the *difference* between cultures and the exclusion of those populations who do not fit with the UK's cultural standards.

8.3 The War in Kosovo: For a 'Good International Citizenship'

The war in Kosovo - a war, according to the British Prime Minister, fought «not for territory but for values» (Blair 1999c), a war made «for the sake of humanity» (Blair 1999b), «in support of democracy and justice but also for tolerance» (Blair 1999e) - is an illuminating example of the problem with British values that New Labour wants to project abroad. The war in the Balkans showed how the projection of the 'superior' cultural values such as 'internationalism', 'democracy' and 'human rights' over the non-European world involved the element of 'superiority' over the alien cultures and, hence, the exclusion of the populations coming from these war-torn regions.

As mentioned earlier, the introduction of the European Charter of Human Rights in the British law in 1998 was alleged to be «the harbinger of a new rights and responsibilities' culture» (Straw 2000b; Wintour 2000). Not long after the party came to power, there was an acknowledgement by the government of its 'moral responsibility' for human tragedy overseas. True, the government admitted that the values, which guided Labour's foreign and domestic policies, should be consistent. The much quoted commitment of the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook for an ethical foreign policy concerned with the priority to be accorded to the promotion of human rights: «our foreign policy must have an ethical dimension and must support the demands of other peoples for the democratic rights which we insist for ourselves» (Cook 1997a). Wheeler and Dunne (1998) discerned in New Labour's rhetoric an attempt to define a model of good international citizenship. Already, in his 1997 general election speech in Manchester, Blair had claimed: «We believe that membership of the international community carries with it responsibilities as well as rights. And that is why we will work with others to ensure the promotion of democratic values, respect for human rights, the rule of law...» (Blair 1997a). Nations that wanted rights must accept responsibilities.

In speeches such as the Chicago and South African ones in 1999 (Blair 1999d; Wickham-Jones 2000b, 15), the British Prime Minister extended the logic of the 'rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe' approach (Blair 1996a, 236) to the international arena. In particular, Blair's Chicago speech showed that during the war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), Britain emerged as the judge, jury and executioner of what counts as a human rights violation by taking the lead in developing criteria under which forcible humanitarian intervention could be legitimised, and in establishing a deeper consensus on the standard of civilised conduct expected of governments around the world. In fact, Blair was blunt in outlining his commitment to intervention and claiming a moral underpinning for such acts: «our actions are guided by a more subtle blend of mutual self-interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish» (Blair 1999a).

The events in Kosovo in the spring of 1999 stimulated a new search for a basis for a foreign policy based on the values of the late twentieth century. Although Blair had been briefly a member of the parliamentary Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) at the beginning of his political career (Wickham-Jones 2000b, 7), he was resolute in instigating NATO's military offensive against Serbia and in defending the action on moral grounds. Writing in *Newsweek* for an American audience, Blair argued «for a new internationalism where the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated and for a world where those responsible for such crimes will have nowhere to hide» (Blair 1999c). In June 1999, again in *Newsweek*, he repeated his claims of a new internationalism and argued that NATO's actions represented «a new moral crusade» (Blair 1999i). Blair was not alone in taking a broad view of the UK's interests. Apart from Cook, George Robertson, Labour's defence secretary, as well, said, «I want our armed forces not only to defend our country, but to be a force for good, in a very complicated and a very difficult new world that we're facing» (Robertson 1997). Americans were by far the most significant contributor to Operation Allied Force, launching all the

Tomahawk cruise missiles and flying ninety per cent of the bombing missions (Dunne and Wheeler 2000, 67). Yet, there is no doubt that Tony Blair, Robin Cook and the defence secretary George Robertson enabled the UK to punch above its weight, as all the post-war British administrations did in the past. For instance, when the war was coming to an end the final settlement was not to be decided by the people of this beleaguered country: «it will be peace, on our terms» (Blair 1999f), as Blair said.

As we have already argued in the *space* of the nation and Dunne and Wheeler (2000), Bourne and Cini (2000) and Hodder-Williams (2000) have also suggested, New Labour often suffers from the delusion of great power status, as though the United Kingdom had the economic and military capability to ‘demand’ that the values British cherish be respected by others (Dunne and Wheeler 2000, 73). This is not to imply the government has been inactive in its defence of human rights, with significant deployments of troops and resources in Bosnia and Kosovo; yet, New Labour’s ability to do something about Indonesia, Algeria, Angola, Afghanistan, China, Myanmar and so on is severely limited (Dunne and Wheeler 2000; Chomski 2001). Especially, the UK’s relationship with Indonesia illustrates the limits of a human rights dialogue (Lawler 1999; Pilger 1999). Perhaps the best description of the UK government’s Janus-faced policy towards Indonesia has been offered by an East Timorese activist: «There is a profound contradiction between pushing for a peaceful solution and arming the Indonesian armed forces which are orchestrating the militia death squads and preventing a peaceful solution in East Timor» (Budiardjo 1999).

The case of the arms sale to the Indonesian regime showed that Cook’s promise for an ethical dimension to his foreign policy was a calamitous error. It was an honourable but half-baked claim, hoisting to prominence the false assumption that his predecessors had always been unethical and carrying the implication that he, a principled foreign secretary, would address the harshness of the world from a more elevated position. Yet, as Kellas (1998, 203) has put it, Britain’s continuing aspirations to Great Power status has been in accordance with an emphasis on a

separate, different or even, *superior culture*, which is primarily defined against the 'Other'.

Indeed, New Labour considers that the British notions of democracy, human rights and so on capture a higher cultural echelon than that of the rest of the nations. A focus on good international citizenship and the international community suggests some notion of equality between citizens, which does not fit with Blair's emphasis on the UK's moral leadership and cultural superiority. As Bhikhu Parekh (2000) has commented, it is risky business for New Labour's Britain to aim to become a beacon to the world - «Britain at its best, a beacon of hope, democracy and dynamism to nations and peoples everywhere» (Blair 1999m); «Britain, one of the cradles of European freedom and liberty» (Cook 2000a) - because to imagine that British have some special talents in this area and that the rest of the world eagerly looks to them for moral guidance is to invite disappointment and the charge of hubris (Parekh 2000, 12). In more specific terms, to say that every nation has a 'purpose' - 'destiny' in New Labour's language - is to make the Thatcherite mistake of taking too simplified and singular a view of its history and identity and suppressing its inescapable diversities and disagreements. For the New Right, it was enough to be 'one of them' by not being 'one of us'. Thatcher's cultural Britishness was predicated on a sustained process of purification and exclusion (Dodd 2001, 215). Instead, New Labour's talk about 'internationalism', 'promoting democracy', 'promotion of our values and confidence in our identity' gave off an apparent inclusiveness and tolerance (Dunne and Wheeler 2000, 63). Yet, the exclusion of the Kosovar asylum seekers and refugees from the national body suggests that New Labour's cultural nationhood fails to provide an alternative, less exclusive account. The Under-Secretary of State for Home Office, Mike O'Brien had claimed that «the Human Rights Act 1998 and an ethical foreign policy can be balanced by the firm immigration controls» (O'Brien 1999, col.122). But the stigmatisation of the immigrants and refugees seems to negate the British

notion of human rights and democracy. As Balibar has suggested, the border control has indeed a cultural dimension (Balibar 1994, 339).

Moreover, the ethical credentials of the Labour government were jeopardised by official policy towards the 800,000 refugees who fled to Albania and Macedonia. As Barlett (2000) tells us, the exodus was unprecedented. Local families took in many refugees but were burdened by the added economic cost of caring for the migrants. Most refugees were confined in cramped conditions in the new tent cities hurriedly constructed with aid from the allied countries and calls grew for the allies to take the refugees into their own countries. However, in Balibar's (1991b, 57) terms, New Labour policy appeared to concur with 'boundary maintenance' and isolation of those alien cultures as a precondition for the preservation of the natural milieu of the British race. In essence, they argued that it would be better for the Kosovars - «our fellow human beings», according to the Prime Minister (Blair 1999c) - to remain within the region to facilitate their eventual return home (Schaefer 1999). Ansell (1997) has assumed that new forms of racialised political discourse are not so much against the 'other' or the values of 'alien cultures' as in previous discourses of Empire, as it is for 'us' and the values of Western culture. In other words, exclusionary sentiment orchestrated through racial discourse is less about justifying the lack of civil and political rights of those excluded than about legitimating the 'natural' desire to remain 'oneself'.

Anne Clwyd, the left-wing Labour backbencher, encountered claims, during a visit to the camps, that some refugees were being barred from entry into the UK. She told the House of Commons that «they have been told that Britain did not want them. I found that a very worrying statement indeed and I do not know whether it is true or not. But so far we have only been told that two hundred and fifty Kosovo refugees are coming to this country» (Schaefer 1999). At the same time as the Labour government was focused on the plight of the Kosovar refugees, its asylum bill, about which much talk was made above, was going through parliament. On this issue, one

rather caustic article has emphasised, 'the Kosovar Albanians are the victims of the greatest crime of post war Europe, but as soon as they cross the Channel, they grow horns and become scrounging frauds' (Cohen 1999, 15). Once more, British culture is construed as being homogeneous and inevitably weakened by alien strains, thus unifying people against the racialised other. The 'Other', in the case of the Kosovar refugees, as representative translator of a non-Western culture, posed a threat to the 'British way of life'. In this way, racism is an important secondary bond in the values debate, there for those who wish to discover it (Ansell 1997, 188).

8.4 Conclusion

The maintenance of the basic assumptions of the command culture of the Westminster model has conditioned the New Labour's projection of the so-called enduring values over Europe.

The longevity of British institutions was concomitant with the Protestant notion of the elect nation - on the continuity of British institutions, see also *time* of the nation and, especially, war memories - and the subsequent inscription upon it of particular ideals such as liberty and democracy. This was tied to the negative representations of those nations and populations whose cultural standards (religious, political) were supposedly inferior or constituted a threat to the British ones. National identity becomes understood only in opposition to the other. Hence, culture is playing a unifying and differentiating role at the same time. During the European debates, especially in the early stages, anti-Catholicism was equated with 'corruption', 'conspiracies' and 'authoritarianism'; values considered completely strange to a Protestant freedom-loving, democratic nation. The Houses of Parliament have been depicted as the embodiment of the qualities of the national community. As a consequence those populations who lacked those constitutional values that constituted the 'oldest democracy' in Europe were completely alien to the British tradition and way of life. The immigrants from New Commonwealth were associated with a

dubious sense of law whereas the European nations were regarded as politically unstable and needed to take lessons in democracy from the 'Mother of Parliaments'. The assumptions and relics of the Westminster culture were passed on to New Labour whose constitutional agenda embodies the command structure of the *ancien* institutional status quo.

As a result, the projection of the 'enduring values' such as Victorian entrepreneurialism and democracy, internationalism and human rights on the European and world stage carried with it the internalised sense of superiority, complacency and parochialism of the British political culture and was made possible only through the locus of the 'other'. The social Darwinist classifications entailed by the revival of the Victorian value system led to cultural inequality of the national cultures on the European stage and the exclusion from the British national community of those populations who did not exhibit the merits of entrepreneurialism. Accordingly, during the war in Kosovo Britain emerged as the true defender of democracy and human rights, building at the same time symbolic boundaries for those populations from the war-torn countries. In both cases, the preservation of the national milieu implied the isolation of alien cultures.

However, as Noakes (1998) has suggested, the construction of national values requires the idea of a national past. The projection of a Protestant political culture, the universality of its values and the notions of a democratic and chosen people who, despite suffering and damage, have learned to survive and become «the torch of freedom and liberty» of the whole world would not have been possible without the remembering of a particular past that embodied all the previous cultural attributes and situated British people not only with each other but with their ancestors. The war memories and the summoning up of imperial greatness have served as «quickenings agents to inform a «united people» who they really are (Wright 1985). It is to the temporality of the nation, and in particular, the war memories and the notions of global development that we should now turn.

PART 4

THE TIME OF THE NATION

Several scholars of nationalist thought have placed a particular emphasis on the implied continuity and difference of the national temporality which, seen in chapter 2, is perceived as a shared past (Renan 1990) and a common journey (Anderson 1991; Outlaw 1990).

Anthony Smith (1995) has written that national identity is constructed from a number of related elements, which he categorises as ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic and socio-political. Each of these, he argues, comes to signify a bond of solidarity between members of national communities who are also united by shared national traditions, myths and memories. In fact, although a sense of shared history remains important to contemporary national identities, the latter have to stress the continuity of imagined, communal, contemporary beliefs in order to have the widest appeal possible (Noakes 1998, 9). Anderson's (1991) thesis that the nation is essentially an imagined concept, one that exists primarily in the minds of those who consider themselves its members, illustrates the importance of national identity, particularly, as chapter 9 will argue, in times of war. In particular, the narrative of British history that has fed into constructions of national identity is one that highlights both past glories and national unity in the face of adversity (Colley 1992a & b). Military success against France was taken as a confirmation of a British identity that embodied the root principles of liberalism: Protestantism, limited government, and free commerce overseas.

During the examined period of the European debates, Britain has undergone a crisis of identity, in which the past has provided one of the few secure footholds in an increasingly uncertain present. Ernest Gellner (1997) has emphasised the use of the past as a means of providing some degree of continuity and serving the interests of the present-day leaders. As will be argued, the war memories and the memory of a

benevolent Empire have been strong cards in the hands of all the Labour party leaderships to overcome the European challenge and the crisis of the imperial centre. Central to this narrative has been the Protestant image of 'plucky little Britain' facing overwhelming odds and winning through a combination of cultural and moral superiority (Noakes 1998, 10). The sense of continuity as embodied in the recollections of the 'Dunkirk spirit' and the 'White Man's Burden' has been grafted on to the feelings of adversity and difference. While this sense of difference, of separation from those who are not members of the nation, is a central component of nationalism, the perception of the Labour party's British temporality cannot be made possible without the 'other' temporality.

The perception of the time of the nation either as a shared past or as a historical journey, involves the distracting presence of another temporality that disturbs the contemporaneity of the national present. Homi Bhabba (1990a) has argued that

«emphasis on the temporal dimension of national entities serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force. The people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. The focus on temporality resists the transparent linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes; it provides a perspective on the disjunctive forms of representation that signify a people, a nation or a national culture» (Bhabba 1990a, 292).

The latter are signified in relation to minorities and cultural difference. Thus people are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference where the claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification. We then have a contested cultural territory where the people must be thought in a «double-time»:

«As historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pregiven or constituted historical origin or event; and also as the 'subjects' of a process of signification, of a performative strategy that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as that continual process by which

the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process» (Bhabba 1990a, 297).

In the first case, the re-membering of the pedagogy strategy aims to represent a homogenised community in a succession of historical moments, whereas the «active forgetting» of the performative strategy aims to cast a shadow between the people, differentiating the self from the other. Difference therefore persists in and alongside continuity (Hall 1990, 227).

What follows is the analysis of the memories which either as the possession of heroic past or as a historical journey have encapsulated the double-time (historical continuity and difference) and have endured through the continuous revival in the party discourse during the European debates: the World War II memories (chapter 9) and the memory and practice of a world, benevolent Empire (chapter 10).

CHAPTER 9

WAR MEMORIES

9.1 Introduction

The legacy of the Empire was a telling proof that Great Britain has always been an extraordinarily warlike state, and was for a long time both aggressively and successfully imperialistic. George Orwell in his famous wartime essay *Lion and the Unicorn* (1941) noted that «England resembles a family, a rather stuffy Victorian family...it has its private language and its common memories, and at the approach of an enemy it closes its ranks» (Orwell 1941, 84 & 88). As Orwell's words suggest, the idea of Britons as a family depends in part on a stock of common memories. As Renan put it, «a heroic past, great men, glory - this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea» (Renan 1990, 19). The most stable notion of a heroic past in the Labour discourse is that of World War II. As with any national history, this one has been raided selectively for significance and meaning.

After the Second World War - a time when peace and imperial retreat fostered a highly introverted view of the British past, a period during which Britain has normally been a peaceful, though, an increasingly disgruntled and essentially second-ranking state - historians such as Linda Colley (1992b) tells us that Britain found it easier to understand its past in terms of political, social, religious and cultural divisions than as a one-time great power influencing and being influenced by every continent in the world.

However, experiences of total defeat separated most of the European Continent from Britain, since Britain's 'finest hour' cast something of a paralysing spell on its relations with European countries. On the Continent, the war had not only destroyed industrial plant, transport systems, and economic life generally, but it had disrupted the whole process of political life as well. Countries had been occupied, and

governments had been discredited or had spent the war in exile. And after the war many of the continental countries and particularly France, Italy, Germany and the three Benelux countries were ready to think and act in European terms. The war, though, had been different for the British. It had left them not with a sense of national failure and a feeling of national inadequacy, but with a sense of national achievement, cohesion and an illusion of power. The spirit of the times intoned that Britain's destiny had been determined by her military victory, and nourished the illusion that war had increased the country's inherent strength, not sapped it. It was no wonder that at such a time and in such a mood the British took it for granted that Great Britain was, and would always remain, a first-class world power. She alone of pre-war European great nations had never been reduced to impotence during the war by defeat and occupation. Her formidable armed forces ranked her with Soviet Russia and the United States in the 'Big Three' that had waged and won the war against Nazi Germany (Barnett 1986, 2). They saw themselves still, like their grandfathers, as a senior and superior race (Young 1998, 24). In the continuing mood of victory politicians and people shared an 'invincible confidence in the genius of Britain' (Barnett 1986, 7). The Labour party shared most of these perceptions of Britain's standing as a result of its victorious past.

9.2 War Memories and Labour: A Question of National Character

Inevitably during the European question what was actually remembered was an instinctive national character. In 1962 it was perceived that the decision of Macmillan's Conservative government to apply for British membership of the Common Market was «an appeal of sheer economic and political defeatism» that «undermined both the initiative and the spirit of adventure of the British people» (Warbey 1962, col.689) which had led them to a victorious war: «We ourselves have not had that experience (defeat); we ourselves have not had that need (to form a union)» (Ungoed-Thomas 1961, col.1576). The motto of the time was that the British

«had the power and the authority to go their own way pursuing their own policies and their own courses» (Edelman 1962, col.590). Labour emphasised with their «we stood alone» rhetoric which was reminiscent of a Protestant ethos, that the British had the power and the authority to go their own way as an indication, as seen previously, of a unique national character and a democratic culture. Uwe Kitzinger noted that the peculiar qualities of Britain's state and society seemed to have been vindicated by its ability to stand alone against Hitler, whilst others fell to the invader with alarming rapidity (Kitzinger 1973, 78).

The Second World War confirmed the respect that the British people have in the political institutions and leadership of the society and rooted it in the imagery of the community (Williamson 1988, 167). On these grounds, the Eurosceptic Douglas Jay argued against British entry throughout the European debates that,

«If a country (Britain) with an unbroken record of parliamentary government and civil liberties maintained for centuries were to put all this at risk by merging with a larger group, the first criterion should have been to choose a group with a similar record of stability stretching back, if not so long, at least till its foundation as a state. It is not obvious that Germany and Italy were the leading claimants to this distinction. History suggests the contrary» (Jay 1980, 360)

The very ritual of re-memory proclaimed the continuity of British life and British institutions while foreign tyrants came, briefly puffed themselves up into a menace, and went. Labour Eurosceptics prided themselves that history had shown that in times of crisis the British people had provided «better judgement of the needs, aspirations and ideals of their nation» (Peart 1971, col.1097), and boasted that the last person who said that Britain «could not go it alone was Hitler» whom the British people defied victoriously (Judge 1971, 336). The speeches of Tony Benn spoke the language of national resilience and continuity till the early nineties:

«Apart from Ireland, *we are the only country* in the Community that has not lived under Fascism or Nazism or been occupied by Fascists or Nazis» (Benn 1983, col.684; 1990, 400).

The 'Dunkirk spirit', which accompanied the feelings of national pride and superiority that separated the Continental countries from Britain since the end of the Second World War, underlined this special character of the British. Several scholars have assented to this view. For Miller, although a close study of the evacuation of Dunkirk would reveal many aspects that the myth overlooks, the 'Dunkirk spirit' was taken to show the instinctive solidarity of the British people in the face of a national crisis; it revealed something distinctive about their character: their ability to improvise a solution to a problem without being ordered to do so by some higher-up (Miller 1995, 36). Likewise, Noakes (1998) has pointed out that «the dominant myth of the blitz is that it was a time when the nation, led by Churchill and under bombardment from Hitler, overcame its internal divisions and aligned itself behind shared values of 'freedom', 'democracy' and the 'rights of the individual'. If the Second World War can be seen as a key period in British national history and national identity, representing a moment when all the imagined values of the British nation were widely articulated and shared then the blitz is a key moment in the war: the moment when 'the people' became 'the nation'» (Noakes 1998, 29).

In the mid-sixties, Wilson, assuming the role of «Dunkirk Harold in Churchillian garb» (Morgan 1987, 259) in a Cabinet meeting, wound up saying, «we should have a bash, and if excluded, not whine but create a Dunkirk-type robust British dynamic» (Ziegler 1993, 335).

Above all, the war memories led to the construction of British national character in opposition to that of the main European nations. It is precisely this shared historical experience that has sustained a sense of common nationality alongside an equally powerful sense of difference (Miller 1995, 173). Williams (1983) has noted that war stands out as one of the fundamentally unifying and generalising experiences: the identification of an alien enemy, and with it what is often real danger, powerfully promotes and often completes a national identity. In this sense, the Common Market was stigmatised as a political union consisting of «small Powers» (Bellenger 1960,

col.1137), «countries defeated in the last war, countries disappointed in their own state, countries finding themselves inadequate for their own protection and for their purpose, and, therefore, having to form a new union in order to provide themselves with a sense of security and confidence that they lack» (Ungoed-Thomas 1961, col.1575). Unlike Britain's feelings of pride, the trauma of 1939-45, during which all the Continental European societies were at some stage defeated, occupied, temporarily extinguished as sovereign units, or shamed by the crimes of war, was to much Continental opinion the final act in a crisis of confidence in the nation state as a provider of society and economic welfare (Lord 1996, 40).

In particular, the party representatives associated particular European countries with authoritarianism, militarism and cowardice. Already, in the early sixties, Gaitskell wondered whether the emerging Common Market would be a «Europe of Hitler and Mussolini...» (Gaitskell 1962b, 158).

In fact it was maintained that there was «a sort of hunger for authoritarian government abroad and a feeling of disillusion with the processes and mechanics of democracy itself, particularly in Western Germany, given the way in which nationalism there may so readily take on the forms, and embody some of the principles, of those excessive forms of nationalism that came to power in the 1930s» (Brooks 1966, col.1264). A number of events fomented lingering hostility, especially, towards the Germans.

For example, a highly emotional response was aroused in many Labour circles to the arrival in Wales of German troops on exercise. At the party conference in 1960 H. Fowler argued that «Germany's history shows a strong military element and its people have blindly followed those war leaders into wars» (Fowler 1960, 176). Although the war was long behind them, Labour could not disassociate the new generation of German soldiers from the atrocities of their predecessors. «The young German soldier», it was alleged, «may be a new generation but many of those who now lead him acquiesced against some of the foulest atrocities ever committed»

(Newton 1961, 175). It was alleged that many of those that trained them «had personally served in Hitler's army which set out to enslave the world, which raped almost the whole of Europe, which created the death camps of Auschwitz, Belsen and Buchenwald for the slaughter of millions of innocent men, women and children» (Miller 1961, 176). The long shadows of Nazism were predominant in the Labour members' minds, almost twenty-five years after the end of the war.

In the late sixties, the rise of the right-wing National Democratic party (NDP) in Germany filled Labour with suspicion of the political stability of this country and, of the subsequent effects on the balance of power in Europe. It was openly claimed that there was a resurgence of Nazism in Germany, with not the same names and faces «but the same tactics» (Molloy 1966, col.1248). Obviously affected by Russian fears of a re-unification of Germany, Labour unburied the old worn arguments of German nationalism, at the time when the *Ostpolitik* of Kurt Kiesinger started to take flesh and blood, which was testimony to Federal Germany's economic strength and Britain's inactivity in the European theatre due to her economic weakness and imperial illusions (Northedge 1974, 267). The rise of the National Democratic party (NDP) in Germany also alarmed the pro-European George Brown who admitted that «we cannot pretend that fears of Germany do not exist» (Brown 1966b, col.1173). In reality, between 1949 and 1969 a variety of right wing Parties and organisations, many of which were led by former Nazis or people with close ties to former Nazis, came and departed from the German political scene. At the end of the 1960s the NDP made a strong effort to gain representation in the national parliament, but it failed to clear the 5 percent hurdle necessary for entrance into the legislature (Conradt 1978, 72). After that it faded, as an indication of its poor organisational base and insufficient strength to seriously challenge the Republic. Nevertheless, Stanley Henig warned his colleagues, that one of the mistakes made thirty years ago was that «the western countries failed to take seriously anything happening inside Germany» (Henig 1966, col.1217).

In spite of Willy Brandt's ascension to power in 1969 as head of a Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SDP) - dominated coalition with the Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP) - the first social-democratic chancellor of Germany since Hermann Müller (1930) (Sassoon 1996, 285) - Germany («our enemies in two world wars» (Brown 1971, col.984) was still regarded by some within the party as «a military nation» (Paget 1971, col.399) with «designs on the lands that they lost at the end of that war to Poland and Russia» (Messer 1968, 243). After all, from 1943 Labour was one of the first socialist parties that ceased to communicate officially with the exiled leadership of the German SDP in Britain and cut off financial support for the SDP, except for limited humanitarian purposes. William Gilles, the then International Secretary of the Labour party had expressed the view at that time that 'the Germans' spirit is not really democratic' (D. Benn 1990, 182). No less remarkable was the continuity of these views and the suspicions about Germans in the sixties.

As Robins (1979) and Ziegler (1993) have pointed out, there were long held fears that Germany's new power would be harnessed to *revanchist* policies and frequently the language used in the left-wing Press resorted to the demonology reminiscent of the party pamphlets of the 1930s with sections of German leadership labelled as 'devils', 'savages' and 'wreckers'. To a considerable extent, then, the party's debate on EC was ruled from the grave.

Even in the early eighties the republican Tony Benn noted that «we live with the legacy that Hitler left.» (Benn 1983, col. 687). His perception of the Common Market was immensely coloured by xenophobic feelings:

«I loath the Common Market (...) of course it is really dominated by Germany. All the Common Market countries except Britain have been occupied by Germany, and they have this mixed feeling of hatred and *subservience* towards the Germans. It is such a complex, psychological relationship» (Benn 1990, 234).

As some party representatives further commented, they were «very glad that during the war there was an English Channel between us» (Burstin 1971, 346). In this way, by mobilising the cosy myth of the war, as a powerful frame for feelings of national pride (Waters 1997, 210), as sole proof of being and identity through the construction of the militarist German character, the Labour party's xenophobic arguments acquired a tone deftly encapsulated by David Low's famous and genuinely moving cartoon of a British soldier standing firmly on the British islands raising his fist to a Nazi-dominated Continent, and declaring 'Very well, alone!' The party's and, in general, the country's love affair with the Second World war and the finest hours it enshrines has been driven and shaped by an increasing anxiety about how the nation measures up in the present, and a growing sense of discomfort with the nation's contemporary identity fueled by its post-war decline (Barnett 1986, 2). This led the party spokespersons to a distortion of European history.

Contrary to the widespread belief within the Eurosceptic wing that historically Britain and Germany were natural antagonists, as Paul Kennedy has shown, there is a longer history of collaboration and mutual understanding. Indeed, before 1914, many British politicians and pundits argued that Germany was their natural ally (Kennedy 1980, 41). So, by remembering a certain version of the War too well, they tended to neglect and misperceive their longer history, and so failed to grasp possibilities for the present and the future of the country in the Continent. This treatment of Germany as a perpetual outcast and the nourishment of animosities whose roots went back decades, indicated an unwillingness by Labour to face the reality of a country which struggled to get rid of the demons of the past. Labour's position reflected a backwardness and a parochial assessment of the real facts. George Thomson, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, rightly argued that xenophobic attitudes, such as statements that «German and Italian industries poured millions of pounds into the Hitler and Mussolini coffers» (Taylor 1967, 276), can only «revive

German resentment and help to create the very situation which we should want to avoid» (Thomson 1966, col.1284).

As for the French, Labour constructed them as merely untrustworthy. As Hugh Brown put it, «one cannot trust them» (Brown 1971, col.984). In particular, De Gaulle was regarded as the prisoner of the elements in the army that «washed him up and betrayed their oath to the French Republic; elements like Soustelle who never denied his Fascist considerations and leanings» (Plummer 1958, 205). Gordon Walker reminded, in a contemptuous tone, his counterparts of the role of France in the war, and asserted that he could not imagine Britain in association with «France which was conquered, occupied by and collaborated with Nazi Germany» (Gordon-Walker 1961b, 185).

Finally, the Italians were racially constructed as cowards who sided with the relatively strong nations for their own protection and the achievement of their own goals. For Labour war appeared as the means to attain recognition, to pass, as Elshtain put it, «the definitive sense of political manhood» (Elshtain 1992, 143). In this respect the Italians had failed. They seemed innately weak and incapable of defending themselves. It was actually alleged that Italy was the country that started and ended in the war on the same side (Paget 1971, col.399), because «the Italians cannot fight» (Brown 1971, col.984).

In short, throughout the three main moments of the European debate in the sixties and early seventies (1962, 1967, 1971) Labour Euro-sceptics constructed national characters whose cultural attributes - 'militarism', 'authoritarianism', 'cowardliness' - were essentially different from the 'democratic instincts' and the 'spirit of adventure' of British people. But it was not just the party Eurosceptics who represented Europeans in this way.

For Shirley Williams, Arthur Bottomley, and David Marquand and the rest of the pro-European Labour MPs, Europe was never above suspicion. For instance, Williams was afraid of Britain being outside of the Common Market and thus «leave

Western Germany leading a European bloc» (Williams 1961, 219). Sharing the same concerns, Bottomley doubted deeply German intentions:

«In two wars Germany tried to control economic and social conditions of Europe - they failed. Are we going to let them do it by peaceful means?» (Bottomley 1971, 333).

Along with his pro-European colleagues, Marquand assented to the view that only the British abstention from European affairs would awaken the evils of the past. The role of Britain was held to be crucial for the maintenance of peace and progress in Europe. The lessons of the past became the guide for the present:

«It was partly our fault that because of the Versailles settlement, Hitler came to power in Germany when he did. It was partly because we failed to give the left-wing government in France in the 1930s enough support and security that the second world war took place when it did. It would be a tragedy if the same thing happened again in the 1970s and the 1980s as a result of the action of this House, above all, as a result of the action of my party. That for me is a very powerful reason to think very carefully before rejecting these terms. Entry into the Common Market offers the best practical way by which the values of my party can be realised in practice» (Marquand 1971, col.1916)

For the Labour pro-Europeans the future of the Continent depended on Britain. Their arguments were equally attached to the spirit of national greatness, superiority and pride, complementing the negative racial constructions of the European countries of their Eurosceptic colleagues. «Britain out of Europe who knows where it would lead» was their familiar tone (Bottomley 1971, 333). For them, the Second World War memories reinforced too this feeling of separateness from the Continent and the special character and moral quality of Anglo-Saxon institutions; the image of Britain being the benevolent overseer and the enlightened democratic power in Europe. As Foster has remarked, one of the catalysts of national unity at the time of Dunkirk and the Blitz was the assertion, hammered home again and again by Churchill in his war speeches and maintained by successive generations of British politicians (see Falklands war), that Britain was standing alone in defence of civilised values against the forces of barbarism (Foster 1999, 50). As mentioned in chapter 7,

their desire was to export the rule of law, the constitution and the ideals of peace and freedom - for which their country stood - to the Common Market (Molloy 1971, col.2156). What is implicit in the discourse of the pro-Europeans is the second meaning of time, as a historical journey. In the pro-Europeans' arguments, the cultural and temporal dimensions of Labour Britishness intersected each other. To them, Britain had the 'obligation' on the grounds of her long democratic traditions to assume a kind of civilising role in a Europe replete with lingering suspicions of authoritarianism and carry its nations along the path of progress and democracy.

The past, which this deeper sense of cultural meaning and superiority occupies and enshrines, is not the simple historical past of antecedent events but a precedent and preferred identity that the Second World War is taken to realise. Myths, like the Dunkirk spirit or the Blitz, provide reassurance that the national community of which one now forms part is solidly based in history that it embodies a real continuity between generations; and they perform a moralising role, by holding up before 'us' the virtues of 'our' ancestors and encouraging 'us' to live up to them (Miller 1995, 36). Yet, this dimension of temporality will become clearer in respect of the memories and practice of Empire in chapter 10.

However as mentioned previously, most of these myths were based on a distortion of Britain's democratic traditions and the post-war European history. This applied no less to the historical role of the New Commonwealth. As the Labour party saw it, Britain's world role did not rest on the strength of the United Kingdom alone; it rested also on that of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Although the Empire had produced only one-tenth of the munitions of war supplied to Britain and the Empire together, the war had witnessed a heart-warming revival of imperial loyalties (Barnett 1986, 3). But these imperial loyalties embraced the old white and not the new black countries. Labour spokespeople claimed that they preferred «the white Commonwealth which has shown its practical adherence to the mother country when the mother country has been in danger, to the emerging nations of the black

Commonwealth...» (Bellenger 1962, col.540). It was actually maintained that «without Canada, Australia, New Zealand, who came into the war in 1940, this country would have been overrun by the Germans, and we should not be bothered about the Common Market now» (Lisle 1961, 219).

According to Renan (1990), forgetting is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation. In the same way, as a dialectic of inwardness and outwardness defines one's national identity, a dialectic of remembering and forgetting might be said to sustain it as well. Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the 'habitus' expresses well this dialectic of remembering and forgetting. The 'habitus' refers to the dispositions, practices and routines of the familiar social world. It describes 'the second nature' which people must acquire in order to pass mindlessly through the banal routines of daily life. Bourdieu emphasises the elements of remembering and forgetting: the 'habitus'-embodied history, internalised as a second nature and so forgotten as history - is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. The result is that the past is inhabited in the present in a dialectic of forgotten remembrance (cited in Billig 1995, 42).

Labour forgot that Britain's rise to mercantile dominance and the process of generating the surpluses of wealth, which set its own economic development in motion, were founded on the slave trade and the plantation system in the Americas in the seventeenth century. Similarly, India provided the basis for the foundation of Britain's Asian Empire in the eighteenth century; and the penetration by British trade of Latin America and of the Far East was the centrepiece of Britain's industrial and imperial hegemony in the nineteenth century. In each of these phases, an economic and cultural chain had bound the fate of millions of workers and peasants in the colonial hinterlands to the destiny of rich and poor in Britain. The wealth - drawn off through conquest, colonisation and trade - had enriched one British class after another (Hall 1978, 33). More important, thousands of West Indians and Indians were

recruited to the Royal Air Force and served in the British armed forces in 1939-45, but this fact hardly registered in Labour's memory of the war (Soysal 1996, 69).

Remembering, as Bhabba has said, is never a quiet act of introspection; it is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present - in this case, the loss of Empire (Bhabba 1990b, 195). The war was taken to evoke the British at their best, the qualities of Churchill's «island race». This helped to construct a sense of nation and nationality that excluded the bulk of post-1945 immigrants who were deemed as a distracting presence of another temporality that disturbed the contemporaneity of the national present (Bhabba 1990a, 297). The doubts about the solidarity of the black populations were a case in point: «if this country is in trouble again I hope that some of the newer Commonwealth countries will come to our aid in the same way as the older dominions have done so often...I have some doubts about some of them» (Bellenger 1961, col.1694). For each party leadership, the reference back to Britain's finest hour focused on Britain that was white. In this sense, David Miller has remarked that «in so far as the British people thought about the Empire at all, their attention was more likely to focus on the 'White Dominions' to which relatives might have emigrated, and which were later to supply troops to fight alongside the British in two world wars» (Miller 1995, 168).

In the early sixties, Hugh Gaitskell evoked the role of the old dominions which stood beside Britain against the continental enemies: «I remember Australia, New Zealand and Canada that they came to our aid at once in two World Wars...We, at least, do not intend to forget Vimy Ridge and Gallipoli; we, at least, do not intend to forget the help they gave us after this last war» (Gaitskell 1962b, 161). Only by harking back to the war years could Labour find who were Britain's allies: «I look around to see who are my true comrades...Australia, New Zealand and Canada, when the mother country was in trouble, did not ask when they should come in; they came in at once. Anybody who has fought in a war and has been in the Army knows the true meaning of the word (comradeship)...» (Bellenger 1961, col.1695). It was

actually argued that «only the old Commonwealth nations came into the war and sacrificed their blood and their people for our sake...» (Lisle 1961, 219).

In the same way, Douglas Jay, President of the Board of Trade during the Wilson administrations in mid-sixties, argued that «nobody can pretend that in the last two world wars we had as much help from all the members of the EEC as we did from the English-speaking Commonwealth and the United States» (Jay 1968b, 95). It was imperative for him and many others within the party that the defence of the Commonwealth was not based on sheer trade grounds, but also because these countries «have proved to be our friends, not just in theory, but in hard practice» (Jay 1968a, col.459). But it was not only the phobic Jay who expressed these sentiments. George Thomson, an ardent European and member of the Wilson Cabinet, insisted that «we shall honour those bonds which have linked us so inseparably in the past, and brought them to our side in two world wars» (Thomson 1968, col.539).

Likewise, in the early seventies, during the Heath negotiations, Harold Wilson, while demanding more safeguards for the dairy products of New Zealand from the Tories who allegedly «sold the New Zealand interests short», did not omit to remind his colleagues of the New Zealanders' «spirit of sacrifice in Britain's interest to keep us fed» (Wilson 1971c, 357). «New Zealand», the then party leader said, «is part of our history, of Britain, of national life» (Wilson 1971c, 358). In sharp contrast with the New Commonwealth, the Commonwealth's role during and after the war was considered to be a badge of solidarity of an organic community coming together in times of national crisis because the Commonwealth countries were part of the British way of life as they stood for «social justice and as an example of stable constitutional democracy» (Huckfield 1971, 1958). In this sense, to be obliged to forget was the construction of a discourse on society that performed the problematic totalisation of the national will along cultural criteria such as citizenship capacities - see more in the immigration debates. The profound historical forgetfulness provided exactly that space within which the racist ideas from the imperial past could be elaborated anew in

the new, culturalist discourse (Lawrence 1992, 70). The essence of British culture has, after all, depended on a kind of historical forgetfulness which reworks the whole meaning of «Britishness» in powerful images of the purity of the nation, family and way of life, now jeopardised by the alien, external wedge. As Russell Kerr, the Australian Labour MP, who was a wartime member of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command flying Lancasters over Germany with a mixed Commonwealth aircrew, accusing the Tory government of «short-sightedness and lack of a sense of history», said, «the Commonwealth is based upon democratic decencies and the rule of law...and has contributed substantially to world peace» at variance with the authoritarian spirit of the European countries (Kerr 1972, col.1400).

Finally, during the row over the farm price issue during the Falklands war - see chapter 3 - once more the links, allegiances and everlasting loyalties of the British nation and New Zealand were considered to be forged during the times of emergency such as war time. It was argued that to be part of the British nation was above all to have been there at its 'finest hour':

«There is no alternative outlet for New Zealand butterfat that now comes to the Common Market. Are we elected to this place to eliminate the economy of one of our greatest allies in two world wars?»
(Pavitt 1980, col.943)

«I do not need to be lectured about the contribution that New Zealand made to this country during the last war, or about the amazing and valuable contribution that both New Zealand and Australia made to post-war reconstruction. I hate to think what would have happened to our food supplies in the immediate post-war period but for the co-operation and generosity of our Commonwealth friends in Australia, New Zealand and Canada» (Stoddart 1980a, col.968)

In conclusion, as Hall (1978) has assumed, the development of an indigenous British racism in the post-war period began with profound forgetfulness - loss of historical memory, a kind of historical amnesia, a decisive mental repression - which overtook the British people about race and Empire since the late 1950s. The native,

homegrown variety of racism, as part of the racial *longue duree* (Winant 1994; 2000), began with this attempt to wipe out and efface every trace of the colonial and imperial past. Behind the facades of a society which had fought Hitler to defend human freedom and dignity there were many worrying signs that the values for which Nazi Germany had been opposed - racism, anti-Semitism and authoritarianism - were themselves part of British society (Williamson 1988, 171). Clearly, as seen in previous chapters, that was one effect of the traumatic adjustment to the very process of bringing Empire to an end. As the 'bastard' children of Empire set up camps in the heartlands of the mother country, a degree of internalisation was forced on the reluctant Briton. The blacks were now a home-grown problem. The 'alien' cultures of the blacks were seen as either the cause or else the most visible symptom of the destruction of the 'British way of life'. They were in Britain but, as Labour discourse reveals, not of Britain. They did not just share a common past but also, as the next chapter argues, were not on the same point of the historical journey.

9.3 War Memories and New Labour

Lucy Noakes has argued that as the Second World War inevitably fades from living memory a new sense of shared identity will develop (Noakes 1998, 170). However, a close look at the New Labour discourse tells us that despite their diminished significance during the last stages of the European debate, war memories cannot be so easily discredited as part of the party's temporal nationhood. The myths that have accompanied war memories, especially those concerning the country's national character, have underpinned the New Labour's Britain's 'greatness in retreat', at a time when the rights and privileges of nation-state are challenged by the ongoing European integration.

At the 1996 party Conference, the war memories figured in Tony Blair's definition of the New Labour's view of the British nation:

«Consider a thousand years of British history and what

it tells us (...) two World Wars in which
 our country was bled dry. This is our nation,
 our characteristics - common sense, standing up
 for the underdog, fiercely independent»
 (Blair 1996b, 87)

This spirit of pride is evident when we turn to the 'special relationship' with the Atlantic ally. As mentioned in the *space* of the nation, New Labour's Britishness is not restricted to the European contours. The party has not abandoned Britain's world role pretensions. By standing shoulder to shoulder with Britain's closest ally, America, the Labour party is reconsecrating the special relationship which underwrote the country's finest hours from the Second World War, redeeming its national past, reaffirming its status as a former and future world power, and making thus difficult its adaptation to a European role. Thus, the war memories have strengthened the contemporary vision of 'greatness in retreat' - see *space* of the nation. This perhaps explains Tony Blair's elaborate toast of Bill Clinton at a White House banquet, where, as Martin Kettle notes: 'Blair quoted Harry Hopkins' biblical remarks to Churchill in the midst of the second world war: «Whither thou goest I will go, and whither thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God». Then Blair continued: «And Hopkins paused, and then he said, 'Even to the end', and Churchill wept» (Kettle 1998).

Additionally, for New Labour the significance of war memories is such that the latter continue to divide those members who have a right to belong to the same association of nations with Britain and those who do not. For New Labour, war memories still underline a special character and its arguments are imbued with the spirit of pride and superiority. Tony Blair has said that the European nations owe their freedom to the British soldiers: «British servicemen died to set Europe free» (Blair 2000a). Like previously, Britain feels allegiance only with those European countries who have 'fought' and 'suffered' along with the British soldiers. At the Warsaw Stock Exchange, Tony Blair devoted a considerable part of his speech to the Second

World War and especially recalled the role of Poland and its right to gain entry to the European Union because of that:

«Britain went to war in 1939 because Hitler invaded Poland. Robbed of their own homeland, the Polish people gave themselves selflessly in the liberation of Western Europe, only to see the iron curtain come down on Poland. Winston Churchill said of the pilots who so valiantly and against such odds defended the last bastion of resistance in Europe against Hitler's air armadas that never had so many owed so much to so few. And of those few, the Polish pilots are remembered and revered for their courage, their skill, their idealism. They laid down their lives not in defence of their own country, but in defence of an ideal, in defence of a free Europe. As the Allied forces struggled to roll back fascism, Polish servicemen marched, fought and died for that same ideal, shoulder-to-shoulder with their British comrades; in the Battle of the Atlantic; at Tobruk and Monte Cassino; in Normandy; the unsung heroes of the Special Operations Executive and the most spectacular intelligence coup of the Second World War, Enigma. Few countries have contributed more to the fall of fascism and Soviet dictatorship in Europe. Now we want you in the European Union» (Blair 2000e).

In the same way, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook also praised the role of the Czech Republic during the war: «Czech soldiers and airmen fought alongside British troops during the World War II» (Cook 1997f). In comparison with the other candidate-countries for membership of the EU, Poland and Czech Republic, on the grounds of common memories, appear to have a legitimate right to become members of the European family of nations.

9.4 Conclusion

During the European debates, the double temporality of war memories in the Labour party's discourse was indicated, on the one hand, by the continuity of British life, institutions and shared values of freedom and democracy, and, on the other, by the differentiation from those nations associated with authoritarianism, militarism and cowardice, and by the exclusion of those populations from New Commonwealth who were not registered in Labour's memory of the war. The development of indigenous racism coincided with Britain's adjustment to the loss of Empire and Labour had a

great share in it. Although they have lost their significance the last few years, New Labour has consciously stressed the 'we stood alone' rhetoric in order to sustain not only Britain's special character but also its pride, superiority and 'greatness in retreat' in relation to the other European nations in the face of the ongoing European integration.

Yet, the development of racism, as a result of the disjunctive forms of representation of certain populations who have signified a threat to British way of life, is also made possible by the way the Empire has been remembered.

CHAPTER 10

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

10.1 Introduction

The possession of a heroic past does not exhaust the significance of the time of the nation. Reminiscent of the Romantics, theorists such as Anderson have added that a nation also conceives itself as an organic community moving steadily down (or up) history (Anderson 1991, 26). Lucius Outlaw has argued that evolutionary theory, as opposed to typological thinking, has now become the dominant intellectual framework for explanations of human and natural difference (Outlaw 1990, 67). The ordering of human groups along an ascending scale (from primitive to civilised in the nineteenth century and from underdeveloped to developed in the twentieth) has made possible the equation of race and nation. Indeed, as Kate Manzo has noted, the sense of being at the same point on a historical journey is just as important to national identity as common ownership of the past (Manzo 1996, 63). The memory and practice of Empire, where the twin notions of time - as a possession and a journey - come together to create the British nation as a progenitor of global development constituted the second aspect of the Labour party's temporal Britishness.

10.2 Labour and the 'Trusteeship' concept

However, at the end of the war and throughout the European debates, Labour was in a certain confusion in its attitude towards Commonwealth - a mixture of thought made up, on the one hand, of a recognition of the rights of all people to self-determination; and, on the other, of a sense of responsibility for the welfare of those who were backward. The irony in Labour attitudes was the deployment of the discourse of the economic and moral development of the colonies just when their guardianship was ending. This confusion led to two distinct lines of policy: the

complete shedding of imperialism as far as the more advanced of the dependent peoples were concerned; and the application of the principle of trusteeship - or benevolent imperialism - for the rest.

As a result, as seen in the *space* of the nation, throughout the European debates what was recalled was a benign, nonviolent, benevolent and progressive Empire. Even when the Empire officially ceased to exist, there was a shared assumption of British cultural superiority within the ranks of the party. In concise terms, the end of the Empire was suffused with a general attitude of paternal superiority; the talk was all of 'trusteeship' (Foot 1982a, 638); 'standards' (Henderson 1964, 1177; Jay 1968b, 125; Gaitskell 1970), 'conditions', 'building up', 'guidance' (Wilson 1964a, 424), 'responsibility' (Griffiths 1967, 1130; Callaghan 1987, 313) and 'granting' (Lawrence 1992, 66). These paternalistic beliefs about the Commonwealth were part a wider web of beliefs, which can be traced back to nineteenth century Britain.

Rita Hinden has noted that humanitarianism, a spirit of trusteeship, a sense of mission, and a concept of what was due to growing children were stronger currents of thought than the crude balance-sheets of profit and loss within the ethical strand of British socialism (Hinden 1949, 113). Its inspiration came from the great struggles for the abolition of the slave trade early in the nineteenth century. The Abolitionists were inspired by certain ideas of human rights and liberties and by a love of humanity rather than by economic arguments. Attention was drawn to conditions in Africa and the West Indies. The strong non-conformist conscience of Victorian times which contributed so much to the ethical content of British socialism, could not condone the evils of colonial rule which were gradually becoming known to people at home. This stream of thought did not feel that these problems would be solved automatically by breaking the links between Britain and the Colonies. Instead, it felt that Britain had a positive duty to help in the improvement of colonial conditions and to build up democratic self-government in the colonies (Hinden 1946, 8). Inevitably, the cosmetic

version of the British imperialism - the idea of imperial trusteeship' for the betterment of backward peoples - took shape at the time (Fryer 1984, 165).

Additionally, as seen in the *culture*, racial Anglo-Saxonism became in some respects a natural accompaniment of British overseas imperialism since it was an ideology that both embodied a view of the historical past as well as stressing the common racial make-up of the white British colonies of settlement. It developed though in the wake of a debate about the nature of the British 'national character' in the mid-years of the nineteenth century (Rich 1986, 13). By the turn of the century English people took for granted that Europeans were the top race and that among Europeans, the inhabitants of the British Isles 'had achieved the apogee of human existence and were uniquely endowed by the Creator with qualities and attributes lacking in other lesser human beings (Fryer 1984).

Thus, the trusteeship plank in British imperial policy had two main components: it was a blend of the missionaries' view that Africans 'represented unregenerate mankind, sinful and unwashed' and the pseudo-scientific arguments for racial superiority. Since Africans were inferior, said the trusteeship theory, the British who ruled them owed them a special obligation, not unlike the obligations that decent Englishmen owed to women. (Fryer 1984, 383). The vocabulary of 'advanced' and 'backward' nations/races was a frequent device used by Victorians to understand the international plane since it extended the discourse of British class politics and the debate over the family into the realm of inter-state relations, as seen in previous chapters.

The development of the Commonwealth ideal did much to attenuate the appeal of segregationism in British political discourse on race. The nineteenth century mythology of black races as essentially rural and pastoral peoples governed by norms and values inherently antithetic to those of the urbanised and advanced metropolitan races of Western Europe and North America thus continued to shape and guide much of the mainstream thinking in Britain on race up to the Second World War. As Hinden

(1946; 1949) remarked, between 1933 and 1942 Labour stressed that the British people had a serious 'responsibility for the welfare of these many millions of people' and that 'in raising the standard of life of workers who are now used to depress general world standards, they are not only carrying out principles of justice and equity, but are doing something which will substantially promote the security and welfare of the British people themselves'.

In 1948 Arthur Creech Jones, Labour Colonial Secretary of the Attlee administration, summed up the post war party attitudes to New Commonwealth: «the central purpose of British colonial policy is simple. It is to guide the colonial territories to responsible self-government» (cited in Hinden 1949). The statement was to become a basis of future policy for both Labour and Tory politicians. British left-wing opinion on race and Empire remained ultimately restricted both by its predominant concern with the fostering of black agrarian societies free from penetration or exploitation by white settler capitalism and the championing of the cultural values and folkways of peasant, as opposed to proletarian, social groupings (Rich 1986, 203). This left successive party leaderships unprepared to cope with the advent of black immigrants into urban working class communities in the post-war years. Long after the material conditions that originally gave rise to these racist ideas had disappeared, these ideas went on gripping the minds of the British political establishment. Trusteeship was a concept now accepted by all parties, yet it involved no theory of political development and rested substantially on the ability of local governors and the static nature of tribal rule. The Labour party, while conceding the principle of independence, was too timid to take positive action: maintenance of 'trusteeship' and 'good government' were the first priorities (Davis 1963, 79).

Turning now to the party discourse in the early sixties, Hugh Gaitskell's ideal of «Commonwealth standards» or «ideals» (Gaitskell 1970, 209-211), that is, the notion that it embodied the principle of the richer members helping the poorer ones,

reflected to a great extent the above notions. The party leader of the time put it explicitly when he referred to New Commonwealth nations:

«today as never before in history the so-called backward countries in Asia and Africa are determined to break loose from the static economy with the standard of living permanently anchored to subsistence level; they are determined to imitate the industrialised and developed nations with their rising curves of productivity and their ever-increasing prosperity. But the process of swift transition is a profoundly difficult one for these countries - socially, politically and technically (...) to carry it through there must be help from outside. Thus, (...) the obligation of other Commonwealth countries to help is inescapable»
(Gaitskell 1970, 211)

For the party leader, the social, political and cultural backwardness of the New Commonwealth made it difficult for them to reach the other old Commonwealth countries, which were called to assume the responsibility to help them to reach higher levels of development. The old white Commonwealth, that is, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, was considered as something of the greatest value, with a mission «to spread democratic institutions and ideas and bridge the gulf between races, colours, standards of living and continents» (Jay 1968b, 125). «We all have an obligation», James Griffiths said, «to the countries which in the past were conquered, acquired and...exploited by us» (Griffiths 1967, col.1130). Even as a member of the Common Market, Britain, according to Griffiths, out of moral responsibility and differential nature, had to assume a leading role «to lessen the terrifying gap between the poor and rich nations of the world» (Griffiths *ibid*, col.1131). At the same time, the proposals, enunciated at the time, for a «co-operative Commonwealth» (Castle 1957) and for a «Commonwealth Bank» (C. Jenkins 1961) were both in accordance with the party's residual attachment to the paternalistic, trusteeship credo.

During the European debates every party leadership sought 'safeguards', 'protection' and 'better deals' for the Commonwealth countries on the grounds of possession of a common past. «We have been in control of their destinies for 125 or 130 years», it was argued (Loughlin 1964, 1218). Wilson did not see Britain as a

merely European country. «We have a role in issues going far beyond Europe looking at problems not through European eyes but through eyes whose vision has been sharpened by years of active partnership in the greatest multi-cultural system in the world» (Wilson 1962a, col.1282). That is why, when he announced in the Commons the decision of his government to make a second application for British membership of the EEC, Harold Wilson stated that «we have the bounden duty to seek the necessary safeguards (for the Commonwealth countries)» (Wilson 1967b, col.1073). In the early seventies, Wilson's concern about Commonwealth sugar and New Zealand butter were a matter of «moral obligation» (Callaghan 1987, 313). It was once more due to the «vast experience in terms of aid to the developing world» (Oram 1972, 83) that Britain had to secure the best terms for the Commonwealth countries. Likewise, in the early eighties, Michael Foot, stressing the common past, felt that the Falklands islanders' «trust» in the 'mother country' was the most important reason for the latter to act because «they have looked to us over the past 150 years (...) for special protection» (Foot 1982a, col.639). It was the time when, for the second time in forty years, Britain was defending «civilisation as our ancestors» (English 1982, 1025). Despite the Commonwealth's declining influence, the Labour party as a whole considered that it had to live up to a legacy and fulfil its responsibilities towards the association that enhanced the country's world standing. As Miller (1995) has noted, the historic national community is a community of obligation. Because our forebears have toiled and spilt their blood to build and defend the nation, we who are born into it inherit an obligation to continue their work, which we discharge partly towards our contemporaries and partly towards our descendants. The historical community stretches forward into the future too. This then means that, if we are going to speak of the nation as an ethical community, we are talking about a community that is not one that the present generation can renounce. This involves an essentially historical understanding in which the present generation is seen as heirs to a tradition, which they then pass on to their successors. Of course the story is continually being

rewritten; each generation revises the past as it comes to terms with the problems of the present. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which the past always constrains the present: present identities are built out of the materials that are handed down, not started from scratch (Miller 1995, 175).

So, it was not accidental that it was not just the Eurosceptics who repeatedly maintained that the EEC inhibited British to fulfil «a duty to the outside world» (De Freitas 1970, col.497), to lead «a crusade to raise the living standard of 2,000 million people who are living on the margin of misery» (Henderson 1964, col.1177), but also the ‘moderate’ pro-Europeans such as George Brown and Roy Jenkins who viewed the Commonwealth in terms of «care for the poorer nations of the multiracial association of nations» (Brown 1962, 193) and «world progress» (Jenkins 1972a, 79).

The Labour representatives were adamant in their opinion that their own political and cultural system was superior to all others, that they had a civilising mission. However, as Hinden (1949) had noted, the trouble with all imperial trusteeships was that they infringed the fundamental dignity of the dependent people. «We cannot teach and preach democracy and liberty and equality between all men, far less try to practice these principles in our policy, without ourselves challenging the whole colonial system which rests on autocracy, subjection and flagrant inequality», said the head of the Fabian Colonial Bureau in the forties (Hinden 1949, 172). And she concluded saying that «the imperialist’s ‘blind spot’ is another psychological problem of its own. Perhaps the mere fact of being a ‘master race’ brings down a certain shutter in our understanding of others. Perhaps we suffer, inevitably, from something of patronage, of superiority towards our dependents. And feelings of superiority may be just as harmful to clear thinking as feelings of persecution and inferiority» (Hinden 1949, 174).

Bearing in mind the last comments, we can realise how difficult it was, not just for the Labour representatives, but also for the inhabitants of the British isles to accept the black immigrants as fellow citizens carrying the same rights, enjoying the

same social status and, of course, sharing the same temporality with them. For this reason, we argued in chapter 3 that Labour did not adopt restrictive and discriminative policies in the nineteen sixties by merely responding passively to public hostility towards black immigrants and electoral calculations. Assuming the aforementioned paternalistic attitudes, the party representatives could not regard the New Commonwealth populations who came to Britain as more than 'lesser human beings'. The imperial past in no way determined the shape of contemporary racism, but the attitudes of superior/inferior, responsible/irresponsible, mother/children, barbarism/civilisation, etc. provided a reserve of images upon which racists and racism could play. It helped explain the specific way racist ideas were formed in the British context (Lawrence 1992, 68) and apparently continue to shape contemporary party notions of temporal Britishness.

10.3 New Labour and the Twilight of Greatness

As said earlier, New Labour praises the benevolent legacy of Empire by being most eager to extol an 'outward-looking approach to the world' or 'outward-looking open-mindedness'. Nowhere is this more the case in Africa. Blair has developed an intense fascination with the problems facing sub-Saharan Africa in which there is the patriotic sense of a moral, almost Christian duty – that Britain should have a pivotal role in the world because of a tradition of enlightened foreign policy. According to his cabinet memo: "New Labour is standing up for Britain in the world: fighting for ethical values" (Hunt 2001). It is exactly those values that the British Empire embodied and that New Labour wants to project over Europe.

Tony Blair said to his constituents in his 2000 New Year message:

«There's still no place on earth that has our combination of qualities. Our creativity, our determination, our courage, our sense of fairness. Foreigners will continue to ask: why does such a small country produce so many great actors, singers, authors, architects? Why is there such a concentration of ground-breaking scientists, inventors, thinkers? "The answer I think is that there is

still something called *the British genius* - a collection of qualities deep in our character. We will always stand out as a nation, we will *never be a run-of-the-mill people doing run-of-the-mill things*» (Blair 1999n).

Thus the twilight of Greatness remains unextinguished. New Labour's vision of British leadership in Europe is apparently determined by a deep sense of her past. Promoting a self-confident image for his country Blair noted that history had taught them that British could not be 'run-of-the-mill-people'. The British had still much to be proud of. He also said at the 1996 party Conference:

«Consider a thousand years of British history and what it tells us (...) an Empire, the largest the world has ever known, relinquished in peace, the invention of virtually every scientific device of the modern world (...)» (Blair 1996b, 87)

The leading role assumed by Britain in Europe today lies in representing those key values and ideas of adaptability, outward-looking openness, creativity, solidarity, democracy and enterprise (Blair 1999h), that bound the dominions and made her 'Great' in the past and which today are deemed necessary for the other European nations in order to adapt to the requirements of the modern complex world. Precisely, on these grounds of national character and the teachings of history, Britain has today a «strong sense of national purpose, underpinned by clear values» and aspires to be «a champion of enlargement» (Cook 2000c).

Inevitably, there is no sign or reason of apologising about the atrocities made in its name because of the significant legacy it passed on through its worldwide links and the cultural values that these links reflected. New Labour does not take a defensive posture to British history. As leading commentators have pointed out, «Britain had much to be proud of that did not entail the brutalities of imperialism, but that it co-existed with social and political change. When India achieved independence there were many Tories who believed that Britain, having begun to surrender its Empire, had undermined its own *raison d'être*. It should now be clear that they misread history in the same way that terrified anti-reformers of modern Conservatism

invoke their static view of what nation means» (Young 2000). The party leader has noted that «we should not either be apologising for it, or wringing our hands about the Empire. It is a fact of our history. It was, in many ways, a most extraordinary achievement and it has left us with some very valuable connections - in the Commonwealth, in the English language» (Blair 1997e).

In parallel with the world role assumptions ('greatness in retreat'), New Labour has not apparently abandoned the Social Darwinist spirit of trusteeship as well. Actually, New Labour has transposed the 'trusteeship' concept to Eastern and Central Europe and presents in a paternalistic way the process of enlargement as a kind of civilising mission, as an ascending scale toward a pan-Europeanisation.

In particular, for New Labour, like the Fabians in the immediate post-war period, Europe is divided between the Western democratic, politico-economically modernised societies and the Eastern world where democracy, economic and political integration cannot grow without help from outside. «We in the West» said Blair, «intend to honour a special *sense of obligation*» towards countries, which suffer from the abuse of human rights - see Kosovo (Blair 1999g). According to the Prime Minister, «Britain, France and Germany standing together as partners, friends and equals» are the guarantors of democracy, human rights and prosperity (Blair 1999g). Those countries are responsible for securing a common future for all the nations of the Continent: «let us offer a common vision of the future: where nations become part of the true family of Europe, part of our security, part of our prosperity». (Blair 1999g).

Likewise, speaking to the Hungarian Ambassadors' Conference in Budapest, Robin Cook stressed the socio-economic gap between the Western Europe and the East and Central by noting that «enlargement will end the division of our continent by standards of prosperity» (Cook 2000c). The Foreign Secretary also placed particular emphasis on the socio-political standards to which these countries should adhere in order to become members of the European family: «Enlargement will help make our continent more stable by integrating more countries into a Union that promotes the

principles of democracy, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human and minority rights» (Cook 2000c). As seen in the debates over immigration and asylum, populations from the East and Central Europe whose countries «have not improved their human rights record» (Straw 2001a, col.485) are seen by the New Labour government as just another group of outsiders who must be excluded. Furthermore, personally, Tony Blair has reprimanded Poland and Czech Republic for their inability to deter their nationals from coming illegally to the British Isles (Bamber and Cracknell 2000).

Besides, in relation to the market economy, all the talk is about 'the front-runners' or 'first rank or wave applicants' who have made 'rapid progress', other applicant countries who 'have further to go', in order to meet the 'established criteria' of 'flexibility', 'employability', 'enterpreunership' and take part in the European nation's historical journey (Cook 1997e; f; g). For instance, addressing Czechs, the Foreign Secretary assured them that «Britain is determined to help you make that journey (...) through targeted assistance...» (Cook 1997f). Action Plans are the main vehicle for UK support to individual applicant countries. The aim of the Action Plans is to bring together and enhance the UK's practical support for reforms in the applicant states. It enables better co-ordination and targeting of the UK's pre-accession assistance. Activities include secondments and information exchanges in fields from agriculture to local government reform. Progress across the range of activity under the action plan is reviewed at regular intervals. So far, Action Plans have been developed with the following countries: Bulgaria (2001), Czech Republic (2000), Estonia (1999), Hungary (2000), Latvia (2000), Poland (1999), Romania (2001), Slovakia (2000), Slovenia (1999), Malta (1999) (FCO 1999).

If the 'advanced' and 'backward' races of the New Commonwealth were the object of trusteeship and responsibility in the post-war period, now the 'first wave' and 'second rank' nations of the Central and Eastern Europe should reach specific socio-economic standards in order to gain entry in the European family of nations - see also

the social Darwinist-inspired talk about Victorian entrepreneurialism in chapter 8. As a consequence those nations and populations who do not possess the same historical time or cannot take part in the same journey with Britain are excluded from the European family in which the UK has assumed a leading role.

As mentioned in previous chapters, racism in the post-war period, however, is not simply a rehash of old ideas. There have been many significantly different racisms - each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear. Racism is always historically specific in this way (Hall 1978, 26). Though it may draw on the cultural and ideological traces, which are deposited in a society by previous historical phases, it always assumes specific forms, which arise out of present conditions and organisation of society. As the previous analysis has revealed, the two core images of colonial peoples, as children needing protection or as the equally immature 'brutal savage', gained new meanings and inflexions in the period of decolonisation and, today, again, their signification is being reinvented. In this sense, like its spatial and cultural dimensions the New Labour's temporal Britishness cannot be defined in isolation from the racial 'other' - be they European, Asian or African.

10.3 Conclusion

As the analysis of the Labour party's discourse on the European question has demonstrated so far, national identity refers to the process by which people who live within national borders (*space of the nation*) feel themselves to be members of that nation on the grounds of shared beliefs and values (*culture of the nation*) in opposition to those 'others' who are not considered to be members of the *imagined* community. The disjunctive forms of belonging as embodied in the boundary conscience and cultural identity of the Labour party's Britishness applies no less to the temporal dimension of the nation. War memories underlined the continuity of special qualities of British character by differentiating the latter from alien cultures through the

performative strategy of historical forgetfulness and distortion of European history that led to the negative racialisation of the character of particular nations and populations. In the same way, memories of a benevolent Empire indicated British cultural superiority over those populations who needed protection that resulted in the construction of images (child/parent) which fed racist ideas in the post-war Britain, making thus impossible for the party representatives, or, even indigenous population, to accept black immigrants as fellow citizens. The current problems with immigrants from the East and Central Europe are perhaps due to the fact that New Labour has transposed many of the aforementioned notions of imperial benevolence to the European context. It remains to be seen whether the continuing attachment to varying degrees of whiteness and the negative signification of the blackness can provide New Labour with scapegoats in order to tackle the problems arising from the uncertain position of nation state within the global context.

PART 5

TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSIONS

During the last few years, there has been a sprawling debate about British identity and Europe. What is Britain? When was Britain? Does Britain still exist? Will Britain survive? Political commentators have declared Britain "dead" and "abolished" (Marr 2000; Hitchens 1999). Tom Nairn maintains that the single currency is the precursor of vast social and political mutations in the new millennium (Nairn 2000, 16).

Before we respond to these questions, it is necessary to examine to what extent we have fulfilled our aim of producing a coherent account of the competing visions of the Labour party's Britishness, which is primarily defined against the 'other'. In order to draw out the conclusions of this study, we will first produce a synthesis of the conclusions drawn from each part (11.1), then go on to indicate the political implications arising from this thesis as a whole and, in particular, in answer to the previous concerns (11.2), and, finally, make suggestions for further research directions emerging from this work (11.3).

11.1 A Synthetic Analysis of the Labour party's Britishness, 1961-2000

From the beginning of this thesis we assumed that for the Labour party, the European question was not just a matter of inter- and intra-party competition, party management and conventions of British politics, as most scholars have suggested. The nationalist beliefs of Labour on Europe are a central, if somewhat neglected part of the party's history. From Hugh Gaitskell's 'one thousand years of British history' in

1962 to Tony Blair's 'constructive engagement with our European partners' in 1997, the talk about Europe concerned the different perceptions of national identity among the front- and back-benchers of the party. One of the main tasks of this thesis was to analyse the competing visions of nationhood found within various parliamentary circles of the party and their corresponding intellectual traditions. The latter provide us with the explanatory framework of the various narratives of nation that figured in the Labour party's discourse on Europe.

Following on from the initial assumption comes the particular definition of Labour Britishness as something more than a hybrid of civic and ethnic accounts of the British nation. In this study, national identity can be understood neither as a category nor as a mere account of its civic and ethnic components; it is primarily a matter of boundary negotiation and construction against the 'other', the 'alien'. In more specific terms, it is relational and contextual: the most recurring elements of nationhood, that is, space, culture and time become understood only in opposition to another race coded as 'other', the 'different' (relational), in moments of anxiety attendant upon changing global power relations (contextual). Race, coded as identity and difference, becomes a constitutive element in the definition of nation whose examination can be possible within a wider canvas. The disintegration and the loss of the Empire, the mass movement of populations from the Commonwealth to the mother country, the economic crises in the 1970s, the imperial adventure in Falklands, the ongoing integration and enlargement of the European Union, are some of the global changes against which the European debates were unfolded the last forty years.

Bearing in mind the above assumptions, the purpose of this conclusion is not simply to reiterate the arguments of each chapter separately. What I intend to do is to give a synthetic account of Labour Britishness in which its spatial, cultural and temporal components intersect each other. A mere account of the conclusions drawn from each part, let alone each chapter, cannot provide us with a full picture of the Labour party's Britishness. Even though the spatial component has been the most

salient aspect of the conceptions of British nation, it cannot always explain everything about Labour nationalism. What follows is the analysis of the three dominant spatial perceptions of British nation found in Labour discourse over the European question along with their cultural and temporal components in order to consider in a following section their possible political implications for current policy choices.

As seen in *Part 2*, the *space* of the nation in Labour's discourse appeared in three different forms: the imperial of Britain and the Commonwealth; the Little Englander of the British Isles; and the European of Britain in the EC.

First, Commonwealth appeared as the fulcrum of the Labour's post-war foreign policy. From its inception, the imperial thought of the Labour party had a humanitarian colouration. For the Fabians, who, in comparison with the other two founding socialist groups (marxists and ethical socialists), were most outspoken in support for imperialism, the question at issue was whether the British Empire could be made into an agency for good. Fabian imperialism defined Empire as Commonwealth and as a 'partnership' between the races and defended imperialism as long as it involved a moral obligation. However, the Fabians' notion of 'moral obligation' was conditioned by the perceived innate inferiority of the colonised. For many years the Fabians continued to treat Africans as 'sub- human'. Differences in law, custom and civilisation were used to construe human distinction. Later, Labour's construction of Commonwealth was built around a particular understanding of what constituted readiness for independence creating thus the distinction between old and new Commonwealth which became important during the immigration debates in the post-war years. As a matter of fact, Labour's discourse on Europe borrowed and re-worked elements from that missionary liberalism in order to defend and re-enact the imperial 'imagined' space as an index of greatness and a sign of a world power with still a 'civilising', 'moral' mission around the world.

Thus, defying trading patterns, politico-economic transoceanic fantasies in Labour revived the White Man's Burden and made the Common Market look like a

narrow association with insignificant world influence. Gaitskell's ideal of 'Commonwealth standards', Wilson's belief in the Greater Britain ('Britain's frontier at the Himalayas') and the assumption of a peace-keeping role in Asia were evidence for the sheer breadth of this largesse which was expected to enfold the world's poor shielding them from Brussels. In the 1970s, the end of the 'East of Suez' role did not mean that the British socialists abandoned the 'post-imperial Great power syndrome'. One of the central objections of Labour to the terms of entry negotiated by the Conservative government of Edward Heath in 1972 was the protection of agricultural exports to Britain from Australia and New Zealand. Heath's arrangements were seen as a 'betrayal of the Commonwealth', whereas pro-Europeans presented Europe as a surrogate for the lost Empire and expressed concerns for a more 'outward-looking foreign policy'. Like their colleagues, the European-minded MPs were not accustomed to seeing Britain as a medium size country. As a result, in the early 1980s, a crisis in one of the post-imperial leftovers, such as the Falklands Islands, brought to the surface the ever-lasting imperial loyalties. The 'defence of the rights of the people' by words alone could not satisfy the Labour party's liberal imperialism. The imagery of a 'sceptred isle set in a silver sea', powerfully supported by the English-speaking world from across the seas, continued to set the context for Labour's entire foreign policy, not only its European policy. The Falklands episode reignited the anti-narrowness grandeur so that the role of the Europeans during the crisis was judged along these terms. As the ensuing debates over CAP showed, Europeans were still the 'narrow-minded people', whereas the Commonwealth people were the real patriots. Finally, the transoceanic identity remains unextinguished in New Labour's psyche. The balancing influence between the American continent and Europe is the self-acclaimed role assumed by Britain due to her glorious past and world links. Britain as a European nation still embodies the connection between the English speaking world transplanting into the Continent those values and principles that have enabled her and America to respond to the new challenges of the global

economy. Accordingly, British premier's favourite motto, when talking about America, has been that «there is no more important task in international statesmanship today than to bind America and Europe close together» (Blair 2000d). The issues of the single market and defence indicate New Labour's adherence to the globalisers.

Delusions of grandeur and claims of moral superiority remained linked to the racially discriminating practices that the party adopted against those 'others' who did not share the character of the national community. Whereas Commonwealth stood for British greatness, the postcolonial black immigration in the sixties and seventies questioned the standing of the British political community. As the immigration debates of that period have unveiled, alien cultures were alleged to embody a threat, which in turn, invited the conclusion that national decline and weakness had been caused by the arrival of blacks.

First, Labour reinforced the image of the coloured minorities as suitable for menial, un-British jobs. Thus, the political community of the Commonwealth was ruptured by a notion of labour market, and the union of British brethren became a pool of mobile labour, which was in turn associated with arguments about social pressure and prior claims on resources. Racism appeared as a discourse of marginalisation, which is integral to a process of domination. Contrary to the conventional wisdom in the literature, Labour did not reflect popular racism; rather, Labour instigated it by adopting discriminating practices. Second, the party representatives voiced arguments about the irreconcilability of the British way of life with that of the coloured Commonwealth citizens. The restrictive character of the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts in 1968 and 1971 narrowed the expansive ideology of the Commonwealth and the imperial family of nations bonded in common citizenship to a more parochial that saw culture in neat and tidy national formations. Labour parliamentary references to immigrants invoked notions of development (literacy, education and competence in English) as indicative of *difference*. Hence, multiculturalism represented a means to an unequal society. In the 1980s, the

immigrant from the New Commonwealth was still the unwanted, the undesirable, despite the assurances given by some MPs for a less racist policy. Nowadays, refugees and asylum seekers have been racialised along the same lines.

As becomes evident, the imperial vision of the British nation in Labour's discourse cannot be examined in solely geographical terms. Cultural and temporal elements intersect with space.

In relation to common culture, nationalism relies heavily on the idea of nation as a family with myths and symbols which act as 'border guards', distinguishing 'us' from 'them'. In particular, the Houses of Parliament have been regarded as the summit of Anglo-Saxon civilisation. Especially, in the post-war period, as crude biologism gave way to new (cultural) racism, law and parliamentary process became more important as a marker for the cultural processes. In this sense, the black immigrants were considered unable to adhere to the British culture. Illegal immigration and propensity to criminal activities confirmed their alien status. As a result, the protection of the rights and welfare of the British people justified racial discrimination against the immigrants. Apart from cultural distinctiveness, the extra-territorial vision of Commonwealth also involved a distinctive temporality.

The sense of shared time in this thesis is termed as a possession of a heroic past and as a historical journey. First, memory and practice of Empire came together to create the British nation as a progenitor of global development. As seen above, throughout the European debates what was recalled was a benign and benevolent Empire. All the post-war party leaders subscribed to it. This meant, on the one hand, the defence of the rights of all the people and, on the other, a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the backward ones. This led to the shedding of imperialism as far as the more advanced people were concerned and the application of the trusteeship for the rest. Hence, the exclusion and the inscription of cultural differences, which stressed the unsuitability of Commonwealth people who could not be part of the same journey as the indigenous population. Second, in relation to war memories, to the

party representatives, the role of the old Commonwealth during the war was considered to be a badge of solidarity of an organic community. Instead, the New Commonwealth was not considered part of the historical journey. They were not there and did not share in Britain's greatness. Hence, they were somehow inferior citizens.

But the imperial vision of the British nation was not the only layer of Labour Britishness. Little Englanderism gained prominence at a time when the Commonwealth was in decline and the international financial system exerted huge pressure on the British economy. In the 1970s, to a significant segment of the party it appeared that the only way to respond effectively to «British degeneration» was to become «a nation of Little Englanders». Little Englanderism was dominant in the ethical tradition of British socialism. Robert Blatchford exhibited a very insular ideal of a self-sufficient community free from foreign influences. As a consequence, the nation and the working class of other nations were always potential enemies, for the prominent ethical socialist. Radicalism ('Britain for the British'), economic nationalism and racialism intersected each other. In similar terms, the radical expression of the Labour party in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Bennite New Left, put forward their own populist, though insular vision. Thus, Labour turned to a kind of economic nationalism as expressed in the *Programmes* of 1973, 1976 and the Alternative Economic Strategy - which was a combination of central planning, public ownership, import controls and industrial democracy - and became the basis of the 1983 election manifesto that presented a non-nuclear 'Fortress Britain'. In essence, Little Englanderism was mainly associated with a shared reluctance within the party to see any weakening of the powers which a future Labour government might wish to use to control or direct its own affairs, either on the economic front or over the border controls. Yet, the arguments over sovereignty at that time were more about what it meant to be British in a world without Empire; what was its standing among the other nations. These concerns were articulated in renewed interpretations of warfare. The instinctive movement towards the en-closure of the nation, made race become the

framework through which the crisis was experienced and the means by which this crisis was to be resolved. Echoing Blatchford, Labour defended the welfare state in racialised terms, as 'our' welfare system that should be used to benefit 'us' and should not be exploited by 'them'. As a result, all the party talk was about farmers worried about 'fewer defences' against European imports, fears of a wholesale invasion of Britain by workers from across the Channel.

Cultural and temporal elements interacted with the narrow vision of Britishness. On the one hand, culturally, French anti-Catholicism presented Britain with the self-image of a Protestant 'freedom-loving' people in contrast to the Continentals' 'absolutism'. In this sense, Labour's Protestant inner beliefs made them feel as a people apart, an insular nation. In their thinking, Britain had a moral mission towards the underdeveloped world through the special relationship with the Commonwealth; by contrast, at the time of Little Englander isolationism, Catholicism was associated with 'higher taxes' and iniquity. Although religion has lost its power on the party's thinking during the last two decades, Labour's latent Protestantism might resurface in the face of a renewed confrontation with the Europeans.

Furthermore, the Houses of Parliament, whose Protestant nature is undeniable, were depicted as the guarantors of the rights of the British people, whereas Europeans were presented as strangers to and enemies of the British democracy. Hence, the calls coming from the Little Englander camp for the restoration of the fiscal and legal rights of Parliament from Brussels to Westminster. On the other hand, memories of the Second World War (*time* of the nation) reinforced this feeling of separateness from the Continent and of the special character and moral superiority of the Anglo-Saxon institutions; the image of Britain being the benevolent overseer and the enlightened democratic power in Europe. Labour emphasised with their «we stood alone» rhetoric, which was reminiscent of a Protestant ethos, that the British had the power and the authority to go their own way, as an indication of a unique national character and a democratic culture.

Finally, Britain as a European nation, as the third vision of Labour Britishness, has dominated the party's thinking, especially during the last ten years. Already, in the post-war period, the pressure groups in the party had assented to some form of a united Europe in which Britain would have a prominent role due to her imperial links and democratic traditions. Despite the federal and trans-continental visions voiced within the Fabian Society and the ILP, however, what finally prevailed was the Europe of nation states. Accordingly, the majority of Labour MPs favoured the functional approach during the European debates. The national instrumentalisation of the European idea was the essence of their arguments. Since the sixties, no speech was made by Europhile MPs that said in plain terms that national sovereignty would be lost. The retention of powers over matters such as taxation, social policy or border controls and the reluctance to proceed to a federal Europe have been linked with exclusionary measures for those who fall outside the European context. The New Labour government espoused intergovernmentalism within the European Union as a response of the nation state to globalisation. Despite its radical domestic agenda, New Labour looks towards Europe in terms of 'pooling' rather than 'surrendering' sovereignty. While co-operating with other European nation states on issues such as social policies, in contrast, on other issues, such as border controls, immigration, single currency, and defence, the New Labour government's stance on Europe is placed in the context of its continuing Britishness which is now defined against the non-European 'other'. The Immigration and Asylum 1999 Act shows that the European dimension of the national essence is revealed in opposition to refugees and asylum seekers. New Labour's domestic Darwinian social policies have defined the substantive core of the discriminatory policies against non-European refugees or asylum seekers (voucher system, forcible dispersal system). These policies have revived the Victorian-style conditions of poverty and destitution, cultivating, thus, the ground for the general public's feelings of insecurity and hatred towards one specific group of persons.

As a consequence, the cultural aspect of the European layer of Britishness has to do with British law. As with the decolonisation, law and order have been the important markers for negative racialisation of the non-British. Thus, cultural preservation through the construction of symbolic boundaries against the discourses of the Other - the non-EU refugees and asylum seekers- is still mediated through the 'Mother of Parliaments'. Further, the value system ('enduring values') that New Labour has projected over the European question has invoked the very Victorian concepts of 'entrepreneurialism', the 'idle' and the 'deserving'/'undeserving' poor or citizen which operate on a terrain that is already heavily racially coded. New Labour's Britain appears to have a unique grasp of these values. As the war in Kosovo also showed, New Labour considers that the British notion of democracy, human rights and internationalism captures a higher cultural echelon than that of other nations. Further, the temporal element of the Europeanised Britishness supports the cultural superiority of New Labour's Britain.

Indeed, New Labour has transposed the 'trusteeship' concept to Eastern and Central Europe and presents in a paternalistic way the process of EU enlargement as a kind of civilising mission, as an ascending scale toward a pan-Europeanisation. All the talk is about 'the front-runners' or 'first rank or wave applicants' who have made 'rapid progress', other applicant countries who 'have further to go', in order to meet the 'established criteria' of 'flexibility', 'employability', 'enterpreunership'. In addition, further evidence is provided by war memories, which underline in New Labour discourse a special character while its arguments are imbued with the spirit of pride and superiority; New Labour's Britain feels allegiance only with those European countries who have 'fought' and 'suffered' along with the British soldiers.

Considering the above synthesis of Labour Britishness, one may suggest that the 'other' has been the essential condition for the three main narratives of Britishness (imperial, isolationist and European) found in the Labour party's discourse during the

European debate. Following on from this, the next two sections comment on the political implications and the potential research directions.

11.2 The Political Implications

One of the issues that this thesis should address is whether the current European dimension of Labour Britishness still requires the non-European 'other'. Judging from the initial steps taken from the second New Labour administration, one can safely assume that the above synthesis of Labour Britishness proves to be a useful guide for the future implications of the party's European policy, in terms of its own view of nationhood.

In particular, the signs are that the European destiny of Britain will continue to be defined against the non-European 'other', as the new Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw sees Europe «as an instrument of civilisation in the world» (Straw 2001). Notions of development voiced in the aftermath of riots by Asian youths in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford from April to July 2001 (the worst riots in Britain since the Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham uprisings of 1985 (Kundnani 2001), such as talk about 'importing poverty', 'vicious circles of underachievement' (Stokes 2001) in relation to immigrants and plans to raise further cultural barriers (linguistic) as a condition of applying for British nationality (Carrell 2001; Sparrow 2001), echoed the debates of 1960s and 1970s. Tony Blair's rhetoric of 'thuggery' refused to look beyond a narrow law-and-orderism and see in the riots the reflection of his own failed ambitions to tackle 'social exclusion' (Kundnani 2001). Likewise, the new immigration checks demanded by the British government to be introduced at Prague's Ruzyně airport, which are mostly targeted at Roma, who are perceived as 'serial abusers' of the British asylum system, is a further case in point (Connolly 2001). The Czech Republic is expected to enter the European Union in 2004. Before then it needs to work hard to convince the European leaders of its human rights record by taking

discriminatory measures against its estimated 200,000 Roma in order to become a member of the European family of nations.

As the previous analysis has showed, to break domestic immigration laws is now redefined as a criminal act, even though the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees upholds the right of refugees to break domestic immigration laws in order to seek asylum. Indeed, the Smuggling Protocol of the 2000 UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime states unequivocally that the 'migrant' should not be viewed as a blameless victim but, rather, as partly complicit in the act of 'illegal migration'. It is now an international offence to assist any person in an illegal border crossing, regardless of whether she or he is a refugee in need of protection or not (Fekete 2001). In this respect has Britain along with her EU partners succeeded in shifting the terms of the asylum debate so as to treat asylum seekers not as people from many different countries, with many different experiences and each with an individual story to tell, but as a homogenous and undifferentiated mass. As already seen, the new policies instituted at the Tampere European Council in October 1999, in essence, formalised arrangements which had earlier been ad hoc and piecemeal (Blair 1999j). In future, Western Europe's asylum policy would not commence at the point of arrival in Europe; rather, the EU's policy of 'refugee reduction' would be achieved at the point of departure, via pre-embarkation checks (Fekete 2001). In future, responsibility for the prevention of refugee movements would be passed on to the asylum seeker's country of origin or the Second or Third World countries through which asylum seekers passed on their way to Europe.

As a result, whereas European nation states are prepared to pool sovereignty on immigration and asylum issues in order to stop asylum seekers from getting in to the EU, the poorer nations of the world lose their sovereignty over immigration controls in order to stop their citizens getting out (another sign of the European notion of 'good international citizenship'). Unless, that is, these citizens are part of the

chosen few: highly-skilled computer wizards, doctors and nurses trained at Third World expense and sought after by the West.

What is more, the vision of a 'Fortress Europe' is not sustained and refined by New Labour just against the non-European immigrants and asylum seekers but also against all those who challenge the rules and standards of the globalised economy that New Labour government has espoused. As Manzo (1996) maintains, the racialised alien can always be found 'within' sovereign boundaries – alien who in turn is linked to aliens 'without'. The anti-globalisation demonstrations in Genoa during the G8 summit in July 2001 prompted the European leaders in considering to establish an anti-riot force (Carroll and Allison 2001). Although Britain's operational relationship with other specialised policing units on the continent is currently limited to providing intelligence and "spotters" to help prevent trouble, in particular, at international football matches, Blair's New Labour government is willing to take on the anti-capitalist protesters because the latter apparently challenge its own view of democracy and nostrums for economic development (Baldwin 2001). Hence, the Terrorism Act 2000, which gives the Home Secretary powers to proscribe any organisation threatening, according to him, violence to advance "a political, religious, or ideological cause" (Sivanandan 2001).

So, in response to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, it can be safely now argued that under the impact of ongoing European integration and, in general, global pressures, Britain will never 'die' or be 'abolished', because as the case of the Labour party has demonstrated, the creation of geographic, cultural and temporal boundaries between nationals and aliens can always be found in the articulation of national identity. As the analysis of the imperial, little Englander and European visions of Britishness revealed, the 'other', the 'alien', the 'foreigner' was, has been and will remain a glue strong enough to hold Britain together in a changed European or global context. The end of the Empire in the late 1960s, Britain's entry to the EC in the 1970s and the ongoing European integration could not and cannot undo

‘one thousand years of history’ because the black immigrants, the European workers then, and, now, the asylum seekers and refugees have conditioned the country’s existence.

11.3 Research directions

Taking into account the nationalist and racist beliefs enunciated over the European question, the vitality of this issue for British identity is without question. This confirms Tom Nairn’s (1971, 1972a & b) and Featherstone’s (1981a & b; 1988) analysis of the Labour party’s European policy. Other studies of Labour and Europe, made by, for example, Newman (1983), Robins (1979), Bilski (1977), have focused upon the party management and the conventions of the adversarial nature of British politics. This study has shown that the European question cannot remain confined only to these short-term considerations. Instead, it has broadened the scope of the discussion and defined Labour Britishness through its competing spatial, cultural and temporal visions of nationhood, which have been conditioned by the racialisation of the ‘other’.

Yet, to consider the centrality of Europe in the past formulation and future revision of Labour’s Britishness, one needs to examine it, not just within the ranks of a political party, but in a comparative way bearing in mind the beliefs enunciated within the rest of the political parties and pressure groups of the British political system whose impact upon a Euro- sceptic public cannot be denied. Therefore, the centre of attention should be placed upon those political attitudes which turn the public opinion towards ‘significant others’ which supposedly threaten to overturn the country’s fortunes within EU. Furthermore, accounts of European social democratic parties’ views of their own national identity would help us to challenge those studies which have assumed Labour party’s uniqueness and exceptionalism within the European context (Thompson 1978; Callinicos 1988). This assumption has been left

unchallenged due to the small number of truly comparative studies of European social democracy in relation to issues of national identity (Berger 1999).

To conclude, the Labour party's nationalist and racist beliefs towards the European question exhibited during the last forty years have to be studied in a wider perspective and not just within the narrow confines of the party competition, because Europe is not just about party identity but embraces the past, present and future of Britain as a nation.

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