

Chapter 5

New Labour and the Third Way in Britain and Europe

Introduction

One important factor which should be taken into consideration when analysing changes within the Malta Labour Party is to give due importance to changes carried out in other Social Democratic parties around the world. Particular emphasis will be given to literature describing shifts from Old Labour to New Labour in Britain. The British example will be taken into consideration not only because of the possible parallels between the British Labour Party and its Maltese counterpart, but also because the British Labour Party tends to be considered a pillar of international Social Democratic politics. In fact, various changes which have been carried out in the Labour Party have influenced, or at least have been complemented by, changes in other Social Democratic Parties around the world.

Old Labour and Social Change and Britain

Similarly to other post-war Social Democratic parties in industrialised societies, the Labour Party had, particularly until the 1970s, a strong electoral base among the manual working class. The

Party adopted Keynesian demand management economics that revolved around a particular type of welfare state. According to Anthony Giddens (1998), its main characteristics included the following:

- A national economy which operated within clear borders;
- The dominance of mass production in basic sectors of the economy;
- A strong state bureaucracy;
- A homogeneous labour market mostly made up of male manual workers;
- A social system based on families in which the husband was the breadwinner and the wife the housewife and mother;
- A very common tendency in which employment for its own sake and materialist values were given more importance than quality of life and post-materialist values;

The Labour Party during this period adopted policies that enhanced national industry and the working class and national industry. Hence, in Labour's 1974 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that its policies were "the first step in the irreversible transfer of wealth and power to the workers and their families" (Polito, 1998: 32). Such statements are nowadays synonymous with what is popularly known as 'Old Labour'.

Old Labour, both in government and in opposition, emphasised the role of the state within the economy in order to enhance the working class. The Party's 1983 losing manifesto promised a five year national plan to co-ordinate expansion and public spending. That would involve worker and trade union participation at every level, as well as discretionary price controls. A new Department of Economic and Industrial Planning would be created, with powers to invest,

purchase and even control individual companies. Public enterprises would be given the go-ahead to increase their share within the market, and nationalisation would be carried out. Workers' co-operatives would be promoted, and the state would play a leading role in various sectors such as the electronics, and pharmaceutical ones. Former Labour media strategist A. McSmith, who gives particular importance to the 1983 manifesto in his analysis of Old Labour, refers to this document as 'socialist'. (McSmith, 1996: 2).

During the Labour Party's eighteen years in opposition from 1979 to 1997, fast changes were taking place in British society. The British economy, operating within an increasingly globalised and interdependent world economy, witnessed a decline in its industrial base and a simultaneous expansion in the service industry and the middle class. Thatcherite politics resulted in large-scale privatisation as well as changes within the welfare state, which brought about an increase in disparities. The British manual working class kept on declining and at the same time millions of women entered the labour market, thus bringing about shifts in family set-ups and patterns. Values changed. Giddens states that the evidence points to two trends of changing values - "a shift, as suggested, from 'scarcity values' to 'post-materialist values', and a changing distribution of values, which fits neither class lines nor the right/left dichotomy" (Giddens, 1998: 20-21).

Anthony Giddens, one of the leading gurus of 'New Labour' and the 'Third Way', concludes that given the vast changes within British society and indeed within developed countries, "Social Democratic parties no longer have a consistent 'class bloc' on which to rely. Since they can't depend upon their previous identities, they have to create new ones in a socially and culturally more diverse environment" (1998: 23).

Towards New Labour

A report commissioned by the Labour Party entitled '*Labour and Britain in the 1990s*' stated that given the changes within British society, Labour's policies had become irrelevant and out of date. (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 40). Writing on Old Labour in 1997, New Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair echoed the findings of this report by stating that

“For many years in opposition, the British Labour Party was seen – however unfairly – as the party of big government, nationalisation, anti-enterprise, soft on crime, unconcerned with family life, gripped by pressure groups, and favouring more tax and spending across the board. We were also regarded as poor managers of public services, under the thumb of trade unions and producer interests and too little concerned with choice and quality. The right was able to turn privatisation and free markets into universal panaceas” (The Times, 21st September 1998).

The situation had been looking inauspicious since Labour's worst ever post-war electoral defeat in 1983. The Labour Party had to reinvent itself if it wanted to be elected. Keynesian economic policy could no longer deliver in terms of policies such as full employment. It had indeed, become a major drawback, hindering electoral success.

New Labour ideologues Mandelson and Liddle state that successive Labour leaders Neil Kinnock and John Smith started blowing the winds of change in the Party as from the mid-1980s. According to Mandelson and Liddle, Kinnock and Smith were essentially involved in a “ground-clearing operation” (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 3) which had two basic tasks – first, the

ridding of Bennite socialist ‘excesses’ which had led to the humiliating defeat in question as well as to the successive split which resulted in the new Social Democratic Party. Secondly, enhancing unity and democracy within the Party.

Commenting on Kinnock’s leadership, McSmith (McSmith, 1996: 113) states that one of Kinnock’s main aims was to reduce the power of trade unions within the Labour Party. These unions had considerable power by means of block votes. They also enjoyed an ideological upper hand due to Clause IV within the Party’s constitution. Written in 1918, the clause committed Labour to ‘secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry...upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange’. Kinnock did his utmost to urge unions to let go of some of their powers. This was not all. The Kinnock leadership also carried out various ideological reforms, and expelled members – such as those belonging to the Trotskyist ‘Militant’ group - who were considered too extreme for a modernised and moderate Labour Party. In the publication entitled *‘Faces of Labour: The Inside Story’* McSmith gives a vivid account of such expulsions (1996).

Giddens states that the first systematic attempt to modernise Labour’s policies took place in the Party’s Annual Conference in October 1987. Given the degree of social change and the hegemonic success of Thatcherism, a general consensus was attained by Labour, favouring greater emphasis on the individual and on personal choice. The Party effectively discarded plans to extend public ownership of industry, and reduced dependence upon the unions. In a metaphorical sense, Keynes was pronounced dead. Giddens noted that such changes were occurring even within other continental Social Democratic parties. Issues such as economic productivity, participatory politics, community development and ecology started appearing on those parties’ agendas, to such an extent that social democracy “moved beyond the arena of

resource distribution to address the physical and social organisation of production and the cultural conditions of consumption in advanced capitalist societies” (Giddens, 1998: 18).

Giddens, Mandelson, Liddle and McSmith show that the foundations of a modernised Labour Party were built during the middle and late 1980s. As McSmith put it, “though he was to fail in his great ambition to become Prime Minister..., Neil Kinnock had at least made a bed in which his protégé, Tony Blair, could lie comfortably” (McSmith, 1996: 143)¹

When Tony Blair was elected leader of the Labour Party in 1994, one of his statements about the need for modernisation of the Party was very upbeat. Writing in the *New Statesman*, he stated that “the reason we have been out of power for fifteen year is simple – that society changed and we refused to change with it” (Marxism Today, 1998: 11). A new hegemonic project had to be created. Christened *New Labour*, it carried out various ideological and strategic shifts which permitted Labour to achieve electoral success after all those years in opposition.

New Labour Ideology

N. Thompson, commenting on the economic literature produced by the Labour Party since the late 1980s, shows how the Party moved away from Keynesian demand-management socialism in favour of supply-side socialism “which aims to increase the flow, enhance the quality and improve the use of factor inputs; the primary objective being to increase productive efficiency, reduce unit cost and, crucially, enhance Britain’s international competitiveness” (Thompson, 1996: 39). In itself this was a major ideological and paradigm change.

¹ John Smith’s leadership was very short due to his untimely death.

While Kinnock and Smith had the merit of paving the way for the abandonment of Keynesian economics, it was Tony Blair who carried out the most outstanding economic reforms. One such reform could be singled out: *the decision to rewrite Clause IV*.

Within the Labour Party Clause IV was generally understood to imply full nationalisation of the economy. It was rather difficult to be interpreted otherwise given that it committed Labour to ‘secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry...upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange’

The Tony Blair leadership considered this clause to be very harmful to Labour’s electoral prospects, portraying the outdated economic policy of an anti-private sector and a classist trade-union party, to the advantage of the rival Conservative Party’s propaganda machine. Hence, in the words of Mandelson and Liddle, “for Labour’s new leader, rewriting Clause IV was indispensable to his mission to create a fresh agenda for the left and centre in British politics” (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 52).

New Labour successfully replaced parts of Clause IV with new wording that embraces the ‘enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition’ in an economy with ‘a thriving private sector and high-quality public services’. Mandelson and Liddle state that by means of this stark change, the Party “has demonstrated an understanding of what is required in order for a modern economy to work both efficiently and fairly in the public interest” (1996: 52).

Therefore New Labour ideology did away with class-based analysis and no longer spoke in terms of struggle between unions and management and between employees and employers. New

Labour became synonymous with the market economy and accepted substantial private-sector involvement even in those sectors that Labour traditionally relegated to the State. Indeed, McSmith states that by 1997 (when New Labour won the national elections),

“the Party was now so thoroughly imbued with free market ideology that when Tony Blair floated the possibility that his Government might privatise one of the dwindling number of enterprises still run by the state, the National Air Transport Service, which handles air traffic control, there was no audible resistance from his followers” (McSmith, 1996: 2).

In 1998, Tony Blair himself defined New Labour’s economic orientation in this way:

“In the economy, our approach is neither laissez-faire nor one of state interference. The Government’s role is to promote macro-economic stability; to develop tax and welfare policies that encourage independence not dependence; to equip people for work by improving education and infrastructure; and to promote enterprise, particularly the knowledge-based industries of the future. We are proud to be supported by business leaders as well as trade unions” (Blair, 1998: 18).

This key statement by Tony Blair implied that New Labour ideology, instead of giving importance to state control, class struggle and equality – as would have been the case with Old Labour - gives much importance to a stable and competitive market, social inclusion and the attainment of economic growth. In Blair’s words, “higher educational standards are the key to international competitiveness and an inclusive society for the future” (Blair, 1998: 18).

Another important ideological aspect of New Labour is its international outlook. Whereas Old Labour was rather nationalistic, giving much importance to the rigid borders within which economic activity would take place, New Labour gives importance to its standing within a decentralised European Union and indeed is bent on making Britain join the European Monetary Union. Co-operation with other democracies is a priority for New Labour. The Party “stands for a strong, decentralised Europe, enlarged to the east and able to tackle cross-border problems effectively but with integration only where necessary” (Blair, 1998: 18).

The New Labour ideology takes into account the various social changes that have taken place in British society during the last decades of the twentieth century. This ideology gives great importance to the competitive edge of the British economy within an increasingly competitive global economy. Its emphasis is modernisation, be it socially, economically or politically. An interesting aspect of its discourse is that it does not speak in terms of conflict, but rather seeks to create and unite. It is not only influenced by the Labour tradition, but also “move[s] forward from where Margaret Thatcher left off, rather than... dismantle every single thing she did” (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 1).

Mandelson and Liddle provide the readers of their *‘The Blair Revolution’* publication with a neat definition on New Labour ideology:

“New Labour does not accept the classic view of the left-right divide, in which both sides are seen to be locked in permanent conflict....New Labour believes that is possible to combine a free market economy with social justice liberty of the individual with wider opportunities for all; One Nation security with efficiency and competitiveness; rights with responsibilities; personal self-fulfilment with

strengthening the family; effective government and decisive political leadership with a new constitutional settlement and a new relationship of trust between politicians and the people; a love of Britain with a recognition that Britain's future has to lie in Europe" (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 17).

New Labour Strategy

Concurrently with an ideological renewal, New Labour has carried out a strategic renewal in order to form a successful hegemonic project and therefore a historic bloc. Synonymous with such renewal is the Blair leadership's managerial methods.

McSmith states that amateur activists - whose main drive is their personal conviction - no longer run New Labour. In his words, "the Party now is increasingly run by professionals, who believe they can make direct contact with the electorate through the mass media, opinion polls and market research, and maintain their support within the Party through direct mailing, telephone banks and postal ballots" (McSmith, 1996: 5).

Such methods are analysed by J.Bleifuss, who focuses on the public relations strategies used by various political parties, including the U.S. Democratic Party and New Labour. Bleifuss states that electoral majorities are now built upon political agendas based on opinion management. Political consultants, scientific opinion polls, television advertisements, spinmeisters, and focus groups feature prominently in the tools used by political parties in order to be electable. Successful strategies become politically situated in "a nebulous centre" (Bleifuss: 1999: 28).

Bleifuss refers to political consultant Dick Morris, whose, *'The New Prince: Macchiavelli Updated for the 21st Century'*, states that "to win and to govern successfully, a candidate of either party must take care not to be captured, branded and held hostage by the extremists and ideologues in his own party. He must transcend party and appeal to the middle." (Bleifuss, 1999: 28). Such a strategy could be considered as being at the heart of New Labour strategy.

Gramscian author Stuart Hall states that a key feature of New Labour strategy is its reliance on the 'Middle England' social consistency. Referring to the way in which New Labour speaks about the family, social values and diversity discourse, Hall states that Blairite discourse is "deeply conventional" (Hall, 1998: 13). Such discourse appeals to the "profoundly traditionalist and backward-looking cultural investment" (1998) in Middle England.

Robin Blackburn agrees with Hall in that the moderate message conveyed by New Labour has helped the Party achieve success in areas that had never previously supported Labour. Basing his arguments on exit-polls during the 1997 elections, Blackburn also states that various citizens within the middling working class, "the so-called C2 skilled manual workers and the C1 non-managerial office workers," (Blackburn, 1997: 4) returned to the Labour fold after switching their support elsewhere in 1979:

Membership within New Labour is another indicator of the Party's strategy aimed at capturing the middle class. Mandelson and Liddle state that the most important organisational priority of New Labour has been the recruitment of new members, who in general tend to be younger. Relatively few new members have been recruited through the Party's union-affiliated organisations. The two political thinkers give empirical evidence of their assertions when they quote some remarkable statistics. A survey of new members within the Party during the mid-

1990s showed that 47 per cent described themselves as professional, 25 per cent as retired, 10 per cent as manual workers, 9 per cent as students, and 9 per cent as unemployed. Mandelson and Liddle echo Hall's analysis of the Middle England factor when they state that "it is particularly helpful that 60 per cent of the new members have joined in the electoral crucial areas of the Midlands and the South" (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 218-220).

Conversely, New Labour has continued the purges of radical socialists within its ranks as carried out during the Kinnock and Smith years. Both McSmith and Hall give evidence of New Labour intolerance of socialist dissidents. The former states that "socialists are no longer a welcome minority in the Party" (McSmith, 1996: 4), and shows how activists of the Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill and Ted Grant types have been expelled or excluded by the Party. Hall states that New Labour strategy discredits critics by labelling them into categories such as 'outdated', 'mad', or 'intellectual' – or to be more concrete, they are "shooting-match branded as 'Old Labour'" (Hall, 1998: 13). He concludes that given New Labour's ideological shifts, the Party has effectively abandoned the "working classes, underclasses, chattering classes, manual workers, lone parents, black families, trade unionists, public sector workers [and] rank-and-file Labourites" (Hall, 1998: 13). Instead, according to Hall, New Labour enjoys a good relation with businessmen.

Hence, unlike the strategy of its precursor, New Labour strategy is not based on class-distinction. It is not biased in favour of the working class. Instead, New Labour puts forward an all-embracing strategy that focuses on *community*. The enemies of New Labour are no longer portrayed as belonging to the ruling or middle classes, but are those who are portrayed as harming the community. Mandelson and Liddle state that such enemies include those who are unaccountable, those whose vested interests go against community interests, the inefficient, and those who neglect their families (Mandelson and Liddle, 1996: 20).

Such ideological and strategic shifts are therefore very different from Old Labour ideology and strategy which gave prime importance to class struggle. As Tony Blair puts it, New Labour is “literally a new Party” (1996: 21). Blair is upbeat about the success of the Party, and implies that it has formed a historic bloc:

“The centre-left may have lost the battle of ideas in the 1980s, but we are winning now. And we have won a bigger battle today: the battle of values” (Marxism Today, 1998: 13).

History will show whether New Labour has formed a durable historic bloc, but what is sure is that Blair led the Party to electoral success in 1997 and 2001.

New Labour in Practice

Any sociological analysis of the New Labour Government in practice must take account the social context within which it has operated. One cannot ignore the fact that New Labour came into power after eighteen years of a Conservative Government during which Thatcherism prevailed. As stated above, the Tory era was characterised by a more globalised economic situation, fully-fledged privatisation, and growth of the service and entertainment industries. The image of the macho working class became a thing of the past, symbolically represented by Thatcher’s victory against miners and other working class groups during the 1980s. Thatcher created a historic bloc which on the one hand carried out neo-liberal economic policies, and on

the other hand appealed to 'British' values such as 'Rule Britannia', symbolised by the Falklands victory.

New Labour therefore inherited a very much-transformed British post-industrial society. At the same time it inherited one of the most unequal of the advanced capitalist societies of the period. Robin Blackburn quotes an OECD survey that ranked Britain in the seventeenth place out of twenty-one members with regards to the proportion of GDP spent on social security, health and education. Blackburn also states that the poorest tenth of the population actually became 13 per cent worse off in 1997 than they had been in 1979 while the richest tenth twice as well-off (Blackburn, 1997: 11).

Among the most important reforms carried out by the New Labour Government in its first years, one may mention the following:

- the setting-up of Scottish and Welsh Parliaments;
- the welfare-to-work schemes;
- progress within Irish peace agreements;
- the minimum wage;
- the incorporating of human rights into British legislation;
- family tax credit;
- a school and hospital building programme;
- the move towards devolution;
- the drive towards constitutional reform in a House of Commons where hereditary peers still hold much power.

At the same time, New Labour has maintained various policies adopted by the Conservative Government, the most notable of which include the pro-privatisation policies.

Many authors hold that New Labour ideology, strategy and policies can neither be defined as 'Old Labour' nor 'Tory'. Various literature on this subject points to the formulation of something new simultaneously with the creation of New Labour: *the Third Way*.

The Third Way

Speaking at a Labour Party conference in September 1998, Tony Blair stated that within politics there are three choices. The first two choices, namely resisting change, or letting change happen with a *laissez-faire* attitude, were rejected by Blair given their respective flaws, namely futility or lack of Communitarian emphasis. The alternative proposed by Blair was entitled the Third Way. Within it "we change, modernise, reform" (Marxism Today, 1998: 25). The Third Way has since then been propagated around the world by various Social Democratic parties.

Blair situates the Third Way in the left of centre of the political spectrum. In his words it does away with statism and "outdated ideology" (Blair, 1998: 18) and instead "takes the essential values of the centre and centre-left and appl[ies] them to a world of fundamental social and economic change; and to do so free from outdated ideology" (1998). The Third Way is thereby considered as uniting democratic-socialism and liberalism, which, according to Blair have been traditionally separated from each other to the detriment of progressive politics.

Like Tony Blair, Anthony Giddens, a main theorist of the Third Way, considers the Third Way as transcending both old-style social democracy and neo-liberalism. Giddens also considers Bill Clinton's Democratic Party (which at that time was in power in the U.S.A.) as forming part of the Third Way (Giddens, 1998: 25-26).

Giddens states that the basic principle within Third Way politics is the deepening and widening of democracy. This could be attained by forming a partnership between government and various agencies within civil society, in what Giddens defines as "the new mixed economy" (1998: 69). Such an economy could function within highly modernised welfare institutions that take into account various social changes which have taken place in the last decades of the twentieth century.

He states that in relation to globalisation, Third Way politics should be positive and avoid economic and cultural protectionism as this "would create a world of selfish and probable warring economic blocs" (1998: 65). On the other hand the British sociologist states that Third Way politics "should not identify globalisation with a blanket endorsement of free trade" (1998: 65). What the Third Way should do, according to Giddens, is emphasise the values of democracy and inclusion.

Renewal of Social Democratic Parties

The concept of the Third Way has in a sense transcended the British political scene and gone global. It has come to represent renewal in various Social Democratic parties that faced negative prospects during the early 1990s. Indeed, during the first couple of years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and Soviet Socialism in general, the neo-liberal, new-right and conservative free

market ideologies gained the upper hand. The Republicans had been holding power in the US under the successive Presidencies of Reagan and Bush, the Tories in Britain had been in power since 1979, while various Social Democratic parties, such as the German one, had been in opposition for a number of years. A few Social Democratic governments did exist, but as Giddens puts it, electorally as well as conceptually “Social Democracy fell into a state of depression” (Giddens, 1998: 154-155).

The winds of change began blowing when Bill Clinton’s Democratic Party won U.S. presidency in 1992. Other centre-left and leftist parties soon followed suit. Wim Kok became Prime Minister in Holland, Lionel Jospin came to power in France, Romano Prodi in Italy and Gherard Schroeder in Germany. The New Labour victory in Britain was considered by many as representing victory over “the very symbol of the Social Democratic crisis of the 1980s, Thatcherite conservatism” (1998: 155).

Giddens also states that in spite of the various Social Democratic electoral victories, “a new and integrated political outlook” (1998: 24) still has to be created among Social Democratic parties. However, Giddens gives importance to the Third Way, which could interact left-of-centre political parties around the world. In this sense, the Third Way could indeed be globalised in a successful manner.

Attempts have already been made to formulate a globalised centre-left ideology. One such attempt was made on 3rd June 2000, when Clinton, Schroeder, Jospin and eleven other world leaders from the centre-left, including the Italian, Canadian and Dutch Prime Ministers Giuliano Amato, Lionel Jospin, Jean Chretien and Wim Kok, the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil and Chile, Fernando de la Rúa, Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Ricardo Lagos, as well as South

African President Thabo Mbeki, met at a Berlin summit to try to create a common centre-left strategy (Incidentally, Tony Blair had to drop out of the meeting to be with his new-born baby).

The summit was characterised by proponents of the Third Way on one hand, such as Clinton and Blair (despite his absence) and proponents of a more traditional type of socialism, such as Jospin on the other. However, a joint declaration was formulated, in which the leaders stated that “we believe market economies must be combined with social responsibility in order to create long-term growth, stability and full employment” (The Sunday Times, 4th June 2000: 3).

Although various divergences do exist within centre-left and leftist politics, the Third Way has been fruitful in various aspects. Whether it will be successful in the long term and create historic blocs is another matter. Indeed, various critics of the ideology have much to say in this regard.

Critique of New Labour and the Third Way

Language professor Norman Fairclough, in his seminal work “New Labour, New Language?” (2000) states that there is a sharp break between the politics of New Labour and that of Old Labour in Britain. The major reason for the break is New Labour’s acceptance of the new international economic liberalism “as an inevitable and unquestionable fact of life upon which policies and government are to be premised” (Fairclough, 2000: 15). Besides, Fairclough identifies what he considers to be inherent contradictions within the Third Way ideology, namely the contradictory combination of what he considers to be new right, social democratic, and communitarian discourses.

New Labour is considered by Fairclough to be attempting to create the Third Way by building a wide alliance, in particular between the traditional 'core' of Labour supporters and the middle class. This alliance reflects the inherent tensions and shifts within the Party. New Labour is therefore facing a contradictory situation, seeking to achieve rhetorically what it cannot achieve in reality – a reconciliation of neo-liberal 'enterprise' with 'social justice'.

Stuart Hall, focusing on New Labour strategy, states that one main flaw within New Labour politics is its effort to be all-inclusive. Hall states that Third Way discourse puts forward a view which does not envisage any conflicting interests that cannot be reconciled. It therefore puts forward "politics without adversaries" (Hall, 1998: 10). This is unacceptable for the celebrated Gramscian author, since, according to him, "a project to transform and modernise society in a radical direction, which does not disturb any existing interests and has no enemies, is not a serious political enterprise" (Hall, 1998: 10).

Former 'Marxism Today' editor Martin Jacques criticises what he defines as the "London/Washington version of the Third Way" (Jacques, 1998: 3) for giving too many concessions to neo-liberal ideology. Jacques states that the Jospin and Schroeder Governments - which include coalitions with other leftist parties such as the Greens - are more radical than the Third Way Governments. Jacques observes that this type of leftist politics is indeed becoming more and more popular in other countries such as Sweden.

Not that a more radical version of leftist politics does not exist within Third Way parties. As Marquis puts it in his analysis of New Labour,

“it would be a mistake to conclude that the Party as a whole is ‘Blairised’. Across the membership, in the trade unions, in Parliament and even in the Cabinet, reservations about Blair, his ‘project’ for the Party, and the course of his Government are widespread” (Marquis, 1997: 130).

Conclusion

New Labour and the Third Way are considered as representing renewed Social Democratic parties, which, given social changes, attempt to widen their electoral appeal beyond their traditional working class consistencies. Besides, such parties also incorporate post-materialist values together with materialist ones. The free market economy is taken on board together with a reformed welfare state, and globalisation is considered an inevitable fact that could be tackled best by supra-national bodies such as the European Union. Such changes will be taken into consideration for the scope of this thesis.

The following three chapters, which will apply the theoretical framework of this thesis in order to explain the possible shifts from Old Labour to New Labour in Malta, will also take account of the changes within British Labour and other European Social Democratic parties. It will be shown that certain changes carried out by the Malta Labour Party in the construction of New Labour were similar to the changes highlighted in this chapter.