



**“PROPAGANDA, PERSUASION
AND THE RISE OF NEW LABOUR”**

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Introduction

The rise of New Labour did not begin with the election of Tony Blair as Labour Party leader in 1994, but in the trough of the party's fortunes in the 1980s. Its origins can be found in the ashes of the dismal general election campaign held in 1983 which saw Labour returned with just 209 Member of Parliament and a drop in its popular share of the vote to just 27.6 per cent, its lowest result since 1918, putting it (in terms of the popular vote) almost in third place behind the newly founded Social Democratic Party (SDP) which had been created in 1981 by a gang of four disillusioned Labour MPs who sought to regain the middle ground of British politics by combining an appeal to social policies that had been the preserve of Labour whilst acknowledging the new market economy that was to become the hallmark of the Thatcher decade.

The SDP faded away into a merger with the Liberals by the end of the 1980s, but they had pointed the way to those who now sought to make Labour electable again. Following the defeat in 1983 Labour's new leader, Neil Kinnock, began a whole series of reforms to modernise and bring the party up to date. In 1985 Labour hired a Director of Communications, Peter Mandelson, and a private pollster, Philip Gould, to take soundings among the electorate, in particular voters that had migrated from Labour to the SDP or the Conservatives to identify the problems in both presentation and policy that Labour were suffering from. Gould and Mandelson both identified a notable change in the electorate. Voters were more aspirational, more individual and more discriminating in whom they chose to vote for. Indeed, both Gould and Mandelson began to describe the electorate not as voters, but as "customers" and "consumers". Labour could no longer rely upon the working or lower middle classes as a natural base for support. Gould noted a sizable expansion in the skilled middle class population during the 1980s that perceived Labour as the party of the poor, controlled by trade unions and influenced by extremists, the party that capped success rather than encouraged it.

Mandelson and Gould worked in tandem to transform this negative perception. Gould provided the raw material of the fears, concerns and prejudices surrounding Labour and Mandelson spearheaded the campaign to transform these perceptions through media management and even manipulation, which led to his being dubbed a "spin doctor", a term imported from the United States of America which entered the British vernacular following Blair's election as leader in 1994.

This attempt to put Labour back into power was known originally dubbed the "Kinnock project" by some of the modernisers, notably Gould. But the journey to modernisation was a long road. Despite the process made, the 1987 general election was a bridge too far, but by 1992 there was cause for optimism. Labour had changed significantly. Many of the "extremists" and "militants" that had blighted the party during the 1980s had been driven out, and Labour no longer supported the core policies outlined in its 1983 manifesto such as withdrawal from the (then) European Economic Community (EEC), the nationalisation of all privatised industries, opposition to sale of Council houses and unilateral disarmament.

Its communications and personal presentation had also vastly improved thanks to Mandelson, and for the first time in a decade Labour were looking like a potential party of power again. The incumbent Conservative government had been in office for thirteen years, had introduced a hugely unpopular “poll” tax, been beset by internal divisions over Europe and were preceding over an economic recession.

However, despite all of these favourable circumstances, Labour still lost. The defeat of 1992 was a defining moment in history. For the hard core of modernisers such as Gould and Mandelson, but also Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, two young Labour MPs who represented the next generation of leaders, this defeat was conclusive evidence that modernisation was not enough. Mandelson, Gould, Blair, Brown and Alastair Campbell, a journalist who had been friendly with Kinnock and Blair, formed an inner core of modernisers who believed the party needed to go further and change fundamentally, ditching its old ideology, its old baggage and even changing the name. This went beyond modernising the party to attempt to win power; there was a greater project at hand. This was about shifting the scales of British politics, which had been weighted in favour of the Conservative Party who had been in power for a total of 47 years in the 20th Century (excluding wartime and National government coalitions). Now the modernisers saw an opportunity to transform Labour, not just into a party capable of winning a general election, but capable of dominating the 21st Century, as the Conservatives had dominated the 20th. For these modernisers it was, as Gould described it in one of his memos, (subsequently the title of his book), “*The Unfinished Revolution*”.

The lessons in how to achieve these aims could be found in various parts of the world, but it was the Democrat Party in the United States that principally pointed the way for New Labour. Gould, and other modernisers, who worked on the campaign to elect Bill Clinton as President saw the Democrats offering themselves to the voters as a new party, specifically targeted to the skilled middle class voters who had voted Republican in the 1980s. The New Democrats were spectacularly successfully in forging this consensus with the middle class, and Clinton was elected with one the largest post war landslides ending his party’s wilderness from the highest office in the land.

Gould took aboard the lessons to be learned from Clinton’s campaign and even enlisted the help and advice of those involved at the heart of Clinton’s team. What emerged was the realization that an even more radical approach to modernisation was required. This involved not only the jettison of unpopular policies such as unilateralism and trade union legislation that had been gradually rescinded during the modernisation process under Kinnock but also asserting Labour’s authority over areas such as the economy and law and order, traditional Conservative strongholds.

By the time of the 1997 election approached, Labour was in the position of being able to portray themselves as the party of law and order and the party trusted with the economy. Labour’s traditional concerns of unemployment, funding of the National Health Service and education, were ensured with traditional conservative principles of the free market economy and law and order. It was in affect the re-launch of the ideals that the founders of the SDP espoused when they broke away from Labour in 1981.

Indeed, the *Sunday Times* ushered in the New Labour era by announcing “Blair Reveals SDP Mark II” It was a rejection of the old order of politics, which as Gould points out, crudely defined British politics as a

choice between an “economically competent but socially uncaring Conservative government or caring but economically incompetent Labour government”. For the modernisers, there was another way to persuade the voters. Blair described it as, “a *third way*, a way of marrying together an open competitive and successful economy, with a just human society”.

It was the complete re-branding of a party as old as the 20th Century that took place upon Blair’s election as leader in 1994. New Labour; the creation of those few men who had come together during the eighties bound with one common goal and would now go on to dominate the government. Blair as Prime Minister, Brown as his “iron” Chancellor, Campbell as Press Secretary (later Director of Communications), Mandelson as a controversial Cabinet minister and Gould as Labour’s senior pollster.

The success of New Labour was spectacular. They did not just win the election, but they altered the entire nature of politics of a generation, condemning the Conservatives to its worst defeat since they had been lead by the Duke of Wellington in 1832. Labour secured a 179-seat majority in an election which had been the culmination of a carefully contrived project to transform Labour from being seeming unelectable to, not just a party of government, but the natural party of government. The defeated Conservative Party leader John Major, described it as “a cunning and very successful marketing ploy by a very small people at the top of the Labour Party.”

It was an unprecedented turnaround and heralded a new dawn in political communication and marketing. On the eve of Labour's first conference as a party in government, Labour, a party deemed by many (including it’s own supporters) to be unelectable just five years previously, had a 69.9 per cent approval rating, and it was reported that Tony Blair had a 93 per cent approval rating. As Stan Greenberg, the pollster for the Democrats in the United States, quipped to Gould, "even Saddam Hussein doesn't get that."

I The Kinnock Project

1983 - 1992

When Tony Blair addressed his party conference as the first Labour Prime Minister for nineteen years he reserved special thanks for its former leader Neil Kinnock. “The mantle of Prime Minister was never his.” Blair said, “But I know that without him, it could never have been mine”. Blair was right to recognise the importance of the “Kinnock project” which set the tone of changes that were to come under Blair, and allowed New Labour to “hit the ground running” (as Gould termed it).

Kinnock had recognised the need to modernise the Labour Party if it were to ever win power again from the moment he was elected leader following the dismal performance at the 1983 election. The commitment to improve the party’s image was underscored by the decision of the National Executive Committee (NEC) to advertise for a new post of Director of Communications. The successful applicant, Peter Mandelson, became recognised for his achievements renovating Labour’s communications methods, and updating the party’s presentation. Mandelson had begun his career in the media producing *Weekend World* for London Weekend Television (LWT), where one of his responsibilities was to edit sound clips to solidify the programme’s arguments. Sound bites became a recognisable feature of New Labour and the *Weekend World* was a useful training ground for Mandelson who understood the importance of being able to encapsulate an argument as concisely and simply as possible. Mandelson also got a political education from the show’s presenter, Brian Walden (a former Labour Member of Parliament), on such topics as the machinations of politics and the election tactics of Franklin Roosevelt.

At his interview to the NEC Mandelson argued the electorate had changed significantly under Thatcher’s enterprise and economic liberalism which left Labour alienated from its traditional supporters among the working class who aspired to be part of the new middle class. Internal indiscipline compounded the decline of support for Labour, and had made it difficult for it to get its message in the media, or a fair hearing within the press, where only the *Daily Mirror* and *Guardian* could be relied upon for support.

Upon his appointment, Mandelson turned to Philip Gould, a political consultant, whom he met through a mutual friend at *Weekend World*, for advice on how to achieve the objectives set out in his interview to the NEC. Gould submitted a report in which he argued that Labour suffered from unfocused objectives. Gould used the example of the “Jobs and Industry” campaign running at the time to illustrate his point. He wrote, “I know little about the effectiveness of your campaign, but I would think that there is a very good chance that it will prove much more effective in stimulating support at the grass roots and with the party activists, than with the public at large. Does this constitute success or failure? Without a clear set of objectives it is very difficult to tell.”

On 23 November 1985, the advertising agency Abbot Mead Vickers gave an all-day presentation at the offices of the advertising agency TBWA to key labour strategists including Gould and Mandelson, but also other influential figures such as Robin Cook (at that time campaign co-ordinator), Patricia Hewitt (Kinnock’s chief of staff), and Chris Powell (senior advertising executive for Labour). Gould described this presentation as “the most important of any presented during the entire period I worked with the Labour

Party. They displayed the fault line between Labour and its potential supporters, the apparently unbridgeable gap between what Labour had become and what the British electorate now wanted.” The first group of voters represented were forty-eight women aged twenty-five to forty-four. Gould recalls that these women “gave us the first definitive proof that Labour had moved beyond the pale for ordinary people...The issues they cared about were those affecting their own personal and financial security: law and order, health, education, inflation, prices and taxation. Defence and the role of minorities in society, two of Labour’s big pre-occupations were at the bottom of the list. Gould noted that “the imagery they associated with us was appalling: word association threw up `reds`, `commies`, `you will do what you are told`, `strikes`, `Scargill` and `Militant`. For the Tories, the words were `Surrey`, `mortgages`, `private pools`. When asked to draw the parties, they drew a small house, small car for Labour; big car and big house for the Conservatives. Tories held champagne glasses, Labour wore cloth caps”.

Gould recommended the creation of a Shadow Communications Agency (SCA) made up of volunteer media professionals, under Gould’s management, were mainly concerned with the presentation of policy. The SCA’s first presentation, entitled “Society and Self”, delivered on March 24th 1986, reported the results of a survey conducted among thirty groups of eight people, who had all been interviewed for an hour and a half each about their views on contemporary issues, and asked to what extent Labour reflected these views. Among those who witnessed the presentation was the Left wing MP Tony Benn, who noted in his diaries that the presentation concluded, “the Labour Party was seen as disunited, squabbling, with Militants or infiltrators, lacking in government experience. What was required in the Party leadership was decisiveness, toughness and direction: people wanted a tough man at the helm. Leadership was what it was about. It was a Thatcherite argument presented to us: `You had better be more like Thatcher if you want to win`”.

Kinnock’s attempts to project himself as a strong leader were hampered by the perception of a party dominated by powerful unions and extremist militants. A by-election in Greenwich in 1987 highlighted the extent that militancy was eroding Labour’s supporters. Labour’s candidate was Deirdre Wood, a former councillor with hard left history. Having started the by-election with 60 per cent of the vote according to a Harris poll, the SDP candidate, Rosie Barnes, overturned a Labour majority of 5,000. Until this by-election Labour had held Greenwich for forty years.

The *Sun* derided Kinnock for not being able to block Wood’s selection, claiming he’d been “over-ruled by the booted faced men and women of the hard Left who now control most constituency parties throughout the country”. The editorial added, “A leader who has no say in who should represent him in a crucial by-election has no say in running his party”. On the same day, Patricia Hewitt wrote a memo, leaked to the *Sun*, in which she warned, “The gays and lesbians issue is costing us dear among the pensioners, fear of extremism and higher taxes is prominent in the GLC (Greater London Council) area”.

The attempts to expel militants were met with fierce resistance by some sections of the party. However, it provided an opportunity for Mandelson to demonstrate his skills at media management, which were to become his hallmark over the years. The *Guardian* reported Mandelson had “contacted the BBC to persuade them to try and stand down Tony Benn from next Thursday’s Question Time, where the former Viscount will use any opportunity to oppose any expulsions or disciplining of Derek Hatton (Militant leader of Liverpool City Council between 1981 to 1986) and his group. Vibrating with indignation, the BBC told Mandelson where to get off...the programme has never had such an approach in it’s six years”.

Kinnock led the fight back against militancy at the end of his speech at the party conference in 1985. In what became the most memorable speech of his career, Kinnock said:

“You start with far fetched resolutions. They are then pickled into a rigid dogma, a code, and you go through the years sticking to that, out-dated, misplaced, irrelevant to the real needs, and you end in the grotesque spectacle of a Labour council - a Labour council - hiring taxis to scuttle around a city handing out redundancy notices to its own workers. I’m telling you, no matter how entertaining, how fulfilling to short term egos, you can’t play politics with people’s jobs and people’s services or people’s lives”.

It was arguably the most important speech made by a Labour Party leader since Hugh Gaitskill’s pledge to “fight, fight and fight again” against extremism. Even the Conservative press were grudgingly supportive. *The Daily Telegraph* stated “Mr Kinnock took on the hard anti-democratic Left of his party in a deliberate and calculated way and won”. The *Sun* said, “Kinnock declared war on the loony Left”.

The following Labour Party conference in 1986 saw another significant change. The red flag, which had symbolised Labour since its creation at the start of the 20th Century, was dispensed in favour of a red rose. Mandelson complained that the flag was reminiscent of “workers marching Soviet style behind red banners” alien to the middle class voters he wished to attract. Kinnock noted that some neighbouring socialist parties across Europe had a red rose as their symbol, much less threatening than a “Soviet style” red flag, and so the SCA went to work on designing a similar symbol.

The new rose was unveiled at the 1986 conference, and at the end of the leader’s speech Kinnock threw roses to delegates. The rose also appeared on mugs, tee shirts, pencil cases, wallets and purses. Although Kinnock had instigated the change, it was mainly associated with Mandelson, for whom it became a personal triumph. Mandelson became so synonymous with the symbol that, upon meeting him for the first time, Prince Charles greeted him with the words “Ah, the red rose man”.

In a further attempt to introduce a “presidential style” to the leadership, a Party Political Broadcast (PPB) was made in the run up to the 1987 election by Hugh Hudson and Colin Welland, who had directed and written respectively the Oscar winning *Chariots of Fire*. This was a PPB emphasised Kinnock’s family values, and contained testimony from his family of his honesty and principles. The PPB included footage of Kinnock’s attack on militancy at the 1985 conference to promote the image of a leader asserting authority over his party. Significantly the broadcast ended not with the word “Labour”, but “Kinnock”

(hence it is often referred to as “Kinnock the Movie”). It was the first step to a presidential style of leadership, which Blair was to emulate and indeed supersede.

However, the policies were still out of tune with the majority of the voters and Labour was still not trusted by the bulk of the middle classes. Polling evidence during the 1987 election showed Labour was still perceived to be too extreme, controlled by trade unions, weak on defence, crime and incompetent with fiscal management. A survey taken during the election (Table 1.1), shows Labour lagged behind the Conservatives on these issues whilst retaining a lead on “caring” issues such as the NHS and education.

Table 1.1 Campaigning issues in 1987

Which party do you think

has the best policies to deal with:	Conservatives	Labour	Liberal/SDP	Don't know/Other
Inflation and prices	54	23	11	12
Unemployment	30	41	16	13
Industrial disputes	51	25	12	-
Defence	54	21	15	11
National Health Service	25	44	19	12
Education	31	38	20	12
Law and order	42	27	14	17

Source: Gallup. See Butler & Kavanagh “The British General Election of 1987”, p.247

Table 1.2 shows how Labour’s support was still concentrated among the DE social groups, whilst the Conservatives retained the bulk of support among ABC1s and, crucially, the skilled middle class C2s.

Table 1.2. How Britain voted in 1987

	ABC1	C2	DE
Conservative	54	40	30
Labour	18	36	48
Liberal/SDP	26	22	22
Other	2	2	2

Source: MORI. See Butler & Kavanagh “The British General Election of 1987”, p.275

A fundamental review of policies which would “sell” to the electorate was now the top priority for the modernisers. Mandelson ordered a major polling and demographic review to be carried out, which amounted to (in the words of Gould) an “autopsy on the British electorate”. Its findings were for Gould a “defining moment. We were about to tell the party that seventy years of history had been wrong: Labour had to take a different course; it had to modernise or wither away”.

The findings of the report, delivered by Gould himself to the NEC and shadow Cabinet on November 20th 1987, noted that Labour’s share of the vote had declined by 17 per cent in twenty years, whilst the Conservative share remained static. Moreover, Labour had lost the support of working and middle class voters to the Tories. Gould pointed out that those who voted Labour did so out of habit. 27 per cent voted Labour because it was “the party of the working class”; 20 per cent voted Labour simply because they “had always voted Labour”. But Conservatives were more discriminating. They voted Conservative because they respected Thatcher as a leader; or they believed the government was economically competent. Only 7 per cent voted Conservative because they “always had done so”. As Gould told the BBC, “I found people had become consumers, people wanted to have politics and life on their own terms”.

The modernisers were convinced that Labour’s inherent weakness as party was due to its association with high tax and spend. Nowhere was this more aptly demonstrated than at the 1992 election. Shadow Chancellor, John Smith, had committed a Labour government to raising £2 billion through an increase in the top rate of tax to fifty per cent in a manifesto published in 1990. Gould noted his polling had shown tax had been identified as the main reason not to vote Labour, with 54 per cent citing it as the primary reason, and 72 per cent of people in the C2 category agreeing with the statement that Labour would raise taxation upon them. Gould delivered this report to senior members of the Labour Party and noted, “the presentation made the politicians angry. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were frustrated that we were in a position where our policy was untenable and unpopular. John Smith, knowing what we said was all true, simply walked out”.

Smith had planned to offset these taxes by announcing a reduction in National Insurance by 1 per cent from 9 to 8 per cent (the equivalent of an income-tax cut of 1p) in his “shadow Budget” to be presented after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont, announced the government budget. It was, as Gould puts it, Labour’s “sole escape route from accusations that we were hitting the middle classes”. However, Lamont put a roadblock in front of this escape route by announcing a 20p band for lower earners whilst retaining the basic rate of income tax. The following day, John Major called an election for April 9th. It was an appropriate starting pistol for an election dominated by tax.

The Conservatives launched their “Tax Bombshell” campaign, quickly followed by the slogan “You Can’t Trust Labour” and the “Double Whammy/Price of Labour - £1,250 a year” campaign. The coverage in the middle class press, whose readers Labour need to win over, was devastating: “Beware Labour’s tax on ambition” - *Daily Mail*, “Labour’s tax shambles” - *Today*, “Labour’s Tax Lie Exposed”, *Daily Express* and “Why Labour have got it all wrong” - *The Sun*. The *Sun* also produced the most memorable front page of the campaign on polling day, which had Kinnock’s face squeezed into a light-bulb under the heading “If Kinnock wins today would the last person to leave Britain, please turn out the lights?”

“The fact that the election was a battle for the middle classes was highlighted by Major’s decision to begin his soap box campaign in Luton South, a constituency with a sizable population of skilled middle class voters, the same voters Labour were targeting.

The campaign that began in Luton South ended in Basildon; another constituency with a skilled working class population that had converted to Thatcherism in the 1980s and had effectively become the barometer of “middle England”. When the Conservatives retained Luton South and Basildon it was clear Labour had lost its fourth election in a row. The Conservatives were back, albeit with a reduced majority of 21.

Fear had again played a major part in Labour’s failure to win, aptly demonstrated among the pages of the tabloids. Table 1.3 shows that the Conservatives still retained the bulk of support among the middle classes, with Labour gaining just a 1 to 2 per cent swing among the C1s and C2s.

Table 1.3. How Britain voted in 1992

	AB	C1	C2	DE
Conservative	56	52	39	31
Labour	19	25	40	49

Liberal Democrat	22	19	17	16
Conservative to				
Labour swing	3	1	2	0
1987-1992				

Source: MORI. See Kavanagh and Butler, *The British General Election of 1992*, p.277

Table 1.4 showed the old fears over taxation and industrial action remained. The perception was Labour had changed, but not enough on these vital issues. Michael Thrasher memorably wrote that the 1992 election was a choice between fear and loathing. The electorate chose loathing.

Table 1.4 Expectations of a Labour Government under Neil Kinnock

<i>Taxes would go up</i>	
Would	75
Would Not	17
Don't Know	8

<i>There would be more strikes</i>	
Would	45
Would Not	42
Don't Know	13

<i>Unemployment would rise</i>	
Would	35
Would Not	49
Don't Know	16

<i>Defences would be cut</i>	
Would	59
Would Not	26
Don't Know	14

Source: Gallup for the Conservative Party. See Butler and Kavanagh, p.96

However, Gould and Mandelson remained resolute that the result of the election did not mean modernisation had failed; rather it had not gone far enough. Gould wrote, "The research could not have been clearer. The cleavage between the people and the party which opened twenty years before, and reached a peak in 1983 still had not closed. Labour was still not the people's party...It was clear to me that Labour had to modernise completely or eventually it would die".

Following Kinnock's resignation, John Smith was elected leader. However, Gould and Mandelson were not in attendance when Smith became leader at the specially convened conference in London. They were in the United States of America where the self-styled "New" Democrats were launching their campaign for the Whitehouse.

A Lesson From America

When the NEC interviewed Mandelson for the position of Chief Communication Officer in 1985, he told them that the Labour Party should base itself on the Swedish socialist party that had taken office in 1982. Mandelson suggested that the voters in Britain were more in tune to this “social democracy” rather than the free market of Reagan and Thatcher. However, by the time Blair had become Labour leader in 1994 Mandelson had been persuaded that the voters had rejected the social democratic European model offered in 1992. It was not to Europe that the architects of New Labour looked toward, but in the opposite direction, across the Atlantic to the United States of America.

Many of the modernisers within Labour saw the Democratic Party as political brothers-in-arms. The Democrats had spent a similar amount of time out of the Whitehouse as Labour had spent out of Downing Street and, following the Gulf War in 1991, it appeared President Bush was on course to win a second term in the Oval Office and extend the Republican grip on the Whitehouse. However, the Democrat candidate Bill Clinton emerged from being an outside candidate to securing the Presidency in the 1992 election.

Working among the Clinton campaign team in Little Rock, Arkansas, was Philip Gould who kept a daily diary of the tactics used by the Democrats. In Clinton’s campaign Gould said he found “articulated the many ideas I had but hadn’t been able to encapsulate or articulate” Gould writes “One week after my arrival I wrote a long memo developing the similarities between the two campaigns and the dangers for Clinton. I said, ‘It is the last week that counts; forget the plaudits, concentrate on the smears; fear builds slowly, and only shows in the vote; tax and trust are the only issues that matter’. This note was the genesis of the defensive strategy used by the Blair campaign five years later”.

Gould returned to London brimming with ideas from the Clinton campaign and set to work summarising the successful strategies that were used. Gould argued, “Labour needs a proper connection with the aspiration of ordinary working people...associated with improving the life of ordinary voters, not penalising them”. Gould described this as “new populism”, and concluded, “A changed Labour Party is the basis of a new relationship of trust with the British electorate...Labour has not changed until it announces that it has changed...Labour must emulate Clinton’s success in discarding the Democrats image ‘as a party of the poor and of the past’ by forging a populism of the center rather than the left”.

Clinton captured the center ground of politics by appealing to the middle class, many of whom voted Republican in the 1980s. The Democrat pollster, Stan Greenberg, like Gould, had polled middle class voters and noted a particular case study in Macomb County, in the state of Illinois.

Macomb was considered by Greenberg to be a beckon of “Middle America” that had been Republican during the 1980s, but was now suffering from high unemployment and low wages. Greenberg wrote, “In the focus groups in the summer and fall of 1992, voters shook their heads and shared a common recognition: George Bush was too distant to entertain any compact with struggling Middle America”.

Clinton made a trip to Macomb after sweeping the primaries and told his audience that it had become a famous county because “native Democrats” had turned to Republicans, just as they had done in Clinton’s own state of Arkansas. Clinton argued that the Republicans had betrayed these middle class voters who were, “working harder and making less”. This targeting of the middle class counties and towns paid off for Clinton who comfortably defeated President Bush in the 1992 election and became the first Democrat elected President for sixteen years. Illinois, containing the county of Macomb, went Democrat, having been Republican throughout the 1980s.

In January 1993 Blair and Brown met with Paul Begala, a senior Clinton strategist. Begala explained how, as Governor of Arkansas, Clinton had helped establish the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), created by Democrat Al From in 1984. The main aims of the DLC were to force the Democrats to come to terms with social change in the country in a process it called “reality therapy”. From, who had become DLC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) called for a “bloodless revolution” in the Democrats after Michael Dukakis was defeated by George Bush in 1988, ensuring a third term for a Republican President. Greenberg argues that Dukakis allowed himself to be portrayed as a “liberal short on patriotism, weak on defense, soft on criminals, indifferent to work, family and values and inexplicably infatuated with taxes...He was swamped by Bush on election day despite a mood for change”. This would have sounded depressingly familiar to a Labour moderniser in 1992.

In 1989 Al From wrote to the DLC board members, which included the then Governor Clinton, in which he said, “What we hope to accomplish with the DLC is a bloodless revolution in our party. It is not unlike what the conservatives achieved in the 1960s and 1970s. By building their movement, nurturing it with ideas from conservative think tanks, and with Ronald Reagan as their standard bearer, they were able to nominate their candidate for President and elect him, and in the process, redefine both the Republican Party and the national public policy agenda”. From expanded on this with the “New Orleans Declaration” (the state where the Fourth Annual DLC conference was held at this time). The New Orleans Declaration reasserted Democratic traditional ideology, stating that, “we share Jefferson's belief in individual liberty and responsibility. We endorse Jackson's credo of equal opportunity for all, and special privileges for none.”

However, the Declaration also asserted more conservative principles that, “We believe the promise of America is equal opportunity, not equal outcomes. We believe the Democratic Party's fundamental mission is to expand opportunity, not government. We believe in preventing crime and punishing criminals, not in explaining away their behavior. We believe the purpose of social welfare is to bring the poor into the nation's economic mainstream, not to maintain them in dependence.” Gould noted that, “Blair’s thinking was entirely complimentary to this”. From chose Clinton as Chairman of the DLC during his period, because (in From’s own words) Clinton “could deliver this new message better than anyone I had heard”.

Clinton ensued conservative economic thinking with an equally conservative bond of individual responsibility. Clinton argued that to be a Democrat in the emerging Century required two things. First,

“you have to believe there’s a role for government in solving common problems.” And second, “whenever government does something with or for the individuals who are irresponsible, it must require responsibility off them”. However, above all was the message that the middle classes were taxed to heavily. Accepting the Democratic nomination Clinton said, “Government is taking more of your money and giving you less in return...In the name of the hard working Americans who make up our forgotten middle class, I proudly accept your nomination for President of the United States, and you will be forgotten no more”. Now it was the Democrats who were using the tax stick to Republicans, such as five years later New Labour used the “22 tax rises” to attack the Conservatives. It was a lesson in turning the tables.

As Begala explained to the BBC political programme *On the Record*, “He (Clinton) had worked for years on a set of ideas as a governor that put personal responsibility back at the center of an activist communitarian philosophy, requiring responsibility in exchange for opportunity. That applies to a host of issues. It applies to crime, where he was a Democrat who’s very tough on crime. It applied to welfare reform where he supported childcare, medical care, job training skills for people on welfare - but then after two years you had to get off. That was a revolutionary breakthrough for a Democrat”.

This concept of individual, rather than state responsibility, was a breakthrough, too, for Blair and for the development of New Labour. It was an area in which Blair made headway, creating a connection between state and individual responsibility during his time as shadow Home Secretary. (See Chapter 3)

When Gould returned to London he organised a one-day “Clinton conference”, attended by many of Clinton’s senior aides, including Begala and Greenberg, who told the audience that the Labour agenda was not yet broad enough to meet the concerns of the middle classes. Greenberg had argued since the 1980s, that Democrats had to establish a consensus with the middle class. In his book, *Middle Class Dreams*, Greenberg claimed, “Democrats cannot aspire to lead the country unless they regain the confidence of downscale voters - working and middle class - who want nothing more complicated than a better life”. For the modernisers the same was true of the Labour Party.

Clinton and Blair appeared to be in tandem both in political ideology and vocabulary. The fact that they not only had similar ideas but also used a similar language to express those ideas did not go unnoticed by the media. The BBC programme *Newsnight*, juxtaposed speeches from Blair and Clinton, which proved to be remarkably similar in both tone and content. Whilst Blair had said, “the theme that I would put forward is the theme of national renewal and change,” Clinton had said, “My fellow citizens, today we celebrate the mystery of the American renewal”. Blair argued, “Where people are given chances and opportunities then it’s important that we understand they owe a responsibility to other people,” Clinton remarked, “We must do what America does best, offer more opportunity and demand more responsibility from all”.

On top of the language and ideas was the way that the Democrats controlled their message. George Stephanopoulos (Clinton’s senior advisor) and James Carville (Clinton’s campaign manager) established a “war room” of communications during the 1992 campaign which had a heavily influence on New Labour. Stephanopoulos describes it thus: “ The purpose of the War Room, wasn’t just to respond to Republican

attacks. It was to respond to them fast, even before they were broadcast or published. Our target was the public's filter for information; our goal was to ensure that no unanswered attack reached real people. The fact we had a War Room would be as important as anything we did there. Its purpose was to make us appear relentless, to intimidate, to make anyone who was paying attention think of us as aggressive, different, and a little unpredictable - pretty tough for Democrats." Gould, who witnessed the effectiveness of this "war room" at first hand noted, "the contrast between that integrated operation and our scattered campaign force in the British election began a drive for the creation of a similar war room from where we could fight the next election".

Labour found its war room at Millbank Tower in early 1996. This communications centre included a Rapid Rebuttal Unit, a 24 hour Media Monitoring Unit, staffed with young activists, dubbed "Mandelson's teeny army" who worked around the clock, "scouring the media for Conservative propaganda". At the heart of this communications revolution was a unique computer database known as "Excalibur" with a huge capacity to read and prioritise documents and dossiers on individuals, particularly Labour MPs considered to be "troublesome", and to ensure candidates stayed "on message" (see page 26). The journalist Peter Osborne remarked that, "Nothing like Millbank had ever been seen before. It was American in inspiration and in its structural preferences for process rather than substances. The process was awesome".

However, just as the modernisers could take valuable lessons in Clinton's triumph, they could also learn from the failures. Clinton's presidency had sailed into troubled waters in the middle of its first term. With a mounting national debt of some 200 billion dollars, Clinton was forced to abandon proposals for the tax cuts that he had promised. This perceived abandonment of commitments made during the Presidential campaign, combined with various scandals, meant that by 1994 Clinton was the most unpopular President for fifty years. The Republicans gained control of Congress, and Clinton seemed destined to become a one term President. It was at this point that Clinton turned to Dick Morris, described by Stephanopoulos as a "dark Buddha whose belly Clinton rubbed in desperate times".

Morris (like Mandelson) was a highly skilled but also highly controversial "spin doctor", as mistrusted as he was admired. Also like Mandelson, Morris for a short period of time went under an alias to keep his involvement with his political master secret. Morris advised Clinton that he would have to preach further to the Middle Class if he was going to be re-elected. Stephanopoulos recalled in 1994, shortly after Clinton had privately begun discussions with Morris, that he found a paragraph in one of Clinton's speeches pertaining to a "middle-class bill of rights".

When Stephanopoulos inquired where this phrase had come from, "Clinton pretended he didn't hear me; Hillary (Clinton) wore a Cheshire grin, throwing me off. It wasn't her; it was Dick". Stephanopoulos says the Morris philosophy was simple, "Steal the popular parts of the Republican platform, sign them into law and you'll win...If 6 out of 10 Americans were for something, the President had to be for it too".

This may have appeared a simplistic approach, but there was a theoretical side to Morris's campaigning, that of life style marketing, which he brought to politics on a level never witnessed before. Morris commissioned the market research firm Penn and Schoen to undertake a "Nero personality poll". This was a survey of thousands of voters, but the only political question asked was to determine if the person questioned was a swing voter. All the other questions were of a personal nature. Mark Penn describes it thus: "We were asking people things like: Where do you like to go? What sports do you like to play? What's your idea of a romantic weekend?" By asking these questions, Clinton's team was able to categorize swing voters into different lifestyle types, and target them accordingly. Doug Schoen said, "We got into peoples head, understood their psychology about lifestyle, what they thought was important, what issues they wanted politicians to address. And these issues proved to be very different from what conventional wisdom had suggested".

This style of marketing went back to Freud and his nephew Edward Bernays, the renowned father of marketing in the United States. Bernays had pioneered the concept of market research to companies to allow them to target potential consumers, and now Morris sought the same with politics. Morris said in an interview with the BBC that he had told Clinton to "bring to the political system the same consumer rules philosophy that the business community has, because I think politics needs to be as responsive to the whims and desires of the marketplace as business is...this involves a changed view of the voters, instead of treating them as targets you treat them as owners...instead of feeling like you can stay in one place and you can manipulate the voters, you need to find out what they want and move yourself to accommodate them".

These elements of "bore politics" (as Morris termed it) were all used in the New Labour campaign, although not on such a grand scale. An example of this can be found in Labour's welfare policy. Clinton's pollsters had identified a growing resentment among the targeted middle classes over welfare benefits handed out to the unemployed. In 1996 Clinton introduced a new law called *Welfare to Work*, encapsulated by the slogan "A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out", which effectively ended the guaranteed welfare payments Roosevelt established with the New Deal some sixty years previously.

In 1997 the Labour Party document on welfare reform, as part of the Road to the Manifesto, (a collection of ideas which would make up the final draft of the election manifesto) was published. Its title was *Getting Welfare to Work* and its slogan was "A Hand up not a Hand out". It was also another example of how conservative principles of individual responsibility was seeping into New Labour ideology. Doug Schoen said "Mandelson and his team were in the United States, watched what we were doing and copied it almost verbatim".

Although America was the principle learning ground for New Labour, it was not just across the Atlantic where lessons were learned. In Australia, the Labor government, under Bob Hawke, pursued what could be termed "Conservative" policies of economic deregulation in the 1980s. The Australian Labor Party re-invented to become an "assertively pragmatic, anti-utopian and non-socialist". When Blair visited Hawke

in 1990 he learned about Labor's programme of privatisation and deregulation, described by Hawke as "market socialism". The Labor Party had offset opposition to this programme by establishing an Accord - a social contract - between government, employers and unions, aimed at building a social consensus, not dissimilar to the "stake holding" theme Blair set out in Singapore in January 1996.

Blair visited Australia again in 1995 as leader of the opposition at the invitation of Rupert Murdoch, (see page 23) where Hawke's successor, Paul Keating, told him "no party in the English speaking world in modern times" had won an election under the suspicion that they would raise taxation. Blair replied the Labour Party would be particularly unlikely to win in such circumstances, because of its tax raising past. Keating's Labor Party were defeated in the 1996 election by the Conservative Liberal Party led by John

These were all lesson which Blair was noting long before he became leader. "We should go out of our way to build common cause with other parties around the world in searching out the way forward," he wrote shortly after the 1992 election. "French and Australian socialists have adapted in government" although he noted, "not without huge internal tensions". It was a recognition not only of the changes needed, but the resistance that Blair was likely to face in implementing, them.

New Labour 1992 - 1997

John Smith's decision to appoint Tony Blair as shadow Home Secretary in July 1992 merited little comment outside of the Westminster Village where Blair's name was still virtually unknown, however it was crucial in the building process of New Labour ideology. Blair and Smith had drawn different conclusions from the result of the 1992 election. Blair shared the view of the other modernisers that the result was evidence that Labour's traditional ghosts continued to haunt them, and if Labour were going to win they would need to fight the Conservatives on traditional Tory grounds.

Conversely, Smith appeared to believe that his party should stay clear of controversial issues. Far from continuing the modernisation project under Smith's leadership the Labour Party became synonymous for its lack of progress or policy. However, this appeared to be a deliberate strategy from Smith. In his study of Blair and Brown, James Naughtie wrote that "He (Smith) believed that the next election would now inevitably be lost by the Conservatives as long as Labour didn't foul up in opposition: his cautious instincts led him to sit tight". This strategy became known as "one more heave", which relied on the assumption that Britain was still a country where the two parties would alternate periods in office with a reasonable frequency. Smith's attitude was encapsulated when Clive Hollick, Gould's consultant (and now Labour peer) returned to London after observing Clinton's election. Hollick produced a memo called "Campaign '96", which reflecting on the Democrat campaign, argued for a "new Labour Party, new policies on tax and trade union links". According to Gould upon reading the memo, Smith replied, "This is all very interesting, but I think you'll find that it will be our turn next time".

The "one more heave" philosophy was a major source of irritation to architects of power like Gould and particularly Mandelson. The Member of Parliament for Hartlepool found his once considerable influence under Kinnock curtailed by Smith who was contemptuous of those who dabbled in what Smith dismissed as "the black arts". Mandelson was left to vent his frustrations through various publications. He launched a thinly veiled attack on Smith's shadow budget shortly after the election writing for *Fabian Review* that, "Unfair or not, the Tory costings and attacks struck accord with some voters". In the same edition of *Fabian Review*, Bair argued, "the public was insufficiently sure of the new Labour Party to put into office. The lesson, in my view, is clear: neither to stand still and simply change leader; nor, certainly, to go lurching back to the 1980s; but to continue and intensify the process of change. This must happen at the level of both ideas and organisation. This is more profound than policy."

The modernisers outside of parliament were equally irritated with the slowing down of the reforms. Alastair Campbell, then assistant editor of the *Daily Mirror*, complained in an article for the *Spectator*, that "obsessive caution is leading to an inertia...If the current line is held to the election, the ducking and diving of Labour will become as big a turn off as the deceit and dissembling of Conservative ministers".

Although Smith may have been playing what some referred to as a "long game", Blair got onto the offensive straight away as shadow Home Secretary. His biographer, Jon Sopel, argues "Labour's

traditional concern for the underdog had led, in his (Blair's) view, to the mistaken impression that all Labour cared about was a neat sociological explanation of why the criminal had committed his crime. But in explaining Labour looked as though it was excusing, and Blair wanted a radical shift in thinking". Crime, always a predominant issue, took on an even bigger role following a number of high profile incidents, notably the murder of Jamie Bulger in February 1993, which shocked the nation and pushed the whole debate on law and order to the forefront of British politics. This was fortuitous timing for Blair who was able to exploit the fear of rising crime, but also articulate his vision of a new society built on links between society and the individual. Blair changed his prepared speech that he had been due to give to the Wellingborough Labour Club in the shadow of the Bulger outrage and instead told his audience that: "The news bulletins of the last week have been like hammer blows, striking against the sleep conscience of the country, urging us to wake up and look unflinchingly at what we see...These are ugly manifestations of a society that is becoming unworthy of the name. A solution to this disintegration doesn't simply lie in legislation. It must come from the rediscovery of a sense of direction as a country and most of all from being unafraid to start talking again about the values and principles we believe in and what they mean for us, not just as individual but as a community". Gould wrote this speech "attacked directly the liberalist individualist consensus that had developed over crime, using the language of punishment and right and wrong. Perhaps more than anything, this change in perspective towards crime reconnected Labour with its electoral base".

Two days later Blair appeared with the Home Secretary on the BBC Radio 4 programme *The World This Weekend*, and during a series of exchanges with his opposite number he first used the phrase "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime". This was a neat sound bite, which originated from Gordon Brown. However, it encapsulated the image that Blair wanted to project of Labour's policy towards law and order, and it signified a dramatic shift in emphasis from the traditional Labour approach. However, "New" Labour was still an aspiration of the modernisers, and would remain so whilst it lacked a leader who not only believed in the project, but who could successfully convince voters across the country to believe in it too. It was fate that played the intervening factor in turning New Labour into a political reality.

On 12th May 1994, John Smith died suddenly after suffering a heart attack at his London home. The battle for the succession of the leadership began literally moments after Smith was pronounced dead. For Mandelson and Gould, the principle question was which candidate could most effectively articulate and develop the on going modernisation project, and win over the middle classes, in particular the middle classes residing in the south that had for so long eluded Labour. There was common agreement that Blair and Brown were the only creditable contenders. As far back as the 1980s Brown and Blair, in that order, marked themselves out as being the next generation of potential leaders. Mandelson became a close friend of Brown during the 1980s, and the former shadow Cabinet minister Bryan Gould noted that during this time that "Mandelson was working on his own project ...It was to ensure that Peter's protégés - Gordon Brown as the prime contender, but with Tony Blair as a fallback - should succeed to the leadership."

This left Gould, but particularly Mandelson, with a dilemma. Brown had either topped, or come close to topping, shadow Cabinet elections since 1988 and was perceived as possessing the fiercest intellect in the party. However, Blair's star had risen to such an extent since 1992 he now appeared to be overtaking Brown on the outside track, and he proven his ability to connect with the middle class voters over their fears of crime, and making law and order a Labour issue.

Gould and Mandelson quickly established Blair as their favoured candidate. In Blair they saw the opportunity of having a leader who encapsulated everything they wished to articulate. John Smith had been respected, but the modernisers feared his Scottish background could alienate him from the south, and as a disciple of "one last heave"; Smith had been unconvinced of the New Labour agenda. And although Kinnock had been a moderniser, his origins had always prevented him being a part of the New Labour project. Gould points out "Where his (Kinnock) modernisation was ambivalent was in relation to the policies and values of the party, where he was torn between the need for Labour to change and his instinctive and emotional attachment to the Labour Party of his youth". For Blair there was no such emotional attachments or baggage. The son of a former Conservative councillor, educated at public school, a fellow of Saint Johns College, Oxford and a barrister, Blair's *Curriculum Vitae* was as conservative as any of the members sitting opposite him in the House of Commons.

The Sunday after Smith's death, Gould held a telephone conversation with Brown, during which Brown asked for his thoughts on which candidate would give Labour its best chance of winning the general election. Gould writes, "I said Tony, without hesitation... Tony not only met the mood of the nation, he exemplified it. He would create for Labour and for Britain a sense of change, of a new beginning, which Gordon could not do".

The following day Brown received a carefully worded letter by fax from Mandelson, in which similar points were made. Mandelson told Brown that although he was widely regarded as the superior intellect, "It would be very difficult for Tony to withdraw in your favour (although Blair had not declared himself a candidate at this stage)... Ultimately, the card the media are playing for Tony is his 'southern appeal'. He doesn't need to point it out or build it up: it is there firmly in their minds and it is linked to their (and our) overriding question, is Labour serious about conquering the South?"

This appeared to be a very deliberate attempt by Gould and Mandelson to force Brown out of the running to ensure their favoured candidate would lead the New Labour project in what Peter Osborne describes as a "New Labour coup *d'etat*". Within twenty minutes of learning of John Smith's death Mandelson was discreetly briefing journalists by telephone that "It's got to be Blair". After Derry Irvine contacted Blair, who was at Dyce airport in Aberdeen as part of the European election campaign, to confirm that Smith was dead, Blair made two phone calls. The first was to his wife and the second was to Mandelson.

Indeed, it was Mandelson who broke the party's self imposed moratorium on the leadership contest during an appearance on Channel Four's *A Week in Politics* when he argued that the new leader would

need to be someone who “will play best at the box office, not simply appeal to the traditional supporters and customers of the Labour Party”. Alastair Campbell chimed in with his column in *Today*, in which he wrote, “Blair is clearly the media favourite. They (Brown and Blair) must decide which of the two is likelier to win a General Election. Who is more likely to stop Basildon man voting Paddy Ashdown?”

The pressure on Brown not to run had now becoming overwhelming, and on May 31st over dinner in the *Granita* restaurant, Brown confirmed to Blair that he would not contest the leadership. With his closest rival out of the running it was a contest in name only, Blair secured a comfortable 57 per cent of the votes against his other challengers, John Prescott and Margaret Beckett. According to Macintyre, Mandelson lamented that his role in supporting Blair had destroyed his long-standing friendship with Brown, and that he had now “made an enemy for life”.

Mandelson’s role in the Blair campaign is, in keeping with man’s character, cloaked in mystery. Macintyre noted that Mandelson had been up to his old tricks of media management on Blair’s behalf when he attempted to postpone Blair’s scheduled appearance on the BBC programme *On the Record*, so his leadership interview would come third and last (always an advantage for a candidate in an election). However, programme editor David Jordan protested he had already booked fellow leadership candidate Margaret Beckett for the date Mandelson wanted. According to Macintyre a “screaming match” erupted, in which Mandelson threatened to go to a “higher authority”. The situation was resolved when Beckett agreed to move her slot, and so Blair’s interview went ahead on the date Mandelson wanted. Macintyre wrote, “Blair regarded Mandelson’s semi-clandestine media handling as crucial”. At his victory party, Blair gave thanks for the support of “Bobby”. Nobody else had any idea to whom Blair was referring, but the journalist Nicholas Jones later revealed it was a pseudonym given to Mandelson by Blair’s diary secretary. Mandelson was not only back as a sphere of influence; he was more influential than ever before, under a new master who shared the same objectives that he had been working towards for nearly a decade.

Alastair Campbell, who became Press Secretary to the new Labour leader, joined Mandelson in Blair’s circle of trusted colleagues soon after Blair’s election. David Miliband, another moderniser, became head of the Policy Unit (and is now Labour MP for South Shields) and Anji Hunter, a long-term friend, was recruited as office manager. Of these last three appointments, Campbell’s was the most important and completed the “inner” core of modernisers. A highly educated and experienced journalist; close to Kinnock, but never at the centre of his influence, Campbell established a reputation for cajoling and even bullying his fellow journalists into carrying the “New” Labour message. Campbell’s experience in the tabloid world meant he was adept at conjuring up memorable slogans and phrases that were the diet of New Labour. Indeed, it was Campbell who came up with the “New Labour, New Britain” slogan on the eve of Blair’s first conference as leader and (shortly after Labour came into office) the “people’s princess” soundbite following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Campbell’s instincts for tabloid journalism were also instrumental in bringing much of the press onside of New Labour. The tabloid’s relationship with Kinnock had been rocky at best, in particular with the press

owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation such as the *Sun*, *News of the World*, *Times* and *Sunday Times*. The relationship between Labour and Murdoch deteriorated to freezing point when News International moved its headquarters to Wapping in the mid-1980s with the loss of around 5,000 jobs. However, upon Blair's election as leader a covert operation began to restore this relationship. The importance of the media had never been lost on Blair, who told Islington neighbour Margaret Hodge (now Labour MP for Barking) the Sunday after John Smith's death that, "the only thing that matters in this campaign is the media, the media and the media". Blair penned his first article as leader for a Murdoch publication (the *News of the World*) in August 1994, in which he significantly said "Labour has no intention of punishing middle-income families with ever higher taxes as the Tories have done". A few weeks earlier Murdoch had given an interview to the German magazine *Der Spiegel* in which he pointed that his papers had helped Harold Wilson in power, and that "only last year we helped the Labor Party in Canberra. I could even imagine myself supporting the British Labour leader, Tony Blair". (August 1994). A plethora of articles (up to half a dozen a week) appeared in the Murdoch press. Although they were in Blair's name, Peter Osborne alleges they were ghost written by Campbell. Relations between Murdoch and Blair began to warm to such an extent that in July 1995 Blair, at the invitation of Murdoch and prompting of Campbell, travelled the 25,000 miles to address a meeting of News International executives in Queensland. It was, as Osborne described it, "the Political Class paying homage to the Media Class". Crucially, Blair acted to reassure Murdoch that New Labour would not undo the Thatcher reforms, and most significantly to Murdoch, would not introduce legislation over cross-media ownership.

Campbell was also influential in gaining Blair headlines over populist issues, which tapped into middle and working class concerns. Campbell is a keen supporter of his local football team Burnley, and it wasn't long before Blair was professing love for his local team Newcastle United. In an interview in 1996, Blair recounted fond memories sitting behind the goal watching centre forward, Jackie Milburn, whom he described as his "teenage hero". The fact Jackie Milburn had retired from football in 1957, when Blair was four years old and that no seats had been built behind the goal at this time was unimportant.

Blair also came up with a proposal for standard entry charge to football games. This proposal gave the opportunity for a well-crafted photo opportunity in which Blair and the Newcastle manager, Kevin Keegan, indulged in a game of headers, with Blair keeping the ball in the air for twenty-seven consecutive headers with the former England captain. Blair also contributed to a leader in the *Sun* following a riot by England fans during a match in Dublin in 1995 in which he condemned the way a game "we love is once more condemned by a group of idiots who shame our country". He was even able to weave the populist football theme into his speeches. "We're coming home, Labour's coming home", he said at the 1996 conference, echoing the lyric "Football's Coming Home" from the popular *Three Lions* song for the England team at the European Championship tournament held that summer.

This was the projection of Blair as a man of the people, the "people's Premier" (as the *Mirror* described him). New Labour were self styled as the "people's party", and Blair made much of the fact that by the time of the election Labour Party membership had doubled from 1983 to over 400,000.

Leo McKinstry (a journalist and Labour activist until his resignation from the Party in 1995) wrote, “The desire to be all things to all people is further reflected in the making of Blair’s personality. He is a football fan, a theatregoer, a devotee of the Spice Girls and the lover of Impressionist paintings. He gives a pasta recipe to the Islington cookbook, but tell the *Sun* that fish and chips are his favourite meal. The barrister who holidays in Tuscany because there’s so much history and culture likes nothing better than a pint of bitter at his local northern Labour club”.

Campbell also understood the importance of news management, which proved crucial in Labour’s attempt to get its message across to its target audience. Campbell’s importance in this regard was demonstrated when Blair made his second speech as leader to the Labour Party conference. It was a speech in which Blair set out plans for a technical revolution in schools, and a return to family values. It was also a speech in which he attempted to wrestle another traditional crown out of the Conservative hands, that of patriotism. Labour had always stumbled upon this thorny ground, hampered by stories, with a varying degree of truth, of extremist Labour councils banning the Union (Jack) flag on grounds it was racist, supporting Irish nationalism and opposing British forces in the Falklands and Gulf, which had left them open to Conservative and media attacks of being the “unpatriotic party”. Blair put his patriotic credentials on the table, telling delegates, “I love my country, I hate what the Tories have done to it...Let us rouse ourselves to a new moral purpose for the nation working together. Unity. Solidarity. Partnership. One Britain. That is patriotism, that is the future”. The political sketch writer for *The Times* Mathew Parris observed with a characteristic arid wit, “Tony Blair has discovered what other socialists have missed. That a Tory speech goes down well in Britain...Politicians used to think if the audience didn’t like the message, you changed the message. Tony Blair has changed the audience”. Blair’s audience were not the delegates sitting in the Blackpool conference hall, but those outside who had never voted Labour before. Unfortunately for Blair, this crucial speech coincided with the long awaited verdict in the O.J. Simpson murder trial in California. Campbell attempted to ensure Blair’s speech was the lead item of news by bludgeoning television companies with faxes on the day, which said, “Whilst I fully understand there is much interest in the verdict, I would implore you not to lose sight of the news value and of the importance to the country of Mr. Blair’s speech”. The BBC duly complied and the speech was the lead item on both the *Six O’Clock* and *Nine O’Clock* News. However, ITN led both their evening news programmes with the O.J. Simpson verdict. Journalist Geoffrey Wheatcroft wrote, “This went beyond spin-doctoring. It was news management worthy of a none-too-democratic Balkan state, or of some Third World country rejoicing in the `new information order`.”

The BBC journalist, Nicholas Jones, claims Campbell came up to him the following day and said the BBC “should be congratulated on showing excellent news judgement for a change”. Jones also claims that

his BBC colleague, John Humphries, privately told Blair and Campbell they ought to be ashamed of such blatant news management. Campbell replied “But it worked”. Humphries suggested that Campbell should be sacked. Blair responded that he thought about giving him a pay rise instead.

This was not the only time that Campbell would stand accused of manipulating the news agenda for New Labour’s benefit. John Sergeant, then chief political editor of the BBC, claimed that Campbell told Blair to ask mundane questions at Prime Minister’s Question Time scheduled on the same day as the launch of Labour’s draft manifesto in the summer of 1996 to ensure the manifesto was the lead item on the news. Sergeant claimed “Blair is asking a deliberately boring question and the reason for that is that he is worried about upstaging himself because he was the big star of the a news conference. So his spin doctors have suggested the best tactic is to be boring”. In the same article Sergeant’s opposite number at ITN, Michael Brunson, agreed Blair asked a “question of staggering dullness” and “you feel you are being used because you’re playing to their rules rather than ours”. Campbell denied these allegations, but the manifesto was indeed the lead item on the BBC’s *Six O’Clock News*.

Campbell was notorious for his ability to control, or attempts to control, everything that was seen and written about New Labour and Tony Blair. The *Sunday Telegraph* carried a report shortly before the 1997 election over an incident where *Daily Mirror* photographer, Mike Maloney, came to the Blair’s home to take family photographs of Blair and his wife for publication. Campbell was present, but had been called away to the phone. When he returned he discovered Maloney had persuaded Tony and Cherie Blair to be photographed rubbing noses together, Eskimo-fashion. According to Peter Osborne, Campbell “went mad”, screaming at Blair “You prat! What do you think you’re doing? Maloney is the original baby faced assassin”, before forcing Maloney to hand the pictures over. Osborne also points out how Campbell became skilled in making himself “an invisible third participant...placing himself within the interviewer’s line of vision and making signs such as tapping his watch”. James Naughtie, a presenter on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Today*, wrote that Campbell “is a regular caller to the BBC in the early morning. The tiniest blip on the radar screen was monitored, and the guns would swing around...The theory is not that a rude phone call will change a headline but that a regular sense of being watched will induce a sense of defensiveness”. Indeed, Roger Mosey, former editor of *Today*, recalls, “If you had a line Labour didn’t like on the 6:30 a.m. bulletin you got called instantly”.

Campbell has often been compared with Sir Bernard Ingham, Mrs. Thatcher’s fearsome press secretary. Indeed, Campbell and Ingham knew each other well when Campbell was a lobby journalist, and Ingham recalled his “friendly relationship” with Campbell in his autobiography. Osborne, argues “Campbell would not have been possible without Ingham...Sir Bernard showed the way for Campbell, just as Margaret Thatcher showed the way for Tony Blair”. However, the crucial difference between Campbell and Ingham is that Ingham always regarded himself as a civil servant first and foremost. Loyal to Margaret Thatcher certainly, but never part of an inner core project to keep the Conservatives in power. Ingham’s loyalty was to the Prime Minister; Campbell’s is to New Labour. Sir Bernard did not attend a Conservative Party conference during his time as Mrs. Thatcher’s Press Secretary; it would be hard to imagine Labour having

a conference without the supervision of Campbell. Indeed, Campbell's role has become so politicised that during the 2001 general election Blair was forced to change Campbell's job to special advisor to get around Civil Service rules which forbade Civil Servants involvement in general elections.

Campbell and Mandelson, to whom the term "spin doctor" was now regularly applied by the media, was a reflection of the new communications revolution under New Labour. The rapid rebuttal unit and Excalibur database at Labour's communications headquarters in Millbank were vital new innovations in this process. David Hill "Usually within about five minutes of the Prime Minister sitting down I'd get a bleep saying that John Major had said something untrue. That enabled me to start alerting the lobby and before we'd even finished our press release, correspondents would be ringing Millbank to ask for a copy. Journalists are inherently lazy, and our rebuttal unit has made it easier for them". (Jones, p.22) Hill also cites an example of the usefulness of the Excalibur computer. In mid February 1997 the *Daily Mail* ran a feature by Kay Coleman, a Chief Executive of a textile firm in Oldham. Mrs. Coleman claimed Labour's proposals to sign up to the Social Chapter would put jobs at risk. Adrian McMenemy, who headed the rebuttal unit, ran Mrs. Coleman's name through Excalibur's database and discovered that she had spoken at the Conservatives women's conference two years previously. The *Mail* had not mentioned Mrs. Coleman's political connections, and by exposing her allegiances to other newspapers, Hill claimed, "Labour made it difficult for the Conservatives to exploit her story in any future propaganda against Labour's support for the social chapter". (Jones, p.23)

Under Campbell's suggested slogan "New Labour New Britain", Blair made his first conference speech as leader in October 1994. The image of renewal was a reoccurring theme throughout. Blair used the word "New" 37 times in his fifty minute speech which was pitched at his targeted audience, those middle classes who felt betrayed by the Conservatives, but still distrusted Labour. Blair used quintessential New Labour vocabulary, reflecting ambitions, aspirations, and middle class concerns.

Blair implored: "To parents wanting their children to be taught in classrooms that are not crumbling, to students with qualifications but no university place, let us say, to Tories have failed you, we are on your side, your ambitions are our ambitions. To men and women who get up in morning and the kitchen door smashed in again...the video gone, again...to pensioners who fear to go outside their homes, let us say the Tories have abused your trust, we are on your side-your concerns are our concerns. To middle and lower income Britain, suffering from the biggest tax rise in peacetime history to pay the bills of economic failure, let us say, the Tories have betrayed you, again...Labour is on your side. Your aspirations are our aspirations. We are back as the party of the majority in British politics, back to speak up for Britain, back as the people's party".

Blair also used the opportunity of his debut speech as leader to announce a major symbolic change by unveiling proposals to rewrite Clause IV of Labour's constitution. Clause IV meant little to those outside of the world of politics, but to many members it stood as the totem of the party's socialist origins, devised by Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1918, which made blanket state control of industry and commerce the main objective of the party.

The announcement took most delegates by surprise, Blair having only consulted a handful of confidants, among them the modernising inner core of Brown, Campbell, Mandelson and Gould. The new Clause, adopted on April 29th 1995 at Westminster Central Hall by 65 per cent, called for a “dynamic market economy” and the “enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition”. Shortly after the vote Blair gave an interview to the *Mirror* in which he condemned the two largest Unions for opposing the change, and gave an indication that a Labour government would not be beholden to the Union. “A Labour government has to govern for all the people, not self interested parties.” Blair wrote, “There may be times when a Labour government and the Unions diverge”. It was a defining moment, and perhaps the date when New Labour finally replaced Old. It also illustrated the significant difference between Kinnock’s modernisation and Blair’s New Labour. This went beyond modernisation, it was reaching out to a specific section of society to prove that Labour had changed. It wasn’t that Clause IV would stand in the way of privatisation, or that it ever had much relevance during the 20th Century, but it was a very public gesture to show Labour had changed. Significantly after the vote Blair argued, “Power without principle is barren. But principle without power is futile.” Mandelson wrote in the *Blair Revolution Revisited* that, “For Blair, Clause IV was not a harmless anachronism; it created a split identity for the party, tying it to an outdated and redundant doctrine which had long ceased to have any relevance to the party’s thinking or policy...For Labour’s new leader, rewriting Clause IV was indispensable to his mission to create a fresh agenda for the left and centre in politics”.

The Blair effect was working. Gould conducted polling with six focus groups in November 1994 and wrote a memo saying the results showed “clear evidence of a real improvement toward Labour in comparison with Kinnock and Smith...The common response is, ‘I’m going to give this lot a go` There is a definite sense that Labour may now be able to address the problems of Britain.”

Blair even took decisions regarding his family that were out of sych with party policy. In December 1994 the *Daily Mail* leaked the news that the Blairs had decided to send their son to a grant-maintained London Oratory School, but even the *Mail* had a rather complementary banner headline of “Labour leader ignores party policy and puts family first”. Blair defended his decision on the *Good Morning With Anne and Nick* television show, stating he wanted maximum choice for everyone. Although the decision caused debate among the media, and the Conservatives accused him of hypocrisy, it had no effect on Labour’s popularity, demonstrated by the result of the Dudley West by-election held two weeks later, in which the swing to Labour was 29 per cent, the largest since 1933.

The decision to send his child to the London Oratory in defiance of his party helped Blair consolidate his appearance as a “strong” leader, something Kinnock had never been able to do. It was now John Major who looked the weak leader, as his government fumbled one crisis after another. In one of the more memorable exchanges at Prime Minister’s Question Time, in which Major taunted Blair over internal opposition to his rewriting Clause Four, Blair retorted that, “There is one very big difference, I lead my party, he (Major) follows his.” Major reflected this “wounding jibe” was “the best one-liner he ever used

against me". Blair also symbolically appointed the late Donald Dewar as Chief Whip in 1995, a position that had hitherto been elected by the PLP. It was a sign that Blair, and his modernisers were in control.

Blair had successfully altered the perception of the Labour Party over the traditional Tory ground of law and order during his time as shadow Home Secretary, and his political blood brother, Gordon Brown, appointed shadow Chancellor in 1992, had done much the same over the economy. To a large extent the Conservatives did much to destroy its own creditability with the financial disaster of "Black Wednesday" on September 16th 1992, and rises in direct taxation in 1993 which threw them into a trough of unpopularity they were never to climb out of.

However, Brown was mindful that Labour were still perceived as a party of profligacy and that John Smith's shadow budget precipitated the "Labour's Tax Bombshell" poster for the Conservatives which worked so successfully against Labour. Brown was determined not to fall into this trap. Unlike Smith, or indeed Hattersley before him, Brown made no major public spending commitments during his time as shadow Chancellor, which lent him the nickname of the "prudent" and "Iron" Chancellor even before he came to office. It was a mantra that suited Brown and New Labour down to the ground. James Naughtie points out that as far back as 1988, when Brown was Smith's deputy in the shadow Treasury department he was advocating "prudence" and "had already concluded that Labour had to establish a reputation for fiscal probity if it was ever to be elected". Indeed, Brown had on times gone out of his way to insist that taxes may even be cut under New Labour. Brown told delegates at the 1996 Party conference "My tax-cutting ambition is to lower the starting rate of tax to 15p or even 10p, to help everyone. I want a people's tax cut for jobs-one that will help thousands back into work.

Our prudence and responsibility is therefore not an abandonment of socialism - it is the very essence of it". Brown combined elements of old socialism, to which he was more attached than Blair, with the New Labour attitude of low tax for the middle classes. Significantly he ruled out any increase in public borrowing at a keynote speech on May 18th 1995, in which he also argued for independence for the Bank of England. On the same day, the political editor of the *Times*, Peter Riddell, wrote, "no longer can the Tories depict Labour as the party of high spending and nationalisation. Mr Brown's speech on counter inflation policy makes past Labour Iron Chancellors such as Phillip Snowden and Stafford Cripps look like free spenders in comparison...Mr Brown's priority is to show Labour can be trusted to run the economy...Labour has changed the terms of the political debate".

The few spending commitments that Labour did make were carefully costed by switching spending from other areas, or by targeting sources of revenue other than direct income tax. Labour pledged to raise money to reduce class sizes by abolishing the assisted places scheme, and to introduce a windfall tax on profits of the privatised utilities to fund a scheme to help young people find employment.

The commitment to exorcise the ghost of Labour's reputation for extravagance was underscored when Brown was interviewed on the *Today* programme on January 20th 1997, he confirmed not only that Labour would stick to the Conservative's spending plans for two years, on which the media had already been briefed, but also that Labour would fight the election on a pledge not to raise direct income tax at all. Table

3.1 shows how Labour gradually took over from the Conservatives as the party most trusted with the economy. Although a clear fall in support for the Conservatives can be traced post the ERM fiasco (before Blair's election as leader), it was worth noting that post 1994 Labour competence on the economy remains in the high forty per cent, only dipping slightly in 1996.

Table 3.1 Party competence rating on economic issues 1991 - 1997

Q: With Britain in economic difficulties which party do you think could handle the problem best?

Date	Conservative(%)	Labour(%)	Labour lead
1991-92	44	30	-14
1992 (pre ERM)	45	34	-11
1992 (post ERM)	31	43	12
1993	27	41	14
1994	22	46	24
1995	22	48	26
1996	26	43	22
1997	36	47	11

Source: Gallup. See *Geddes and Tonge p.112*

A very clear divide had now emerged between “old” and “New” Labour. In 1996 Blair's delivered his last speech to the conference before his party would face the electorate at the polls. He clearly identified the voter he was targeting, when he told delegates:

“I can vividly recall the exact moment that I knew the last election was lost. I was canvassing in the Midlands on an ordinary, suburban estate. I met a man polishing his Ford Sierra. He was a self-employed electrician. His dad always voted Labour. He used to vote Labour, he said. But he'd bought his own house now. He'd set up his own business. He was doing quite nicely, so he said `I've become a Tory now`”.

Blair wanted Sierra man back at the next election.

The 1997 General Election

The 1997 general election campaign was conducted under an atmosphere of intense excitement but optimistic caution at Labour's communication headquarters. Labour had been consistently ahead in the opinion polls, but had seen big leads disappear before and the spectre of the 1992 defeat from the jaws of victory still haunted activists. Andrew Marr, then political editor of the *Independent*, observed that at Millbank there were "zipped lips, buttoned imaginations and clenched buttocks". Labour, he wrote, were "a party trapped by its own opinion-poll lead".

The caution at Millbank was not without good reason. The Prime Minister had called the election on March 17th for a May 1st polling day. Twice as long as the traditional two or three week campaign. Major's strategy appeared to be an attempt to allow his party to regain lost ground in the hope that Labour would unravel during the campaign, as they had done in 1992 over taxation. However, it was a strategy that spectacularly backfired as Tory "sleaze" dominated the news agenda for the first few weeks.

The news got even worse for the Conservatives when the *Sun*, a loyal stalwart throughout in the 1980s, and (according to its own self aggrandisement) "Wot won it" in 1992, announced that it was backing Labour. The *Sun* was a vital recruit. Not only did it have the largest mass circulation throughout the country, (a circulation that had increased from 1992 after a long running price war) but it had the largest percentage of readers within the social C1, C2 and DE categories. The very groups that had deserted Labour in droves during the eighties to give Mrs. Thatcher residence in Downing Street, and the same groups that had granted a extension to John Major's lease in 1992. As Andrew Neil, former editor of the *Sunday Times* writes, "The *Sun*'s support was a real coup for Blair, who recognized its political importance in the 1980s as that the paper that cemented its massive Middle England readership around Thatcher. He believed it would be a matter of great symbolic significance - a sign that New Labour really was safe for the striving lower middle classes". However, it should also be recognised the *Sun* were jumping on a rolling bandwagon. This was an acknowledgement that the majority of *Sun* readers no longer feared voting Labour, and the *Sun* certainly did not want to be backing the wrong side. As then editor Stuart Higgins explained after the election, "Imagine the nightmare scenario for us on election day, with Labour having the landslide they had and us being on the wrong side. It would have been a complete nightmare going against everything the *Sun* stands for, i.e. popular opinion". The importance of the *Sun*'s backing was not lost on New Labour, least of all Tony Blair who sent Higgins a handwritten note thanking him for his "magnificent support", which, "really did make a difference".

The Conservatives not only lost the support of the *Sun* and the *Star*, but also the usually loyal *Times* which had (for the first time in its history) not endorsed the Conservatives, advising its readers instead to vote for the anti-European Union candidate. The *Independent*, which had been neutral in 1992, also backed Labour. Among the Sunday papers, the *News of the World*, (also owned by Murdoch), which had the

largest circulation of all the Sundays (4.37 million) also switched from Conservative to Labour. For the first time in a general election, Labour went to the polls with the backing of the majority of Fleet Street.

. Table 4.1 shows the political allegiances of the popular daily newspapers and the percentage of their readers in the various social classes. The *Daily Mail* retains the highest proportion of C1 readers, with the *Express* second. However, the *Sun* and the *Star* have a significant C2 readership, making their switch from Conservative to Labour all the more vital in capturing the middle class vote.

Table 4.1 Newspapers' political allegiances and circulation (figures in millions)

Newspaper	1997	1992	Percent of readers in social grade (92 in brackets)			
			AB	C1	C2	DE
Dailies						
<i>Sun</i>	Labour (3.84)	Conservative (3.57)	8(5)	22(17)	30(35)	40(43)
<i>Mirror/Record</i>	Labour (3.08)	Labour (3.66)	10(6)	23(18)	31(36)	36(40)
<i>Daily Star</i>	Labour (0.73)	Conservative (0.81)	7(14)	19(14)	34(38)	40(44)
<i>Daily Mail</i>	Conservative (2.15)	Conservative (1.68)	28(24)	38(32)	18(25)	16(19)
<i>Express</i>	Conservative (1.22)	Conservative (1.53)	24(20)	34(34)	23(26)	19(20)
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Conservative (1.13)	Conservative (1.04)	56(49)	28(32)	9(11)	7(7)
<i>Guardian</i>	Labour (0.40)	Labour (0.43)	57(52)	29(27)	5(11)	8(11)
<i>The Times</i>	Euro-Sceptic (0.72)	Conservative (0.37)	57(61)	27(26)	8(8)	8(6)
<i>The Independent</i>	Labour (0.25)	None (0.39)	52(52)	31(29)	8(11)	9(7)
<i>Financial Times</i>	Labour (0.31)	Labour (0.29)	63(57)	26(30)	5(8)	6(5)

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation, as published in *Geddes and Tonge*, p.75

Following the election a MORI poll discovered that 52 per cent of *Sun* readers voted Labour with just 30 per cent backing the Tories. In 1992, 36 per cent had voted Labour and 45 per cent had voted Conservative. The swing from Tory to Labour among *Sun* readers was therefore 16 per cent, compared to a national swing of 10.5 per cent. Table 4.2 shows the parties supported by the readers of the popular press, and highlights the remarkable rise of Labour support among traditional Conservative papers such as the *Daily Telegraph*, *Times* and *Daily Mail* from 1992 to 1997. Table 4.2 Party supported by daily newspapers

Newspaper		Paper supported by readers		
		Con %	Lab %	Lib Dem %
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	1997	57	20	17
	1992	72	11	16
<i>Express</i>	1997	49	29	16
	1992	67	15	14
<i>Daily Mail</i>	1997	49	29	14
	1992	65	15	18

<i>Financial Times</i>	1997	48	29	19
	1992	65	17	16
<i>The Times</i>	1997	42	28	25
	1992	64	16	19
<i>Sun</i>	1997	30	52	12
	1992	45	36	14
<i>Daily Star</i>	1997	17	66	12
	1992	31	54	12
<i>Independent</i>	1997	16	47	30
	1992	25	37	34
<i>Mirror</i>	1997	14	72	11
	1992	20	64	14
<i>Guardian</i>	1997	8	67	22
	1992	15	55	24

Source: MORI Political Aggregate, 21 March-29 April, as published by Butler & Kavanagh, p.161

The *Sun* was the main vehicle for Blair to carry his message to his target voters during the campaign, and a vehicle in which he tried to allay the fears voters may still have had over a Labour government. For example, the subject of Europe was recognized as one of the areas where Blair's enthusiasm could be damaging in the face of a predominantly Euro-sceptic electorate, so Gould suggested Blair write a series of Euro sceptical articles in the *Sun*. In April Blair wrote an article expressing caution over abolishing the pound for a European single currency. Under the headline "My Love for the £" Blair wrote, "I know exactly what the British people feel when they see the Queen's head on a £10 note. I feel it too. There's a strong emotional tie to the Pound, which I fully understand. Of course there are emotional issues involved in the single currency. It's not just a question of economics. It's about the sovereignty of Britain and constitutional issues too." The new sceptical tone prompted an angry response from EU Commissioner Jacques Santer over the way Europe was being handled by both main parties, but on the 22nd April the *Sun* published another article by Blair promising to slay "the Euro dragons". (April 22nd 1997)

Labour went into the election campaign with five simple key pledges; These were pledges not raise direct income tax, to reduce class sizes, to x, to x and x. These pledges were printed on a small card and posters across the country carrying Blair's signature, and were designed to reassure potential Labour voters.

Throughout the campaign Gould continued to poll swing voters virtually every evening. Gould noted many of the electorate had become bored by what they perceived as a negative campaign on both sides (due to the fact that "sleaze" was such a dominate issue). Gould suggested Labour "turn a corner strategically by saying we were going positive". (Gould, p.356). At the suggestion of Campbell Labour launched a series of multicoloured posters under a more positive slogan "Britain Deserves Better" (the title of their manifesto).

Gould also noted that there was still concern among some voters over Labour's relations with the Unions, which he relayed to Blair. At the following morning press conference on March 26th Blair emphatically told the media "Anyone who thinks Labour has made the changes in the party to give it all away to the unions or anyone else does not know me". (Tony Blair, Labour Party press conference, March 26th 1997). A few days later the shadow Education Secretary David Blunkett, who a year previously had been jostled by angry delegates at the NUT (National Union of Teachers) conference, told BBC Radio 4 that New Labour would not be intimidated by Unions "who threaten and bully" (BBC Radio 4, *World At One*, March 31st 1997). Gould noted in his focus group that, "TB's words (on the Unions) were enough to reassure them. These words stopped or massively reduced damage today". (Gould, p.354)

Labour launched its manifesto on April 3rd, which stuck rigidly to the New Labour agenda. It gave a clear indication of how Labour was attempting to marry the opposing forces of government regulation and free enterprise. It said, "The old left sought state control of industry. The Conservative right is content to leave all to the market. We reject both approaches. Government and industry must work together to achieve key objectives aimed at enhancing the dynamism of the market, not undermining it." On taxation there was the commitment that "There will be no return to the penal tax rates that existed under both Labour and Conservative governments in 1970s" and Unions and industrial action the manifesto said "we make it clear that there will be no return to flying pickets, secondary action, strikes with no ballots or the trade union law of the 1970s. There will instead be basic minimum rights for the individual at the workplace, where our aim is partnership not conflict between employers and employees.

As the Conservatives continued to sink into a quagmire of sleaze and disunity, New Labour continued the march onto their territory. This was highlighted by the content of Labour's election PPB's. There was the "Oxo Mum" broadcast, which Gould describes as "a female, a typical Daily Mail reader whom our target audience would be able to identify with - going through four different segments of the five minutes to reveal the hurt and damage she had felt over the previous five years; education, health, crime and, finally of course, the tax rises". (Gould p.322) Another Labour PPB depicted Fitz the bulldog who gradually awoke when he heard interspersed clips of Blair's speeches. The bulldog was meant to symbol Britain's re-awakening pride, another example of the renewal theme. The bulldog was also significant because of its connotations with British patriotism (not something Labour was renowned for), and the fact that a bulldog had been used in the successful Conservative campaigns of the 1980s under the slogan "Britain Is Great Again, Don't Let Labour Wreck It". It was as Gould says, another "bold stride across Tory territory". (Gould, *Ibid*).

Polling day proved just how successful the New Labour project had been in breaking down the walls of the middle class areas that had for so long kept Labour out of power. In London middle class areas such as Putney, Regents Park and Kensington North, Wimbledon, Richmond, and (perhaps most memorably) Enfield Southgate (held by Michael Portillo) went Labour. In the south of England, outside London, traditional Tory bastions such as Hastings & Rye and Hove went Labour. Kent, which had not had a Labour MP since 1979, suddenly had eleven on May 2nd. Table 4.3 shows by a regional breakdown how

Labour made inroads in London and the south. This was true class dealignment in action, as shown in table 4.3. There was a rise in support for Labour across all social classes, but there was a disproportionate rise among the C1 and C2 voters. Table 4.4 shows conclusively New Labour was successful in hitting its intended targets of the middle classes.

Table 4.3 Party shares of votes and changes in votes shares by regions (%)

Region				<i>Change 1992 - 1997</i>		
	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lab</i>	<i>Lib Dem</i>	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Lab</i>	<i>Lib Dem</i>
Scotland	17.5	45.6	13.0	-8.2	+6.6	-0.1
Wales	19.6	54.7	12.4	-9.0	+11.4	0
North	22.2	60.9	13.3	-11.2	+10.2	-2.2
South East	41.4	31.9	21.4	-13.1	+11.1	-2.0
London	31.2	49.5	14.6	-14.1	+12.5	-0.6
South West	36.7	26.4	31.3	-10.9	+7.2	-0.1

Source: Geddes and Tonge, p.11

Table 4.4 How Britain voted in 1997

	1997 vote % (change on 1992 in brackets)		
	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
AB voters	42 (-11)	31 (+9)	21 (0)
C1	26 (-22)	47 (+19)	19 (-1)
C2	25 (-15)	54 (+15)	14 (-4)
DE	21 (-8)	61 (+9)	13 (0)

Source: 1992 data ITN/Harris exit poll. 1997 data BBC/NOP exit poll. See Kavangh & Butler, p.246

It should be recognised that tactical voting, as well as popular support for Labour, was responsible for the Conservatives inhalation, but even this could not mask the astonishing achievement. Labour had won with a 179-seat majority, returning 43.2 per cent of the vote (higher than the Conservatives had achieved at any point during the Thatcher era) and a total of 418 Members of Parliament. It had taken firm control of areas that they had hitherto struggled to even find a foothold, and their huge majority ensured that they would almost certainly win a successive term in office (which they subsequently did in the 2001 election, barely denting their majority) and possibly even a third. The revolution that Gould had called for had come home, and the scales of British politics had been changed for the 21st Century.

Conclusion

New Labour has turned Britain into a political hall of mirrors. Although many elections have been defined as watershed in British political history, the 1997 result perhaps more than most deserved this epithet. Labour had entered the election as a party reborn, after many bitter defeats in the 1980s as they made the small incremental steps towards modernisation and a “centre ground” of politics that was largely being set by Thatcher, a clear agenda was emerging from the core of modernisers that went beyond accepting the Thatcher debate, it was a post-Thatcherite agenda that Blair and the modernisers were setting.

The ideals and determination to win that culminated into New Labour had been crystallising under Kinnock, with Campbell, Gould and Mandelson outside of parliament, and Blair and Brown inside. It was a project identified through the raw material collected by Gould and translated by Mandelson. The concept of a new individualism had emerged in the 1980s under the Thatcher-Reagan axis as both America and Britain embraced these radical Conservative politicians, throwing the Democrats and the Labour Party into a long period of wilderness. However, the modernisers in the Democrats had been quicker than those in the Labour Party to learn the lessons of the new political age. Gould, Mandelson and many of the other modernisers witnessed first hand with the Clinton campaign how successful and focused communications could be in persuading swing voters who had feared previously feared the Democrats. After Clinton's election returned with an even clearer agenda, and the knowledge of how to achieve their aims.

Tony Blair appeared to have the hand of destiny on his shoulders as the man to lead this project. The moderniser's determination to make Labour acceptable to the south of England, unconquered territory nearly twenty years, was demonstrated by the ruthless way Mandelson and Gould moved to make Blair leader upon John Smith's death, uspersping Gordon Brown, regarded as heir apparent for sometime. Blair's election as leader ensured that the New Labour project could finally be implemented. Re-branded as the “people's party” that cared about issues the “people” cared about and a self-discipline and strong leadership with had been instilled through years of defeat, New Labour was a unique osmosis of presentation and policy, with Campbell and Mandelson leading an awesome vanguard over what was seen and written.

It will forever remain an untested hypothesis how successful Labour would have been in 1997 with New Labour, or Tony Blair as leader. It is likely, given the unpopularity of the last Conservative government that Labour would have been successful in winning the election. However, it is unlikely that the victory would have been anything remotely approaching the scale of New Labour. The purpose of New Labour

was not simply to win an election, but to break the mould of politics as its forerunner the SDP had attempt to do in 1981. This was the “Unfinished Revolution” Gould spoke of in his memo. It was a revolution to alter and change the entire face of British politics.