

The “*Third Way*” combines a complete and coherent definition for the modern Left with an illustration of the ways in which the Left can promote radical social change, using concrete examples drawn from government policy. In this sense, the “*Third Way*” is certain to prove the starting point of a fruitful debate. This debate should have an international dimension, given that the universal nature of the major problems of our day necessitates the pursuit of cooperative solutions after exchanges of views and experiences.

It is in this spirit that I take this opportunity to offer certain observations. My comments, though obviously coloured by the special needs of Greek society and the discussions of the Greek Centre-left, are of more general relevance and could add to the discussion currently under way.

The central importance of culture

It is a tenet of the Centre-Left that culture is directly connected to the values which give meaning to life, and concern both the development of our personality and the formation of our collective identity. Culture is a public good, for which the State should care, without, however, patronising it. The State should guarantee the freedom of cultural production, and at the same time ensure equal access of all to the enjoyment of culture. It should extend itself in bridging cultural inequalities and in supporting the *avant-garde* and the more demanding forms of art. In this way it enriches the stock of potentialities that the citizen should have available in order to shape in an autonomous and creative way his own personality. Moreover, in times when social exclusion is a real threat, culture can be a factor promoting social cohesion.

Environment - Quality of Life

For the Centre- Left development is a qualitative and not simply financial process: Its function is to provide for each individual the space and potential to put into practice his/her personal version of the “good life”. It is for this reason that problems related to the quality of life are at the centre of political discussion. The deterioration of the physical environment increases our responsibility towards future generations to whom we owe an equally rich heritage. We are duty bound to explore the entirety of the potential of modern technology to guarantee sustainable development. In addition to the larger issues relating to the environment, we should not lose sight of the fact that the quality of life and the quality of social co-habitation depend equally on day-to-day issues which absorb and trouble individuals.

In shaping our environment, we should note that in these type of issues very close and fruitful links can be forged between the Centre Left and the modern civil society: The Centre-Left has much to learn from the ecological (“green”) movement and other autonomous citizens’ movements.

Importance of macroeconomic stability

Macroeconomic stability, in the form of low inflation and the absence of major macroeconomic shocks, has been part of the European landscape of the last decade. The defeat of inflation has offered broad-based benefits to the more vulnerable parts of the population, giving rise to a “social dividend” contributing perhaps more to their well-being than many dedicated social policy initiatives. These social effects help to explain why the safeguarding of economic stability is a key goal of the economic

unification process in the European Union, where it will play the role of providing a solid foundation and a springboard for economic growth.

The attainment of price stability for a long period risks that the goal of stability be taken for granted. Ignoring the importance of adequate financing in social policy could hence hurt some of the people it is designed to help. Economic stability as an accompaniment to social cohesion needs to be fully integrated in the programme of the centre-left. Indeed, the caricature of the Left as proponents of fiscal irresponsibility in the pursuit of ephemeral political advantage has never been less true.

The challenge of Globalisation: the importance of quality factors

The integration of the world economies is something to which the internationalist spirit, which has characterised much of the best left-wing thought, should warm to. Indeed, it is my personal belief that the interweaving of production processes across borders can be a powerful mechanism for leading to socially desirable outcomes for the world as a whole as well as for all participants. There are good reasons for supporting the openness pursued by the European Union, together with rapid progress in the information society processes.

We must also recognise, however, that the process of globalisation carries with it a danger of a competitive “bidding down” of much of what we hold distinctive and desirable in our societies: pressures to reduce non-wage costs can pose a threat to the secure financing of social programmes.

The centre-left should unequivocally reject such courses of action. Instead, we should pursue the alternative, which is high-quality production where competitiveness is earned through innovation, the technological edge, close attention to what the consumer needs. Such a growth path avoids the conflict between a high level of social protection and economic success in the globalised economy. Indeed, a well-run and cost effective social protection system in such a situation can serve as a competitive advantage, rather than an obstacle.

Attaining the European Social Model: Convergence from different starting points

An effective response to globalisation requires that the social solidarity mechanisms should meet a minimum set of conditions in order that they can safeguard cohesion without placing economic development at risk. This minimum set of conditions forms the European Social Model.

European societies and social protection systems must converge towards the European Social Model from different starting points. In the North the starting point is that of the Welfare State of the 50s or 60s, tinged by a certain paternalism, but, nevertheless, a product of the post war Social Democracy. The South, on the other hand, began the period with a situation where social protection was provided by the family and informal networks and the Welfare State was heavily biased towards pension provision and was frequently operated as part of clientelistic networks. A recognisably “modern” welfare System only began emerging in the South of Europe in the ‘80s, and still has a long way before serving the minimum functions of social protection of the European social model.

The debate on the future of the welfare State must take into account this dichotomy; that whereas the Northern countries have to consolidate or find less paternalistic answers, the South has still much ahead of it in the form of basic welfare provision. Schematically, while the North is converging on the common target from above, the South must do so from below.

Towards a new patriotism

European convergence need not lead to cultural homogeneity, nor is a strong national identity incompatible with European citizenship. In view of this, the new Centre-Left should promote a "new patriotism": uncompromisingly opposed to the nationalistic and xenophobic variety, the destructive potential of which was once more revealed during recent conflicts, but able to combine distinctiveness and pride in one's own heritage with appreciation of other cultures and awareness of our common destiny. Therefore, the challenge ahead is to help national - but also regional, and local - sensitivities find expression within a framework of uninhibited interaction, building "unity in diversity".

The new Centre-Left should combine a tough stand on crime and illegal immigration, with a compassionate treatment of individuals and families fleeing war, persecution and famine, and with a readiness to extend social and possibly political rights to new entrants. It is our belief that the promotion of inclusive national identities, in which citizenship is defined in terms of willingness to belong, respect of the constitution and acceptance of the law of the country, can help shape stable, tolerant and cohesive societies.



Πρόεδρε,
 Όταν ο Blair εἰς ἔσπευε τὸν ἴστο δρόμο
 τὸν ἀνατίθασκε μεῖς ὡς ἀγαπίοις καὶ
 ἐπιθυμῶμεν ἵνα πρὸ οὐδιστικῆς συνέχειας
 ἡμεῖς μετὰ τὴν ἀδύνητα εἰς ἐπιτεταθῆμεν
 μετὰ τὴν Μαργαρίτη Βουτσαῖου ἐν
 ἴστο δρόμο καὶ ἐν ἴστο δρόμο
 τὸν Giddens. Ἐπιτεταθῆμεν ὅχι ἀνατι-
 κῆται ἐπιστολῆς καὶ σημεῖα ἐπὶ τῆν
 οὐδία. Οἱ ἀνατικῆται οὐδιστικῆς καὶ ἀπο-
 ραση περὶ τὴν ἀπονομῆς πράξεως
 σημεῖα μετὰ τῆν ἀνατικῆται τὸν ἀπο-
 τῆτες, μετὰ τῆς

ΝΘ.