

## SUMMARIES

### **Decline and Political Innovation in the British Labour Party**

by Oreste Massari

For a long time, the British Labour Party has been one of the most remarkable cases of the decline of mass socialist parties. Rather than providing an exclusively sociological interpretation of this decline, due only to social changes, the first part of this essay underscores the political and institutional factors involved in the crisis of the party (governmental incompetence, sectarian policies, dependence on unions, a lack of internal democracy etc., as well as a move away from the rules and constraints of the «Westminster model»).

In the second part, the essay focuses on the means whereby a process of political innovation was brought about as well as its dimensions. By making use of political communication, social sciences, restoring the role of leadership and the parliamentary opposition, Labour has once again become an electable and governmental party.

Along with these unquestionably positive developments, such as that of rendering the role of Opposition competitive and credible, the process of innovation has brought out the fact that a hard core, resistant to change remains strong, due to the party's cumbersome and union-dependent organizational structure.

The fourth consecutive defeat of Labour in April 1992 calls into question not only the future of European Left, after the upsets of '89, but also the future of the traditional model of British democracy, now that the periodic alternation in power no longer takes place.

## **Minorities and «National Security» in the Middle East**

by Alessandro Colombo

The purpose of the essay is to explain the reason why the coexistence among different ethnic, religious or national groups is more difficult in the Middle East than in other areas. In the more traditional analysis of the Middle East, intolerance is held to depend on internal characteristics such as authoritarian regimes, leaders' personalities or arab/islamic fanaticism. Actually, this essay is based on the notion that the regional system affects the outcome of behaviour regardless of the intentions and motives of the actors themselves.

The thesis is that a number of factors make middle eastern states insecure, and that within the anarchic and competitive conditions of their regional system the states are compelled to regard minorities as a problem of «national security» and their demands as a threat. The relation between states and minorities entails a typical «security dilemma». Although minorities don't attempt to weaken the state, the state cannot be sure that they are and will remain «peaceful»; thus it is induced to be intolerant in order to defend itself. But as it fights minorities the state risks to undermine its identity and to strengthen theirs, sinking into a still worse condition of insecurity.

## **Organizational Developments of New Social Movements and Their Political Context**

by Hanspeter Kriesi

This essay presents an analysis of the extent to which the organizational development of new social movements in four Western European countries – France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland – is determined by the specific opportunity structures of the political contexts in each one of these countries. First, a certain number of concepts are introduced which allow to specify the notion of the organizational infrastructure of a social movement and its development. Then the determinants of a movement's organizational development are discussed. This discussion emphasizes the role of political opportunity structures, although it also takes into account internal organizational dynamics, different movement types and other external conditions such as the economic situation of a given country. The empirical analysis confirms the relevance of the national political context for the organizational growth and decline, the external structuration and the transformation of goal orientations and action repertoires of the most important new social movements in the four countries. As expected, the French social movement organizations turn out to be generally

weak, most radical and most strongly politicized by their partisan environment. By contrast, the organizations of movements in the two smaller European democracies have a comparatively large membership, are relatively well endowed with resources, relatively well integrated into the political system and comparatively moderate. German organizations, finally, take an intermediary position, which corresponds to the ambiguous political opportunities they faced in the period under study (1975-1989).

## **To Survey Secularization in Italy**

by Roberto Cartocci

In the present day Italy, the religious cleavage is becoming much more prominent than in the past two decades. Bishops intervene in the cultural, political, and institutional debate and catholic political leaders discuss on the viability of a (new) catholic party.

The essay aims to ascertain the diffusion of catholic values and their geography. It first deals with two alternative ways to manage the concept-variable nexus (semantic vs. syntactic); then it underlines the semantic limits of data collected by current sample surveys, which tend to smooth the difference between behaviours and opinions or attitudes.

In the final sections two aggregate indicators of catholic observance are presented: the number of civil marriages and the circulation of the catholic press. The author applies these two indicators to describe the different rates of secularization in the various zones of Italy during the 1980's. A typology of Italian provinces is finally proposed, which distinguishes among «secularized», «catholic», «conformist» and «in transition» ones.

## **New Institutionalism in Political Science: Contributions from the Rational Choice Approach**

by Daniela Giannetti

In the last decade several remarkable developments within the rational choice approach have been known as New Institutionalism. The renewal of interest in economic and political institutions springs from the recognition of the shortcomings of behavioral revolution in political science and the explicative inadequacies of neoclassical paradigm in economics. Within the New Institutionalism a number of different lines of investigation can be distinguished.

This essay focuses on political institutions with two aims: 1) to identify two main strands of research, one rooted in the positive political theory, particularly in the social choice literature, the other one in the transaction costs economics, in order to show their analytical similarities and to illustrate potential extensions to the study of parliamentary systems and to the analysis of the development of modern representative institutions.

Some general implications of the analysis are drawn and objections to the overall line of inquiry are discussed in the concluding section.