

A MILITANT PAMPHLET

**COMMON MARKET - NO
SOCIALIST EUROPE - YES**

the socialist case

BY TED GRANT

with new introduction

by Peter Taaffe

15p

**plus Leon Trotsky on
THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE
[Is the Time Ripe for such a Slogan?]**

CHRISTIAN
NEWBY.

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INTRODUCTION

The 'Socialist Answer to the EEC' by Ted Grant was written in 1971 on the issue of Britain's entry into the Common Market.

The three years which have elapsed since it was first issued have not rendered this analysis obsolete. On the contrary as the reader can see events since then in Britain and in the other eight countries which make up the EEC have entirely borne out this analysis.

But it is not for this reason alone that Militant is re-issuing this pamphlet at this time. The June referendum on the Common Market has re-opened the debate within the Labour movement on all the issues dealt with in this pamphlet. Militant was the only tendency in the Labour and trade union movement which took a clear class position during the 1971 Common Market controversy. So too in the present debate.

In the two years since it entered the Common Market the sickness of British capitalism has been enormously aggravated. The sunny optimism of even the Confederation of British Industries the spokesman of the monopolies—which had the most to gain from entry—has completely evaporated. The chronic weakness of the British capitalist economy has been shown in every department.

They have been completely outstripped and beaten by their rivals in the EEC. This is summed up in the colossal trade deficit which British capitalism has accumulated with the other EEC countries. Since 1972 this deficit has increased from £459 million a year to £2,785 million in 1974. But this is not due to Common Market membership alone as some of the anti-Marketees argue. It is an expression of the decay—the lack of competitiveness—of the British capitalists. In the same period Britain's deficit with the rest of the world has gone from £477 million to £4,259 million!

The former 'workshop of the world' now imports over 50% of its manufactured and semi-manufactured goods! An indication of the devastating weakness of British capitalism was recently shown by the Economist when it revealed that a total of £12 billion manufactured goods were imported into Britain in 1974. British capitalism is beaten in its own backyard!

This is a consequence of the complete failure of the capitalists in the past to re-tool in order to meet the challenge of its EEC rivals. Manufacturing investment increased by 10% in 1974 but this was still below the amount re-invested by the capitalists in 1970! Yet the 'forcing house' of EEC competition has resulted in a spectacular leap in investment in at least one field—property. Thus the British capitalists have an estimated £5,000 million sunk in property in the Common Market countries.

This has meant a catastrophic falling behind of key industries like steel, which is still a measuring rod of economic health. In 1974 steel production in Britain dropped by 15.9% to 22.4 million tons. Even

backward Italy overtook Britain in steel production in 1974 for the first time with 23.8 million tons while the former satellite of British capitalism France produced 27 million tons and West Germany's steel production was 53 million tons.

The glittering prospect of Common Market membership has proved to be a mirage for the British capitalists. Nor will the 're-negotiated' terms brought back from the Dublin EEC summit in triumph by Wilson do anything to restore their flagging fortunes. Wilson has earned the plaudits of the capitalists and their press because they realise that while Common Market membership offers no magic cure for their ills, outside the EEC they would face even worse disaster. But the concessions which Wilson has received are tiny when set against the massive problems which beset the economy.

The total refund on Britain's budgetary contribution in any one year will amount to no more than £125 million in a year. Yet last year there was a deficit on the balance of payments of £3,820 million more than 5% of Britain's Gross National Product. The prospect for this year is for anything of the order of £4,000-5,000 million deficit. On this 'fundamental issue' the EEC mountain laboured and produced a mouse! The same applies to the concessions on New Zealand cheese and butter which in no way challenge the fundamental interests of the other capitalist powers in the EEC.

Britain's EEC rivals—in particular Germany and France—have been prepared to grant these concessions only because they fear the departure of British capitalism would be a body blow to the EEC which would eventually lead to its complete break up.

Even at the time of Britain's entry as 'SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE EEC' shows in detail, national rivalries had undermined the dream of a capitalist 'United Europe'. But in the last two years any lingering hopes which the capitalists still had have been completely shattered.

Thus the Economist a zealous advocate of British capitalism's entry into the EEC and 'European Union' mocks its own past position in its January 14th issue... "The grand design of Europe is dead and long may it remain so... The aspirations in Germany and Benelux for a united Europe of the future, although still passionately held by some, are now very shop worn... this summit of the nine (which had just taken place in Paris) put the stamp on the idea that Europe will remain a loose confederation of nation states."

The Economist confirms in its own stark and cynical way the consistent position of Marxism that it is impossible to unify Europe on a capitalists basis... "Mr Tidemans the Belgium Prime Minister, (was labelled) a 'wise man' (which he already is) and (commissioned) for a year and preferably longer, to try to define what the undefined words 'European Unity' mean."!!!

Only a handful of naive pro-Marketeters and their counterparts in the anti-Market camp still imagine that Britain could be swallowed up in a 'United Europe'. The capitalists have long since abandoned these dreams. The Times their most authoritative organ showed this in its comments on the Dublin summit... "The plans for economic and monetary union remain only an aspiration for the

future not a blue print."

In other words there is not the remotest possibility of "economic and monetary union." How could the Times write otherwise when each of the EEC countries have blatantly ignored every one of their solemn undertakings not to break the Community rules whenever they have felt that their vital 'national interests' were at stake?

The dominant section of finance capital in Britain wish to remain in the Market not because they are planning to set up some fiendish 'supra-European' state as some of the anti-Marketeters imagine. They are bound with economic hoops to the European markets. 35% of British exports go to the other EEC countries. Even more than in 1972 British capitalism's trade and influence with her former Empire—"The Commonwealth"—has drastically declined.

This has recently been underlined by the statements of the Prime Ministers of Australia, Canada and New Zealand all of whom delivered lectures on the advantages of Britain remaining in the Common Market. The Australian Prime Minister visited Brussels first before coming to London which shows the diminishing influence of British capitalism in her former colonies!

The prospects for British capitalism within the EEC are indeed gloomy. They entered too late at a time when the outline of the future break up of the EEC was already taking shape and the 'European Economic Miracle' was beginning to grind to a halt. Now even the Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Wilhelm Haferkamp, has informed the European Parliament... "The days of vast increases in prosperity are gone forever. The growth rate of private consumption (i.e. the standards of the working class PT) is in the future bound to lag behind the national product as a whole." (Times 20/2/75).

But for British capitalism to be outside the Common Market would be an even worse disaster for the British monopolies! They would be forced to enter into a 'free trade agreement' with the EEC. This could mean that key prices for steel and other products would be fixed by the EEC, as with Norway and Sweden, without the British capitalists having a say.

This is why the British capitalists have treated with scorn the arguments of Powell and the Tribune left of the Parliamentary Labour Party that EEC membership infringes 'Britain's sovereignty'. On a capitalist basis outside the EEC, Britain—by which the bosses mean themselves—will enjoy less sovereignty. On a capitalist basis there is no alternative at this stage to continued membership of the EEC.

The right wing pro-Marketeters in the Parliamentary Labour Party reflect with tender concern the desire of the dominant sections of finance capital to remain within the EEC.

But there is not an atom of socialism or of a class approach in the position of Tribune and their allies, the 'Communist' party leadership, on this issue. They have highlighted the issue of 'sovereignty'. This is to completely mis-educate the advanced workers in the Labour Party and trade unions in particular. The CP in particular has spoken about the alleged betrayal of the 'nation' of 'Britain' during the re-negotiations. This is to pander to all the base nationalist prejudices of the politically uneducated workers and

the middle class.

Disraeli's 'two nations' still exist—the nation of the rich and that of the poor. It is the 'Britain' of the poor—the working class and lower layers of the middle class—which is the concern of the Labour movement. In or out of the Common Market their future is bleak unless society is transformed along socialist lines. Nowhere does the Tribune say this clearly. Nor does it link opposition to the EEC to a clear class and socialist alternative.

In its issue of 7th March Tribune printed a long article by Michael Barratt Brown which it claimed represented a 'socialist alternative' to the Common Market. It was anything but as the following quotes will show...“the system of political organisation of the EEC has just one political end: to prevent any one of the member states breaking away from the capitalist embrace...all the economic institutions, rules and regulations of the EEC are designed to achieve just one economic end: that the allocation of resources in capital, land and labour of goods and services is determined in the market by the return in profit of private capital.” This is of course true.

But wouldn't this also be the case if Britain was outside the Common Market and still remained on a capitalist basis? Barratt Brown goes on to say that...“The freedom of national governments to intervene in their economies is firmly circumscribed.” But how would the position be any different if the Labour Government came out of the Common Market but still remained within a capitalist framework? The powers of the Labour Government between 1964-70 were “firmly circumscribed” not by the Common Market but by 'strikes of capital' economic pressure and the blackmail of the capitalists which the Labour leaders capitulated to.

As a result Labour's minimum reform programme was jettisoned. It is the remorseless pressure of the British monopolies and not the EEC Commission which has resulted in the Labour Government granting enormous concessions to the capitalists in the last budget with the promise of more favours to come in the next one. Even those mild measures like the National Enterprise Board and the Capital Transfer Tax have been watered down to suit the capitalists. But it is not the Rome treaty—a scrap of paper—or foreign devils which has forced the Labour Government to retreat on these measures but the living reality of the pressure of the British capitalists. There is no way of escaping that pressure in or out of the Common Market, unless the Labour Government breaks this power by nationalising the 300 monopolies under workers control and management.

A vague proposal to 'extend public ownership' by Michael Barratt Brown is no real alternative. There are no clear measures outlined by him and Tribune which give a socialist alternative to the Common Market. Radical phrases are used but they are incapable of disguising the narrow nationalist approach of Tribune.

Tribune—probably as a result of the past criticism of the Marxists—indignantly deny this charge...“the tendency to a rather narrow nationalism of more conservative nationalists (perhaps the less conservative nationalists are preferable PT) needs to be corrected. It has dangerous and potentially fascist implications. To tail behind a purely nationalist and potentially anti-socialist line

would be fatal." A big section of Tribune MPs and supporters like Clive Jenkins are refusing to heed Michael Barrat Brown's advice. Otherwise why are they intending to speak on the same platform as the rabid "anti-socialist" Powell and other right wing Tories?

But a few lines after condemning those with 'nationalist' deviations Barrat Brown commits the very same sin... "It is the fashion to decry the weakness of the nation state in the face of the super powers and the giant companies and of course most small nation states are desperately weak...but **Britain is not small**... Appeals to the Dunkirk spirit have been too often invoked by failing politicians to carry much conviction but few would deny that the challenge of 'going it alone' combined with some real evidence of equality of sacrifice would elicit a common response...the only hope for Britain as for others suffering from such an ebb (in their economic condition) is to cut themselves off as far as they can from the effects of the world market"!!(our emphasis).

These lines of Michael Barrat Brown reveal the utter confusion—to be kind—of the Tribune. Science, technique and the organisation of labour—the productive forces—are rebelling against private ownership on the one side and the nation state on the other. The market of 55 million people in Britain is too small for the giant monopolies who have the potential and are geared to the European and the world market.

It is reactionary utopianism to say that it is possible to cut Britain off from the world market. Through the international division of labour which has been enormously extended in the last twenty five years—the world is bound into one inter-dependent whole. It is impossible for any country—least of all Britain which relies for most of its raw materials and food from abroad—to build a self sufficient socialist utopia.

The beginning of socialism would mean a level of technique and production higher than the highest level yet reached by capitalism. This is not possible if the productive forces are strangled by capitalist ownership and the nation state. The unsuccessful attempts of the capitalists to unify Europe expresses the contradiction between the need to organise production on at least a European scale and the barriers to this in the form of the vested interests of capitalism.

Only the working class can free the mighty forces of production for the benefit of the peoples of the continent through a Socialist United States of Europe.

The great majority of the rank and file of the Labour movement oppose the Common Market for vague class reasons. They see the capitalists lauding the advantages of the EEC and therefore instinctively oppose it. They are confirmed in their opposition when they see the right wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party joining in the chorus of the pro-Marketeters. These worthies have formed a bloc with the most rapacious section of finance capital in advocating continued membership of the EEC. They claim that this is done in the spirit of 'internationalism' that the EEC represents a step towards a 'Socialist Europe'. This is a pernicious fairy tale which the spokemen of British capitalism themselves have refuted.

Thus Christopher Soames one of the EEC Commissioners in a recent speech pointed out...“I believe going into Europe is based essentially on the capitalist system and will always be so” (Times 25/1/75). Moreover the EEC is incapable of overcoming Europe’s national and racial divisions. The present world recession has already resulted in 4 million unemployed in the EEC and brought in its train measures to exclude immigrant workers from Germany, France etc.

But the leading opponents of the EEC in the ranks of the Labour movement have directed these class suspicions of the advanced workers into narrow nationalist channels. This is expressed not just in the ‘sovereignty’ and ‘splendid isolationist’ arguments of Tribune. It is also seen in their preparedness—along with the CP—to share platforms and march with right wing Tories, dissident Liberals and the nationalists. The ‘theoretical’ justification for this position has been supplied by the CP leadership. Thus in the Morning Star of February 28th Jack Woodis wrote...“In other words; when they oppose the EEC, the Tory anti-Marketees are prompted by class aims which are fundamentally different from those of the Communist Party.

Despite this, we share a common aim in wanting to take Britain out of the Common Market—and this provides an objective basis irrespective of our different class reasons for joining in a united campaign against the Common Market...There is nothing against socialist principles in working for such a broad campaign. On the contrary it has always been a basic tenet of Marxism that the working class, by itself can never attain its objectives.”

The CP justify their espousal of class collaboration by pointing to the fact that Labour only received 39.3% of the vote in the October General Election. They say that it is therefore necessary to water down and effectively abandon any class opposition to the Common Market in order to woo Tory and Liberal voters. But isn’t this precisely the general approach of the Labour right wing of Jenkins and Co? They maintain that Labour’s programme must be toned down that the mythical ‘middle ground’ must be occupied if the middle class and politically uneducated workers are not to be ‘frightened away’. Marxism has answered this argument many times. We have pointed out that this strata will not vote for a paler version of Toryism. It is necessary to advance a programme which links their demands with the idea of the socialist transformation of society. This can only be successful in a battle with the Tory, Liberal and Nationalist leaders—only if the Labour movement sets out to unmask these scoundrels before their middle class and working class followers. To form a bloc—to share a platform—with them is to re-inforce illusions in the Liberal, Tory and Nationalist leaders. The right wing of the Labour Party can quite comfortably share platforms with their Tory and Liberal opposite numbers. For them this could be a dress rehearsal for a more permanent alliance—in a National Government—when the economic crisis is serious enough.

But Tribune MPs who share a platform with the like of Powell, no matter how unconsciously, are aiding and abetting a dangerous

opponent of the Labour movement. It should be the task of those who claim to stand on the left of the Labour Party to combat the nationalist and racist poison put forward by Powell and his allies.

Denis Skinner, and some MPs in the Tribune group are refusing to speak on the same platform as the Tories and Liberals

But they need to go a step further. It is not sufficient to just oppose the Common Market. This opposition needs to be invested with a clear class approach. Moreover a viable socialist alternative needs to be posed in the referendum campaign. We will advocate that Militant supporters vote 'NO' in the referendum. We oppose the Common Market in the same way that we oppose British capitalism. But at the same time we advance the socialist alternative—**A SOCIALIST BRITAIN and A SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE.**

The capitalists will use the press, TV, radio and the enormous means of propaganda at their disposal in order to guarantee a massive 'YES' vote. They will use the fact that food prices are presently lower in the Common Market than on world markets. And if there is any suggestion that the vote will go against them they will conduct a scare campaign. This is what their Southern Irish counterparts did in 1972 and obtained a 5-1 majority. In Denmark too the capitalists threatened the working class with devaluation if there was a 'NO' vote in the referendum!

But victory for the capitalists and their shadows in the Labour movement in the referendum campaign will not cure the maladies of British capitalism. The piling up of the problems of British capitalism means the certainty of social turmoil in Britain. So serious is the crisis that the capitalists are openly talking of replacing the Labour Government with a National Government at a certain stage as a means of ruthlessly slashing the living standards of the working class.

In Europe too the grandiose events in Portugal and Greece and the coming revolution in Spain are an anticipation of an era of social revolution which will leave no part of the 'Old Continent' untouched. The slogan of a 'Socialist Britain and a Socialist United States of Europe' is not a programme for the dim and distant future. It is the only way that the workers of Britain and Europe can avoid the miseries which a continuation of capitalism will mean. We urge all Young Socialists, Labour Party members and trade unionists to ensure that 'A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE EEC' reaches as many workers as possible during the referendum campaign. We also include as an appendix a short article written in 1923 by Leon Trotsky. This article together with 'A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE EEC' are vital to an understanding of the Common Market and the task of uniting Europe on a socialist basis.

Peter Taaffe (March 1975)

SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE EEC

The discussion on the Common Market has become one of the main issues which face the working class and the British people at the present time. Heated arguments are taking place within the trade union and Labour movement. The active workers in the movement must understand the reasons why the ruling class is undertaking 'entry into Europe'.

BRITISH ECONOMY RELEGATED TO SECOND DIVISION IN WORLD LEAGUE.

The decay of British capitalism has progressively advanced during the course of the last few decades. Although nominally a victor power, in reality British capitalism was defeated in the course of the two world wars. Diplomatically, economically, politically, the power of British capitalism has shrunk.

For three hundred years, the ruling class in Britain played the game of the balance of power in Europe. Uniting with one coalition of powers to balance against another coalition, the oligarchy in London was able to take the final decision. This policy was weakened by the effects of the First World War, and finally destroyed during the Second. There were only two victorious powers in the Second World War; they emerged out of the holocaust as super-powers, mighty American Imperialism and Stalinist Russia. The attempt by British capitalism to maintain itself as the third world super-power has ended in ignominious recognition of her reduced role. The attempt to remain a major military power by the expenditure, in the early post war period, of as much as 10% of the national product on arms, failed in its purpose and merely added a crushing burden on the British economy and standards of living.

Thus reluctantly the ruling circles have recognised that Britain's economic weight is no longer commensurate with its former world status, and that they have been reduced permanently to a second rank world power on a par with the other defeated European powers, West Germany, France and Italy. Looking to the future, they can only see a further attenuation of the power of British Imperialism in comparison with its rivals and the possibility of being reduced to a third rate level.

On the basis of the status quo, in Europe and the World, the strategists of capital see Japan and Stalinist China as new super powers, in the coming decades. Thus to project themselves on a world scale the former great powers must band together. They have been reduced to size as comparatively small European powers by the common destruction of two world wars; and secondly the growth of

the world economy.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES RESTRICTED BY NATION STATE

The economic basis of this process is due to the world division of labour and the growth of productive forces. Two world wars, Fascism and the slump were already an indication of the growth of productive forces (that is the power of man over nature), factories, communications, technique and science beyond the framework of the nation state and private ownership of the means of production. From being a source of the development of society, capitalism and the nation state have become a terrible drag and impediment to the full and harmonious development of productive forces. ICI alone could supply the world's need of chemicals. While the working class through its political and trade union organisations, has not solved or even recognised the problem, the capitalists are attempting on a capitalist basis to try and overcome the basic problems with which they are faced.

CRISIS AND CONFLICTS INEVITABLE

The British economy with a population of 55 million, is too small a market for the giant industries and combines which were created in the last period. The basis of the power of Russia and America is the continental market of 205 and 250 million people. Consequently, the most modern industries, motor cars, chemicals, electronics, computers, plastics and sections of the engineering industry look towards a regional market of 250 to 300 million people. They wish to add one region of economic and political power to those previously mentioned.

However, even if successful, such a pool of power could only result in new contradictions on a world scale. It would be a partial solution which over a period would only exacerbate the tensions and conflicts on a world scale. The so-called under developed world, the former colonies of Britain, France and other colonial areas are seen as satellites, as fields for exploitation jointly of the Common Market countries. They would have economic preponderance and therefore would have a dominant say in the industrial development and policies of these countries. It would be a new cover for colonialism. As the world economic upswing slows down crises and conflicts within and without the EEC will be inevitable, especially the conflict with the giant of American Imperialism.

GLORIFIED CUSTOMS UNION

On the basis of the world economic upswing the EEC has held together and has had partial success. In all the countries of the EEC the growth of industry, the simultaneous propping up of agriculture with the Common Agricultural Policy, keeping out cheaper food imports while at the same time undermining and whittling away the peasantry (a survival of pre-capitalist formations) has been the basis

of the success of the Market. It is above all the big industrialists and the giant combines and the big farmers who in the main have benefited.

The Common Market as the name implies is a glorified customs union with the abolition of tariffs between the Common Market countries and a common tariff on a world scale which in its turn has stimulated and quickened world trade. It is the general lowering of these barriers on the basis of the world economic upswing which has heightened and stimulated the growth of industry in the EEC.

COUNTIES REMAIN SEPERATE ENTITIES

Inexorably, however, with the logic of capitalism, the formation of a new regional bloc, a trading bloc, will in its turn stifle and act as a brake on world trade. Very rapidly from a means of development it will become a source of new barriers and impediments to world trade. The shadow of new trade wars has already been cast by the threat of neo-protectionism in the American market, still the biggest in the world. Denis Healey has openly spoken of trade war between the blocs, in this context mainly the USA, Japan and the EEC. Reprisals will lead to counter reprisals and, on the basis of a slowing down of world trade in the long run, aggravated economic crises and slumps. The Common Market is a joint capitalist endeavour and not a mutual benefit society. This limitation, in the long term will be fatal for the Market. Under favourable conditions, despite strains and stresses, the Market has survived by the abolition of tariffs internally and the common customs barrier to the rest of the world. It remains a gathering together of seperate countries, governments, armies and police forces which remain as completely separate entities. A fact sheet published by the Government states:

“As this Community develops, it is expected that an increasing degree of political unity will evolve. But little progress has been made towards this and decisions concerning form and timing depend on the unanimous decision of the member countries.”

This was always a utopia. David Coombes, author of the recent book ‘Politics and Bureaucracy in the European Community’ writes sadly:

“The Commission, like the Community as a whole, has no powers in fields such as foreign affairs or defence and has no right to the use of force internally or externally. It has no power to approve Community legislation (as this rests with Council of Ministers) as far as the EEC is concerned...the Commission has, as yet, no power to raise revenue from an independent source of finance...On the other hand, its lack of power to make decisions on its own on all the most important questions and its lack of an independent source of revenue (in theory temporary but in practice persistent) limit the sense in which the term ‘supranational’ can be applied to the Commission.” (page 84-85).

He goes on to point out that “the main principle of the system seems to be that agreement with the governments must be obtained before any action is taken.”

VESTED NATIONAL INTERESTS WILL COME TO THE FORE

The difference can be understood if Wales, Scotland and England are regarded as different countries. They have one government, one currency, one army, and police force which are overall under national control, an economy which is completely integrated as one economic and political whole. The Common Market, on the other hand, is a joint capitalist endeavour, where the countries have pooled their resources together as a customs union, and banded together against the powers outside the Common Market. While world trade has been growing, and world interdependence increased, tariff barriers through GATT have been lowered. But this period seems to be drawing to a close. A trade war between the regional blocks particularly Japan, America and the EEC may hold the disparate and conflicting interests of the Common Market countries together for a period, but in the long run, the vested national interests of the capitalist class in particular of Germany, France and Italy will come to the fore. Even if the skin and bones remain, as a living and growing entity, the Common Market will be dead.

NO REAL INTEGRATION OF ECONOMIES

The United Kingdom has, not only one government, one state, one army, one area of customs, but, with insignificant differences in Scotland one law for economic and commercial purposes. The Common Market, on the other hand, is not a federation of states or even a more vague confederation. Consequently the dominant vested interest in each section are those of the ruling class in that section. Dutch capital, French capital, German and Italian capital remain as separate rulers of 'their' areas. Consequently there has been no mingling and merging into one ruling class in the Common Market, but capital in all of these countries remains separate, and distinct. This makes the possibility, indeed the inevitability of conflict and contradiction between the interests of the different ruling classes. In the recent devaluation of the franc France did not consult her partners, despite the fact that such action is specifically forbidden in agreements between the Common Market partners. This had an immediate effect on the Common Agricultural Policy, forcing Germany and Holland to introduce taxes on the border, on farm products, as with the devaluation these would undercut their own peasants. Even more pointed was the allowing of the Deutschmark to float, again against all the rules of the Common Market. Here the roles were reversed, with the French capitalists protesting to the German ones against this violation of the rules of the Market. Previous to the dollar crisis, caused by the flooding of fictitious capital in the shape of dollars onto the German money market, it has been the Germans who have been most insistent on moving rapidly towards fixed relations between the Common Market currencies and the 'goal' of a single currency by 1980. Now they reversed this procedure at the first serious test, while the French

Government was screaming for maintaining a fixed relationship. The German Government insisted on a common floating of the currency of all the Common Market countries against the dollar, which would have been for their benefit and convenience, and to the detriment of the French capitalists. When this was refused because of the interests of the other Common Market capitalists, unilaterally, the German Government allowed the mark to float. This meant an upheaval in the market because the Common Market agricultural policy is based on fixed parities with the dollar, and changed parities meant that the German Government and the Dutch Government have to impose taxes on French agricultural produce coming into the country and give subsidies for the export of foodstuffs to France and other Common Market countries. The law of capitalism that in a crisis it is "each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost" manifested itself. Willie Brandt, the Chancellor of the German Government—a Social Democratic Chancellor at that—declared "Germany comes first." Thus the interests of German capitalism, as with the French devaluation in the interests of French capitalism, were paramount.

When it is a question of sharing out a growing market, capitalist gangsters can always reach a compromise, When it is a question of a declining market and who is to bear the burdens of such a decline, the thieves fall out over a division of a smaller booty. That is why the argument about 'sovereignty' is so wide of the mark. With different currencies and differing interests, there can be no real integration.

CRUSHING ECONOMIC WEIGHT OF US CAPITAL

The formation of the EEC was intended to be a political, diplomatic and economic counterweight to the crushing preponderance in all these fields of American Imperialism. Even today, despite the combination of the EEC countries, crushing economic weight is in the hands of the American capitalists and economy. In 1965, for plants producing over 6 million metric tons of steel, only 7.6% of EEC production came from such giants, in comparison with 81% in the USA and 49% in Japan, The disparity has probably increased since then.

The size of plants in auto, chemicals, rubber, electrical goods, steel and petroleum (1963), in two thirds of cases in EEC plants, is only half of those of the USA. In the first four industries mentioned, the third enterprise in the USA was bigger than its first equivalent in the EEC. (West German firms within the EEC, in turn tended to be bigger than the French). In the vital field of scientific research and development in 1962 (and the situation is worse now) the USA spent four times as much as the entire community taken together.

THE CONSERVATIVE CASE

The Conservative case as put forward in the White Paper and in the propaganda of Heath, Davies and other members of the Tory cabinet, as was to be expected, are arguments dictated by the needs and interests of Big Business and the CBI. It is a case of the flag

following trade, a reversal of the procedures of the past. The direct domination of half of the world by British Big Business has collapsed. The attempt to build a counterweight to the EEC in EFTA has not had the desired effect. While trade has increased, it has been outdistanced by the trade results of the EEC.

END OF EMPIRE—'EUROPE' IS NEW CATCHPHRASE

The looting of colonial peoples in the Empire, the super exploitation of the past, has resulted in the revolt of colonial peoples. No longer are they content to have the burden of British capitalism's wars put on their shoulders.

In the change of front of the decisive sections of the Tories, we see the underlying realities of phrases about 'Empire', 'Country', 'Patriotism' and 'Idealism'. What they are really interested in is rent, interest and profit, and the necessary power, privileges and prestige to maximise these. Consequently, the 'Commonwealth and Empire' party is giving up these catchphrases, which are outworn means of disguising the naked interests of capital. In a gambler's throw now the 'European' card is to be played, in the Heathian phrase.

BRITAIN BEING DISPLACED IN MARKETS OF FORMER EMPIRE

The reason is not far to seek. Apart from the loss of profit due to the collapse of direct domination of the Empire, which opened up these areas to penetration from American, Japanese and European capital, there is the loss of trade to those competitors in markets formerly dominated by Britain.

As late as 10 years ago, Commonwealth markets took 33% of British exports, This had been reduced to 20% in 1970. Japan has become Australia's biggest market, with America now in second place. The USA is Canada's largest market, taking 60% of her exports. The old 'Dominions' are looking more and more to the USA. Politically, diplomatically and economically, Britain has long been displaced as first for India's trade. The former African colonies no longer look towards Britain as they did compulsorily with British military occupation in the past.

COLD FACTS OF WORLD ECONOMY SHOWS BRITAIN'S DECLINE

Despite a rapidly increasing trade, Britain's share of the world market has swiftly declined. Britain's exports to the Commonwealth were 37% of the total in 1958, and 21% of the total in 1970. On the other hand her exports to the EEC countries increased from 14% to 22% and in EFTA from 11% to 16%; in the whole of Western Europe, from 27% to 41%.

Half the total output of the United Kingdom as well as the EEC was industrial production. However, the gross National Product increased twice as fast between 1958 and 1968 in the EEC as in

Britain. The EEC doubled its GNP in the period. Britain only increased her production in the same period by 50%; despite the lessons of the past, the British Government spent more proportionately on defence. In 1958 the EEC countries invested a greater proportion of GNP, 25%, in the EEC, while 20% was reinvested in Britain.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BEYOND RESOURCES OF SINGLE COUNTRY

Vast sums must now be spent on science and technology, nuclear energy, space aviation and computers to be able to put industry on a competitive basis internationally. The bankruptcy of Rolls Royce was a warning in this respect. As Professor Swann, in his book on the Common Market comments:

"It is increasingly beyond the resources of any single European country to support alone the research and development effort which its industry needs to be both efficient and able to compete with the industries of the USA, USSR and Japan."

BIG MONOPOLIES STAND TO REAP BIG BENEFITS

The CBI and the Big Business monopolies, the paymasters of the Tory Party, are the most intent and determined to push Britain into the EEC. It is their pressure which forced British capitalism to abandon its age old policies and attempt what would be for Britain, an adventurous path. In a letter from 10 Company Directors of the CBI to the Times on 12 July, they say:

"Inside the Community we shall have the opportunity to increase our economic growth rate nearer to the level long enjoyed on the continent. **The full advantages of membership may not be shown in the first years**, but we have no doubt that the outlook for national well-being will be substantially better inside the Community than outside it." (Our emphasis).

What they really mean is that it will be substantially better for the monopolies and their owners. ICI, Fords, British Leyland, the City of London, electronics and computer industries, the most modern, many American owned, will gain a big advantage. The research and development in these industries is as high or higher than the level on the Continent. But for the old industries, particularly the luxury trades and those sheltering behind tariffs, it will be hard going. 10% of British manufacturing industry is American owned and the projected figure is that within ten years it will be 25%. These are the vital growth industries, computers, electronics, plastics and cars. American capitalism threatens to gain a stranglehold on the nerve centres of British capitalism and turn it into a satellite, in all but name the 51st state.

BIG BUSINESS NOT CONCERNED AT EFFECT ON WEAKER FIRMS

This adventure on the part of British capitalism is fraught with serious consequences for the weaker sections of its class. That grouping of the capitalists which is intimately linked with markets in the Commonwealth and with the Daily Express as its spokesman, will suffer losses; the more dynamic and modern sections will make marginal gains in the European economy. But, for a power like Britain, whose international relations have been based on world trade, it is a step backwards towards regionalism. What they gain on the EEC roundabouts, they will lose on the world trade swings, thus balancing out the gains and losses. For such areas of old heavy industry, shipbuilding, coal, as Scotland, Tyneside and Merseyside, the prospect will be bleak. But, as always, the dominant sections of industry are not concerned about their weaker brothers, let alone the suffering imposed on the working people. Heath's consolation is that Social Security payments will leap up with the cost of living and in any case workers can take themselves off to the monstrous conurbations of London and the Midlands.

The agricultural deficiency payments will mean on balance losses for British capitalism. There are only 860,000 employed in agriculture in Britain, 3% of the working population.

BANKERS SEE RICH PICKINGS AHEAD

The City of London, banking, insurance and shipping interests, which have a decisive say in British foreign policy, hope that it will still be able to maintain their interests in the so-called 'under-developed world'. They expect to increase their investments in the Europe of the 10, and see London as the banking and insurance capital of the new Community. The role formerly played on a world stage, they see being maintained and extended in Europe. They see the prospects of big gains in revenue; enormous sums will flow to and from Europe and the bankers will get their commission. They are not concerned with their industrial brothers who will go to the wall; **They see rich pickings ahead and that is their 'interest'.**

SEARCHING FOR A PANACEA

Against the background of declining power, the decay of empire and the worst record of economic growth of all the industrial countries, British capitalism is searching for a panacea. Powell, the prophet of raving racial reaction, amidst his right wing views, while searching for issues on which to gain support for his vicious brand of reaction, sometimes making penetrating points, while offering no real solution to the problems of British capitalism. His attack on the policy of entry into the EEC in a speech in Wolverhampton on 11th April did not receive wide publicity, naturally enough given the policy of the decisive section of the British ruling class. He said:

making motor cars in the age of linear induction motors and strides in technology that cannot even be imagined? Do we want to be an under developed nation in the 21st century?

A market of 300 million people will allow us to invest and expand...The advance of technology and the international company make it essential if we are to exercise any control over our destiny.

Being an unrepentent European, if that means that I may have to defy a three line whip one day, then so be it" (25 June 1971).

This is not the worst material turned out by the pro-Marketeters. Britain's entry now would not mean automatically an increase in real wages, if it depends on the capitalists and the Government; it would mean a fall in wages. It is to be noticed that, while talking about internationalism, there is no mention of class, which is the only basis for internationalism which has any meaning. The assumption that capitalist ownership and control will continue indefinitely for Britain and Europe in the year 2000 and beyond is a give-away. Entry into Europe is capitalist politics, in the interest of capitalism. It will not lead to peace but new regional antagonisms and trade wars.

STRIKES ALL OVER EUROPE

The idea that the class struggle has been abolished has been refuted in Britain and Europe in the last ten years. Gone is the mirage of the 'affluent' society, which these former supporters of Gaitskill believed in. In Britain, the demonstrations and strikes against the open reaction of Heath and Conservatism is one symptom of the class struggle. On the part of the Tories, their onslaught against workers' standards and the social services is not an individual whim of Heath, but is caused by the impasse of British capitalism, due to the falling rate of profit and even a fall in the amount of profit (See Militant and Militant International Review).

In Italy, the struggles of the working class against low standards and conditions has resulted in a series of general strikes. In France, despite the vaunted 'high wages and good conditions', we had the May days, the general strike and occupation of factories over a period of a month. In Germany, there have been a series of large scale strikes in the last months.

This hardly looks like the paradise pictured by Rose and the marketeers. As for 'peace', the increase in votes for the neo-fascist MSI in Italy in some recent local and regional elections is a warning. The continuance of capitalism in the main European countries and Britain, represents in the long run, a threat to democracy and peace. A destruction of the workers organisations, which a possible coming to power of fascism would mean, would inevitably prepare the way for a new war and the destruction of civilization, perhaps of mankind itself.

PREPARED TO PROP UP TORY GOVERNMENT

The assumption that the status quo in relations between classes and nations can be maintained, either internally or internationally is the dream of this section of the party. Their assumption always

begin by an acceptance of the present class relations within society. Their policies accept this as a geometric axiom. They are opposed to radical measures of nationalisation and therefore their ideas are always limited by the framework of capitalist society.

Their illusions of 'managing capitalism' better than the capitalists received a rude shock with the experience of the Labour Government of 1964-70. But they have learnt nothing from this and forgotten everything. They remain prisoners of their middle class outlook. They are quite prepared, on the basis of their prejudices, to prop up the Heath Government by defying a three line whip in order to vote with the Tories. The support of ruling class ideology is more important to them than bringing the Government down.

They do not conceive a Labour Government as anything fundamentally different from a Tory one. In the next Labour Government, they will be responsive to any pressures from the capitalists and their tools, the press and TV against radical policies. If they are prepared to save a Tory Government now, they will be prepared to bring down a Labour Government which tried to bring in drastic anti-capitalist measures.

For them, it is capitalism and its needs which decide policy. They are for social reform when the country, i.e. the ruling class, can 'afford it'. They are for counter-reforms, cutting social services and living standards, when the economy, i.e. the capitalist owners of the means of production, are in difficulties. Everything they do starts from the capitalist premise of the 'nation' and the status quo in the relations between the classes.

THE TRIBUNITES AND LEFT UNION LEADERS—NO ALTERNATIVE

The attitude of the left wing of the movement is more in tune with the deep felt hatred and misgivings of the workers towards the Tory Government. The active rank and file of the Labour and TU movement especially feels a natural class mistrust of the Government of Big Business..

They know that never in history have the Tories initiated measures in the interests of the working class, without immense pressure from the workers. Especially in the field of foreign policy, the needs and interests of the capitalists decide policy. Consequently, in a period of rising cost of living and growing unemployment and when the Government is slashing the social services, they think that any measures of the Conservatives must be dictated by the needs of their backers, the millionaires and employing class. It is this which has brought the big majority to opposition to entry into Europe. They know that the Tories are not acting for the workers' benefit but that of their paymasters. Consequently the hostility to the EEC policy of the Conservatives.

However, while reflecting the opposition of the working class to Conservative policies on Europe, the leaders of the left have no alternative to offer other than the Tories' policies of yesterday: 'the Commonwealth', 'National Sovereignty', 'the Nation'—all myths of the capitalism of the past find echoes in their propaganda.

class. They surrendered nothing. It was a bargain between gangsters each striving for some advantage over the other, and banding together to gain advantage over even more powerful rivals. In class terms, the working class has nothing to gain, whatever concessions the British ruling class gained from the ruling class of the Six. To pose the question as one of the nature of the terms is wrong from a socialist point of view. A 'better agreement' would not alter the character of the EEC in any way. We must be opposed to the **capitalist character** of the group of Six and the foreshadowed group of Ten. It is not a question of minor or major changes in the agreement but the sinister character of all the **capitalist** participants. The group of Ten, even more than the group of Six, will accelerate trade war with America and Japan. It would rapidly cancel out any temporary advantages which Britain might gain by entry, even on better terms.

IRRECONCILABILITY BETWEEN OPPRESSOR AND OPPRESSED

However, the anti-Marketeers in the Labour movement have not explained **what alternative** policy they propose. Having frightened themselves about the gruesome reactionaries in the Community, they inconsistently stand and speak on the same platform as right wing Tory reactionaries, complementing right wingers who speak on the same platform as Tories and Liberal, thus abandoning the indispensable and independent **class criterion** on all major decisions. They make the issue seem 'above party', which is to make nonsense of the whole idea of socialism and the irreconcilability of interests between the oppressor and the oppressed.

INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE MUST BE POSED

As a capitalist power standing on her own, Britain is bankrupt. There is no solution inside the EEC, there is less of a solution outside. The left leaders have the right wing basking in the aura of a spurious 'internationalism', while they wear nationalist trappings. This cannot clarify the issue for the working class. As against the blind alley of negative pro or anti-Marketism, there must be placed the **class internationalism of the working class**. The workers of Britain have interests in common with the workers of the Common Market and of all countries. Their interests are opposed to the capitalist class of all countries including Britain.

The problems facing the working class can only be solved by socialist methods. The ousting of the 350 monopolies, banks and insurance firms who control 85% of the wealth of Britain. This is not 'doctrinaire'—it is the real source of all difficulties facing the Labour movement. Skirting round the problem only prepares unmitigated disasters for the Labour movement and the working class. There is no magical way in which this issue can be avoided. It is **central** to the task of maintaining and improving living standards.

REAL INTERNATIONALISM MEANS CLASS SOLIDARITY

The working class in Britain can strike a real blow for internationalism by expropriating the ruling class. Workers everywhere respond to other workers engaged in struggle against the common enemy—capital. The British postal workers had the solidarity and refusal to blackleg against, of postal workers all over the world—and especially the European continent. The dockers and seamen had the same.

The French workers in May 1968 had the support and refusal to blackleg of all the workers in the surrounding countries. That was a real blow in the name of internationalism. That was the working class of different countries standing shoulder to shoulder in the struggle. That is real internationalism. Not the phony internationalism of supporting one own ruling class in any temporary arrangements they make with the ruling class in other countries.

In Russia and East Europe the bureaucrats who have made a mockery of the idea of socialism and democracy by their usurped privileges and totalitarian power could not maintain their rule for months, even days, in response to a clarion call of international socialism by the British workers.

FOR A SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

To the programme of the ruling class of partial integration of the economies of the EEC must be posed a **real alternative** and a **real plan** of production for the whole of Europe. With the resources of the TUC and the LP a plan for a **socialist Britain could be drawn up**. A plan involving workers management of industry and the state by the trade unions.

This could be integrated with other plans in a genuine Federation of a Democratic Socialist United States of Europe. A **socialist Britain, in a socialist Europe would mean undreamed of plenty for the working class of Britain and Europe**. It would mean inevitably the overthrow also of the ruling class of Latin America, Africa and Asia...A socialist Britain and a socialist Europe could render the peoples of these continents genuine support and aid financially and scientifically. The socialist idea would sweep the world preparing the way for peace and a World Federation of Democratic Socialist States.

DEMAND A GENERAL ELECTION

But a beginning has to be made. In the crisis of Britain against the capitalist idea of the Common Market must be posed the alternative of a socialist Britain as a step to the Socialist United States of Europe. The demand for a General Election must be issued by Labour and the TUC. Let the people decide democratically whether they wish to enter the Community.

How much the ruling class cares for 'democracy' is shown by the cynicism with which they refuse to consult the people on great issues such as this. They do not wish to have a General Election on the

question simply because it would mean defeat for the Tories.

If the Labour Party and TUC launched a campaign, mobilising the human resources of the Trade Unions, Labour Party, shop stewards committees and Co-ops they could have an active campaigning force numbering millions. But to get these numbers enthusiastically mobilised would require a socialist programme, more than the hum-drum programme of reforms in a capitalist Britain, of which the active workers in the movement and the working class generally are sceptical. An overwhelming majority could be won for the programme of a socialist Britain in a Socialist United States of Europe as an alternative programme to the ruling class programme of entry into the European Economic Community.

THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

[Is the Time Ripe for such a Slogan?]

I think that in conjunction with the slogan 'A Government of Workers and Peasants' the time is appropriate for issuing the slogan 'The United States of Europe'. Only by uniting these two slogans shall we get a definite, systematic and progressive response to the most urgent problems of European development.

The last imperialist war was essentially a European war. The incidental participation of America and Japan did not alter its character. Having secured what she required, America withdrew her hand from the flames and returned home.

The motive power of the war consisted in the fact that the capitalist forces of production had outgrown the boundaries of the European national states. Germany had set herself the task of 'organising' Europe, i.e. of uniting economically the European continent under her own control, in order then seriously to set about contending with Britain for world power. The aim of France was to break up Germany. The small population of France, her predominant agricultural character, and her economic conservatism, make it impossible for the French bourgeoisie even to consider the problem of organising Europe, which, indeed, proved to be beyond the power of German capital, backed as it was by the military machine of the Hohenzollerns. Victorious France is now maintaining her mastery only by Balkanising Europe. Great Britain is inciting and protecting the French policy of dismembering and exhausting Europe, all the time concealing her work under the traditional mask of hypocrisy. As a result, our unfortunate continent is disintegrated, and dismembered, exhausted, disorganised and bankrupt-transformed into a madhouse. The invasion of the Ruhr is a piece of violent insanity accompanied by far-sighted calculation (the final disruption of Germany)—a combination which is not unfamiliar to the psychiatrist.

Behind the war lay the need of the forces of production for a wider field of development, unhampered by customs barriers. Similarly, in the occupation of the Ruhr, so fatal to Europe and to mankind, we find a distorted expression of the need for uniting coal of the Ruhr with the iron of Lorraine. Europe cannot develop economically within the state custom frontiers created at Versailles. She is compelled either to remove these frontiers, or to face the prospect of complete economic decay. But the methods adopted by the ruling bourgeoisie to overcome the frontiers it, itself created, are only

Parties of Europe, so, and even to incomparably greater degree, will the triumph of the revolution in Europe furnish an impulse to the revolution in America and throughout the whole world. Although, when we abstract ourselves from Europe, we are obliged to peer into the mists of years to perceive the American revolution, yet we may safely assert that by the natural sequence of historical events the triumphant revolution in Europe will serve in a very few years to shatter the power of the American bourgeoisie.

AWAY WITH THE CUSTOMS BARRIERS

Not merely the question of the Ruhr, i.e. of European fuel and iron, but also the question of reparations is envisaged in the scheme of 'The United States of Europe'. The question of reparations is purely a European question, and can be solved in the near future only by European means. The Europe of Workers and Peasants will have its reparations budget—as it will have its war budget—as long as it is menaced by dangers from without. This budget will be based upon a graduated income tax, upon levies on capital, upon the confiscation of wealth plundered during wartime, etc. Its incidence will be regulated by the appropriate bodies of the European Federation of Workers and Peasants.

We shall not here indulge in prophecies as to the speed at which the union of the European Republics will proceed, in what economic and constitutional forms it will express itself, and what degree of centralisation will be obtained in the first period of the workers' and peasants' regime. All these considerations we may safely leave to the future, remembering the experience already gained by the Soviet Union constructed on the soil of the former Tsarist Russia. What is perfectly obvious is that the customs barriers must be thrown down. The peoples of Europe must regard Europe as a field for a united, and increasingly schematic economic life.

FEDERATE TO FIGHT

It may be argued that we are in reality speaking of a European Socialist Federation as part of a World Federation, and that such a regime can be brought about only by the dictatorship of the proletariat. We will not stop to answer this argument, since it was refuted by the international analysis made during the consideration of the question of a 'Workers Government'. The 'United States of Europe' is a slogan in every respect corresponding with the slogan 'A Workers' (or Workers' and Peasants') Government.' Is the realisation of a 'Workers Government' possible without the dictatorship of the proletariat? Only a conditional reply can be given to this question. In any case, we regard the 'Workers' Government' as a stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therein lies the great value of the slogan. But the slogan 'The United States of Europe' has an exactly similar and parallel significance. Without this supplementary slogan the fundamental problems of Europe must remain in suspense.

But will not this slogan play into the hands of the pacifists? I do not believe that there exists such 'lefts' nowadays as would consider this sufficient grounds for rejecting the slogan. We are living in 1923 and have learnt a little from the past. There are the same reasons, or absence of reasons, for fearing a pacifist interpretation of the 'The United States of Europe' as there are for fearing a democratic—SR interpretation of the slogan, 'A Workers' and Peasants' Government'. Of course if we advance 'The United States of Europe' as an independent programme, as a panacea for achieving pacification and reconstruction, and isolated from the slogans 'A Workers' Government' the 'United Front' and the 'Class Struggle', we shall certainly end in democratised Wilsonism, i.e. in Kautskyism, or something baser (if there is anything baser than Kautskyism). But, I repeat, we live in the year 1923 and have learnt a little from the past. The Communist International is now a reality and it will not be Kautsky who will initiate and control the struggles associated with our slogans. Our method of posing the problem is in direct contrast to the Kautsky method. Pacifism is an academic programme, the object of which is to avoid the necessity of revolutionary action. Our formulation is an impulse to fight.

SAVE EUROPE

To the workers of Germany, not the communists (it is not necessary to convince them) but the workers in general, and in the first place to the social democratic workers, who fear the economic consequences of a fight for a Workers' Government; to the workers of France whose minds are still obsessed by the questions of reparations and the state debts; to the workers of Germany, France and of all Europe who fear that the establishment of the workers regime will lead to the isolation and economic ruin of their countries, we will say; Europe, even if temporarily isolated (and with such a powerful bridge to the East as the Soviet Union—she will not be easily isolated) will be able, not only to maintain herself, but to consolidate and to build herself up, once she has broken down the customs barriers, and has united herself economically to the inexhaustible natural riches of Russia. 'The United States of Europe'—a purely revolutionary perspective—is the next stage in our general revolutionary perspective. It arises from the profound differences in the situations of Europe and America. Whoever overlooks these differences, which are of such vital significance at the present time, will, willy-nilly reduce a true revolutionary perspective to a mere historical abstraction. Naturally, the Workers' and Peasants' Federation will not stop in its European phase. As we have said, by our Soviet Union an outlet has been obtained into Asia, and from Asia into Europe. We are, therefore, here envisaging only a stage, but a stage of great historical importance, through which we must first pass.

This document, written by Leon Trotsky, was a contribution to the discussion among the parties of the Third International and first published in English in 1923.

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