

NO

**TO THE CAPITALISTS'
COMMON MARKET**



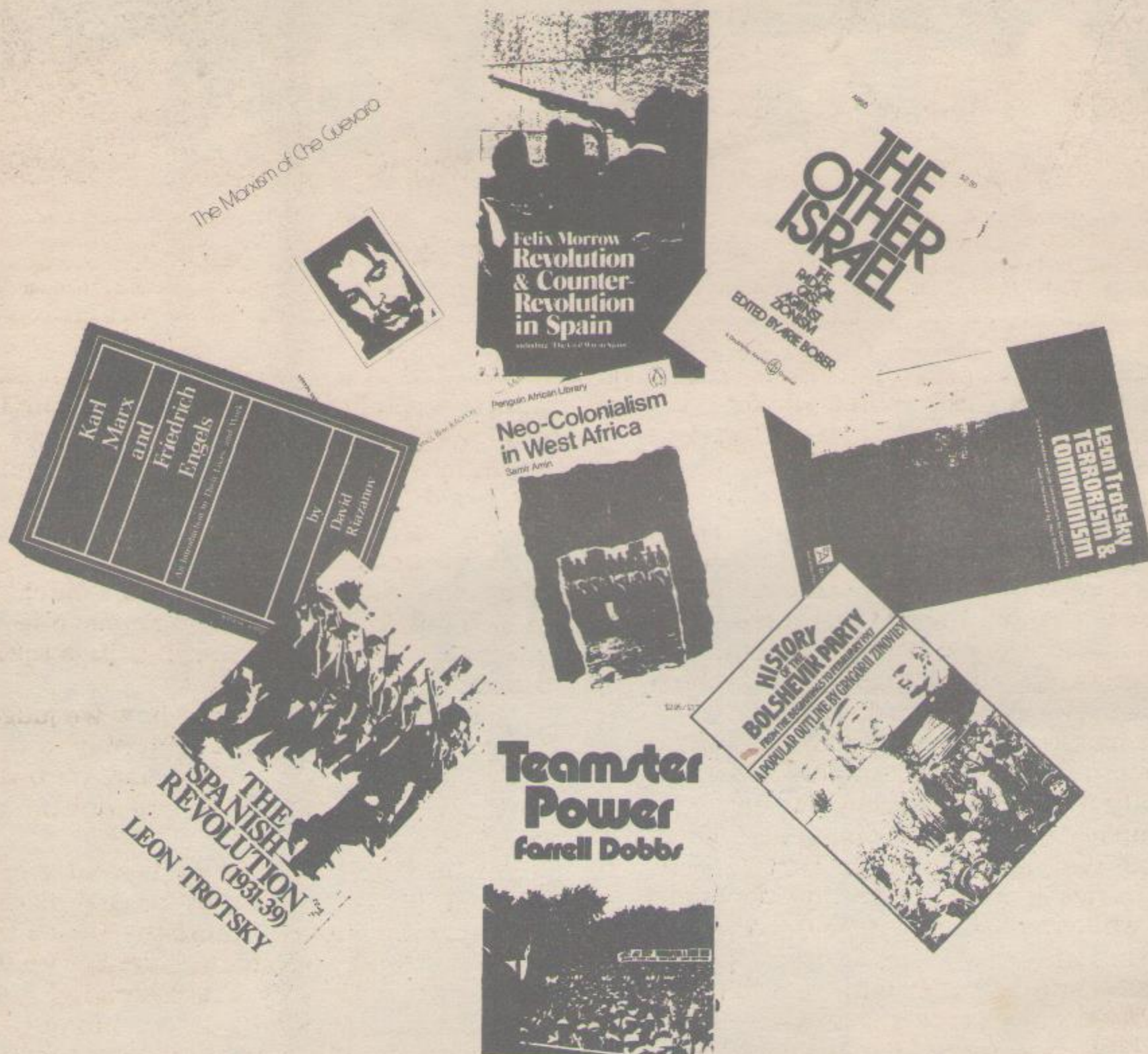
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Introduction



NEW TEAM: The EEC Commission (clockwise from front center): George Thomson, U.K.; Jean-François Deniau, France; Sir Christopher Soames, U.K.; Wilhelm Haferkamp, West Germany; Patrick Hillery, Ireland; Albert Borschette, Luxembourg; Pierre Lardinois, Netherlands; Ralf Dahrendorf, Germany; Henri Simonet, Belgium; Carlo Scarscia-Mugnozza, Italy; François-Xavier Ortoli, France; Emile Noel, France; Altiero Spinelli, Italy; Olan Gundelach, Denmark.

The debate over the Common Market is a crucial one for the working class. The right-wing Labour leaders warn that if Britain fails to enter the EEC bankruptcy and economic disaster is inevitable. The left reply that entry will mean the end of parliamentary democracy as we know it. Trade union leaders tell us that the EEC has increased inflation and will confront the unions with more powerful multi-national employers. So what stand *should* workers take?

Meanwhile, the question of Britain's entry into the EEC has produced some apparently weird and confusing line-ups. The bulk of the Labour Cabinet has joined up with the leadership of the Tory Party and the Liberals in favour of continued membership, while the Labour 'left' has joined hands with the right-wing Tories to campaign against. Outside Parliament, we find people like Enoch Powell speaking on platforms with union bureaucrats like Clive Jenkins and Jack Jones, and the fascists of the National Front putting forward slogans about 'sovereignty' similar to those of the Communist Party and Tony Benn. What is the meaning and importance of all this?

At the same time, Wilson is clearly staking the future of the Government on the outcome of the referendum, lining up against the whole trade union bureaucracy and the bulk of Labour Party activists. So what is the future of the present Government?

These are a few of the questions we seek to answer in this pamphlet.

Whether Britain stays in or leaves the EEC, Britain cannot become a 'little island' unaffected by what goes on in the rest of the world. If there are workers being laid off in Germany and Italy, workers will soon be laid off here; if there is a socialist revolution in Portugal or Spain, workers throughout

Europe—including Britain—will be inspired to follow their example; if revolution triumphs in Indochina or Africa the economic fortunes of the British capitalists will be crucially affected. British capitalism is not an island—no capitalist country is. The ruling class is acutely aware of how much its fortunes depend on developments elsewhere and the working class in Britain must also understand this.

Thus the starting point for how we judge the question of Britain's membership of the EEC must be the effect of the EEC on the working class *as a whole*—throughout the world.

The first thing we must ask is what is the EEC? Why was it created in the first place? The Common Market is more than just a trade bloc. The Treaty of Rome, which set up the EEC signed in 1957 by West Germany, France Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg prescribed more than just a customs union. The abolition of trade tariffs between member states, and the establishment of a common external tariff for trade with countries outside the EEC, were completed quite quickly. The Treaty proposed a series of measures of 'economic harmonisation' to bring economic structures throughout the community into line: free movement of capital and labour, a common transport policy, a common fuel policy, a common tax system, and a uniform agricultural policy.

A number of institutions have grown up which correspond to these developments. Between them, the Council and the Commission—composed of ministers appointed from the governments of the member countries—can make legally binding regulations on member states, economic enterprises and private individuals. The logic of these developments leads towards the

creation of a European super-state.

The EEC is of course a *capitalist* institution. Its aim is to ensure 'free competition' throughout Europe and remove obstacles to the merger of big capitalist firms to which this free competition inevitably leads. In other words, it represents above all the interests of the great trusts and monopolies which operate on a European-wide scale. Every trade unionist is aware of the threat which these multi-nationals represent. They can transfer investment to low wage areas, break strikes by shifting production from country to country, and play off workers of one country against another. So what is being contemplated is a *state* structure furthering the interests of these concerns—not just in Europe, but on a world scale.

How and why did such a development take place? The shape of post-war Europe is decisively different to that of the Europe of the '20s and '30s. How does this 'new Europe' fit into the world situation as a whole? Only by grasping this can the real significance of the EEC be grasped.

The Second World War, like the First, was the result of competition between the major capitalist powers for the world's markets and the world's labour force. These two wars brought about the death of millions. But they did something else: they aroused the working class of Europe to revolution—successfully in Russia in 1917, unsuccessfully in Germany, France and Italy; after the Second World War, capitalism was destroyed in Eastern Europe. European capitalism was tearing itself apart.

These two wars also saw the rise of American imperialism. It took the opportunity of invading the colonial markets of the war-torn European powers, and took over much of the military responsibility for policing capitalism on a world scale and preventing revolution. In Europe itself, US capitalism sought to place its stamp, economically and politically. Not only would it dominate the European economy, it would take the bloody ruling classes of Europe under its tutelage.

US capital was bound to flood into Europe at the end of the war. Europe stood in ruins. Railways, roads and bridges—the entire system of communication—had been smashed; over 70% of Europe's merchant marine was destroyed; and even in the 'victor' countries on the continent, production had slumped to a quarter of pre-war levels. The US economy found rich pickings in 'reconstructing' the European economy.

This 'reconstruction' also had clear political aims. Europe had to be buttressed against revolution, and it had to be harnessed to play a global role in support of American imperialism. Hence the Marshall Plan, by which American economic 'aid' was pumped into Europe on a vast scale, went hand in hand with the construction of NATO and the browbeating of the Soviet Union into heading off revolutionary movements among the workers of Europe—many of whom were still armed as a result of their resistance

against Nazi rule.

Henceforward the European economy would be moulded in the image of US capital. American firms benefited from the economic advantages of producing on a larger scale than those in Europe had previously done. Hence the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) initially set up to administer America's 'Marshall Plan' aid to European capitalism succeeded by 1956 in freeing some 90% of European trade from quota restrictions. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome created the framework which would allow US capital to roam freely across Europe. By 1963 in France, for example, US firms controlled 40% of the petrol industry, 65% of photo-film, 65% of farm machinery, 65% of telecommunications and 45% of synthetic fibres. From now on, European capitalists would have to enjoy the same freedom of multi-national operation in order to compete effectively with US capital.

To buttress both economic growth and military unity against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the US sponsored a whole range of European institutions, from those concerned with laying the foundations of economic activity, such as the European Coal and Steel Community, to those concerned with developing research which had a bearing on military projects, such as Euratom. Crowning all these bodies, and tied to them, was of course the NATO alliance to which the European capitalist states had to make substantial economic contributions.

This is not to say that there were no antagonisms between the different European imperialist powers. France wanted to protect its colonies from economic invasion by the more rapidly developing German economy. Britain, which was still holding on to its colonies and whose currency was an international standard for world trade, wanted to stay outside the EEC altogether. Furthermore, in times of crisis, each of the European states has, and will continue to, aggressively assert their own 'national' economic interests. Nevertheless, overall the EEC seeks to unify the ruling classes of Europe against the common internal enemy—the working class—and the common external enemy—the threat of world revolution. A blow to this institution would weaken world imperialism as a whole.

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For the EEC: The ruling class and the Labour Government

On the surface British imperialism looked healthy enough after the war. After all, it had 'won' the war and, compared to the rest of devastated Europe, had emerged relatively unscathed. So, with the Empire under their belt, the British ruling class carried on with 'business as usual', as though nothing in the imperialist garden had changed since the war. But this complacency was based on an illusion. In fact British imperialism suffered from severe weaknesses which were soon to become apparent.

Because of the historical pre-eminence of British imperialism in the capitalist world the most profitable sectors of the economy were found in foreign investment and foreign financial operations. Unlike all other European imperialisms there was no deep inter-penetration of industrial and financial capital in Britain. In fact the financial sector was the overwhelmingly powerful sector of the ruling class, based on banking, insurance and other financial operations centred on the City of London.

The ruling class was able to build up the Empire and reap huge profits through the financial sector. But these profits were made at the expense of the development of domestic industry, which suffered from a disastrous lack of investment. The anarchy of the capitalist market wreaked havoc with the British economy as the ruling class fell over itself to make a quick buck in the colonies and completely overlooked the necessity of investment in its own industry. This ostrich-like obstinacy continued unabated even after the Second World War. The British ruling class resolved to live off the fat of Empire and rest contentedly on the enormous economic reserves built up in the period of Britain's dominance over world economy.

This shortsighted policy was based on two fundamental mistakes. Firstly, it relied on the continuation of the Empire, or the 'Commonwealth' as it was euphemistically called. If Britain was to rely on the Empire then there was no need for unity with the rest of Europe, and no need to help in its economic reconstruction. Britain could retain her independent role as one of the major world powers. This view explains why the British ruling class never expressed much interest in the European Economic Community at its outset. However, the 'winds of change' brought on by colonial revolts dealt serious blows to any hope of Britain maintaining an independent role in the world economy and exposed the appalling weaknesses of British capitalism.

With the reconstruction of Britain's major economic rivals in Europe and Japan, the second fundamental weakness of British

capitalism came to the fore. While these new economies were able to maintain high economic growth in the new sectors based on modern technology, British capitalism's lack of industrial investment and development over the previous century stuck her with archaic and declining industries with low growth. With the war victors being rapidly outpaced by the 'vanquished', and with the Empire rapidly disappearing, it was clearly time for a fundamental reorientation of British capital.

The man to take on this job was none other than Harold Wilson. Promising to 'put the white hot heat of the technological revolution' through British industry, Wilson sought to orient British capitalism towards the European market, to move away from the alliance with American imperialism, and to strengthen the hand of the industrial-based sectors of the ruling class.

Throughout the whole post-war period there had been a steady rise to predominance of the industrial sector of the ruling class. The Labour Government of 1964 received the support of the decisive sections of big business because it promised to consolidate this shift from financial to industrial capital, and towards the concentration and monopolisation of industry. This reorientation implied a decisive shift away from the Commonwealth and Britain's 'independent' role towards integration into the European economy and the EEC.

The British ruling class needed more from the Common Market than simply a larger market for its products. With the increasing inter-imperialist competition of the '60s British capital could only survive as part of a general link-up and merging of European capital against the American multinationals. With the increasing development of 'European' monopolies it became evident that there was no longer any possibility of British industry carving out an independent sphere for itself. Unable to beat them, British capital joined them and headed for the Common Market.

Just prior to entry the bosses' union, the Confederation of British Industry, issued a pamphlet making just this point: 'Many large firms have....reached the point at which further national restructuring is impossible because of the present scale of the enterprise in relation to the market...If Western Europe is to compete effectively in world markets restructuring on a sufficient and European basis is essential. Only in this way can it create units of the number and scale necessary to meet world competition.'

A reorientation of British capitalism towards Europe is therefore absolutely crucial for the most important sections of the British

ruling class. Their faithfully ally, the Labour Government, is well aware of the importance of the outcome of the referendum on the 'renegotiated' terms of entry to the Common Market. Wilson and the Labour right are eager to ensure the fulfilment of the ruling class's needs, but whatever their subjective desire the present situation in the Labour Party makes things difficult.

The present Labour Government came into office with the support of no significant section of the ruling class. It came to power by default, through the collapse of the ruling class parties, rather than Labour's immediate usefulness to the ruling class. Since the defeat of the Heath Government at the hands of the miners, the whole strategy of the ruling class has been in ruins. Faced with the need to carry through the economic re-orientation of British capital, and also with an economic crisis of large proportions, the ruling class desperately needs a political instrument to inflict a big political defeat on the workers movement. The Heath Government tried and failed. The result is a massive crisis inside the ruling class so grave that it may take the ruling class years to assemble a viable political alternative.

In the meantime the ruling class has no option but to get what it can out of the Labour Party. But that is where the problems really start for the ruling class, for the Labour Party is itself racked by internal divisions, not least of which are around the Common Market.

The present Labour Government is in a very different position from that of 1964-70. Then it was still possible to make certain minimal concessions to the working class and at the same time meet the demands of the capitalists for a restructuring of the economy. This is not the case for the present Labour Government. Since the late 1960s, the bourgeoisie has demanded the strengthening of the state against the workers' movement in an effort to weaken its organisations, undermine its bargaining power, and drive down its standards of living. This is an even more urgent need of the ruling class today, since Heath's Government failed to carry this out against working class resistance. But the Labour Party is based on the organisations of the working class, in particular the trade union bureaucracy, and a head-on confrontation of this kind would tear it apart.

Already the demands for 'strong state' measures by the capitalists, coupled with the rising militancy of the working class and capitalism's inability to give significant economic concessions to the workers, has opened up sharp divisions in the Labour Party.

Entry into the EEC is itself part of the capitalists' attempt to construct a 'strong state'. The struggle against the creation of a centralised, European-wide capitalist state is therefore part of the struggle against the moves of the bourgeoisie to undermine the hard-won democratic rights of the work-

ing class in order to strengthen capitalist class rule. While it is correct for the workers' movement to use the opportunity of the referendum on Britain's entry to oppose the creation of such a state by a 'No' vote, the defence of 'democratic rights' will not be carried out by defending the sovereignty of Parliament, which is by no means democratic or sovereign.

The Labour left is firmly opposed to Britain's entry into the EEC, not simply out of a chauvinist reaction, but because Britain's entry into the EEC will allow Brussels to intervene against Government decisions on matters such as regional policy, state take-overs, and investment hand-outs to big firms. It would thus constitute a blow to their efforts to utilise the capitalist state to gain concessions for the working class through a modicum of capitalist 'economic planning' to combat the crisis. Undoubtedly, Wilson's present tactic is to postpone the inevitable turn to statutory incomes policy until, he hopes, the outcome of the referendum has smashed the left. Under these circumstances he could impose a statutory incomes policy with the minimum damage *inside* the Labour Government, even if he cannot block massive working class opposition.

The Labour left & the C.P. How not to fight the Common Market

The right wing of the Labour Party, led by Wilson, Callaghan, Healey and Jenkins, is clear that staying in the Common Market is a matter of life and death for Britain's crumbling capitalist economy. Jenkins and Shirley Williams have even threatened to resign from the Cabinet if the vote goes against staying in the EEC. But what of the opposition of the Labour left and trade union bureaucracy to the Common Market?

They find themselves caught between an upsurge of the working class and the capitalist crisis, both of which increase the need of the ruling class to impose a decisive defeat and a 'strong state' on the working class. In this situation sections of the bureaucracy and the labour left are forced to make a certain 'left turn' in order to maintain their base of support in the workers' movement and preserve any role at all in the politics of the capitalist state. While they are on occasions prepared to break with the *particular* interests of the ruling class at a given point in time, they are not prepared to challenge the capitalist system itself. Thus even their 'left' brand of social democracy misleads the working

class as to the tasks which it must carry out to meet the crisis.

Faced with the real opposition to the Common Market of large sections of the working class who see, in however confused a way, that it is not in their interests, the Labour left come out in opposition to British membership. But their opposition is not based on a class position—an understanding that the Common Market is an attempt at one and the same time to strengthen the ruling classes of Western Europe in relation to their working classes, and strengthen world imperialism as a whole. Instead they rely on nationalistic and chauvinistic arguments. They are not anti-capitalist but simply anti-Common Market. More often than not this amounts to extolling the virtues of 'Little England' (which they conveniently forget to mention is also a capitalist England) against being ruled by 'faceless bureaucrats' in Brussels.

Tony Benn published a letter to his constituents just after Christmas in which he made the pathetic plea that continued membership of the EEC 'would mean the end of Britain as a completely self-governing nation and the end of our democratically elected Parliament as the supreme law making body in the United Kingdom.' He raised the 'horrifying' spectre of Britain losing her 'national sovereignty'. With a Canute-like obstinacy he nostalgically revered the utopian dream of an 'independent' Britain resting on a 'mixed economy'. Not once have Benn or his cohorts explained how such a Britain would remain immune from the crisis sweeping the capitalist world.

The upshot of the Labour lefts' defence of 'national sovereignty' is their involvement in a 'broad front' campaign, the nationalist 'Get Britain Out Campaign', which involves right-wing Tories, members of the Monday Club, and even Enoch Powell, as 'allies' in the fight to get out of the Common Market. After all, the Labour lefts' opposition to British membership of the Common Market on the grounds of protecting 'national sovereignty' suggests that the working class has more in common with its own domestic oppressors than with the working classes of the other Common Market countries. In such a view an unprincipled alliance with a rag-bag of capitalist reactionaries becomes a principled defence of 'Little (capitalist) England'.

The Labour lefts' position appeals to all the most backward ideas which bind British workers to their own ruling class. The days of a 'sovereign', 'independent' Britain rested on Britain's imperial heyday. This was the time of which it has been truly said that Britain had 'an Empire on which the sun never set and the blood never dried'. Britain's industrial pre-eminence and the financial domination of the world by the City of London were made possible by the massive amounts of money accumulated through the slave trade and the ruthless plunder of the

colonies. At home the brutal exploitation of labour, including child labour, contributed its bit to making Britain a 'sovereign nation'.

Imperial dominance allowed the ruling class to grant limited concessions to the working class and integrate trade union and labour leaders into the capitalist social order. Blinded by the wealth, power and seeming omnipotence of British imperialism, the labour leaders became infected by the virus of white supremacy and national chauvinism, and mesmerised by the prospect of winning seats in the capitalist parliament—the seeming source of all power. Ideas of 'gradual change', made possible by the ever increasing wealth of the Empire, and the 'fairness' of the British system of government and justice became widespread in the working class, preparing the way for the slaughter of millions



Photo: EZRA NATHAN

Right-wingers rally against the Common Market

of workers in the imperialist bloodbath of two world wars.

The Labour left still dreams of this 'sovereign Britain'—a Britain in which the interests of a mythical 'national unity' were allowed to swamp the real interests of the working class. They fail to realise that it is the crisis of capitalism itself which is undermining the traditional institutions of capitalist democracy, because they can only conceive of politics in terms of parliamentary collaboration with the ruling class and the capitalist state.

In fact withdrawal from the Common Market will *intensify*, not lessen, the crisis of these institutions and the capitalist economy. Socialists will have to fight to defend the democratic rights and organisations of the working class whether Britain comes out of or stays in the Common Market. And this defence will take place *against* the capitalists' parliament, police, judiciary and state apparatus. To win this fight it will be necessary to extend *workers' democracy*, not the power of the rotting institutions of capitalist rule like Parliament.

One of the ironies of the present split in the Labour Party over the Common Market is the way in which the right wing is able to

turn round and denounce the 'Little England' mentality of the left and berate them for their lack of an internationalist outlook. As Roy Hattersley, right wing Minister of State at the Foreign Office, put it in an attack on Benn's Open Letter: 'To turn our back on the EEC, and pursue a Victorian chimera, might turn out to be the right to have the lowest growth rate in Western Europe and the freedom to have a Gross Domestic Product which averages per head of population half that of the Federal German Republic (*Financial Times*, 7 January).

There's nothing new in this strange line-up, in which the left tries to outdo the right by the amount of red, white and blue that it waves. During the big debates around German rearmament in 1954, the Labour left and the Communist Party opposed it on the purely chauvinistic grounds that Germany had twice waged war against Britain and 'could not be trusted'. The whole coverage of *Tribune*, the paper of the Labour left, was presented in these terms and great play was made of the 'justifiable fears' of France. 'In 1945', screamed the drum beating *Tribune* of 22 January 1954, 'Frenchmen, alongside British, Americans and Russians, stood in the ruins of Berlin. They swore that never again would the Germans be allowed to menace Europe'.

Just as it is doing today with the Common Market, the Labour left failed to see that German rearmament was a fundamental class question. Behind the policy of American cold-warrior John Foster Dulles, backed by Tory Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, lay the imperialists' need to rearm the German capitalists against the potential threat to capitalism posed by the very existence of the Soviet Union—despite its suffocating domination by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Thus in 1954, under cover of the so-called European Defence Community—fore-runner of NATO—Dulles and Eden were quite willing to give the right-wing Chancellor of West Germany, Dr Adenauer (who had four ex-Nazis in his cabinet and made no secret of his desire to re-unite Germany by any means necessary), an army of half a million men.

But their lack of *internationalist class* understanding meant that the Labour left could not clearly explain what was at stake and could pose no real alternative—in exactly the same way as they fail with regard to the Common Market today. Its campaign failed to crawl out of the gutter of chauvinism and even slid towards racism. (*Tribune* printed a cartoon which showed Dulles presenting a machine gun to a gorilla dressed in German uniform). Only the Trotskyist paper *Socialist Outlook* (proscribed by the Labour leadership in 1954) put forward a correct class position: no arms for the German capitalists, arms for the German workers!

As a result the right wing of the Labour Party, under the leadership of Herbert Morrison, was able to make hay out of the left's chauvinism. At a private Labour Party Conference in July 1954 he branded

his opponents as the 'anti-German school of thought.' By the September Conference of the Labour Party the left—defeated as much by its own chauvinism as the campaign of the right—lost the vote when the Woodworkers Union delegation scabbed on union policy and voted for rearmament.

The vital lesson for today is that *the EEC must be opposed on a class basis*. So long as the Labour left and the Communist Party lead the workers' movement up the blind alley of defending 'national sovereignty' and 'parliamentary rule', the fight against the Common Market will be hopelessly hamstrung. Moreover, by raising the whirlwinds of nationalism and chauvinism inside the working class the Labour lefts and the Communist Party will bring down the roof over their own heads, for it is the most reactionary capitalist forces—Powell and the fascist right—who will eventually benefit from such reactionary ideas.

The opposition of the Communist Party to the Common Market differs from that of the Labour left only in so far as they try to find elaborate *theoretical* justifications for their capitulation to chauvinism and their collaboration with the enemies of the workers' movement. What the Communist Party, in common with the running mates they seek on the Labour left, is proposing in the fight against the Common Market is not a united front of workers organisations, but collaboration with Liberals and Tories. It was only recently as a result of several prominent Labour lefts saying they would not speak on the same platform as Enoch Powell, that the CP added Powell to the National Front as the only persons and bodies they were not prepared to collaborate with in the anti-EEC campaign.

Jack Woddis, a leading stalinist 'theoretician', was obliged to write a four part series in the *Morning Star* to justify the CP's activities in the Common Market campaign. 'In essence', he wrote, 'we are faced with two problems. First the national question. Secondly the parliamentary question.' (*Morning Star*, 24 February). He then went to incredible lengths to justify the CP's defence of British 'national sovereignty'. He based this on the argument that the 'real' nation is not the capitalist state of the ruling class but a mystical entity known as 'the real British people.' This idea, which deliberately blurs the irreconcilable conflict between the interests of the working class and *all* sections of the capitalist class, excludes only the big monopolies.

For Woddis and the Communist Party it is these monopolies which are presented as the source of all the attacks on the democratic rights and organisations of the working class. In reality it is frenzied sections of small capital, ground between the millstones of capitalist competition and the mass struggle of the working class, who are the most hysterical opponents of the workers' movement. But because sections of small capital, whom the likes of Enoch Powell

and sections of the Tory Party represent, oppose the Common Market for their own reasons, the CP try to hide this fact in order to cobble together a 'united campaign' with these reactionary forces.

There is a deadly logic in the Communist Party's defence of 'national sovereignty'. It flows from their belief that there is a peculiarly 'British' road to socialism based on the 'democratic traditions' of British capitalism. (It should be remembered that the Communist Party of Chile told the same story before the workers' movement was drowned in blood following the military coup in September 1973.) As the *Morning Star* put it (27 February), 'the perspective.... of transforming Parliament from being an instrument of the capitalist class into becoming an organ of the representative power of the working people, an instrument of the people's will to end capitalism and introduce Socialism. The Common Market attack on the sovereignty of Parliament means a threat to the Socialist aims of the working class.' (*Morning Star*, 27 February). Thus the Communist Party's chauvinist and class collaborationist opposition to the Common Market is a direct and logical result of their whole rotten programme.

To justify their position they have the audacity to quote Lenin who always made it absolutely clear, in theory and practice, that it was only through smashing the capitalist state and waging the most determined fight against all forms of class collaboration that the working class could defend its interests. Woddis quotes Lenin's statement in *Left Wing Communism* that it is necessary to take advantage of 'every "fissure", however small in the ranks of our enemies' to justify collaboration with the class enemy. And Lenin's insistence on 'taking advantage of every possibility, however, small, of gaining an ally among the masses, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional' (our emphasis) is read by Woddis to include 'leading anti-Market Tories'. Since when have communists considered Tories to be representatives of 'the masses'?

The result of the CP's capitulation to chauvinism is shown in practice in the *Morning Star's* reports of the workers' occupation at the Imperial Typewriter factory in Hull. The *Morning Star* is completely unable to deal with the political confusion of the workers that results from their chauvinist outlook. The workers at Hull blamed the loss of their jobs not on the capitalist crisis (and therefore defending them on the basis that the crisis is a capitalist crisis for which the workers will refuse to pay), but on the 'anti-British activity' of the US-owned multinational Litton Industries. With a union jack flying over the top of the occupied factory, the workers claimed that 'Britain needs its own typewriter industry'. The *Morning Star* remained silent on this point, encouraging the workers' belief in the 'superiority' of being exploited by British bosses as opposed to 'foreign' bosses,

and leading them up a blind alley.

With good reason Woddis went out of his way in his articles on the Common Market to refute what he considered to be the 'slander' that Communists 'are not patriots'. 'Her Majesty's Communist Party' certainly are 'patriots', and it is this patriotic devotion on questions of 'national sovereignty' and the rule of capitalist parliament—which they share with the Labour left—which paves the road to defeat in the struggle to defend the hard won democratic rights and material gains of the working class.

The danger from the right

It is not only the Labour lefts and the Communist Party who counterpose defence of Britain's 'national sovereignty' to membership in the Common Market. Such a view is also advocated by the *extreme right*, in particular Enoch Powell and the National Front.

While the sections of the labour movement who put forward this position may do so in the belief that they are defending the democratic rights of the working class, the right-wing takes up this stand from an entirely different point of view, one with which no class-conscious worker would sympathise. These people are not in the slightest bit interested in the democratic rights of the working class—they are racists, authoritarians, and fascists.

Yet so great is the political confusion created by the ideas of the Communist Party and the Labour lefts that they are actually prepared to cooperate with, and take part in joint actions alongside, these reactionary, anti-working class forces.

Enoch Powell is one of the most clear-sighted capitalist politicians in Britain today. He parted company with the Tories in 1972 when Heath embarked on a policy of confronting the trade union movement head-on through the Industrial Relations Act and the pay laws. Powell warned that this would lead to defeat for the Government, and pointed out that repression could only succeed if it was part of a correct package of political moves.

Powell understood that in order to defeat the great industrial might of the working class the ruling class had first to *paralyse them politically*. He realised that it was futile to threaten to put all trade unionists (including the TUC!) outside the law unless you had first won a sizeable section of workers over to the idea that strikes were all the work of 'communists' and 'subversives'. It was no use attacking trade unionists who were fighting unemployment unless you could convince many white workers that their jobs were being threatened because of coloured immigrants, and offer a reactionary 'solution' to their problem.

Similarly, it was no use trying to promote 'national unity' as a weapon against trade union militancy if you were at the same time helping British capitalists to hook up with the European capitalists through the EEC. In Powell's view it was necessary to put aside the need of the ruling class to get into the Common Market in order to try and convince a section of British workers that they had an interest in uniting with British capitalists and British imperialism against every other nation, race and creed. Only in this way could the working class be split down the middle, a section won to the side of the capitalists in the fight against the organised workers' movement, and the necessary political basis laid to create the sort of 'strong state' that Heath and the Tory party wanted to build.

Powell's way of going about things had already shown its ability to ring up significant successes. In 1968 when Powell was sacked from the Tory opposition's 'shadow cabinet' for making his racist 'rivers of blood' speech, thousands of workers (including some from well-organised groups like dockers) struck and demonstrated their support for him. In 1972 when the Ugandan Asians came to Britain Powell again spoke out, and again thousands of workers demonstrated to back him up.

To try and get his strategy off the ground Powell has more recently taken three steps. First, he has left the Tory Party. He wants to be in a position where, at some later stage when the crisis is really near exploding point, he can come along and form a 'non-party' government to 'save the nation' from disaster. So he tries to give himself an image of being above 'petty party politics', a 'man of principle' modelled on Churchill, etc.

The second move he has made is to exploit this image to start building himself a solid reactionary base among the loyalists of Northern Ireland. This base he hopes to use with good effect against the workers' movement in this country in the future, and in the meantime he is taking full advantage of the anti-Irish chauvinism of British workers.

The third link in his reactionary chain has been to try and associate himself with trade unionists, and even Labour Party representatives, wherever possible. The aim of this is to get these figures from the workers' movement to bear witness that Powell is not just a Tory in disguise but really 'above' the class struggle and capable of speaking and acting on behalf of workers.

The campaign against the Common Market, because it has been put on a chauvinist footing by the Labour lefts and the CP, has thus given him just the chance he wanted, and once his foot is in the door he seizes the opportunity to let loose with all his reactionary weaponry. No sooner had Powell appeared on the same anti-EEC platform as leading trade union bureaucrat Clive Jenkins, for example, than he came out with the most vicious racist speech in years.

Powell is one of the most dangerous enemies of the working class. He is out to

build the sort of regime that De Gaulle set up in France—one that can use the myth that it is 'above the class struggle' to deal powerful blows to a politically divided working class. But there are other, even more vicious forces that have hitched their wagon onto Powell: the fascist National Front.

The National Front, a fascist group led by one-time Nazis like Webster and Tyndall, are what may be called the 'outriders' for the sort of strong state operation that Powell wants to carry out. While Powell speaks from the Parliamentary platform, the NF are out on the streets stirring up racism, nationalism, anti-Irish chauvinism, and 'defending the family' (i.e. the oppression of women). They whip up an active mass base for Powell by presenting themselves as 'working class', through denouncing the bankers and promoting working class methods of struggle such as strikes—but for reactionary ends (against black workers, for example). In the racist upsurges of 1968 and 1972, the National Front played a prominent role in promoting the strikes and demonstrations.

The NF are among the most virulent agitators for the strong state methods of Powell. But they have an even longer term strategy than Powell. Within the mass reactionary movements they help to stimulate, the NF encourages and organises direct action—physical intimidation against black people, Jewish people, and the left. In this way, they seek to build up organs of reactionary violence which, after some future seizure of power by the fascists, would be legalised by the fascist state and become part of its official machinery of terror against the workers' movement. The National Front promote Powell and his like simply as a means to reach their own, even more violent and reactionary, aims.

The NF have followed Powell into the anti-Market campaign. Two years ago they were able to march in the same anti-EEC demonstration alongside trade unionists and Communists. Since then the climate has changed a lot due to the vigorous campaign against the NF conducted by the anti-fascist movement. This has succeeded in pinning the 'fascist' label firmly on the NF and opened the eyes of trade unionists to the NF's game, so that very few labour movement leaders would now dare associate with them. (They have even been expelled from such class-collaborationist bodies as the 'Get Britain Out Campaign' because of pressure from trade unionists.)

This ban on the NF is a step forward—but it is not enough. It does not prevent the National Front taking advantage of the nationalist and chauvinist ideas being sown in the anti-Market campaign to spread their own reactionary poison in the working class. Only a break with such ideas by the workers' movement and the organisation of an independent working class campaign against the EEC on the basis of *working class internationalism* can act as an antidote to this threat from the right.

Against the Common Market - For a United Socialist Europe

We have already mentioned the fundamental reason why socialists oppose the EEC: because it is a capitalist institution designed to strengthen the power of the ruling class against the working class on an international level.

Of course the EEC is not the only institution which attempts to do this. The various imperialist military alliances—of which the most important is NATO—play exactly the same role. And for this very reason socialists must couple the demand for British withdrawal from the EEC with the demand for British withdrawal from the demand that we get out of NATO and break off all such imperialist alliances.

But the EEC is far more than simply a pact between capitalist states over economic or military questions. It represents an attempt to translate into political organisation the most fundamental features of capitalist economic development—the international concentration and centralisation of capital.

We have referred to the growth of multi-national firms in the post-war capitalist economy. These giants, whose production and marketing operations range freely across national borders and whose capital is often provided by capitalists from several different countries, need a multi-national state to service their multi-national interests. They need it to provide them with a uniform economic policy that serves their interests in all spheres of operation, to control the workers' movement across the continent, and ultimately, to protect their capital against the working class through European-wide capitalist institutions—law, courts, the police and the army.

It is this multi-national section of European capital that is the driving force behind moves to turn the EEC into a genuine 'super-state'. Such a development would give the European capitalists an immensely powerful weapon—they would be effectively coordinated throughout the continent by a European capitalist state while the working class remained fragmented on the national level. This would multiply all the advantages already enjoyed by the multi-nationals in dealing with their workforce a hundred fold, and extend into every field of social and political life.

But the struggle of the working class against the plan for a European state cannot rest on the defence of the old capitalist 'national' state. The national state is being threatened because it is out of date as a capitalist institution—it no longer fits in with the real set-up of capitalism and the real needs of the most important section of the capitalist class. Whether or not a super-state is brought into existence the international

centralisation of capital and the multi-nationals will remain. And if they cannot get the sort of European-wide state structures they want then they will use their immense power to get the next best thing: to ensure that the states of the various different countries conform to their needs.

Some members of the Labour Party have understood this problem, but draw from it the totally wrong conclusion that the only way forward is to support EEC membership in order to fight for a 'democratic' European super-state that will have the power to control the multi-national monopolies. (See the Fabian pamphlet *Sovereignty and Multi-National Companies* by Wayland Kennet, Larry Whitty and Stuart Holland).

Ironically, this view is of a piece with the political ideas of the anti-market Labour Party lefts and Communist Party, who also think that capitalist institutions can be 'turned around' and used in the interests of the workers. But whereas they only apply the idea to national institutions our Fabian friends apply its logic to the multi-national institutions of the EEC itself.

It could be argued that the Fabians are more in tune with the reality of contemporary capitalism, for it is certainly true that the multi-nationals cannot be fought on the national plane alone. The international spread of their interests makes it possible for them to allow, and even encourage, the dislocation of production in one country without jeopardising their operations as a whole. Thus the multi-nationals will respond to policy moves which threaten their interests in a given country by all sort of manoeuvres—including massive and devastating economic sabotage, if the situation warrants it. For examples of this we no longer have to look as far afield as Chile. Now, right on our European doorstep, we can see the multi-nationals at work in Portugal.

The upsurge of the Portuguese working class after the downfall of fascism, and the very limited measures taken by the Government (such as the establishment of a minimum wage of £13 a week!), were enough to spark off a veritable orgy of economic wrecking by the multi-nationals. Several companies simply packed up their bag and baggage and left the country altogether leaving empty factories and unemployed workers (who had often not been paid for weeks) in their wake.

But of course this reformist idea of the workers 'taking over' the capitalist state is just as bankrupt in its international form as in its national variety. The hope of 'democratising' the EEC in the interests of the working class is just as idle as that of establishing

socialism through Parliament. The working class *does* need to have its own international means of tackling the multi-nationals, but that means cannot be obtained through capitalist institutions. It must grow out of the organisations and struggles of the working class themselves.

What this means is that in opposition to both the plans for a European super-state and the multi-national monopolies whose interests such a scheme serves, the workers' movement must fight for a *United Socialist Europe*. This does not mean that the workers' movement must wait until it has got fully coordinated on a European scale before it moves to fight for the implementation of socialist measures. As long as a full-blown super-state has not been set up, the rule of the capitalists remains primarily organised and centralised on the national level, and the working class must fight to destroy this rule and replace it with their own organised power on the same level.

But this does not mean that the 'United Socialist Europe' becomes just an abstract long-term goal or piece of verbal trapping. It finds its living expression both in the fight of the working classes of the different European countries to create and put into practice their own solutions to the capitalist crisis, and in the forging of practical links between these struggles through *international proletarian solidarity*.

For a Socialist alternative

One of the reasons why it is imperative that working class opposition to the EEC be organised on the basis of an independent workers' campaign is that only on this basis can any real *alternative* to the EEC be put forward. For the only alternative to the EEC is the adoption of socialist solutions to the capitalist crisis, and even the professional confusionists of the Labour left and the Communist Party have not tried arguing that we can move towards socialism in alliance with the right-wing of the Tory party and Enoch Powell!

The strongest weapon the capitalists and the Labour Government have going for them in the current referendum debate is the lack of any clear-cut alternative to Britain's membership in the EEC. They are able to produce convincing facts and figures to show that membership in the EEC is essential to the survival of British capitalism, and confuse the working class by producing evidence that after their 'renegotiation' the cost of staying in is not *that* great after all.

Because they do not base their opposition to the EEC on an internationalist class position the Labour left and the CP are able to do little in response except squabble over the figures. Moreover the only alternative

the Labour left poses to EEC membership is a different set of *capitalist* policies which make little sense in face of the overwhelming evidence of the depth of the capitalist crisis, and British capitalism's patent inability to 'go it alone'. As a result the working class is thrown into confusion and left at the political mercy of the pro-Marketees and the Labour Government.

Let us take a closer look at the policies put forward by the left, which show clearly their total political confusion, and their inability to face up to the problems confronting the working class.

The biggest item they have been stressing recently is a scheme of 'import controls'—but at the same time they argue that a free trade agreement could easily be negotiated with the EEC once we got out! Moreover, while they slate the EEC for not doing enough about the position of Third World countries, their chauvinism and chatter about stopping 'foreign competition' inspires groups like the Lancashire textile workers to demand action against cheap imports from Third World countries.

The idea of solving Britain's economic difficulties through 'import controls' is both absurd and reactionary. In so far as it involves excluding imports from parts of the world under the heel of imperialism, it means trying to export our economic problems onto the backs of those who can least afford it. But even that sort of reactionary project would backfire—because other, more powerful and efficient capitalist countries would do exactly the same to us. In that sort of trade war, backward British capitalism is strictly a loser.

So the result of 'import controls' under a capitalist system would be the throttling of British exports, resulting in an even worse economic crisis and mass unemployment, while the cost of living would be pushed up by the substitution of more expensive home-produced goods for cheaper imports.

The sort of problems that British capitalism would be faced with if it was forced to withdraw from the Common Market could only be dealt with in two ways. From the standpoint of the capitalists, they could try to smuggle in by the back door what the working class had booted out by the front: by negotiating a free trade agreement with the EEC they could try to continue the integration of the British capitalist economy with that of their European capitalist partners, hoping that this process and the strengthening of the Common Market's political machinery in the meantime would eventually suck Britain back in again. This is the view already being propounded by that leading representative of the capitalist class, *The Economist*.

The other solution—the only one in the interests of the working class—is the creation of a socialist economy, based on the nationalisation of the major means of production and economic planning. Part of the planning

of a socialist economy would, of course, involve control over imports and foreign trade in general.

But the aim of this would not be to create some crazy 'British' economy cut off from the world economy and the international division of labour forged through centuries of capitalist development. On the contrary, the socialist control of foreign trade would aim to *extend* and refine this international division of labour and pattern of trade: it would be a policy directed towards the development of a planned, socialist economy *on a world scale*.

In relation to those countries bled dry by imperialism, instead of trying to export our problems to them through capitalist 'import controls', socialist policy would seek, through aid and trading agreements based on relations of equality, to stimulate their economic development and thus our mutual trade. Even more important for the development of a world planned economy would be the establishment of close economic and trade links with COMECON—the economic federation of the workers' states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Such agreements would stimulate foreign trade and allow us to take into account the international distribution of natural and social resources to produce the world's necessities in the most efficient and cheapest fashion, thus ensuring the smoothest and most rapid growth of the living standards of *all of humanity*.

For International proletarian solidarity

The forging of links between the various different struggles of the European working class can take place in a variety of ways. Most immediately, there is an urgent need for the coordination of the trade union struggles of European workers. This requires the setting up of bodies—particularly of workers in the same industry or firm—that can unite workers' struggles across national borders, at the level of the base and not just the bureaucratic leadership. Internationally coordinated claims, negotiations and industrial action (such as the coordinated strike of Dunlop-Pirelli workers in Italy and Britain) can then be organised.

A particularly important type of move is the creation of international combine committees within the great multi-nationals. Such bodies could not only coordinate struggles against the manoeuvres of the multi-nationals, but could organise the opening of the books for all the firm's international operations and establish the sort of international workers'

control that could block the multi-nationals' attempts to sabotage the struggle for socialism by European workers. This would be a real step towards a United Socialist Europe.

Of equal importance is international *political* solidarity. As European workers in particular countries move towards socialism in the fight against the international capitalist crisis, the working class elsewhere in the world must learn the lessons and draw their inspiration from these struggles. But the ruling class will also be studying them—and doing everything in its power to strangle the socialist infant in its cradle. The only way to block such plots will be by the working class of the entire imperialist world mobilising to prevent their ruling classes unleashing plans for political, economic and military intervention. Only international solidarity can defend the right of the workers of each country to make their socialist revolution.

The need for such solidarity is not just something that will be required in the future—it is urgently needed today. The Portuguese working class, breaking free from almost a half-century of fascist rule, has gone further in the fight against capitalism and imperialism than any European working class since the Spanish civil war of the 1930's. Dozens of Portuguese firms are currently subject to workers' control, with democratically elected workers committees scrutinising the firm's accounts and watching the bosses operation like hawks; other firms which have gone out of business or been driven onto the rocks as part of the bosses' economic sabotage are being run directly by the workers, who are demanding that they be nationalised under workers' control; the working class upsurge has forced the Government to nationalise the economically powerful banks and insurance companies which own about half of Portuguese industry, and workers are now demanding that nationalisation be extended to the transport system; inside the army capitalist authority is being challenged as rank-and-file soldiers solidarise with the workers' struggle, and in some cases even decide their actions through democratic mass meetings, instead of 'taking orders' through the channels of the capitalist state.

In the near future the workers of Spain will join their Portuguese comrades in the offensive against capitalism, knocking the decrepit Franco dictatorship into the rubbish bin, and raising the banner of socialist revolution throughout the Iberian peninsula.

The more astute sections of the ruling class are already aware of this danger, and are talking of the need to isolate 'the Portuguese virus' and deal with the situation in the Iberian peninsula as a whole. In addition to the sabotage of the multi-nationals, a vast propaganda campaign is underway throughout the imperialist world over Portugal and various other international pressures have been brought to bear. The Belgian Foreign Minister has made it clear that the EEC will have nothing to do with Portugal if it sets up 'a

dictatorship of the left' (i.e. socialism), a number of European countries have adopted a policy of 'cash on the barrelhead' for all exports to Portugal, and many openly capitalist currents of opinion (such as the British magazine *The Economist*) have called on the reformist social democratic parities of Western Europe to provide political and material support for the pro-imperialist leaders of the Portuguese Socialist Party.

But imperialist intervention is not going to stop at these half measures. Already the Spanish Government has been asking for assurances from the Americans that they would get help in the event of 'internal disorders' getting out of hand, and in response plans are underway to draw Spain into a much closer relationship with NATO, with the possibility of her eventually becoming a member.

NATO will also play a key role in Portugal, whose former fascist Government took the country into this imperialist alliance. NATO influences, exercised through training programmes, military assistance schemes, and joint operations are undoubtedly already being used to pick out and strengthen the most pro-imperialist elements in the Portuguese army. Moreover, if the workers' upsurge continues, it is not at all inconceivable that NATO could become the umbrella under which direct military intervention could be organised in conjunction with such domestic reactionary forces. (After all, the imperialists can always cite the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia as a precedent).

'Hands off the Iberian Revolution!' is a shout that must reverberate from one end of Europe to the other as millions of workers in every country unite to make demands on their Governments, mount mass demonstrations, and organise industrial action to defend their Spanish and Portuguese comrades. The success of such international solidarity can make possible victorious socialist revolution in the Iberian peninsula, and lay the foundation stone for a United Socialist Europe.

Another area in which a clear understanding of proletarian internationalism is essential is with regard to immigrant workers. For the reactionaries, racists and fascists, this question is a godsend. For it allows them to link up their long-standing campaign against black workers in the country with the opposition to the EEC.

Many sections of the labour movement, who have totally capitulated to racism in the past, are not able to offer any arguments against reactionaries on this score. But even those who have opposed racism find themselves drawn towards the anti-immigrant arguments of the right by their own nationalist and chauvinist position. Thus even the Communist Party uses the argument about the dangers of 'free movement of labour' as a reason for opposing the EEC

But working class internationalism has nothing in common with this view. Proletarian internationalists want to link up with their

fellow-workers around the world in a united fight against the common enemy of world capitalism, not bash them over the head in the hope that *we* won't have to suffer quite so much from the capitalist crisis if we can make them suffer a bit more.

The EEC's 'free movement of labour' policy is a strictly capitalist one: it allows workers to move from one country to another in so far as their labour is required for the smooth operation of capitalist exploitation throughout the Market. The immigrants have no political rights in the 'host countries', and are used, as are immigrants from outside the EEC, to provide cheap labour and as a weapon against better organised and better paid native workers.

The answer to this situation is not a campaign against immigrants and immigration by the native working class, but *unity* between immigrant and native workers to fight for full political rights and equality of economic treatment for all immigrant workers. On the basis of such unity the presence of immigrant workers will *strengthen* the workers' movement, by the addition of their numbers, their militancy, and their fresh experiences, and stimulate its struggle against the real enemy—the capitalist system.

But we should also realise that immigrant workers do not travel thousands of miles leaving friends and families behind to work in unfamiliar and often hostile surroundings for the fun of it. They do so because they are forced to by the ruin and plundering of their native lands through the operation of the capitalist system. Just as Welsh, Scots, and northern workers in Britain are forced to leave their homes and travel south to find jobs because of the regional concentration of British industry, so workers from Southern Italy, the Iberian peninsula and Turkey have to go through even greater upheavals because of the development of European capitalism.

Once more the answer is international working class unity. The workers of these backward countries and regions must be given the fullest support in their fight for an end to the plunder of their homelands and for the creation of jobs and industries locally, even if it is not in accord with the laws of capitalist profit-making. Workers in the multi-nationals must unite to prevent their bosses chopping off their operations and creating yet more unemployment in the underdeveloped areas as the crisis begins to bite and even, as the Italian trade unions have done, insist that they *increase* employment in these areas, even if it is unprofitable for them to do so.

Such united struggles can draw the working class throughout Europe—native and immigrant, those in the industrial heartlands and those in the backward peripheries—into a common fight for a socialist Europe. For it is only a European-wide planned socialist economy which can ensure the even development of production without the irrational regional inequalities and immense human suffering that European capitalism has scattered throughout the continent.

THE WAY FORWARD

BUILD INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION LINKS

Multinational firms can switch production from one country to another to cut costs or make strike action ineffectual.

*Combine Committees should be set up to coordinate internationally the struggle against the trusts. The example of the joint strike action of Dunlop-Pirelli workers in Italy and Britain shows the usefulness of such committees.

The bosses try to pit British workers against French, Italian against German, etc.

*Workers should organise solidarity actions with all struggles against the same bosses or in the same and related sectors in other countries. The miners' strikes of 1972 and last year were given real support by mine-workers in Europe. This shows in practice what the united action of European workers can achieve.

BUILD LINKS WITH IMMIGRANT WORKERS

The 'free movement of labour' provisions of the EEC helps the bosses use immigrant workers as cheap labour and to divide the working class.

*Immigrant workers must be integrated into the Trade Union movement but should be able to organise their own caucuses in the Trade Unions to deal with the specific problems they face.

*British workers should support immigrant workers' struggles for equal pay and against redundancies. Unity is strength and they will be the next under attack.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

Portugal could be a real first step towards a socialist Europe. Workers in all European countries must ensure that their ruling class does not intervene economically or militarily.

*All trade unionists should support the activities of the Portuguese Workers' Coordinating Committee and affiliate their Trade Union and Labour Party branches to support its campaign in solidarity with the Portuguese Working Class.

SUPPORT SPANISH POLITICAL PRISONERS

In Franco's prisons, hundreds of militants face long sentences and scores are condemned to death. Meanwhile hundreds of thousands of Spanish workers have been mobilising against the dictatorship through strikes, factory occupations and street demonstrations.

*All branches of the labour movement should invite speakers from the Spanish Solidarity Campaign and give all possible support to its activities.

COMMIT WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS TO A REAL FIGHT

The recall Labour Party Conference can organise a real fight against the EEC with meetings in all workplaces and by organising all the activities above.

*Labour Party branches should put in resolutions taking up these points and calling for a real right.

*A lobby of the Labour Party conference should be organised to make sure all these issues are discussed and a real fight gets under way.

*Resolutions must be put in all Trade Union branches calling for a recall TUC to organise the fight against the Common Market.

BUILD LOCAL WORKERS COMMITTEES AGAINST THE EEC

In many areas, local committees of the Labour movement have been set up to campaign for a 'no' vote. Such committees should be spread to every area to organise factory gate and site meetings, local conferences, public meetings and speaking tours to fight for a socialist alternative to the capitalists EEC.



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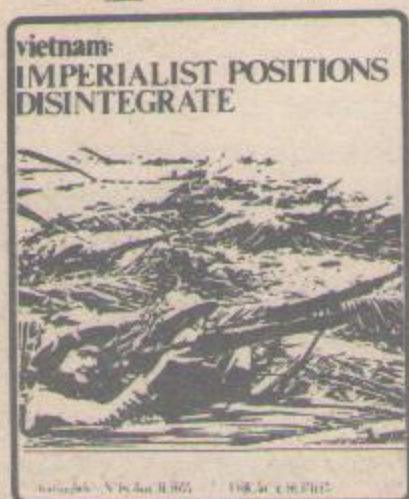
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