

Communist Organisation in the British Isles
Why Communist Organisation in the British Isles
Says Vote for the EEC

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* WHY COMMUNIST ORGANISATION IN THE BRITISH ISLES SAYS *
* VOTE FOR THE EEC. *

1. The establishment of the EEC of 25th March 1957, following upon the example of the European Coal and Steel Community (formed April 1951), marked the close of the period of imperialist rivalry amongst the European states. The process for the formation of a European bloc was necessitated by the manifestly superior economic and political weight deployed by the USA and USSR subsequent to World War II. The process was accentuated in the '60s by the necessity to meet the economic challenge of Japan, while the confrontation with the USSR remained predominantly military.
2. Modern production demands increasingly large productive capitals, and only by confederation of European states could the concentration of capital proceed far and fast enough to compete with that of the USA, Japan and the USSR.
3. The 'classical' or 'model' nation-state was a creation of the European bourgeoisie out of, but based upon, the former feudal states. They were developed to hold down the masses of a former feudal state for exclusive exploitation (in a new way) by the capitalists in that state, and to protect and further their interests overseas, especially in an imperialist mode of operation.
4. The ideology indispensable to the creation and maintenance of the requisite capitalist social relations, was that of nationalism. By leading all the (latently) 'national' forces against feudalism and absolutism, internal and external, the bourgeoisie was enabled to consolidate 'the nation' ideologically on the basis of an all-class, territorial interest rooted in the existing economic activity, in contradistinction to all other nations, proto-nations and areas of the world not yet even embarked upon feudal statehood.
5. Thus, subsumption of class-interest within a mystified 'community of interest' supposed to characterise 'the nation' and be its transcendental existence - in short, the ideology of bourgeois nationalism - is the most persistent and pernicious ideological legacy of capitalism, for the myth is deeply rooted in economic process.
6. But that process of commodity production undergoes internal qualitative change, whereby it does not cease to be commodity production - the production of use-values for exchange through the market - but becomes commodity production upon a new technological basis. As capital concentrates in accord with advancing productive technique, demanding ever higher capital investment, so inevitably does the cooperation within, and interdependence among, the individual units of production. Less and less therefore does the blind operation of the laws of the market, constrained only by the bounds of the old nation-state, serve the needs of commodity production demanding large integrated capital. And coordination of existing capital in Western Europe demands further planning and integration. Why the former imperial rivals of Europe can now integrate to form a viable bloc, is because historically they have evolved relatively homogeneous socio-economic formations: European history is of a piece. Differential rates of advance within and away from the feudal-state basis, led to rivalry and conflict culminating in European world-hegemony and world-imperialist war. These are now superseded by the dominating global rivalries of the USA, Japan and the USSR, but variations amongst the Nine in rates of exploitation, organic composition of capital, etc., mean that integration is slow and partial. This is accentuated in a period of economic depression and retrenchment like the present, but the longterm tendency will assert itself throughout, because of the underlying economic imperatives.
7. Both World Wars have proved just how central to bourgeois political hegemony is national ideology. The current de-construction of that ideology, as sacred national autonomy is downgraded and dismembered piecemeal, puts the whole of bourgeois ideology into crisis. This is the best avenue for ideological intervention a scientific communist leadership could hope for. By itself economic crisis does not necessarily produce ideological rupture, or even general conditions favourable to communist intervention. Illusions to the contrary are dispelled on examination of (say) the 'Hungry Forties' of last century or the 'Hungry Thirties' of this - to say nothing of the British General Strike.

8. In bringing the superstructure therefore, into accord with the base in its new form of large capital, the bourgeoisie are forced to jettison much of their old state superstructure, federalising their state as part of a greater whole. In so doing they must overtly and covertly jettison much of their old ideology - like 'state sovereignty', 'national uniqueness', 'national destiny' and so on. In other words, they cannot help but undermine many of the theological notions that underlie and underpin bourgeois ideology as we know it. Many of those who cannot use Marxist science to analyse and evaluate this objective, progressive process, are forced back into sheer oppositionism, since the initiative in all this lies with the bourgeoisie, the objective needs of whose capital is the dynamic in this historical process. Oppositionism must inevitably recoil into the outworn ideological apparatus of the bourgeoisie, whose original needs created it, and whose developing needs abandoned it.

9. Such is the substance of opposition to the EEC when Socialism is not the immediate alternative: whether subjectively it is undertaken 'to oppose monopoly capital', 'defend the monarchy', or 'preserve our national autonomy to choose Socialism'. In all such cases, moral imprecations against monopoly capital and its internationalism substitute for scientific understanding of the objective, progressive tendencies inherent in the transcendence of national boundaries. In reaction, sentimental socialism - virtually all the British Left - are forced to fall back upon, and then to idealise, the prevailing bourgeois-national mentality that still grips the masses, if these masses are to be mobilised against the most advanced form of bourgeois ideology - Europeanism.

10. As scientific socialists, i.e., as historical materialists, COBI does not strive to hold back historical development. On the contrary, scientific is rendered qualitatively distinct from Utopian, merely moralising, Socialism, by seeing its realisation only as the outcome of the forces innate within historical development. This nowise means sitting back passively awaiting the inevitable advent of Socialism. It does mean recognising the fundamental distinction between subjective and objective, and researching-out the objective laws of historical development such that subjective, conscious intervention into objective reality is rendered effective. This is the only way our desire for socialism can be translated into meaningful, efficient action.

11. In the development of the EEC we recognise the forces, both of productive and superstructural advance, positively assisting the proletariat in effecting a revolution for the establishment of socialism, through the destabilisation of the 'national' framework upon which both bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology depends. Objectively this process lays the basis for breaking down the barriers between the European nations; i.e., of being able to use the momentum of capital itself, to free the workers of the whole region from the worst and most obscurantist element of capitalist hegemony - national particularism. And in addition to a broader and heightened sense of solidarity on an all-European scale, the revolutionary experience and ideology of the working class across the continent, can only enrich and invigorate the consciousness of British workers.

12. In 'Proletarian Pamphlet No.1' we stated under the heading of 'Communism and Elections': "For Communists the question of what line to take over bourgeois elections is not one of principle but one of tactics... Communists do not hesitate to use any tactics which increase the combativity and political consciousness of the masses, and shift the balance of class forces in favour of the working class."

For the reasons outlined above we hold that the development of the EEC and Britain's membership within it constitute such a shift. Accordingly, like Marx here quoted, we advocate a vote in the coming Referendum in favour of Britain's continued membership of the EEC.

"But, in general, the protective system of our day is conservative, while the free trade system is destructive. It breaks up old nationalities and pushes the antagonism of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to the extreme point. In a word the free trade system hastens the social revolution. It is in this revolutionary sense alone that I vote in favour of free trade."

