

COMMON MARKET or **COMMON OWNERSHIP?**

STATEMENT by

The Socialist Party of Great Britain

<i>Common Market Referendum, 5 June 1975</i>	
Britain IN or OUT?	NO
WORLD SOCIALISM for World COMMON OWNERSHIP	YES

You are being asked to vote "Yes" or "No"—

To stay in or get out

We have a quite different approach—

Consider it carefully before you vote

We say that this issue is of no consequence to the vast majority of people in Britain or any other country. It is essentially a problem for the privileged minority who own and control the means of production and distribution—the land, mills, factories, offices, transport etc. Being inside or outside the European Common Market will not alter the basic conditions of wage and salary earners. All the problems and hardships of working class life—poverty, insecurity, unemployment, crises, and the never-ending struggle to make ends meet—are the normal state of things inside and outside the Common Market.

The Common Market can be likened to a businessmen's club in process of enlarging its membership. The pro-Marketeters argue that a united European group of countries will be better equipped to meet the competitive challenge of other Powers and power groups in the world. Those British manufacturers who think they

can sell more and make bigger profits inside Europe want to stay in, while others who fear that continental manufacturers will undercut them inside the British Home Market want to get out.

The arguments for and against are a string of half-truths. Those who want to get out say that since January 1973, when Britain went into the Market, unemployment has been rising, and is expected to exceed 1,000,000. The Tory Mr. Whitelaw says that unemployment is bound to increase if Britain withdraws from the Market. But in 1972 *before* Britain entered the Common Market unemployment was over 1,000,000 under a Tory government.

There is unemployment in the Common Market countries (4 million) and unemployment outside Europe—the U.S.A. 7½ million, Australia 150,000, Japan 800,000, Canada 800,000. This is capitalism going through one of its periodic crises for which neither the pro-Marketeers nor the antis have any solution whatever.

Their wordy battle about inflation is equally spurious. They argue whether the 34 per cent rise of prices since Britain joined the Market would have been more or less if Britain had remained outside. It is spurious because Conservative Governments and Labour Governments have both long been operating a policy of inflation, and between 1945 and 1973 prices rose by 250 per cent. Other Governments, inside and outside the Common Market, in greater or less degree, have been operating the same policy in the mistaken belief that it would keep unemployment down.

Restriction of Production in the Common Market

Mr. Wedgwood Benn emphasises that the Common Market has restricted British steel production and might do the same for shipbuilding. Other opponents of E.E.C. membership point to recent examples of the deliberate curtailing of farm production and the chemical treatment of grain to prevent human consumption—this in a world in which millions go hungry. But this is not just a whim of the Brussels bureaucrats. It is a normal feature of capitalism. If by mischance or miscalculation huge surpluses accumulate and depress prices below the level at which profits can be made, manufacturers and farmers hold goods off the market or limit production. Governments often intervene and (as in the U.S.A.) actually pay farmers not to produce. The only way to end such madness is to end capitalism.

Socialism and the Common Market

Mr. Len Murray (*The Times*, 8 March 1975), declared the opposition of the T.U.C. to British membership of the Common Market on the ground that “it had started off with too much competitive purpose and too little about community purpose; too much of economics and too little of social welfare; too much about fair business practice and too little about fair social practice”. Not a word about Socialism either in or out of the Community. Some anti-Marketeers argue that Socialism has a better chance outside the Market; these are the so-called ‘Left-Wingers’. It is not Socialism they want but State capitalism (Nationalisation). It solves no working class problems and has nothing to do with Socialism.

You are being asked to vote for capitalism inside Europe or capitalism outside Europe. It is not in your interest to vote for either.

The 'Little Englanders' and 'Sovereignty'

Mr. Enoch Powell and other advocates of withdrawal make much of the point that inside Europe political power is in the hands of the nine governments collectively and no longer rests at Westminster. Cynics might say that if the conditions of working class life under Labour or Tory governments outside the Market are the test it could hardly be worse inside Europe; but this is another misleading half-truth. As long as the great mass of the workers in Britain, Europe and everywhere else tolerate and support it there is no escape from capitalism's evil consequences. World Socialism alone will solve the problems of the working class and all mankind.

The Line-up of the Parties

While some Tory M.P.s are opposed to their Party's support for staying in Europe, the Referendum's most shattering impact has been on the Labour Party. The cynical Mr. Wilson, arguing that renegotiation makes all the difference, and a majority of the Cabinet are for staying in, while some Ministers, along with half the M.P.s and a majority of the National Executive of the Labour Party are strongly campaigning to get out.

One Labour M.P. Mr. Ian Mikardo, accused his leader, Mr. Wilson, of leading "a motley and multi-coloured army" made up of one half the Labour M.P.s, nearly all Tories, all Liberals, the Confederation of British Industry and the City, "who do not give a damn about what was good for the nation unless they got easy pickings" (Daily Telegraph, 23 March 1975). This stung the Labour Party Headquarters Publicity Director, Mr. Percy Clark, into retorting that someone might accuse Mr. Mikardo of leading "a motley army of National Frontists, Maoists, Powellites, Trotskyists and Communists against the Market".

While the British Communist Party opposes the Common Market (it has no criticism of its Eastern bloc equivalent), the Italian Communist Party maintains that it is the best thing that has ever happened for Italy.

Mr. Enoch Powell, who in the past two general elections voted Labour and urged all electors to do likewise, appears on the same anti-Market platform with Mr. Clive Jenkins.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain

The S.P.G.B. alone stands aside from the confused debate about what is good for British capitalism. The interest of the working class of all countries is to have done with capitalism and establish Socialism. Socialism is neither British nor European. It is a world concept to deal with world problems. and don't think you can leave it to political leaders to bring it about. Its establishment rests upon your understanding of the world in which you live and your desire for a fundamental change. Armed with this knowledge you can take the necessary political action to strip the minority of their ownership; to abolish all frontiers and Markets; to herald a world fit for human beings to live in.

Socialists can demonstrate their support for Socialism by writing
SOCIALISM—COMMON OWNERSHIP across the Voting Paper.

Read the *SOCIALIST STANDARD*: Monthly: 10p

For further particulars write to
Secretary (CM), The Socialist Party of Great Britain
52 Clapham High Street, London S.W.4

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds:

- 1 That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.), by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
- 2 That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3 That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4 That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
- 5 That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6 That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
- 7 That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8 **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.