

EUROPEAN STUDIES

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Britain and Europe since 1945

Migrant workers in the EEC

Britain and Europe: quotations

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Migrant workers in the EEC

There are five million migrant workers in the EEC: those from the EEC member countries who benefit from the special provisions in the Treaty of Rome which encourage mobility of labour within the EEC itself and those who come from less developed countries outside the Community and do not enjoy the same social security and other provisions.

It is well known that there are over two and a half million immigrants in Britain (over one million of them from the Commonwealth), but in fact the influx of people from the less developed areas of the world affects the whole of Western Europe. Altogether there are between eight and nine million immigrants. Switzerland has one million and Sweden 171,000, but the majority—nearly five million—are in the EEC countries.

Table 1
Immigrants in the EEC countries (in thousands)

	1968 France	1968 Germany	1967 Netherlands	1967 Luxem- bourg
<i>Country of origin</i>				
EEC countries				
Italy	586	454	8.5	11.7
Other EEC	128	149	12.4	13.0
Non-EEC countries				
Spain	618	175	12.6	—
Portugal	303	27	—	—
Greece	—	212	1.6	—
Yugoslavia	48	169	—	—
Turkey	8	205	10.3	—
Algeria	471	—	—	—
Morocco	88	—	—	—
Tunisia	60	—	—	—
Others	354	533	26.6	3.2
Total immigrants	2,664	1,924	72.0	27.9
Total population	49,866	59,879	12,597	335

Notes

No figures on the nationalities of immigrants in Belgium are available, but there are about 200,000 foreign workers. The figures for the Netherlands and Luxembourg are for workers only, as none on the number of immigrants including dependents are available.

Sources

Immigrants: France, 1968 Census; Germany, *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, No. 7, 1969; Netherlands and Luxembourg, *Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften, Die Freizügigkeit der Arbeitskräfte in der EWG*, 1968. Total population: *OECD Observer*, February 1969.

There are two main groups of migrants: firstly those from other highly developed countries (usually within

the Community) who move in search of a better job and new experience; secondly those from countries outside the Community—Southern Europe, North Africa and even further afield—who leave their own countries to escape unemployment and poverty. In many ways, workers who come from Southern Italy are more like the second group than the first. As the figures indicate the group of people from backward regions with poor educational standards and little industry is by far the largest.

Some immigrants come to Community countries permanently. Others come for a few years only, in the hope of saving enough money to go home and build a better life there. There are important differences in the cultural backgrounds of the various immigrant nationalities. On the one hand are the Italians and Spaniards whose cultures and languages are not very distant from those of France; on the other the Turks and North Africans whose languages are quite unlike those of Western Europe and who have been brought up in Muslim societies. An intermediate position is taken up by people coming from the most backward parts of Europe, like Portugal and Greece.

But once these different groups arrive, their aim is a common one: they hope to gain prosperity for themselves and their families by working in the highly developed industries of Western Europe. In recent years, the economic, social and cultural integration of immigrants has become an important problem for several Community countries as well as for the governing bodies of the Community itself.

Economic importance

Foreign workers make a vital contribution to the labour force in all the Community countries except Italy (which is still a major source of emigrants) and the Netherlands (where foreigners were only 2.1 per cent

of all employees in 1966). The map shows the nationalities of the foreign workers and the countries in which they are concentrated. In Germany, the number of foreign workers has increased sharply in the last year and there are now nearly 1 ½ million—over six per cent of all employes. In France, the 1968 census counted over 1 ¼ million economically active foreigners (6.3 per cent of the active population). Belgium has about 200,000 foreign workers—7 per cent of her labour force. More than a quarter of Luxembourg's labour force consists of foreigners—mainly Italians in the steel and building industries.

The economic importance of foreign workers lies not just in their numbers, but in the fact that they are willing to take jobs which nationals of the host countries reject because the wages are poor, the working conditions unpleasant or the social status low. Immigrants, usually hampered by ignorance of the language, poor basic education and lack of vocational training, enter the occupational hierarchy at the bottom. Their presence helps to make it possible for nationals of the host countries to leave the less desirable jobs and move up into skilled, supervisory and white-collar positions. Thus immigration is a factor assisting the social promotion of the national population.

Foreign workers are concentrated in occupations like building, heavy engineering and metallurgy, mining (in France and Belgium), public services and transport, catering and domestic services. For example, 36 per cent of foreign men in France are in the building trades. 29 per cent of employed foreign women are in domestic service. In Germany a third of the foreign workers are in the metal industry. The next largest quotas are in other manufacturing industries and in building. Throughout the Community, most foreign employees are unskilled or semi-skilled manual workers. As they are concentrated in certain industries and regions, they have become indispensable for the economies of the countries in which they work, and their sudden removal would lead to economic chaos.

Immigrants from within the EEC

Community policy

The free movement of labour within the Community was a basic part of the plan for European integration laid down in the Rome Treaty (Article 49). It has been achieved in three stages, concluding with the adoption of Regulation No. 1612/68 by the Council of Ministers on July 29, 1968—18 months ahead of the original schedule. Citizens of EEC member states have the right to take up employment in any member state and may even go there for up to three months to seek work. Member states may no longer discriminate against citizens of other Community countries by giving their own nationals priority in employment or placement

through the labour exchanges. Furthermore, all EEC citizens enjoy "Community priority" over the nationals of outside countries. A Community worker no longer needs a work permit, but still requires a residence permit, which is issued for five years and is automatically renewable. This may be refused only for "reasons of public order, safety or health".

Community workers now enjoy equal treatment in virtually all matters relating to employment. This includes taxation, social security, the right to bring in family members, the right to own a house, access to public housing, and the right to be elected to workers' representative bodies at the place of work. Only a few restrictions still exist: Community workers can only bring their families if they provide evidence that they have an adequate dwelling, which can be very difficult in some countries; they do not have full civic rights, like the right to vote, in other Community countries; they cannot be elected to public office, which in France includes the post of trade union official.

Freedom of movement for workers within the Six has become a reality, yet, at the same time, the actual number of workers taking advantage of the opportunity has not increased. Indeed, migration between the Community countries has actually declined. In 1961, 292,494 first work permits were issued to citizens of member states moving within the Community. In 1967 the figure was only 129,138. Even if we discount 1967, which was a recession year in some Community countries, and take the 1966 figure we still find a slight decline—only 260,619 workers moved within the Community.

This apparently paradoxical situation is explained by the development of the Italian economy, partly as a result of the new opportunities presented by the EEC. About four-fifths of migrants within the EEC have always come from Italy, but now the large reserves of unemployment which existed there only ten years ago have been largely absorbed by rapid industrial development. Northern Italy is even beginning to experience labour shortages and some Italian firms (Alfa-Romeo for instance) have sent recruiting teams to Germany to persuade their compatriots to return to highly-paid jobs in Milan or Turin.

The pool of unemployed which still remains in Southern Italy is no longer a source of labour for the rest of the Community since, for reasons of their age, background, and so on, many of these people are not readily adaptable. The solution to their problem must lie in social and regional development policies and not in emigration.

The legal barriers to migration within the Community may have disappeared, but social, linguistic and cultural barriers still exist. As wages and conditions in the Community countries level off, the economic incentive to surmount such barriers declines. The main type of labour movement which is now developing between Community countries is no longer a south to north migration of impoverished, unskilled men. It is that of highly-skilled technicians and experts, whose services are required throughout the Community. Such em-

ployees tend to take their families with them and adapt easily to their new surroundings, so that temporary migration no longer means involuntary separation and hardship.

Workers from outside

Apart from the temporary economic setback of 1966-1967, the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers has continued to grow. Due to losses in both World Wars and low birth-rates in the Thirties, all the Community countries have populations with increasing proportions of old people, dependent on a relatively static labour force. Thus the additional workers needed cannot come from within these countries. Moreover, Community nationals who have been able to benefit from vocational training and promotion opportunities are less and less willing to take dirty arduous manual jobs. A situation of international competition for scarce labour has developed, and employers and labour ministries have had to look further and further afield for new workers.

At the end of June 1968 only 363,461 of the 1,014,774 foreign employees in Germany came from other Community countries. Germany has labour recruitment agreements with Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Tunisia and even South Korea (for nurses and miners). At present, the largest flows of foreign workers come from Turkey and Yugoslavia. France gets most her foreign workers from outside the Community as well—from Spain, Portugal and other Southern European countries. In addition there are 334,000 North African workers (plus 285,000 dependents)—mainly Algerians—and fifty thousand workers from France's former colonies south of the Sahara. Holland and Belgium are also having to attract workers from Turkey and North Africa. Only Luxembourg still gets most of her labour from within the Community.

No common policy

The Community has no common policy towards immigrants from non-member countries, and the regulations and practices governing the workers' legal, economic and social position vary widely. Migrants from outside the Community are usually at a considerable disadvantage compared with Community citizens. Their freedom to change jobs is restricted, for some years at least, and this helps to ensure that they do not compete for the more desirable jobs. They are usually only allowed to bring in their families after a year or more. Their political and trade union rights are severely limited.

Although some EEC countries have bilateral agreements with non-Community countries about the social security of immigrants, immigrants from outside the Community do not always have equality with regard to social security. If a Community national has an accident or loses his job, he is entitled to social insu-

rance benefits in his home country, but such benefits are not generally transferred abroad in the case of non-Community citizens. Such workers are also often worse off with regard to family allowances—an important factor in countries like France, where family allowances may form a very high proportion of a family's income.

Illegal immigration

Many problems arise from the spontaneous nature of the migratory movements. Both France and Germany have recruitment offices abroad which select workers, tell them about the working and living conditions to be expected, and provide transport. Men recruited in this way find work and housing awaiting them. But an increasing proportion of the migration does not go through the official systems. In 1968, 82 per cent of immigrants to France came "clandestinely", i.e. without work permits, or often without passports or any papers at all. This is because the official system is slow and inefficient. Many Portuguese workers come illegally in order to escape military service, which lasts 3-6 years and usually means being sent to fight in Angola or Mozambique.

The clandestine immigrants arrive in a completely new and strange society, with no idea of how to find work or accommodation. Such men are easily exploited and have no chance of help from the law or the unions as they are illegal immigrants: taxi-drivers overcharge them, "agents" take large sums of money for finding them work and getting documents. Many employers (particularly in small building firms) take them on because their weak position compels them to accept low wages.

Housing problems

Finding a decent place to live is one of the greatest difficulties for immigrants. Because they come in search of work they are concentrated in expanding industrial areas where the housing shortage is already severe. The host population fears the competition of immigrants and this strengthens prejudice against them. Discrimination and low incomes combine to ensure that immigrants everywhere have the worst housing conditions.

The Governments of the Community countries have realised that immigrants have special problems and have taken measures to help. In Germany, employers are obliged to provide accommodation for newly arrived single workers. In France, a special fund builds hostels for foreign workers. But the provisions are not adequate to meet needs. In Germany only about 100,000 beds are available. In France the figure is 60,000.

In any case, little help is available for workers who wish to bring in their families. They have to find a dwelling on the private market. All too often they end up in inadequately converted basements or attics. In France, which has the worst housing shortage in Europe and where average rents went up by 178 per cent be-

tween 1958 and 1968, many immigrants cannot find proper accommodation at all. This is why the notorious "bidonvilles"—unhealthy shanty-towns made of waste materials and scrapmetal—have grown up around many French cities.

Integration in the local community

Clearly, the immigration of large numbers of people with very diverse cultural, educational and social backgrounds is bound to lead to difficulties of adaptation and integration. The language barrier is hard to overcome, particularly as many immigrants have had little basic education. Many immigrants are actually illiterate—it is estimated that one million adults, mainly immigrants, cannot read or write in France.

Workers who come for a few years only remain isolated from the host society and do not learn the language and customs of the country. Although many immigrants are beginning to settle down permanently, few come with that intention at the outset. Until they finally realise that they are there for good, it does not seem worthwhile to go to evening classes. Thus many immigrants spend years in France or Germany without learning more than a few words of the language.

Most employers agree that foreign workers adapt rapidly to industrial work. They often work many hours of overtime, for they have to send money home to dependents and at the same time make saving for their own return home. Ignorance of industrial work practices sometimes leads to conflicts between immigrants and other workers, and strikes and disputes often arise. The unions of the Community countries have taken special action to solve such problems. The difficulties are great, but many immigrants have become active trade unionists, despite the initial suspicion of other workers.

Future trends

If economic growth continues at its present rate, most EEC countries are likely to need immigrant labour for the next few decades at least. It has been estimated that Germany will have two million foreign workers by the mid-Seventies, which means at least three million immigrants including dependents. Migrants within the Community enjoy good social conditions and the chance of getting any job they wish. Migrants from outside the Community, on the other hand, are concentrated in the worst jobs, and are often kept there by restrictive regulations and lack of training opportunities. They

also suffer poor housing and social conditions. Already, people are speaking of the immigrants as "Europe's new lower class". Special action is needed to improve their conditions.

The home countries of the immigrant workers hope that labour migration will help in their economic development. They hope to get back a core of highly-trained industrial workers and that workers' savings will provide a source of foreign currency for the purchase of capital goods abroad. At present such potential benefits are often merely wishful thinking. Most foreign workers from countries outside the Community do not obtain vocational training which would be useful to them on their return home, and their savings are usually spent on consumer goods or on unproductive small businesses in the services sector.

A common EEC policy could help both to raise the social status of migrants while in the Community countries and to make them more valuable to their home countries when (and if) they return. The setting up of centres to give basic language and vocational training to prospective migrants before departure would aid the speedy integration of foreign workers and would make it easier for them to learn a useful trade while abroad. In the past such centres have been set up in Italy with the assistance of the European Social Fund. Now that most immigrants come from outside the Community there is a good case for extending similar schemes to other countries.

Further Community policies could ensure that foreign workers get the jobs they are best suited for, and that they are given chances of promotion. Reasonable housing conditions could also be provided for. The creation of a better-trained and more stable foreign labour force would, in the long run, be to the advantage both of the Community and of the foreign workers' home countries. The emergence of a new lower class of immigrants can only be prevented by the recognition of the international unification of the labour market which is already coming about, and the granting of full social and political rights to immigrants, wherever they come from.

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Comecon

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was given fresh impetus by the challenge of integration in Western Europe. Eastern European cooperation is compared with integration in Western Europe. Finally there is the question of how to reform Comecon to align it with the present movement of economic reform in Eastern Europe.

The origins

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, known as "CMEA" or, more commonly, "Comecon", was founded in January 1949 by the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Rumania. Albania joined in April 1949 and East Germany in September 1950. In May 1956 Communist China and Yugoslavia became "observers", North Korea and North Vietnam following them in 1957. Yugoslavia withdrew in 1958 and did not renew its association as an observer until 1964. China, North Korea and North Vietnam gradually withdrew after 1960 when the Sino-Soviet dispute came into the open. Albania, which supported the Chinese in the quarrel, withdrew abruptly in 1961. In 1962 Outer Mongolia was admitted to, and still retains, full membership.

The purpose of Comecon as defined in Article I of the Statutes adopted in 1960 is "by uniting and co-ordinating the efforts of the member countries" to promote the development of the national economy and the acceleration of economic and technical progress in the member states; the acceleration of industrialization in the less developed member states, an increase in the productivity of labour and an improvement in the welfare of the peoples of the member states. The Article goes on to say that "the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance is established on the basis of the sovereign equality of all the member countries of the Council".

Comparison with the EEC

Although the general aim of promoting economic welfare as set out in the Comecon Statutes is similar to that of the

EEC as set out in the Treaty of Rome (defined in Article 2 of the Treaty as being "to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increased stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and close relations between its member states") there is an important difference between the method proposed to achieve the desired end. Whereas the Treaty of Rome provides for the gradual establishment of a Common Market within which common policies will be accepted by the member states and many of the functions of economic management progressively assigned to common institutions, the Statutes of Comecon go no further than to authorize the Council to organize cooperation between the member states and to recommend joint measures in specified fields of activity. This is essentially a difference between integration and co-operation.

It may appear paradoxical that the "authoritarian" states of Eastern Europe should adopt a system so much more "permissive" than that adopted by the six democratic West European States, but the Statutes of Comecon assume that the member states, under the rule of Communist Parties, are already in effect politically integrated and that for this reason they will find no difficulty in voluntary cooperation in economic and technical matters. This assumption is in fact too optimistic; the institutional structure of Comecon is not strong enough to implement proposals for integration or even for cooperation against the will of the member states. The Council, the supreme directing body, is composed of comparatively junior ministers from the member states; when major policy decisions are to be taken special meetings of senior government and party officials, not forming part of the Comecon organization itself, have to be arranged. The Council of Comecon has neither the status nor the powers of the Council of Ministers of the EEC.

The institutions

The headquarters office of Comecon is in Moscow. The Council¹, composed of Vice-Premiers, Ministers of Foreign Trade, Chairmen of State Planning Commissions of the member states or persons of comparable rank, is required to meet at least once a year in each of the capitals of the member states in rotation. Since 1962 there has been an Executive Committee to maintain the direction of the organization's work between meetings of the Council. A permanent Secretary, N. Fadeev of the USSR, controls a staff of experts and advisers drawn from the member states. In 1956 permanent Commissions, specializing in particular sectors of the economy, were established in the member states, located in countries where interest in the sector in question is particularly strong (e.g. agriculture in Sofia, chemicals in East Berlin, coal in Warsaw, machine-building in Prague). The Commissions which deal with major questions of common concern—electrical energy, foreign trade, economic problems, uses of atomic energy, co-ordination of research, statistics and foreign exchange—are in Moscow. For so large an area the permanent staff is comparatively small, perhaps no more than a third of the number employed by the EEC in Brussels. The layout of the organization tends to emphasize the presence of the one very large Power in its midst, for while the headquarters of the EEC is in Belgium, one of the smaller of the EEC states, the headquarters of Comecon and an important part of its institutions are in the USSR.

The powers of the central institutions of Comecon over the member states are limited not only by the composition of the Council but also by Article IV of the Statutes which lays down that (a) the recommendations adopted by the member countries of the Council shall be implemented by the governments in accordance with national legislation and (b) the effects of recommendations and decisions shall not extend to countries which have declared their lack of interest in a matter considered by the Council. The weakness of the Council's authority has had contrary effects. In the first place although no single country can exercise a veto in the Council, it can prevent any recommendation from being uniformly applied throughout the area. Secondly, the single most powerful member of the Council cannot "constitutionally" use the Council to impose a decision on another member. Thirdly, it is extremely difficult for those in Eastern Europe who wish to see the area more closely *integrated* (as distinct from more *co-operative*) to use the machinery of the Council for this purpose.

Development

1945-1956

In the period from 1945 to 1949 when the USSR was establishing the regimes in Eastern Europe which gave it effective political and military control of the area there was no plan to integrate their economies on the lines adopted by the EEC. In many ways Eastern Europe was cut off from the rest of the world and developed methods in economic planning and foreign trade which gave it a

¹ See insert.

unique and exclusive character of its own. As a result of this isolation it was natural that the countries of Eastern Europe should trade with each other much more than with the outside world. On the other hand each country tried to reconstruct its economy and to hasten the process of industrialization in accordance with its own national plans, and this led to a high degree of national self-sufficiency or autarky.

In the first period of Comecon's existence, which coincided with the last years of Stalin's life, the organization, smaller and weaker than it is today, could do virtually nothing to influence economic developments in Eastern Europe except to try to co-ordinate the lists of commodities to be exchanged between the member states. Apart from a meeting in Sofia in November 1950 to discuss inter-regional trade no meeting of the Council took place between the end of 1949 and the spring of 1954. Not only was no progress made in regional planning in this period: under pressure from the USSR the economies of the states became even more distorted by the priority given to heavy industry.

With the death of Stalin and the ending of the Korean War in 1953 there was a widespread reaction in Eastern Europe against the hardships endured by the ordinary consumer. A new phase began. Now for the first time consideration could be given to the supply of consumer goods and the rationalization of production in order to reduce costs. The Council of Comecon awoke from its long sleep and began to meet more frequently, discussing the construction of a unified electricity grid, encouraging the member states to conclude long-term trade agreements with each other and beginning to get to grips with the idea, which was to prove very troublesome later on, that there should be specialization in production as between the member states.

1956-1962

In 1956, undoubtedly spurred on by the progress of negotiations for economic integration in Western Europe the institutional structure of Comecon was at last strengthened and the first twelve standing commissions were established. Serious discussion of the plan to specialize production by country did not begin until 1957-1958. Here the Council met with disappointment because many of the states were reluctant to agree to specialization as it might involve the discontinuance of industrial activities in a particular member state and their transfer elsewhere. In fact very little was achieved. Dissatisfied with progress the Party leaders of the member states met in Moscow in May 1958 and agreed that the economies of the member states should be reorganized and their national plans co-ordinated. The most important practical effect of the meeting was not so much a fundamental change in organization as a major investment boom which affected all the member states but left relations between them largely unchanged. It did not secure closer integration.

Challenged by the rapid progress of the EEC in its early years the Party leaders of the Comecon states subjected their own system, which was evincing all the signs of stagnation, to a searching analysis in 1962. This time Mr. Krushchev put forward an ill-prepared scheme for a central planning institution for the whole of Comecon which would in effect have imposed the long-sought-for specialization among the member states by authoritarian direction. To achieve such a centralized system it would have been necessary to alter the Statutes and give the organization an entirely new status. In fact discussion did not reach that stage for the Rumanians, fearing with considerable justice

COMECON TRADE WITH EEC, UK AND USA*

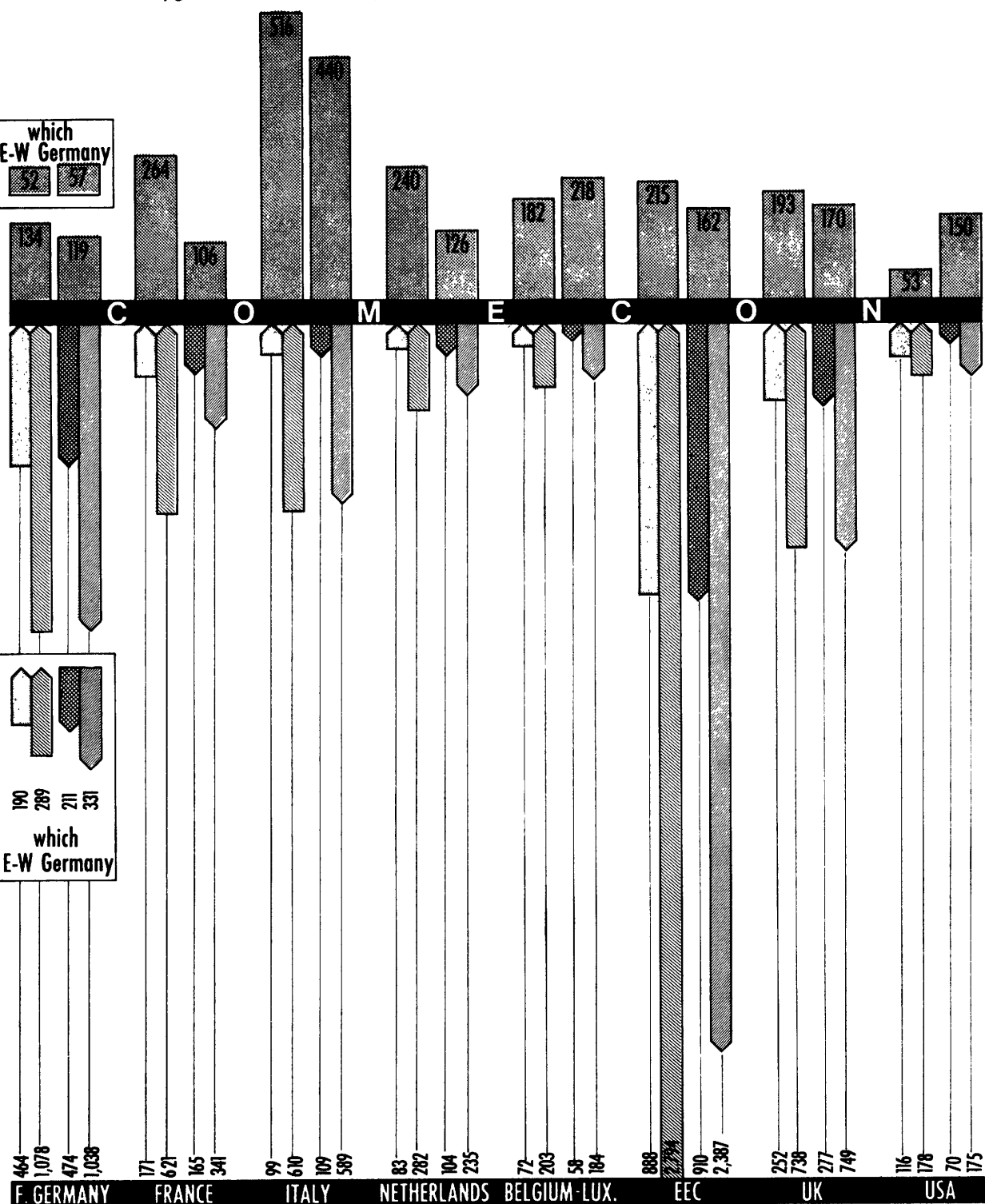
COMECON TOTAL

IMPORTS 1958: 10,172
1968: 23,921
% Increase 135

EXPORTS 1958: 10,315
1968: 25,153
% Increase 145

which
E-W Germany
52 57

190 289
211 331
which
E-W Germany



IMPORTS **EXPORTS**

1958 1958

1968 1968

% Increase

* in \$ m

that the scheme would halt their own industrialization and condemn them to supplying food and raw materials, went into opposition and have ever since been implacable opponents of central planning and even of closer integration in the organization. Though less outspoken than the Rumanians other Comecon states dislike the idea of central planning for the whole area, chiefly on the grounds that its supranational character would imperil such national independence as they have been able to preserve within the "socialist commonwealth". There are still some Russian theorists and officials who advocate a comprehensive plan in the longer term but the Soviet Government has been very cautious in its official pronouncements on the issue since 1962 and has hesitated to give a strong lead.

Economic reform in Eastern Europe

Opinions on the subject of integration have become more complex and diverse since the movement for reform of the management of the national economies began to take shape in Eastern Europe in the early sixties. Beginning in East Germany in 1963, extending through Poland and the USSR in 1965, launched in Czechoslovakia in 1966, cautiously applied in Rumania in 1967 and culminating in its most advanced exemplar in Hungary in 1968 the movement seeks to resolve the difficulties of central planning in what are now industrial societies by a limited decentralization of economic decision-making. While all the states retain the concept of the central national plan they all now devolve, in varying degrees, some of the responsibility for decision-making to industrial associations and enterprises and all accept, in varying degrees, the management of the economy by such means as the control of credit as a partial substitute for the detailed direction of the economy by means of strict quantitative prescription from the central planning authorities. In most cases, and in varying degrees, cautious experiments are being made with the use of prices and differentials in earnings as a means of adjusting supply to demand and stimulating initiative.

Comecon as such plays no part in the reforms which, although they share a good deal of common ground throughout the area, are being implemented in strikingly different ways as between one country and another according to national requirements. Although restrained by the fate of Czechoslovakia, where economic reform was associated with a political ferment crushed in August 1968 by the USSR as an intolerable deviation from the norm, the Comecon states have developed systems of management which have heightened diversity rather than uniformity within the organization. The problem of integration has become correspondingly more complex.

Trade

The member states do a large part of their foreign trade with each other¹. The levels of trade are planned by the national states (with some intervention from the central Comecon institutions) and incorporated in bilateral trade agreements. Together with participation in joint projects such as the electricity grid, some joint production arrangements between enterprises and the exchange of technical information these agreements are the principal instruments for the integration—such as it is—of the area. It is a laborious and unsatisfactory method, widely criticized in Eastern Europe for its failure to promote the free flow of

¹ See table, page 4.

commodities, capital and labour, its failure to promote the grouping of enterprises to obtain the advantages of large scale production and therefore the progress of industrial efficiency and its failure to secure a rational system of prices upon which calculations can be made. The monetary system, based on artificial exchange rates and a method of accounting in inconvertible roubles carried out through the International Bank for Economic Cooperation hampers not only the development of trade within the area but also its relations with the rest of the world economy². Given this legacy from the past and the institutional weakness of Comecon, the diversity in levels of economic development, the differences in methods of economic management, the universal tendency towards greater decentralization in the national economies and the general desire of the non-Russian members to safeguard a degree of national independence, it is small wonder that a consensus as to the replacement of the present Comecon system by a new and more closely integrated one is hard to find.

Comecon future

Most members of Comecon accept the necessity for reform. They see the advantages of scale and technical progress which might flow from a better system of regional integration. But how are they to be obtained? To conceive of the area as a single planned economy is to go back on the principles of the contemporary reforms and to invite political trouble. To conceive of it, as some East European thinkers do, as a potential single market is to go beyond the scope of the national reforms as at present operating and, by inviting still more radical changes in the system of economic management, challenge the basis of socialist planning in the member states themselves. The search for a way of escape from this dilemma is giving rise to intense discussion. The member states tend, on grounds of general principle and of national interest, to proffer divergent solutions which at one extreme favour the idea of a common market and at the other either the status quo or a more closely integrated technological community. The problem is so inherently difficult that the last "summit" meeting of party and government leaders in April 1969 produced almost no result. The debate will be protracted; decisions as and when they are reached will be of major importance not only for the future of Comecon but also for the relationships between its member states and the rest of the world.

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² See insert and compare with table.

Table 1

Comecon's trade 1958 and 1968

	Imports				Exports			
	1958 \$m	%	1968 \$m	%	1958 \$m	%	1968 \$m	%
<i>USSR</i>								
Total	4,350	100	9,410	100	4,298	100	10,634	100
From/to								
EEC	222	5.1	908	9.6	271	6.3	758	7.1
UK	73	1.7	273	3.0	146	3.4	367	3.4
Other Comecon ^a	2,206	50.7	5,697	60.0	2,320	54.0	5,830	53.0
<i>East Germany</i>								
Total	1,680	100	3,387	100	1,890	100	3,783	100
From/to								
EEC	250	14.9	396	11.7	252	13.3	465	12.3
(Of which:								
W. Germany)	190	11.3	289	8.6	211	11.2	331	8.8
UK	33	2.0	38	1.1	12	0.6	31	0.8
Other Comecon ^a	1,055	62.8	2,426	71.5	1,229	65.0	2,708	71.4
<i>Poland</i>								
Total	1,227	100	2,853	100	1,059	100	2,858	100
From/to								
EEC	138	11.2	363	12.7	120	11.3	293	10.3
UK	83	6.8	175	6.1	69	6.5	147	5.1
Other Comecon ^a	651	53.0	1,749	61.1	508	47.9	1,760	61.4
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>								
Total	1,357	100	3,077	100	1,513	100	3,005	100
From/to								
EEC	122	9.0	289	9.4	110	7.3	290	9.6
UK	32	2.4	80	2.6	29	1.9	80	2.7
Other Comecon ^a	844	62.2	2,083	67.5	910	60.2	1,944	64.4
<i>Hungary</i>								
Total	631	100	1,803	100	684	100	1,789	100
From/to								
EEC	73	11.6	220	12.2	75	11.0	200	11.2
UK	20	3.2	52	2.9	12	1.8	42	2.3
Other Comecon ^a	399	63.3	1,189	65.9	388	56.8	1,214	67.5
<i>Roumania</i>								
Total	482	100	1,609	100	468	100	1,469	100
From/to								
EEC	51	10.6	423	26.3	56	11.9	255	17.4
UK	7	1.5	101	6.3	7	1.5	56	3.8
Other Comecon ^a	361	74.8	741	46.0	322	68.8	767	52.1
<i>Bulgaria</i>								
Total	367	100	1,782	100	373	100	1,615	100
From/to								
EEC	30	8.1	196	11.0	25	6.7	126	7.8
UK	3	0.8	21	1.2	3	0.8	27	1.7
Other Comecon ^a	302	82.2	1,301	72.9	306	81.8	1,211	74.9
<i>Comecon</i>								
Total	10,172	100	23,921	100	10,315	100	25,153	100
From/to								
EEC	888	8.8	2,794	11.7	910	8.8	2,387	9.5
UK	252	2.5	739	3.1	277	2.7	749	3.0
Other Comecon ^a	5,891	57.9	15,187	63.5	6,060	57.7	15,433	60.5

^a Not including Albania, Mongolia.

Britain and Europe since 1945

Britain's flirtations with Europe have been a constant factor in European politics since the end of the war. The past negotiations are reviewed in the perspective of the current debate about application for entry into the Common Market.

The question of British entry into the European Community dominates British foreign policy and is likely to do so for some time. Few leading governmental, business, or labour leaders remain uncommitted and two polarized bodies of opinion now compete for support from among the broad masse of the British people.

In this atmosphere it is understandable to view Britain as an outsider, or non-European, attempting to become a member of the European club. Such a view, while fashionable, distorts or ignores much of British foreign policy since the Second World War. Britain was always, in its own frame of reference, European; albeit reluctantly. The evolution of Britain's attitude to the EEC had to await both the development of a viable, tangible Europe as well as the decline in her other foci of interests.

From the war to the ECSC¹

Reconstruction and cooperation after the War was facilitated by the establishment of several European organizations such as the European Payments Union, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OECD) and the Council of Europe. Under the influence of the British these organizations were designed on the basis of inter-governmental cooperation and thus fell short of the aims of continental federalists who thought that reconstruction might provide an impetus for greater European unity.

In the field of defence, the British like the Americans tended to regard the increasing differences between East and West as the greatest threat to world order. This attitude

was at odds with that of the Continent of Europe but reinforced the British notion that a "special relationship" existed between Britain and America.

Without minimizing either the Soviet threat or the extra-European interests of countries like France, the Netherlands and Belgium, the first priority of Western Europe in security matters was to eliminate the possibilities of armed conflict between France and Germany. With this aim in view Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister, proposed the idea of a Coal and Steel Community. As coal and steel were the basis of the armaments industry in Europe, it was thought that an agreement which made France and Germany interdependent in these areas would prevent either from going to war against the other.

Belgium, Holland, Italy and Luxembourg joined with France and Germany to form the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. The United Kingdom was asked to participate but declined although the Conservative party was critical of Atlee's action at the time it too declined to join when returned to power.

Joining the ECSC appeared to involve the surrendering of more independence than Britain was prepared to do at that time. The British were aware that the European visionaries saw the ECSC as the first step towards a supra-national Europe and they believed that membership of a supra-national Europe would limit their freedom of manoeuvre in other foreign policy areas—i.e. in the Commonwealth and in playing a global role in conjunction with the United States.

If Britain is to be blamed in these early days it must not be for underestimating Europe, but rather for overestimating the value of the Commonwealth and Empire and the advantages of Britain's relationship with the United States.

In 1954, however, Britain ratified an "Agreement concerning the relations between the European Coal and Steel Community and the United Kingdom", which erected a

¹ See *European Studies*, Teachers' Series No. 1 "The European Communities: historical background".

Standing Council of Association with functions relating exclusively to a "continuous exchange of information", "consultation" and "coordination of action" in regard to matters of common interest concerning coal and steel. This agreement still stands and indeed there is still a permanent ECSC delegation in London today. The *Manchester Guardian* (December 9, 1954) called the agreement "perhaps too cautious, too typical of reluctant British insularity".

Messina to EFTA

At this time the Six were already preparing to launch, in the form of the Messina conference of June 1955, their next and most ambitious scheme to date a plan for economic collaboration.

The Messina conference established a Committee, chaired by M. Spaak, to investigate ways in which integration in the general field of economics and trade and in the specific area of nuclear research could take place. The United Kingdom was invited to participate in these early discussions and did so. This almost immediately led to differences of opinion about the nature of any arrangements. The Six were reasonably happy with the functioning of the ECSC and favoured close ties along those lines. Their preference was for a customs union and supra-national institutions of limited power. The British, on the other hand, favoured a free trade area and preferred to work through the OEEC. The United Kingdom withdrew from the talks in December, 1955 because British interests could not be reconciled with what the Six had in mind.

The reasons underlying Britain's position remain unclear but it appears that the British Government made some serious miscalculations. As was suggested earlier, the British appeared to underestimate the determination of the Continentals to proceed on the path towards integration. The Government also appears to have overestimated the British bargaining position. The Six were discussing two separate but related issues: integration in the field of atomic energy and the Common Market. Because of British pre-eminence in nuclear research the Government seems to have assumed that the Six would make concessions over the Common Market aspects in return for British participation in the atomic energy agreements. This might have been so had the United States not undermined the British position by insinuating that it was prepared to assist any European cooperative effort in the field of nuclear research. The British also hoped to get strong support from the United States and from other OEEC members for its pro-OEEC, free trade position. This was likewise eroded by the Americans when they expressed strong support for the more substantive efforts proposed by the Spaak Committee. Another factor may be that the British simply were not prepared for the events which unfolded in 1955. The speed with which the Six moved was indeed surprising considering that the EDC disaster had so closely preceded this new impetus.

The British Government continued to press for a free trade area within the OEEC but this invariably brought them to loggerheads with the Six. The Europeans felt that, in proposing the free trade area, the British were intent on destroying the EEC before it could get off the ground. Charges of "wrecking" and of "dividing Europe" were hurled at the Six and especially France and it became clear that the negotiations between Britain and the Six were

continuing on little more than their own faltering momentum.

By the time the negotiations broke down in 1958 it was evident that the Six and the United Kingdom retained most of their fundamental differences. The Six were intent on building a close, formal, and binding relationship among themselves and while they were not opposed to Britain joining the Community they were not prepared to alter its fundamental structure to accommodate her. Britain, on the other hand, could not enter an agreement which forced her to fundamentally restructure her traditional trading policy built on Commonwealth preferences and cheap food and raw materials in return for benefits that appeared intangible and uncertain. The extent to which Britain's attitudes towards the future of Europe lagged behind those of the continentals is illustrated by the fact that when, in 1956, Britain proposed a free trade area, an arrangement already considered inadequate by the Six, it represented a significant change in British policy and provoked much debate in the United Kingdom.

The Stockholm Convention for a European Free Trade Area was signed by Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom in 1959.

The decision to enter the EEC

The British Government took the opportunity provided by the signing of the EFTA agreement to engage in a major reappraisal of foreign policy and the assumptions upon which it was based. It was obvious that, in the light of changing realities, Churchill's three circles concept required re-examination.

The special relationship with the United States was certainly in need of a fresh assessment. Although it was not fully appreciated at the time, Suez demonstrated that any hope the British had of influencing American policy was rapidly diminishing as the United States acquired independent interests of its own. Britain's efforts for free trade in the context of Europe not only failed to win favour in the United States but actually ran counter to American policy towards Europe. Since the early post-war years the Americans had often been more "European" than the Europeans and they enthusiastically endorsed the type of community favoured by the Six. With the formation of the EEC the United States began paying more attention directly to Europe, and the British, rather than providing the road to Europe, risked being bypassed by the Americans if they stayed out.

The Commonwealth too had changed greatly in the years since the war. Much of the post-war optimism concerning the political strength of the Commonwealth had faded. It was clear that the emerging multiracial Commonwealth would be quite different from the small group composed of the old Dominions and Britain. The Commonwealth and the remnants of Empire were still highly valued in Britain but they certainly provided no political or economic alternative to Europe.

Europe was also considerably different from its pre-war or early post-war equivalent. European unity excited the imaginations of many on both sides of the Channel and after several false starts it appeared that European unity might at last be safely launched. The Common Market had not been the economic disaster for Britain that some envisaged but as the Six began increasingly to talk of political cooperation the implications could not be ignored

in the United Kingdom. Time had also shown that Britain had little to fear from the Community institutions since de Gaulle had strong views on supranationalism; views which were remarkably close to those of the British Government.

These realities were all brought home to the Government in its foreign policy reviews and entry into Europe began to assume enticing characteristics. There remained, however, a number of very serious obstacles. There was the problem of Britain's Commonwealth preferences. Britain could give up its preferences in other Commonwealth markets easily enough but to terminate free access to the British market would impose a hardship on many Commonwealth producers. More seriously, entry into Europe would amount to reverse discrimination in the sense that Commonwealth exports to Britain would not only lose their privileged position but, through the imposition of the common tariff, would be put at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* exports from the Six. These were problems that had always existed for Britain but, in addition, there was, since 1959, a new one in the form of the EFTA. Britain was the primary force behind the creation of the EFTA and she felt a responsibility to ensure that other EFTA members would not suffer unduly from British membership in the EEC.

This was the quandary in which Britain found itself in the latter part of 1960. Prime Minister Macmillan's cabinet was far from unanimous on the question of entry and no decision could be taken until the Government could ascertain what concessions the Six might be willing to make. The Six took the position that nothing could be done until Britain applied for membership. Mr. Macmillan, the Prime Minister, was left with no choice and finally, at great political risk, he announced to the House of Commons on 31 July, 1961 that he intended to seek full membership of the European Communities, making it clear, however, that the vital interests of the Commonwealth and the EFTA would have to be considered.

The first negotiations for membership 1961-1963

The negotiations started in the autumn of 1961 and were terminated by President de Gaulle's veto in January 1963. The General's motives were political and few were fooled when he cited the non-productive character of the talks as the reason for their cessation.

The real problems in the negotiations were the result of the seemingly impossible position that the British Government was in. Governmental opinion concerning the aims and ideals of a European Community was somewhat behind that on the continent and this led the Europeans to question the depth of the British conversion. The issue was complicated by the fact that general British opinion on Europe was considerably behind that of the Government. The result was that the Government was forced to say one thing at home and another on the continent. In convincing the Europeans of their sincerity they ran risks of offending opinion at home. In attempting to soothe domestic opinion the Government raised fresh doubts on the continent. This was the dilemma which faced the Government.

The views of the British Government gradually moved closer to those on the continent but, unfortunately, domestic views crystallized as the Labour Party hardened its position against entry. These problems further complicated matters because they affected the negotiations. To demonstrate that they were not "selling out" the Commonwealth the Government was forced to take an unrealistically hard bargaining position with the knowledge that they would

have to make concessions later. The unrealistic initial position taken by the British disturbed the Europeans and raised doubts about British intentions. These doubts were somewhat dispelled when later concessions were made but these concessions were billed as "defeats" by the Labour opposition and much political capital was made of them.

In spite of this precarious balancing act it is likely that had de Gaulle not interfered, Mr. Heath would have arrived at some mutually agreeable arrangements with the Six. When it became clear, however, that the British were determined to join de Gaulle had either to impose his veto or change his entire concept of Europe and France's place in it. Prime Minister Macmillan made the first choice somewhat easier than it might otherwise have been by appearing to "sell out" to Kennedy at Nassau. This act, viewed against the fact that the British view of the world was closer to the American than the French, gave de Gaulle's veto just enough credibility to suit him. The fact that France's partners opposed the French action did not unduly worry de Gaulle since he was confident that they would not sacrifice the Community for Britain.

From the veto to the 1966 election

The immediate British reaction to President de Gaulle's veto was one of shock and dismay. The Government's position was that the veto had made the European question a non-issue for the present although its European policy had not changed. The Labour opposition went to great length to embarrass the Government and labelled both the negotiations and the veto as humiliating defeats for Britain.

The European question then went into a kind of limbo and was only briefly revived in the 1964 election campaign. The victory of a Labour Party opposed to entry into the EEC and preoccupied with domestic problems continued to keep the issue in the background until early 1965 but the worsening economic situation and the fact that Mr. Wilson, now in power, must take Europe more seriously than he had previously done, worked towards a revival of interest in Europe.

The 1966 elections saw the clarification of both political party's positions although the question by no means dominated the campaign. The Conservative position continued to be for unqualified entry while the Labour Party was somewhat more ambiguous. Mr. Wilson seems to have favoured entry if the right terms could be gained.

The second and third British bids

The 1966 election returned the Labour Party to power with an increased majority and Mr. Wilson took the opportunity to reorganize his cabinet, placing in prominent positions several declared "Europeans". When the Prime Minister announced the Government's declaration of intent in the Commons on 10 November, 1966 he knew he could carry both his cabinet and the Parliamentary Party. Those ministers opposed to, and those in favour of, entry were about evenly balanced and the presence of a majority who were prepared to follow Mr. Wilson either way left him in a strong position since the increased Parliamentary majority meant that, when he came out for entry he could carry a majority in spite of some opposition from the Labour backbenches.

In an attempt to accurately assess the British position Mr. Wilson undertook a tour to the capitals of the six Community members. The Prime Minister was well received and he made a number of notable speeches,

especially one at the Council of Europe, in which he left no doubt that the Labour Government, like its Conservative predecessor, accepted and shared the enthusiasm for a united Europe. The European response to Mr. Wilson's tour, and the successful Parliamentary debate following it, led to a second British attempt at entry in May 1967.

The EEC members (with the significant exception of France) and the Commission of the European Communities all expressed their willingness to commence talks with Britain at the end of 1967 but this second bid, like the first, was frustrated by the intransigence of France, or more accurately, President de Gaulle. This time it was, among other reasons, the state of the British economy that the General cited as his reason for believing the time for British entry was not yet ripe. The remaining five Community members took this French rejection of Britain less passively than they had previously and they sought alternative ways of cooperating with Britain and thereby minimizing the effect of the French position. Over the central issue of entry, however, little could be done and it seemed clear that as long as General de Gaulle remained President, Britain would have to stay outside of the Community.

Fortunately for Britain, the world of President de Gaulle began to crumble in May 1968 and a year later the General himself departed from the international scene. The new French Government has abandoned its attempts to forestall what appears to be inevitable and the 1969 resurrection of the British application results in talks starting in July 1970.

Influential opinion in Britain is solidly in favour of joining Europe. In their quest for entry the political parties have the good offices of both the influential and mass media. Organized business is also strongly in favour of joining although the position of the mass labour movement and farm interests is more ambivalent and public opinion polls reveal that large segments of the British people expect but do not prefer entry.

These doubts are fed and encouraged by the organized anti-Common Market forces who remain opposed to entry. These groups have recently united in an effort to block entry and although they have little chance of changing Government policy they continue to play on popular opinion and hope to have the question submitted to a referendum, thereby capitalizing on the uncertainty of the public. The logic behind the publication of the January white paper on the costs of joining Europe is questionable since, if it was

an attempt to improve Britain's bargaining position in Brussels, it was done at the price of weakening the Government's domestic position and giving aid and comfort to those opposed to entry. Mr. Wilson has also, on one or two occasions, not hesitated to play partisan politics with the issue.

On balance, there appears to be every reason to believe that this British attempt will be successful. It seems to be accepted by the major political leaders that Europe is too important an issue to be reduced to partisan, electoral politics and such damaging statements as have been made in the past will not likely be repeated. More importantly, the French seem not only tolerant but encouraging in their attitude towards Britain. There can be no doubt that much tough bargaining remains and the path to Europe will not be easy to traverse. Dean Acheson's 1962 remark that Britain has lost an Empire and not yet found a role is, however, no longer true in 1970; its role is now unalterably fixed in Europe.

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Britain and Europe: Quotations

These quotations, which exemplify the evolution of British and Continental attitudes to the question of Britain's role in the process of European integration from 1945 to 1970, are intended as further aids to the study of this problem and as a supplement to the article on Britain and Europe. They were chosen because of their suitability for discussion and are not necessarily representative of official attitudes or of all the different factions at different times in the different countries. It is suggested that pupils debate the Reynaud quotation and that they analyse and compare the other quotations as follow-up work to a lesson on Britain and Europe.

1. **Paul Reynaud**, former French Prime Minister, wrote the following letter to the "Listener"

"The trouble is, I know, that in England statesmen are pro-European when they belong to the Opposition and anti-European when they are in power."

2. **Winston Churchill** Conservative Party Annual Conference, Llandudno, October, 1948

"The first circle for us is naturally the British Commonwealth and Empire, with all that that comprises. Then there is also the English-speaking world in which we, Canada, and the other British Dominions play so important a part. And finally there is United Europe. These three majestic circles are co-existent and if they are linked together there is no force of combination which could overthrow them or even challenge them. Now if you think of the three interlinked circles you will see that we are the only country which has a great part in every one of them. We stand, in fact, at the very point of junction, and here in this Island at the centre of the seaways and perhaps of the airways also we have the opportunity of joining them all together."

3. **Harold MacMillan** Council of Europe Consultative Assembly, Strasbourg, August 16, 1950 (on the European Coal and Steel Community)

"One thing is certain and we may as well face it. Our people are not going to hand to any supranational authority the right to close down our pits or steel-works. We will allow no supranational authority to put large masses of our people out of work in Durham, in the Midlands, in South Wales or in Scotland.

Fearing the weakness of democracy, men have often sought safety in technocrats. There is nothing

new in this. It is as old as Plato. But frankly the idea is not attractive to the British ... We have not overthrown the divine right of kings to fall down before the divine right of experts."

4. **Sir Anthony Eden** Gabriel Silver lecture, Columbia University, January 11, 1952

"You will realize that I am speaking of the frequent suggestions that the United Kingdom should join a federation on the continent of Europe. This is something which we know, in our bones, we cannot do.

We know that if we were to attempt it, we should relax the springs of our action in the Western Democratic cause and in the Atlantic association which is the expression of that cause. For Britain's story and her interests lie far beyond the continent of Europe. Our thoughts move across the seas to the many communities in which our people play their part, in every corner of the world. These are our family ties. That is our life: without it we should be no more than some millions of people living on an island off the coast of Europe, in which nobody wants to take any particular interest."

5. **Edward Heath** Statement made by Mr. Heath, then leader of the British negotiating team at the time of the first British application to join the European Community, at the meeting in Paris, October 10, 1961, between the British and the six EEC governments

"The British Government and the British people have been through a searching debate during the last few years on the subject of their relations with Europe. The result of the debate has been our present application. It was a decision arrived at, not on any narrow or short-term grounds, but as a result of a thorough assessment over a considerable period of the needs of

our country, of Europe and of the Free World as a whole. We recognize it as a great decision, a turning point in our history, and we take it in all seriousness. In saying that we wish to join the EEC, we mean that we desire to become full, wholehearted and active members of the European Community in its widest sense and to go forward with you in the building of a new Europe.

Faced with the threats which we can all see, Europe must unite or perish. The United Kingdom, being part of Europe, must not stand aside. You may say that we have been slow to see the logic of this. But all who are familiar with our history will understand that the decision was not an easy one. We had to weigh it long and carefully."

6. **Action Committee for the United States of Europe** Joint declaration of June 26, 1962

"The Unity of Europe will be strengthened by Britain joining the European Community on equal terms with the member states under the conditions of the Treaty of Rome. Thus a union of 240 million inhabitants will be created. This union will enable all its members to achieve a higher rate of economic growth. The Commonwealth countries, among others, should benefit from this expansion. British membership in the initial stages of a European political union will increase the influence of Europe in world affairs: an influence which neither England nor our countries could exert separately."

7. **Hugh Gaitskell** Labour Party Annual Conference, October 3, 1962

"What does federation mean? It means that powers are taken from national governments and handed over to federal governments and to federal parliaments. It means—I repeat it—that if we go into this we are no more than a state (as it were) in the United States of Europe, such as Texas and California.

We must be clear about this: it does mean, if this is the idea, the end of Britain as an independent European state. I make no apology for repeating it. It means the end of a thousand years of history. You may say 'Let it end' but, my goodness, it is a decision that needs a little care and thought. And it does mean the end of the Commonwealth. How can one really seriously suppose that if the mother country, the centre of the Commonwealth, is a province of Europe (which is what federation means) it could continue to exist as the mother country of a series of independent nations? It is sheer nonsense."

8. **Harold MacMillan** "Britain, the Commonwealth and Europe", pamphlet, October 1962

"We in Britain are Europeans. That has always been true, but it has now become a reality which we cannot ignore. In the past, as a great maritime Empire, we

might give way to insular feelings of superiority over foreign breeds and suspicion of our neighbours across the Channel. For long periods, we were able to maintain a balance of power in Europe which served us well. Indeed, if we had not turned away from Europe in the Imperial heyday of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is even possible that the slaughter of two world wars might have been avoided. Are we now to isolate ourselves from Europe, at a time when our own strength is no longer self-sufficient and when the leading European countries are joining together to build a future of peace and progress, instead of wasting themselves in war? . . . By joining this vigorous and expanding community and becoming one of its leading members, as I am convinced we would, this country would not only gain a new stature in Europe, but also increase its standing and influence in the councils of the world. We would bring to the inward preoccupations of a continental land mass the outward-looking vision of a great trading nation whose political and economic horizons span the globe."

9. **A. J. P. Taylor**, historian, "Encounter", December, 1962

"I am a European. I am at home in Europe. European literature is my literature. Europe's past is my past. I understand European music, European art. The other civilisations of the world are foreign to me. I don't want to turn inwards, to be merely English. But the Europe now offered to me is not my Europe. I don't like the people who are running the Europe of the Common Market. I am against their sort in this country. I am against them abroad. I don't want to be tied with one part of Europe against the rest. I am not prepared to renounce the Russians who are as much part of Europe as we are. If any people have put themselves outside Europe by their behaviour, it is the Germans—not the peoples whom we propose to put out. I want amity and cooperation between all peoples, not teaming up with one privileged group against the others.

We belong to the Commonwealth as much as we belong to Europe.

We set an example to the world, not to Europe. We have exploited the world in the past. All the more reason to give it a hand now. I don't want to join with a few rich white nations against the world of colour and poverty. I want to bring the coloured peoples up to where we are, not to push them down harder than before. Europe of the Common Market is a colour-bar community in economics, if not in politics.

I can understand why the rich are for the Common Market. Cartels and monopolies have always been their way. I daresay it will make the rich richer. The Common Market is the opposite of International Socialism; and I don't see how any Socialist can support it."

10. **President de Gaulle** Press conference, Paris, January 14, 1963

"Then Great Britain applied for membership in the Common Market. It did so after refusing earlier to participate in the community that was being built, and after then having created a free trade area with six other states, and finally—I can say this, the negotiations conducted for so long on this subject can be recalled—after having put some pressure on the Six in order to prevent the application of the Common Market from really getting started. Britain thus in its turn requested membership, but on its own conditions.

England is, in effect, insular, maritime, linked through its trade, markets and food supply to very diverse and often very distant countries. Its activities are essentially industrial and commercial and only slightly agricultural. It has, throughout its work, very marked and original customs and traditions. In short, the nature, structure and economic context of England differ profoundly from those of the other States of the Continent.

It must be agreed that the entry first of Great Britain and then that of those other States will completely change the series of adjustments, agreements, compensations and regulations already established between the Six, because all these States, like Britain, have very important traits of their own. We would then have to envisage the construction of another Common Market. But the 11-member, then 13-member and then perhaps 18-member Common Market that would be built would, without any doubt, hardly resemble the one the Six have built.

It is foreseeable that the cohesion of all its members, who would be very numerous and very diverse, would not hold for long and that in the end there would appear a colossal Atlantic Community under American dependence and leadership which would soon completely swallow up the European Community."

11. **Harold Wilson** Bristol, March 18, 1966

"Labour welcomes the growing improvement in Common Market attitudes.

The Government's position, as we have stated again and again, is that we are ready to join if suitable safeguards for Britain's interests, and our Commonwealth interests, can be negotiated. But unlike the Conservative leader, we shall not proceed on the basis of an unconditional acceptance of whatever terms are offered us.

We are not unilateral economic disarmers. So: Negotiations? Yes. Unconditional acceptance of whatever terms we are offered? No."

12. **Harold Wilson** Council of Europe Consultative Assembly, Strasbourg, January 23, 1967

"We mean business in a political sense because over the next year, the next ten years, the next twenty years,

the unity of Europe is going to be forged, and geography, history, interest and sentiment alike demand that we play our part in forging it—and working it.

There may be those who believe that to widen the Community will be to weaken it or to dilute its existing sense of purpose and its institutions. Change there will be, as there has been throughout these ten years. For he who rejects change is the architect of decay. The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery. We within Europe will play our full part in generating change, whatever that means for vested interests or for the protectionist-minded, in Britain or elsewhere. It will be not on stagnation but on movement, continual movement, that the momentum created in postwar Europe can continue, indeed accelerate. Widening therefore, based on change, will mean not weakening, but strengthening."

13. **Jean Monnet** Comments following de Gaulle's press conference, May 1967

"What a long way we have come since the followers of General de Gaulle voted against the European Treaties, and from the time when the London Government considered the Common Market to be an illusion . . . In what sort of world are we living, if the Six have to reject, without discussion, the request of a great European democracy—overwhelmingly confirmed by its elected representatives—to join the Europe now being united?"

14. The **British Government** The Prime Minister's letter of application

10 Downing Street
Whitehall
May 10th 1967

MR. PRESIDENT,

I have the honour, on behalf of her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to inform your Excellency that the United Kingdom hereby applies to become a member of the European Economic Community under the terms of Article 237 of the treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my highest consideration.

HAROLD WILSON

*H.E. Monsieur R. van Elstande,
Chairman of the Council of Ministers
of the European Economic Community.*

15. **George Brown**, speaking as Foreign Secretary, Council of Western European Union, The Hague, July 4, 1967

"I have been charged by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to make clear to the Member Governments of the Communities the reasons for our application and its consequences as we see them.

We in Britain are conscious that this is a decisive moment in our history. The issue will shape our future for generations to come.

The European Communities are developing on an economic base. But we in Britain, no less than the present Members of the Communities, do not see the issues only in economic terms. The balance of economic advantage for us is a fine one. Some of the most decisive considerations for us have been political.

But, as I say, we are aiming at something far more than material prosperity. We see this leading to a greater political purpose for Western Europe. And if that purpose is to be realised, Britain must share it. We want, as soon as we can, to develop really effective political unity with our fellow West Europeans.

Fears have been expressed that there would be some radical alterations in the nature of your Communities if we and other European countries were now to enter them. There will of course be changes. But they will be changes of dimension—a larger Community, a more powerful and more influential Europe. None of us should have anything to fear here—for the whole concept of size is, as I have explained, the essential element of that unity we aspire to. And above all that unity requires a common purpose and outlook, and a will to work together. We have already given assurances about this, and what I have to say today will confirm them. The fundamentals of the Communities will remain unaffected, for we shall be accepting precisely the same treaty aims and obligations in letter and spirit as yourselves. We aim to create with you a unity, which will be all the greater because it will be built on the rich diversity of achievements and characteristics of European peoples who share a common purpose and a common resolve for peace.

This application is therefore not just a matter of economics and politics. The history and culture of our continent is the birthright of us all. We have all contributed to it and we all share in it. Our application flows from the historical development of our continent, from the sentiments, which, as Europeans, we all share and from the idea we all have of the part our continent should play in the world. Today the European spirit flows strongly in the movement towards a greater unity. Surely it is in the interests of all our countries that Britain should make her full contribution to this unity.”

16. European Commission Opinion on the application for membership of the UK, Ireland, Denmark and Norway, September, 1967

“Analysis of the chief problems involved in the extension of the Community reveals that the accession of new members such as Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Norway, whose political and economic structures and level of development are very close to those of the present member states, could both strengthen the Community and afford it an opportunity for further progress, provided the new members accept the

provisions of the Treaties and the decisions taken subsequently—and this they have said they are disposed to do. Their accession, although it would bring great changes with it, would not then be likely to modify the fundamental objectives and individual features of the European Communities or the methods they use.

It is the Commission’s opinion that, in order to dispel the uncertainty which still attaches in particular to certain fundamental points, negotiations should be opened in the most appropriate forms with the States which have applied for membership, in order to examine in more detail, as is indeed necessary, the problems brought out in this document and to see whether arrangements can be made under which the indispensable cohesion and dynamism will be maintained in an enlarged Community.”

17. Queen Juliana of the Netherlands Speech from the throne, September, 1967

“Our country wholeheartedly cooperates in the completion of the Common Market and the building of an economically united Europe. However, the government attaches the greatest importance to the examination of the requests for membership of the EEC put forward by Great Britain, Ireland and the Scandinavian countries. A further hindering of their admission, which would maintain the division of Western Europe, would cause deep concern to the government and would without any doubt have serious repercussions on the course of European integration.”

18. The Hague Summit From the Communiqué issued after the meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Six, The Hague, December 2, 1969

“They reaffirmed their agreement on the principle of the enlargement of the Community, as provided by Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome.

In so far as the applicant states accept the treaties and their political finality, the decisions taken since the entry into force of the treaties and the options made in the sphere of development, the heads of state or government have indicated their agreement to the opening of negotiations between the Community on the one hand and the applicant states on the other.”

19. George Brown House of Commons, February 25, 1970

“To me this is far more political than economic. For me it is a question of how in a changing world Britain retains a power, a capacity, to influence events. I make no apology to anyone. I will pay a very high economic price in order to have that power politically to influence our future and the way that the world develops.”

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